

IMUSIC

Making Universities Ready for Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity

Handbook for University
Staff and Student Peers



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
About the project	6
Results from the needs analysis & policy recommendations	8
Policy recommendations	10
Instructions for use of the handbook	12
MODULE 1: Self-reflection on (conscious or unconscious) prejudices against refugees/migrants	14
Content & Relevance	14
Educational goals	14
Theoretical background	14
Exercise 1 – Stickers on the forehead	16
Exercise 2 – Soundgame	18
Exercise 3 – River game	19
Glossary	21
References	22
MODULE 2: Communication strategies in consulting as well as in the everyday exchange	23
Content & Relevance	23
Educational goals	23
Theoretical background	24
Exercise 1 – Acting in Silence	25
Exercise 2 – Conveying information through a soundscape	27
Exercise 3 – The Sphere	28
Glossary	30
References	31
MODULE 3: Intercultural competences for diversity management	32
Content and Relevance	32
Educational goals	32
Theoretical background	33
Exercise 1 – Migration background and family histories	34
Exercise 2 – With the luggage at the border	37
Exercise 3 – Simulate	40
Glossary	41
References	42
MODULE 4: Group-specific module	43
Content & Relevance	43
Educational goals	43
Theoretical background	44
Exercise 1 – Take a step forward	45
Exercise 2 – Game of the goose	47
Exercise 3 – Responding to racism in class	48
Exercise 4 – Another university	50
Exercise 5 – All equal all different	52
Exercise 6 – Diversity bingo	53
Glossary	54
References	55
Summary & collection of voices	56
Notes	58

INTRODUCTION

Europe and the European Union have long been characterised by a culture of immigration and flight. Many and diverse push and pull factors are the basis for these long-lasting movements. Especially with increasing globalisation, countries and continents are moving closer together than ever before. Additionally, crises in various parts of the world can also be a trigger for a flight to the European Union (EU). The 2015/2016 phase referred to as the *refugee crisis*, but also the increasing internationalisation of universities supported by numerous initiatives have led to and lead to an increasingly heterogeneous and diverse student body.

The MUSIC project (*Making Universities ready for Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity*) responds to this development and a concrete need: a strong interest in studying in the EU among many refugees, migrants, and international students a high level of education who want to further develop their competences and skills and continue their educational path at a European university. With the significant increase in applicants, diversity-sensitive, qualified staff at all levels of the higher education system are gaining importance, as they are crucial for the academic success and cosmopolitan climate at universities. Additionally, student peers are essential to the integration and cultural sense of community at universities. Especially students in representative and decision-making positions such as in student councils or other active roles at the institution play an important part. There is a great willingness to support international students and students with a refugee/migrant background. However, based on the project's needs analysis, it must be noted that not all the necessary resources are available. Among the involved groups (administrative and teaching staff, student peers, refugee, migrant, and international students) the following points of improvement were raised: self-competences in terms of prejudices, communicational skills for dealing with language-barriers, sensitivity towards structural challenges such as bureaucracy and the educational system and intercultural and inclusive competences to further integration and understanding. Often, interpersonal encounters between employees and people with refugee or migration experience have only taken place in an auxiliary discourse.

The MUSIC project is based on the belief that the integration of refugees, migrants, and international students into the university system is associated with major opportunities, as it promotes the internationalisation of universities and encourages overall positive developments at universities. Therefore, the project reacts to specific challenges universities in Europe are facing. With the rising internationalisation, the number of tasks for the university system is growing. This not only affects the level of teachers in seminars and lectures, but also other groups of employees - from administrative staff to members of student groups to employees at the student union and university sports. Therefore, the project addresses three target groups: teaching and administrative staff as well as student peers.



The MUSIC project developed a comprehensive programme for employees and student peers at European universities to break barriers in the use of educational and administrative services for students with an international background. The social inclusion of this group is promoted through the qualification of employees from different fields of work and different professional groups within the *microcosm university* as well as through the sensitisation of student peers. The EU-funded MUSIC project aims to address this challenge through a teaching-learning concept that is designed to sensitise those different target groups at the university to the concepts of cultural diversity and social inclusion and to optimise processes of integration at the university. In addition to strengthening intercultural and communication skills relevant in the context of counselling or teaching, the teaching-learning concept also includes the familiarisation with concepts of civic education and inclusive citizenship. In the course of the project, a teaching-learning concept was evaluated and continuously optimised in several steps together with partners from Austria, Germany, Greece, and Italy. The didactic-ready concept resulting from this process is available in all partner countries in the form of a handbook. This handbook, along with online tutorials aiming to further deepen the topics addressed in the handbook, is the main output of the project.

The MUSIC curriculum of the handbook is modular. It includes three basic cross-cutting modules that are relevant to all target groups (university teachers, administrative staff, student peers):

Module 1 is designed to guide the trainees towards self-reflection on (conscious or unconscious) preconceptions toward refugees and migrants, to understand social mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion, and to raise awareness for racism and discrimination. With practical exercises the trainees learn about their own pre-assumptions and categorisations and reflect on their existence as well as their overcoming.

In **module 2** the target group works on their communication strategies in counselling as well as in everyday exchange. Through music and sound, movement, acting, as well as the use of expressions the participants connect with their body and explore options of non-verbal communication that can help with language barriers in university life.

As the last one of the cross-cutting modules, **module 3** addresses (inter)cultural diversity and intercultural learning. By stimulating the trainees to investigate their own family history and ethnic background and simulating challenging intercultural encounters at the university from different perspectives their reality of life is directly connected to the learning outcomes.

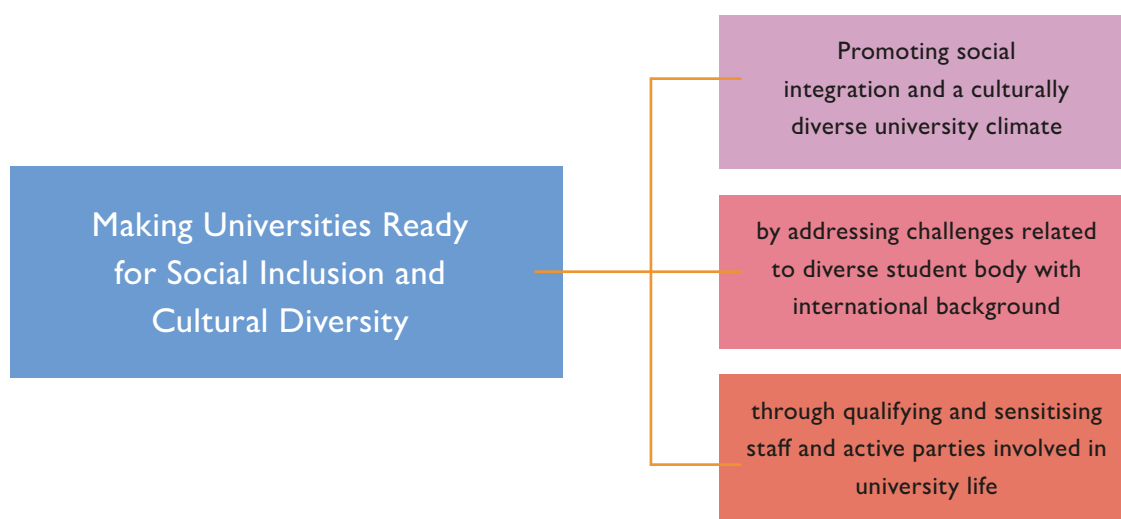
Module 4 is composed of target group-specific activities (e.g. for university teachers) and raises awareness of the specific challenges and problems refugee, migrant, and international students are facing in university contexts combining and deepening the previous approaches towards the specific needs of each target group.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Overall goal

By qualifying and sensitising employees from different work areas and students active in the *microcosm university*, the social inclusion of students with an international background is promoted in the MUSIC project. MUSIC pursues a concept that focuses on all relevant actors within the university: teaching and administrative staff as well as student peers. Since the individual support of these target groups should have a special priority at the universities, employees need specific competences in the areas of communication, interculturality, and political education to be able to constructively face possible problems and conflicts. Reflective, informed staff will provide migrant, refugee, and international students with easier access to tertiary education, strengthen diversity and interculturality at universities, and make a significant contribution to the integration of this group into the European community. Students with a refugee/migrant background should experience equal appreciation and opportunities for social participation in higher education, which goes hand in hand with an increase in general equality of opportunity.

Therefore, the aim is to sensitise staff and students (primary target groups) for social inclusion and cultural diversity. Raising awareness also indirectly reaches another target group, namely students with a refugee/migrant background and international students in general. Moreover, the aim is to shape the processes of inclusion in the best possible way. This promotes the opening of the university in the sense of an inclusive self-image. Internal processes can be reflected in this sense and modified, if necessary. University employees can improve their intercultural and communicative competences, e.g. in the context of counselling or teaching. The focus of the project is on concepts such as fair treatment (irrespective of religion, origin, or gender, etc.), which can be connected to the current discourses of civic education and social science didactics. The aim here is not to remain solely at the individual level, but to impart additional knowledge about structural levels, for example by reflecting on structures of power and domination, analysing daily political events, and looking at the discourse on discrimination, stigmatisation, and forms of group-related hostility. Refugees and migrants are the secondary target group of the project. They will benefit from the improved competences of the staff in the drop-in and counselling centres. The role of advising (international) students is of great importance. The concept is based on the experience of intercultural and civic adult education. In this field, there is long-standing expertise regarding the work with heterogeneous learning groups. It was often adult education institutions that, in the context of the so-called refugee crisis created educational opportunities for new arrivals. Methods and exercises from inclusive adult education are therefore adapted and made fruitful for the concept. In addition, concepts and contents of civic education are incorporated into the project.



Specific aims

Target Groups:

- Primary target group: qualifying and sensitising for challenges related to social inclusion and cultural diversity
 - » **Administrative staff** (e.g. in secretariats, international offices, ...)
 - » **Teaching staff** (teachers, lecturers, professors, ...)
 - » **Student peers** in representative, decision-making and other active positions (e.g. student councils, student assistants, ...)
- Secondary target group: profiting from competences and awareness building in the primary group
 - » **Refugee students**
 - » **Students with migrant background**
 - » **International students**

Outputs

Handbook

Offering theoretical background knowledge enriched with practical exercises to elaborate the learning outcomes:

- **Module 1:** Guiding **self-reflection on prejudices and social exclusion** (concerning students with refugee/migrant background)
- **Module 2:** Training competences in the field of **(non-verbal) communication skills** helpful for language barriers
- **Module 3:** Stimulating **intercultural awareness and competences**, specifically for the university context
- **Module 4:** Providing **target-specific learning opportunities** to the parts of the primary group and combining previous approaches of social inclusion and cultural diversity

Online Tutorial¹

In addition to this handbook, online tutorials have been created as part of this project. The MUSIC-Online Tutorials consist of an online course and short video tutorials. While the former deepens and expands on the theoretical contents of the MUSIC curriculum, the latter introduces the participants to the practical exercises, preparing them for their implementation. The webinar, which constitutes a stand-alone output, deepens the overall curriculum, focusing on the issues of diversity, inclusion, civic education, and communication.

¹ This link leads to the [online tutorials](https://tinyurl.com/3hvae38k); <https://tinyurl.com/3hvae38k>

RESULTS FROM THE NEEDS ANALYSIS & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To determine the exact needs for the concrete contents of the curriculum's modules and to develop corresponding offers and exercises for further training, a needs analysis was executed at the partner universities of the MUSIC-project in the very beginning. For this purpose, individual and group interviews with members of the target groups were conducted and evaluated. The results provide an insight into concrete needs and action requirements in terms of further training demands. The analysis serves as a starting point for the development of the individual modules and for the formulation of policy recommendations. In the following, the results are summarised for each target group: administrative employees, teaching staff, and student peers. Then the chapter outlines the results of the interviews conducted with the secondary target group of refugee, migrant, and international students. After a summary of the needs analysis, the chapter concludes with policy recommendations.

Administrative employees

The needs analysis shows that, especially for administrative employees at all universities, language and communication difficulties present the main challenge. The interviews further illustrate the difficulties in the field of communication. For example, administrative staff at the University of Kaiserslautern describe the uncertainty concerning misunderstanding and sufficient sensibility towards the addressed students. Furthermore, fear of judgement due to language barriers occupies the staff. Administrative employees wonder for instance how to inform foreigners about common manners or naturalities and habits without overstepping personal boundaries. Hence, awareness of cultural differences is a necessity resulting in an interest for further training. In terms of temporal constraints, the interviewed wish for a short and concise training, taking up approximately one afternoon. Similar uncertainties are also reported by administrative staff at the University of Vienna. Accordingly, a key challenge for administrative employees is constructed by the students' difficulties in understanding the university system such as formal requirements and bureaucracy. The language barriers mentioned above especially emerge if international students speak neither the local language nor English. Administrative employees also describe recognition of previously attained grades and diplomas and language requirements as a barrier for international students. Likewise, administrative employees at the University of Pavia claim difficulties of students in understanding the university system. Besides, the staff attributes themselves only minor skills dealing with issues of gender and religion (for example Muslim students ask them about spaces for praying). They are interested in further training in general and in training with specific focus on opening their mindset and flexibility in communication with students. Furthermore, the staff at the University of Hanover experiences a fear of students in communicating their needs. Therefore, another main challenge might be encountering and reducing this fear to ensure targeted help. Administrative employees at the University of Piraeus are willing to enhance their awareness of cultural differences. Overall, some have an interest in further training, while others do not express the need for further training, indicating that the willingness to participate in training is a key requirement for the MUSIC project.



Teachers, lecturers, and professors



Similarly, for teachers, lecturers, and professors at most of the universities, the language and communication difficulties are a main challenge. For instance, reference can be made here to the interviews with teaching staff at the University of Kaiserslautern, who name comprehension problems and necessary repetitions in class as examples for language and communication difficulties. They fear a potential decrease of scientific quality in their classes. In addition, they express uncertainty of being sensitive enough or a fear of judgement when addressing international students in class. Questions like 'Can I go and ask them if they have understood everything or do I just stamp them with the fact that they have not; is that discriminatory or just well-

intentioned by me?' arise. Therefore, they are interested in training on adequately addressing refugees and students of different cultural backgrounds. They wish to learn about basics in the right handling to strengthen their ability to reflect and to prevent (premature) condemnation. Likewise, the staff at the University of Piraeus express the aim to be more aware of cultural differences. The teaching staff of the University of Hanover as well as of the University of Vienna describe difficulties of students in understanding the educational system and in adapting to different learning modalities as challenging. All in all, the teaching staff is particularly interested in training on how to deal with students of different cultural backgrounds.

Student assistants and student representatives

Student representatives and assistants at most of the universities observe the following challenges for international students, refugee, and migrant students: language and communication difficulties as well as understanding the educational and the university system and certain processes like the admission process, formal requirements, and bureaucracy.

Student peers at the University of Kaiserslautern and the University of Piraeus claim that language and communication difficulties due to the lack of students' language skills are the main obstacles for the interaction with international students. Moreover, they wish to become more aware of cultural differences. At the University of Vienna, student assistants and student representatives see the admission process altogether as well as residential and financial issues as major challenges for the secondary target group. They also criticise a lack of accessibility and comprehensibility of information provided on the university's websites. Similarly, student peers at the University of Pavia describe obstacles in how to communicate formal requirements and bureaucratic processes. Student assistants and student representatives at the University of Hanover and the University of Kaiserslautern express the danger of discrimination for international students, migrants, and refugees. Lastly, students at the University of Kaiserslautern report a lack of contacts of local students with international students.



Refugee, migrant, and international students

Refugee, migrant, and international students at all universities describe language and communication difficulties as well as understanding the educational and university system with their formal requirements and bureaucracy as the main challenges.

At some universities, international students experienced prejudices and discrimination by employees. Besides, they describe a lack of contacts with local students. Understanding professors who only speak and teach in the local language, learning the local language and finding contact with local students are mentioned as key challenges. Meanwhile, others report predominantly positive encounters with the staff, especially in practical laboratory activities. Some consider their experiences positive and feel welcome. They do not see a need for further training for the staff in matters of tolerance and openness but suggest English training for some of them. At the University of Piraeus, the lack of contacts with local students is a main challenge as well. They add difficulties in communication with the professors and would prefer having more classes and projects with local students. A lack of information about specific procedures and difficulties with the recognition, obtainment or renewal of personal documents are described additionally to the general problems mentioned above from international students at the University of Vienna.



Image: Freepik.com

Summary

Two main parties contribute to a positive, culturally diverse learning and university climate: On the one hand, local actors involved in administration, teaching, and student life and, on the other hand, international, migrant, and refugee students. The three main challenges for international, migrant, and refugee students are the issue of communication, the comprehension of and adaptation to different educational systems, and the lack of information on programmes about social inclusion and cultural diversity. Since the project specifically addresses the first group, the focus of the curriculum is the building of competences to encounter and finally overcoming the challenges foreign students are experiencing and supporting a successful integration into the university. Therefore, the university system must improve in terms of (intercultural) communication competences and transparency concerning processes and requirements both in the administrative and teaching field. On top of that, a welcoming and engaging prejudice-free climate would improve social inclusion and cultural diversity for all parties involved.

Policy recommendations

Based on the needs analysis outlined above, the partners of the MUSIC-project formulated policy recommendations. These proposals address the political-structural level of university systems in Europe and seek to address policies at the European level. Since the university systems differ all over Europe, the recommendations may not be applicable in all countries or may even already be realised in some.

1. International, migrant, and refugee students face problems with language, intercultural communication and understanding the university system. Offering mandatory welcome courses on university level could ease the start of studies and problems along the way (e.g. language barriers, communication with the administration, understanding the educational system, introducing contact points for further questions). Some students do not only have a poor level of the national language, but also a poor level of English. A further solution in the context of the language barrier would be to offer translators or translator programmes/apps (including further training in the use of such programmes for lecturers).

2. The needs analysis highlighted the presence of potential difficulties for students with refugee/migrant background in dealing with formal bureaucratic procedures, which sometimes might complicate or hinder their path within the university. This results in two recommendations:

2.1. First, to ease bureaucratic procedures at the national and European level, and to harmonise relations with countries of origin for the recognition of grades and diplomas and the issuance of student visas.

2.2. Second, it would be important to develop multilingual guidelines for students with refugee/migrant background to help them navigate the university system (from the enrolment process to the registration to the exams) and to create or strengthen a multicultural and well-trained point of contact within the university to help students deal with such issues.

3. Similarly, the needs analysis pointed out how students with refugee/migrant background might have difficulties in integrating within a potentially new city or society, experiencing loneliness, financial problems, and social exclusion. A lack of possibilities for exchange with local students can minimise the potential of learning outcomes, communicative competences, and social inclusion for international and refugee/migrant students. Extracurricular activities and guidance introduced by the university would provide easily accessible opportunities to establish networks between students. Forming a support system and enhancing intercultural interaction, all students could improve their learning outcomes, language, and organisational skills.

4. The needs analysis shows that university staff need a more concrete point of contact for issues related to dealing with international students. Most universities have student committee units and departments of international affairs that plan events for international students or offer training for international students to promote their inclusion. However, there are fewer or no offers for university employees to get in touch with them. Therefore, a specific position for university staff should be more present and promoted.

5. The university strategies on equality, diversity and inclusion seem to focus on gender equality and people with disabilities. While this is certainly important, we also believe that greater attention should be dedicated to students with refugee/migrant background. In this respect, the development of general guidelines for the social and cultural inclusion of students with refugee/migrant background and the introduction or expansion of specific training programmes or workshops for employees (in the local language and in English) would significantly improve equality and diversity within universities.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THE HANDBOOK



About the MUSIC curriculum

The MUSIC curriculum offers a wide range of modules and exercises that stimulate skills to deepen social inclusion and deal with cultural diversity in the broadest sense. The exercises and theoretical backgrounds are located on a continuum. While some more general exercises deal with, among other things, the reduction of prejudices, others dive deeper into the curriculum, offering specifically tailored activities ready to use at (European) universities. Here the reader will find a training designed to support the removal of barriers to access in education and administration for refugee, migrant, and international students. The target groups are different employees and student peers in central roles at the university. The aim is to sensitise them for social inclusion and promoting culturally diverse universities.

The curriculum is sectioned into four modules with different exercises:

- **Module 1:** self-reflection on (conscious or unconscious) preconceptions towards refugees/migrants
- **Module 2:** communication strategies in counselling as well as in everyday exchange
- **Module 3:** (inter)cultural diversity and intercultural learning.
- **Module 4:** target group-specific offerings (e.g. for university teachers).

About the structure of the handbook

The different modules of the MUSIC curriculum provide the reader with an explanation of the content and relevance of the module. The educational goals of every specific module will give guidance to choose fitting topics. To deepen the understanding of the modules' intended learning outcomes and foundation of ideas, the reader can find a section on the theoretical background.

Module Structure:

- Content & Relevance
- Educational goals
- Theoretical background

The different exercises in each module follow a similar structure. In the beginning of each exercise, the reader can find a short introduction and an insight into the methodology of the exercise. Thereafter, the learning outcomes are outlined, followed by the instructions that explain the exercise. The exercises close with tips for the reflection and further deepening of the content. Moreover, the handbook provides an info box for each exercise pointing out the addressed target group(s), the duration, and the requirement next to each exercise. For further reading the exercises are summed up with references.

Exercise Structure:

- Introduction & Methodology
- Learning outcomes
- Instructions
- Tips for reflection / deepening the content
- Target group(s)
- Duration
- Requirements / needed material

How to use the handbook

The handbook can be used...

- **...as a course:** The MUSIC handbook is designed to provide a complete course on social inclusion and cultural diversity.
- **...in parts only:** The modules and exercises can be used individually. It is not necessary to work through them in chronological order. Exercises can be skipped. Modules can be used independently to train a group with specific training needs on a topic developed in the MUSIC curriculum.
- **...as a course adapted to the group by the facilitator:** Facilitators can create a specific course based on the needs and experiences of the group. The MUSIC curriculum can serve as a foundation or as a supplement to another concept. A specific course can include ideas, parts of modules and exercises and can adapt them to other resources, participants and intended learning outcomes.
- **...to supplement other trainings:** The MUSIC curriculum is very hands-on and can easily be integrated into another concept.

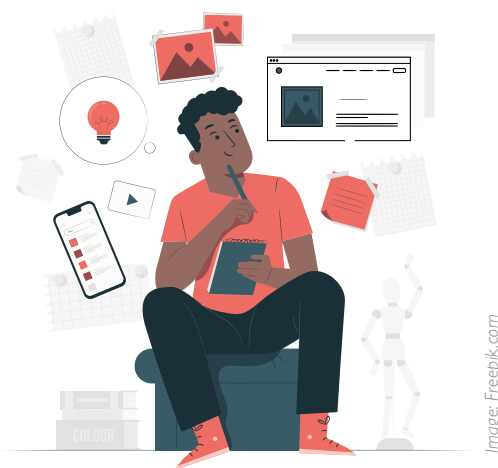
***Note:** The following exercises presuppose extreme sensitivity to the issues they deal with, the target audience they address, and the dynamics they can activate in the group and the individual. Direct participation is never an obligation but must always be a free and voluntary choice. Participation can be active or observing. Generally, it is recommended to start with an ice-breaking exercise, which helps to facilitate trust between the participants and creates a sense of community. Exercise 1 of Module 1 'Stickers on the forehead' can be used as a warm-up exercise. Always explain and agree on the rules of communication at the beginning.*

MODULE 1: SELF-REFLECTION ON (CONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS) PREJUDICES AGAINST REFUGEES/MIGRANTS

Content & Relevance

The transformations associated with migration processes are often perceived as challenges in society. Refugee movements, caused by war, terrorism, poverty, economic and environmental problems as well as general migration movements in the context of growing globalisation and internationalisation, lead to the development of heterogeneous societies. This is accompanied by the risk of exclusion and discrimination when certain individuals or groups of individuals are perceived as different (and of different value). There is a great discrepancy between the questions 'Are all human beings equal?' and 'Should all human beings be equal?'. In reality - whether on the street, at work or in school - not all people consider each other as equals. To establish a spirit of inclusion in a society characterised by migration and intercultural diversity, educational institutions must take up the task of promoting inclusion and dealing reflexively with diversity. At the university level, too, we must focus on uncovering prejudices and stereotypes and criticizing discrimination and racism.

This module aims to promote self-reflection of (conscious or unconscious) prejudices against refugees, migrants and anyone else who is perceived as *different* by offering a series of practical exercises. In that respect, the content ties in with the concerns of university employees and students who want to sensitise themselves to cultural differences and who want to critically self-reflect unconscious prejudices.



Educational goals

The exercises will contribute to:

- Understanding social mechanisms: exclusion and inclusion.
- Reflecting on one's own stereotypes and prejudices.
- Raising awareness for racism and discrimination.

Theoretical background

People who flee or migrate are often judged by their economic benefit for the country they flee to, as we have seen in Europe in recent years. Social hierarchies and an economic value system characterise society.

The causes of discrimination lie in individual minds and are socialisation- and experience-based. Every person lives in their own bubble and has a certain idea of what is *normal*. Everyone categorises their environment and their fellow human beings according to their own experiences. Individual-subjective perceptions that shape each person are usually more unconscious than conscious. Thus, every person has experience-based prejudices against *strangers* and thinks – sometimes more, sometimes less – in stereotypes. Both stereotypes and prejudices as fixed conceptions lead to the social construction of *groups* through labelling or stigmatisation. The difference between stereotypes and prejudices is that stereotypes remain unevaluated and are not necessarily negative, whereas in

the case of a prejudice, the addition of an emotional judgemental component usually results in a negative judgement towards a group of people. Therefore, prejudices result in negative or hostile attitudes and behaviour towards people.

Due to subconscious inner images everyone encounters an unknown person with prejudices and categories. Of course, people are more likely to identify with those with whom they share common interests or characteristics, such as origin, religion, language, appearance, or an interest - all constructed categories of society in which we think and act, but often unthinking. The constructed categories become problematic especially when people who differ from a certain group in a category are perceived as unequal because of an ascribed *otherness* and hostile attitudes towards People of Colour (marginalised group with experience of racism) or other marginalised groups develop, which lead to exclusion because of *otherness*.

Subjective conceptions of normality, categorical thinking and the consequences for marginalised groups are brought together in the model concept of group-focused enmity (GFE). The concept says that hostility to humans is not directed at individuals but at *groups*. Consequently, individuals are marked as unequal based on elected or attributed *group* membership and exposed to hostile mentalities (Heitmeyer & Mansel, 2008). As a result, stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination against people occur because they belong to a marginalised group, or in short, people are devalued because they deviate from *normality*. Thus, *groups* of people are devalued because of ethnic, cultural or religious characteristics and traits, sexual orientation, gender, a physical limitation or social reasons. Behind this lies an ideology of inequality. The differentiation of people into *groups* follows this ideology categorically and qualitatively, so that people who are perceived as *normal* are considered valuable or equal and those who are perceived as foreign or different are labelled unworthy or unequal - whether unconsciously or consciously. This is how *Othering* occurs: a labelled division into *we* and *they*, which is always determined by society. Due to the categorical classification, there is a danger that a strict and impermeable social hierarchy develops in society. Therefore, discrimination takes place not only on an individual level, but also on a structural level, due to hierarchies that are established in society (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011; Groß, Zick, & Krause, 2012).

Discrimination often does not occur based on membership in only one *group* or category. Different categories that create inequality often interact (intersectionality). For instance, the discrimination or even oppression of women is not always only due to their gender, but also because of their skin colour, class, or sexual identity. White heterosexual women often benefit from the characteristics ascribed to them, which result from the categories race and sexual identity, although they are discriminated as women, while non-white women or queer women are affected by several discrimination structures (Collins & Bilge, 2020).

The fact that people regard such categories and their attributions as natural leads to strong inequalities in the distribution of power. The people affected by discrimination on the basis of labelling are contrasted with those who benefit from social constructs created by categories. They have privileges, which they often perceive not as privileges but as natural rights. Whenever categories and their power are questioned, resistance initially encounters. Prominent examples of this are the demand for women's suffrage or resistance to racial discrimination in the USA.

However, the categories of difference in which power relations are at work and which privilege some characteristics and discriminate against others, are socially constructed and should be regarded critically. From a constructivist perspective, even the wording itself can lead to subconscious misunderstandings. By speaking of – ultimately only created – *groups* and categories we finally construct

them, which reinforces group thinking, even though there are no *groups* as such and no *others* or *strangers*. The reproduction of lines of difference is questionable, since rejection and discrimination are considered *normal*. One's own prejudices, inner images and seemingly existing normality must be examined, and the construction processes must be illuminated and reflected upon. This reflexive-critical attitude towards prejudices and how to deal with them is based on a constructivist school of thought (Mecheril, 2010; Möller, 2017). Following the idea of German migration pedagogy as a basis for argumentation, static terms like *culture* and *intercultural* can also be criticised. The term creates an imagination of the outside and the foreign (Mecheril, 2010, p. 65), which illustrates the danger of culturalisation.

The phenomenon of discrimination represents a social challenge, especially because the underlying opinions, ideas and thought patterns are strongly anchored in society and are perceived as a fixed normality, which has also led to the development of a normality of racism (Foitzik, 2010). This makes it even more important in a migration society to reflexively question such constructs and categories as *culture* and to uncover one's own prejudices in order not to put people into pigeonholes of higher or lower rank. The emergence of stereotypical ways of thinking cannot be entirely prevented, which is why it is necessary to learn how to deal with them so that they do not reinforce negative prejudices. In this respect, education that is critical of racism must sensitise more strongly to diversity and intersectionality so that we can overcome the constructed categories.

Therefore, in this module we first want to raise awareness of how societies work. Participants should develop an understanding of how affiliation and non-affiliation are defined in societies and lead to inclusion and exclusion. They will realise that everyone categorises their environment and their fellow human beings and is also personally affected by this. The exercises will show that people are categorised differently and at the same time raise awareness for the constructive character of these categories. Finally, the module will raise awareness for one's own social position and the privileges that come along with that. The module aims to raise awareness of racism as a social problem that has consequences not only for those directly affected, but for all of us in different ways.

Exercise I – Stickers on the forehead²

Introduction & Methodology

The exercise gives participants a first idea of how European societies work. It helps to sharpen the view for social mechanisms like inclusion and exclusion and defining affiliation and non-affiliation. It offers a good starting point for following exercises. Methodologically, this exercise can be assigned to role plays with physically active group interactions.



Target group(s)

- All 3 target groups
- 10 – 25 people



Duration

- 30 – 45 min



Requirements / needed material

- Coloured stickers in 4 to 6 different colours & sizes

Learning outcomes

- Reflecting on the construction of belonging to a group.
- Talking about feelings of belonging or being excluded.

2 An impression of the exercise from the accompanying [online tutorial](https://tinyurl.com/4a92dw8y): <https://tinyurl.com/4a92dw8y>

Instructions (explaining the exercise)

1. All participants are asked to close their eyes.
2. The instructor will randomly put a coloured sticker (or sticky note) on the forehead of every participant.
3. The participants are asked to come together in groups without speaking (!). (Let the group mingle for about 5 minutes).
4. When the participants formed groups, participants may look at their coloured sticker (or sticky note).
5. Debriefing.

Optional: The colours can be distributed unevenly. The group activity becomes more interesting if one colour is only given once, but others are given several times.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

The groups are often formed according to the colours of the stickers, although the colours are not mentioned in the task. It is therefore interesting to consider together why appearance plays such an important role and what that means for the perception of belonging to the society.

It might be helpful to collect keywords on a whiteboard during the discussion.

- How did you feel during the process of finding a group?
- How did you choose a group?
- Which criteria did you choose to form groups?
- What alternative group formations would have been possible?
- Which inclusion and exclusion processes could you observe?
- What criteria for inclusion and exclusion arise?
- How do mechanisms like inclusion or exclusion work?
- To what extent can you relate the game's development to processes in society?
- What role do power structures play in this exercise and our real lives?

Exercise 2 – Soundgame

Introduction & Methodology

In this exercise, participants are asked to reflect on their stereotypes and prejudices and recognise how those guide their actions. Furthermore, participants should also recognise how prejudices and stereotypes are connected to social affiliation and non-affiliation. Methodologically, this exercise can be assigned to interactive group work. This exercise deals with personal interests (music preferences) but is not too intimate.



Image: Freepik.com



Target group(s)

- All 3 target groups
- 10 – 25 people



Duration

- 60 – 90 min



Requirements / needed material

- Speaker
- Laptop/MP3-Player/...
- **Option A:** Collection of min. 100 different songs of different genres
- **Option B:** Access to a streaming service for music
- Sheets with the names of the participants (one sheet per participant)

Learning outcomes

- (Self-)Reflection on construction of prejudices and stereotypes.
- Reflection on experiencing stereotypes.

Instructions (explaining the exercise)

1. The participants choose a favourite song.
 - » **Option A:** All participants will receive the list of available songs and mark their favourite without the other participants seeing it. The lists go back to the teacher.
 - » **Option B:** All participants write their favourite song on a piece of paper and hand it to the teacher. The other participants should not see which song was selected.

2. The teacher places sheets with the names of the participants in the room so that everyone can see them.
3. Then some of the selected songs are played (recommendation: no more than 5 songs) and the participants walk around in the room. Everybody tries to guess who picked the song they listen to. They are asked to stand by the sheet with the name of this person. Those whose favourite song is currently being played should not show a reaction and stand to a different name. After a short pause, the next song will be played without any resolution.

Note: The facilitator should say that it is an impossible task to guess other people's favourite music, but that as we listen, we will have ideas about who might have brought the song or who we think would not listen to it. It is important here to explicitly encourage participants to allow and notice the existence of prejudices and attributions in their minds.

4. For the resolution, the facilitator plays each song again briefly and the person who brought the song briefly stands up. S/he can now, if wanted, tell the group what this song means to her/him and why s/he understands it to be one of her favourite songs. There will probably be some surprises.
5. Reflection

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

The reflection should clarify how prejudices work; in what way we benefit from them and what effects they have for people affected. It is important to emphasise that prejudices are not personal misconceptions but socially shared images about people who are pigeonholed. During the evaluation, the seminar leader should make sure that the self-evident nature of the classifications is questioned.

- How did you decide whose favourite song it might be?
- On what basis did you make the decision?
- Which pigeonholes did you use?
- What aspects did you use for guessing (e.g. sex, gender, origin, language, clothes, hairstyle, shoes, body size, content of the lyrics, ...)?
- How did you feel when other people stood by your name? (During your song? During a completely different song?)
- What surprised you? And why?

Exercise 3 – River game

Introduction & Methodology

The *River game* questions the usual ways in which people create opinions about a fact by reducing the information one would need to have a clear opinion about an issue (e.g. about people, a situation, etc.). This exercise uses the mode of (self-)reflection to critically examine one's own biases. Methodologically, this exercise can be assigned to a mind game or a debate or group discussion. It is important to follow the instructions given in the activity very strictly.



Target group(s)

- All 3 target groups
- 10 – 25 people



Duration

- 60 – 90 min



Requirements / needed material

- White-board & pens OR black-board & chalk

Learning outcomes

- (Self-)Reflection on prejudices and stereotypes.
- Raising awareness for the coexistence of different perspectives.

Instructions (explaining the exercise)

1. The facilitator narrates the story of a female character and four male characters. S/he draws a river and sketches of the female character and two male characters on the left side of the river and two other male characters on the right side, like this:



(Optional: The participants can be asked to give names to the 5 people involved in the story.)

The plot of the story would be:

Mila is deeply in love with Marco, a male person on the other side of the river. To cross the river Mila needs a boat. Thus, she asks Peter (the man on the left side of the river) to help her cross the river with his boat. But Peter refuses Mila's request. She asks another male person on the left side of the river, Tom. Tom is willing to take her across the river but requires from Mila that she would have to spend the night with him at his house. Mila is desperate, so she accepts Tom's condition.

The next day, Tom is taking her across the river. Mila is finally meeting up with Marco. After telling Marco the truth about the night with Tom and her feelings, Marco reacts furiously and rejects her. Mila is hurt and full of sorrows. She turns to the second male person on the right side of the river called Georg. Georg is so angry about Marco rejecting Mila that he goes up to Marco and beats him up. Marco has to go to the hospital and Mila remains sad and is now full of regret.

2. The facilitator asks the participants to build groups. Within the groups, they are asked to discuss the story they just heard. After that, every group needs to come up with a list from 1 to 5 placing at position 1 the person with the worst behaviour in the story to position 5 the person with the least bad behaviour. Following the discussion, every group is asked to describe and explain the decisions made about the lists.

3. After this very important part of the game, the facilitator retells the story in another way:

Mila is deeply in love with Marco, a man on the other side of the river. To cross the river Mila needs a boat. Thus, she asks Peter (the man on the left side of the river) to help her cross the river with his boat. But Peter refuses Mila's request.

Additional information: *Mila is 14 years old and Marco is her physics teacher at school. Peter is another teacher at Mila's school who knows about her feelings for her physics teacher. To protect both of them from any disadvantage or harm, he declines Mila's wish. She asks another man on the left side of the river, Tom. Tom is willing to take her across the river but requires from Mila that she would have to spend the night with him at his house. Mila is desperate, so she accepts Tom's condition.*

Additional information: *Tom is Mila's grandfather, who is lonely after his wife died. So, he asks his grandchild to stay the night at his house, spending a little more time together than usual.*

The next day, Tom takes her across the river. Mila finally meets up with Marco. After telling Marco honestly about the night with Tom and her feelings, Marco reacts furious and rejects her.

Additional information: *Marco rejects Mila because she is his student.*

Mila is hurt and full of sorrows. She turns to the second male person on the right side of the river called Georg. Georg is so angry about Marco rejecting Mila that he goes up to Marco and beats him up. Marco has to go to the hospital and Mila remains sad and is now full of regret.

Additional information: *George is 16 years old and a dropout from Mila's school. They are friends. George has been diagnosed with several psychological problems that are expressed through extremely violent behaviour. Because of his violent behaviour, he has been expelled twice from school and has stayed three months in a local juvenile reform school. He is always looking for a fight and, because of this, he is on the margins of his local community.*

4. Discuss the reasons why participants chose different orders to determine the behaviour of the people and now think differently about their behaviour in the story in plenum. There is no second ranking.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

The reflection should be about confronting the participants with their beliefs and prejudices they might have had previously. This exercise questions the usual ways by which people create opinions about a fact by reducing the information one would need to have a clear opinion about an issue.

- What do you think about the behaviour of the people involved in the story now?
- On what basis did you form your first opinion?
- Why did your judgement change?
- What are the takeaways from the exercise for our daily lives?
- How does our discussion connect to the topics of presumptions and prejudices?

Glossary

- **Discrimination:** is the term used to describe social disadvantage based on characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, origin, religion or, for example, disability. Institutional discrimination occurs when an institution as a whole treats people inappropriately or even in a discriminatory way on the basis of their phenotypic characteristics, their cultural background or their actual or assumed ethnic origin. Institutional racism can be manifested in processes, attitudes, and behaviour which, through unconscious prejudice, unawareness, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotypes, lead to disadvantage of individuals or *groups*. The consequences are ultimately general xenophobia or racism, antisemitism, sexism, etc.
- **Group-focused enmity:** the concept provides empirical results to explain the socially anchored rejection patterns. According to this, people are marked as unequal and exposed to hostile mentalities due to chosen or assigned group membership. As a result, the concept includes stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination against people because they belong to a marginalised group, or in short, people are devalued because they deviate from normality. Thus, groups of people are devalued because of ethnic, cultural, or religious characteristics and traits, sexual orientation, gender, a physical limitation, or social reasons (Groß et al., 2012; Zick et al., 2011).
- **Intersectionality:** draws attention to intersections of discrimination and illustrates the respective power structures in which categorical attributions are embedded. It describes that different inequality generating structural categories are entangled with each other. Forms of oppression and disadvantage do not allow for an additive sequence of categories, but are rather mostly interwoven: For instance, the discrimination or even oppression of some women is not only due to their gender. Other factors are skin colour and class affiliation. None of the categories of difference such as gender, ethnicity, class, nationality, sexuality, age, etc. stands alone. They must also be considered in interaction. However, the categories of difference in which power relations are at work and which privilege some characteristics and discriminate against others, are though socially constructed (which must always be kept in mind) (Collins & Bilge, 2020).
- **Othering:** refers to the construction of the *foreign*, which simultaneously constructs a *we* in difference to a *they* and creates a dichotomy. Groups are distanced from each other by attributing deficits, whereby the *strangers* are excluded - usually to the disadvantage of *others* and advantage of one's own group, which enjoys privileges.
- **Racism:** describes the devaluation of people who are considered biologically different (e.g. skin colour, origin). The labelled inferiority is justified with a qualitative evaluation of physical features and characteristics; racism is therefore also seen as the devaluation of foreign groups with innate inferiority. It is important to note that racism functions based on ascribed characteristics. People are racialised (Zick et al., 2011).

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- Zick, A., Küpper, B., & Hövermann, A. (2011). *Die Abwertung von Anderen. Eine europäische Zustandsbeschreibung zur Intoleranz, Vorurteilen und Diskriminierung*. Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Exercises:

Exercise 1:

- Kolle, G. (n.d.). Das Punktespiel. Retrieved November 29, 2021 from <https://kulturshaker.de/methoden/stereotype-vorurteile-diskriminierung/das-punktespiel/>

Exercise 2:

- Wagner, P. (2017). Von Schubladen und Zuschreibungen. Übungen zur Selbstreflexion. Welt des Kindes SPEZIAL, 3. Retrieved November 29, 2021 from https://situationsansatz.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Wagner2017_Schubladen_wdk-spezial.pdf

Exercise 3:

- Kolle, G. (n.d.). Soundgame. Retrieved November 29, 2021 from <https://kulturshaker.de/methoden/stereotype-vorurteile-diskriminierung/soundgame/>

Exercise 4:

- OUT-SIDE-IN-Consortium (n.d.). Inclusive Adult Education for Refugees. Retrieved November 11, 2021 from https://www.idd.uni-hannover.de/fileadmin/idd/Projekte/Out-Side-In/OSI_HANDBOOK_ENG_2019.pdf

MODULE 2: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN CONSULTING AS WELL AS IN THE EVERY-DAY EXCHANGE

Content & Relevance

Image: Freepik.com



Module 2 aims at developing the communication competences of all the target groups that comprise the university community (lecturers-teachers-professors, researchers, administrative employees, student assistants, and student representatives) through concise experiential art-based exercises focusing on non-verbal communication, making use of the three basic elements of everyday reality perception and formation (body language, movement, sound).

It responds to the universities' need to ensure equal opportunities and fight discrimination, in their effort to further increase the cultural diversity and facilitate internalisation processes.

This need has been imprinted on the needs analysis findings under the *Main challenges and needs* category and more specifically as:

- Language and communication difficulties (lack of students' language skills).
- Fear of being misunderstood / uncertainty of being sensitive enough / fear of judging.
- Interest in training on attitude in communication with students.

The MUSIC project, responding to the idea that came from the needs analysis for planning and organising more extracurricular activities to increase social inclusion and multicultural understanding, is providing this module with art based participatory methods, focusing on the development of the communicative competence and not on the artistic expression competence. Although we believe that art can benefit in a multidimensional way in every learning environment and multicultural cooperation, users of the above-noted methods will learn less about music, dance, and acting and more about how we listen, how we are being heard, present ourselves and invent ways of dealing with difficult communication situations in our daily lives.

Educational goals

The exercises of module 2 aim to:

- Further development of self-expression and creative skills through reflection, transformative learning and mindful learning.
- Critical reflection on analysing power structures underlying our communication practices.
- Understanding and conscious use of non-verbal or paralinguistics communication tools (e.g. movement, voice tone, sound, eye contact, body posture, etc.).
- Further understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Respect for diversity of cultural expression.

Theoretical background

All people working in the field of communication in formal and non-formal education would probably have come across the *Mehrabian 7-38-55 rule*. This rule allegedly states that only 7% of a message goes through words, while 38% are conveyed through paraverbal communication elements (the way the words are said) and the remaining 55% through face and body language expression.

The truth is that the application of this rule in all kinds of communication and all kinds of meanings is a rushed and over-simplifying generalisation of the experiment data of Albert Mehrabian (1981), who proposed this rule only for the conveying of feelings and attitudes through communication. Certainly, his overall research work in implicit communication (Mehrabian, 1981) refers to the fundamental significance of *non-verbal communication*, body posture, movement, face expressions, eye contact, voice quality, and intonation during speech, volume, and speed of speech, interpersonal distance, etc. in the conveying of a message from the transmitter to the receiver.

All the above comprise communication tools that play an important role to our everyday interpersonal communication, as they shape our perception and our beliefs about both our co-speaker and the communication fact itself, and they have been extensively studied in psychology and psychotherapy disciplines (Giles & Robinson, 1990; Gordon, Druckman, Rozelle & Baxter, 2006).

The importance of *art-based methods* for communication education, and more specifically for managerial education has also been highlighted. While in the past, research on the benefits of art-based education has focused on the educational outputs of reflection, critical reflection, transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997), in contemporary research much attention is paid to the meta-cognitive dimension of art-based education, and in particular its effect on *perceptual refinement* (Springborg, 2012). The learning environment shaped by art-based methods is an ideal space for the participants to bring their experiences as a starting point for transformation, but it also has the capacity to develop meta-cognitive skills and impact on multiple levels of communication in everyday life.

Since art-based methods for communication development (focusing primarily on non-verbal communication) aim to increase the chances of safe communication and decoding in a multicultural university environment, the important role played by *cultural differences* in non-verbal behaviour cannot be ignored.

Early studies by Watson (1970) and by Watson and Graves (1966) have shown differences in gazing behaviour, space behaviour, body orientation, and touching behaviour among members of different cultures. More recent studies by Ekman and his colleagues distinguished the universal from the culturally specific sources for expressions of emotion (e.g. Ekman & O'Sullivan, 1988). While the underlying physiology for the primary emotions may be universal, the actual expression elicited is subject to cultural (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002, 2003) and situation-determined display rules [...]. Display rules serve to control an expression or to modify certain expressions that would be socially inappropriate or would reveal deception (Gordon et al., 2006, p. 93-94).

The following exercises reproduce a vast part of behaviours-movements that are similarly perceived in many cultures. At the same time, behaviours, movements, gestures, and sounds that are not similarly perceived and interpretable by everybody, can act as material for further familiarisation and training and bring different cultures closer (increasing also self-awareness and smooth familiarisation with cultural diversity).

Exercise I – Acting in Silence³

Introduction & Methodology

This exercise fully familiarises participants with the conscious use of body language (eye contact, pantomime, body posture, face expressions, interpersonal distance, etc.) as it completely removes spoken language from communication and introduces participants to the rich world of non-verbal communication. Through a shared expressive challenge in the form of a theatre game, participants discover and connect with their already acquired knowledge and experiences in the non-verbal expression of even complex concepts and instructions.



Image: Freepik.com



Target group(s)

- All 3 target groups
- 10 – 25 people



Duration

- 60 – 90 min



Requirements / needed material

- Open space (ideally with a wooden floor)
- Comfortable clothes

Learning outcomes

This particular exercise aims at

- Helping the participants start to notice themselves and others around them as well.
- Growing the participants' expressive means without using any words and communicating with each other non-verbally.
- Facing communication barriers and using creative competences to overcome them.

Instructions (explaining the exercise)

1. The facilitator guides the participants by giving the following instructions:
 - I walk in the space.
 - On the clap of hands I stop moving.
 - I concentrate on my own breath.
 - I observe the people around me.
 - I have to follow one person of the group and start moving behind them.
 - The group creates a circle.
2. In absolute silence I try to say 'good morning' to everybody without words, using only eye contact.
 - » After that I create eye contact with one person. Without losing eye contact with my partner I must now switch places, but I should meet my partner at the centre of the circle. If a couple (a) has created eye contact and another couple (b) has already started to move the couple (a) has to wait without losing eye contact.
3. In this part the couples keep on switching places but now the members of the couples have to copy the movement of their partner as if they were looking into a mirror. The participants must use different qualities of movement (changing speed, levels, etc.). There is always a meeting point at the centre of the circle and the participants have to try not to lose eye contact.
4. The participants must now switch places with another member of the group but now when they step into the circle, they have to carry an emotional act (love, hate, I need help, etc.). At this moment the couples do not have to copy what they see but to

3 An impression of the exercise from the accompanying [online tutorial](https://tinyurl.com/3vkbfy8u): <https://tinyurl.com/3vkbfy8u>

react to what their partner is doing. Eye contact is important once again.

5. The group splits into three groups. Each group has to create and present a theatrical act with no words under the following titles:
 - » Help!
 - » I would like to...
 - » Disagreement

The titles must be hidden from the rest of the groups. The groups have to improvise in absolute silence for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes have passed, they can speak for 3 minutes in order to talk about the details of their theatrical acts. They improvise again in silence for 3 minutes. Each group makes the presentation in front of the other groups. The audience attempts to describe what they understood from the act.

6. The group stands in a circle. For one last time random couples meet in the centre of the circle and say 'goodbye' in any way they want (with or without words, in a well-known or in a strange language etc).

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

This exercise addresses all target groups of the project and does not require previous experience in theatre, pantomime, or performing arts in general.

Some instructions of the exercise may put the participants in a difficult position (for example, when familiarising with eye contact everyone feels awkward at first). Our tendency is to hide such moments of awkwardness and embarrassment from others, and this is perfectly acceptable. On the other hand, however, the exercise will achieve the greatest learning effects if we manage to highlight these difficult moments, become aware of them and observe ourselves how we overcome them.

To do this, a round of reflection with the participants is required at the end.

Beforehand, the facilitator should prepare a semi-structured list of questions in order to facilitate the emergence and presentation by the participants of the knowledge and skills used during the exercise, as well as the attitudes acquired. Questions like those below could support this procedure:

- How did you feel during the eye contact? Why?
- Did you find it difficult to perform your feelings (love, hate, I need help, etc.) in the circle? Why? How do you feel right now?
- What did you find most difficult during the working groups and the preparation of the performance? If you failed to communicate your ideas nonverbally with the rest of your team, how many words do you think you would need to achieve it?
- What did you think of the performances? Did they represent the title/topic?
- How do you evaluate the whole experience?

• What have you discovered today that you would like to use in your daily life?

Exercise 2 – Conveying information through a soundscape

Introduction & Methodology

A soundscape describes a sound or a combination of sounds which create or emerge from an immersive environment. Sound – whether produced by man or by nature itself – can transmit one or more pieces of information to the audience. We can make use of sound to convey specific information describing a situation, a fact, or a story.

In our everyday life we usually ignore the great influence of our sound environment and the ways in which it affects our perception of the world. We only pay attention to sound when it disturbs us (aeroplane flying low, public works out of our window) or makes us feel good (music, birds singing). But in other cases we find it difficult to understand that sound is the main channel of message delivery (in a movie at the cinema, it is the sound that makes us anxious about what will happen next, not the image of a closed door). Sound can convey messages and meanings in ways waiting to be discovered and integrated into our communication practices. The general methodology of the exercise is based on experiential learning and team work, following the method of soundscape creation.



Target group(s)

- All 3 target groups
- 10 – 25 people
- Participants need to be somewhat familiar (ice-breaking exercise)
- Not accessible with hearing impairments



Duration

- 50 min



Requirements / needed material

- Open space (ideally with a wooden floor)
- A4 white papers
- Markers for painting

Learning outcomes

- Self-development through creativity.
- Creating a quicker way to realise and share the important information.
- Awareness of communication channels.

Instructions (explaining the exercise)

1. Based on the participants' number, split the group into subgroups of 4 people at least. On three different pieces of paper, invite the groups to simply draw a story that has a beginning on the first page, a middle part on the second page and an end on the third page. Each group keeps the story secret from the others. Then in 15 minutes each group will have to find a way to describe this story and then to perform this description without using words but only sounds to the other groups.
2. Each group performs their story with sounds, while the audience keeps their eyes closed or their backs turned to the stage, so they cannot see any action, only listen. The audience is then asked to translate the story into words based on the sounds they heard. The groups still do not reveal their stories, they just keep the feedback.
3. After the presentations each group with the comments of the audience goes to a second round (or if necessary, a third one too) of creation and presentation, correcting or removing each time the wrong or misleading information that makes the story different from the original. In the end, the groups reveal their stories.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

- We do not have to inform the groups that they have to present the story in an audience with closed eyes beforehand. At the end we realise that we have to keep only the key words (sounds) and not all the elements that we drew (saw) on the paper. With this approach the important information arrives faster to the ears of the listener, without the noise of the meaningless information.
- This is a pleasant and entertaining exercise. We can also make use of it by repeating it with the aim to create a new vocabulary of sounds or information that can be used in the future.
- A round of reflection with the participants at the end is recommended. Coordinate an open discussion where the participants have the space to express their experience.

Exercise 3 – The Sphere

Introduction & Methodology

This exercise guides the participants through a journey of the awareness of their environment, of the space through which the human body moves and of the relations developed with other people. The exercise follows the experiential learning and team work methodology, making use of active participation and collaboration for the creation of a common experience. It is also based on the cooperation between body and mind and the human inner impulsion to express and communicate through the body.



Target group(s)

- All 3 target groups
- 10 – 25 people



Duration

- 50 min



Requirements / needed material

- An open space (ideally with a wooden floor)
- Comfortable clothing
- Music playlist with relaxing songs & nature sounds (low volume)
- Sound system, speaker(s)

Learning outcomes

This exercise aims at raising the participants' awareness of their body, its positioning inside the environment and space and inside the relations we develop as well as its potential as a communication and expression tool.

Through this exercise we can achieve:

- Better connection with our body.
- Opportunity to observe oneself and the others.
- Opportunity to know oneself better and connect with a group.
- Awareness that our body consists of individual parts able to move independently or combined.
- Development of spontaneous and conscious movement.
- Development of imagination.
- Awareness of our body's ability to communicate and convey feelings and information.
- Development of non-verbal communication.

Instructions (explaining the exercise)

1. Introduce oneself through body and movement:

The facilitator asks the group to form a circle and start observing their body asking questions and giving examples:

- » Is there any body part that feels sore or in pain?
- » Do you notice anything different today? (e.g. 'My feet are sore because of standing for a long time.')
- » Is there something about my body that I would like to share with the others? (e.g. 'I slept well and I feel fresh.')

After some minutes of observation, the facilitator asks the participants to introduce themselves to the group, first with their name and the observation of their body, and then with a movement that represents this situation. The facilitator starts giving an example and the participants follow, e.g.:

- » 'I am Costas and today my shoulders are in pain, because I carried a heavy load.' Then Costas says his name again, while at the same time he bends his knees, lowers his head and puts his hands on his shoulders.

The facilitator invites the participants to repeat each person's movement. Thus, they put themselves into other people's position, get to know each other and also do a short warm up.

2. My body, the environment, and the others:

The facilitator puts on some mild, low volume music and asks the group to break the circle and freely move into space. S/he lets the group move freely while at the same time the participants observe their body, their breath, expression, and way of moving as well as the others'. As the group keeps on walking, the facilitator gives the following instructions:

- » Breathe with more awareness.
- » Create small, interesting paths between other people. Avoid making circles.
- » Observe the space in which you move in and the environment.
- » Observe the others, too. How do they move? Recall the movement with which they introduced themselves before.
- » Observe yourself in this crowd and in this space.

Then, the facilitator claps his/her hands and the participants stop moving. At the second clapping, the participants start moving again. By repeating, the facilitator creates a code under which the participants understand that with each clapping they should pause until the next clapping, when they move again. Repeat several times, change the speed and the duration of pauses.

3. Discovering my sphere:

At some point, the facilitator asks the participants to stand for a while at the point they randomly paused. Then s/he asks them to keep following the instructions given without interrupting the procedure. S/he invites them to trust him/her and actively participate; if somebody feels uncomfortable it is ok to stop, but encourage them to also try something that might be difficult for them.

- » Consider that the place where you stand now will be your personal space for a while. You can imagine that a big bubble, a sphere is surrounding you and providing you with safety.
- » Extend your arms and discover how big this space is.
- » Move into this safe space, trying to discover its dimensions and limits.
- » Try to move continuously, making use of the instructions on your way. There is no right or wrong movement.
- » If you feel safe, you can close your eyes and feel the limits and dimensions of the space.
- » Try to involve all your body in this process and not only your arms, but also, head, shoulders, fingers, torso, pelvis, knees, feet, even eyes, face muscles, sternum.
- » Try to move low or high, fast or slow, try to jump or turn in the sphere.
- » You can follow the music.
- » Do not forget to breathe and do not be afraid of making the movement bigger.
- » Slowly return to a neutral position and open your eyes if closed. Try to keep this feeling of your personal space while we are going back to the groups' space and continue to move.

While the group is moving, the facilitator points out that we are transferring our body into the space that surrounds us and in between people also moving around us, as if we transfer the sphere we discovered before. We can choose whether we remain in our safe personal space or allow somebody else to enter our space.

4. The sphere breaks:

Then, the facilitator asks the group to create encounters; to communicate by observing how they manage their personal space, when they keep it away from others, when they allow somebody to approach entering their sphere and how they feel about their body in each condition. The facilitator proposes:

- » Give a handshake.
- » Say 'Good morning' in any way you like.
- » Find a reason to give a hug.
- » Find a reason to congratulate somebody.
- » Offer a present or offer help to somebody.
- » Give directions to somebody.

5. Let's introduce ourselves again through the body and movement closing the circle:

The facilitator asks the group to come back to the circle, gives some time for everybody to observe their bodies again and asks them to repeat the process of step 1. Maybe there are some changes, maybe not.

When all participants have talked, the exercise is completed. The facilitator thanks everybody for sharing and participating.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

It is advisable that 10 more minutes are given to the participants to discuss their feelings during the process

- What was hard for you?
- Have you discovered something that you wish to keep?

Glossary

- **Pantomime:** is "the art or act of expressing thoughts and emotions with movement rather than speech" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). An ancient form of pantomime can be found in Roman times, where a solo performer or dancer was representing movements related to the narration of a chorus. Nowadays, pantomime can refer to any form of performance where the story is told non-verbally, based on the body movements and facial expressions of the performer.
- **Non-verbal communication:** Non-verbal communication types include eye gaze, gestures, facial expressions, paralinguistics such as loudness or pauses and rhythm or tone of voice, body language and posture, interpersonal space, touch, appearance, and artefacts.
- **Sound:** whether produced by man or by nature itself - can transmit one or more pieces of information to the receiver. We can make use of sound to convey specific information describing a situation, a fact, or a story. Sound is transmitted through gases, solids, and liquids in the form of waves.
- **Soundscape:** is the sound or combination of sounds produced by natural or artificial sound sources and perceived or/and interpreted by humans. Human perception and the production of meaning that influences human behaviour are the key features that differentiate it from the broader acoustic environment, which simply refers to the sounds or combination of sounds that coexist in an indoor or outdoor space.
The soundscape can be created from sounds of the natural environment, such as animal voices, birds fluttering, insect buzzing (biophony), sounds of weather phenomena, the movement of rivers and the sea (geophony), as well as sounds created by human activity, such as a musical composition, the sound of office equipment, industrial sounds and even human language (anthropophony). What is crucial here, is the way in which the environment is understood by those who live in it.
- **Personal space:** refers to the space that surrounds a person; the space which is considered personal or allows for privacy. When another person goes into this private area a level of discomfort is often felt by the person whose private space is violated. Personal space is linked also to the concept of *interpersonal distance*, the distance at which persons usually position themselves from other interacting persons. Interpretations of behaviour related to the category of proxemics are encountered in many sociology and psychology studies. Hall (Gordon et al., 2006) proposed four categories of interpersonal distance that describe different types of communications in face-to-face interactions (valid mostly in Western cultures):

1. intimate distances in which interactants stand 6–18 inches from each other, types of interactions expressing intimacy being *love-making and wrestling, comforting, and protecting*
2. personal distances of 1.5–4 feet, which usually reflect close, personal relationships
3. social or consultative distances of 4–7 feet, which are typical of business and professional client interactions
4. public distances of 12–20 feet involving public speaking in which recognition of others spoken to is not required.

Personal space is linked to the first and second category and is challenged or reconciled in interactions of the 3rd and 4th type.

- **Safe space:** The term safe space (or *safer space* in a more realistic point view) generally means “a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment or any other emotional or physical harm” (Lexico, n.d.). This definition may seem too broad; in fact, we can tell two different perceptions of the term: one is the ideological one, while the second one refers to physical spaces/environments catering to the need of safety of the people involved. It is also often referred to places created for marginalised individuals to come together to communicate regarding their experiences with *marginalisation*, most commonly located on university campuses in the Western world, but also at workplaces. The term safe(r) space (also positive space) may also indicate that a *teacher*, educational institution or student body/group does not tolerate *violence, harassment, or hate speech*, thus creating (or aspired to gradually create) a safe place for marginalised people.

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MODULE 3: INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES FOR DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Content and Relevance

We have selected four themes from the needs analysis: A first theme concerns the concept of diversity and the recognition of cultural differences. The module works on the recognition of diversity and the development of an awareness of one's own and other's diversity, both cultural and personal (the multiple differences). Differences must be first recognised in order to be accepted or rejected, even to avoid pre-judgement. Recognizing cultural differences is a necessary step to improve intercultural encounters and dialogue. A second theme introduces the concept of multicultural societies and the different models of welcome and integration. The module aims at (1) gaining new knowledge on the concept of multicultural society; (2) expanding the concepts of society, borders, encounters and clashes between cultures; and (3) developing the meanings of the terms insiders and outsiders.

A third theme concerns the intercultural meeting and plans to build the idea of a relational environment. The module works on the ability to empathise with the other, to create a third environment of safe meeting based on trust (holding), where it is possible to express without fear, or where fears can be expressed without awe of the right pre-judgement of one's own and others.

A fourth theme faces the prejudice as a precursor to discrimination and exclusion. It will be a cross-cutting theme within the module.



Educational goals

1. Exploring and recognising the diversity between cultural and social systems, understanding the dimensions of social and cultural diversity by deepening the knowledge of the migration phenomenon and the concept of foreigner (identity/culture) and outsider (proximity/distance).
2. Educating to multicultural society by deepening the models of welcome and integration and stimulating reflection on the concepts of ethnocentrism, ethno-relativism, membership groups, systems, and organisational cultures, openness/closure to diversity to make visible barriers to acceptance of diversity (cultural dimensions and stereotypes).
3. Supporting the development of intercultural relational skills by exercising active listening and stimulating empathy and awareness of each other's emotions and needs, supporting the ability to take the other's point of view, and facilitating cognitive and behavioural flexibility to develop mediation skills.
4. Stimulating awareness of the mechanisms of discrimination and prejudice by fostering in-depth knowledge of the concepts of stereotype, prejudice, ethnocentrism, victim-blaming, discrimination, harassment, stigma, and stimulating the analysis of the concept of conflict in an intercultural key with reference to the observation of group dynamics such as exclusion and stigmatisation versus inclusion and integration.

Theoretical background

The systemic relational model (Bateson 1977, Von Foerster 1984, Maturana & Varela 2001) is the underlying theoretical foundation that supports and orients the methodology proposed in the exercises since:

- It considers the individual and each social group understood in relation to each other, as subsystems of various different contextual systems that influence each other.
- It favours a shared definition of the issue from different formulations (multiplicity of vantage points and narratives).
- It promotes the activation of integrative processes of the *differences* present in the individual, in the group, in relational networks, with an open and constructive vision.
- It activates collaborative and evolutionary relational resources through the recognition and enhancement of resource and resilience aspects for change.
- It also supports the centrality of an ethical position and cultural sensitivity, the recognition and respect of personal, cultural, and religious diversity, as well as the maintenance of a relational position free from value judgements.
- It recognises the importance of a continuous self-reflection on perceptions and prejudices.

The key concept of systemic intervention in human organisation is that, in addition to the content of the intervention itself, there is a level of analysis that concerns the observation of the meanings and quality of communication and relationship, which is fundamental for achieving the objectives of change. Today's increasingly globalised society requires us to change and broaden our points of view and acquire an intercultural competence, which is essential to understanding the codes of conduct and the ways generally accepted in different societies and environments. Intercultural competence can be defined as complex skills that are required to interact effectively and appropriately with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself (Fantini, 2009).

The module intends to work towards intercultural learning according to the three categories of learning: knowledge, skills, and attitudes (European Parliament and Council of 23 April 2008) defined by UNESCO (2009) as understanding and respect of the different cultural groups and dialogue between different cultural groups.

In both Deardoff's (2006) models of intercultural competence (pyramidal and procedural) knowledge concerns cultural self-awareness and understanding of the influence of contexts in worldviews (the lens through which each of us sees the world), specific cultural knowledge, socio-linguistic knowledge, assimilation of global themes, and trends. The skills to be developed consist of listening, observing, considering the world from the perspectives of others (viewing how perspectives are similar and different), evaluating, and creating links. The attitudes to be developed relate to curiosity, openness, respect (valorisation of others), and discovery, tolerance of ambiguity, and cultural humility (combining respect with self-awareness). Orchestrated together, these components produce internal effects, i.e. the development of flexibility, adaptability (being able to temporarily move to another perspective), ethno-relative vision, and empathy. In turn, the inner effects determine external effects that correspond to behaviour, like building relationships (creating lasting intercultural personal bonds) and communicating effectively and appropriately during an intercultural interaction (visible part of the competence).

The skills most directly relevant to fostering intercultural competence according to Portera (2013a) are: observation, listening, evaluation, analysis, interpretation, relating, adaptability, non-judgement, stress management, metacommunication, and creative problem solving. Attitudes include respect, empathy, open-mindedness, curiosity, risk-taking, flexibility, and environmental tolerance. The acquisition of intercultural competence is a complex process that "includes cognitive aspects, language and social skills, motivation and positive attitudes in a double sense (individual/social), as well as a meta-reflective and meta-strategic level that regulates the process and presumably implements it indefinitely" (De Angelis, 2011).

Also important are the relational and dialogue dimensions: "where the other is not only observed, described and known, but becomes part of a dynamic and interactive relationship" (Portera, 2013b). To achieve this, we need to build a *third space* of mutual trust and transformation in which everyone can be available for mutual change, promote interactions that consider the other's point of view, so that exchanges are based on empathic authenticity, trust and mutual respect. Only then can otherness become the vehicle for our expansion, because it is only by understanding the *other* within me that I can expand. This means promoting interactions that consider the other's point of view, so that exchanges are based on empathetic authenticity, trust, and mutual respect (Bennet, 1993).

Among the intercultural skills to be acquired, according to Franca Pinto Minerva (2002) communication competence is not reduced to pure linguistic competence. Rather, it is a socio- psychological competence in approaching the stranger, in overcoming one's fear of coming into contact with others and agreeing something with them.

It is related to language mediation, dialogue, and the art of listening. Learning to listen to the stories of others

contributes to enriching our visions of life, to deepen the meaning of our existence, to allow on our way through emotions and reflections that end up bringing out the pregnancies and, at the same time, the complexity of their own history, to make themselves permeable to others in order to bring to light the inexhaustible richness of one's plural identity (Pinto Minerva, 2002).

Decentralisation and empathy then become fundamental pillars (skills) of the authentically intercultural relationship, and by empathy we mean “the ability to understand the person with whom one is interacting, (the) attempt to empathise, to put oneself in the shoes of others, to fall into the other possibly without preconceptual attitudes or stereotypes” (Portera, 1997). Through active and non-judgemental listening, empathy, abstention from judgements, openness towards other people, positive management of conflicts will become possible. Since the latter – especially in a pluralistic and multicultural context – are inescapable, it is essential to develop mediation, negotiation, and cooperation skills by learning to recognise them (distinguishing the specific problem from the person in front of you) and manage them appropriately.

Recognising the *other* through the ability to communicate, dialogue, and resolving conflicts then implies that one understands it and understanding is generated by knowledge. A qualifying point in the process of intercultural understanding is critical verification, which tends to neutralise the influence of one's own point of view in the perception of the culture of others. This requires an ongoing effort to explore and understand not only other cultures but also the hidden mechanisms of one's own culture (Milani, 2015).

Exercise I – Migration background and family histories⁴

Introduction & Methodology

To explore and recognise diversity, we decided to start with an exercise based on the genogram, a schematic family tree drawn with a minimum of two or three generations. This technique allows us to observe family histories from multiple points of view. The encounter with diversity (mixed couples, adoption) among which the event of migration (internal or external, outgoing or incoming) is frequent. The exercise, in addition to storytelling and knowledge, allows the comparison of migration stories of different families, times, and cultures. We want to focus on how migration movements are still current and cannot be placed only in geo-historical moments.

The projects and meanings attributed to migration are multiple and elaborated differently by families. Exploring the wealth of stories and sharing them within the group becomes paradigmatic of how diversity is close to us, within the family stories of everyone. This exercise therefore aims to broaden the concept of diversity by beginning to stimulate the exploration of what is most intimate to all of us: our own family history. By allowing a comparison between the personal dimension, the family history with respect to migration, and the social dimension, understanding one's cultural background becomes a starting point for the development of intercultural competences (Lustig & Koester, 2013, p. 272).



The experience of this exercise in a group results in the continuous reworking of knowledge, attitudes, and experiences, and thus can be of transformative value. It is with the help of the group that one can better grasp the repetitions, redundancies, connections, wounds, and resources within family histories. In this exercise, the group must be supported to respectfully approach each other through the experiences of listening, participating, confronting, and reflecting, and then developing the ability to connect with one another.

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⁴ An impression of the exercise from the accompanying [online tutorial](https://tinyurl.com/yckw7j6k): <https://tinyurl.com/yckw7j6k>

This exercise allows participants to develop empathy, to put oneself in someone else's place, and to understand the emotions that accompany family histories. Besides, it stimulates the understanding that some processes are both vertical, that is, recurring in the temporal dimension of generations, and horizontal, that is, belonging to numerous family histories, sometimes even across cultures. This experience of similarities and differences enriches one's point of view and improves understanding. The multiplicity of belonging is amplified.

The genogram is an active non-verbal technique (Bowen, 1979), a diagram that organises family stories through two or three generations (McGoldrick, Giordano & Garci-Preto, 2005; Mc Goldrick & Gerson, 1985). The technique promotes greater exploration of family histories by allowing to focus on events or relationships even from the past, possibly extrapolating rules and myths, roles, rituals, values, communication, languages, relationships, thoughts, beliefs, practices, customs, ways of interacting, and expected behaviours. The use of this exercise allows us to exploit different levels of application: the level of behaviours enacted *hic et nunc* and the diachronic level of history and its meanings; the phenomenology of current communicative transactions and family myths; the originality of the individual and the characteristics of the systems of belonging (Chianura & Iacoella, 2003).

Through the genogram it is possible to highlight how individuals and family systems carry their roots of identity, built through a multigenerational maturation process involving genetics, culture, affective life, and other individuals, relational and socio-affective factors. With this in mind, a person's individuality emerges as a *relationship story*.



Target group(s)

- Teaching & administrative staff
- Students from host & refugee contexts



Duration

- 120 min



Requirements / needed material

- DIN-A-3 sheets
- Coloured markers
- PC & projector
- Genogram example

Learning outcomes

- Comparing the different histories and coping strategies of the migration events among families.
- Analysing migration-related experiences such as: difficulties, fears, wounds, and trauma, language and cultural barriers, resources, resilience, benefits, contamination.
- Applying transversal skills, especially relational and communication skills: knowing how to ask questions, knowing how to listen, knowing how to make connections.
- Integrating active and empathic listening with attitudes of respect and curiosity.
- Improving intercultural sensitivity.
- Developing the ability to interconnect multiple levels of observation of the different relationships in which each individual is immersed.
- Developing the capacity for self-reflection (the ability to see oneself while interacting with others).
- Recognising the specificities of and differences between groups.
- Improving the ability to work in groups.

Instructions

1. The facilitator starts with introductions, explains and agrees on the rules of communication, with appropriate instructions about questions (open, closed, circular⁵) and how to ask them (see methodological note), and introduces the theme of the exercise. An [introductory video](#)⁶ on migrant DNA is offered as a starting point (can also be proposed at the end to consolidate learning). Participants can be asked to bring photos and/or documents related to characters and events, related to migration and/or stories of diversity.
2. The facilitator provides the graphic-symbolic elements on the board, showing an example of a completed genogram. All participants proceed to the phase of graphic reconstruction of the individual genogram (max. 15 min). Sitting in a semicircle, in front of a table, and with a sheet of paper with coloured markers, they represent their family tree, inserting information such as names, origin, age. The graphic representation includes the oldest generation in the highest part, and the matrimony ties in parallel (see genogram symbols below).
3. According to the time available, some participants will be asked to present their genogram to the group, selecting the maps with stories of migration and suggestions related to the encounter with diversity, conflict events between family groups and identity reconstruction related to culture (it is not important that the memory is precise).

The facilitator makes the selected participant proceed to the narration, and then asks questions aimed at highlighting the salient details of the genogram, in order to expand and relate the significant events, the multiple affiliations, and the possible differences even between the stories, trying to enhance the modes of adaptation and the possible hybridisation.

Significant events related to the historical, social, and cultural context concern roles, communication, values, beliefs, practices, customs, rituals, thinking, ways of interacting, relationships, and expected behaviours also related to culture.

While empathetically supporting the person presenting the genogram, the facilitator should also actively involve as many participants as possible in the discussion, allowing them to ask questions for clarification, insights or connections (20 min), and to provide final feedback.

4. Sample questions on cultural transmission:
 - » Which cultural values do you see that have shaped your family and its members?
 - » How have they formed you?
 - » Is there a national or ethnic culture that has had a particular influence on you and your family?
 - » How does it manifest itself in your life?
5. The activity concludes (10 min) with a group reflection on the themes that emerged:
 - » Phenomenon of migration as an unplanned event of the family
 - » Concept of *foreigner* (identity/culture)
 - » Diversity of social and cultural dimensions
 - » Multiple belonging in relation to social and cultural values
 - » One's limits and capacity for openness
 - » Evaluation on: what aspects were considered positive and what were considered negative? What can be said to have been learned or otherwise understood in the new situation?

Suggestion for debriefing: a symbolic donation, by each group participant, of a metaphorical object, a phrase, a word, for the person who brought the story.

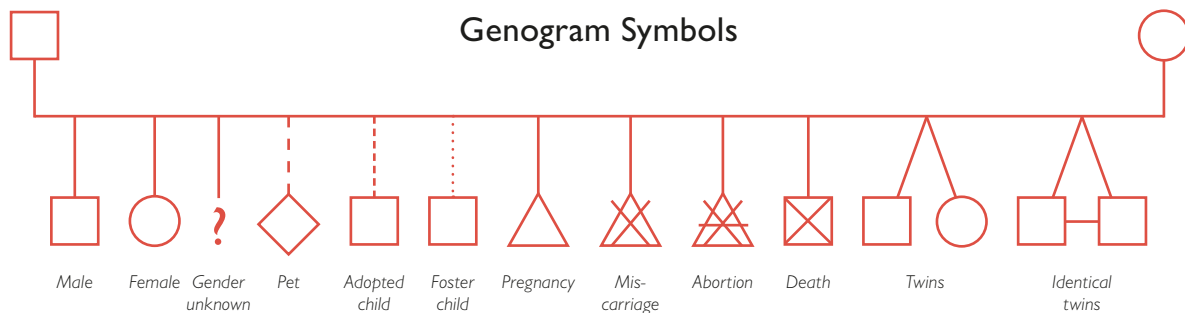
.....

⁵ Circular questions are a conversational technique that puts each person in the position of an observer of the thoughts, emotions, and behaviours of others, thus creating a community of observers. Asking a person to express his or her views on the relationship and differences between other members (family members for example), clarifies the structure of relationships in the system, beyond the meanings attributed to behaviours. The circular interview fosters the process of hypothesising, because it forces everyone to engage in alternative readings, to question premises considered fundamental and to imagine new possible paths.

⁶ <https://tinyurl.com/38rs27rw>

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

Delve into some questions about cultural factors. What is more important to a culture than time: the past, the present, or the future? What is the attitude towards risk and uncertainty? How important is individual versus group success? How should power be equitably distributed and how should subordinates treat the decisions of those in power? What is more important to the culture: competitiveness or warm personal relationships? Is there congruence between the parent culture and the receiving culture? How many differences between the cultures are highlighted, how many similarities? (Hofstede, 1984).



Genogram symbols legend ⁷

Exercise 2 – With the luggage at the border

Introduction & Methodology

In order to gain new knowledge about cultural diversity, a role-play on the value of welcoming is proposed. Participants can actively experience the possible intercultural conflicts and the different models of welcoming between groups and societies. In this exercise, the dynamics have three points of observation: from the us group (the insiders), from the others group (the outsiders), and from the third external observation group.

The groups are micro-societies with their own rules, languages, and rituals. These micro-societies have physical or symbolic boundaries dictated by laws or regulations, with their own culture that perpetuates a sense of belonging to the society itself. The exercise aims to reflect on the boundaries that the group tends to create and how they influence welcoming practices. The focus of this exercise is also on the migrant's experience: the reasons of migration, motivations, expectations, culture shock, social distance, fears, barriers (linguistic, cultural, bureaucratic etc.), styles of adaptation, feelings of exclusion, inclusion strategies, and socio-cultural resources.

Among the techniques based on an experiential methodology, role-playing, simulation, and psychodrama have been evaluated as promising tools for the development of intercultural competences (Hiller, 2010). Role-playing aims to the appropriation and autonomous production of models from experience, allowing empathy to trigger possible changes in behaviour. The less structured the role-play is, the more room is left for decision-making and creativity of the participants. Participants face unknown terrain and are forced to adapt to the context, to operate even without knowing all the answers, to manage ambiguous situations, or to confront more familiar activities while managing and processing them from different points of view.

The goal is to bring out the states of mind and bring them to life through the recitation of attitudes or behaviours. The technique can help to develop empathy, attitudes of respect and adaptability, to gain knowledge about similarities and differences, assumptions and biases, conventions of verbal and non-verbal communication. Through concrete and direct experience, together with questions and reflections, participants can acquire different attitudes and greater flexibility (e.g. openness and understanding) and develop intercultural skills.



Image: Freepik.com

⁷ Source: <https://tinyurl.com/ypax56zb>

The possibility of facing a realistic situation during a simulation and therefore a protected context which is potentially anxiety-provoking can teach one to react. The exercise promotes participants' empathy with a different situation by helping to dismantle stereotypes and showing how people tend to reproduce themselves.



Target group(s)

- Teaching & administrative staff
- 12 - 20 people



Duration

- 120 min



Requirements / needed material

- Coloured paper (3-4 different colours)
- Large & very long tape (borders)
- Photographs & newspaper articles
- Computer & projector
- Example stories as case studies

Learning outcomes

- Recognising the concept of group identity and boundaries between groups.
- Comprehending differences between groups and the dynamics that generate acceptance.
- Becoming aware of prejudices and stereotypes about gender, religion, background.
- Understanding the stages of acceptance and marginalisation.
- Knowing the different levels of intercultural sensitivity.
- Identifying empathetic attitudes, respect, and curiosity.
- Highlighting the value of diversity.
- Recognising group, role, and belonging dynamics.
- Using the ability to work creatively in groups.

Instructions

1. Randomly divide the group into three or four subgroups: one or two receiving companies, one family group, one observer group. The exercise consists of three phases: (1) the initial phase of introduction, presentation, warm-up and explanation of the game with instructions and the preparatory phase of the groups (about 30 min); (2) the actual game (about 40 min); (3) the final phase with open discussion, observations, and concluding reflections (about 30 min).
2. Facilitator and participants briefly introduce themselves. The facilitator gives the instructions to the groups separately.
3. Preparatory phase (20 min): each group or society builds up a national identity (name, colours, language, laws, rules with respect to borders, reception methods, a political-administrative identity with respect to migration). [In alternative the facilitator can provide cards with role statements and instructions].
4. The participants in the family group build a family identity and story, defining the characters through the creation of names and roles, the cultural and socio-political background, the reasons for migration and the migration project.
In order to make the participants identify with the migrant's/refugee's journey, the choices s/he has to make, the losses s/he suffers, the feeling of courage or fear, and the experience of belonging, the pressures suffered (family, social, political) can be introduced through some real stories of immigration (slides, prints, newspapers).
5. The actual game phase is divided into: (1) the departure (10 min), (2) the journey (10 min), and (3) the arrival (20 min). At the start, a perimeter is drawn on the ground with adhesive tape: the house.
The family gathers their things in a suitcase before the trip that could be useful for the trip and in the new society: 10 concrete, abstract and/or symbolic (like a song) or metaphorical objects (each object can be written/drawn on an A5 sheet). The journey begins by asking the family to tell what they are leaving behind and the reasons for the move.
Then the facilitator informs the participants that many people are leaving the country at the same time, that the roads are too crowded, and that they cannot continue by car. The journey continues on foot and 2 items must be left behind. During the

journey, the family encounters obstacles like a refugee camp, a boat, a reception centre (draw the route by taking pieces of tape and using flattened newspaper to make dots). Family members are forced to leave something behind, review the contents of the suitcase, and get rid of other items. Theft and violence may be experienced, with the facilitator acting as the narrator.

6. In the arrival phase, the family is faced with two companies (if the size of the group allows it) from which they can choose to be accepted, to which they propose their request for entry, considering what is needed to be accepted (documents, visa, payment, exchange of information, request for asylum). Participants in the role of family members must act to be accepted and convincing to enter the group, they can activate different resources, means or skills.

Insiders and outsiders of society must be able to communicate by talking at the border, actors must decide and mediate with respect to the needs of the spaces and contexts of insertion (work, home, school, university) and the offer of the hosting group. The request to accept the family, or separate individuals, is the subject of discussion within the group or society.

7. In the final phase (group accepted by one society, rejected by one, or not accepted by both) a reflection on what happened is proposed through an open discussion, using everyone's observations. Starting from the external group, a comment will be asked about everyone's observations with respect to the content and processes, in the other groups and in the relationships between them.
8. Debriefing (see below)

Tips for reflection/deepening the content

- What did you think about during this exercise?
- What is realistic?
- How did you feel about interpreting (...)?
- Fears?
- How important is individual achievement versus group achievement?
- Is the desire to be responsible for others or should we primarily take care of ourselves?
- What does it mean to be outside the circle or inside?
- How much do people within the group have to *mediate* to get their idea accepted?
- How inclusive is the group/society as a whole?
- Did they feel accepted or did they feel rigidity?
- How does this feeling (acceptance or rigidity) affect the experience of acceptance?
- What is the attitude towards risk and uncertainty?
- To what extent do members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations?
- What does inclusion entail?
- How do people perceive the integration of diversity over time?
- What is welcoming?

At the end of the session, the ideas that emerged can be compared with some input from reality.

Exercise 3 – Simulate

Introduction & Methodology

For the objective of supporting the development of intercultural relational competences, the experiential technique of simulation is an adequate activity that allows the participants to get right into the required role and experience the *as if* of the situation that you want to solve, improve, and deepen. The management of real problems is simulated, in various real work contexts, such as those that arise during information and orientation interviews between office staff and foreign students, between teachers and foreign students in the classroom, and dialogues between foreign and native students.

The help of the group of participating observers is crucial at the time of restitution and reflection because it considers and values different points of view allowing for the expansion of positions.

When one has to acquire different ways of relating to others it is important to be able to put oneself in other's shoes. Simulating situations in a protected context can help to learn from the direct experience people can. With the practice of simulated situations, you can experiment in a protected context what has been thought and practised up to that moment on real experiences. The simulations have the purpose of projecting beyond reality but allow you to learn in the *here and now*, because the comparison with the emotions, or reactions, affecting the situation is immediate. The simulated situation is a real and concrete learning experience (Avallone, 1989).

It can be considered that in multicultural organisations the following points have been hierarchically outlined as key problem areas: religious differences, different attitudes toward job duties, money, the opposite sex, differences in worldview, differences in body language, differences in national traditions and lifestyle, different patterns of behaviour (meals, clothing, recreation), differences in national character and its manifestations. In general terms, inadequate cross-cultural competence leads to problems such as: time and time management, psychological differences, different disregard for the role of corporate culture, differences in rank and hierarchical relationships in work situations.



Target group(s)

- Teaching & administrative staff
- 10-15 people



Duration

- 60 – 90 min



Requirements / needed material

- Chairs
- Paper
- Scripts for simulation⁸

Learning outcomes

- Recognising cultural differences related to verbal and paraverbal communication.
- Demonstrating the channels and behaviours through which one communicates with others.
- Identifying limitations and strengths (e.g. paraverbal communication skills).
- Recognising experiences inherent in language/cultural barriers.
- Recognising prejudices and stereotypes about gender, religion, background.
- Analysing cross-cultural sensitivity.
- Managing emerging problems and solving them creatively.
- Developing the ability to activate resources and networking.

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⁸ The scripts are either prepared in advance by the facilitator or developed together with the participants.

Instructions

1. Participants form groups of up to five people. Each group, starting from the experiences⁹ of the participants, prepares the staging of a moment of their working life in which communication difficulties emerge (each group agrees on the characteristics of the characters and how they react to the difficult situation) (20 min).
2. Each group enacts its situation (5 minutes for each group) and each performance is followed by a discussion with all participants (silent observer during the performance) who return their point of view, bringing reflections and feelings, trying not to express value judgements on the work of the participants but focusing on what might have influenced the behaviour in the simulated. The facilitator gives space also to the observations of the actors who give their point of view on the experience of the situation: what did they think, how did they find themselves in that role and what did they feel in that situation.
3. The presenter, if s/he considers it useful, can contribute with his/her point of view, and may add further observations to enrich the comparison.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

Thoughtful questions to all participants:

- Has the dialogue been fluid or have there been communication blockades?
- Have the communication goals been met?
- How has the problem solving been handled?

Glossary

- **Stereotypes:** are rigid and impermeable systems of ideas (clichés) that contain the knowledge and expectations that a person has about a certain human group. These ideas can be positive (they love to sing), negative (laziness), or neutral (gesticulating). They are automatic thoughts when meeting or reflecting on the characteristics of a group. They are acquired either during personal experience and (or) social learning, they are often transmitted within a social context. They resemble mental schemes: those who fall into that category will have the characteristics of that category (generalisation) (Benelli & Regazzon, n.d.).
- **Prejudices:** are preconceived opinions, conceived not out of precise and direct knowledge (in the absence of empirical data) of the fact or about the person, but based on common voices and opinions. Tendency to consider in an unjustified unfavourable way people who belong to a particular social group. Prejudices contain beliefs, affects (emotional reactions), and attitudes (they orient behaviour). They refer to opinions and attitudes (Benelli & Regazzon, n.d.).
- **Empathy:** is the ability to feel what the other is feeling, a putting oneself in the other's shoes perceiving emotions and thoughts. It is the ability to see the world as others see it, to be non-judgemental, to understand the feelings of others while keeping them distinct from one's own (Rizzolatti & Gnoli, 2018).
- **Active listening:** means generating effective communication, in which the person speaking has proof that s/he has been heard, understood, and accepted. To create this connection with the other, one must try to grasp every aspect of the message, the posture, and the tone of the voice, the hesitations and the emotions that emerge from what is said. It is an assertive communication technique, based on acceptance and empathy, useful for not only promoting the ability to correctly and effectively express one's emotions or arguments, but also for knowing how to listen and perceive reasons and feelings of others to build a message that the other is able to understand. Attention to listening and suspending one's own judgements, the attempt to acquire the point of view of the other in order to fully understand what one wants to communicate, allow to establish that authentic contact that can become the basis for enriching and effective relationships (Rogers, 2007).
- **Cultural awareness:** means being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value - positive or negative, better or worse, right or wrong. A culturally aware person knows about the existence of a multitude of different cultures and the resulting diversity of notions about the world. This knowledge, awareness, and acceptance of other cultures and of the cultural identities of others, includes "the will, the ability and the sensitivity necessary to understand people with different backgrounds" (Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, 2020).

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⁹ It is also possible to provide tracks to participants.

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MODULE 4: GROUP-SPECIFIC MODULE

Content & Relevance

The module aims at developing specific activities and exercises for the different target groups of the project, in order to respond to the specific needs identified during the initial analysis and, more broadly, to improve social inclusion and cultural diversity within the university environment. The needs analysis highlighted both general and more specific issues to be addressed to fulfil the project objectives. At a broader level, these issues concern *self-reflective and critical thinking issues* (i.e., the need to sensitise employees towards stereotypes and prejudices), *bureaucratic issues* (i.e. the need to sensitise employees towards specific bureaucratic challenges students with refugee/migrant background face), and *inclusive and intercultural issues* (i.e. the need to create an inclusive environment for students through curricular, extra-curricular and informal activities).

Although the needs stated in the needs analysis chapter occur across different target groups, they should be addressed differently, according to the specific environment in which they develop. The module activities are therefore tailored to the multiplicity of situations and challenges in which each target group might find itself, encouraging a deep reflection on the role that each one of them has within the university and in relation to the other groups and to the students.

The activities draw from different pedagogical and theoretical foundations that aim to empower subjects and provide them with the necessary skills and expertise to recognise, combat and prevent discrimination in their everyday lives. While some activities are conceived to make participants critically reflect upon their own university role and to raise their awareness about issues of social inclusion and cultural diversity, others require a deeper elaboration on certain topics, a specific knowledge of some concepts or issues, as well as a peculiar sensitivity in dealing with the feelings that the activities themselves might generate. In this respect, not only should the facilitator have previous knowledge about the topics discussed, but s/he should also warn participants about the potential emergence of strong feelings, observe group dynamics and relations, and be able to deal with such feelings in a respectful and sensitive manner.

The activities are not linear and can therefore be implemented in part or adapted according to the specific situations. The implementation of all the activities in this module would require between 8 and 9 hours. However, while the time for the implementation of the activities might vary according to the number (and preparation) of participants, it is suggested that enough time is dedicated both to the initial discussions, where the facilitator can collect general ideas and/or introduce specific topics, and to the final plenary sessions, where participants can collectively talk about the implementation of the exercise, discuss its outcomes, and reflect on its takeaways.

Educational goals

In line with the overall objectives of the project, the module aims at:

- Increasing employees' awareness towards the social inclusion of students with refugee/migrant background within the university system. It does so by targeting the specific needs of the different target groups and developing the skills they need to deal with social inclusion and cultural diversity in their everyday lives. Through processes of cooperative knowledge production/sharing and learning by doing, the module aims to develop specific educational goals, such as:
 - » Increasing critical thinking skills.
 - » Improving problem-solving skills.
 - » Developing communication and intercultural skills.
- Developing a certain set of skills that not only can be employed within the working environment, but can also be helpful and necessary, more broadly, in society and in everyday life. The skills acquired in the working environment can indeed be transferred at other, higher levels, thus enhancing the participants' understanding of their civic role within society and promoting a democratic way of life.

Theoretical background

In the past couple of decades, there has been a lively debate inside and outside academia around issues of citizenship, social inclusion and cultural diversity (Kabeer, 2005; Shachar, 2009; Banks, Suárez-Orozco, & Miriam Ben-Perez, 2016). This was due to the global socio-political transformations and to the increasing worldwide migration movements that have accompanied them. These processes challenged the traditional conception of citizenship as a set of privileges and duties connected to the membership of a given political community.

Historically, the idea of citizenship has entailed the provision of certain rights and duties to some members of the political community, thus defining and continuously reshaping the boundaries of in- and exclusion across the community itself (Anderson & Hughes, 2015; Balibar, 2015). From the ancient Greek society to the modern nation-state, some have been allowed to actively participate in the socio-political life of the community and to enjoy the rights and duties connected to this membership, while others have been excluded based on arbitrary criteria of class, gender and race. As the *other* was progressively included (i.e., through struggles or political decisions), their integration has been often subject to discriminatory practices (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2012).

The reasons behind discrimination are primarily structural and subsequently individual. Discrimination occurs when a given social category – in our case, migrants – is the target of specific forms of exclusion, whether they be through political stances, social discourses, and/or institutional practices. Such forms of exclusion affect the everyday lives of the targeted group even when they are formally included in the political community. When such forms of exclusion are implemented widely and supported by political discourses, they might be interiorised by the members of the community, which might therefore reproduce – willingly or not – discriminatory practices in their everyday life (see Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, & Cassidy, 2019).

Research, however, has shown how concepts such as nation, culture, and identity are complex, variegated, and socially constructed: this means not only that their meaning is continuously changing according to specific context-driven circumstances, but also that the boundaries of in- and exclusion that they draw are arbitrarily defined and can be challenged through struggles or the implementation of alternative and more inclusive practices. Anderson (1983) highlighted how the concept of the *nation* is ridden with contradictions: despite being relatively recent, it appears old among nationalists, thus evoking great political power. Besides, despite its supposedly universal character, this concept has been developed and constructed through the reproduction of specific symbols and practices that have created an *imagined community* through the exclusion of the *other*.

Similarly, other authors have argued that concepts such as *identity* and *culture*, far from having a well-defined and uncontested meaning, are fragmented, multiple, continuously changing, and differentially experienced (Hall, 1996; Schmid & Börs, 2012). Hall has noted that identities:

emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally constituted unity – an ‘identity’ in its traditional meaning (that is, an all-inclusive sameness, seamless, without internal differentiation). Above all, and directly contrary to the form in which they are constantly invoked, identities are constructed through, not outside, difference (Hall, 1996, p. 4).

In our case, the concept of *culture* requires specific attention. When looking at *culture*, it is important not only to prevent cultural stereotyping but also the essentialization of cultures themselves, or the process of *culturalisation*. By *cultural stereotyping*, it is meant the consideration of cultures as hermetically sealed containers, that is, immutable, closed and well-defined boxes in which people are categorised. These categorisations, which are either publicly sustained through discourses and policies or tacitly implemented through practices and dispositions, might be interiorised by individuals and therefore reproduced, more or less voluntarily, at the everyday level. By *culturalisation*, which often derives from *cultural stereotyping*, it is meant instead the consideration of specific cultures – or of some of the characteristics within them – as superior or inherently better than others. Culturalisation, therefore, further reinforces a specific differentiation into *us* and *them* based on specific, socially constructed and pre-established criteria. Both aspects, that goes without saying, hide or imply cultural prejudices, biases, and discriminations.

From a theoretical point of view, the module will therefore start from a conceptualisation of culture as a socio-politically constructed, dynamic, and unbounded process, shaped by both social (external) and individual (internal) factors that vary continuously across space and time. From an empirical point of view, it derives that every person is inherently different from others – even though they supposedly share some socially defined cultural traits (e.g. national, religious, or ethnic aspects) – but, at the same time, does share some characteristics with others. As we understand that focusing on cultural differences might be considered problematic, the module aims at promoting *equality in difference*, i.e., the acknowledgement that, despite the socially constructed differences between people, we all have something in common.

Exercise I – Take a step forward¹⁰

Introduction & Methodology

This exercise aims at raising awareness on the potential forms of discriminations that students with refugee/migrant background might face in their everyday life, either for their class, race, ethnic, national, or gender background. It invites participants to reflect on the concept of privilege, by critically examining how common everyday activities might constitute a problem for someone else. It does so by making participants impersonate a specific character and acting as putting themselves in the role. In some cases, especially if participants come from variegated backgrounds, the exercise can be carried out without letting them impersonate any role. This, however, would require a stronger process of follow-up and self-reflection, in order not to make participants feel discriminated against within the game.



Target group(s)

- Administrative staff
- 4 - 20 people



Duration

- 60 – 90 min



Requirements / needed material

- 10 role cards
- List of situations

Learning outcomes

- Reflecting about the privileges that some students might have in their academic path, regardless of their academic performance.
- Reflecting about the variegated social experience forms of discrimination that certain students (in particular students with refugee/migrant background) might face at university.

Instructions

1. Warm-up: Before starting the exercise, a warm-up activity can be done to allow participants to familiarise with the exercise and break the ice. In this activity, participants are allocated along a straight starting line and asked to step forward if the *situation* that will be read by the facilitator applies to them. The situations, which start with 'Have you ever', can include: sung karaoke?; climbed over 4000 metres high?; lived abroad for more than one year?; been without a shower for more than two weeks?; ridden a horse/motorcycle?; visited more than three continents?; skydived?; eaten insects?; swum in the ocean?; free-climbed a tree or a rock more than 10 metres high?; had a close relative who lived to over 100?; cooked a meal for more than 10 people?; done bungee jumping?; seen a polar bear?; etc.
2. Divide the participants in pairs and distribute the role cards to the groups. For the purpose of the game, the roles should reflect different categories of students (e.g. refugee student, international student, migrant student, national student, European student, student from the countryside, student from a *difficult* periphery, student from a wealthy family, local student, Erasmus student, etc.).

¹⁰ An impression of the exercise from the accompanying [online tutorial: https://tinyurl.com/yjs9yr6n](https://tinyurl.com/yjs9yr6n)

3. Give each group 5-10 minutes to reflect on their role, asking them to write down some key points of their character (name, age, gender, nationality, ethnic group, religion, family, socio-economic background, studies, etc.).
4. Allocate participants along a straight starting line and tell them that, as the *situation* cards are being read out loud, they can move one step forward if they can answer positively to that situation. The situations represent experiences that students might face or have faced in their everyday life (e.g. 'I grew up in a neighbourhood that was not multi-ethnic'; 'I went to a high school that was not multi-ethnic'; 'I have never had to worry about university fees/rent'; 'I do not have to work to sustain my studies'; 'I can follow the profession of my choice'; 'I feel safe when I walk around the city at night'; 'I do not have any problem with the language'; 'I have never felt discriminated because of my ethnic group / national origin / gender / sexual orientation / family income'; 'I feel that my religion/culture is respected in the society where I live'; 'I have never encountered any difficulties in applying for a study programme'; 'I know where to ask for advice when needed'; 'I have always been treated with respect by admin staff/teachers'; 'I always feel free to express my opinions'; 'I have enough space and resources to perform my duties'; etc.).
5. At the end, invite everyone to take note of their final position, and to tell (or guess!) each other's role cards. Give them a couple of minutes to come out of their role before discussing the exercise.



Tips for reflection / deepening the content

- As a follow-up, participants can reflect on their previous knowledge about privileges and discrimination, or on their specific, everyday consequences that these might have for students with refugee/migrant background during their academic path. The discussion can focus on the participants' feelings about the activity in general and, more specifically, about the role they or others were impersonating.
- For those who stepped forward more often, questions can focus on whether and when participants realised that others were not stepping forward so often; whether they could imagine the other participants' role; and whether they had ever felt uncomfortable about their position. Conversely, those who stepped forward less often can be questioned about their feelings on their position, and whether they had ever felt that they could do anything to change or improve their situation.
- Questions can also address real life experiences: in this case, participants may be asked to think of whether and how these situations can occur within the university environment and affect students' everyday lives. If participants have faced any of these challenges, they can share their own experiences with the others, reflecting on the potential steps that they could take to address those challenges as an employee.

Exercise 2 – Game of the goose

Introduction & Methodology

This exercise aims at putting participants in the shoes of students with refugee/migrant background, in order to increase their awareness of the challenges that such students might face in the university system. This is achieved through a process of brainstorming to identify challenges; the implementation of a live game to allow participants to relate to such challenges; and a debate to discuss impressions and results.



Target group(s)

- Administrative staff
- 2 - 10 people



Duration

- 90 – 120 min



Requirements / needed material

- Board with a path of 30 steps (one every three steps marked with a sign)
- 10 cards with specific instructions/challenges
- A six-face dice

Learning outcomes

- Learning about some of the challenges that students with refugee/migrant background might face at university.
- Becoming more aware of difficulties and needs of refugee/migrant students.

Instructions

1. Initially, participants can brainstorm some bureaucratic challenges that students with refugee/migrant background might face at university. The challenges identified can be written on the cards, together with some instructions (e.g. skip one turn; go back one step; etc.). Challenges can include: not having the proper documents to proceed; having a card written in another language; having to wait for a specific answer; etc. Cards can also contain positive messages (e.g. having filled the documents in the right way; having collected the right signatures; etc.) and correlated with positive instructions. Some cards can also be prepared in advance.
2. Participants start from step zero and throw a dice. If they advance to an empty step, their turn is concluded. If they advance to a marked step, they have to pick a card and follow its instructions.
3. The game ends when one of the participants reaches the final step.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

As a follow-up, participants can reflect on the specific challenges that students with refugee/migrant background might face. Initial questions can focus on the participants' feelings about the activity in general or about the specific challenges encountered during the game, and the way participants coped with them. Afterwards, the discussion can deal with real life situations, and participants may be asked to think of whether and how these challenges can occur within the university environment and affect students' everyday lives. In conclusion, if participants have faced any of these challenges, they can share their own experiences with the others, reflecting on their potential role in changing the situation and/or on the potential steps that could be taken to address those challenges as an employee.

Exercise 3 – Responding to racism in class

Introduction & Methodology

This exercise aims at raising awareness on the issue of racism in class and, more generally, in the educational system. It will do so by brainstorming what racism is, identifying potential actions or situations that might be considered as racist. After the group discussion of a case study, participants will be invited to develop guidelines to prevent or deal with racism in class.



Target group(s)

- Teaching staff
- Max. 20 people, groups of 3 - 4



Duration

- 90 – 120 min



Requirements / needed material

- Large sheets of paper OR flip-chart for each group
- Markers & pens
- 4 situation cards

Four situation cards:

- » **Situation 1:** Tobias, a diligent student, asks to privately talk to you after class. That day he came to school with some money for an important purchase later. However, when he looked in his backpack, his wallet was not there. After talking with his friends about it, Tobias got convinced that Adrian, a Roma student from Serbia, had stolen it: two other students had seen him around his backpack a few hours before. Tobias is determined to raise the issue to the dean.
- » **Situation 2:** Two days later, the dean meets the teachers to discuss recent cases of pickpocketing in school: in the past months, two other students have reported personal objects gone missing. One teacher reports rumours of Adrian as the most likely culprit, as he came to the class with a new phone the day after. Another teacher confirms the rumours, adding that Adrian is often seen in other classes during the break.
- » **Situation 3:** The dean and the teachers meet Adrian and report to him the rumours against him. Adrian defends himself from the accusations, pointing out that he would never do such a thing, and that the phone was a present from his parents. The teachers and Adrian eventually agree that the former keep this case a secret if the latter behaves.
- » **Situation 4:** The dean and one teacher discuss the improved situation in school. Suddenly, another teacher enters the room and reports that the wallet has been found: Tobias had lost it on his way to school; someone had found it and had given it to the police. They discuss the recent news.

Learning outcomes

- Reflecting about, identifying, and preventing racist incidents in class.
- Raising awareness and sensitivity on the topic.



Image: Freepik.com

Instructions

1. Divide participants in groups of 3-4 people and ask them to reflect on racism in class: What can constitute racism in class? How can a racist incident be identified?
2. Ask them to write down their answers in the sheet of paper or on the flipchart.
3. Read the first situation card and ask participants to discuss the situation, write down their feelings about it, and imagine what they would have done in their place. Do the same with the other three situation cards, allowing participants some minutes to reflect upon each situation.
4. At the end of the four situations, allow some minutes for the groups to discuss the outcomes of the case and to think what could have been potential alternatives to solve the initial issues.
5. Open the discussion to the plenary, going back to the initial brainstorming on racist incidents in class. Allow participants some minutes to discuss their initial reflections with the outcomes of the situations and ask them to discuss some ideas to solve the different problems.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

- After the game, participants can reflect on the meaning of racism, both in relation to the activity and with reference to their experiences in class. The discussion on the activity can start with some questions about the participants' feelings about the exercise in general and, more specifically, about their collective process to find a definition of – and a solution to – the racist incidents.
- Questions can also address real life experiences: in this case, participants may be asked whether they had ever experienced racist incidents in class, how they dealt with such incidents, and whether they would behave differently after the completion of the activity. The discussion can also focus on what universities could do to raise employees' and students' awareness on racism and to prevent racist incidents.
- At a later stage, the discussion can revolve around how teachers would deal with racism in their class, in particular whether they would include other pedagogical perspectives (such as feminist or postcolonial approaches) in their curricula and classes, or potential activities to discuss racism with their students maintaining a balanced and respectful atmosphere.
- Participants may also reflect upon their own pedagogical role: questions, in this case, can focus on how they would talk or deal with racism in their class; what they could change in their role as teachers, and whether there is enough space and time in their class for students to openly acknowledge and confront issues of racism.

Exercise 4 – Another university

Introduction & Methodology

This exercise aims at (1) critically reflecting on specific challenges related to social inclusion and cultural diversity that might arise in class, and (2) ideating pedagogical solutions to counteract them. This is achieved through group work activities to discuss and identify potential solutions to the challenges presented, and through a final debate to discuss impressions and results. By reflecting upon their own pedagogical system, participants can develop a more grounded perspective on social inclusion and cultural diversity in class.



Target group(s)

- Teaching staff
- Max. 20 people, groups of 3 - 4



Duration

- 60 – 90 min



Requirements / needed material

- Five situation cards
- A large sheet of paper OR a flipchart for each group
- Pens OR markers

Learning outcomes

- Reflecting about, identifying, and preventing incidents related to social inclusion and cultural diversity in class.
- Raising awareness and sensitivity on the topic.

Instructions

1. The facilitator explains the setting: 'Year 2120. Interplanetary travels have become the norm, and people frequently travel to other planets for work, study, and leisure. Every year, millions of students depart the earth to conduct their studies abroad, and millions of others come to the earth for the same reason. Universities generally praise the implementation of such exchanges, but there are always issues related to the integration of students in class. The concerns expressed by some students in this regard have raised the attention of the Head of Department. For this reason, a meeting has been convened with the teachers to discuss current and potential activities on social inclusion and cultural diversity to improve the integration of students from outer space'.
2. Divide participants in groups of 3-4 people and ask them to divide their paper/flipchart into three equal spaces.
3. Distribute one situation card to each group. Some examples of situation cards can include:
 - » The student from Venus is extroverted, but is often excluded from interactions with others, both during group work and outside class. Is it because he is the only one with green skin?
 - » The student from Jupiter always wears a big hat with bells attached. The hat prevents other students from seeing the blackboard; moreover, whenever she moves, the bells resonate through the room. When questioned about the hat, she replies that it is an integral part of her culture, and that she has no intention to remove it.
 - » The three students from Mars are attentive and diligent during the lesson, but they always sit in the back of the class and talk among each other, with scarce interactions with the others even during group work.
 - » The student from Saturn does not speak much with other students, both during and outside class, and he is often excluded from group work. He is the only student from his planet and feels rather uncomfortable in meeting other people; therefore, he feels lonely and excluded.
 - » The new student from Mercury gets along very well with a local student: the two are becoming good friends and are planning to move together in the same shared flat. However, in class and in the dining hall, one usually sits with other students from Mercury while the other remains with other local students.

4. Ask them to discuss and write down in the first space some reflections on the general situation (socio-cultural issues related to that, what could have gone wrong in class, what could have triggered the situation, what could have escaped the teachers' attention).
5. Ask them to reflect on and write down in the second space some potential ideas/actions to be taken in class/university to improve the situation.
6. Ask them to think of, discuss, and write down in the third space the potential challenges, obstacles, and difficulties in implementing such ideas/actions in class
7. When the participants have finished, the facilitator can ask one participant from each group to recount the story and explain what the group has come up with. The facilitator and the other groups can ask questions or participate in the debate. After having collected all stories, a final debate can ensue, revolving around the experience of the game and the general issues of social inclusion and cultural diversity within universities.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

- As a follow-up, participants can reflect on the status of social inclusion and cultural diversity, both in relation to the activity and with reference to the university system as a whole or their own classroom in particular. The discussion on the activity can start with some questions about the participants' feelings on the exercise in general and, more specifically, on their collective process to discuss the different situations, the solution proposed, and the potential challenges encountered.
- Questions can also address real life experiences: in this case, participants may be asked whether they had experienced similar situations in class, how they dealt with them, and whether they would behave differently after the completion of the activity. Participants can then reflect on their own pedagogical methods, in particular whether they have already implemented some ideas to foster social inclusion and cultural diversity in class, or, on the contrary, if they need to improve their awareness on the topic and the strategies to foster social inclusion and cultural diversity.
- The debate can also take into consideration the broader social level: in this case, participants can discuss issues of social inclusion and cultural diversity within society, and the policies to promote them. They can discuss the specificities of certain university systems or countries, highlighting the policies and strategies that work better or that, on the other hand, need to be improved.

Exercise 5 – All equal all different

Introduction & Methodology

This exercise aims at critically assessing the formation of prejudices among people, preventing their formation, and developing a more enhanced vision on social and cultural diversity. This will be achieved through buzz groups and debate, which will increase participants' awareness on inclusion and diversity.



Target group(s)

- Student body
- 8 - 20 people



Duration

- 60 min



Requirements / needed material

- Set of cards containing specific ethnic groups (Eastern/Southern European, Chinese, Indian, Northern African, Sub-Saharan African, Hispanic, etc.).

Learning outcomes

- Reflecting about the role of prejudices in shaping their opinion on other people.

Instructions

1. Divide participants in groups of 4 - 5 people.
2. Allow one person from each group to pick a card, making sure that they do not belong to the group specified in that card. Allow them to return to their group and show the card to the others.
3. Allow the card holder 1-2 minutes to think about the ethnic role s/he should represent, and all the other participants to think of stereotypical remarks about the category of persons named by that card. The remarks do not necessarily need to reflect the opinions of the group members but may include remarks they may have heard in their family, at school, at work, or in the media.
4. Ask the other members to express, in turn, their remarks to the card holder.
5. Allow the card holder to respond to each of the remarks.
6. When the first round is completed, allow other members, in turn, to pick a card and repeat the exercise with each member of the group, until every group member has impersonated a role.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

- As a follow-up, participants can discuss the developments and outcomes of the activity, reflecting not only on their feelings about the exercise but also on the individual and collective process of coming up with stereotypical remarks or, on the contrary, of finding an answer to them.
- The discussion can also be directed towards personal experiences of the participants: in particular, they can debate whether they have ever experienced racist incidents or prejudices at work; what they have done to counteract them; and whether they would have behaved differently if they had done the exercise before. At a later stage, participants can reflect on their or other people's prejudices, and on how such prejudices are constructed in society.
- The discussion can focus on the general process of opinion formation; on the role that culture, politics, or the media have in shaping our opinions; and on the social and political consequences that such opinions might have on other people. Finally, participants can reflect on whether and how their opinion or behaviour has changed during the exercise, as well as on specific ways to counteract the effects of prejudices on the affected people.

Exercise 6 – Diversity bingo

Introduction & Methodology

This exercise aims at assessing, preventing, and combating stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudices, raising awareness on the importance of social inclusion and cultural diversity in educational and social contexts. This will be achieved through brainstorming and debate activities, which allows participants to reflect on how prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination affect opinions and behaviours.



Target group(s)

- Student body
- Max. 20 people



Duration

- 90 min



Requirements / needed material

- Flipchart
- Markers & pens
- 20 'Find a person who' situation cards

Learning outcomes

- Reflecting about, identifying, and preventing forms of discrimination, stereotyping, and prejudices in the university.
- Raising awareness on the main topic *diversity*.

Instructions

1. In an initial plenary session, discuss with the participants their ideas about the terms *discrimination*, *prejudice*, and *stereotype*, writing down their answers on the flipchart. The discussion should lead to understanding these definitions as below, providing some examples:
 - » **Prejudice:** A set of preconceived negative beliefs about a group of people that justify the idea that the latter is inferior or unworthy because of their ethnic, religious, national, gender, or class characteristics (e.g. Aboriginal people do not have good work habits).
 - » **Stereotype:** The attribution of negative characteristics or behaviours to a particular group and its individual members (e.g. Aboriginal people are always late and often alcoholics).
 - » **Discrimination:** Any action or behaviour that causes a person to be treated in an unfair, hurtful, and negative way, often because of specific prejudices or stereotypes against them (e.g. an Aboriginal person is not given a job because of their Aboriginal origin).
2. Distribute the situation cards to the different participants. Each card is titled 'Find a person who' and includes potential situations, such as: has a mother who works outside the home; knows how to phone a deaf person; has a family member who immigrated to Europe; hopes to get a job as police officer; knows what to do when someone else tells a joke that makes fun of people; rents the apartment/house in which they live in; can identify food as part of their culture; knows someone who has a disability; learned German as a second language; speaks three or more languages; can identify an Austrian custom or tradition; has an accent; has witnessed an incident of discrimination; is vegetarian; has three or more siblings; has lived in more than three states; knows what Yom Kippur is; has relatives living in another country.



Image: Freepik.com

3. Ask participants to go around the room and find someone to ask one of their questions on the card. If the respondent replies affirmatively, the enquirer should write the respondent's name below that question. Afterwards, the respondent should do the same with the enquirer.
4. Once both participants have replied to each other's questions, allow them to move on to look for other respondents. Participants should collect as many signatures as possible in 10 minutes.
5. At the end of the activity, invite participants in plenary to discuss the different scenarios in relation to the definitions of discrimination, prejudice, and stereotype defined earlier.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

- As a follow-up, participants can reflect on the meanings of prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination, both in relation to the activity and with reference to the university system as a whole. Regarding the activity, participants can elaborate on their feelings about the exercise, discussing the potential difficulties in finding someone corresponding to the different situations, and reflecting on their decision to ask a particular question to a particular participant.
- At a later stage, the discussion can revolve around how student bodies deal with racism in their everyday life: in this case, participants can reflect on whether they have experienced issues of discrimination, prejudice, and stereotype in their work, how they dealt with them, and whether they would behave differently after the completion of the activity. Participants can then reflect on their own way of dealing with such issues, discussing in particular whether they have already implemented some ideas to counteract issues of discrimination, prejudice, and stereotype in their work, or, on the contrary, if they need to change their methods, improve their awareness on the topic, and develop strategies to cope with such issues.
- The debate can also take into consideration the broader university level: in this case, participants can discuss whether their universities have already put in place guidelines or instructions to prevent or deal with discriminatory incidents, whether there is enough space and time within their universities to openly acknowledge and confront such issues, and what can be done to improve the situation.

Glossary

- **Citizenship:** a highly contested term and a continuously changing practice. Since its first appearance in ancient Greece up until today, it has entailed the provision of certain rights and duties to some members of the political community, while others have been excluded based on arbitrary criteria of class, gender, and race. Thus, the boundaries of in- and exclusion across political communities are continuously contested, defined, and reshaped through negotiations, contestations, and struggles.
- **Cultural identity:** a socio-politically constructed, dynamic, and unbounded process, shaped by social (external) and individual (internal) factors that vary continuously across space and time. From this, it derives the concept of *equality in difference*, i.e., the idea that, despite being divided by socially constructed identities (e.g. national, religious or ethnic aspects), all human beings have something in common among each other.
- **Discrimination:** a structural process through which a given social group is the target of specific forms of social exclusion due to its supposed differentiation from the dominant group in relation to class, race, gender, age, disability, and other characteristics, which may also intersect with each other. Although they reproduce through socio-political discourses and/or institutional practices, these forms of discrimination can also occur on an interpersonal level, they can affect those who are formally included in the social community and can be interiorised even by the members of the discriminated group.
- **Inclusion:** a social process through which an individual/group is included in a predefined group/society. Inclusion can be formal, when the individual/group is included through a legal process that formally recognises their presence and assigns specific rights, but keeps reproducing discriminatory practices against them, or substantial, when the individual/group is included and the forms of discrimination against them are eliminated. Given its complexity, inclusion should be thought of in a relational way, i.e., also through practices of exclusion, privileges, and discrimination.

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SUMMARY & COLLECTION OF VOICES



The handbook concludes with a summary of the evaluations of the modules carried out during the project. These were conducted once locally by all partners individually and additionally together at a joint staff training. A collection of voices underlines why the MUSIC project is of great importance. The chapter concludes with an outlook.

Local Evaluation:

During the implementation of the MUSIC project, the participants were asked to take part in an evaluation to get an impression of how the project is received. The evaluation addressed questions

about the coherence of the contents and aims, the capacity of implementing the modules at universities, the time requirements, and the appropriateness in relation to the target groups. The coherence as well as the appropriateness in relation to the target group were rated (very) good by a great majority across all modules. The answers on capacity and the time required were more divergent for module 2 and 3, but predominantly (very) good. All in all, modules 1 and 4 were rated slightly better than modules 2 and 3. More impressions from the comments are summarised and presented below.

Module 1 aims to enhance self-reflection in view of prejudices and social inclusion. Overall, positively highlighted are the accuracy of the tasks, the aims pursued, the interactive character of the tasks, and their reflexive and psychological elements. The great potential to show prejudiced thinking and comprehend inclusion and exclusion processes are emphasised.

Module 2 functions as a tool for people who cannot express themselves well in another language as communication is not only about spoken language, though it is often reduced to that in everyday life. The tasks are described as excellently delivered and eye-opening. Learning about social bias in relation to body language has aroused interest among the participants and shows great potential to create awareness for inclusion.

In module 3, the opportunity to compare different cultural aspects and to highlight which are related or similar are assessed well. Although this module should be handled carefully as it approaches some difficult and personal topics, comments on the helpfulness and interestingness of the tasks show the appreciation for the module. It supports the gain of intercultural awareness and competences.

Module 4 offers target-specific learning opportunities to extend and use the already gained knowledge and competences from the prior modules. The opportunity to empathise with others and exercises to evaluate the current situation at a university are positively underlined.

The overall feedback shows interest in the project and the conviction that the structure, the modules, the tasks and the provision of information are well thought out and consist of good ideas. The different target groups are also considered inclusive and meaningful.

Larisa, Greece

After implementing the modules in the course of a meeting of the project partners and practice advisors in Larisa, Greece, additional feedback was given by the practice advisors there. The following feedback was used to further improve the modules.

In module 1, *Stickers on the forehead* was classified as a good exercise for groups that are not yet familiar. The groups therefore need time to deal with sensitive topics in depth (power struggles, migration, exclusion). The idea to add supporting questions in order to reach a deeper discussion arose. In the light of Covid-19, the question for an implementation online arose as well. In *River game*, the focus should be on prejudices, assumptions and the lack of empathy when reflecting the exercise. The exercise consists of the process of creating meaning from the information the participants have. They are *victims* of misinformation – the idea of a discussion around mass media and framing came up. Further, it is recommended that the names in the story should not be random (the person in love should have a female name and the person suggesting to stay the night should have a male name). Otherwise, the exercise may miss its point.

In module 2, the focus lies on connecting the exercises to reach the project's aims and meet the working realities of the target groups (e.g. how could you use non-verbal communication for intercultural communication?; helping international students to understand you). The module is rated as flexible, although more clarification and more guidance for the users of the handbook and the webinar is needed.

In module 3, participants need to be familiar as the exercises reach a more personal level. A warm-up is suggested. Smaller groups would support the group work and solve the prior problems. The aim here is to step into different shoes of different characters. For “Migration background and family histories”, a time limit for drawing and discussing should be given. The questions and key words as well as the instructions should highlight the focus on movement and migration. Participants should discuss in small groups as this makes the exercise less time-consuming. At the same time the discussions can become more profound.

In module 4, *Take a step forward* could be supported by guiding questions (e.g. Was your character stereotypical?). At the end of *Another university*, it would be beneficial to discuss the transferability of the fictional scenarios to reality and also to talk about structural issues.

Outlook

MUSIC is a project with high potential to promote social inclusion and cultural diversity at universities across Europe. A diversified student, teacher, and staff body has become the norm. The opening of universities and the further path to smooth inclusion are therefore essential. The MUSIC project is based on the assumption that the will to support refugee, migrant, and international students is already widely represented at universities. However, concrete support and know-how are lacking. This challenge is now to be met with this modular concept developed and tested in European cooperation.

All four modules were very positively received in initial trial runs. The broad target group, the interactive character, and the well-designed exercises as well as the reflective and psychological elements of the curriculum are to be emphasised. Administrative staff, teachers, and students should be sensitised to diversity-specific challenges such as language barriers, challenges in administrative areas, and bureaucracy as well as cultural differences. The further development of self-reflection, the acquisition of new (communicative) skills, and the development of awareness and empathy are relevant for this goal, wherefore the MUSIC project particularly focuses on these fields.

Further, MUSIC seeks changes in university policies wherefore policy recommendations are included in this handbook (see chapter *Results from the needs analysis & policy recommendations*). The project recommends, among other things, mandatory welcome courses for international students to minimise language barriers and the obstacles of bureaucracy in a different university system. Multilingual policies and the establishment of service centres with well-trained staff as contact points are also considered useful. Easily accessible information about extracurricular activities would facilitate contacts with local students. Also, local students, teachers, and staff should be provided with more opportunities for further training.

Despite some challenges that will certainly remain or take a long time to resolve, through the implementation of MUSIC, from now on there is much less standing in the way of the development of cosmopolitan and diversified universities.

NOTES

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NOTES

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