

## **ARE WE ALL ALIKE?**

Teacher's training to the inclusion of the children of foreigners

### **ISSUE THAT THE TRAINING UNIT ADDRESSES**

The training unit is designed for the benefit of classroom teachers of all subjects, from primary to secondary school. The activities are focused on:

- creating the atmosphere of trust, openness and respect
- promoting the empathy and equality
- offering the respect for learners, no matter what nationality, ethnic group, religious confession or background they belong
- preventing the stereotyping, prejudice, bullying and discrimination

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- to reflect on the own perceptions on what constitutes a democratic classroom culture
- to understand the importance of supporting positive whole-school atmosphere
- to gain understanding awareness of the nature of stereotyping and prejudice
- to increase awareness measures in the field of discriminatory attitude and bullying
- to make a positive impact on reality and it will benefit schools as well as other social structures

### **COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE THAT ARE DEVELOPED**

#### ***Values:***

- valuing human dignity and human rights
- valuing cultural diversity

#### ***Attitudes:***

- respect
- openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices
- tolerance of diversity

**Skills:**

- empathy
- flexibility and adaptability
- conflict resolution skills

**Knowledge and critical understanding:**

- knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability

**TIPS FOR TEACHERS**

- The teacher should play a role of facilitator who coaches their learners through challenges.
- The teacher should decide which is the best way to group the learners to ensure everybody's active collaboration.
- It is important to observe the learners carefully during the whole activity.
- It is necessary to have enough time for the debriefing part of each activity.
- All activities are designed to be used in a classroom.

**TIMELINE**

<b>N°</b>	<b>Name of activity</b>	<b>Type of activity</b>	<b>Time</b>
<b>1.</b>	I think you like jazz	ice-breaking/introductory	25 minutes
<b>2.</b>	The neighbourhood yard	main activity	40 minutes
<b>3.</b>	Letters to the next generation	concluding/evaluation	35 minutes

## Activity 1

### I THINK YOU LIKE JAZZ

**Type of activity:** ice-breaking/introductory

**Aim:** to help learners get to know each other and build a group

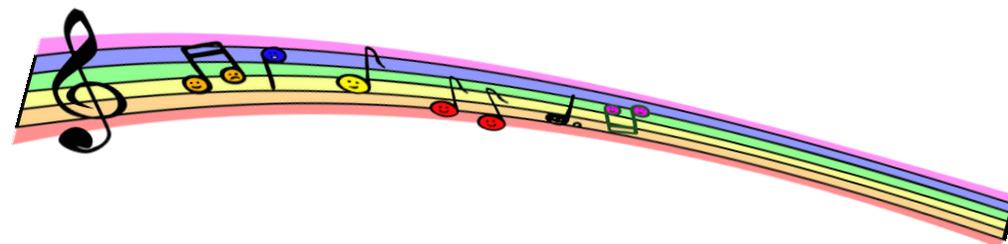
**Resources:** pen, paper

**Practical arrangements:** room for learners to move around and then to sit in a circle comfortably

**Time:** activity 15 minutes; debriefing 10 minutes

#### **Procedure:**

1. The teacher tells learners that they have all moved into a new house and they do not know each other yet. They should try to contact each other so that they get to know their neighbours better:
  - Each learner should find a partner whom s/he does not know well or does not know at all.
  - Each pair looks for a quiet place to carry out the activity.
  - Without talking to each other, learners write 5 sentences about what they think their partner is like.
  - They should only use appreciative assumptions, for example about school (“I think you like history”), about eating habits (“I think that you like pizza”), about hobbies (“I think you like to listen to jazz”), about their family (“I think that you have a sister who is older than you”), etc.
2. The teacher asks learners to form a circle, still sitting next to their partners:
  - They introduce their partner to the whole group by reading out their five sentences.
  - Assumptions are corrected - Learners talk about themselves and say if the assumptions were right or wrong.
3. For the **debriefing**, the teacher engages learners in a discussion on the following questions:
  - How did it feel to be described by your partner? What have you learned?
  - How did you feel during the process of writing your comments? Were you right in your guesses?
  - What have you learnt through this exercise?



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## Activity 2

### THE NEIGHBOURHOOD YARD

**Type of activity:** main activity

**Aim:**

- to raise learners' awareness of the psychosocial dynamics of inclusion/exclusion, co-operation/competition and discrimination/prejudice
- to develop learners' reflection on their own attitudes, beliefs and values
- to help learners gain new skills and develop their knowledge of important concepts related to intercultural competence such as identity, discrimination, otherness, empathy, diversity, co-operation and interdependence

**Resources:** stickers of four colours

**Practical arrangements:** a large uncluttered space

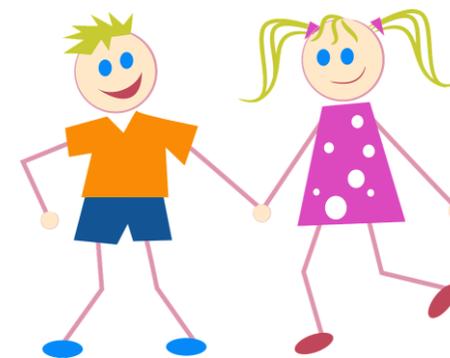
**Time:** activity 20 minutes; debriefing 20 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. The teacher asks learners to form a circle and gives them the following instructions: *“We are going to start an activity. In this activity you are not allowed to talk at all. First I will ask you to close your eyes and then shortly after you will be able to open them again. But you still must not speak. It is very important that you never speak throughout this exercise. Now, please close your eyes.”*
2. The teacher silently sticks small coloured stickers on learners' foreheads. For example, with a group of 20 learners, the distribution may be for example the following:
  - majority = green stickers on 8 learners' foreheads
  - second majority = red stickers on 6 learners' foreheads
  - first minority = blue stickers on 3 learners' foreheads
  - second minority = yellow stickers on 2 learners' foreheads
  - 1 learner remains without a sticker

(The number of stickers of each colour is meant to model social inequalities. Very quickly, learners in the majority group are likely to feel more “confident” than the others and will tend to become leaders in the task.)

3. The teacher gives the following instruction to the group: *“When I say so - you will open your eyes but you will not be able to talk. Your task will be to group yourselves. Now you may open your eyes... and group.”*



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(The formulation of the question is important. Although learners are not told to group “by colour”, that is what they are most likely to do as the teacher has not given any instruction or any criteria for grouping. Because of people’s habit of classifying things in the surrounding environment, the group will separate into subgroups of blues, greens, yellows and reds, and leave the learner without a sticker all alone and isolated.)

4. While the group works the teacher observes the learners’ behaviour and attitudes and makes notes to use during the debriefing of the activity.

As learners do the exercise, they realise that because they do not know what is on their forehead, they need to rely on each other to complete the task. Only others can see what colour they belong to and they cannot talk to each other to communicate. It will take about 10 to 15 minutes for the group to sort this difficulty out. It takes trust, co-operation and creativity to complete the assigned task. It is a very powerful exercise and the debriefing part always brings in a lot of material for reflection.

5. Learners can remain where they are after the silent grouping activity, but of course they can now speak. The teacher will introduce some prompts for the **debriefing** session.

- “How did you feel when you had your eyes closed?”

(Learners can reflect on their experience during the activity: not being able to use language to communicate, not seeing everything, etc. In many instances, a discussion about living with disabilities and how it must feel to be in such situations in real life will emerge. Some may feel this part of the activity to be threatening and express uneasiness.)

- “What was your first reaction when you opened your eyes?”

(Discussing our feelings is an important component of development and learning. Many feelings are expressed at this point, such as the feeling of loneliness or being lost. Opposite feelings might be expressed, or how we feel when we become aware of being perceived and evaluated on the basis of criteria that are unknown to us. As learners express themselves, the teacher can introduce concepts such as identity, discrimination, or the notion of otherness and perception of self by the other.)

- “How did it feel not to be able to talk?”

(The group will reflect on parallels with real-life situations. Often the conversation will lead the group to discuss the feeling of powerlessness in situations where one cannot make oneself understood, about language barriers and non-verbal language.)

- “What strategies did you think of to do the task?”

(By discussing the instructions and how they were understood, learners will gradually realise what types of behaviour they displayed in the group. Learners need to understand during the debriefing discussions that they could have chosen alternative grouping methods and that nothing in the instructions given by the teacher should have led them to segregate and form red, blue, green and yellow groups: they could have formed as many subgroups as possible composed of all the available colours (a rainbow group, for example, thus accepting “difference” within their

group), or they could have decided not to leave anyone isolated and incorporated the “loner” in any group. This question is central to the learning process that will make learners come to realise how they “jumped to conclusions”, or make learners critically analyse their own propensity to segregate, reflect on the unconscious level of their decision making, and understand why these strategies were chosen and not others. The group can then develop further by studying other options that could have been taken; the teacher can decide to conceptualise further by introducing notions that are central to intercultural competence (e.g. empathy, diversity, co-operation, interdependence) and identify attitudes, skills and knowledge that can prompt behaviour that uphold human rights and social inclusion.

- “What does this make you think of if you compare it to real-life situations?”

(At this point, learners can start to generalise what they have learned across different contexts, and apply it to their own experiences and conversations. Often the discussion will make the group realise the implications of overt and covert discriminatory behaviour in small groups and social groups, as well as on a global level.)



Source - <https://pixabay.com/>

### Activity 3

#### **LETTERS TO THE NEXT GENERATION**

**Type of activity:** concluding/evaluation

**Aim:** to make learners evaluate a training course, session or a series of activities that they were involved in

**Resources:** a blank A4 sheet for each pair of learners

**Practical arrangements:** room/classroom with chairs and tables to sit and write

**Time:** activity 20 minutes; debriefing 15 minutes

#### **Procedure:**

1. The teacher explains why it is important to review what has been done and discussed in the previous activities or sessions. Then s/he tells learners that their evaluation will take the form of a letter to the next set of learners.
2. The learners form pairs. If there are an odd number of them, it is better to have a group of three rather than to have someone work alone.
3. The teacher may provide a few ideas on what to write about and how to organise the writing into a letter, for example writing some points on the board (depending on the age of learners):
  - aims of the activity
  - atmosphere
  - activities
  - learners' plans for using the knowledge, skills and attitudes that have been developed
  - problems, risks, dangers
  - general advice for future learners
4. Learners discuss their ideas in pairs and write their letters together to the next set of learners so that they know what to expect.
5. When the time is up, the letters are passed around. If possible, everybody reads everybody else's letters (they should take notes to be able to quote one or two interesting points from some of the letters).
6. A **discussion/debriefing** follows with questions for clarification, and suggestions for an action and/or improvement based on the bullet points on the board and the quotes you and the learners want to read out from some of the letters.

### **Tips and potential difficulties**

Perhaps it is useful to remind learners that this should not turn into a round of compliments but into the kind of letter we all expect to receive from a critical but supportive friend or colleague.

### **REFERENCES**

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