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# TOOLKIT

**EVERY STORY(TELLER) MATTERS**  
HUMAN LIBRARIES AND MUTUAL RECOGNITION

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT





## What is the Toolkit?

The Every Story Teller Matters Toolkit is a practical resource designed to help youth workers, educators and organisations promote social inclusion and intercultural work with young people.

Developed in the context of the project, this toolkit brings together proven methodologies such as the Human Library, storytelling and intercultural competence development, offering structured guidance for application in formal and non-formal educational contexts.

Its content is based on real experiences gained throughout the project and local activities carried out by project partners.

## Why is it useful?

This toolkit offers all the resources needed to foster intercultural inclusion in youth work. It offers clear, ready-to-use materials that make it easy for youth workers to integrate intercultural learning into their programmes.

By combining easy and simple explanations of concepts with engaging formats such as videos, infographics and templates, it enhances educators' ability to create inclusive, participatory and diverse learning environments.



# Purpose and objectives

The main objectives of this toolkit are:

- To provide practical tools and methods that support the development of intercultural competences.
- To strengthen inclusive and participatory practices in youth work.
- To facilitate the application of innovative methodologies, such as the Human Library, using adaptable and accessible materials.
- To equip educators and youth workers with resources that respond to current social realities, including post-pandemic challenges in terms of youth engagement and inclusion.

This toolkit is designed for a wide range of users, including:

- Youth workers and educators working in multicultural or intercultural settings.
- NGOs, community-based organisations and institutions involved in youth development.
- Trainers, facilitators and programme designers who wish to integrate interculturality into their educational approach.
- Anyone interested in promoting dialogue, empathy and mutual understanding among young people.



# How to use this toolkit

The toolkit is organised in thematic sections that can be explored independently or together. In this one we can find:

- Conceptual foundations of youth work and interculturality
- Development of key competences, including empathy, communication and cultural awareness
- Methods and activities to develop these competences
- Application of the Human Library methodology
- Good practices and recommendations from real experiences
- Annexes with templates and additional materials

## Formats and accessibility

To support different learning styles and levels of experience, the content is available in multiple formats:

- Text-based content for detailed explanations and theoretical understanding
- Infographics that summarise key ideas and processes in a visual way
- Short videos (30-60 seconds) that present concepts and steps in a dynamic and easy-to-follow way
- QR codes embedded in infographics that provide direct access to videos and extended content



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Whether used as a complete programme or for specific needs, this toolkit is a flexible and accessible tool for anyone working to promote intercultural inclusion and social participation.

We invite you to use this toolkit as a practical tool to foster more inclusive, participatory and culturally diverse environments.

**SCAN ME**





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# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



# YOUTH WORK AND INTERCULTURALITY





In today's increasingly diverse societies, youth work plays a key role in shaping inclusive, empathetic, and culturally connected communities. This section provides the conceptual foundation for understanding how youth work and interculturality intersect—and why this matters.

Youth work empowers young people through non-formal education, creativity, participation, and personal growth. It supports their ability to engage with others, navigate social differences, and contribute to society. But in a multicultural world, working with and across differences is not enough—true transformation comes from interculturality: the active practice of dialogue, mutual learning, and connection between cultures.

This framework explores six core concepts:

- Youth Work as a tool for empowerment and engagement;
- Inclusion and Diversity, to ensure everyone feels valued and respected;
- The difference between Interculturality and Multiculturality, and why dialogue matters;
- The power of Storytelling to build empathy and challenge stereotypes;
- The role of Empathy in creating safe, supportive spaces;
- And innovative methods like the Human Library, where real stories help break down prejudice.

Each of these ideas is introduced through short videos and infographics designed to inspire, inform, and support youth workers in building meaningful intercultural experiences. Together, they form the backbone of our toolkit—equipping you to foster spaces where young people can connect, grow, and truly belong.



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# Key concepts

Youth work



Inclusion  
and diversity



Interculturality  
VS  
Multiculturality



Storytelling



Empathy



Human Libraries





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# YOUTH WORK *and Interculturality*

## YOUTH WORK, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

**Youth work** brings young people together and supports their growth. It helps build skills, confidence, and community through informal learning and participation. Explore activities that help young people lead, create, and connect—check the toolkit for ideas!

Everyone deserves to belong. **Inclusion** means welcoming all differences and making sure everyone has equal access and a voice. Make space for all identities—use the toolkit to learn how to build truly inclusive spaces



## INTERCULTURALITY VS. MULTICULTURALITY

Understanding cultural differences is key to working with youth.

**Multiculturality** is about different cultures coexisting.

**Interculturality** is about dialogue, exchange, and mutual learning.

Choose dialogue over distance. Find tools in the toolkit to promote intercultural exchange.

## STORYTELLING

Stories connect us.

**Storytelling** lets young people share their lives, challenge stereotypes, and build empathy.

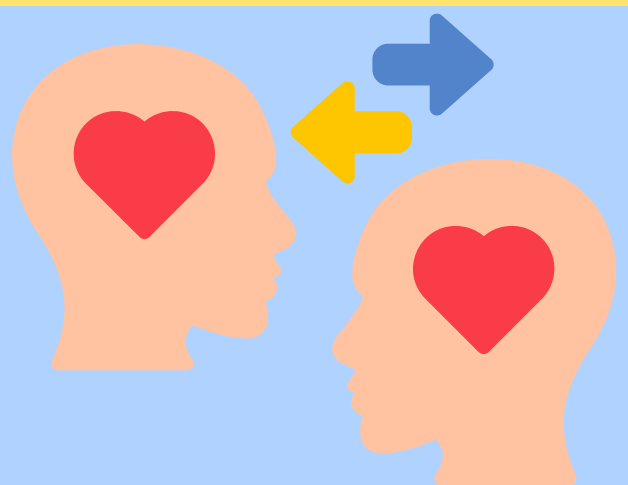
Encourage youth to tell their stories. Use the toolkit to explore digital storytelling methods.

## EMPATHY

**Empathy** helps us see through others' eyes.

It's about feeling with others—listening, caring, and building respect across differences.

Practice empathy every day. Try our activities to bring more understanding into your group.



## HUMAN LIBRARY

What if people could be books?

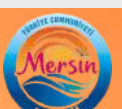
In a **Human Library**, people share real-life stories to break down prejudice and open minds.

Run your own Human Library! Use our guide in the toolkit to start meaningful conversations.



<https://everystoryteller matters.eu/>

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# IMPORTANCE OF INTERCULTURALITY




# IN YOUTH WORK



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In today's increasingly interconnected and multicultural societies, interculturality plays a vital role in building inclusive, respectful, and collaborative communities. In the field of youth work, fostering intercultural understanding is not only a tool for social inclusion — it is a fundamental value that strengthens mutual respect and dialogue among young people from diverse backgrounds.

This video offers a brief but meaningful journey into why interculturality matters in youth work, how it transforms youth programmes, and what strategies can be used to embed it into everyday practice. From promoting cultural exchange activities to developing intercultural competences, we explore how these actions contribute to more cohesive and empathetic communities.

 Scan the QR code to watch the video and discover how you can promote interculturality in your youth programmes.

*Let's build bridges, not walls.*





# Integrating Interculturality in Youth Programs

## Why Interculturality Matters in Youth Contexts:

- Encourages respect for **diversity** and fosters inclusive environments.
- Enhances mutual understanding and **reduces prejudices**.
- Prepares youth to become **global citizens** and **effective communicators**.
- Promotes **social cohesion** and **community solidarity**.



## Key Strategies to Integrate Interculturality:

### 1. Cultural Exchange Activities

- Organize intercultural workshops, events, and celebrations.
- Foster direct interactions among diverse youth groups.



### 2. Inclusive Curriculum Development

- Integrate diverse cultural perspectives into educational content.
- Provide resources that represent multiple cultural backgrounds.

### 3. Training and Capacity Building

- Equip staff with intercultural competency training.
- Develop youth leaders skilled in intercultural communication.

### 4. Collaboration with Communities

- Partner with culturally diverse community organizations.
- Facilitate community-driven intercultural initiatives.



### 5. Safe and Inclusive Spaces

- Ensure spaces are welcoming and affirming of all cultures.
- Address and manage conflicts respectfully and constructively.



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# DEVELOPMENT OF



# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES



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In a diverse and interconnected Europe, youth workers are key actors in fostering inclusive, respectful, and collaborative communities. But to do so effectively, they need more than good intentions — they need solid intercultural competences.

This video explores the core skills that enable youth workers to engage meaningfully across cultural differences. From empathy and active listening to conflict resolution and teamwork, these competences are essential tools for promoting dialogue, breaking down stereotypes, and creating safe spaces where every young person feels valued.

Discover how critical thinking, cultural awareness, and effective communication can help you foster mutual understanding and strengthen participation in your youth programmes. These competences not only support individual growth, but also reinforce social cohesion and equity at the community level.

**Let's create environments  
where diversity is a  
strength and inclusion is a  
shared responsibility.**



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# Key concepts

**Cultural Awareness**



**Empathy and Active Listening**



**Effective communication**



**Conflict management**



**Teamwork**



**Critical thinking**





# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES FOR YOUTH WORK



## CRITICAL THINKING

Ability to objectively analyze, question stereotypes and recognize forms of discrimination. Allows for reflective and fair decision-making.

## EMPATHY AND ACTIVE LISTENING

Understanding the emotions of others and listening attentively fosters relationships based on respect, recognition and trust.

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Resolving disagreements respectfully and constructively transforms tensions into opportunities for learning and intercultural cohesion.

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Expressing ideas clearly and listening actively, taking into account the cultural context, reduces misunderstandings and promotes mutual understanding.

## TEAMWORK

Collaborating by valuing diversity of perspectives promotes shared responsibility and strengthens a sense of community.

## CULTURAL AWARENESS

Recognizing how culture influences one's own and others' beliefs and behaviors fosters respect and openness to diversity.

- Encourages open and respectful dialogue where different perspectives are valued.
- Breaks down stereotypes by challenging prejudices and promoting a deeper understanding of people.
- Creates safe spaces where everyone feels heard, seen and valued.
- Improves collaboration and group dynamics through empathy, communication and teamwork.
- Promotes self-reflection and recognition of our own biases and their impact.
- Facilitates inclusive and creative decision making, adapted to diverse contexts.
- Strengthens intercultural relationships by fostering mutual understanding and respect.
- Promotes social inclusion and active participation of all young people.



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# METHODS AND ACTIVITIES TO



# DEVELOP COMPETENCES



Inspiring growth in young people requires more than theory—it calls for practical, engaging methods that bring competences to life. Youth workers across Europe need adaptable tools to help young people develop critical skills like empathy, collaboration, and responsible decision-making.

This section presents a collection of tested activities designed to build those key competences through experience, reflection, and dialogue. Whether you're working in schools, youth centres, or community spaces, these methods will help you create dynamic learning environments that are inclusive, empowering, and impactful.

Each activity is clearly described with its objective, required materials, and a simple step-by-step guide. Short videos and visual infographics will support your implementation, offering clear, hands-on guidance.

Let's equip youth with the tools they need to thrive—one activity at a time. Empower them to think critically, act empathetically, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.





# Culture Through the Window

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of this activity is to develop cultural awareness as a core intercultural competence by helping participants explore how culture shapes identity, perception, and interpersonal dynamics. It invites young people to reflect on the aspects of their cultural background that are visible to others and those that are often hidden, misunderstood, or overlooked.

By making these reflections visible and opening space for dialogue, the activity enhances participants' ability to:

- Recognise and respect cultural differences
- Challenge assumptions and stereotype
- Reflect on their own cultural identity and biases
- Develop empathy and openness toward others

This activity supports the development of inclusive attitudes and communication skills, which are essential for navigating diverse social settings and fostering mutual understanding in youth work and intercultural environments.



## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This activity uses the metaphor of a window to help participants reflect on how their culture is perceived by others versus how they experience it themselves. Participants draw a window and write or draw inside it what is visible to others (e.g., language, food, clothing) and outside it what others don't usually see (e.g., values, emotions, beliefs, identity struggles).

Through discussion in small groups and as a whole, participants become more aware of assumptions, reflect on the richness and complexity of identity, and develop greater empathy.

It is ideal for Human Library events, intercultural workshops, classrooms, or online youth sessions.

To support reflection, facilitators may use guiding prompts such as:

- What do people assume about you based on your appearance, language, or behaviour?
- What values or traditions shape how you see the world?
- What is something important about your identity that people might not realise?

Sharing a few example “windows” at the start can help participants feel more comfortable and inspired to share.



## MATERIALS NEEDED

- A4 paper or printed/digital window templates
- Pens, pencils, or markers
- Optional: online collaboration tools like Jamboard, Miro, or Google Slides

## APPROXIMATE DURATION

- 45–60 minutes
- Preparation: 5–10 min
- Drawing and sharing: 20–25 min
- Group discussion and reflection: 15–25 min

## TARGET GROUP

- Young people aged 14+
- Groups of 6–20 participants
- Suitable for diverse cultural backgrounds
- Works well in youth workshops, Human Library activities, schools, and intercultural learning spaces
- Adaptable for online or hybrid settings



# STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION

## Preparation

- Arrange a quiet space or create an online template (if remote).
- Introduce the purpose: exploring identity through what is seen and unseen.
- Provide an example (real or fictional) to guide participants.

## Activity development

- Give each participant paper or a template. Ask them to draw a window.
- Inside the window: Write or draw what people see about their culture.
- Outside the window: Write or draw what people don't see — values, emotions, struggles, family expectations, etc.
- Emphasise creativity and emotional honesty.

## Discussion, final reflection and/or evaluation

- Participants pair up or form small groups to share their windows.
- Facilitate reflection with questions like:
  - “What surprised you?”
  - “What do we tend to assume based on what we see?”
  - “How can we create spaces where the ‘outside’ is better understood?”
- Wrap up with a group discussion on how this experience relates to inclusion, bias, and youth work.



## EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

- Use reflection prompts in group or anonymous formats.
- Ask participants:
  - “What did you learn about yourself?”
  - “How has your view of others changed?”
  - “How does this help you in a diverse group setting?”
- Optionally use digital tools (Mentimeter, Google Forms) for quick input.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- Participants reflect deeply on their cultural identity
- Increased understanding of the complexity and depth behind cultural expression
- Better recognition of assumptions and biases
- Stronger empathy and group connection
- Greater readiness for intercultural dialogue and inclusive behaviour

INCLUSION MATTERS  
**INCLUSION  
MATTERS**



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

- Normalise different levels of depth — not everyone will want to share deeply, and that's okay
- Encourage emotional safety and mutual respect
- Use examples and be ready to guide participants gently into reflection
- Avoid forcing anyone to share more than they're comfortable with
- If working online, give clear instructions for using digital templates and allow for quiet reflection time

## POSSIBLE ADAPTATIONS

- For younger groups: Use symbols or simple drawings, and shorter sharing time
- Online use: Use shared documents or boards for remote reflection
- Low literacy or language barriers: Offer the activity with drawings, translated instructions, or paired facilitation
- Pre-Human Library: Use the window as a way for “human books” to prepare their stories or for “readers” to open up to new perspectives





## EXAMPLES/CASES

Here are a couple of examples for inspiration.

### 1. Cultural Norms and Misunderstandings

Inside the Window (what people see):

- Doesn't make direct eye contact
- Avoids confrontation in group discussions
- Always very polite and says "yes"
- Often brings homemade food that smells different

Outside the Window (what people don't see):

- Comes from a culture where respect is shown by avoiding eye contact
- Saying "yes" often means "I heard you," not necessarily "I agree"
- Grew up in a household where speaking up to elders is discouraged

Feels hurt when food is seen as "weird" or laughed at

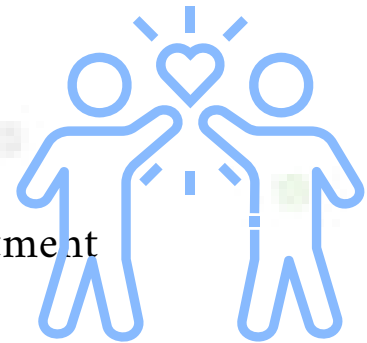




## • Festivals and Family Priorities

### Inside the Window:

- Took a day off for a religious celebration
- Talks a lot about cousins and extended family
- Missed a weekend event due to a family commitment



### Outside the Window:

- Comes from a culture where extended family is central to daily life
- Religious holidays are deeply personal but not publicly recognised in this country
- Faces assumptions that they're "not committed" when prioritising family
- Finds it difficult to explain these cultural differences without seeming defensive

## • Communication Styles

### Inside the Window:

- Very quiet in group discussions
- Doesn't challenge others openly
- Rarely gives direct feedback

### Outside the Window:

- Comes from a high-context culture where silence is part of respectful communication
- Was taught that disagreeing openly is disrespectful
- Worries that speaking up may be misunderstood as rude

Finds it hard to navigate direct discussion styles in youth activities



- Time and Structure

Inside the Window:

- Frequently late to meetings
- Doesn't follow fixed agenda
- Often improvises or "goes with the flow"

Outside the Window:

- Comes from a culture where time is more flexible and relationships matter more than schedules
- Finds strict structure and rigid planning stressful and unfamiliar
- Is often misjudged as disorganised, when in fact they are highly adaptive and responsive
- Feels their approach to time is not respected as valid or valuable





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# CULTURE THROUGH THE WINDOW



This activity encourages participants to explore how culture shapes identity by distinguishing what others see versus what remains hidden. It promotes self-awareness, challenges assumptions, and builds cultural awareness and empathy among youth.

## MATERIALS

- A4 paper or printed/digital window template
- Pens, markers, or drawing tools
- Optional: Online collaboration tools



## TARGET GROUP

- Young people aged 14 and up
- Group size: 6–20 participants
- Ideal for youth groups, Human Library events, classrooms, or intercultural training
- Adaptable for both in-person and online formats

## STEPS

- 1.Introduction: Present the activity and its goal: to reflect on what’s visible and invisible about our culture and identity.
- 2.Draw the Window: Each participant draws or receives a window template.
- 3.Inside the Window: Participants write or draw what people typically see about their culture (e.g. food, dress, holidays, language).
- 4.Outside the Window: They reflect on and record what others don’t usually see (e.g. values, beliefs, emotions, pressures, contradictions).
- 5.Small Group Sharing: Participants share their windows in pairs or small groups, fostering understanding and empathy.
- 6.Whole Group Reflection: Reflect together: What did we assume? What surprised us? How can this improve how we work in diverse groups?

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Younger participants: Allow more drawing, simplify prompts.
- Online groups: Use Jamboard or Google Slides templates for collaborative sharing.
- Multilingual or intercultural groups: Offer prompts in multiple languages and explain unfamiliar references.
- Introverted participants: Offer a journaling option or anonymous sharing method.





# Empathy Circles

## OBJECTIVE

An Empathy Circle provides a safe and focused space for individuals to share their thoughts and feelings on a specific topic or prompt, while others actively listen and reflect back what they hear, emphasizing the speaker's emotional experience. The core principle is to truly understand another person's perspective without judgment or interruption. The primary objective of Empathy Circles is to develop empathy and active listening skills through structured sharing and reflection on diverse perspectives.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Pen and paper for each participant.
2. A talking object (e.g., a stone, pen).
3. A list of short, relatable prompts or scenarios.
4. Questions for the Facilitator-led reflection session.



## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Empathy Circle is a group activity, ideally involving 4-8 participants seated in a circle to promote connection and equality. Guided by a facilitator, the activity centers on a specific prompt, with a talking object indicating the current speaker. That person shares their thoughts and feelings uninterrupted. Following their turn, the other participants briefly 'echo' back what they heard, focusing on the speaker's emotions and perspective.

This cycle of sharing and echoing continues around the circle, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to speak and be deeply heard.

The session typically concludes with a brief reflection on the experience, emphasizing attentive listening and the validation of individual feelings.

Empathy Circles are used in various contexts to foster deeper understanding, improve communication, build trust, and promote empathy.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR-LED REFLECTION SESSION

Questions for the Facilitator-led reflection session

"How did it feel to be truly listened to?"

"What was it like to try and understand someone else's perspective?"

"Did you notice any common themes or different viewpoints?"

"What did you learn from this activity?"



# PROMPTS

## Prompts Focusing on Cultural Differences/Understanding:

"Describe a time you experienced a cultural difference that surprised you."

"Share a moment when you learned something new about a different culture."

"Tell about a time you had to explain something about your culture to someone who didn't understand."

"Describe a situation where you saw someone being treated differently because of their cultural background."

## Prompts Focusing on Empathy/Connection:

"Share a time you stood up for someone who was being treated unfairly."

"Tell about a moment when you felt a strong connection with someone from a different background."

"Describe a time you tried to understand someone else's perspective, even if you disagreed with them."

"Share a time you felt like you made a real difference in someone's life."

## Prompts Focusing on Stereotypes/Prejudice:

"Tell about a time you heard a stereotype about a group of people."

"Describe a time you witnessed someone being prejudiced."

"Share how stereotypes make you feel."

"Tell a time you had to challenge a stereotype."



# PROMPTS

Prompts Focusing on Feeling Misunderstood/Excluded:

"Tell about a time you felt like someone made an unfair assumption about you because of where you're from or how you look."

"Describe a moment when you felt like your voice wasn't heard because you were different."

"Share a time you felt like an outsider in a group or situation."

"Tell about a time you felt judged before someone really got to know you."

Tips for Using These Prompts:

Keep it open-ended: Allow for a variety of responses.

Relate to youth experiences: Ensure the prompts are relevant to their lives.

Create a safe space: Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers.

Encourage emotional expression: Remind participants to focus on their feelings.

Prompt



## APPROXIMATE DURATION

- Approximately 45-60 minutes.
- Preparation: 5-10 minutes (arranging the space, gathering materials, reviewing the process).
- Setting the Guidelines: 5 minutes (facilitator explains the purpose and rules).
- Sharing and Echoing Process: 25-40 minutes (depending on the number of participants and the depth of sharing). Aim for roughly 2-3 minutes per person to share, and 1-2 minutes for the "echoes" from the group.
- Brief Reflection: 5-10 minutes (facilitator guides a short discussion on the experience).





## TARGET GROUP



### Age Group:

- Younger Adolescents (12-15 years): Adaptable with shorter sharing times, simpler prompts focusing on relatable experiences (friendships, school), and more structured facilitation. Smaller group sizes (4-6) are often more effective.
- Older Adolescents and Young Adults (16-30 years): Well-suited for standard implementation with more complex prompts exploring identity, social issues, and cultural understanding. Group sizes of 6-8 work well, but can be slightly larger (up to 10) with effective time management.

### Number of Participants:

- Small Groups (4-6): Ideal for deeper sharing and more individual attention. Allows for more frequent turns and longer "echoing."
- Medium Groups (7-10): Manageable with clear timekeeping. Requires more focused facilitation to ensure everyone has a chance to participate meaningfully.
- Larger Groups (11+): Can be divided into smaller Empathy Circles running simultaneously with different facilitators. This ensures everyone has an opportunity to speak and be heard within a reasonable timeframe.



## Type of Environment:

- **Educational Settings (Schools, Universities):** Can be integrated into classroom activities, workshops on communication, social-emotional learning, or intercultural studies. Provides a structured way for students to connect and understand diverse perspectives within the school community.
- **Youth Organizations and Clubs:** Suitable for regular meetings or special events focused on building community, fostering empathy, and developing interpersonal skills among members.
- **Community Centers and Workshops:** Effective for bringing together diverse groups of young people from different backgrounds to promote social cohesion and understanding within the wider community.
- **Online/Virtual Environments:** Adaptable using video conferencing platforms with clear guidelines for turn-taking and "echoing" via voice or chat functions. Breakout rooms can be used for larger groups. Requires strong facilitation to manage the virtual space and ensure engagement.

**Informal Settings:** Can be used in less structured environments (e.g., youth gatherings, retreats) with clear explanation and gentle facilitation to encourage open and empathetic communication.



# STEP BY STEP

## 1. Preparation (5-10 minutes):

- Gather Participants: Aim for a group size of 4-8 participants for optimal engagement. Larger groups can be divided into smaller circles.
- Arrange the Space: Have participants sit in a circle, ensuring everyone can see each other clearly. This physical arrangement fosters a sense of equality and connection.
- Materials: You will need a simple talking object (e.g., a small stone, a pen), paper and pens for personal reflection afterward and a list of short, relatable prompts or scenarios.
- Introduce the Activity (Facilitator): Explain the purpose of the Empathy Circle – to practice deep listening and understanding each other's perspectives. Emphasize that the goal is not to offer advice, share personal stories (unless it's your turn to speak), or debate, but to truly hear and reflect back the speaker's experience.



- Setting the Guidelines (5 minutes - Facilitator-led):
  - One Speaker at a Time: Only the person holding the talking object speaks.
  - Active Listening: Everyone else focuses entirely on the speaker, paying attention not just to the words but also to the tone, body language, and underlying emotions.
  - No Interruptions or Cross-Talk: Participants should refrain from interrupting the speaker or engaging in side conversations.
  - Focus on the Speaker: The focus remains on the person holding the talking object until they are finished speaking.
  - Confidentiality (Optional but Recommended): If the topic is personal, encourage participants to respect the privacy of what is shared within the circle.
  - Right to Pass: Participants have the right to pass when it's their turn to speak.
  - Time Limits (Optional): Depending on the group and the prompt, you might set a brief time limit for each speaking turn (e.g., 2-3 minutes).





- The Sharing and Echoing Process (15-30 minutes):
- Introduce the Prompt (Facilitator): Present a clear and concise prompt or question related to the theme you want to explore (e.g., "Share a time you felt misunderstood," "What does belonging mean to you?"). Tailor the prompt to be relevant and engaging for the youth group.
- First Speaker: The facilitator can start or designate a person to begin. This person takes the talking object and shares their thoughts and feelings related to the prompt.
- Echoing (After the Speaker is Finished): Once the speaker has finished (they indicate they are done by passing the talking object back to the center or to the next person), the other participants take turns briefly "echoing" what they heard. The echo should focus on the speaker's feelings and perspective, not their own opinions or interpretations.
- Speaker's Confirmation (Optional): The original speaker can briefly acknowledge if the echoes resonated with them. This helps the listeners know if they are understanding correctly.
- Next Speaker: The talking object moves to the next person in the circle, and they share their response to the same prompt. The echoing process repeats after they finish.

Continue: The process continues around the circle until everyone who wants to has had a chance to speak and be echoed. Participants can choose to pass their turn if they are not ready to share.



- Brief Reflection (5-10 minutes - Facilitator-led):
- After everyone has had a turn (or time runs out), the facilitator can guide a brief reflection. Questions might include:
- "How did it feel to be truly listened to?"
- "What was it like to try and understand someone else's perspective?"
- "Did you notice any common themes or different viewpoints?"
- "What did you learn from this activity?"
- Keep the reflection brief and focused on the process rather than individual stories.





## EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

The effectiveness can be gauged through both informal and more structured methods. Informally, observing participants' engagement during the activity, noting the depth of their sharing and the thoughtfulness of their "echoes," and facilitating a post-activity discussion about their experience and learnings can provide valuable insights.

More structured evaluation can involve short, anonymous surveys before and after the activity, asking participants about their comfort levels with listening and expressing empathy, their understanding of diverse perspectives, and their sense of connection with others. These surveys can use rating scales or open-ended questions to capture both quantitative and qualitative data on the activity's impact on their awareness and skills.





## EXPECTED RESULTS

**Expected Results:** Participants will demonstrate improved active listening skills, showing greater attentiveness and accurate reflection of others' feelings. They will also exhibit increased empathy, displaying a greater understanding and validation of diverse perspectives and emotional experiences. Participants are likely to report a stronger sense of connection and trust within the group.

**Expected Impacts:** The activity should foster a more inclusive and respectful environment where young people feel heard and valued. It is anticipated to contribute to a reduction in stereotypes and prejudice by promoting deeper understanding across different backgrounds. Ultimately, Empathy Circles aim to empower youth with enhanced communication and social-emotional skills, leading to more collaborative and understanding communities in the long term.





# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

## Managing the Activity:

- **Clear Instructions:** Begin by clearly and concisely explaining the purpose, steps, and guidelines of the Empathy Circle. Use simple language and check for understanding.
- **Time Management:** Be mindful of the allocated time. Gently guide participants to be concise in their sharing and echoing, especially in larger groups. Use a visual timer if helpful.
- **Talking Object Management:** Ensure the talking object is passed smoothly and that everyone understands its significance.
- **Gentle Guidance:** As a facilitator, your role is to guide the process, not to lead the content. Avoid interjecting with your own opinions or stories during the sharing and echoing phases.
- **Model Active Listening:** Demonstrate active listening through your own posture, eye contact, and brief acknowledgements during the "echoing."
- **Encourage Participation:** Gently encourage quieter participants to share when the talking object comes to them, but always respect their right to pass.
- **Monitor the Energy:** Pay attention to the group's energy levels. If the energy dips, consider a brief stretch break or a slightly different prompt for the next round (if doing multiple rounds).
- **Smooth Transitions:** Clearly signal the transitions between sharing, echoing, and the final reflection.



## Resolving Possible Conflicts or Problems:

- **Dominant Speakers:** If one or two individuals tend to dominate the sharing time, gently remind the group of the time constraints or the importance of hearing from everyone. You can say something like, "Let's ensure everyone who wants to share has a chance to do so within our time."
- **Off-Topic Sharing:** If a participant deviates significantly from the prompt, gently bring them back to the focus. For example, "Thank you for sharing that. To help us stay focused on the prompt of [topic], could you perhaps relate your thoughts back to that?"
- **Judgmental or Advice-Giving "Echoes":** If participants start offering advice or judging the speaker's experience during the "echo," gently redirect them to focus on the speaker's feelings. "Remember, the 'echo' is about reflecting what you heard the speaker feeling, not your opinion or solutions."
- **Disengagement or Silence:** If someone seems withdrawn, check in with them during a break or privately if appropriate. A simple, "Is everything alright?" can be helpful. Respect their space if they don't want to share.
- **Emotional Distress:** If a participant becomes visibly upset, acknowledge their feelings with empathy. Offer a break or the option to step out if needed. Have resources for support available if the topic is potentially sensitive.

**Disruptive Behavior:** Address any disruptive behavior calmly and directly, reiterating the agreed-upon guidelines for respectful participation.



## Ensuring Engagement of All Participants:

- **Relevant Prompts:** Choose prompts that are relatable and engaging for the specific age group and context.
- **Variety of Prompts:** If doing multiple rounds, use a variety of prompts to cater to different interests and experiences.
- **Small Group Dynamics:** Smaller groups naturally tend to have higher engagement. If working with a large group, dividing into smaller circles is key.
- **Emphasize the Value of Listening:** Highlight that active listening is just as important as sharing and that their "echoes" are valuable contributions.
- **Create a Safe and Trusting Atmosphere:** Emphasize confidentiality and non-judgment from the beginning. Your role as a facilitator in modeling empathy and respect is crucial.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Acknowledge and appreciate participants' efforts in listening and sharing. A simple "Thank you for sharing" or "That's a thoughtful reflection" can go a long way.
- **Interactive Elements (Optional):** For younger groups, you could incorporate brief, related activities before or after the Empathy Circle to build connection and prepare them for deeper listening.

**Reflection Questions:** Frame the reflection questions in a way that encourages everyone to think about their experience and what they learned.



# POSSIBLE ADAPTATIONS

## Adapting to Different Contexts:

- Online/Virtual:
  - Materials: Utilize video conferencing features. Establish clear turn-taking protocols (e.g., raising hands, digital talking object). Use chat for brief written "echoes" if preferred.
  - Structure: Smaller breakout rooms for the circles might be more manageable. Emphasize clear audio and visual presence. Facilitator needs to be adept at online moderation.
- Educational Settings (Classroom):
  - Materials: Prompts can be linked to curriculum topics (e.g., historical figures' perspectives, characters' motivations in literature). Students can journal reflections afterward.
  - Structure: Can be integrated into a lesson plan. Focus reflection on learning outcomes. Consider peer assessment of listening skills (with clear criteria).

## Adapting to Diverse Cultural Groups:

- Be mindful of cultural norms regarding sharing and emotional expression.
- Provide clear guidelines on confidentiality and respect.
- Adapt prompts to reflect cultural values and experiences.
- Consider using multilingual facilitation if needed.



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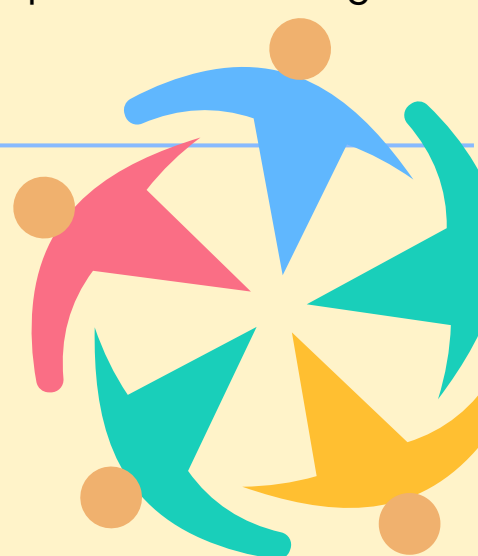
# EMPATHY CIRCLES



The objective of Empathy Circles is to cultivate empathy and enhance active listening skills. By sharing and reflecting, the participants understand diverse perspectives, fostering respect and breaking down stereotypes.

## MATERIALS

- Pen and paper for each participant.
- A talking object (e.g., a stone, pen).
- A list of short, relatable prompts or scenarios.
- Questions for the Facilitator-led reflection session.



## TARGET GROUP

- Youth (16–30) from diverse backgrounds, including immigrants, seeking to build empathy and understanding across cultures.

## STEPS

1. Group Division: Divide participants into smaller groups (4–8 people each).
2. Circle Up: Each group arranges their seating in a circle.
3. Explain Goal & Object: In each group, explain the empathy/listening focus and introduce the talking object (e.g., a stone, pen), explaining that only the person holding it speaks.
4. Set Rules: Outline guidelines (only speaker with object speaks, listen attentively, no interruptions).
5. Present Prompt: Introduce the topic to all groups.
6. First Speaker: In each group, one person takes the talking object and shares.
7. Echo Feelings: Others in the group briefly reflect the emotions of the person holding the talking object.
8. Next Speaker: The talking object is passed to the next person who wishes to share.
9. Repeat: Continue the cycle of sharing with the talking object and echoing within each group.
10. Brief Reflect: Each group has a brief discussion on their experience.

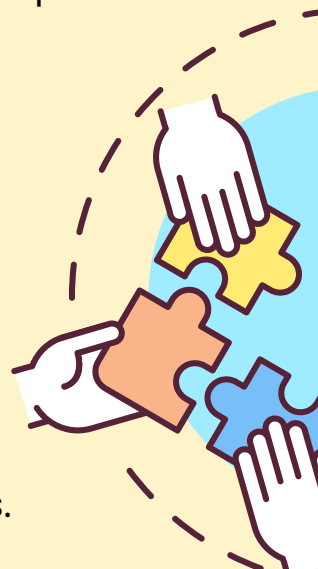
## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Diverse Cultural Groups:

- Be mindful of cultural norms regarding sharing and emotional expression.
- Provide clear guidelines on confidentiality and respect.
- Adapt prompts to reflect cultural values and experiences.
- Consider using multilingual facilitation if needed.

### Online/Virtual Settings:

- Use video conferencing platforms with breakout rooms.
- Establish clear guidelines for online etiquette.
- Consider using digital tools for sharing and reflection.
- Maintain clear moderation of the chat and voice conversations.





# Listen and Draw

## OBJECTIVE

To enhance effective communication, active listening, and attention to detail, especially in intercultural settings, by interpreting verbal instructions accurately and translating them into visual representations. The activity aims to develop key intercultural communication skills by emphasizing the importance of clarity, interpretation, and non-verbal assumptions in verbal communication. Participants practice decoding language across different communication styles and cultural perspectives, improving mutual understanding and collaboration in diverse teams.

## MATERIALS

1. A simple original image (held by the trainer only)
2. Paper for each participant
3. Pencils or pens
4. A timer (optional)
5. A whiteboard or screen (optional, but useful for showing the original image after the activity)



## DESCRIPTION

"Listen and Draw" is a team-based communication exercise designed to foster active listening and improve verbal interpretation skills. Participants are given paper and a pencil, and listen to a trainer describe an image using only words. Without seeing the image, participants must recreate it based solely on the trainer's instructions. This challenges individuals to pay close attention, interpret information without visual cues, and rely on verbal clarity. The activity can be conducted in person with small or large groups, and it encourages teamwork, feedback, and discussion around the communication process. At the end of the activity, drawings are compared to the original image, and a group reflection helps reinforce the learning outcomes.

## APPROXIMATE DURATION

1. 45–60 minutes total
2. Preparation: 5–10 minutes
3. Activity implementation: 15–25 minutes
4. Discussion and reflection: 20–25 minutes



## TARGET GROUP

- Adults in corporate or training environments
- Suitable for diverse teams, especially multicultural or international teams
- Recommended group size: 5–25 participants
- Applicable in both formal training settings and informal workshops

## STEP BY STEP

### Preparation:

1. Choose or create a simple line-drawn image (e.g., a house, landscape, or geometric shapes).
2. Print or display the image for the facilitator only.
3. Prepare enough paper and pencils/pens for each participant.
4. Set up a quiet and comfortable space where participants can listen and draw without distractions.

### Activity development:

1. Gather participants and explain the objective: to draw an image based only on verbal instructions.
2. Emphasize the importance of active listening and clarity.



1. Allow participants to ask **yes or no** questions if needed (optional, depending on desired difficulty).
2. Continue describing until the image is complete.
3. Set a time limit to maintain pace and focus.

**Discussion, final reflection and/or evaluation:**

1. Show the original image to the group.
2. Allow participants to compare their drawings to the original and to each other's.
3. Lead a group discussion using reflection questions:
  - What caused the differences in your drawings?
  - Was there any moment when you clearly understood the instruction?
  - What would you do differently if you repeated the exercise?
  - How does this relate to real-world communication challenges in diverse teams?



## EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

1. Use informal discussion and participant feedback during the reflection.
2. Optionally, distribute a short survey or questionnaire with prompts such as:
  1. “I felt confident in understanding the instructions.”
  2. “This activity helped me recognize the importance of clarity in communication.”
  3. “I am more aware of how cultural assumptions may affect how I interpret language.”

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- Improved active listening and interpretation skills
- Greater awareness of communication challenges in multicultural settings
- Enhanced appreciation of clarity, feedback, and patience in team communication
- Strengthened teamwork and attention to non-verbal cues in verbal descriptions



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

- Practice describing the image beforehand to ensure clear and logical instructions.
- Use images with varying levels of complexity depending on participants' experience.
- Monitor group dynamics and encourage everyone to participate.
- Clarify whether participants may ask questions during the description phase.

Create a supportive atmosphere where errors are treated as learning opportunities.

## POSSIBLE ADAPTATIONS

- For online teams: Use breakout rooms and digital drawing tools (e.g., whiteboard apps or drawing software).
- For younger audiences or informal settings: Use fun and silly images to keep the tone light and humorous.
- For multilingual teams: Have the instructions translated or repeated in multiple languages.
- For advanced groups: Add distractions or give intentionally vague instructions to mimic real-world ambiguity.



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# LISTEN AND DRAW



This activity aims to improve effective communication, with a focus on active listening, interpreting verbal instructions, and attention to detail. It encourages collaboration and clarity in team environments, especially useful for intercultural and diverse groups where communication styles may differ.

## MATERIALS

- An original image (held only by the facilitator)
- Paper (one sheet per participant)
- Pencils or pens
- Timer (optional)
- A way to display the original image at the end (e.g., screen, printout)



## TARGET GROUP

- Adults in professional, educational, or training settings
- Group size: 5 to 25 participants
- Ideal for multicultural or interdisciplinary teams
- Works well in both formal workshops and informal team-building sessions



## STEPS

### Preparation:

Select or design a simple image (scenery, object, geometric shapes).  
Prepare enough paper and pencils for all participants.

### Introduction:

Explain the goal: to draw an image based solely on verbal instructions.  
Emphasize the importance of listening and following directions carefully.

### Activity execution:

The trainer describes the image step-by-step without showing it.  
Participants draw based only on what they hear.  
Optionally, allow yes/no clarification questions.  
Set a time limit if needed.

### Reveal and comparison:

Show the original image to the group.  
Participants compare their drawings to the original and each other's.

### Reflection and discussion:

Lead a short debrief with questions like:  
What made the instructions easy or difficult to follow?  
What strategies helped you stay focused?  
How does this relate to communication in your work/team?



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Remote Teams:** Use virtual whiteboards or drawing apps (e.g., Miro, Jamboard) if you want to play.
- **Younger or Casual Groups:** Choose fun, playful images (like animals or fantasy scenes) to keep it light.
- **Multilingual Teams:** Repeat instructions in multiple languages, or provide a translated summary.
- **Advanced Teams:** Increase the complexity of the image or limit clarification questions to make the game more challenging.



# Silent Discussion

## OBJECTIVE

To develop participants' intercultural competencies, especially reflective thinking, empathy, and written communication, in conflict resolution situations. This activity highlights how written dialogue can promote mutual understanding and constructive collaboration in diverse work environments.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This activity engages participants in a silent, written conversation to explore solutions for solving workplace conflicts. Participants work in small groups and respond to a conflict scenario using only written comments, and a different coloured marker. They interact with each other's ideas in writing before engaging in verbal discussion to reflect on the conversation.

This method simulates how we often use written communication (emails, messages) in multicultural and hybrid workspaces, requiring careful thought. It emphasizes respecting diverse viewpoints and practicing inclusive, constructive responses—key aspects of intercultural competence.



## MATERIALS

- Flipchart papers (1 per group)
- Coloured markers
- Printed or digital copies of conflict scenarios (1 per group)
- Pens/notepads for participant notes during reflection
- Timer

## APPROXIMATE DURATION

**Total: 30–40 minutes**

- Preparation: 3–5 minutes
- Silent discussion: 15 minutes
- Group discussion: 5–10 minutes
- Whole-class reflection: 10 minutes
- Optional evaluation: 5 minutes

## TARGET GROUP

- Age group: 16+
- Group size: Small groups of 4–6 participants; adaptable for larger groups with multiple smaller teams

**Environment:** Suitable for classrooms, workshops, team-building sessions, or intercultural training (in-person or hybrid)



# ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT

## Preparation

1. Prepare flipchart papers and coloured markers (1 per participant in a group).
2. Print or assign one conflict scenario to each group.
3. Set up enough space for each group to work without distraction.

## Activity Development

### 1. Group Formation (2 minutes)

Divide participants into small groups (4–6 people). Each group receives:

- One large paper sheet
- Coloured markers (1 per person)
- One conflict scenario

### 2. Silent Written Discussion (15 minutes)

- Participants read the scenario.
- Without speaking, they write their thoughts, ideas, and proposed solutions on the paper using their assigned marker colour.
- They are encouraged to respond in writing to others' comments, challenge respectfully, or build on ideas.
- Emphasize the importance of clear, respectful, and inclusive written communication.



### 3. Group Verbal Discussion (5–10 minutes)

- Once time is up, allow groups to discuss the written dialogue aloud.
- Encourage reflection:
  - What were the most important ideas?
  - What was helpful or surprising?
  - Did the written format change how they communicated or thought?

### 4. Whole-Class Reflection (10 minutes)

Each group briefly shares:

A summary of their scenario

Key ideas or solutions discussed

How the silent format influenced their thinking and communication

## EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Facilitators can evaluate the effectiveness through:

- A brief verbal reflection or feedback round
- Optional written surveys asking:
  - What did you learn about your communication style?
  - How did this activity help you understand others' perspectives?
  - What would you do differently in a real written conflict situation?



## EXPECTED RESULTS

Participating in the Silent Discussion activity fosters enhanced awareness of how written language can be a powerful tool for managing conflict in thoughtful and effective ways. It encourages increased understanding of diverse perspectives and promotes empathy within group settings. Through the process of silently reflecting and responding, participants also develop their reflective thinking and intercultural communication skills. Additionally, the activity cultivates a greater appreciation for silent and inclusive methods of dialogue, which are particularly valuable in diverse or cross-cultural environments.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

Facilitators should encourage an atmosphere of openness and respect by reminding participants that the written discussion space is judgment-free. It's important to observe the group dynamics discreetly to ensure that everyone is engaging with the activity. Participants should be reassured that varying writing styles or language proficiency are completely acceptable, as the focus is on sharing ideas rather than perfect grammar. Finally, use the post-discussion reflection to draw meaningful connections between the activity and real-world situations, such as workplace or intercultural communication.



## POSSIBLE ADAPTATIONS

- For younger groups: Use simpler conflict scenarios or pair the activity with visual cues or cartoons.
- For online/hybrid formats: Use shared digital documents (e.g., Google Docs) with colour-coded text instead of paper.
- For time-limited settings: Reduce silent discussion to 10 minutes and shorten group reflection.

For larger groups: Have multiple small groups work in parallel and rotate scenarios between rounds.

**SCAN ME**





# SILENT DISCUSSION



To develop participants' intercultural competencies, especially reflective thinking, empathy, and written communication, in conflict resolution situations.

## MATERIALS

- Flipchart papers (1 per group)
- Coloured markers
- Printed or digital copies of conflict scenarios (1 per group)
- Pens/notepads for participant notes during reflection
- Timer



## TARGET GROUP

- Small groups of 4–6 participants; adaptable for larger groups with multiple smaller teams. Suitable for classrooms, workshops, team-building sessions, or intercultural training (in-person or hybrid)

## STEPS

### Group Formation

Divide participants into small groups (4–6 people).

### Silent Written Discussion

Participants read the scenario.

Without speaking, they write their thoughts, ideas, and proposed solutions on the paper using their assigned marker colour.

### Group Verbal Discussion

Once time is up, allow groups to discuss the written dialogue aloud.

### Encourage reflection

What were the most important ideas?

What was helpful or surprising?

Did the written format change how they communicated or thought?

### Whole-Class Reflection

Each group briefly shares:

A summary of their scenario

Key ideas or solutions discussed

How the silent format influenced their thinking and communication

### Evaluation and feedback

Facilitators can evaluate the effectiveness through:

- A brief verbal reflection or feedback round
- Optional written surveys asking



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- For younger groups: Use simpler conflict scenarios or pair the activity with visual cues or cartoons.
- For online/hybrid formats: Use shared digital documents (e.g., Google Docs) with colour-coded text instead of paper.
- For time-limited settings: Reduce silent discussion to 10 minutes and shorten group reflection.
- For larger groups: Have multiple small groups work in parallel and rotate scenarios between rounds.



# Human Knot

## OBJECTIVE

To develop intercultural competencies such as teamwork, communication, empathy, problem-solving, and trust-building through physical collaboration and mutual understanding in a diverse group.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Human Knot is a dynamic, physical activity where participants form a tangled circle by linking hands across the group and must work together—without letting go—to untangle themselves. The activity encourages participants to navigate diverse communication styles, non-verbal cues, and collaborative problem-solving in a fun, low-pressure setting. It is especially effective in mixed cultural groups as it highlights the value of listening, teamwork, and different approaches to challenges. This method simulates how we often use written communication (emails, messages) in multicultural and hybrid workspaces, requiring careful thought. It emphasizes respecting diverse viewpoints and practicing inclusive, constructive responses—key aspects of intercultural competence.



## MATERIALS

No materials needed, just an open space where participants can move freely.

## APPROXIMATE DURATION

- Preparation: 5 minutes
- Activity: 15–20 minutes

Debrief/Reflection: 15–20 minutes

Total: 35–45 minutes

## TARGET GROUP

- Age: 12 years and up
- Group Size: 6–12 participants per group (larger groups can be divided)
- Environment: Indoor or outdoor spaces

Ideal for: Schools, youth groups, intercultural camps, diversity workshops



# STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION

## Preparation

1. Identify a safe and spacious area for the activity.
2. Briefly introduce the purpose of the activity — to collaborate and solve a physical puzzle together while reflecting on how we communicate and work through differences.

## Activity Development

1. Ask participants to form a circle, standing shoulder to shoulder.
2. Everyone extends their right hand into the circle and grabs someone else's hand (not the person directly next to them).
3. Repeat the same with the left hand, ensuring it connects to a different person and again not someone next to them.
4. Once everyone is connected, the group must untangle themselves to form a circle without letting go of hands.
5. Encourage participants to talk, listen, be patient, and suggest strategies.
6. If the knot becomes physically impossible, allow one-time hand releases with a short reflection on needing flexibility in real-world problem-solving.

## Discussion, Final Reflection and/or Evaluation

After the group succeeds (or spends a good effort attempting), hold a group discussion:

- What was challenging about this activity?
- How did you communicate with each other?
- Did everyone feel included in the process?
- Can you relate this to how we work in diverse teams or communities?



## EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

- Informal discussion with debrief questions
- Optional: Short feedback forms or anonymous comment cards
- Facilitator may observe participation, communication patterns, and levels of engagement during the task and discussion

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- Participants will: Experience the importance of collaboration and clear communication
- Build empathy by relying on and helping others
- Reflect on their role in a group and how they interact in diverse environments
- Strengthen group cohesion through shared challenge-solving

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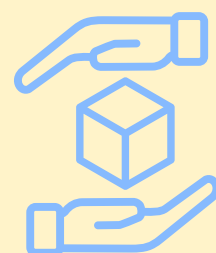
# HUMAN KNOT



This activity aims to foster intercultural competencies such as communication, collaboration, empathy, and trust-building by engaging participants in a physically cooperative challenge. It encourages reflection on how diverse perspectives and communication styles influence teamwork.

## MATERIALS

- No special materials required
- Just an open, safe space for movement



## TARGET GROUP



- Age Group: 12+
- Group Size: 6–12 people per group
- Context: Suitable for youth workshops, intercultural training, classrooms, or informal learning environments
- Accessibility: Adaptable for participants with limited mobility

## STEPS

### 1. Preparation:

- Explain the activity and its goal: teamwork and communication across differences.
- Ensure a safe, open area for movement.

### 2. Form the Knot:

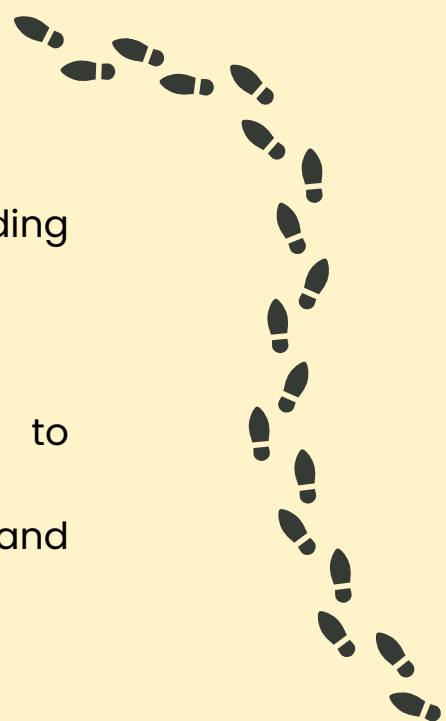
- Participants stand in a circle.
- Each person grabs another's right hand, avoiding immediate neighbors.
- Repeat with left hands, creating a tangle.

### 3. Untangle:

- Without letting go, participants work together to untangle the knot into a circle.
- Encourage open communication, strategy, and cooperation.

### 4. Reflection:

- Discuss how communication helped or hindered.
- Explore connections to real-life intercultural teamwork.
- Optional: Repeat the activity silently or with specific cultural roles to deepen the experience.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- For limited mobility: Use string or ropes to simulate hand connections while seated.
- For large groups: Split into smaller circles and compare strategies.
- To deepen cultural learning: Assign cultural communication traits (e.g., high-context vs. low-context) to participants.





# Breaking down Stereotypes

## OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this activity is to foster intercultural competencies by encouraging participants to identify, discuss, and challenge stereotypes. Through guided discussions and interactive exercises, participants will gain a deeper understanding of different cultures, promote empathy, and develop skills to recognize and counteract stereotypes. This activity aims to create a more inclusive and respectful environment by highlighting the importance of cultural diversity and mutual respect.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The activity begins with an introduction to the purpose and importance of critical thinking in recognising stereotypes. Participants are then divided into small groups to list common stereotypes on index cards, which are shared with the larger group for discussion. The facilitator writes these stereotypes on a whiteboard and leads a discussion on their origins, impacts, and validity, encouraging participants to share personal stories and use critical thinking to question each stereotype. The concept of reframing is introduced, asking participants to reframe stereotypes by considering alternative, positive perspectives.



The activity concludes with a summary of key points and a collective reflection on how critical thinking and reframing helped in understanding and challenging stereotypes, encouraging participants to apply these skills in their daily interactions. The activity requires index cards, a whiteboard, markers, and optionally, multimedia resources, and lasts approximately 45 minutes.

## MATERIALS

- List of all the materials needed for the activity. This includes resources, tools or any equipment needed for implementation.
- Index cards
- Markers
- A whiteboard or large paper
- Optional: multimedia resources (videos, images) to illustrate points





# TOPICS AND QUESTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY

## Topics Focusing on Critical Thinking:

### 1. Introduction:

- "Why is it important to challenge stereotypes?"
- "How can critical thinking help us recognize and break down stereotypes?"

### 2. Group Discussion:

- "What stereotypes have you encountered or heard about different cultural or social groups?"
- "Why do these stereotypes exist?"

### 3. Sharing and Reflecting:

- "How can these stereotypes be harmful?"
- "What evidence supports or refutes this stereotype?"
- "How might this stereotype affect individuals from the targeted group?"

### 4. Incorporating Reframing:

- "How can we reframe the stereotype 'immigrants are unskilled' to highlight their contributions?"
- "What positive perspectives can we consider for each stereotype listed?"

### 5. Personal Stories and Reframing:

- "Share a personal story where you experienced or witnessed a stereotype."
- "How can you reframe this experience to focus on positive aspects or lessons learned?"



### Tips for Using These Topics:

- Keep it open-ended: Allow for a variety of responses.
- Relate to participants' experiences: Ensure the topics are relevant to their lives.
- Create a safe space: Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers.
- Encourage emotional expression: Remind participants to focus on their feelings.

### Questions for the Facilitator-led Reflection Session:

- "How did critical thinking help in understanding and challenging stereotypes?"
- "What was it like to try and understand someone else's perspective?"
- "Did you notice any common themes or different viewpoints?"
- "What did you learn from this activity?"

## APPROXIMATE DURATION

Approximately 45-60 minutes.

The activity is estimated to take around 45 minutes to 1 hour in total. This includes approximately 10 minutes for preparation, 45 minutes for implementation (including introduction, group discussion, sharing and reflecting, incorporating reframing, and personal stories), and 20 minutes for reflection and conclusion. This time frame allows for thorough discussion and meaningful engagement with the activity's objectives

- Preparation: 5-10 minutes (arranging the space, gathering materials, reviewing the process).
- Introduction: 10 minutes
- Implementation: 45 minutes
- Reflection and conclusion: 20 minutes



# TARGET GROUP

## 1. Tips for Using TAge Group:

- Youth (ages 12-18): Ideal for middle and high school students to foster early awareness and critical thinking about stereotypes.
- Adults (ages 18+): Suitable for college students, workplace teams, and community groups to promote intercultural competencies and inclusivity.

## 2. Number of Participants:

- Small Groups (5-10 participants): Allows for more intimate discussions and personal sharing.
- Medium Groups (10-20 participants): Facilitates diverse perspectives while maintaining manageable group dynamics.
- Large Groups (20+ participants): Can be divided into smaller subgroups for discussions, ensuring everyone has a chance to participate.

## 3. Type of Environment:

- Educational Settings: Classrooms, workshops, and seminars where learning and discussion are encouraged.
- Workplace: Team-building sessions, diversity training, and professional development programs to enhance workplace inclusivity.

Community Organizations: Local clubs, cultural groups, and non-profits aiming to promote social cohesion and understanding.



# STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION

## Preparation

### 1. Materials:

- Index cards
- Whiteboard or large paper
- Markers
- Optional: multimedia resources (videos, images) to illustrate points

### 2. Setup:

- Arrange the room to facilitate group discussions (e.g., small clusters of chairs or tables).
- Ensure all materials are readily available and accessible.

### 3. Introduction Preparation:

- Prepare a brief explanation of the purpose of the activity and the importance of critical thinking in recognizing and breaking down stereotypes.



# ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT

## 1. Introduction (5 minutes):

- Begin by explaining the purpose of the activity: to identify and challenge common stereotypes.
- Discuss the importance of critical thinking in recognizing and breaking down these stereotypes.

## 2. Group Discussion (10 minutes):

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Provide each group with index cards.
- Ask each group to list common stereotypes they have encountered or heard about different cultural or social groups on the index cards.

## 3. Sharing and Reflecting (20 minutes):

- Have each group share their list with the larger group.
- Write the stereotypes on the whiteboard or large paper.
- Facilitate a discussion on why these stereotypes exist and how they can be harmful.
- Invite participants to share personal stories or experiences related to the stereotypes discussed.
- Encourage participants to use critical thinking to question the validity of each stereotype.
- Ask guiding questions such as: "What evidence supports or refutes this stereotype?" and "How might this stereotype affect individuals from the targeted group?"



#### 4. Incorporating Reframing:

- Explain the concept of reframing: changing the way we look at a situation or belief to see it from a different perspective.
- Highlight how reframing can help challenge stereotypes and promote a more inclusive mindset.
- After listing stereotypes, ask participants to reframe each stereotype by considering alternative, positive perspectives.
- For example, if a stereotype is "immigrants are unskilled," participants can reframe it to "immigrants bring diverse skills and experiences."

#### 5. Personal Stories and Reframing:

- Encourage participants to share personal stories where they have experienced or witnessed stereotypes.
- Ask them to reframe these experiences by focusing on positive aspects or lessons learned.





# DISCUSSION, FINAL REFLECTION, AND EVALUATION

## 1. Conclusion and Reflection (10 minutes):

- Summarise the key points discussed and the reframed perspectives.
- Collectively reflect on how critical thinking and reframing helped in understanding and challenging stereotypes.
- Encourage participants to apply these skills in their daily interactions.

## 2. Evaluation:

- Gather feedback from participants on the activity's effectiveness and their learning experiences.
- Use this feedback to make any necessary adjustments for future implementations.





# EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Evaluating the effectiveness of the "Breaking Down Stereotypes" activity can be done through both informal and structured methods:

## INFORMAL METHODS

### 1. Group Discussions:

- After the activity, facilitate an open discussion where participants can share their thoughts and feelings about the experience.
- Ask questions like "What did you learn from this activity?" and "How has your perspective on stereotypes changed?"

### 2. Personal Reflections:

- Encourage participants to write brief reflections on what they learned and how they plan to apply these insights in their daily lives.
- Collect these reflections to gauge the impact of the activity.



# STRUCTURED TOOLS

## 1. Surveys:

- Create a survey with questions that assess participants' understanding of stereotypes, their ability to critically analyze them, and their willingness to challenge them.
- Include both quantitative (e.g., Likert scale) and qualitative (e.g., open-ended questions) items.

## 2. Feedback Forms:

- Provide feedback forms where participants can rate different aspects of the activity, such as the clarity of instructions, the effectiveness of discussions, and the overall impact.
- Ask for suggestions on how to improve the activity.

## 3. Pre- and Post-Activity Assessments:

- Conduct assessments before and after the activity to measure changes in participants' knowledge and attitudes towards stereotypes.
- Compare the results to evaluate the effectiveness of the activity.



## EXPECTED RESULTS

### 1. Enhanced Critical Thinking:

1. Participants will develop the ability to critically analyze and question stereotypes, understanding their origins and impacts.
2. Improved skills in evaluating evidence and considering alternative perspectives.

### 2. Increased Cultural Awareness:

1. Greater awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity.
2. Participants will gain insights into different cultural and social groups, fostering empathy and respect.

### 3. Improved Interpersonal Skills:

1. Enhanced communication skills through sharing personal stories and engaging in group discussions.
2. Ability to listen actively and respond thoughtfully to diverse viewpoints.

### 4. Positive Attitude Towards Diversity:

1. Participants will learn to reframe negative stereotypes into positive perspectives, promoting a more inclusive mindset.

Increased willingness to challenge stereotypes and advocate for inclusivity in their daily interactions.

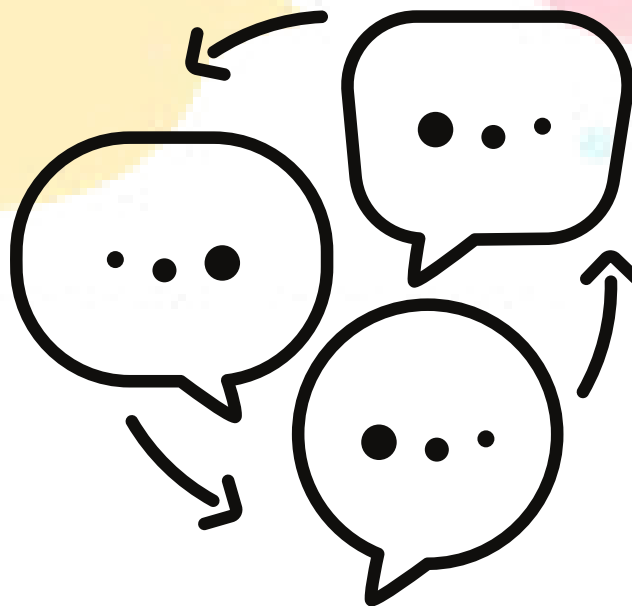


## 5. Strengthened Social Cohesion:

1. Building stronger connections within the group by understanding and respecting each other's backgrounds and experiences.
2. Creating a supportive environment where diversity is valued and celebrated.

## 6. Personal Growth:

1. Participants will reflect on their own biases and stereotypes, leading to personal growth and self-awareness.
2. Development of strategies to counteract stereotypes and promote inclusivity in various contexts.





## EXPECTED IMPACTS

### 1. Increased Cultural Sensitivity:

- Participants will develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.
- Enhanced ability to recognize and respect different cultural norms and values.

### 2. Reduction of Prejudices:

- By challenging and reframing stereotypes, participants will reduce their own prejudices and biases.
- Promoting a more inclusive and equitable mindset.

### 3. Improved Social Interactions:

- Participants will be better equipped to engage in respectful and meaningful interactions with individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Strengthened relationships and social cohesion within the group.

### 4. Empowerment to Challenge Stereotypes:

- Participants will feel empowered to question and challenge stereotypes in their daily lives.
- Increased confidence in advocating for diversity and inclusion.



### 5. Enhanced Critical Thinking Skills:

- Development of critical thinking skills to analyze and deconstruct stereotypes.
- Ability to apply these skills in various contexts, leading to more informed and thoughtful decision-making.

### 6. Promotion of Inclusivity:

- Creating a more inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated and valued.
- Encouraging participants to actively contribute to fostering inclusivity in their communities.

### 7. Personal Growth and Self-Awareness:

- Participants will gain insights into their own biases and stereotypes, leading to personal growth and self-awareness.
- Development of strategies to counteract stereotypes and promote positive change.





# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

## Managing the Activity

### 1. Set Clear Expectations:

- Clearly explain the purpose and objectives of the activity at the beginning.
- Establish ground rules for respectful and open communication.

### 2. Create a Safe Environment:

- Foster a supportive atmosphere where participants feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences.
- Emphasise confidentiality and respect for all opinions.

### 3. Be Prepared:

- Familiarise yourself with the materials and steps of the activity beforehand.
- Have all necessary materials (index cards, markers, whiteboard) ready and accessible.





# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

## Resolving Conflicts or Problems

### 1. Addressing Discomfort:

- Acknowledge that discussing stereotypes can be sensitive and may evoke strong emotions.
- Encourage participants to express their feelings and provide support as needed.

### 2. Handling Disagreements:

- If conflicts arise, mediate the discussion by reminding participants of the ground rules.
- Encourage active listening and empathy to understand different perspectives.

### 3. Dealing with Resistance:

- Some participants may be resistant to challenging their own stereotypes. Approach this with patience and understanding.
- Use guiding questions to gently prompt critical thinking and self-reflection.





# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

## Ensuring Engagement

### 1. Active Participation:

- Encourage everyone to contribute by asking open-ended questions and inviting quieter participants to share their thoughts.
- Use small group discussions to ensure everyone has a chance to speak.

### 2. Interactive Elements:

- Incorporate interactive exercises, such as role-playing or storytelling, to keep participants engaged.
- Use multimedia resources (videos, images) to illustrate points and maintain interest.

### 3. Positive Reinforcement:

- Acknowledge and validate participants' contributions to build confidence and encourage further participation.
- Highlight insightful comments and examples to reinforce key points.





# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

## Additional Tips

- **Flexibility:**
  - Be adaptable and ready to adjust the activity based on the group's dynamics and needs.
  - Allow extra time for discussions if participants are deeply engaged.
- **Follow-Up:**
  - Provide opportunities for participants to continue the conversation after the activity.
  - Encourage them to apply the skills and insights gained in their daily interactions.





# POSSIBLE ADAPTATIONS

## Adapting to Different Age Groups

### 1. Youth (ages 12-18):

- Use simpler language and more relatable examples.
- Incorporate interactive elements like games or multimedia resources to maintain engagement.
- Shorten the duration of discussions to match attention spans.

### 2. Adults (ages 18+):

- Include more complex and nuanced discussions.
- Use case studies or real-world examples to illustrate points.
- Allow for longer, in-depth discussions and reflections.

## Adapting to Different Group Sizes

### 1. Small Groups (5-10 participants):

- Foster intimate discussions where everyone can share personal stories.
- Use a roundtable format to ensure equal participation.

### 2. Medium Groups (10-20 participants):

- Divide into smaller subgroups for discussions, then reconvene for sharing and reflecting.
- Use breakout sessions to manage group dynamics.

### 3. Large Groups (20+ participants):

- Split into multiple smaller groups for the activity.
- Use technology (e.g., online platforms) to facilitate discussions and sharing.



# POSSIBLE ADAPTATIONS

## Adapting to Different Contexts

- Educational Settings:
  - Integrate the activity into a broader curriculum on diversity and inclusion.
  - Use classroom resources like projectors and whiteboards for visual aids.
- Workplace:
  - Tailor the activity to address specific workplace diversity issues.
  - Incorporate team-building exercises to strengthen workplace relationships.
- Community Organizations:
  - Adapt the activity to focus on local cultural groups and community issues.
  - Use community spaces and resources to facilitate the activity.





## Adapting to Different Needs

- Language Barriers:
  - Provide materials in multiple languages.
  - Use visual aids and multimedia resources to support understanding.
- Accessibility:
  - Ensure the physical space is accessible to all participants.
  - Use assistive technologies for participants with disabilities.
- Time Constraints:
  - Shorten the activity by focusing on key elements
  - Offer a condensed version that can be completed in a shorter timeframe.

**SCAN ME**



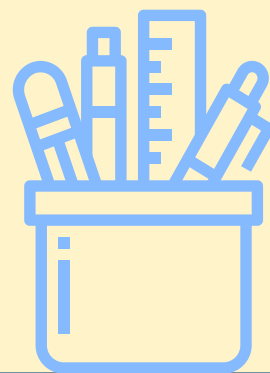


# BREAKING DOWN STEREOTYPES

The main objective of this activity is to help participants identify, question, and challenge common stereotypes. By doing so, the activity aims to foster mutual understanding and respect among diverse groups. Participants will develop critical thinking skills, practice empathy and active listening, and enhance their cultural awareness. This activity contributes to creating a more inclusive and collaborative environment where all individuals feel valued and heard.

## MATERIALS

- Index cards for each group
- Markers
- A whiteboard or large paper
- Optional: multimedia resources (videos, images) to illustrate points



## TARGET GROUP

- Youth Workers
- Young People
- Educators
- Community Groups

## STEPS

- Dividir en grupos.
- Explicar objetivo y reglas.
- Compartir estereotipos.
- Cuestionar y replantear.
- Compartir experiencias.
- Reflexionar y concluir.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Diverse Cultural Groups:
  - Confidentiality and Respect: Provide clear guidelines on confidentiality and respect to ensure a safe space for all participants.
  - Culturally Relevant topics: Adapt prompts to reflect the cultural values and experiences of the participants. This makes the activity more relatable and meaningful.
  - Multilingual Facilitation: Consider using multilingual facilitation if needed to ensure that language barriers do not hinder participation and understanding.



## ONLINE/VIRTUAL SETTINGS:

- **Video Conferencing Platforms:** Use video conferencing platforms with breakout rooms to facilitate small group discussions.
- **Online Etiquette:** Establish clear guidelines for online etiquette, such as muting microphones when not speaking and using the chat function respectfully.
- **Digital Tools:** Consider using digital tools for sharing and reflection, such as online whiteboards or collaborative documents.
- **Moderation:** Maintain clear moderation of the chat and voice conversations to ensure that the discussion remains respectful and on-topic.





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# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE



# HUMAN LIBRARY METHODOLOGY



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Implementing the Human Library is not just about organizing an event — it's about creating a transformative space where real conversations can challenge stereotypes, awaken empathy, and spark mutual understanding. This methodology turns people into “Books” and listeners into “Readers,” opening a platform for lived experiences to be shared and heard in an honest, respectful environment.

To make this possible, careful planning and thoughtful preparation are essential. From defining the purpose and assembling the right team, to selecting diverse and willing “Books,” every step supports the creation of a safe, inclusive space where meaningful dialogue can unfold. The process involves training and supporting participants, designing a welcoming setting, and ensuring that both Books and Readers are ready for an experience that may be emotional, eye-opening, and deeply human.

What follows is a practical guide to bringing the Human Library to life — from preparation and promotion to facilitation and evaluation — all centered around the shared goal of connection through conversation.





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EVERY STORY(TELLER) MATTERS  
HUMAN LIBRARIES AND MUTUAL RECOGNITION

# IMPLEMENTING A HUMAN LIBRARY



**A LIBRARY WHERE THE  
BOOKS ARE... PEOPLE!**

**- REAL STORIES. REAL  
CONVERSATIONS.**



**THE “BOOKS”**

**- PEOPLE SHARING PERSONAL  
LIFE EXPERIENCES.**



**THE “READERS”**

**- LISTENERS WHO ASK,  
CONNECT, REFLECT.**



**IT’S ALL ABOUT DIALOGUE.**

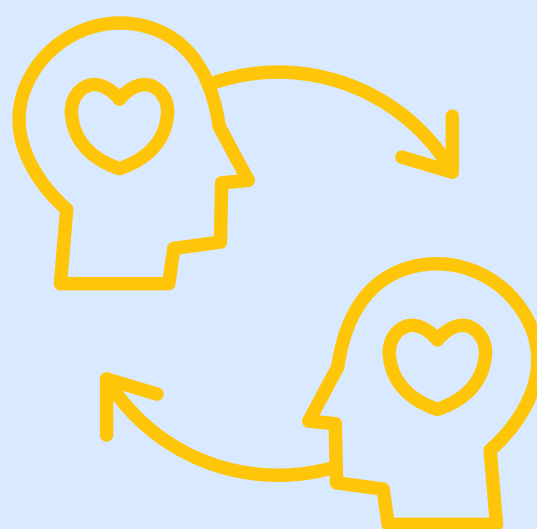
**- NOT READING — TALKING AND  
LISTENING.**

## THE GOAL?

**- Break stereotypes** ✨

**- Build empathy** ❤️

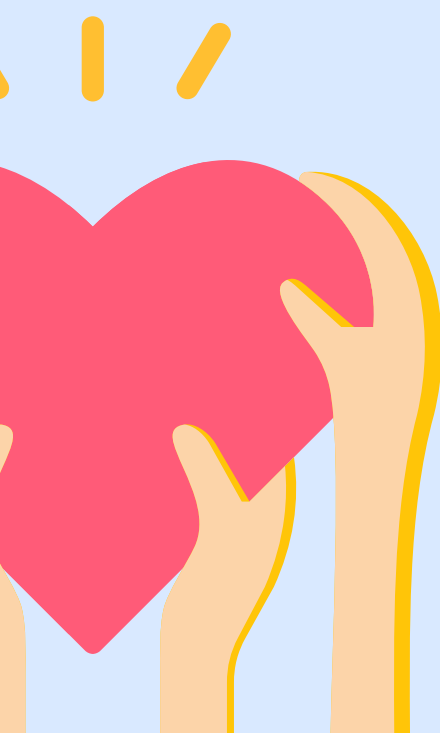
**- Foster understanding** 🌍



## HUMAN LIBRARIES CREATE...

**- Safe spaces, honest  
conversation** 🔒

**- Open minds, open  
hearts** 💡



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# PLANNING AND PREPARATION

## RECRUITMENT OF "BOOKS"

### Find diverse voices 🌍

Backgrounds, beliefs, identities & experiences

### Diversity = richness 💎

(- Ethnicity

- Gender

- Religion

- Ability

- Life experiences)

### Help "Books" prepare 🤝

- Understand the event

- Reflect on their story

- Shape the narrative (with support)

- Create a title & synopsis

- Design a cover

- Define safe space needs

- Agree on privacy & collaboration

### Reminder:

Every conversation will be different! 🔄

## PLANNING AND PREPARATION

### Start with one question ?

- What's the goal?

### Define the purpose 🎯

- Awareness?

- Inclusion?

- Intercultural dialogue?

### Form your team 👥

- Logistics

- Communication

- Recruitment of Books & Readers

### Choose the right space 🏠

- Accessible

- Comfortable for private talks

### Set the details 📅

- Pick a date

- Plan session length (20-40 min)

## PREPARATION AND SUPPORT FOR "BOOKS"

### Training & confidence building 🧠

- Individual or group sessions

- Safe, supportive space

### Key focus points 🎯

- Authenticity

- Confidentiality

- Active listening

### Help shape the story 📝

- Identify key moments

- Structure with flow

- Reflect on what to share

- Set personal boundaries

### Prepare for tough questions ?

- How to respond

- When to say "I'd rather not answer"

### Adapt for different audiences 👥

- Teenagers ≠ Adults

- Adjust tone, language, detail

### Their story matters ❤️

- Remind them of their impact

### Creative covers 🎨

- Title + visual design

- No real names/photos (unless agreed)

- Spark curiosity

- Use metaphors or personal symbols

Encourage imagination! 🌈

## PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

### Spread the word

📱 Social media, schools, local groups

🌍 Real, diverse stories

🤝 Invite people from all walks of life

### For the Readers

📢 Clear information

📖 Access to covers & synopses

✅ Accept Terms & Conditions

🕒 Show up!

🧐 Be curious, ask questions

🛑 Respect boundaries and the space

🕒 Stay till the end

📝 Give feedback

### Some Ground Rules for Everyone

(1. Mutual respect & active listening)



(2. Respect the Books and their privacy)



(3. Respect the schedule)



(4. Take care of the space and resources)



(5. Be fully present and responsible throughout the experience)



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# STRUCTURE, SPACE & FLOW HOW A HUMAN LIBRARY WORKS

## *The Books and the Readers!*

### THE BOOKS

- 2 to 6 Books per event
- Diversity + safety =
- A chance to be heard
- Sharing real stories = empowerment

### THE READERS

- 2 to 10 per Book
- Smaller group = deeper dialogue
- Engage & ask (with respect)
- Active listening is key
- The Book is the star

## FACILITATING THE FLOW

- Book Keepers!
- Welcome participants
- Keep time & balance the groups
- Share ground rules
- Support energy & signal transitions
- Agree on a safety signal with each Book



### TIMING & ROUNDS

- Total duration: 1h30 – 2h30
- Each round: 20–40 min
- Less than 20 = too short
- More than 40 = too tiring
- Max 2 rounds per Book, with breaks

### SPACE MATTERS

- Quiet space or separate storytelling areas
- Private rest zone for Books
- Support materials
- Accessibility for all
- Bonus: coffee corner = connection

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• Educacion





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# METHODS FOR THE EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE EVENT

## COLLECT FEEDBACK

### From:

- Books
- Readers
- Organizing Team

### Why?

- Understand the impact
- See what worked
- Improve for next time



Now it's time to reflect!

## HOW TO GATHER IT

- Quick questionnaires
- Ask about feelings, experience, insights
- Use before & after forms to track change

## BONUS

- Let Readers write messages to the Books
- Anonymous or signed
- A small gesture — big emotional impact



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# RECOMMENDATIONS



## SUPPORTING THE BOOK-BUILDING PROCESS

Offer follow-up sessions:

- Brainstorming
- Story structure
- Test runs

Remind them: share only what feels right!

(The story can be:) symbolic, thematic, or about key moments. Reflective questions help.

📖 Writing a draft helps with structure & timing

🗣️ Practice aloud to build confidence

Some Books need extra support!



Some final tips to make sure your Human Library runs smoothly — and meaningfully.

## SOUND MATTERS

- Watch for overlapping stories
- Too much noise = less intimacy
- Create quiet zones



## EVALUATION CAN BE TRICKY

- Feedback forms short & simple ✍️
- Clear, friendly language
- During the event  
👤 For teens or kids:  
Try playful or creative feedback formats 🎨🧩



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# PROJECT



# BEST PRACTICES





This section gathers a collection of six best practices contributed by each project partner, showcasing real experiences and activities implemented throughout the project. Each example includes a brief description of the context, the approach taken, and the outcomes achieved.

The aim is to provide inspiration and guidance through practical insights, including reflections on the challenges faced, solutions found, and lessons learned. Testimonials and key takeaways highlight the human aspect of each initiative, while a final set of recommendations offers valuable advice for those planning similar actions in the future.

Additional materials, such as photos, tools, or detailed descriptions, are accessible through the provided links.





## A HUMAN LIBRARY EVENT

A Human Library event was held featuring a Syrian migrant woman as a "book" who shared her personal story with high school students serving as "readers." The event began with an introduction to the Human Library concept, followed by the book sharing her life experiences, challenges, and insights. Students actively participated by asking questions towards the end of the session, creating meaningful interactions documented through photos and videos.

A few challenges emerged during the event, such as language barriers that hindered clear communication, leading to brief pauses and requiring translation assistance. Another challenge was the initial hesitation of students in asking questions. Additionally, the emotional intensity of the personal stories shared necessitated sensitivity and psychological support. These challenges were addressed effectively by providing simultaneous or consecutive interpretation, conducting a brief orientation on questioning techniques beforehand, and having psychological support mechanisms, such as counselors, readily available.



Participant testimonies highlighted profound impacts, with students noting increased empathy, understanding, and awareness of refugee issues following the event. The Syrian woman's story deeply resonated with the students, significantly altering their perspectives and correcting misconceptions about refugees. The event underscored the effectiveness of direct, personal storytelling in reducing prejudices and fostering genuine intercultural understanding.

For future projects, it is recommended to ensure convenient timing and venue selection to maximize comfort and participation. Enhancing language support through additional translators or language facilitators is crucial. Integrating Human Library events regularly into school curricula can help sustain awareness. Pre-event training on cultural sensitivity and active listening skills would benefit participants.





## THE CREATION OF A POOL OF HUMAN BOOKS

During the implementation of Human Library events, preparing and supporting the “Books” was a key priority. Three of the four young immigrants living in Portugal who had taken part in an international mobility remained involved in the project, participating as Books in the events—two of them in more than one session. Additionally, through contacts from the association and youth workers involved in the process, more people from diverse nationalities and backgrounds joined the pool of Books.

One of the team’s biggest concerns was the well-being of those who volunteered to be Books. Sharing personal stories often puts people in a vulnerable position, so a close and personalized support process was essential. Most of the time, one team member was designated to accompany each Book more closely, becoming their main point of contact. Several meetings were held with each Book, where they received all the logistical information about the event, support in structuring their story (when requested), and feedback throughout the preparation process.

During the events, extra care was taken to create a warm and welcoming environment — for example, by collecting personal written messages from Readers to each Book. This proved to be a meaningful way for Books to receive direct feedback and understand the impact of their story.

After the events, the team continued following up with each Book to reflect on their experience.



This close and personal relationship allowed for the creation of a more stable and sustainable pool of Books, many of whom were available to participate in more than one event. This enriched the project by allowing Books to interact with diverse groups of Readers, and it also made project management more efficient, as the team could count on people already familiar with the process. One of the main challenges was ensuring consistent and diverse participation from Readers. In events that relied on open calls, two key issues emerged: first, the pool of participants with personal connections to the Books runned out, leading to a drop in attendance in subsequent editions; second, the audiences were often not very diverse, mostly composed of people from the same social circles—usually already aware and engaged with the topics.





To expand reach and diversify the audience, organizing Human Library sessions in schools proved to be an effective solution. These settings allowed us to engage younger and more varied groups, often at a crucial stage for developing critical thinking, empathy, and active listening.

Another challenge was the team's need to define a clear and unified model for how to implement the Human Library methodology and how to support the Books. To address this, an information guide was created, outlining the methodology, the structure of the events, and the process of building and supporting the Books. This guide has helped the team stay aligned and allowed Books, Readers, and other stakeholders to better understand the process.

The Books' testimonials highlight the importance of continuous support:

"Having guidance throughout the process adds depth and self-awareness. It's a chance to relive and rethink your story."

"The support made all the difference, from the guiding questions in the first reflection to the sensitive and collaborative creation of the book cover."





Participating in more than one event was seen as beneficial:

“The possibility of continuous participation in different spaces brought new perspectives.”

“Retelling my story to different audiences helped me explore new meanings, enriched by the reactions and reflections of more and more Readers.”

One Book shared:

“Taking part in this project helped me take ownership of my story and strengthened my identity and resilience as an immigrant.”

The key takeaway: establishing caring, empathetic relationships and creating a safe space is essential for meaningful participation.

To secure a personalized support: avoid including too many Books in the same event to ensure the team can offer close, individualized accompaniment. And for that to be possible, a good team management is also essential. In order to guarantee that the Books don't feel that their work is in vain or less valued, and to expand the project's impact, it is important to ensure that the Readers join in, not only in number but also in diversity.

Foster long-term relationships: Working with Books over multiple events enriches their experience and strengthens the project's foundation.



## UNEXPECTED RESULT

During the implementation phase of our Human Library events under the project, we had the unique opportunity to host a mobility in Romania with 29 participants from different countries. The participants had gathered for a training focused on gender equality—an ideal context to explore personal narratives and foster deep dialogue.

What made this experience even more special was the setting: a serene summer camp, surrounded by nature, far from the noise and distractions of the city. The calm, inspiring environment created the perfect atmosphere for meaningful reflection, trust-building, and open-hearted conversations.

Recognizing the shared purpose of the group and their readiness to connect, we decided to pilot our very first Human Library event. We began by introducing the concept and guiding participants through a reflective process, encouraging them to think about personal experiences that shaped their understanding of gender roles, stereotypes, or identity. Initially, we were unsure whether anyone would feel ready to step into the vulnerable role of a “book.”

To our surprise and deep appreciation, two participants courageously stepped forward to share their personal stories. Their honesty and emotional depth sparked powerful, intimate conversations and inspired others to open up as well—creating a ripple effect that brought the group closer together.



Given the interest from the rest of the group in hearing both stories in depth, we adapted our schedule and organized two Human Library sessions per day—one in the morning and one in the afternoon, with a lunch break in between.

This structure offered a valuable benefit: it gave participants the chance to fully engage with both stories in a relaxed and focused way. Rather than rushing through multiple narratives, readers had the time and emotional space to listen deeply, reflect, and connect with each storyteller individually. This setup amplified the impact of each session and created a more meaningful and respectful experience for both books and readers.

Our main concern at the start was whether any participants would be willing to become books, especially given the group size and the vulnerability required. We also wondered if the setting—while beautiful—might make it harder to focus on serious topics.

To address this, we invested time in carefully introducing the Human Library concept and held guided reflection activities to help participants explore their personal stories in a safe, gradual way. The natural surroundings, rather than distracting, turned out to be a grounding force—creating a peaceful, non-judgmental space where people felt at ease. The two volunteers who came forward helped break the ice, and their bravery set the tone for the entire day.



One key takeaway was that quality matters more than quantity. Even with just two books, the emotional impact was immense. We also learned that trust, time, and environment are critical ingredients for a successful Human Library. And perhaps the most surprising lesson? The effect of the stories lasted far beyond the event itself.

After the formal sessions ended, we noticed that participants continued sharing personal experiences, forming deeper connections, and opening up to each other in casual conversations. The Human Library had created a safe space that extended beyond the event—helping bond the participants as a community and laying the foundation for honest, long-lasting dialogue throughout the rest of the mobility.

For others looking to implement a Human Library event, especially during youth mobilities or training sessions, we recommend starting small. Two authentic stories can be just as impactful—if not more—than a full roster of books. Focus on preparation: create a reflective process that builds trust and allows participants to connect with their own narratives. Choose a peaceful, nature-based setting if possible—it truly enhances the atmosphere. Lastly, structure the day with breaks and time to process—like splitting sessions with a lunch break—to help participants stay emotionally present and engaged.

And remember: sometimes the greatest impact of an event happens after it ends—leave room for that magic to unfold.



# BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN LIBRARIES

Creating a safe space is essential for the successful implementation of Human Libraries events. To create a safe space, we applied a multi-faceted approach, primarily focused on clear communication and trust-building. To ensure books and volunteers understood the project's goals and the Human Libraries methodology, we conducted workshops to thoroughly explain the process. To facilitate comfortable initial encounters, we provided lunch and snacks, fostering a relaxed atmosphere. These workshops also served as a platform for books and volunteers to connect on a personal level, fostering a sense of security and mutual respect. In the process of writing the books, emphasis has been on building trust, particularly among the volunteers and the books, as well as among the books themselves. We organized two workshops specifically to facilitate this, providing opportunities for participants to get to know each other and share their motivations for involvement. The first workshop included introductions and discussions that revealed a common desire among the books – all with minority backgrounds – to share their experiences and challenge stereotypes. This shared purpose helped forge a strong connection between them, while volunteers expressed a keen interest in contributing to a project focused on shifting perspectives.



Following lunch in the first workshop, we paired up the books and volunteers two by two to begin developing the book and synopsis. The second workshop focused on writing the books, and the paired volunteers and books then met separately to finalize the synopsis and the book cover.

These initial workshops were crucial in laying the groundwork for the Human Library events. By establishing trust, ensuring open communication, creating a welcoming environment, and initiating the book development process, the books were empowered to share their stories authentically, knowing their voices were valued and supported.

Preparing participants to share personal stories, especially on sensitive topics like identity or trauma, presents challenges in navigating emotional readiness and personal boundaries. Participants often feel uncertain about what or how much to share. Facilitators can foster emotional safety with a flexible, participant-led process using reflective questions, optional journaling, and informal check-ins, allowing individuals to set their own boundaries. It is important to normalize that stories may evolve and sharing is always voluntary.

Another hurdle involves varying confidence levels and communication styles. Some participants may not feel confident speaking in public or may have difficulty expressing personal experiences in a linear narrative, while others find it hard to make their story accessible across cultural or linguistic boundaries. The solution is offering diverse preparation formats like one-on-one meetings, visual aids (e.g., storyboards), or peer storytelling circles. Emphasise that storytelling prioritizes authenticity over performance, validating all forms of expression.



The two initial workshops were crucial for establishing trust and open communication. These workshops fostered a safe space where both the books and volunteers felt comfortable and valued. A key learning was the importance of a welcoming environment, including shared meals, to facilitate personal connections and break down barriers. One participant noted,

*"Participating in these workshops and being met with great welcoming made it easier for me to open up and tell my story,"*

*"The connection with the other 'books' and volunteers was remarkable, especially seeing how aligned we were in our ambitions and objectives.*

*This created a comfortable and pleasant environment."*

The workshops also empowered the books by dedicating time to develop their narratives and affirm the importance of their stories. This emphasis on trust-building directly influenced participants' engagement in the Human Library events. By cultivating trust and mutual respect, the workshops reduced intimidation and encouraged open sharing. Another book stated,

*"Meeting the other books and hearing their stories was eye-opening and created a strong connection among us. This significantly reduced the intimidation I felt about sharing my story, as I felt safe and supported by the other books and the volunteers."*

These testimonials highlight how the workshops' structure, particularly pairing books and volunteers for story development, supported the Human Library events. Participants recommended allocating more time and incorporating storytelling practice, where each book could practice sharing their story and receive feedback.



Supporting participants in preparing their personal stories for Human Library workshops is a delicate yet rewarding process. It is crucial to begin preparation early and build gradually, allocating sufficient time for identifying and supporting participants who wish to act as Human Books. This early engagement fosters deeper reflection, builds trust, and allows for necessary adaptation. By approaching preparation as a relational and flexible process, rather than a fixed structure, facilitators can create spaces where participants feel genuinely seen and supported. These small, intentional actions can ultimately transform a powerful storytelling experience into a truly transformative one.





# FACILITATING INCLUSIVE HUMAN LIBRARY EVENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

A key goal of our project was to ensure that young individuals, including those with disabilities, had the chance to actively join in intercultural dialogue and awareness-raising efforts through our human library events. In these events, individuals (“books”) share their personal narratives of migration with “readers”, aiming to promote understanding and empathy among diverse cultures and experiences in life.

We acknowledged the need to create spaces that are accessible and inclusive, particularly when engaging with children who have various disabilities, enabling them also to take part in these transformative experiences. Our human library event specifically aimed to connect migrant storytellers with young participants with disabilities, providing them with early insights into migration, diversity, and social justice topics.

One of the primary challenges we encountered was enabling direct communication between the human “books” (migrants who spoke English) and children with disabilities, particularly those with hearing impairments or other communication challenges. The core of human libraries is founded on the direct sharing of stories and emotions between the storyteller and the reader, and we understood that involving intermediaries could risk weakening that bond.



To address this, we decided to work closely with the teachers of the children, who were well aware of the unique communication requirements of each student. For those with hearing impairments, teachers assisted us by translating into sign language, ensuring that the children could fully engage with the stories. In instances where a language barrier existed (such as when the human books spoke solely English), we arranged for real-time translations into Greek to aid understanding for both the educators and the children.

While this method meant that the interactions were mediated instead of entirely direct, it allowed the children to participate actively, pose questions, and engage with the migrant storytellers in a manner that honored their needs and abilities. Most importantly, it provided these children, who frequently experience exclusion from intercultural engagements, with the chance to expand their horizons and connect meaningfully with individuals from varied backgrounds.

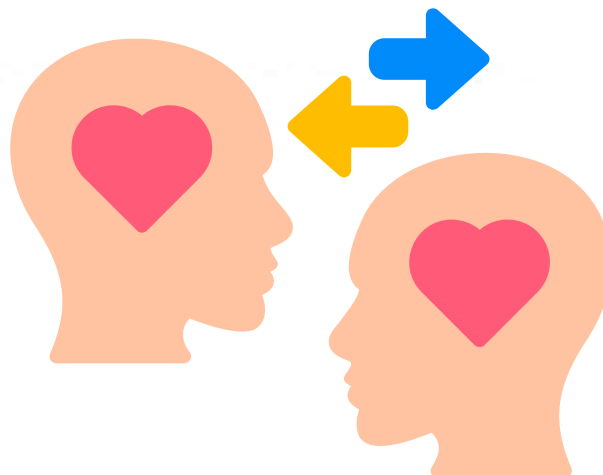
Although we lack direct quotes from participants, the feedback from both educators and students was overwhelmingly positive. Instructors expressed appreciation for the chance to introduce their students to global topics in a format that was easy to understand, and many observed how engaged and curious the children became during the sessions. The human books also valued the opportunity to share their stories with a younger, more diverse audience than they typically encounter.



From this experience, we discovered that fostering inclusion often demands creativity and adaptability in program development, and that the participation of teachers and interpreters can be incredibly helpful. Crucially, we found that even when communication involves mediation, the essence of the human library, namely empathy, listening, and dialogue, remains preserved.

For upcoming projects that aim to include children with disabilities, we suggest collaborating closely with educators, sign language interpreters, and specialists from the early stages of planning to ensure that all communication needs are addressed. Establishing partnerships with schools and organizations experienced in working with disabled children can also help in customizing activities to various abilities and building trust among participants.

Additionally, we recommend creating materials and content in various formats (such as visual aids, support for sign language, and simplified language translations) to enhance accessibility at intercultural events. Lastly, being adaptable and open to making immediate changes is essential, as it ensures that young individuals, regardless of their abilities, can partake in meaningful intercultural experiences and develop into compassionate, informed global citizens.





# BUILDING A CROSS-CULTURAL NETWORK TO FOSTER INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION

One of the main objectives of the project was to achieve diverse and inclusive participation, incorporating participants from different countries and cultural backgrounds.

This was achieved by building on the participation in activities of other projects focusing on interculturality, which allowed access to existing networks with international profiles.

Thanks to the exchange of experiences among participants and as people shared their experiences within their environments and network, interest and curiosity in the project was generated, which led to the incorporation of new participants.

One of the main challenges was to find participants of different nationalities for activities such as mobilities and human library events. Although there was genuine interest, it was not always easy to reach people who met all the specific requirements and actively involve them in the project.

The solution was to build on spaces and connections established through previous experiences and projects, particularly those involving immigrants or people with close ties to immigrant communities, which fit the project criteria. Thanks to Neotalentway's previous involvement in initiatives focused on interculturality, it was possible to reach out to these participants and involve new people and organizations interested in the project's objectives.



Thanks to these connections, the visibility of the project grew, attracting a more diverse range of participants and stakeholders. This expansion not only enriched the activities, but also ensured that each event met specific participation requirements.

Although we do not have direct quotes from participants, overall, the feedback received was very positive. Many participants expressed their enthusiasm for discovering initiatives like this, learning more about the Erasmus+ program and the opportunities it offers, and connecting with people from different backgrounds. Whether through local activities or international mobilities, participants valued the opportunity to exchange experiences, feel listened to and feel part of a wider intercultural network.

Throughout the experience, we learned that establishing and maintaining trusting relationships opens doors to reach other audiences and achieve the proposed objectives. Word-of-mouth recommendations and informal contacts were often more effective than official calls for participation in social networks, since thanks to the previous experience and trust established by the collaboration in other activities, they promoted the interest and enthusiasm of the participants to be part of this initiative.



We also realized that explaining opportunities such as those offered by Erasmus+ in a clear and simple way, especially to people who were not previously familiar with this type of programs, is a great tool to attract the attention of different target audiences and encourage participation.

For future projects, we recommend taking advantage of previous connections from other projects or activities as this can greatly facilitate the search for participants and broaden the scope of the project. In addition, it is advisable to design communication strategies that are simple and accessible, to ensure that the message is clear and tailored to the needs and interests of the target audience in order to arouse their interest and encourage their participation. It would also be beneficial to identify and recruit ambassadors or informal representatives within the different groups or countries, people who can naturally help to spread the message and build trust among new participants. Finally, maintaining open and close communication and providing clear information about the project and its opportunities, such as those offered by Erasmus+, can help generate motivation and commitment from a very early stage.



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# ANNEXES





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# EVENT TECHNICAL DATA SHEET FOR IMPLEMENTATION

<b>Event title</b>	
<b>Language</b>	
<b>Date and time</b>	
<b>Event location</b>	
<b>Estimated total duration</b>	
<b>Main objective</b>	
<b>Number of books expected</b>	
<b>Number of expected readers</b>	
<b>Organizing team (names and roles)</b>	



## BOOK CONSENT FORM

Book title:

Synopsis (max. 100 words):

Visual proposal for the cover (description or attached image):

Significant elements or symbols for the Book:

Logistical requirements (materials, space, accessibility):

Are you comfortable with photographs during the event?

Yes / No

Do you consent to sharing your story beyond the event?

Yes / No

Comments or specific needs:

Signature or agreement (digital or manual):



# HUMAN LIBRARY EVENT CHECKLIST

- Definition of event objectives
- Selection and preparation of space
- Call for Books
- Creation of visual materials (covers, synopses, signage)
- Registration and communication with Readers
- Design of event schedule and assignment of shifts
- Designation of Book Keepers or facilitators
- Preparation of materials and catering (if applicable)
- Completion of consent forms
- Post-event evaluation



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# HUMAN LIBRARY EVENT EVALUATION

Thank you for participating in this Human Library event. We would like to thank you for your active participation and commitment. Your contribution has been critical to the success of this event.

We ask for your feedback to evaluate the quality of the event and to better understand the impressions and knowledge gained during the day. These comments will help us to improve and optimize future similar events.

The following questionnaire is used only for internal purposes. Therefore, the information is collected in an anonymous way, it is completely confidential and will not be shared with external parties. Data will be securely stored and your privacy will be protected.

There are no correct or wrong answers. For this evaluation we appreciate if your responses are as sincere as possible.

Please share with us your gender

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Please share with us your age

- 15 - 19
- 20 - 25
- 26 - 35
- 36+

Please share with us your country of origin



What have you learned or gained from your participation in this event on human libraries?

- Greater understanding of social problems.
- New and different perspectives.
- Increased knowledge about diversity and inclusion.
- Inspiration to take social action.
- Skills such as empathy and respect.
- I learned about personal resilience and how to overcome challenges.
- I felt more confident to share my own experiences and perspectives.
- Learning outcomes

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements (SD= Strongly disagree; D= Disagree; NN= Neither agree nor disagree; A= Agree; SA= Strongly Agree).

- I have a better understanding of how social norms, traditions and stereotypes influence my perception of other people.
- I feel more motivated to promote the inclusion of migrants in my community.
- I now better understand the importance of cultural diversity in our local community.
- I am more motivated to collaborate with other members of my community to promote migrant inclusion.
- I have understood the impact of personal storytelling and cultural exchange in promoting empathy and understanding.
- This event has improved my ability to engage in meaningful conversations with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- This event has strengthened my personal commitment to a more inclusive and equitable society.
- I feel more committed to being an active advocate for inclusion and diversity in my local community.



Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements (SD= Strongly disagree; D= Disagree; NN= Neither agree nor disagree; A= Agree; SA= Strongly Agree).

- The promotion of the event was effective and appropriate
- The duration of the event was adequate.
- The Human Library methodology has been well explained and I understand how it works.
- The event space was adequate and comfortable, facilitating interaction and learning.
- The event was easily accessible to all participants.
- The organisation and running of the event was efficient and well coordinated.
- I felt comfortable during the event.

What did you enjoy most about the human library event?

What did you find most valuable about your experience at the human library event?

Do you think this event would have been more effective if it had been held in person?

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure



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Explain your answer to the previous question

How do you think the human library event could be improved for future participants?

Would you be interested in participating in future human library events or similar initiatives?

- 
- Yes, I would like to participate as a book
- Yes, I would like to participate as a reader
- Yes, I would like to participate as a book or a reader
- No
- Maybe

Thank you!





# HUMAN LIBRARY EVENT RULES FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

## Before the event:

- Learn about the purpose of the event.
- Read the synopsis of the available books (if previously shared).
- Confirm your attendance

## During the event:

- Practice active listening
- Respect the time and privacy of the Books
- Ask questions with respect and openness
- Participate with commitment

## After the event:

- Complete evaluation
- Share your experience if you feel comfortable
- Thank you for contributing to a more inclusive space!



# READER CONSENT


## Reader Consent

- Reader name (optional):
- Age:
- How did you hear about the event?
  - Social media
  - Email
  - Newsletter
  - Organization's website
  - Past events
  - Online search
  - Other
- I have read and agree to the terms and conditions of the event
- I agree to actively participate and respect Books
- I understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality and creating a safe space

Signature or digital/manual acceptance



# ACTIVITY TEMPLATE FOR DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

<b>Name of the activity</b>	
<b>Objective of the activity</b>	Describe briefly and clearly the main objective of the activity. This should be related to the development of intercultural competencies
<b>General description</b>	Detailed explanation of what the activity consists of, how it is carried out, and in what context it can be applied. Make sure it is clear enough for someone who has never done it.
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	Describes the expected results: changes in attitudes, acquisition of intercultural skills, strengthening of relationships, etc
<b>Materials needed</b>	Complete list of materials, tools or resources needed for the preparation and execution of the activity.
<b>Approximate duration</b>	Indicates the estimated time of the activity, including: 1. Preparation
	Describes what type of group the activity is aimed at, considering...
<b>Step-by-step implementation</b>	1. Preparation; 2. Activity Development 3. Discussion, Final Reflection and/or Evaluation
<b>Evaluation and feedback</b>	Proposal for how to evaluate the effectiveness of the activity. May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feedback rounds</li><li>• Facilitator observations</li><li>• Structured tools (rubrics, indicators, etc.)</li></ul>
<b>Recommendations for the facilitator</b>	Practical tips to ensure successful implementation:
<b>Possible adaptations</b>	Suggestions for adapting the activity according...



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