



BONITA TORO'S

methods for dealing with prejudices



Bonita Toro, a young Spaniard, is a veteran of international youth exchanges. Bonita has already had five exchanges with Käkäläjärvi alone, and Simo-Petteri is her trusted friend. Bonita initially learned methods from others but later started devising them herself with her friends. She realised that the purpose of youth exchanges is to open the participants' eyes, to learn and to be amazed.

**The following are methods that Bonita uses to look behind prejudices.
How could you take a similar peek?**

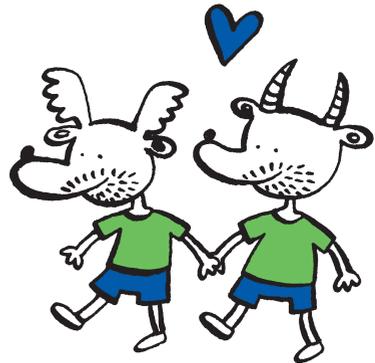
An urban adventure to break free from prejudices

The participants take a test to find out about their personal prejudices. They then seek different groups that are discriminated against – persons with disabilities, transsexuals, immigrants, refugees, gays and lesbians, people who speak a different language or follow a different religion... – and everyone assesses what they know about the selected groups. The urban adventure teams are picked ensuring that those who know the least about each target group go out together. During the urban adventure, they visit organisations that represent the different groups and learn about the challenges encountered by people who belong to these groups. While sightseeing, the team members interview local people about their opinions of these groups. In the evening, all teams get together to talk about their thoughts. Should we campaign for the rights of some minority?



Experiencing prejudices under your own skin

Make eating a difficult experience. At a table for four, one person is blindfolded, another can only use one hand, the third may not speak, and the fourth cannot hear. How does it feel? Or the bravest participants can go out to town and test their limits. If I wear a burqa for a day, will I be treated differently? What if two boys walk hand in hand around town for a couple of hours, will people shout abuse at them? What happens if I stand in the marketplace with my eyes blindfolded with a sign, "I am a Muslim, hug me?" These experiences can be channelled into blogs, social media updates or videos, and by spreading them, you can try and influence people's attitudes.



Face value

We tend to rely on stereotypes a lot. We make assumptions based on language, skin colour or clothes. If young people from different countries collect facial or full-body images of celebrities in their countries who all have different stories, what presumptions do we make based on the way they look? The pictures are divided between two groups. One of them takes the facial images, the other the full-body images. The groups' task is to look at the pictures and try and guess about the person's story. Eh? Some thought Leo-Pekka Tähti was a male model, others presumed that his life in a wheelchair must be tough. The young leaders revealed that he has won three gold medals in wheelchair racing at Paralympics. This teaches the participants that our first impressions are not always right.

