

## THE INTERCULTURAL HISTORY LINE

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### Source

This activity is adapted from the Education Pack “All different – All equal” (Council of Europe 2005).

### Themes

- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Social and political context

Other topics addressed: different readings of history and different interpretations of historical events; ethnocentrism and nationalism; empathy and promoting a broader vision of the world

### Competences addressed

- ▶ Attitudes: respect for oneself and others; openness and curiosity towards diversity
- ▶ Knowledge of culture, history and politics; knowledge of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination
- ▶ Skills: critical thinking; dealing with conflicts

**Complexity** : Level 3

**Group size** : 5 to 30 people

**Time** : 90 minutes

### Objectives

- ▶ To explore different perceptions of history and history teaching
- ▶ To look for similarities in our education systems
- ▶ To raise curiosity about and empathy with other peoples' cultures and histories
- ▶ To generate a critical approach to our own history
- ▶ To analyse whether historical narratives take diversity into account.

### Materials

A long sheet of paper in order to draw a timeline (starting with 1500 AD), sticky notes.

### Preparation

This activity can be preceded by “Every picture tells a story”. Showing participants how our perception is influenced by the type of information we have helps them understand how nationalistic perspectives in teaching history can influence our understanding of historical events.

### Instructions

1. Inform participants that this activity will make use of historical events in order to discuss culture.
2. Invite each participant to think of five historical dates that are very important for their country or culture and to write them briefly on a sticky note together with their name. Give participants about 10 minutes to write and then ask them to place the sticky notes on the timeline.
3. When everyone has done this, ask them to explain why those dates are important, what they stand for and why they have chosen them.

### Debriefing and evaluation

You may use the following debriefing questions.

- ▶ Did participants find any dates or events surprising? Were they familiar with all of them? If any events are unfamiliar to some participants ask those who recorded them to explain.

- ▶ How and why do we learn about certain events in our history and not others?
- ▶ Among the events that participants mentioned, are the different minorities or groups present in them? Why or why not?

### **Tips for facilitators**

This exercise is particularly suited for multicultural groups, although it can also work well with monocultural ones. In this case, it may be interesting to reflect upon what makes us remember some dates instead of others and what influences us.

If in your group there are participants from different countries where conflict has been experienced, make sure there is a sufficient level of trust and empathy in the group to carry out this activity. Discuss in the debriefing how historical events may be experienced in totally different ways according to a person or a group's situation in that given event.

### **Variations**

The activity can be adapted and used with a one-year calendar.

Participants can be asked to mark the most important holidays celebrated by different countries, cultures, religions, etc.

### **Suggestions for follow-up**

This activity can be followed by "In other words", which focuses on rewriting biased media articles. In this flow, after analysing the diversity or lack thereof in history teaching, they can analyse how diversity is present in current news reporting.