EXCLUSION BREAKFAST

Source
This activity was developed by the educational team of Voices of Young Refugees in Europe in the context of the study session “The role of media on the road to social inclusion of young refugees: hearing the voices of young refugees in Europe”, 2012, and was adapted by Nadine Lyamouri-Bajja.

Themes
- Social and political context
- Stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination

Other topics addressed: exclusion, power relations, human rights.

Competences addressed
- Attitudes: respect for oneself and others, a sense of social justice and responsibility
- Knowledge of human rights
- Skills: empathy; solidarity; critical thinking

Complexity: Level 4

Group size: 15 or more people

Time: 110 minutes (45 minutes for the simulation, 20 minutes at the end for those who did not get breakfast, 45 minutes debriefing), starting at breakfast time

Objectives
- To understand the mechanisms of social exclusion and injustice through a real-life experience
- To explore the concept of control vs freedom through a common group experience
- To reflect on power relations and discrimination in an intercultural context.

Materials
A5 coloured paper (red, blue and green), a stamp, four T-shirts of the same colour for the facilitators (optional), two tables, placed in a space near the kitchen area where participants usually have breakfast.

Preparation
This activity can be preceded by “From exclusion to integration”. In this flow, participants can better understand the mechanisms of creating categories in societies and how to address them.

This activity needs to be carried out when participants usually have their breakfast, in the area where they eat it.

Prepare passports for each participant. This could be a piece of folded A5-coloured paper, featuring the word “passport” and each participant’s name. Prepare four red exclusion passports, six blue stamp-requiring passports and, for the rest of participants, green diplomatic passports. The green passports are stamped and signed, the blue ones are either stamped, or signed or dated, but never have the complete three elements. The red passports are empty.

Before the activity, organise the space and responsibilities in the following way.

One facilitator should be in charge of passport distribution: this person should stand in a position to greet all the participants on their way to the breakfast room. For example, if people arrive via an elevator, this position could be in front of the elevator door or otherwise close to the kitchen entrance; each participant receives a passport from the facilitator and then goes into the breakfast room.

A second facilitator is in charge of passport checking: this person should have a table in front of the kitchen/breakfast space entrance. Each participant should show their passport to the facilitator in order to find out if they are to be let in or not. The facilitator informs participants if they can enter the kitchen area or if they need to go to another office. Only those with green passports and blue passports that contain both a stamp and a signature will be allowed into the kitchen.
A third facilitator sits at the **border office** and acts arbitrarily. This person is in possession of a stamp. They can either stamp the passport or sign and date the passport or both. They can also tell participants to first go to the administrative office to fill in a form.

A fourth facilitator is placed at the **administrative office**, handing out forms to be filled in. The forms are clearly discriminative and also confusing and unclear. When asked about the contents, the facilitator should simply answer vaguely, without being supportive. When receiving the forms back, the facilitator can choose to ignore the form, comment on it or ask additional questions. They can then arbitrarily send the person back to the border office or can decide to put a note into the passport (or sign it).

The facilitators at the administration and border offices act as they feel, with no coherence, and can support one participant while being unsupportive to another.

If possible, prepare four T-shirts for the team of facilitators. To be easily recognisable, facilitators could wear the same T-shirt or any other distinctive sign.

Print the forms for the administration office either in very bad colour print, so that some questions are not visible enough to be filled in, or in another language of your choice that is not understandable for participants.

The day before the activity, participants should be informed that breakfast will be at a certain time (to be defined) in the morning, to make sure that everyone comes. Do not give participants any further information at this stage.

**Instructions**

1. The activity starts at breakfast. When participants go for breakfast, they will find a border control in front of the entrance to the dining area.

2. One facilitator will hand out the passports to participants without giving them any information.

3. In front of the kitchen, another facilitator checks the passports and:
   - lets those with green passports through and welcomes them with a smile and a “bon appétit”;
   - tells those with blue passports that they need to get a stamp from the immigration office; no other information is given;
   - informs those with red passports that they will not be allowed in; they are not given any reason as to why they cannot access the area with their passports.

4. A third facilitator sits at the border office, looks very bored and uninterested and checks certain passports. The facilitator signs them or decides not to sign them, stamps some but not others, or sometimes writes the wrong date. Those with blue passports get sent back and forth between different facilitators. In some cases, if the dates are wrong, a passport will need to be renewed. For this, participants are sent to the administrative office where they are told to fill in a form.

5. At the administrative office, a fourth facilitator gives forms to those participants who need to apply for a new passport. This facilitator can read the form, throw it away, ask additional questions or comment on it. They can then decide to help the participant by providing them with further guidance or a signature or can instead just send the applicant back to the border office.

6. Let participants continue their toing and froing for a while, and then let some, but not all, of the participants with blue passports enter the kitchen area.

7. Let the activity continue until everyone has picked up their passports.

8. Announce the end of the activity, and give some time to those participants who did not get breakfast to get it.

9. After this time, gather the participants and move on to the debriefing.

**Debriefing and evaluation**

The debriefing could contain the following questions.

- How did participants feel about the activity?
- How was it for the excluded ones, what did they think/feel/do?
- What did participants who needed a stamp do? Did they have a strategy?
- How was it for the group having breakfast? How did they feel? When did they realise that some people were not given breakfast? What did they do?
How did participants react to the administrative form? Did they fill it out? What did they think about the questions? Is this in any way related to real-life experiences?

What was the message of this activity?

Does any of it relate to some real-life experiences participants have had/known of?

What can one do in such situations? Who could help?

What does this activity have to do with intercultural learning/intercultural dialogue?

The debriefing could also address:

- majority/minority relations
- solidarity
- inclusion/exclusion mechanisms.

**Tips for facilitators**

This activity is quite intense and provocative, as it happens outside the formal programme (at breakfast time) and is therefore totally unexpected. During the activity, facilitators need to behave in ambiguous and at times arbitrary ways on purpose, so that the conditions related to exclusion, injustice and discrimination can become evident.

The whole team of facilitators needs to be attentive – first while in their different roles, but also in checking that participants are OK, as some might react quite emotionally.

In certain cases, it can be good to choose who to give which passport to, for example when the activity is done with people who have experienced similar situations in real life. People who went through this in reality could be traumatised, so you should avoid facing them with the same situation again. Rather give them a comfortable role.

Make sure everyone gets informed when the simulation is over and allow everyone to have their breakfast before meeting for debriefing.

In some cases, an additional facilitator can take the role of social worker to help participants in need and provide support.

After the breakfast and before the debriefing, participants should come out of their roles and the facilitators should check if everyone feels OK. One way to leave the role play behind is to ask all participants to shake or move around in the room, and shout their name. Another way is to let them imagine they were wearing a tight costume and to let everyone virtually take it off until they are entirely themselves again.

The personal security file includes questions that are deliberately discriminatory and unacceptable. This should be addressed well in the debriefing in order to help participants question the existing administrative procedures and attitudes.

One purpose of the activity is to denounce injustice, arbitrary treatment and discrimination. Therefore, the ambiguous behaviour of facilitators, the unclear procedures and the requests to fill in inadequate forms need to be questioned and addressed.

In some cases, participants have experienced quite similar processes and procedures in real life, in visa applications or at border control. They may therefore not necessarily question it. It is then important for the facilitator to reframe the activity into a human rights context.

**Variations**

In the context of a national or international youth activity, this simulation can be made more real by pretending that this is a real procedure to check participants’ registration details. In that case, they could be told that some papers are missing, that they need to find the director of the building where the activity is held for a stamp, etc.

**Suggestions for follow-up**

This activity can be followed by “Don’t be a bystander” in order to reflect on ways to intervene when other people are being treated in an unjust way.
Handouts

Administrative form to be filled in by participants

Personal Security File

1. First name:

2. Last name(s):

3. Date of birth:

4. Address and place of residence:

5. Name of parents:

6. Profession of parents:

7. Race/ethnicity:

8. Language spoken at home:

9. Have you ever had a police record? On what matter?

10. Have you ever used drugs? Which ones?

11. Do you or someone from your close family own a weapon? What type and model?

12. Have you ever used a weapon?

13. Have you been diagnosed with a mental illness? Which one(s)?

14. Do you currently have any transmittable disease(s)? Which one(s)?

15. Do you know anyone in your personal surroundings who is involved in suspicious activity(ies)? Please provide details.

I hereby certify that all information provided above is correct.

Date:                      Signature: