FROM EXCLUSION TO INTEGRATION

Source
This activity was developed by Oana Nestian Sandu.

Themes
- Identity
- Culture
- Social and political context
- Intercultural communication and dialogue

Other topics addressed: majority–minority relations, exclusion and integration

Competences addressed
- Attitudes: respect for oneself and others; a sense of social justice and responsibility
- Knowledge of culture, history and politics
- Skills: solidarity

Complexity: Level 4

Group size: 12 to 30 people

Time: 110 minutes (20 minutes for the introduction of the model, 30 minutes for the analysis, 30 minutes for presenting conclusions, 30 minutes for debriefing)

Objectives
- To increase understanding of the functioning of the minority–majority relations in society
- To understand the attitudes of minorities and majorities in their interaction with each other
- To analyse the relations in society based on a simple framework that reflects complex relations and attitudes.

Materials
Handout with acculturation orientations, flip chart, markers, one big room and several small rooms or areas allowing the possibility for group work.

Preparation
Before running this activity familiarise yourself with the acculturation model described in the section “Models and theories of intercultural learning” in Chapter 2, so that you can explain it during the activity.

This activity can be preceded by “The flower of identity”. A reflection on one’s own identity before engaging in this activity, which is focused on the relationship between identity and communication, helps participants to view their identity in a social context and better understand the implications of power relations upon identity and of identity upon social interactions.

It can also be preceded by “Find your group”, an activity which helps participants understand how easily categories are built and how in-group and out-group feelings are generated.

Instructions
1. Present briefly the interactive acculturation model described in the section “Models and theories of intercultural learning”; in Chapter 2. You can draw the two axes (identity and communication) and explain how different levels of focus on these two axes represent different acculturation orientations (high focus on identity + low focus on communication = segregationism/separatism; low focus on identity + high focus on communication = assimilationism; low focus on communication + low focus on identity = exclusion/marginalisation; high focus on communication + high focus on identity = integrationism).
2. Explain in detail each acculturation orientation and give examples, such as the following.

- **Assimilationism** – Policies and attitudes that promote assimilation more or less explicitly, requiring immigrants to give up their language, religion, traditions and behaviours and embrace the traditions of the majority culture in order to be accepted as full members of society.
- **Segregationism** – Situations in which national minorities or immigrants are kept in separate neighbourhoods. There are some cases in Europe where the authorities build walls to separate the neighbourhoods. Situations in which minorities attend separate schools, enjoy separate festivities, go to separate stores and restaurants.
- **Exclusionism** – Situations in which politicians or other people explicitly claim that minorities and immigrants should leave the country/city or, even worse, should be murdered or sterilised.
- **Marginalisation** – Situations in which a person does not feel they belong to any group anymore. They are not accepted as a full member either of the majority or any of the minorities. For example, a Roma girl who comes from a traditional community in which girls do not attend school beyond the fourth grade, but who goes to high school. She might not identify with her co-pupils from the high school, nor with her childhood friends from the neighbourhood.
- **Integrationism** – Situations in which people with different cultural backgrounds live together, interact with each other, learn from each other, have equal rights and are not afraid that these interactions will make them or their culture less authentic.

3. Distribute the handout with the description of the acculturation orientations presented below, both from the majority perspective and the minority perspective.

4. Divide the group into subgroups of four or five participants.

5. Each group is asked to analyse for a given context the relation between the majority and a minority group of their choice by following the questions in the group analysis handout.

6. Participants are encouraged to make the analysis from a social, political, economic or educational perspective, based on their own knowledge, and to illustrate their view with as many examples as possible. They might have different opinions based on their lived realities and knowledge on the subject. Explain to the participants that while this process invites them to look at the relation through a certain level of generalisation, this does not exclude differences within the majority or minority group.

7. Give groups 30 minutes for their analysis and ask them to prepare to briefly share the relation they analysed and, specifically, their thoughts on the last question on how relations can be improved.

8. Once groups are back and they have presented their points, move to the debriefing discussion.

**Debriefing and evaluation**

- How was this analysis for you? What was surprising, what was difficult?
- How do people end up adopting attitudes of segregation, assimilation, exclusion or integration? How are they formed?
- How could relations between minority and majority groups be improved, for their respective benefit? Can you think of any examples in your context?
- What can be done to promote integrationism in your own communities? What can young people do? What should the authorities do?

**Tips for facilitators**

People in the group might have different opinions, so give everybody the opportunity to express their opinion and to support it with concrete examples.

Participants might identify more than one dominant acculturation orientation of/towards a certain group. They might distinguish between geographical areas, they might discuss differences within groups. The reality is complex and there should be no attempts to simplify it to fit into a model. This model is presented as a lens through which an analysis of society can be made, not as way to fit the reality into a model. Always encourage participants to give arguments/examples for their point of view and make it clear that different perspectives are welcome.

If participants come from different countries their social realities might be different. Thus, in the small group work ask them to think of a minority that is present in all the countries the participants come from. The acculturation orientations of/towards that minority might not be the same in each country. Examples from each reality are important to support why participants identify one acculturation orientation as being dominant.
Suggestions for follow-up

This activity can be followed by the activity “Don’t be a bystander” or by “Sharing discrimination – Fighting discrimination”. In this flow, participants move from analysing the relationships between different groups in society to discussing individual cases of discrimination and taking action to redress social injustices.
Handout 1 – Acculturation orientations

Acculturation orientations of majority groups

**Assimilationism** – This reflects a situation in which the behaviour of a person is considered “normal” only when it reflects completely the characteristics and values of the majority culture. People who have this orientation accept the presence of other groups in their society as long as members of these groups give up their identity to embrace the culture and identity of the majority.

**Segregationism** – The presence of other groups in society is tolerated as long as they live separately, in specific neighbourhoods or regions (including ghettos). Segregationists avoid contact with minorities as they believe this would dilute or weaken the integrity and authenticity of their culture/identity.

**Exclusionism** – No tolerance for other cultural groups and a belief that certain groups can never assimilate within the majority community. There is an attitude of total rejection of the presence of other groups in society. Certain exclusionists create the conditions to incite minorities to leave the country/neighborhood.

**Integrationism** – The valorisation of the maintenance of cultural specificities and identity of other groups, as well as the willingness to modify one’s own institutional practices and certain aspects of the majority culture to facilitate integration of minority groups. It reflects a situation in which there is both freedom of expression and opportunities to affirm cultural identity, and spaces for dialogue between people who identify with different cultural groups in society.

Acculturation orientations of minority groups

**Assimilationism** – This reflects the willingness of minority groups to give up most aspects of their own culture for the sake of adopting the cultural practices of the majority. People with this orientation believe they can only become full members of society if they think, speak and act like the majority.

**Separatism** – This is characterised by the desire to maintain all the features of one’s own culture, while rejecting the culture of and relations with members of the majority culture or other cultural groups. People with this orientation live in closed communities, attend schools in their own language and, according to their own traditions, do not socialise with members of the majority population and are afraid that doing so will lead to a loss of identity.

**Marginalisation** – This characterises individuals who feel ambivalent and somewhat alienated from both their own and the majority culture, thereby feeling excluded from both their heritage culture and the culture of the majority. A certain level of openness towards other cultures, as well as certain beliefs, practices or world views, might lead people to experience a situation is which they do not have a feeling of “belonging” to any group.

**Integrationism** – This reflects a desire to maintain key features of one’s own culture, while also valuing the adoption of key elements of the majority culture. People with this orientation view their identity as fluid; they manifest their cultural specificities openly, while also engaging in relationships with people belonging to different cultural groups and valuing pluralism.
Handout 2 – Questions for an analysis of relations between a majority and minority group

► What is the dominant acculturation orientation of the majority towards the minority group? Think of concrete examples of:
  - the general attitude of the majority towards this group;
  - what is presented in the media and social media regarding this minority group;
  - how politicians and opinion leaders refer to the minority group;
  - whether members of the minority group have access to services;
  - whether they participate or have the chance to participate in community life.

► What is the acculturation orientation of the minority groups towards the majority? Think of aspects such as:
  - where the minority group lives;
  - how members of the minority group view their presence in society, specifically in the public and cultural life of the community;
  - how and where the minority interacts with the majority.

► Once you have identified the specific acculturation orientations for each group, discuss what is, in your opinion, the long-term impact of their relations as it stands. For example, will it lead to a loss of cultural specificities for either group, such as language, religion or customs? Are positive relations promoted between the groups?

► Are you aware of any policies at national or European level that aim to develop an integration orientation of/towards this minority?

► What can improve the relations between the majority and minority group?