

Changing Migration Narratives

The Migreat Project Guide:
concepts, methods, activities
and good practices



MIGREAT!



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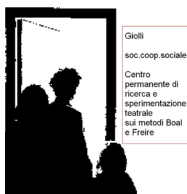


MiGREAT!



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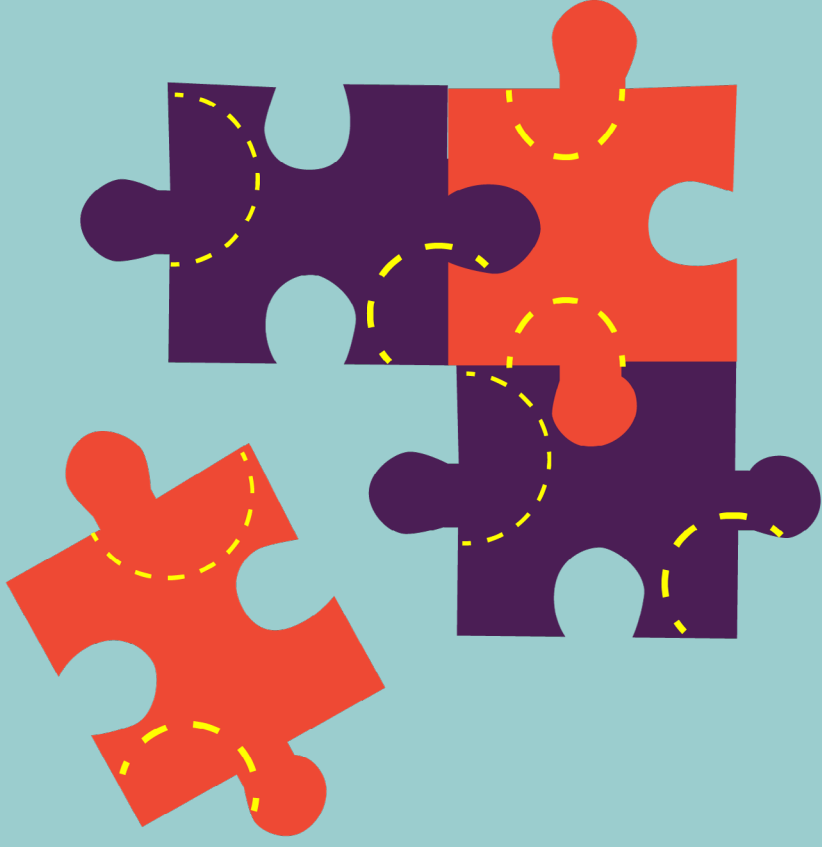
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INTRODUCTION.

1.1.

Background to the project

The MiGREAT! project brought together our four educational organisations from across Europe: EFA (UK), Élan Interculturel (France), Giolli (Italy), and Nyitott Kör/Open Circle (Hungary). We were all deeply concerned about the rise of anti-immigration sentiment in our countries and across the continent, and we were determined to do something about it, starting with our contexts, knowledge and expertise.

MiGREAT! had international learning and capacity-building at its core. It helped educators and other stakeholders develop and use alternative narratives around migration, with the aim of countering negative discourses. Throughout the project, we shared expertise, learned new methods and disseminated these methods in our wider networks in the four countries, but also internationally. This was in order to have a bigger impact on the crucial work of opposing the negative representation of people from a migrant background [\(1\)](#).

Across the four educational organisations, we have expertise in Freirian popular education, community organising, Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, Theatre in Education, applied drama and the Critical Incident method. The wide range of praxis and expertise brought in by the partners was an asset throughout the

project. The first part of MiGREAT! involved sharing good practice internally, seeking to create opportunities for collaborative work that would allow for the development of methods to use in creating alternative narratives. In order to reach this goal, we ran three training sessions in the UK, Italy and Hungary.

We also ran three webinars that allowed us to use the tools found in this guide in a variety of ways and apply them to a range of concrete scenarios relevant to our respective contexts. Through these sessions, we reached around 80 practitioners, including adult educators, theatre practitioners, activists, campaigners, community organisers, psychologists, and social and cultural workers. Many of these practitioners were from migrant backgrounds themselves.

To disseminate the work further and have a wider impact, we worked on dissemination. We reached hundreds of people in our wider networks by sharing the events we organised (workshops, seminars and a conference) and the tools we produced (this guide, visual tools, theatre scripts and antidiscrimination guidelines). Each partner used their skills to lead on one of these outputs and/or was involved in the development of all the others.

1.2.

Narratives about migration in the UK, France, Italy and Hungary

Narratives are stories that circulate in societies. They emerge from shared social beliefs and also act to reinforce them, while guiding decisions and actions of individuals and groups (2). They depict reality in a partial way, through a particular point of view. Some of them are more dominant than others, but that can change. In most European countries, dominant narratives about migration and migrants from low-income countries seem to be dehumanising and/or essentialising (3), especially since the 'migrant crisis' in the middle of the 2010s and the growing popularity of far-right discourse and policies that seem to influence the mainstream discourse across the continent (4).

In the context of migration, we believe that counter and alternative narratives are useful as they can offer fresh perspectives on a reality that is otherwise viewed in a partial way through negative stereotypes. They can also reflect the diversity of experiences of people from migrant backgrounds in a non-normative way and better equip us to fight against oppression. Alternative narratives do not necessarily need negative narratives to exist; they can be realistic and factual narratives about the lives of people who face social oppression. While counter narratives precisely aim to reach those who sympathise with extremist views, countering only a specific narrative,

alternative narratives aim to reach the whole population, including producers of extremist narratives.

We prefer the use of alternative narratives within our project to mean narratives which offer an inclusive, non-exclusionary vision of a society that embraces its diversity and promotes human rights. They not only provide information, but can also create emotional bonds between those who engage with them, meaning that alternative narratives can influence their internalised vision of the world. Thus, it is important not only to denounce essentialising discourse and develop counter narratives but also to produce alternative narratives so that the migrants can cease to be stereotyped and discriminated against. It is often necessary to use both strategies to complement each other both on a personal and societal level, with the aim of empowering communities, and improving inclusion and the perception of the country in question. It is worth noting that alternative narratives can be intricate to use. This guide aims to formulate ways to produce and use them effectively, so sometimes we will use one term or another, or both, depending on the context.

We recommend this reading for educators and activists in the field of social work, migrants or other, who have some practical experience. We did our best to present

an overview but encourage readers to go deeper: read the references, participate in training in real life, test out our activities and share with partners. Our partnership is also happy to hear your feedback and support you in this process.

In this chapter, we will briefly introduce the particular situation of each partner's country in 2020. The UK, France, Italy and Hungary all have different histories and different political contexts, which we need to understand if we want to tackle essentialising narratives about migration. We consider it important to present the contexts from which we speak in order to position ourselves accurately in relation to narratives on migration. This absolutely

does not limit the usefulness of our tools in other contexts, but should encourage our readers to reflect on their realities in order to better adapt the methodologies that are described in the following chapters.

2020 was definitely not a n e a s y year. We wrote this guide in the midst of one of the biggest crises in recent years: the Covid-19 pandemic. We have gone from a world of constant and intense mobility to a year of severe restrictions and changes in customs and habits. We believe this is a historic moment to build the narratives we dream of. We leave here some of our analyses and reflections on the 'world of before' and some clues for the 'world of tomorrow'.

We hope you enjoy reading!

Dominant narratives about migration in the UK

Before analysing current narratives on migration, it is important to briefly provide the historical backdrop against which they appear. It is sometimes claimed that the UK is an island of immigrants, a reference to the first inhabitants of Britain, and that 'we are all immigrants' after all. It is important, however, to stress that it is impossible to separate any discourse on migration from race and British colonial history. Starting in the late 19th century in particular, various legislation was passed in attempts to control borders and immigration, with an emphasis on excluding those seen as 'undesirable'.


Currently in the United Kingdom, a large part of the discourse on migration is focused on Brexit. Immigration has become a key political issue that has arguably shaped the outcomes of the 2016 Brexit referendum and the 2019 general election.


The ruling Conservative party has emphasised integration in government policy, which often presents migrant communities as an 'other' and a 'problem' that needs to be solved.


A policy response that reinforces this discourse is the protocol of teaching what is termed British Values. These are 'values' that migrant communities are expected to learn and practise so they may better integrate. These policies and approaches create a binary of 'us' vs 'them', further feeding into racist narratives about migrants that appear alongside a spike in hate crime that has more than doubled since 2013. They also suggest that the UK is superior to what is often Global South contexts and 'their' values. Underpinning all of the above is also a homogenisation of migrants as one 'block', with no factoring in of diversity in ethnicity, class, gender, religion or other identity category.


The British media plays a large role in shaping these discourses and, arguably, influencing election and referendum results.

Some of the dominant narratives that appear in the media include:

 **Economic threat:**
the implication that migration directly impacts jobs and wages, housing and resources for 'Britons';

 **Criminality:**
that young refugee men in particular are 'criminals' and 'terrorists';

 **Not working / 'living off the state':**
in the 1990s in particular there was emphasis on 'bogus people seeking asylum' who arrive in the UK to 'milk the system' through claiming benefits and making use of the free National Health Service (NHS);

 **Cultural threat:**
that migrants 'import' with them 'different values' and that they will not be able to 'integrate'. There is often hyperemphasis on Muslim migrants in particular in this context.

Examples of alternative narratives

Some media coverage provides nuance, however, and groups such as Migrant Voice have been established to address the issue of representation in the media, something many other less mainstream media outlets also attempt to do more proactively (e.g. Gal-dem).

One alternative to dominant narratives that often appears in the media is one that stresses on 'good immigrant' models, often highlighting contributions to public services or 'heroic' acts. One Day Without Us was an example of how this is also deployed by grassroots initiatives to highlight the importance of migrant workers to the UK economy. Another popular example is referencing the migrant workforce in the National Health Service (e.g. #MigrantsMakeTheNHS). This narrative, though popular, can be reductionist, however, and can reinforce ideas about merit and acceptance that can be harmful.

Another approach, which perhaps counters the above narrative, uses humanisation instead as its primary tool, often seen in

cultural spaces in particular (e.g. a recent exhibition at the Migration Museum that addresses the subject of 'home' in relation to refugees) and campaigns for migrants' rights (e.g. various Refugee Council campaigns). This is sometimes intertwined with an appeal to nationalist sentiment through claims that this is 'not the Britain that we know', which was particularly prominent in campaigns for safe passage for unaccompanied child refugees, where the 'British' thing to do would be to provide this. Humanising approaches can sometimes become ones that frame migrants as victims, however, reduced to a victim-storyteller from which a story is extracted to generate sympathy and compassion. A response to this narrative can be seen in the work of the poet Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan who writes in her poem 'This is not a humanising poem': 'So this will not be a 'Muslims are like us' poem/I refuse to be respectable/Instead/Love us when we're lazy/Love us when we're poor'.

A different category also used is one that celebrates contributions of migrant

communities, merged with celebrations of diversity.

The Greater London Authority, currently under Mayor Sadiq Khan, often sponsors some of these and they tend to revolve around celebrations by specific communities (e.g. Eid or Diwali). Sometimes connected to this are history projects that highlight the long history of migration to Britain as can be seen in the Black Cultural Archives or the Our Migration Story project. These also stress that migration has always been a part of British history. Another related example can be seen in the Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants' campaign People Move. The campaign emphasises movement itself as a fact that will not change, and migration not only being to the UK, but beyond, which also challenges us to think about the exceptionalism of white British emigration.

On the Left, the 2019 manifesto of the Labour Party [\(5\)](#), the main opposition party in the UK, attempted to counter the scapegoating narrative of 'migrants steal our jobs' by blaming economic policies for worsening work conditions and availability of jobs. This space, however, is contentious, with dominant political parties sometimes attempting to accommodate increasingly popular anti-immigrant sentiment for political gains. Several migrant-focussed/led trade unions have emerged in recent years (e.g. United Voices of the World). Arguably,

by exposing issues around exploitation, they create a counter-narrative, diverting attention to another culprit ('bosses'). This shift of focus also has the potential to unify migrants and non-migrants around a class position they hold in common.

Similar to unions, there are other groups that are migrant-led and do not necessarily set out to counter any narrative, but inevitably do some of that work. Promote the Migrant Vote is a campaign that involves migrant organisers supporting other migrants to vote. A migrant-led festival, Migrant Connections, takes place annually and brings together various migrant groups to foster cross-migrant solidarity. Additionally, groups such as the All African Women's Group were established on the basis of solidarity and support of women with experience of detention, raising awareness about the issue. Cultural production, such as the popular book *The Good Immigrant*, counters negative dominant narratives using the lived experience of authors from migrant backgrounds.

In these examples are everyday stories of migrants as people with agency, sometimes exposing injustices that can be relatable on a wider scale. The stories add an important dimension in terms of counter-narratives, as they provide alternatives to both dominant and popular (but critiqued) counter-narratives.

Dominant narratives about migration in Italy

For a long time, Italy was mainly a country of emigration instead of immigration. The topic of migration was not considered or discussed for a long period, and only at the end of the 1980s was there a drastic increase in narratives in relation to migration. In 2001, there were one million people with a migrant background in Italy and immigration became, for the first time,

a crucial topic in the election campaigns and public debate.

Since 2008, entering Italy with a work or study visa has become very difficult and a growing number of people have been seeking asylum. From 2011, the Arab Spring saw increasing numbers of refugees and people seeking asylum arriving on Italy's

coasts and crossing borders. This opened up a vast and intense debate on the EU, borders and defence, with a change of tone in political and social life.

The political climate of the country includes politicians who use overtly racist language and categorisations that are inflammatory.

This is fuelled by the social climate; the media and social networks undoubtedly play an important role, with a growing

sense that anything can be said.

In summary, the dominant narrative about migrants / migration has the same four pillars already explained in the UK section. Despite the efforts of trade associations (Rome Charter, 2011), activists, and entities that have been working on migration for several decades, there is no doubt that an alarmist, securitarian and racist rhetoric has prevailed and cases of reported racism have increased.

Examples of alternative narratives

There are, however, experiences that we consider important to mention to shed light and stimulate a possible deepening of understanding, without claiming to be exhaustive.

Some examples:

● **“Ero straniero”** a campaign promoted by many different organisations (social, religious and political). This campaign includes a list of concrete law proposals for the economic integration of migrants and the regularisation of their status.

● **“Liberi di partire-liberi di restare”** a campaign promoted by CEI (Permanent Assembly of Bishops). The purpose is to devolve part of the money issued to the Church through taxes to projects that offer protection to migrants to Italy. The aim is to protect the right to move.

● **“Io accolgo”** a campaign promoted by various civil society organisations, bodies and trade unions. They created a network to raise awareness of initiatives of solidarity and good practice with a focus on migration. The aim is to make people aware of those actions and give examples, stories, and testimonies.

Most of them are campaigns, with the aim to achieve a concrete objective but that at the same time give alternative ways of seeing, reading and understanding different aspects of migration.

● **“Benvenuti ovunque”** (‘Welcome Everywhere’), a magazine on the widespread reception of migrants and refugees. This magazine is dedicated to migrants and to those who travel, to affirm the freedom of movement for anyone who is forced to leave their country, or who chooses to do so because they want to. ‘Welcome Everywhere’ is an editorial project of Comune: (<https://comune-info.net/>) carried out in collaboration with the Rete dei Comuni Solidali (Network of Solidarity Municipalities) and with the Rete di Cooperazione Educativa (Network of Educational Cooperation, which helps circulate Welcome Everywhere even among children, teenagers and teachers), supported by a grant from the Waldensian Church.

All campaigns and initiatives listed above stem from an idea and definition of migration linked to concepts of defence of basic rights and argue for them to be respected, but at the same time they contribute to creating a different view of migration.

Possible limits lie in the fact that they engage people already sensitive to the issue and the risk is that they may strengthen the division between those who are pro and those who are against migration. Radical positions against migrants come from the

upper class but also from marginalised people; to have an effective impact on dominant narratives, we need to also take into account this second target group.

Finally, it is necessary to mention that the National Italian Order of Journalists in accordance with FNSI (Journalists Union) created, in 2008, the Charter of Rome. In this document a group of experts pointed out how journalists should report events regarding migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum. The scope and aim is to respect the substantive truth of the facts observed.

Dominant narratives about migration in France

In France, narratives about people from a migrant background are polarised, with the two poles being: the idea of a 'migration crisis' and the archetype of a 'good' migrant that would thrive economically. In both cases, people from a migrant background are essentialised or dehumanised (6).

On the one hand, in public discourse, people from a migrant background are often described as a mass of people arriving in the country (often in precarious situations, fleeing danger and seeking a safer and better life). In this perspective, migrants are frequently related to criminality and danger in speeches, and generally portrayed as an inconvenience and consequently considered as such by the French population (7).



Campaign which took place in the town of Béziers in southern France:

"The state is imposing them on us. Here they come... the migrants in our city centre!"

Moreover, in the word 'migrant' hides a social and economical category, as it is exclusively reserved for a pejorative connotation implying misery. It is also linked to Islam in the general perception, which has a negative image in France, because it is often stereotyped as a threat to 'French values and identity' (8). For other migration contexts the speech is adapted, proposing other vocabulary such as 'newcomers' or 'expatriate' people, which has a more positive connotation.

On the other hand, some types of migrants are viewed as 'good' migrants: those with a higher economic status in France, which would guarantee their integration in the country. Migrants succeeding economically and those adjusting/assimilating better to the 'French norms' are presented as the optimal model/ideal. This is linked to the growth of discourse that presents equality as 'useful' rather than following from an ethical imperative (9). From our perspective, equality is a matter of justice, rather than merely something economically useful.

While the general perception of people from a migrant background is often negative, concern about the growth of racism is widespread among the French population (10).

Examples of alternative narratives

In fact, a lot of alternative narratives are already produced in France and in Europe. In 2015, WhatsApp conversations of a Syrian migrant were published on the Le Monde website. We could read exchanges between two Syrian migrants and their family and friends that have stayed in Syria. It is particularly interesting because there is no mediator: readers have direct access to the perspective of the Syrian migrants. It allowed for a very realistic, humane depiction of their lives, which favours the ability of readers to identify with migrants (11).

In 2016, Éléonore Bully went to the Calais migrant camp and investigated the ways the inhabitants lived despite really harsh living conditions. Her report shows that they developed the camp as a place of socialisation with a church, art activities, etc. Thus, it promoted alternative narratives because it humanised the migrants (12). During the same year, Yasmine Bouagga and Lisa Mandel published a comic book called *Les Nouvelles de la Jungle* with the same perspective. After going to the Calais migrant camp, they wrote stories about the inhabitants in a pedagogical and humorous way, contributing to changing the narratives about the Calais camp (13).

The afrofeminist activist Amandine Gay has self-produced a documentary, *Ouvrir la Voix* (Speak Up), which compiles the testimonies of several French and Belgian Black women, who talk about their life and their experience of racism. This allows us to view the world through women's testimonies and women whose voices are often overlooked in mainstream media. This creates media representation for Black women and it also raises awareness for people who do not face discrimination themselves.

As for Sarah Zouak, she produces many

documentaries about women in Muslim countries, amplifying the voice of these women (14). She is a member of Lallab, an organisation that promotes alternative narratives about Muslim women in France (15). Another actor of the struggle against discrimination is 'Halte à la N', an organisation that carries out actions against radicalisation of the youth, education professionals and parents (16).

European projects aiming at changing narratives about minorities are also interesting. For example, the manual 'WE CAN! Taking Action against Hate Speech through Counter and Alternative Narratives' that emerged from the No Hate Speech Movement and that was produced for The Council of Europe, aims to occupy the online media space with positive narratives. With the same perspective, the project Infomigrants is a news and information site for migrants 'to counter misinformation at every point of their journey: in their country of origin, along the route, or in the places where they hope to start a new life'. It is available in five languages (French, Arabic, English, Dari and Pashto) so it is accessible for many migrants.

It emerged from the collaboration between three European media sources: France Médias Monde (France 24, Radio France International, and Monte Carlo Doualiya), the German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle, and the Italian press agency ANSA (17).

This project is a good example of an action that both helps migrants concretely and contributes to raising awareness about their situation.

For example, The Council of Europe lists a number of anti-hate speech campaigns that exist throughout Europe (18).

Dominant narratives about migration in Hungary

Research about attitudes towards migrants and people seeking asylum started in 1992 in Hungary. They have been measured regularly using the same methodology ever since, led by Endre Sík at TÁRKI Social Research Institute. In 2006 the researchers included a fictitious unknown population called Pirezians among the groups being tested for xenophobic attitudes. Interestingly, 59% of the respondents stated that the Pirezians should not be welcomed in the country, and in 2007 this ratio increased to 68%. Even though this is considered to be a high ratio of anti-immigration opinion - especially considering it is a non-existent population that could not have threatened the Hungarian economy or identity before in any way - the data showed even stronger xenophobic attitudes towards people with Romanian, Russian, Chinese or Arab origins.

According to the data, anti-migrant attitudes are dominant in Hungary (19). However the general attitude towards Hungarian minority group members in the neighbouring countries is much more welcoming. Among several other possible reasons, this attitude could emerge from a general lack of trust, which can be explained by looking into the history of harsh foreigner dictatorships oppressing people's lives for centuries and the several unprocessed traumas of the 20th century (20).

'In January 2016 the level of xenophobia reached an all time high, and xenophilia practically disappeared' (21). The responses of the local government to the so-called immigration crisis have been extremely negatively determining the public attitude towards migrants and refugees.

We need to emphasise that the public media and the majority of the commercial media

have been expropriated by Viktor Orbán's illiberal democratic government (21) in parallel to the increase in migration. Here we mention some of the most drastic steps in shaping public opinion. A nation-wide anti-immigration campaign was organised, which included huge posters on highways, main roads and public transport, and advertisement slots on TV and the radio, as well as continuous news reports highlighting terrorist attacks and criminalisation of migrants. A 'Special Migration Support tax' of 25% was introduced on projects that support migration or migrants (only for projects involving money coming from outside of the EU, a measure mostly implemented to exclude US residing funder, György Soros and his foundations for Migrant Aid support).

A blacklist of organisations and individuals that help migrants was published in a journal, labelling them as 'Mercenar[ies] of Soros' (23). The public media has ever since been picturing refugees and migrants as 'aggressive', 'terrorist', 'non-civilised', 'disease carriers' and in some cases 'fortune seekers'. The same ideology is present in the centralised school education, mostly through the monopolised textbooks (24).

Nevertheless, compared to other EU member states, the country has been accepting fewer migrants, of which approximately 20% come from other EU member states, and approximately 40% from Ukraine, almost all for work and study. Additionally, in 2019 fewer than 50 individuals were received, protected or accepted as refugees out of approximately 500 people seeking asylum. In 2015 these numbers were approximately 500 people out of approximately 177,000 (25).

Examples of alternative narratives

Meanwhile, the local NGOs and civil society groups have been fighting against the rise of xenophobia and implementing projects focusing on the sensitisation of society and counter narrative campaigns. Projects for deeper awareness are being organised, thus support of migrant families and unaccompanied youth is present to some extent, including among missions of religious associations. Other services include the support of education of migrants and intercultural mediation.

We can state that a thin layer of civil society is filling in what would have been a public task, although they need to work under extremely difficult and stressful circumstances, as for instance they can easily be labelled as an 'organisation receiving foreign funding', since most financial support for Migrant Aid comes from abroad. Another expressive example of the same narrative is the cynical nickname 'migrant-caresser', which is widely used by the public media and pro-government opinion leaders referring to people who support migrants, literally meaning 'the one who caresses migrants'. The terms is both offensive for a marginalised population and for the ones supporting their inclusion (26) (27).

The biggest and oldest organisation supporting migrants and people seeking asylum in Hungary is Menedék (Hungarian Association for Migrants). Among many artistic, cultural and social sensitivity projects over its 25-year history, it ran the 'Being a Stranger' project, in which a documentary theatre performance was devised and showcased by migrants and locals exploring the concept and feeling of being a stranger in 2015, at the peak of the 'immigration crisis' in the EU. This initiative was special at the time because it connected newcomers and locals where it was co- led by Samira Sinai Iranian-Hungarian theatre maker and Tamás Sebő, Hungarian psychologist (28).

Likely the most famous project working towards social sensitisation and focusing on human narratives of migration until today in Hungary is an interactive 'theatrical board game' by Mentőcsónak Company, titled 'Menekülj okosan!' (MigrAction). During the performance the public is arranged into fictitious families of four who in the blurry future need to leave their homes for the utopian Finistan. The families, however, only have a few days to fight dictatorship, exclusion and injustice. The untraditional performance gained international attention and has been running regularly since 2016 in Budapest (29).

Fictional film 'The Citizen' directed by Roland Vranik gained wide public attention in 2018, when it won several international prizes at film festivals. The film is based on a true story of a Black man in his late fifties working as a security guard in Budapest. He keeps failing on highly bureaucratic citizenship exams when he falls in love with a history teacher, called Mari, helping him pass the desired test. The motion picture is a milestone with regards to narrative, because the production was funded by the National Film Institute, a public institution (30).

The list could go on mentioning civil society projects, fictional and documentary movies on different perspectives about migration, nonetheless lacking public support. However, many of these initiatives still focus on emphasising the difficulty of the situation that people with a migrant background are facing during their attempt at mobility or integration in the host country, which is likely to undermine their agency by reducing them to victims.

On the contrary, Palantír Film Foundation maintains a documentary film project 'Strangers in My Garden', in which an online collection was created, containing diverse human stories from all over the world, subtitled to Hungarian, available mainly for educational purposes (31).

1.3.

Conclusion: similarities and differences

To conclude, narratives are linked to material circumstances, and that is why different stories are created in different locations. The narrative of 'unwilling' migrants in each country is composed of different protagonists but the common point is that in each case, it is linked to a physical representation of migrants, which is developed differently according to each context (Muslims in France, for example).

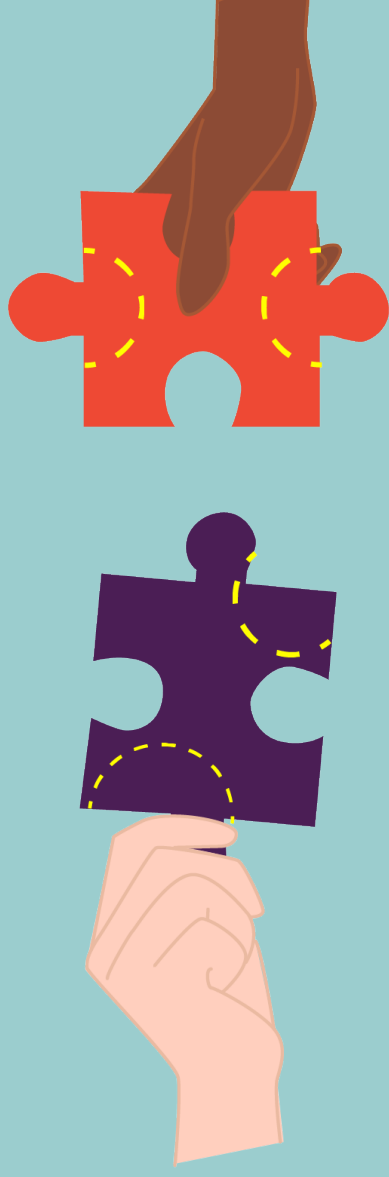
The fact that they can be 'visualised' reinforces the labeling and the separation between 'good' and 'bad' migrants; when images and videos about migrants are released, the stereotypes are strengthened. Whether through the images of a 'criminal immigrant' or a 'victimised immigrant', both guide societies to associate these migrants with poverty.

In this sense, it is important to highlight the role of the media in building these messages. Although Hungary hosts the smallest numbers of people from a migrant background, among the realities presented here, it is the country with the most aggressive narrative regarding migration.

It is difficult to define which of these factors comes first, whether the violent discourse inhibits migration to the country, or whether the low rate of migrants turns them into a 'true other' and facilitates a racist discourse. But it is evident, in both cases, that media and public policies play an important role in building collective mentalities on the subject.

In the French and British realities, a narrative portrays a certain type of migrant as a threat "to national values". It is another interesting point to reflect on the narratives of immigration in Europe linked to the creation of a hierarchy of cultures in relation to xenophobia and racism. That is to say, there exists a hierarchy of migration within European countries, where certain people with migrant backgrounds are valued and accepted more than others within popular discourse.

These hierarchies intersect with colonial and white supremacist hierarchies dating back to Western Europe's colonial projects of former centuries.



**METHODS TO CREATE
ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES.**

2.

Methods to create alternative narratives

In the first chapter of this guide, we saw why it is necessary to promote alternative narratives about migration in order to shift the societies perception in relation to this topic. In this second chapter, we will share why, while developing these alternative narratives, we believe it is important to use participatory methods.

We will: (i) present the methods that we used in our project; (ii) propose some methodological aspects to take into account; and, finally, regarding our practical experience in the project, (iii) share guidelines and strategies to create visual tools on counter or alternative narrative.



2.1

Participatory methods: what they are and why are they necessary

Some authors have argued that today's education can be hierarchical and disciplinary (32). On the contrary, participatory methods promote horizontality. We believe that our project is a tool for social transformation through the exchange of knowledge, so our learning methodologies should reflect the model of society we imagine; an egalitarian, horizontal one. To build such methodologies, we were inspired by John Dewey, a North American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer, who tried to develop democratic educational tools. According to him, 'education is a social process; education is growth; education is not a preparation for life but it is life itself' (33). Another key figure of participatory methods is Paulo Freire, who advised educators to practise dialogue and interaction with students in order to replace the hierarchical education system with an emancipatory one (34). According to him, to reflect on what and how we learn brings out a desire for a collective transformation of our society. Thus, participatory methods emphasise the fact that an inclusive society has to be developed in a collective and horizontal way rather than in a top-down way.

Moreover, it is particularly necessary to use participatory methods with members of minority groups. Participatory methods focus on the development of the participants' agency, defined as the capacity of individuals to build collective power (35),

act independently and make their own choices. Feminist thought, for example the work of Patricia Hill Collins, has shown that agency is unequally distributed among members of society, based on criteria such as race and gender (36).

When working with members of minority groups experiencing discrimination, it is important to use participatory methods because they allow free expression and critical engagement, and in doing so they promote their agency, furthering their empowerment. In fact, participatory methods are related to protagonism, or being a real participant during the learning process. According to Maria Regina Martins Cabral (37), in order for protagonism to happen, learning spaces need to take a democratic stance and be able to welcome different voices and opinions, a position that takes on the great challenge of building and cultivating more horizontal power relations. In order to do this, it is necessary to promote individual expression, which is linked to the development of self-confidence.

If people believe that they do not have space to express themselves and that society puts them in less important contexts in which to speak, it may happen because their voices/expressions have been discouraged for a long time, thus legitimising the absence of their narratives in public debate. That is why participatory methods and democracy

are so closely linked, and why we believe they are necessary within the framework of our project. Debating issues and being able to make choices are the biggest allies of a flourishing protagonism and agency, and it is particularly necessary for people who face oppression.

Finally, Stephen D. Brookfield argued that structural relations of power are internalised by individuals who face forms of oppression as well as by those who benefit from them (38). Thinking in innovative ways through participatory methods can allow them to challenge these

internalised power structures, because they push them to adopt a new perspective on their daily lives. They can highlight social hierarchies and demonstrate that power could be shared differently than it is today in discriminatory societies. Hearing about other experiences of oppression can allow the oppressed participants to think about their own experience and gain confidence in themselves. Ultimately, participants would be able to detach themselves from stereotypical representations, to think in an active way about their future, and to imagine what kind of world they would like to live in and build.

Using participatory methods to promote alternative narratives

Narratives are useful pedagogical tools. They have been recognised as important means of learning (39). They appear as a mediator for knowledge, and they can be actually understood by listeners with different levels of knowledge. Telling a story about their own life promotes the participants' reflexivity, which allows them to gain a better understanding of themselves and be more self-confident. It promotes their agency.

Moreover, alternative narratives generate a process of identification with those who receive these messages. Once the individual recognises themselves in what is being told in the narratives, they can gain confidence, and are encouraged to engage politically both within and beyond the frontiers of communities. Furthermore, developing narratives allows a certain freedom about which points of view we wish to put forward, allowing different points of view to coexist. Finally, it allows for questioning of ideas and concepts that are somehow 'normalised' in a society (40), for example universalism and egalitarianism. This evokes fruitful debates.

Participatory methods are particularly useful and necessary to promote alternative narratives. When becoming protagonists of their learning, participants are guided through empowerment and can gain the confidence that is necessary to challenge hegemonic narratives that are not told from their perspective and are somehow widely accepted in society. Moreover, one of the main things that explains the negative depiction of migrants in mainstream media is that the people who speak about them did not themselves experience migration, and have a lack of knowledge about it.

Sandra Harding (41) and Nancy Hartsock have argued that the intellectual perspectives of people are shaped by their social and political experiences, their subjectivity. To provide an 'objective' vision of oppressions lived by some people, it is thus necessary to emphasise their subjectivity, that is often negated in dominant narratives. Historically, the Black feminist movement, with authors like Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, Angela Davis and others, has insisted on the necessity that the people who face forms of oppression need to be able to speak for

themselves. In France, for example, activists such as Mrs Roots or Rokhaya Diallo have also insisted on this idea.

In this perspective, when working in anti-racist or feminist organisations as a member of a dominant / more privileged social group, it is important to reflect on the discursive position one adopts. If we do not face any kind of oppression (or not the one that the group we are working with faces), we need to be attentive to not reproduce paternalistic dynamics, to be an ally rather than a representative, to give the floor rather than to speak up for others. Participatory methods are particularly useful in enabling

this. Indeed, when dominant narratives about migration attempt to make the points of view of migrants about their own situation invisible, participatory methods precisely allow them to express themselves and offer the opportunity to understand migration. This is not through a top-down outlook disconnected from the person in question, but rather through a bottom-up, human one. They allow them to be subjects of their own narratives. Using participatory methods with members of minority groups promotes their knowledge, that only they possess (42). Thus, they allow migrants to be empowered and provide a more realistic vision of their lives to society.

Why can individual stories contribute to the construction of a common narrative?

Individual stories of migrants depicted through alternative narratives can contribute to the construction of a common narrative which redefines the universal. The notion of universalism has been questioned because it can obscure inequalities by negating social differences between individuals (43).

By promoting alternative narratives that emerge from the experience of minorities, it is possible to renew universalism so that

it can be more inclusive and provide an idealistic political strength (44). Recognising the diversity of experiences in our societies might be the first step in promoting equality, and narratives are a good way to allow this recognition.

Participatory methods are numerous around the world. In this guide, we will present in detail just three of them, based on our respective experiences.

2.2

The methods that built the Migreat! project

2.2.1

The pedagogy of the oppressed

Background on author

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian educationalist who was highly influential in developing key principles for participatory and radical education. His revolutionary theories were shaped by his work on literacy with marginalised communities (landless agrarian workers in particular) in Brazil and Chile. His arrest and exile following the 1964 military coup in Brazil, and the banning of his seminal book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) in multiple countries, is evidence of how influential his work is. A key element of this work has been to come to an understanding of what oppression is, and how it manifests and is maintained in the world. Freire's work discusses oppression as the dehumanisation of the oppressed at the hands of the oppressor.

He also examines how dehumanisation impacts the oppressed, including how they can internalise the narratives that dehumanise them.

While his work largely focuses on oppression related to the contexts he worked in, the same principles can be extended and applied to the current context of migration and the dehumanising and oppressive narratives targeting migrants. As Freire sees it, liberation from oppression has to be done through a process led by the oppressed, or one in which they are fully involved, a point that is very relevant to thinking about the process of creating alternative narratives on migration to address oppressive, dominant ones.

The classroom as an extension of society

Freire's work on education is premised on the idea that the classroom and education are never neutral. Education is not devoid of oppression and is shaped by power dynamics, especially those between teacher and students.

Freire argues that education must address the binary of teacher/student as a first step to addressing power dynamics in the classroom; the teacher and student need to be simultaneously both teachers and students. He strongly opposes the banking model of education that views students as 'receptacles' into which knowledge provided by the authority, the teacher, is deposited. In this model, only the teacher has knowledge, and this 'knowledge' is often presented in a way that is out of touch with the students' lived reality and often does not have

immediate relevance to the students' lives.

Dismantling this banking model is therefore a way to directly address power dynamics in the classroom but also oppression in general, as he viewed the banking model as a way of maintaining and reproducing oppression. A collaborative approach to teaching and learning that centres relevance to students and their interaction with the world, and that recognises their knowledge and experience is a key component in doing this. Freire developed theoretical and practical approaches (also known as the problem-posing approach) to this that were further built for the context of adult education beyond Freire's contexts in Latin America. Examples include those by Elsa Auerbach and the Reflect [\(45\)](#) approach to adult education.

Some of the key components of participatory approaches are:

- The classroom is shaped by a process of dialogue that enables the teacher and students to have equal footing and fosters a culture of respect and validation.
- Students' knowledge and experience is fully acknowledged and listened to attentively. For example, racist attacks targeting people from a migrant background can be a theme that the teacher takes notice of through creating ample opportunity for students to share their experiences and through listening to them.
- Critical engagement with the themes explored is actively fostered. Racism can then be analysed to look at the roots of the problem, how it manifests, how it affects the students, and how it can be tackled. The classroom, therefore, becomes a space to develop what Freire refers to as critical consciousness, that allows students, the oppressed in this context, to identify and examine the oppression, and find ways to address it.
- The curriculum is not static and is constantly emerging. Generative themes are used as a follow on from listening. They reflect the themes that emerge from listening and act as a starting point to learning and building on what students already know. To build on the example above, the generative theme can be racism, which is further explored in the classroom, allowing students to learn through language they already know in relation to a topic that has immediate relevance to them.

Relevance of Freire's works in creating alternative narratives on migration

Freire's work can be readily applied in many contexts beyond education. Dominant narratives on migration are replete with oppression and dehumanisation. Many of the principles of the problem-posing and participatory approaches to education can be used here. Some questions informed by Freire's work that can be asked when embarking on work to create alternative narratives on migration are:

- Who is leading on the work to counter narratives on migration? Is it the migrants affected? How can we ensure that work on liberation in relation to this oppression is led by or fully involves migrants affected?
- How are dominant narratives being examined and what is the process that led up to this point? In what ways does this process allow migrants to unveil the oppression of dominant narratives? How can we ensure it is collaborative and relies on dialogue?
- How does the internalisation of the narratives of the oppressor by people affected appear in the context of doing this work? What process can we follow to address that through fostering critical consciousness?
- How are we ensuring that power dynamics between people affected and others involved in this work are addressed? What does a dialogue process look like in this context?
- While addressing power dynamics, how are we ensuring that others involved in this work are not engaging in a form of humanitarianism or charity, as opposed to commitment to liberation?
- How are we ensuring we do not replicate the same tactics or methods that are used by the oppressors when we attempt to counter their narratives? Doing so might build power for one oppressed group, but end up replicating the same 'oppressor consciousness' we are trying to challenge
- How are we ensuring work already being done and led by migrants affected is not being replicated, competed with, or side-lined by our work?



Paulo Freire

2.2.2

The theatre of the oppressed

Paulo Freire influenced many other practitioners who were seeking innovation in terms of education and social transformation. One of them was Augusto Boal, a Brazilian activist, to whom we credit Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) (46).

Many books and manuals about the method and about its theoretical background have already been written and translated into more than 70 languages as TO became

widely known and popular among activists, facilitators, teachers, theatre directors and social workers around the world. This method provides useful guidance for those who wish to understand and practise the set of dramatic techniques introduced by TO theorists and practitioners, particularly in order to explore systemic exploitation and oppression within common situations and to enable spectators to become actors.

What is Theatre of the Oppressed?

TO is a method that embodies many parallels to Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

Its aim is to fight oppression by empowering oppressed people and enabling them to find their own solutions to oppression. The relationship between actors/spectators or trainers/participants is like the one proposed by Paulo Freire: an exchange based on dialogue and mutual respect, cooperating in research around a specific oppression. With this in mind, Boal speaks about the 'spect-actor' as a key role in a TO performance, that is a person who watches the play and intervenes to experiment with ways to overcome oppression. Another key role is that of the Joker, the one who leads the TO workshop and performance, facilitating the spect-actors' intervention and giving space for real research around oppression; they are not a judge, a politician, a speaker,

a teacher, or a priest... but a co-researcher. Within this method, Boal continuously incorporated various techniques in order to better analyse the oppression he encountered, step by step. One of the most famous and symbolic is called Forum Theatre, a play where unchallenged oppression is shown and the spect-actors are called to come onto the stage, replace the oppressed or an ally and try out a strategy to end the oppression shown. The Joker regulates the debate and interventions with no evaluation. You can see how this approach has similar assumptions as Freire's.

In the MiGREAT! project, we used these techniques in our training and workshops. We developed theatre scripts that can be found on our blog alongside further information on the process and final results.

Using participatory methods to promote alternative narratives

TO is interdisciplinary and widely used in politics, social action, education, art, and therapies, as Boal highlighted in his books.

In the MiGREAT! project we mostly focussed on adult learners and adult education, supporting lifelong learning.

When exploring educational contexts, we may recognise several levels of oppression. The first step towards a more inclusive and equitable community / society / classroom / organisation is to become more aware of the structures of dominance, hierarchy and the exploitation by authority that is present in our realities and context. Patterns of oppression in wider society are very likely to be replicated within our educational institutions.

Nevertheless, the nature of oppression is influenced by the values of the community, and, in turn, the culture and society where it appears. Accordingly, individuals become socialised into roles, where one either oppresses others and 'wins', or becomes the one oppressed, and 'loses'.

This system of oppression becomes clear, when we see that different individuals have different learning needs. If the teacher always uses these same methods, for example, some students may always perform continuously worse and can easily become stigmatised. Even more so if the community enforces the value of high academic performance, and depreciates lower formal learning outcomes. The teacher, in this case, is not necessarily aware of the oppression introduced, however, in the long-term they enable some while oppressing others. If the learning environment does not allow for the different needs of the individual to be considered, discussed and made visible, and are instead ignored or oppressed, learners may lose motivation easily, are less likely to be engaged in learning, and will be less

equipped to deal with conflict situations. Theatre offers an opportunity to watch and observe cases and make a story become alive for our senses and emotions. Participatory theatre offers the possibility to step closer, explore and practise our right to self-expression (in this case connected to a story). Theatre of the Oppressed offers us choices for better understanding, including an understanding of how we can act, as well as what the consequences of our actions can be.

Stepping into different roles in a story offers a different type of embodiment (47); in being able to watch our peers step into offered roles, or switch between them equips us with new perspectives. This will highly contribute to how inclusively we create narratives in the future, being able to understand the point of view of the other. This aspect justifies our choice of this methodology to co-construct alternative narratives about migration.

There are many ways through which we can incorporate TO into teaching and community-building, always depending on the purpose and the exact target group. Theatre of the Oppressed is composed of various techniques: Forum Theatre, Newspaper Theatre, Image Theatre, Invisible Theatre, Legislative Theatre. Other approaches inspired by Boal came after too: the Drama and Theater in Education (DiE and TiE) and Debate Theatre, for example.

In Chapter 3 we will provide some examples that we tried out and found useful, as well as practical activities and exercises to illustrate and better understand all these practices, and, most importantly, how to use them to change narratives on migration.

Since Theatre of the Oppressed is a process which identifies different forms of oppression and ways to solve them, we also have to take into account theoretical and methodological frameworks when

we decide to use a tool involved in T.O, in order to avoid a shift towards the so-called 'technicism', that is a reduction of complexity, a trivialisation of reality and methods (see Edgar Morin, 'La complessità').

If we wish to use TO to explore narratives, we have to keep in mind the following as a minimum:

1) TO goals

1.1) Analyse and transform: to analyse and transform the oppressive realities as opposed to simply reflecting on realities or, worse, confirming/reinforcing/justifying oppressive ones

1.2) Autonomy: to give to oppressed people the means of theatre so that they can liberate themselves

2) Theoretical points

2.1) OPPRESSION: the concept of oppression relates to a complex situation and it is the key point of TO. Oppression is the prevailing of one social group over others, an inequality of power to make decisions about one's own life, a monologue, a reduction of possible choice, inequality in the distribution of resources, etc. Oppression is not misunderstanding, it has to do with privilege. In context of this project, we assume that the dominant narrative is a form of oppression for migrants and anti-racist activists.

3) Key methodological points :

3.1) Process orientated: focus on the process of awareness-raising instead of transmission of truths from facilitators (or Jokers, to borrow Boal's term)

3.2) Human being a whole: TO is a process based not only on cognitive skills and verbal language but also on acting, body awareness and creativity.

3.3) Dialogue: enhancing dialogue among the oppressed and oppressors, not merely as verbal communication, but as a balance of power.

3.4) Problematising: trust the group of oppressed people in their approaches to finding a solution. The role of the Joker is not to teach the truth or simply to accept what the group says, but to explore, TOGETHER (and not 'on behalf of'), the oppression chosen, and to help the group to go deeper in relation to this through problematising opinions, discoveries, interpretations, proposals, etc.

3.5) Balance social/individual: The TO process needs to create a balance between the individual visions, needs and actions, and the collective ones. In summary, it is fundamental to create a good group to start the research.

3.6) Micro-Macro: in analysing oppression there is a specific situation (single or general one) that has to be investigated, but the attention must be also on the macro that influences

the micro of the situation, otherwise, we risk losing effective solutions to an oppression and risk also confirming stereotypes or dominant visions.

3.7) Flexibility: each TO process is unique; we do not have standardised procedures, but we start research with a group; that means taking into account aspects such as the size of the group, composition (such as age, abilities and gender), story, social groups members identify with, previous experience, level of awareness about narratives, fluidity in using their body, etc.

We propose these steps based on a group of 20 people, both migrants and/or activists, with a good level of Joker's language, confident in using their body, with some ideas about narratives, with the motivation to explore the issue. Different groups would require different processes and tools.

Benefits:

- TO is theatre so it engages us emotionally and pragmatically, not only intellectually
- TO is based on images created on stage; images are a strong element for a narrative
- TO is a ritual that can create a community, even if temporary; in the community we can share our personal narratives and create new ones during the sessions
- A theatre play can be disseminated through streaming and also recorded and shared on the Internet, contributing to a counter/alternative narrative.

Limits:

- TO can attract people but can also exclude some individuals or groups that dislike its language
- TO exposes actors to an audience; people with migrant background can be reluctant to show themselves
- TO cannot reach thousands of people directly, its effectiveness is just in the face-to-face meetings.

Requirements for a successful project:

- A right process of building a Theatre session, with attention to oppressed groups, to enable them to drive the process
- Paying attention to creating events where people are not manipulated but stimulated to share doubts, stereotypes, etc. so that they can be processed
- Paying attention to investigate how and which alternative narratives are worth creating.

2.2.3

Community organising

Another participatory method incorporated in our partnership was Community Organising.

'Community organising' is a process where by people - usually people connected by sharing an identity, geographical area or campaign interest - come together to build their power and make change, specifically by taking action on their shared self-interest.

While community organising has historically existed in many forms, the term is credited to Saul Alinsky, who organised with impoverished communities in Chicago, USA, in the mid 20th Century. Alinsky's books *Reveille for Radicals* and *Rules for Radicals* codified some of the principles and practices of community organising that distinguish it from other forms of activism, protest, traditional labour organising, mass mobilisation and community development.

Community organising starts with the premise that power is unequally distributed in our society. It seeks the redistribution of power and sees conflict and confrontation between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' as necessary to this process - following Frederick Douglas's sentiment that 'power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and never will' (48).

Community organising often aims to build power in dispossessed communities in the

long term, not just centred around a single issue. This means building the capacity of individual community members to affect change, as well as inculturating habits and systems for action and leveraging power. The process is likely to involve self-education and relationship building within and outside the community. And this educative and relationship-building process will be rooted in ongoing collective action.

Since Alinsky, community organising has continued to evolve and variagate. Distinction is now often drawn between 'grassroots' (or 'door-knocking') organising which brings people together outside pre-existing organisations, as opposed to faith-based and broad-based community organising which rely on identifying leaders within existing organisations and bringing them together around shared self-interest.

Although community organising can be done by and led from within communities themselves, institutions of community organising generally operate with professional community organisers that are not members of the communities they seek to organise. The organiser acts as an agitator and coach to inspire community leaders that change is possible and develop their change-making capacity through ongoing action and mentorship. Of course, the power dynamics inherent in this relationship between paid outsider

and community members needs ongoing critical examination, especially when the organiser does not face the same

oppressions as the community that they are organising.

Some other principles of community organising include:

- 'Don't do for others what they can do for themselves' - although community organising can involve a professional organiser from outside the community, organising should always focus on building the capacity of those with limited power to effect change, rather than make change on their behalf.
- Power-mapping - We can force those with power to do what we want if we understand their self-interest, and we understand who our allies and enemies are around these issues. Mapping and analysing our context allow us to predict the behaviour, weaknesses and strengths of different actors and adapt our tactics accordingly.
- 'Pick the target, freeze it, personalise it and polarise it' - it is easy in our complex economy and society for no single actor to accept responsibility for a social problem. Alinsky argues that to change things we need to pin down single actors as targets for our actions. We do not just target organisations, we name individuals, to make our demands more coherent. Polarisation means making a clear demand which forces everyone to decide which side they are on.
- Don't go outside the experience of your people' - To engage effectively with your base, you need to understand and speak to their experience and central values.

Why do we use Community Organising to change narratives of migration?

Community organising principles can be fruitfully applied to the development of counter or alternative narratives.

To do so, we could treat narrative-creation as a form of action, ultimately aimed at

creating change.

Like strategic action, effective framing benefits from having a clear goal - what are you creating an alternative narrative for? What do you want the impact to be? [\(49\)](#)

Self-interest and experience

A community organising approach attends strategically to people's values, experience and self-interest in order to 'speak to people where they are'. In the development of counter or alternative narratives, it can be helpful to identify a specific audience for

our message, in relation to our final goal (above). We can then seek to understand the values and experience of our intended audience(s) in order to communicate our message to them more effectively.

Choosing a target

A central tenet of community organising is to pick a clear target for demands. For counter or alternative narratives that seek to inspire a particular behaviour change in the viewer, it can also be useful to specifically name a target as the cause of harm. Australian research into counter and alternative narrative creation around

migration found that 'government decided' or 'leaders chose' was more effective than formulations that skirted blame, such as 'conditions worsened' (50). The reason this was effective, the research argues, is because 'to believe a problem can be fixed through human action, people must believe human action caused it'.

'Don't speak for others when they can speak for themselves' and building leadership

In the narratives we produce, are we speaking for people who can speak for themselves? Both our communications and the process by which narratives are developed should centre the voices of those most impacted by the issues. Not just because this is 'the right thing to do' - but because this will build the capacity of those people to have a voice in the future.

In community organising, the ultimate aim

of any action is to build the power and leadership (capacity to effect change) of the community involved. We can also apply this to alternative narrative creation. This means holding the dual goal of:

- a) achieving the impact we want our narrative to have (see above) and
- b) building the leadership of our people through the process itself.

2.3

Methodological aspects

(when, how, why to intervene in a community, group of migrants, etc)

In our project, as already described earlier, we think that the process of changing narratives necessitates the use of participatory methods with those directly impacted by negative narratives.

This process can be made up of different types of workshops: focus groups, action-research, or whatever seems best suited to each context. It will also depend on the period of the intervention,

and if some kind of contact with the participants was already made or if the trust level between the public and organisation still needs to be built. In this section, we will briefly describe the key considerations when preparing to work directly with participants. These learnings are informed by our practical experience from the MiGREAT! project.

An essential process before organising workshops: recognising our position within power structures

As organisers of workshops, it is necessary to understand geographical and temporal contexts in order to develop alternative narratives about people from a migrant background. Participatory methods can be very useful to develop these narratives. The ideal scenario involves working with the community and doing collaborative work.

However, organising workshops, particularly with members of groups that face oppressions that we do not necessarily face, demands profound reflexive questioning about our own position as individuals, our 'place of speech' (51). We need to understand the ways in which we benefit from power structures ourselves if we want to be able to make society more

egalitarian. Power structures can penetrate even the most progressive social spaces, and this questioning helps to minimise them or at least highlight them and address them. Reflexive questioning is important in order to not reproduce top-down relationships with participants, which would only impose on them our point of view on society. Indeed, we see the world through a particular frame of reference, that is partly built through our social experience. In order to highlight the participants' points of view, we need to be aware of ours and 'de-neutralise' it, and particularly aware when we do not face the same social oppressions. Alternative narratives can lose their purpose if applied only from the point of view of someone who is not directly affected by these narratives.

They can even be harmful to people who face oppressions, as for example the anti-racist campaign that the city of Paris led for the 2024 Olympics (52). On advertising posters, the campaign reproduced racist graffiti that had been written on ads representing Black athletes, by twisting the sense of the meaning of the graffiti to emphasise the qualities of these Black

athletes. The campaign has been accused of promoting a violent discourse and of emphasising a lack of sensitivity towards people who face racism.

How can we engage in reflexive questioning that will allow us to organise horizontal participatory workshops that would really benefit members of oppressed groups?

Engaging in self-reflection (decentring)

Among several methods for this purpose, we believe that the first step to allow horizontality is self-reflection. In this sense, the social psychologist Margalit-Cohen Emerique developed an approach, initially directed at social workers but which later adapted for other professionals in the social field.

Cohen-Emerique's methodology is based on the analysis of culture shocks, concrete situations called 'critical incidents'. These are specific situations where we feel a strong emotion during an interaction with a person from a different socio-cultural context to ours. This analysis opens up a space for better understanding of how our own values and cultural expectations shape our interactions. This understanding makes it possible to reach a certain degree of cultural neutrality, and thus achieve better negotiation of possible solutions. This approach is based on three steps: decentring, discovery of the frame of references of the other, and negotiation. For the purpose of this guide, we will shed light only on the first step.

The term decentering comes from the writings of the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980) on child development. Decentering is, to him, a learning phase that allows the child to move from an egocentric vision to a more objective, more empathetic perception of the world around them. In

psychology, decentering is defined as the process of distancing oneself from one's own point of view and being able to adopt a point of view other than one's own.

For Cohen-Emerique, decentering is used to detect and manage one's own vulnerabilities and sensitivities. It allows us to use our own experience as an illustration of intercultural dynamics. It, therefore, amounts to an invitation to self-disclosure and vulnerability - once we as educators, activists and social workers recognise our limits, privileges and stereotypes, this process helps us compensate for our position of authority and move towards horizontality. Decentering is one of the essential skills needed for critical thinking.

Decentering is not an easy process, and it is only possible when we interact with the other, in order to provoke the revelation of our own frame of reference (including values, norms, representations). The analysis of several 'cultural shocks' collected from professionals / people in similar contexts helps to identify so-called 'sensitive zones' characteristic of a professional domain or a specific context. According to Cohen-Emerique, 'sensitive zones' are those where it is more difficult for the professional to communicate, where misunderstandings are more frequent, more intense and feelings are more pronounced. Sensitive zones often include representations of the body, religion, perception of time, family

representation, gender and child rearing, to name a few examples.

There are several ways to practise decentering. At Élan Interculturel we propose an activity created by Vera Varegyi where we present a collection of images that will be used as triggers to unveil participants' values, in order to simulate culture shocks (53). It is also possible to propose sections of analysis of critical incidents. Critical incidents are not necessarily huge life-changing events, but every moment that we feel some kind of emotion that comes from an act, word, tradition, etc from another person that was completely unexpected by

us. For example: one man who asks a woman about her religious beliefs. She answers 'I do not have a religion', and he does not understand, he feels disorientated. From his frame of reference, not having a religion is something unthinkable. The encounter with someone who has a different frame of reference can cause a culture shock.

The encounter with the other allows us to realise that we are not culturally neutral, and start to reflect and engage in a dialogue to explore sensitive areas and identify the values behind our feelings, actions and reactions.

Some questions that you can ask yourself to engage in decentering:

- Why am I working in the social field? What are my values?
- What do I ignore about the situation of the participants? In which ways am I different from them? What privileges do I have?
- Does this activity truly benefit the participants or is it just me that is imagining it does?
- Do I benefit from this activity? How? Do I benefit from the activity more than the participants?
- Is my point of view dominant in the way I am conducting the activity? How can I make sure it is not?

Hints to create a group of participants for the workshops

It is important to be conscious of the power structures that exist within the group that you are working with, for example gender structures that tend to make men speak more frequently and with dominance (54). Otherwise, the workshops will reproduce power structures present in society and will not allow people who face oppressions to express themselves and be empowered.

More than being conscious of these power structures, you can make sure that the groups that you work with are 'safer places' by selecting the participants based

on particular criteria. For example, you can create 'caucus groups', or affinity groups, which bring together people who face a similar social oppression (55). You can choose to organise groups with only people from a migrant background, or women from a migrant background, or vulnerable people, or Black women from a migrant background, or trans women from a migrant background, etc. This will create a space where they can talk more easily about their shared experience without facing the judgement of people who do not understand their situation (56).

You can also choose to create groups with people who do not face the same kinds of oppression. In this case, it is particularly important to be attentive to power structures within the group, and to address them at the beginning of the workshop by encouraging participants to engage in decentering. You can also set time aside during the workshop to set up subgroups with people who face the same kinds of oppression so that they can talk about it with each other.

In any case, there is no 'magic' manual to help us challenge traditional practices of structuring society. The construction of safe spaces and fruitful workshops is also, and more importantly, to do with interest in the needs of the other. And as individuals, even if they belong to the same social group, behave in unique ways, and dialogue and curiosity should guide the practice in this area in order to create a welcoming space for everyone.

2.4

Guidelines and strategies to create visual tools on counter or alternative narrative

Alternative narratives are complex to disseminate. They are not simply discourses that will somehow be adopted by people when they get to know them. And even if they were, we would still need to make sure that people actually know about

them. It is thus important to reflect on ways to disseminate alternative narratives in an efficient manner, so that they can really change people's minds. To do that, here are some tips to develop efficient communication campaigns.

How to develop a communication campaign?

a) Define the problem you want to address

Firstly, we have to be conscious that it is impossible to deal with all problems at once, so it is necessary, as a team, to talk about all the problems that you wish to address and choose one. For example, you can choose to focus on alternative narratives about a particular community, or on alternative narratives about work-related matters, or on alternative narratives about the daily lives of people from a migrant background, etc. Here are some strategies to find this 'problem':

- Researching online to find studies that have been done about the topics that you want to talk about
- Researching for other communication campaigns that conveyed similar

alternative narratives can also be useful

- Organising focus groups and / or interviews with the concerned people in order to have a narrative that really reflects the reality (you can find a toolkit with activities at the end of this guide)

Depending on the message that is chosen, you can express sub-messages, but you always need to remember your central message and the values you wish to affirm in order to be coherent. If you select a negative narrative that you want to challenge, think of a positive alternative or counter narrative that does not replicate the original negative narrative. This is because communications theory shows that restating a narrative reinforces it, even if you are only restating it to say that it is not true! E.g. saying 'Migrants are not criminals' actually reinforces the idea that migrants are criminals, because

it still associates the words 'criminals' and 'migrants' in people's minds.

This part of a campaign is sometimes long, but better to be long than be short and inconsistent with reality.

b) Defining the aim of the campaign

Once you have a narrative, it is then necessary to define the aim of the campaign. What impact do you want your campaign to have? This stage of the process is also linked to the next one: the audience you are going to choose (this can be done simultaneously).

It is time to think about impact, and exactly which change in thinking you are aiming at. It is really useful to try to imagine how you want your audience to think, feel and act after engaging with your campaign.

Do you want to push people to do something in particular? For example, do you want them to engage on a political level? Or maybe you want non-racialised people to change the way they talk to people who are racialised?

c) Defining communication targets

You cannot reach all of society at once. To develop an efficient communication campaign, you need to define who you are talking to during this particular campaign. The more precisely your target will be defined, the more efficient your campaign will be. For example, do you want to target people over 60 who live in the countryside, people under 20 who live in the suburbs, or people under 20 who live in a particular city?

Sometimes defining a very narrow target can be very useful and allow you to build a strong group of supporters / create a sense of belonging amongst the members of your audience. One concept that can be really useful is the idea of 'the moveable middle'. If you imagine a line, on one extreme you have the people who already agree with you. On the other extreme, you have the people who are never going to change their

minds. You need to target the people in the middle. Who are they? How do you identify them?

It is all about empathy and serving the needs of your audience in the way they will most accept and benefit from. If we only ever do things the way we would like to, we can never grow our audience outside our own echo chamber. Therefore, you have to decide which group you want to focus on. Review your pen portraits and consider these questions: Who is most easy for you to reach? Who can you most easily persuade? Which audience would create the biggest impact if you changed their mind?

d) Defining the communication identity of the campaign

For the next step, it is important to reflect on the identity of the campaign that you are developing, to convey a clear message. It will help the people who follow you to feel like they know you. For example, you need to define the tone of the speech you will use: is it joyful? Is it serious? Is it cynical? Is it ironic? It is completely linked to the previous step, your audience? It is also possible to create personified campaigns. In this case, you can tell the stories of people that you work with and that are directly connected to these alternative narratives. Of course, do that in collaboration with them.

Using emotion is often much more efficient than showing numbers (even though these can also be impactful in certain cases - if for example you are advocating for the establishment of quotas or other numerical matters). Storytelling is also very useful in terms of communication: which stories are you telling?

e) Choosing communication channels

You will not be able to communicate through all channels. And you do not need to! Depending on the aim of your campaign, your target and the problem you want to address, you need to choose the channels through which you will communicate. For example, if your targets are people over 70

living in the countryside, try to know how they have access to information and talk to them using the same media.

In terms of social media, if you have followers, that is great. Otherwise, you can consider working with partners to make your audience a bit bigger. It can be other organisations, or it can be influencers that could be interested in what you do and will share your work. Interaction is very important to promote social change.

In the case of traditional media, you can contact media that could be interested in the workshops you organise in order to develop alternative narratives. You will then be able to reach their audience when they publish an article about your work.

There are also some alternatives to traditional and social media: street campaigns, partnerships with local shops... and a bonus: you can write about your campaign and pitch to the media so that they can publish them. It has to be very clear and concise.

f) Defining the temporality of your campaign

Another point of the process is to define the temporality. How long should your campaign last? A few months? One month? A few weeks? Sometimes a short campaign can be very impactful if it is well planned.

Depending on the subject, there is a better period in the year to talk about it, or worse. It may be handy to do some research to know a little bit more about big events and dates that are related to the theme of your campaign. For example, if there is already someone else that does, every year, a big event about the subject you are covering, it is not smart to launch the campaign at this time.

Afterwards, you can decide when you want to start your campaign. Is there a particular date that could suit your campaign? For

example, a national or international day, or during holidays, before an election, etc.

In terms of planning of temporality, also consider thinking about the rhythm of your campaign? Will you communicate daily? Every two days?

g) Create visual tools

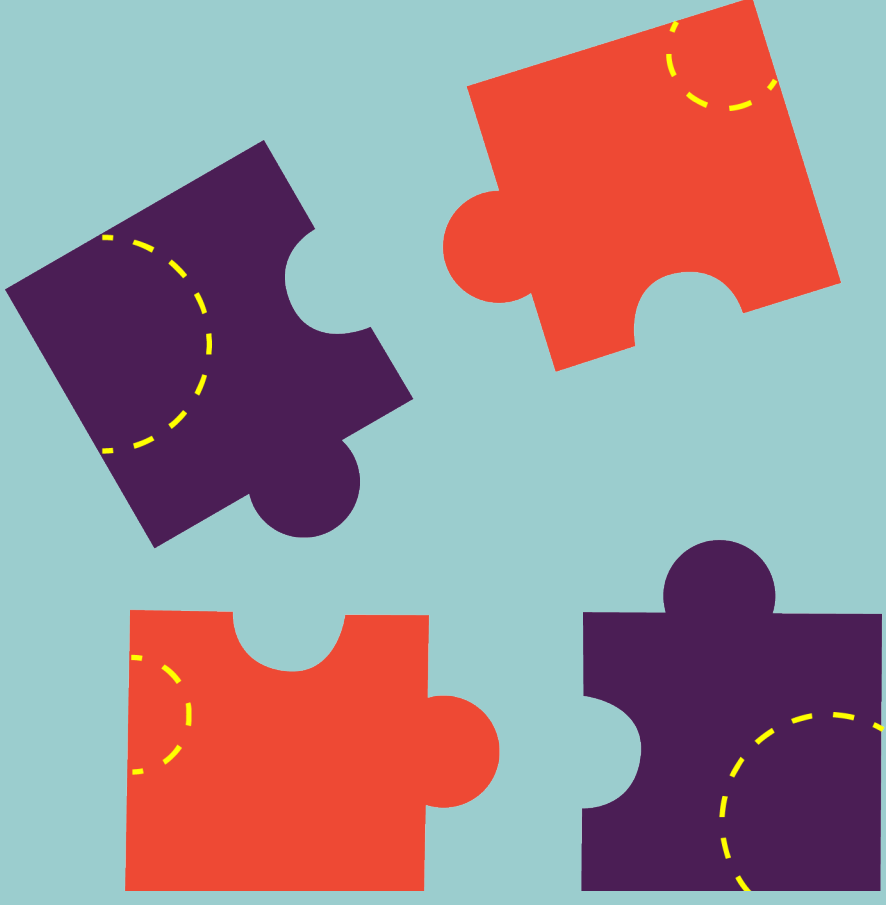
To start the creative part, you can list all the possible tools you can and might want to create, and discuss the pros and cons of different visual tool formats.

Images are often more engaging than words. In social media, they are particularly necessary because algorithms highlight them. Choose a particular palette of colour, a particular font, and the same types of images. Try to introduce space in your visual tools - do not overload them.

If you lack skills in using softwares like Photoshop or Illustrator, you can use easier tools such as Canva. Or, leave it to a creative team if possible in your organisation. The creative team can also work with your participants to develop the tool with them, based on the brief they have developed.

Again, remember that it is important to talk about all the communication tools that you will create with the people who are directly connected to the alternative narratives that you wish to spread. This could help avoiding blunders such as the anti-racist campaign of the city of Paris that we discussed earlier.

These strategies represent our experience during the MiGREAT! project, but campaigning is not the only way to change the dominant narrative. Our creativity can be stimulated to invent strategies like community organising based interventions, local positive policies that create common goals instead of competition, education in schools... the sky's the limit! In the next chapter, we will share a rich toolkit that can be used.



**TOOLS AND
PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES.**

3

Activity book : exercises, games and dynamics to work on the change of narratives

After exploring the contexts and some of our methodologies, this chapter will be dedicated to practice. Various activities and exercises will be described in order to concretely transform narratives in relation to migration in Europe. These activities have been developed in a collaborative way and tested in our trainings.

Changing narratives is a complex process, and it takes a long time. In this guide, we do not intend to provide ready-made recipes, not least because, as mentioned earlier, each context is specific and strategies that work in one context do not necessarily work in another. However, we believe in sharing our experiences, as organisations that are part of this struggle, to help other educators, activists, social workers, and all

interested people. Through our practical experience we have developed a toolkit to be used and shared.

Our activities are divided into five categories which represent a proposal for steps for the process of development of counter or alternative narratives : Community/Group-building (i); Exploring current narratives (ii); Exploring what narratives we want to see (iii); Narrative creation (iv) and Reflection and learning (v). At the end, you can also find a pack of Transversal activities, with activities that merge different steps.

**For all activities involving Theatre of the Oppressed, we advise you to watch the lecture on the 'recommendation board' on [page 27](#)

3.1

Community/Group-building

Share something about you! By Elan Interculturel

Technique

Storytelling and creative presentation

Objectives

- Get to know each other
- Work creatively on a common story
- Think about/reflect on our own story
- Active listening
- Storytelling

Materials needed

- Paper
- Colour markers
- Dixit cards or image postcards photos, etc. (to engage the participant's imagination)
- Any other creative material that participants might want to use for their presentation
- Storytelling

Time needed

45 minutes - 1 hour

Step by Step Instructions

Preparation:

- Display Dixit cards all over the floor on the room
- Ask your participants to choose one that represents them (open question) (5 minutes)
- Make random groups of 4

Instructions:

- 'Share with the group your image (why did you choose it? What aspect of your identity do you want to share or reveal to the rest of the group?)' (15 mins)
- 'Based on the stories you heard, you now have to create a new story that includes at least one true element from each of your stories. REMEMBER : A story has a beginning, a quest / conflict and an end.'
- Prepare for presentation: 'You have to present your story in a creative way to the rest of the group. You can decide how to do it (drawing, small impro, mime, radio spot, TV programme, song, graphic campaign, etc.) Use your creativity and have fun!'

Debriefing

- Ask the group how they felt during the activity. Ask if the groups want to share which element they chose to keep from each participant.
- How was the process of creating a common story? (hardest/easier parts)
- Which resources did you use to achieve the task?

Hints for facilitators

- Try to lead the group to a common reflection on their identity (do they feel included/ represented in the common story)? Does everybody participate equally in the process? Does everybody express themselves freely?
- Bring attention to the fact that everybody has the capacity to tell a story and to create new ones. We try with this small exercise to show how individual stories can easily become collective ones, to show participants that they already have a narrative to share and a narrative to construct/build.

Evaluation

Did you learn something new about yourself and / or about others? Did you discover some new skill you are capable of that you have never noticed before?

How are you? By Giolli

Technique

Theatre-image

Materials needed

None

Objectives

- Getting to know each other
- Sharing emotions and building trust in the group
- Active listening
- Learning to express in non-verbal language

Time needed


For 20 people: 15-20 minutes

Step by Step Instructions


- Ask the group to stand in a circle.
 - You start asking the person in front of you, more or less : 'How do you feel when you hear some comment from the dominant narrative about migrants?'
 - This person, let's say number 10, answers while you just listen.
 - Immediately after person 10 finishes, you step forward and create an image with your own body, reflecting some aspect of the speech that touched you. There is no right or wrong way of doing this; it is a creative way to translate words into images, with no need for trying to perfect it.
 - Immediately after, the 2 persons on either side of you create an image with their own bodies and join you, creating a common sculpture.
 - Person 10 observes and claps their hands when they are satisfied.
 - We proceed with the person on the right side of you, who asks person number 11 the same question in point 2 above and the activity continues until everyone has spoken.
-

Debriefing

It is better not to stop the process with a break or reflection but continue with the next steps of this guide.




Hints for facilitators

- Accept all verbal expressions, both very soft and trivial and very intense. You are not there to judge, but to facilitate group-building.
 - If someone struggles with creating the image, explain that all images are acceptable and that it is a creative process so everyone can express the same meaning in different ways.
 - Insist also on acting before thinking, to make what the body feels in response to the words heard.
 - In the case of blocks to creating an image, you can accept a small gesture from the blocked person, for example: inviting them to use a spontaneous gesture.
-
- 

Evaluation

It is better not to stop the process with a break or reflection but continue with the next steps of this guide



3.2

Exploring current narratives

'Loud Voices' inspired by Cops in the Head
Rainbow of Desire (Boal) By Elan Interculturel

Technique

Rainbow of Desire (Augusto Boal) and
Culture Shock Method MCE

Objectives

Explore the current dominant narratives
linked to migration

Materials needed

- Markers
- Flipcharts

Time needed

1h30 - 2h depending on the number of
participants (minimum 12 participants)

Step by Step Instructions

Make small groups (3 or 4 people depending on the size of the group you are working with)

Step 1: (5min)

Provide them with a large piece of paper (paperboard) so one person from the team can lay down on the paper while the rest draw their outline. This will be the support material for them to work on: the outline of a person.

Step 2: (20min)

Ask your participants to imagine that this character represents MIGRATION in their local context (e.g. if we are in Paris we will ask our participants to imagine that the character

represents MIGRATION and people with migratory background in France or Paris). Ask the participants to draw or write words/phrases associated with migration and migrants in media, political discourse or social media that we hear every day.

- Voices, ideas that we hear/read in mainstream media.
- Shared representations, stereotypes, etc.

IMPORTANT: Participants do not have to agree on these narratives, the idea is to explore current narratives, they can be either positive or negative, or even 'neutral'. It is absolutely possible to have opposite visions in the same outline.

Step 3: (20 minutes)

After the brainstorming, ask the teams to summarise their thoughts into 2 or 3 main ideas. They will have to present them with others as statements.

Step 4: (5 minutes per group)

Each of the small groups should present what they reflected on to the other groups.

Step 5: (20 minutes)

Debriefing, see below.



Debriefing

After all the presentations, try to reflect with the group about their outcomes. Here are some suggestions on topics you can dig in but facilitators can feel free to follow their instinct based on what the group shared. Remember the instructions were to try to collect ideas, words that characterise dominant narratives about migration (and not yet what the participants feel/think about them).

- Do you see common points between the various dominant representations?
- Where do you think the dominant representations come from? Why do you think they are so widespread? (ideas: Historic reasons? Political discourse? Public policies? Dominant society? Economical interests?...)
- Who do these discourses come from? Why do these people reinforce those ideas?
- Do you see only one vision/side about migrants or do you see a plurality of ideas? Why?



Hints for facilitators

- Make sure to do this activity after the creation of a safe space, hearing and talking about some sentences and ideas might be really intense for some people.
- After this activity, we suggest taking a break and working on the creation of alternative and counter narratives. Doing this activity in an isolated way might not empower the participants completely.

Card cluster By EFA

Materials needed

- Blank cards or post-it notes, pens and a table
- Or online: use an online whiteboard such as Google Jamboard

Objectives

Explore the current dominant narratives linked to migration

Time needed

30 – 60 minutes

Step by Step Instructions

The card cluster is a way for a group to pool knowledge and create a group narrative about how migration is predominantly thought about in their locale.

Each participant is given three pieces of card and told to write three different things about the topic in question, one thing on each card. It can be information, opinion or personal experience related to the topic or question and there are no rights or wrongs. Participants then share their cards and cluster similar cards together to create a map of their collective knowledge, experience and interests around a topic.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the generative theme of your card cluster. This could be 'stereotypes about migration' or 'ideas about migration in [your country]'. Or a question like 'what ideas do people have about migration in [your country/area]'.
2. Give each participant three cards (or sticky notes). Ask them to write 3 things they know about the generative subject. Tell participants to write only one item on each card (this is important, otherwise it will be impossible to cluster ideas subsequently!).
3. Once participants have their cards ready, bring the group together around a surface such as a table or wall. Ask one participant to place, stick or pin one of their cards on this surface. If working online, participants can place post-it notes digitally on a digital whiteboard as they write.

4. Other participants can then add cards which are connected or similar to the first card. Participants should read out their card and place it next to the card that has gone before to create a cluster of cards on the surface. Invite participants to explain the card if the meaning is not completely clear.
5. When no one in the group has any cards which are obviously connected to the last card laid down, participants can lay down a new card on the surface, starting off a new cluster.
6. Once all the cards are laid down, ask participants to check the clusters and re-arrange them if there are better ways to cluster the cards. Ask participants to collaboratively decide on titles for each cluster and write those titles down on new pieces of card in a distinctive colour.
7. Finally, when the cards have been clustered and named, participants take turns to create a single narrative, or summary of the statements. Depending on your generative subject or question, this should leave you with a collection of dominant narratives about migration and possibly some meta-themes, comments or questions about the subject of dominant narratives. This produces a wealth of language and opportunities for further language development work, as well as 'sub topics' for further exploration.



Hints for facilitators

Depending on the size of your group, you could give participants more cards at the beginning of the activity. You can also keep some cards or sticky notes spare, and tell participants they can write more cards at the feeding backstage if they have new ideas

Searching for oppression as a dominant narrative By Giolli

Technique

Image-Theatre: Sculpting a subject using other group members' bodies

Objectives

- To find a typical situation where the dominant narrative has a great influence on people's lives.
- To strengthen the group through sharing stories.

Materials needed

- Various objects that do not have exclusive characteristics, such as scarves, bottles, boxes and sticks.
- A flip-chart (or 1-2 big sheets of paper) and some markers.
- A smartphone can be used to take pictures.

Time needed

40-60 minutes, depending on the group's skills.

Step by Step Instructions

1. Split the group into sub-groups of 4-5 people.
2. Show the group how to make an image, by sculpting a volunteer.
3. 'You are the clay and I am the sculptor. I'm sculpting you and you have to hold the shape I create. I can touch you and move a part of your body or I can show you the position you have to take'.
4. Then give the group instructions such as: 'Now you go to the sub-groups and - in silence - think about a personal situation where you were the protagonist or witness. This situation should be an oppressive situation where the dominant narrative was present or the situation was linked to it in some way. Try to figure out an image that can summarise the situation. The first person who has a clear image in their mind starts to act as a sculptor, as described above. At the end, observe your sculpture and if satisfied, clap your hands and the image is released'.
5. Monitor each group and check if there is any problem. When everyone is ready, invite all the sub-groups to gather.
6. Invite the first group to show their own images, one by one, until the end. During each presentation, briefly ask the audience questions such as: 'What do you see? What could that be? What element of the dominant narrative is present here?' in order to stimulate reflection and interpretations and have everyone's attention.
7. If you have an assistant, ask them to write on a flip-chart or a big piece of paper all the situations evoked by the images in the audience.

Debriefing

Only if you see some strong emotion in someone, ask something general like:

- 'How was it?'
- 'Is there anyone who wants to share their experience?'
- 'What touched you most?'

If you interrupt here for some reason you can ask:

- 'Which elements constitute the dominant narrative?'
- 'Are they consistent or not?'
- 'Was there any contradictory element?'



Hints for facilitators

- As usual, the Joker is impartial, neither a teacher, nor a speaker or a priest, so avoid any judgement, comments or remarks if not needed to help the process to proceed. Trust the group, they know the way, limit yourself to help them and balance passivity and activism, avoid manipulation, imposing your ideas and sentences linked to the banking model of education.
- During the process of image-creation, approach each sub-group, observe more than interfere and help only if help is requested or if you see a block.
- Urge people to think in images instead of thinking verbally and then translating.
- During the show, try to keep a rhythm in order to avoid annoying the public with too many comments.



Evaluation

It is better not to stop the process with a break or reflection but continue with the next steps of this guide

3.3

Exploring what narratives we want to see

Finding solution By Giolli

Technique

Image dynamisation

Objectives

- To explore the possibility of change
- To verify the consistency of change

Time needed

10-20 minutes, depending on the focus of the group and the research needed.

Materials needed

The ones already used in the last activity

Step by Step Instructions

Keep the multiple images of oppression already created and ask people to relax for the explanation.

1. Invite the public to quickly replace the most oppressed person in the image. When you clap your hands, the person being replaced goes back to the audience.
2. Repeat the scheme once more, but ask the spectators to join the person who is most oppressed, instead of replacing them.
3. Explain the following: 'Now we have x images in the room, created by x sculptors. I'm going to clap my hands many times and you are allowed to move each time I clap, as a video frame. With each clap you are allowed one movement, after which you have to stop. You are asked to move in the direction of change if you are not satisfied with the image you are in. If you are happy, do not move. As everyone moves, the situation

will be constantly changing, so be aware of what's happening and try to avoid the oppression of the dominant narrative and create happiness/new narratives instead'.

4. Then the joker claps their hands at a steady rhythm whenever they notice different dynamics or something interesting happening. At a certain moment the joker would say "stop" and everyone stops.



Debriefing

The Joker asks volunteers to share what they perceived and saw.

Possible questions :

- 'What did you perceive inside?'
- 'What was your goal?'
- 'Did you succeed ? Why?'
- 'What did you observe in the others?'



Hints for facilitators

- During the dynamisation of the images, be careful to give as many claps as needed to resolve each tension and each desire, but also do not exhaust the group.
- In the discussion, pay attention if someone was hurt emotionally by the dynamics.



Evaluation

Usually in TO practice, we evaluate at the end of the day or of the process

Problem Posing By EFA

Materials needed

An image or picture representing the dominant narrative

Objectives

To unpick a dominant narrative that participants have encountered and develop alternative and / or counter narratives

Time needed

1 hour or more

Step by Step Instructions

Overview:

Problem Posing uses an image (also referred to as a 'code') to represent a problem of interest for the group. In this case, we can select codes which reflect dominant narratives about migration that are relevant or familiar to the group.

The code could be a picture that has been drawn by the facilitator (or participant) in advance, a photograph, or an image found online. The group looks at, and then discusses, the image. The facilitator carefully facilitates the discussion using a series of structured questions. The questions lead participants towards a deepening analysis of the problematic narrative. Problem Posing comes from the work of Paulo Freire and, subsequently, Elsa Auerbach.

Instructions:

- 1. Preparing your code:** The code should be an image that represents or relates to a dominant narrative around migration.
- 2. Display the code so everyone can see it.**

3. Ask the group a series of questions about the code:

Stage 1. Describe the content

Example questions (you will not want to ask all of these)

- What do you see?
- Where are they?
- Who is in the picture?
- What is happening?
- What do the people say/ believe / think?

4. Define the narrative

- Is there a problem with this picture?
- What is it?
- What stories/ideas/narratives about migrants/migration are shown in this picture?
- So is the story X or is the story Y?
- Is this a common narrative?
- Do you recognise this narrative?

5. Personalise the narrative

- Have you experienced any effects of this narrative?
- Would you like to tell us about it?
- Have you ever seen something like the image happen?

6. Discuss the narrative – Causes and consequences

- Why do people think this way?
- Why is this idea popular NOW?
- What are the causes of this?
- What are the consequences?
- Who is affected?
- Who is it a problem for?

7. Discuss the alternatives to the narrative

- How could people see things differently?
- What stories/narratives would be better?
- Is it possible to solve this?
- How can we change this?
- Is there anything WE can do?
- Do we need to put pressure on X?
- What steps do we need to take?



An example of a code - it does not have to be a complex image as long as everyone understands the problem it depicts

Debriefing

Plenary

The Problem Posing discussion can often be tiring and emotionally charged, as well as important and rewarding. At the end, it is helpful to do an activity that restores calm and brings people back together. A human card cluster works really well:

1. Give participants blank cards. They write an adjective in English to express how they are feeling, or how they felt during the discussion. On the back of the card they write why they felt that. Encourage participants to choose a language other than English (their expert language) to allow them to give a fuller explanation.
2. Participants then walk around the room, displaying their feeling card, looking for others who have the same or a similar feeling.
3. They form a group of similar feelings.
4. Once in a group, participants find a partner and tell them about their feelings, using the back of their card.



Our messages By Nyitott Kör

Materials needed

Post-its/stickers, pencil, small pieces of paper, cards with pictures

Method

Intercultural training combined with Drama pedagogy

Time needed

120 minutes

Objectives

- Sensitise participants about the topic of narratives and its role in society
- Exploring current mainstream narratives about people from migrant backgrounds
- Exploring what messages the target group wishes to transmit

Target group

From 5 to 20 participants interested in narratives

Step by Step Instructions

1. Name circle - everybody forms a circle and we go round with each person telling their name. This helps us to learn the names in the circle
2. Stimulus: every participant has a sticker put onto their back, without seeing it. Each sticker has a different symbol. There are stickers with plenty of the same symbol (eg. triangle), there are a few of another symbol (eg. circle), and one unique symbol without any pair (eg. line). Colours can also play a role.
 - a. The participants need to find their group, 'where you belong', without talking to each other, silently and without looking at their own symbol.
 - b. While the participants are searching for their group, and how to form a group, the facilitator is watching them and taking notes.
 - c. Debriefing part (see below)
3. Choose a picture that says something to you about migration (from cards, internet, books, anywhere). Everyone from the group shares why they chose the picture and what it brings up for them.

Forming Definitions:

- a. in trios participants form their own definitions for these words:

- A. immigrant
- B. refugee
- C. migrant
- D. foreigner
- E. expat
- F. local patriot
- G. xenophobic society/person
- H. inclusive society/person

b. Write them and place them to a visible spot in the room.

4. What kind of narratives and prejudices are present in your society/your country that are affecting migrants? Collect them written out on sheets of paper. For example: 'they don't want to learn Hungarian'.
5. In pairs: Choose from these words, then formulate a message that you would like to see or hear instead of this. For example: 'They want to learn Hungarian, but they don't get enough help to do so'.
6. Share these messages with the rest of the group.

Follow up workshop - Think about how you would like to formulate this message visually.

Debriefing

For exercise 2 (Stimulus):

After forming groups of the same symbol, a reflection and debriefing activity happens. You can ask:

- What happened?
- How does the largest group feel? How do they feel about the people who are not part of the largest group?
- How do the others who were not in the largest group feel?
- Look at your sticker. How did you form the group you are in? Why?
- Could you have formed a group with 3-4 different types of symbols?
- Why did each symbol look for other like them? Where and how did we learn that from?
- What was the journey of the person who has the unique symbol? Please tell your journey and feelings attached.
- What kind of groups from society can feel the same way as your group?

For exercise 4 (Definitions):

- In which category do you list yourself? How do you identify yourself in front of the others? Is it possible to form new categories?
- What other words belong to the expression 'migrant' in your language? Why? How do you feel about it?

At the end of the session:

- What was your journey today? Please explain in a few sentences.

3.4

Narrative creation

'World as it is, world as it should be' By EFA

Technique

This approach can be used to explore current dominant narratives around migration and generate alternatives

Objectives

To generate ideas for counter and or alternative narratives

Time needed

30 – 60 minutes

Materials needed

- Flip chart paper or large sheets of paper to draw on
- Online, use a digital whiteboard

Step by Step Instructions

1. Separate the group into small subgroups or breakout rooms (online) of 3 – 6 people per group.
2. Give each group a sheet of paper or a shared document (online) which you have pre-prepared by drawing a line half way down to divide the sheet into two sections.
3. Get the group to write a heading in each section: 'the world as it is' in one section and 'the world as it should be' in the other section.
4. In the first section, get the group to draw or note down the stereotypes or ideas about migration or migrants that currently exist in their context.
5. In the second section, get participants to write down the ideas or stories about migrants/migration that they would like to dominate.
6. Once the two sections are complete, get the groups to present their sheet to each other. Ask participants to comment on similarities and differences between the analysis of different groups.

Debriefing

Ask participants to discuss how they found the exercise

- a) What did they learn?
- b) Was there anything that surprised them?



Hints for facilitators

New vocabulary and language may be generated by participants in this activity – if you are working with language learners, it can be useful to highlight new words/phrases to celebrate the vocabulary of the group and to teach the words to any participants who are not familiar with them

Forum-theatre By Giolli

Technique

The technique called Forum-Theatre is one of the most famous within Augusto Boal's methods of Theatre of the Oppressed.

According to this method a narrative can be expressed in different ways and not only within the workshop.

If you want to work out prejudices the best is to have a mixed group of people, people who are migrants to a country and people who are not, and work together. Empathy will be strengthened with some specific exercises and through the essence of theatre that is to play another role and to put yourself in the other's shoes.

If you follow the strategies on [page 32](#) the most important contribution of Theatre of the Oppressed is to build an alliance among different oppressed groups that break down the dominant and divisive narrative.

Objectives

To generate a new narrative. This objective is reached with 4 mechanisms:

1. The Forum play is built up by a mixed group that overcame prejudices finding a common goal
2. The situations represented can affect both people who are migrants and those who are not (like lack of houses)
3. The play is run by a Joker who questions the dominant narrative throughout
4. Searching for solutions during the session brings out allyship in people, instead of competition, and that creates a new vision of the 'Other'.

Time needed

- To create a Forum play with a mixed group requires time. You can foresee from 12 hours to 30, but it is a very general advice.
- The sole session of Forum-Theatre lasts about 2 hours.

Materials needed

Depends on what the script is

Step by Step Instructions

To generate a Forum play there are different paths. The easiest is the one described below.

Group creation and de-mechanisation:

1. Start to create a safe and positive group atmosphere. If the group is mixed by age, ethnicity, culture, background, class, gender, etc. it will require further attention. There are exercises that can be used for this in Boal's texts. By using these exercises you are bringing the group to a process of 'de-mechanisation', which releases the physical, emotional, and mental stereotypes and rigidities affecting the individuals. This step is very important to be open to new solutions, new ideas, and new behaviours.
2. Only if you perceive a sufficient positive group atmosphere start with the next step of 'knot research'.

Knot research

3. Ask people to make pairs and to discuss personal situations they have lived or witnessed concerning a dominant narrative on migration and where they were emotionally involved. This can be something that has happened in a public space, in the labour market, on public transport, in searching for a house, at school, etc.
4. Ask each pair to choose one story that they both feel is most representative.
5. Make groups of 4 and repeat: each pair tells the chosen story and at the end they choose the most representative.
6. Proceed as many times as needed from the size of the group.
7. Ask one speaker of each sub-group to tell the story to the whole group.

Reaching the embryo

8. Discuss which is the most representative story for this group today (you can also choose more than one and then create sub-groups).
9. Stage the story chosen with the contribution of all. To stage the story the best way is to improvise and only afterwards to talk about what was clear, what was not, what needed to change, etc. Then begin a new improvisation, again asking the same questions afterwards. Use this circular method of devising and composing a play.

Cleaning the embryo

10. This is an important phase since the embryo can be limited or confused or lacking something, so this step is key to analysing the plot and the characters in-depth and to work out if the play is ready or not.

Key questions should be:

- What is the core question the play gives to the audience? (The question)
- Is the plot real enough? (Reality)
- Is its structure suitable for a Forum? (Structure)
- Are the characters deep enough? (Characters)
- Is the micro-situation framed in the larger macro-situation? (Micro-Macro)
- Is the dominant narrative well depicted? (Narrative)
- Is the plot theatrical or is it boring? (Theatricality)

Once cleaned enough, depending on the time you have available, the urgency to get started, the group's fears or desires, etc. you can move to the play session.

Debriefing

This is done throughout, with exercises, techniques and reflections alongside the process after each activity, trying to keep a balance between action and reflection



Hints for facilitators

For narrative work: put attention to narrative, the dominant narrative should emerge from the story but sometimes it is taken for granted so it is up to you as the Joker to make it explicit and to question what seems natural.

For foreign language learning: the whole activity is full of concrete chances to improve linguistic competencies - to tell a story, to listen, to make comments on a scene, to improvise dialogue in a specific context, etc. Verbal and non-verbal communication help us to understand each other.

'Comfort zone' By Nyitott Kör

Technique

A combination of storytelling, creative creation and Drama

Materials needed

- Prepared cards for warm-up: on one side questions that open up the topic, the other side is blank/ graphically designed if possible.
- Blank paper sheets, pens.
- Chosen images: an island and one of its typical streets printed or projected, possible opportunity to project multimedia and speakers.

Objectives

- Participants identify key messages and concepts they want to share with an audience that they identify about themselves
- Create opportunity for self-representation and creative expression in a shared and safe context
- Work socially, creatively and collaboratively

Time needed

3 hours with one break

Step by Step Instructions

1. Introductory circle: everyone has a piece of paper which they divide into two sides. On one of the sides draw a moment when you felt comfortable during the last couple of weeks. On the other side, draw a moment when you experienced discomfort during the last couple of weeks. Share among the group.
2. Questions and answers: the group gets into a circle, and there are cards on the floor in the middle, facing down. The facilitator picks up a card randomly and chooses somebody to whom the question that is written on the card will be aimed. They ask the question. Then the chosen group member answers and picks up the next card, and thus chooses the next person. The same follows until there are no more cards. The 'used' cards will be placed facing up on the floor/a table in a part of the room.
3. Stimulus: two images are projected or shown in print to the participants. One is about a relatively small and green island, the other is about a typical street of this island with village houses.
 - **Narration:** We invite you now to imagine that you are a foreigner to this island that has around 30,000 inhabitants. The vast majority of them were born here and lived

here all their lives. Most of the locals are fishermen. You arrived a year ago here with your family, because for some reason you could not live anymore in your home country. By now you have a place to live, you have just enough income to get by, and you learned the basics of the language. You still feel at a distance from the locals and it has been hard for you to make friends, but you don't quite understand why. What are the questions you would like to ask the locals, but you are shy to, or don't know exactly whom to ask?

4. The facilitator proceeds to a collection of questions in pairs or small groups, and places them visibly on the floor or the wall, all questions are read out loud.
5. In small groups of 3-5, participants receive different points of view on some paper: a working class family, local decision makers, the local newspaper's staff, teachers in the local school, 12-18 year old teenagers, policemen; and 3 questions from the previous collection. Their task is to imagine possible reactions/answers to these questions from the given group. They may be asked to perform an improvised scene/conversation about their feelings of discomfort towards the foreigners stepping into the roles of the locals according to the given point of view.
6. In small groups of 3-5 members, the task of the group is to identify a key message based on the previous tasks that they would like to introduce to the community of this island in order that foreigners feel more comfortable here, and find a way how that message can be expressed creatively and artistically, calling the attention. Eg. posters, sculptures, monuments. We share these among the group. A possible introduction to this task: There is a local cultural centre on the island, where the foreigners were offered a space for two weeks to install an exhibition, and organise an opening event. What do they want to present there and how?



Debriefing

Thinking about the artistic products that the groups created, whom would you invite to this exhibition from the island? Who would benefit from coming into this event? Are their members in the local community for whom it would be more important to come in, than for others?

What would you like to ask from the guests of the exhibition after they experience it?

Hints for facilitators

Questions to Instruction 2 for the cards:

- Your thoughts/feelings about growing old
- Your thoughts/feelings about religion
- Your thoughts/feelings about money
- Your thoughts/feelings about friendship
- Your thoughts/feelings about life in a village
- Your thoughts/feelings about authority
- Your favourite holiday, and why
- Characteristics of people that you appreciate a lot
- Characteristic of people that make you angry
- Something you remember from a recent holiday
- Something that was recently bothering you
- Something you are looking forward to
- Where would you go now if you could go anywhere?

Other questions are possible to be posed as well on the cards, and it is important that these stimulate the thoughts and relationships of the participants to the topics of the story that follows.

The precise wording with the narration elements are important, and it is good to have them written priorly. If facilitators feel competent to work through dramatic techniques, the narrations can also be replaced by theatre scenes or video clips that reveal the same information and give context to the exercises.

There are several shifts of perspectives throughout the session: from the 'me' to the 'foreign person on the island', followingly to the 'local community member' and coming back to the 'foreigner' and then back to ourselves. These shifts have to be carefully prepared to enable participants to explore them in depth.

For instruction 3 Stimulus: some more details to the context are possibly elaborated by the facilitator, and if participants ask questions they can answer them, in case these information are necessary for the group to be able to take the next step. Eg. the 'foreign family' has an income from day labourer jobs in agriculture - or similar - that probably isolates people during working.



Evaluation

- How do you understand comfort and discomfort in terms of this session?
- How do you feel now, after this session?
- What are you bringing with you?
- How would you feel if you could participate in the installation of such an exhibition in your community?

3.5

Reflection and learning

Spectrum line By EFA

Technique

This can be used to reflect on the learning so far and evaluate collectively. It allows for reflective discussion amongst participants, with a clear visual representation of the spread of group opinion.

Objectives

To reflect on the groups' experience of a topic or course and whether the aims have been met.

Time needed

15 – 30 minutes

Materials needed

Space to spread out. If doing this online, participants will need to have access to video, and can raise their hand up or down their screen

Step by Step Instructions

1. The facilitator makes statements and asks participants how far they agree or disagree.

To show how far they agree, participants go and stand somewhere along a 'spectrum line' between two walls or two points in the classroom or meeting space. One wall or point represents complete agreement and the other wall or point represents complete disagreement.

If doing this online, participants can raise their hands to the top of the screen to show complete agreement, or to the bottom of the screen to show complete disagreement.

Alternatively, this could be done through an online poll.

2. Example statements:

- I enjoyed the course/session
- I know more about counter and alternative narratives
- I know how to challenge the popular ideas about migration
- I feel more confident about X
- I know how to do X
- [add your own]

After each statement has been read out, and participants have positioned themselves, the facilitator can invite participants to explain why they are standing where they are (or, online, why they have voted the way they have). The facilitator can ask for comments from those participants who are furthest along the spectrum line in either direction.

3. Participants can change their position if they are persuaded by something someone else says. By giving people a chance to speak once they have positioned themselves, they can justify their stance, add nuance and clarify their understanding of the statement.



Debriefing

If a spectrum line gives participants a chance to express satisfaction and enjoyment, it can be a feel-good closing activity.

If some participants express dissatisfaction with elements of the session or course, the facilitator may want to follow up with making or eliciting some suggestions for how to address this e.g. 'Maybe next time we could...'. In areas where participants express less confidence or feel they have made least progress, the facilitator can ask whether this is a topic or area that participants would like to explore further. This can help inform course planning if you have forthcoming sessions together.



Hints for facilitators

If the group does not have enough trust/confidence for participants to be singled out to speak, the facilitator can ask for opinions from 'someone at this end of the spectrum line' instead.

When selecting statements for the spectrum line, choose definitive statements e.g. 'I feel confident to challenge harmful narratives' rather than 'I feel quite confident to challenge harmful narratives' to see a wider spread of responses. You are aiming to use statements where not everyone will stand at one end.

3.6

Transversal activities

MiGREAT! Debate Theatre By Nyitott Kör

Method

Debate theatre: an interactive theatrical game.

Generally the aim of the method is to provide space for a moderated and fair debate. Participants are invited to debate the most crucial and divisive social issues and questions. One or more experts in the topic, or an 'experiential expert' may also be invited to participate in the debate.

During the debate, the creators show theatrically dramatised scenes, which trigger thoughts and feelings of the participants. Questions and statements that facilitate the debate are posed in connection with the scenes, and participants are asked to take sides accordingly. During the debate participants can change their initial opinions by changing sides. Participation is meaningful and exciting for those participants also who don't like to express themselves publicly in speaking, because by choosing a side physically and visibly, they also express their views.

Objectives

- Raise awareness about the topic of narratives and their role in society
- Explore current mainstream narratives about migrants and migration
- Explore what narratives the participants find important and how these can be created
- Facilitate a social debate where all opinions can be expressed
- Reveal hidden/not commonly known aspects of the topic through the participants' own experiences and by the prepared scenes
- Reflect on the current time we are living in, in connection with the phenomena behind migration

Materials needed

Chairs for the participants and the facilitators, + 30% of chairs to facilitate switching sides. Tools necessary for the scene. Paper sheets and pens.

Time needed

90 minutes

Target group

It can be organised for an established group of adults and adult learners (optimally for 15-35 participants), and also as a public event, where the number of participants can reach around 70 participants, or more.

The debate is richer when there are diverse opinions present in the audience.

Step by Step Instructions

Central question: Why is it important to improve the range of narratives about migration, and how can we do it? Who is/are responsible for (wider) change to happen?

The basic sequence:

- Introduction to the method, rules and to the topic
- A game or warmer activity that activates participants' body, voice and presence, thoughts and feelings
- First question/statement, choosing sides, a short debate, a trial of the method
- Dramatised scene
- Second question/statement, choosing sides, debate
- Movie clip
- Third question/statement choosing sides, debate
- Monologue
- Fourth question/statement choosing sides, debate
- Closing dramatised scene
- Reflection task
- Follow up

Explaining the process step by step:

1. Introduction: The facilitators explain the frames: topic and central question, method of the debate, role of the theatre scenes, time frames, setting and its importance. Participants can pose questions so all have a common understanding about what is going

to happen, and how it is created. Chairs are organised as two audiences facing each other from the beginning.

2. Game or warmer activity: When did you first hear the term 'migrant', in what context and how did you feel about it? - Have a short conversation with the people who are sitting around you, 3-4 people, take notes.

3. Statement: The term 'migrant' is a stigma. Sides: a) yes, it is. b) no it is not. Participants choose a side according to their opinions and a debate is started with the help of the facilitator/moderator.

4. Dramatised scene. Narration: The following scene takes place in the hall of an apartment building, where A and B are neighbours. Scene: C leaves through the hall, B says goodbye kindly from the door to C, A comes in through the door. A sees C and stops. Stares at C. Stares at B while C leaves. B says 'hello' to A. A asks about the private teaching business of B. B answers kindly. A asks about what kind of people B is teaching here, in the building. B asks A to repeat the question. A starts a monologue about 'foreign' and 'weird' looking men and women entering the building, the monologue ends with pointing out the irresponsibility of B. B says goodbye and closes the door.

5. Question: Is migration a threat to our country? Sides: a) yes, it is. b) no it is not. Participants choose a side according to their opinions and a debate is started with the help of the facilitator/moderator.

6. Movie clip: A short (5 minutes long) montage about how migrants are pictured by local mainstream media. The montage shall be strong and provocative. [Here](#) is possible footage to be used.

7. Statement: Journalists are responsible for the predominantly negative narratives about migration. Sides: a) I agree. b) I disagree. Participants choose a side according to their opinions and a debate is started with the help of the facilitator/moderator.

8. Monologue from a person from a migrant background about a story of exploitation of power by the authorities. The monologue may be written by the creators, based on their own stories, or chosen from [this book](#). Abdallah's monologue would serve the purpose well for instance.

9. Statement: Once told, a story can never be unspoken. Sides: a) I agree. b) I disagree. Participants choose a side according to their opinions and a debate is started with the help of the facilitator/moderator.

10. Closing dramatised scene. Focus of the scene: Is it the responsibility of the individual to change narratives about minority groups? How can it become a common responsibility? What can the individual do? Is there hope? The scene can be devised by the creators. It may be a chorus, a poem, or a song. It shall be emotionally engaging.

11. Participants receive a piece of paper and write briefly about: Which changes they would like to see about the narratives around migration in the next 10 years, what they feel they could do for these changes to happen.

12. Follow up: Answers are collected, transcribed and shared with participants anonymously after the event.

Debriefing

No special debriefing for participants.

- If tried out as a training for trainers activity, reflection may include:
- How were your emotions and body involved during the activity?
- What did you observe about others in terms of being involved emotionally and with their bodies?
- Why were these memorable, important?
- What do you think about the participants that remain silent during the whole activity? - If there is a member who did not speak, why did they choose this strategy?

Hints for facilitators

- Ideally debate theatre is prepared and facilitated by 3-5 actor-teachers. Two can perform in the scenes and take two different sides to each question, where they might also respond in their roles from the previous scene, to help taboos dissolve and to spice up the debate. The third facilitator can moderate, and these roles can change depending on the comfort zone and expertise of the facilitators. For example, A and B act in the first scene (point 4), C moderates the discussion (point 5). Later A and B can also become moderators, and C can act.
- The preparation for debate theatre, if the scenes are kept simple and the questions/ statements are already elaborated, may be around 15-25 hours long (5 rehearsals), depending on how many elements are being devised in the preparation process.
- The ideal time of the activity is around 90-105 minutes, a longer debate can be very tiring.
- It is possible to place the dramatised scenes or clips in the debate organically, based on the aims and intentions of the theatrical elements. The facilitator may take statements from the participants and 'test' them for side-taking and debates during the activity.
- The moderator/facilitator holds the responsibility for creating space for everyone to express their opinions if they wish to do so. Some participants may consciously or unconsciously suppress other voices and opinions. By being aware of this, the facilitator(s) may use techniques they are familiar with to empower other participants to enter the debate.



COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES.

4

Collection of good practices

During our work and our research, we have come across many other people who also participate in the construction of new narratives on oppressed groups in Europe. We are not alone (fortunately). For this reason, we have brought together this small final part of our guide to gather some of the

practices and exchanges that we discovered while we have carried out the work.

To this end, each of our partners conducted an interview with a local ac, in order to cross our learning, visualise best practices and our challenges.

Lallab : challenging Muslim women's narratives in France

Lallab is an anti-racist feminist association that gives a voice to Muslim women. Its vision is that all Muslim women can be who they want to be without fear of being judged, discriminated against or oppressed on the basis of their identities. To arrive there, they develop tools and resources that enable Muslim women to take their place in their lives and in their space, in order to put Muslim women back at the centre of decision-making.

In France, as we described briefly in the first chapter, some minorities are perceived by some as a 'threat' to the 'traditional French identity' and 'republican values'. Muslim people (women, mainly), are subjected to constant attacks from the media, from institutions, which construct a discriminatory and simplistic narrative - a completely false one.

According to Paya Ndiaye (former president at Lallab), these narratives are extremely badly done because they are not created by the concerned parties: Muslim people. To fight that, one of the strategies of Lallab is to create a community of expression: 'In France, we talk about Muslim women all the time but nobody lets them speak, at Lallab we want to re-appropriate the story'. Concretely, they have developed a documentary, an online magazine and a festival, all led, produced and organised by the community of 'Lallas' (the name for their volunteers).

Paya also explains how changing narratives is always a collective movement that will benefit many other groups in society: 'When you defend the rights of one part of the population, it has an exponential effect and you defend the rights of all women. For

example, we have a partner association, the Alliance Citoyenne de Grenoble, which works on access to swimming pools for Muslim women, because in Grenoble a Muslim woman wearing a burkini cannot get into a swimming pool. They fight on this subject that is very specific, it concerns very few people. But in truth, when they

do that, when they defend the rights of some women to wear their burkini in the swimming pool, they defend the rights of all women, and even of all people, to wear a swimming pool garment that is convenient for you and allows you to be comfortable to go to the pool'.

Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) : taking action on issues of migrant justice in the UK

JCWI aims to inspire its base audience (politicised, radical, predominantly young) to persuade the middle (generally politically-aware, don't identify as radical, predominantly older) to take action on issues of migrant justice. JCWI runs a number of different campaigns that aim to change the narrative on migration and influence policy.

One example of their actions is the People Move campaign, which is online as are many of JCWI's examples that aim to reach their base. The campaign seeks to shift the narrative on migration to one that focuses on the reality that people from all backgrounds move, have moved and always will. It uses the word 'move' instead of 'migrate' to expand the definition of movement and include all movement, from moving 'down the road' to moving to 'a different country'. There is an implied message that this simply has to be accepted as fact. The campaign also hopes to frame migration as an issue to be managed through humane and fair processes instead of being seen as a problem to be solved. The campaign video highlights the different reasons people move, from work and study to staying alive.

The video then argues that no one should suffer because they move. As part of the campaign, JCWI launched a manifesto with twelve steps towards a fairer immigration

system. The vision is that Britain becomes a place where 'newcomers are safe and welcome' and where 'communities are strong and open'.

JCWI was set up in 1967 in response to a wave of racist and anti-migrant narratives, and it is a key organisation that adopts unapologetically radical stances on migration. They have been a key voice in shaping debates and narratives on migration that centre migrant communities, their experiences and their agency. JCWI is currently actively finding ways to make its work as migrant-led as possible and is in the process of launching a new campaign, Work It Out, that would allow for more of that. The campaign will call for an end to unfair treatment of people from migrant backgrounds in the context of work. This includes calling for fair wages, scrapping No Recourse to Public Funds which restricts some from being able to access benefits and support from the state, and separating work from immigration enforcement. It also recently launched an art and activism strand through which it will be commissioning artwork that carries JCWI's messages and a lot of people with lived experience have pitched for it.

In JCWI's communication, it always presents solutions to any given problem, and its solutions are evidence-based and focussed on the welfare and humanity of people

affected. It has tackled difficult debates very humanely, including recently the deportation of foreign national offenders on the first charter flight to Jamaica since [The Windrush Scandal \(57\)](#). It did this by going into the details of the stories of the people, the circumstances surrounding

their offence and how many had lived in the UK for most of their lives and even served their full sentence here already. Focus groups the JCWI has hosted have shown that going deeper into human stories helps win people over.

Ferencvaros Community Foundation in Hungary

The Foundation was established in 2011 by private entities, and their main goal is to support fundraising for civil society initiatives. According to Orsolya Polyacsókó, co-worker of the organisation, they first started to brainstorm about alternative narratives connected to migration, and the local foreigner community in 2015 [\(58\)](#). The team wanted to use their tools to present a more human side about migrants, and through that foster their inclusion in the neighbourhood's society.

At first, they conducted interviews with locally residing and working foreigners, to better know their needs, their stories and their challenges. Following they organised a photo exhibition with the contribution of some of the interviewees, in which images of their precious objects, accompanied by textual narration of the stories were exhibited [\(59\)](#). As Orsolya sees, 'One of the elements of the successful presentation of these stories was the choice of the venue. We could achieve that the local food market hosted the exhibition for one month, and through that we reached out to a diverse public and also had meaningful press coverage of the action' [\(60\)](#). The images were artistically photographed and edited by Balázs Pivarnyik.

The high quality of the visual product played

an important role in the engagement of the public. As a result of these two strategies, the exhibition was later invited to other events and places, and the images were hosted by local shops in their shop windows as part of the series of events called Ráday korzó in 2018.

The Foundation is coordinating an ongoing project called Új szomszédaink – Sokszínű Ferencváros (Our new neighbours - The multicolour Ferencváros) in which there were many actions organised about and together with residing foreigners that reached out to a wide public and had positive reception both from locals and the migrant community.

Their most recent action is a Gastro-vlog, titled Főzd meg a világot! (Cook the world!), in which a new, multicultural recipe video is published biweekly. One of the aims of the action is to present the cooks, who are foreigners living in the neighbourhood, and show the diversity of this group to the locals, through human stories.

They publish the videos first on their facebook page, which fosters the wide reach out to the local community, as facebook algorithms prioritise internal uploads. A few days later they published the videos on their youtube channel also.

Libera la parola' and 'sportello legale': independently organised spaces in trento city (Italy)

LiberaLaParola (translated as 'free the word') was created in Trento, North Italy, after a public assembly. On this occasion, three people with previous experience on monitoring transit migrants and homeless people in the city and on the border proposed to the assembly to think about aims and practices of migration and inclusion and needs emerged. In September 2018; Libera La Parola Trento was born, as a free and independently organised Italian language school. The main aim was to make more effective interactions among different people.

Sara Ballardini (one of the volunteers) says: 'As a trained language teacher, I found that teaching Italian to migrants was something which could make sense. I could also take advantage of the years spent in Colombia, and my experience in human rights and human rights defenders. Nonviolent approach and the relevance of local communities (usually identified as 'victims') in the changing processes are the key of all what I'm trying to do'.

As part of an independent centre (Centro Sociale Bruno), LiberaLaParola is a place where people can find an answer to a specific concrete need: learning the Italian language. That's the base for an equal relationship, as a relationship among adult people is supposed to be. Sharing is a fact, and it's the aim of all activities: we speak because we want to express ourself. This seems to be the correct place to take care of relationships and to monitor the situation of the city; sometimes, here we can even have a better point of view than the social workers, because we are seen as 'out of the system'.

As Sara said: 'It's a space for community and information sharing from a point of view that is different from mine, because I'm not

homeless, and I'm not a migrant.'

In the 'Italian schools network' (61) there is a strong willingness to go beyond the 'ABC teaching'; the aim is to offer tools for empowerment.

It's a sincere space also for volunteers, which wonder together about the deep meaning of actions. They think together about colonialism and control systems, which can also influence social work and solidarity networks. They know very well that we are conditioned by the system that we want to change, more than we are aware of. Inside this system, word is power.

During these years there were a few important occasions, in which, as Sara said 'eventually we could use our word to build something together!'

Here you have few example of activities:

- Meetings and discussions in groups about problems that we face in Italy, to prepare a public assembly. During the discussions, an interesting point was raised, between who is seeing the responsibility of the system, and who thinks that people can't recognise their own responsibility.
- Students assembly about 'residence'; among sixty people took part in it; 'residence' as is recognised by the municipal authorities. Beginning from key words, the translation wasn't literally, but instead was into the personal experiences. As native Italians, we can be clear about the language of discriminating laws, but migrants are the victims of this. Any action, to be effective, needs the action of both parts.

In close connection with the experience of the school, we want to describe the activity of the Legal Desk, a place where people can

go to obtain information regarding their status and rights in terms of documents and presence on the national territory.

Irene Serangeli, a volunteer, tells us how the situations that arise are 'often very different from each other, but linked by the difficulty in finding understandable information at the institutional counters'. In particular in relation to the asylum request and the regularisation of summer 2020, more than 200 people went to the counter.

The need for information regarding documents, the fear and the impossibility of obtaining them by going to the institutional counters, push many people to turn to Irene and other volunteers. At the counter, an equal welcome is guaranteed, disinterested help, the possibility of following the development of the complex regulatory steps linked to obtaining a document over time. All this, carried out by focusing on the person, supported in his request to see his rights satisfied.

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France

Website: <http://www.compagnie-naje.fr>

E-mail: compagnienaje92@gmail.com

GERMANY

- Kuringa

Berlin

Website: <https://kuringa.de/en/>

E-mail: kuringa@kuringa.org

ITALY

- Giolli cooperativa sociale

Parma

Website: www.giollicoop.it

E-mail: segreteria@giollicoop.it

- Parteciparte

Roma

Website: <https://www.parteciparte.com/it>

E-mail: parteciparte@gmail.com

SPAIN

- Forn de Teater Pa'tothom

Barcelona

Website: <https://www.patothom.org/>

E-mail: info@patothom.org

UNITED KINGDOM

- Cardboard Citizens

London

Website: <https://cardboardcitizens.org.uk>

E-mail: mail@cardboardcitizens.org.uk

HUNGARY

Hungarian website for searching among the relevant organisations :

<https://www.szhazineveles.hu/>

FOOTNOTES.

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1. We chose to use this term instead of the commonly used 'migrant' in order to avoid reducing people to their migrant journey. This choice allows for the humanisation and recognition of people's individual histories and experiences, which cannot be encapsulated in one term. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/person-migratory-background_en

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2. Other elements of definition can be found in the We Can! manual that emerged from the European No Hate Speech movement. URL : <https://rm.coe.int/wecan-eng-final-23052017-web/168071ba08>

3. Definition of 'essentialising': this term refers to the discursive phenomenon of reducing human beings to a narrow essence, without recognising them a certain complexity and relationships with others and a context.

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30. The film synopsis and list of awards on the Hungarian Film Institute's website: <https://nfi.hu/en/film/the-citizen60> The local food market of Ferencváros, Fővámteri piac, is one of the biggest and oldest markets of the city, attracting many tourists yearly, however locals as well visit it to obtain their daily goods.
31. The films portray the lifestyles, adaptational strategies, hardships and victories of migrants living in Europe. Separation and assimilation, new and old homes, homelands, families and friendships are reflected in the fate of individuals and communities: <http://eng.palantirfilm.hu/strangers-in-my-garden-film-collection/>

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45. Reflect for ESOL Resource Pack: <https://www.skillsforlifefnetwork.com/attachments/pages/964/Reflect%20for%20ESOL%20Resource%20Pack.pdf>

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46. Augusto Boal: *Theatre of the Oppressed*, 1979.

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47. The concept of embodiment was first introduced by Maurice Merleau Ponty in the training of actors. The attempt is to bring body and mind closer together in the performer. In this case we refer not only to the actors' work, but also to the process participants (the spectators) are invited to experience.

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48. From Douglass's 'West India Emancipation' speech, delivered at Canandaigua, New York on 3rd August 1857

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49. Framing Equality Toolkit, PIRC <https://publicinterest.org.uk/FramingEqualityToolkit.pdf>

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50. <https://wordstowinby-pod.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/People-Seeking-Asylum-Messaging-research-brief.pdf>

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53. Example: the photo of a rite of passage after death that is performed in India that is completely different from the rituals performed in France.
54. Joshua Gunn, 'On Speech and Public Release', Rhetoric and Public Affairs, 13(2) (2010): 1-41.
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57. <https://www.jcwi.org.uk/windrush-scandal-explained>
58. As we explained in the first chapter, the Hungarian government has been conducting a massive anti-migrant campaign as part of their election campaign to generate public panic in the minds of the locals.
59. The original idea came from exhibition called 'Humans of New York'
60. The local food market of Ferencváros, Fővámteri piac, is one of the biggest and oldest markets of the city, attracting many tourists yearly, however locals as well visit it to obtain their daily goods.

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61. An informal network of schools of Italian for migrants, based in different places and settings of the country.

Changing Migration Narratives

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and good practices

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