Privilege walk education

# Aims

* To consider how aspects of personal and social identities privilege and disadvantage children and young people in education in Europe
* To reflect on the connection between discrimination in education and education for sustainability
* To consider what students and teachers can do to reduce discrimination

# Method

* Each participant takes a role card from the bag, and reads it. Chance to check anything that is not clear.
* Ask participants to line up, in a horizontal line.
* Explain that the walk they will take represents progress and achievement in education. If you are able to step forward you are achieving, if not you are being held back.
* They should imagine they a school they know well in your country.
* Read each question aloud. If the role they have means they can answer yes, the participant can take a step forward. Otherwise they stay still.

## Reflection activities

* **After each step** – check with a few participants who could move forward, and who could not and why
* **After all questions** – ask the people at the front, middle and back to read their cards and/or comment on what they feel helped or hindered them in education
* **Groupwork** – give all groups the following three questions. Ask them to discuss and note down answers to share in plenary. Share answers by regrouping groups (jigsaw) or by each group reporting back 2 ideas for each question, until all ideas are exhausted. (see possible responses below to help guide discussion)

1. What identity characteristics lead to discrimination in education in Europe and why?
2. What has discrimination in education go to do with sustainability?
3. What can we do to reduce discrimination in education?

# Statements

1. You see and hear your language/s at school
2. You develop your language/s and use your language/ to learn at school
3. People do not insult you because of how you look
4. You have books and magazines at home
5. You have lots of family and friends who live nearby
6. You have family and friends in medium and high status jobs
7. You and your family feel you belong in the place that you live now
8. You celebrate important festivals from your culture/community at school
9. Your family understand what is expected of them from the school
10. You have never been asked where you really come from
11. You learn about the ideas and experiences of people you identify with at school
12. You identify with teachers at school, because you look similar, or are part of similar communities
13. You regularly see positive examples of people who look like you in the media
14. You can access all the places at school where your class needs to go
15. You study in mainstream classes

# Role cards

– to do (before the 9th)

30 role cards – you are all 9 years’ old

Should each contain a mixture of characteristics and avoid stereotypes

Add names and ages (between 6 and 15)

Alter (6-15)

Geschlecht

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| White  Moved to Germany from Ukraine as a small child  Father is a doctor, mother works part time  Speak Ukrainian at home and German at school | White  Born in Germany  Father Italian German and mother German-German, both engineers working in large tech companies  Wheelchair user and attend regular physical therapy sessions which mean you sometimes miss school  Use Italian with father and German with almost everyone else  Lots of family and friends locally |
| White  Single parent family, parent is unemployed  Low-income family  Strong local accent  Can’t afford cool clothes or toys | White  Single parent family, parent is unemployed  Low-income family  Strong local accent  Can’t afford cool clothes or toys  Severely deaf |
| Born in Germany  Attend Orthodox Christian church  Speak Serbian with parents and with friends who are mostly originally from Balkan countries  Parents are in low-income jobs, but are studying alongside work so they can re—enter their previous professions (journalism and medicine) | Born in Italy – dual nationality (Italian/German)  Use Italian, Arabic and English at home with parents  A large network of family and friends mostly outside of Germany  Attend Mosque and celebrate Muslim festivals |
| Born in Germany  Attend Orthodox Christian church  Speak Serbian with parents and with friends who are mostly originally from Balkan countries  Parents moved to Germany as adults and work in low income jobs. | Brown  Born in Germany  Parents moved to Germany as adults and do low-paid work  All family are in Vietnam  Active in the local Vietnamese community, with regular gatherings |
| Brown  Born in Germany  Mother moved to Germany as an adult and works as a doctor  All family on mothers’ side are in Thailand  Buddhist |  |
| Brown  Born in Syria, where parents worked at a university  Two years living in an asylum home before gaining citizenship  You attend German language classes and some regular classes  You have a network of friends, mostly also new to Germany  You speak Arabic, German, and some French and English |  |
| Brown  Born in Germany  Parents are scientists who are applying for German citizenship  No family in Germany. Most family in India, some in Europe, and some in the USA.  Lots of good friends many also with migration backgrounds  Speak Malayalam and English with parents and family, German and English with friends here, and German at kindergarten and at school |  |
| Black  Born in Germany  Mother Turkish and Italian, father Nigerian and German.  Single-parent family.  No other family in Germany but a large network of friends.  Mother is a well-known writer, who recently won a regional prize for literature.  Some family members are Muslim and you celebrate Muslim festivals at home | Black  Born in Mozambique  Parents are engineers working in local technology company. They are applying for jobs in the USA where there are better opportunities.  Speak German, English, Portuguese, Ngoni, Sena, and Swahili, with parents and Portuguese, Ngoni, Sena, and Swahili with family in Mozambique  Attend church regularly and celebrate Christian festivals |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

# Reflection questions

## What identity characteristics lead to discrimination in education in Europe and why?

Here are some characteristics which can lead to discrimination in education:

* Gender- male, female, **other**
* Sexuality – heterosexual, **homosexual, bisexual**
* Language – monolingual high status language, multilingual high status languages, **multilingual low status languages**
* Skin tone– white, **brown, black**
* Ethnicity- European, **African, Asian, Africa, combined ethnicities**
* Nationality – a European nation state, more than one European nation states, **a European and a non-European nation state, more than one non-European nation states, stateless**
* Social network- family and friends nearby, family and friends with middle and high status jobs, **no/very few family or old friends nearby, family and friends in low status work or out of work**
* **Cultural resources – are not recognised and valued at school**
* Socio-economic status – **low,** middle, high
* **Physical or cognitive impairment**

This is because of dominant ideas about the characteristics of ‘normal’ Europeans, which include being white, able-bodied, heterosexual, cis, Christian, only European nationality, and either monolingual or multilingual in European languages.

It was not always like this, but this idea of nation states, modernity, universal truths are part of a historical processes such as the enlightenment, the building of European nation-states, colonialism, modernity and international development.

Discrimination is a social process. There is nothing bad about these characteristics, but they are made into disadvantages by cultures and communities at school. Often in ways which people who do not suffer from discrimination are not aware of.

Intersectionality describes the increased discrimination faced by people who have more than one characteristic which leads to discrimination. For example, being brown, Muslim, and with a physical impairment.

## What has discrimination in education go to do with sustainability?

The sustainability challenge is to see, think and act differently. This demands an opening up of fixed, Euro-centric assumptions about what counts as ‘normal’ European citizens, and valuable ideas and practices.

Pluralising Europe gives us all the opportunity to feel that we belong and can contribute to a positive future. It enables us to learn from the experiences of communities now and in the past, within European geographical boundaries and around the world.

## What can we do to reduce discrimination in education?

Some ideas:

* Allow learners to use their languages at schools and for learning. This practice is found to support subject learning, and learning of the language of education (e.g., May, 2017).
* Ensure our curriculum and learning and teaching materials include diverse people, communities and perspectives including people of colour, people with disabilities, communities outside of Europe.
* Make space for and be curious about learners’ out of school lives, values and experiences.
* Celebrate diverse festivals at school.
* Educate learners about discrimination and encourage them to speak up when they experience or witness discrimination.
* Ask learners for their ideas.

## Social and historical processes and structures/key concepts

(link to glossary)

* Patriarchy
* Racism
* Colonialism
* Ablism
* Modernism/Universalism
* Homophobia
* Forced migration
* Conflict

Relativism

Scientism

Universalism

Pluralism

Intersectionality

Discrimination

Privilege