

« Circles of identity-welcoming diversity »



PREPARED BY: *élan interculturel*

TAGS (3 categorizations)

Is this activity focusing on one of the 3 steps of the method or tackling a sensitive zone?	Step of the method	YES	Decentering: becoming aware of different identity positions	Discovery of the frames of references of the other	Negotiation
	Sensitive zone treated	YES	Status		

Small Description

Please explain in a short paragraph (using grammatically correct full sentences) what your activity is about, why did you create it?

The first part of the sequence “circle of identities” is an easy introductory activity which allows participants to get to know each other by exploring what identity elements they share with each other and what differentiates them as unique individuals. It is also an entry point to become aware of our different social / cultural identities. The second part of the sequence, “welcoming diversity” is an activity whose objective is to offer a symbolic gesture of recognition to all social identities represented. Indeed, we’re present in the training not just as individuals, but also as members of social groups. In our societies, different social groups may benefit from different status: some are more valorised, others less. The aim of the activity is to offer a recognition to all these identities, in particular those that represent a minority – whether or not it is visible.

Quick info

 **TIME FRAME**
30-60min

 **GROUP SIZE**
2-10

 **FACILITATION LVL**
Beginner

 **COMFORT ZONE**
Safe

 **MATERIALS**
Pen and paper
or a
computer/mobile
device.

15 min	More than 6	beginner	Relatively safe	Space to allow participants to stand in circle
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Preparations needed

- learn as much as possible about the diversity represented in the group
- think of what type of visible or deep diversity can be relevant to the theme of the training

Instructions Step By Step

Please give step by step instructions of your activity, including debriefing. Be direct, address the reader as a facilitator directly: eg. ask your participants to stand in a circle...

Step 1.

Invite participants to stand in a circle, tell them you're going to start to get to know each other, and show the process: a person thinks of something true for her/him, goes to the centre of the circle and proposes the statement, e.g.: "I speak at least three languages." All the participants for whom the statement is true, move towards the person in the centre, to the extent that the statement is true. Propose a couple of statements, then let participants propose their own statements. After a couple of free statements ask participants to think of identity elements that they feel are relevant for the subject of interculturality. A couple of examples:

- I was born in a different country than where I live now
- I lived in other continents than Europe
- I identify myself as woman
- I'm more than 45 years old
- I've already participated in intercultural trainings

Step 2.

If a participant makes a statement that is only true for her, she deserves a round of applause. Whether or not this happens spontaneously, once each participant already proposed a

statement you can change the instruction, so that from that point on, people propose statements that they think characterizes only them.

Step 3.

Once all participants who wished to do so proposed a statement that could differentiate them, thank participants for all the sharing. Point out, that a conclusion from the activity is that we all have multiple identities, and that some of them connect us to other people, and depending on the context some of them make us unique individuals.

Step 4.

Take a moment to welcome the diversity in the group, with a sentence such as “to close the sharing, I’d like to take a moment to welcome all the diversity represented in the group.”

List the elements of identities that you have explored through the circle, paying attention to cover the possible diversity on the dimensions you mention. For example: “I’d like to welcome...

- people who are older than 50 and younger than 50
- participants who were born in the country where they live and those who were born elsewhere
- participants who have a religion, those who do not have one
- men, women, those who do not identify as either, and those who sometimes identify with one and the other

After listing some dimensions, ask participants to add what diversity we should welcome. When there are no more additions, close the sharing, acknowledging that all this diversity will make the training richer and more interesting, but that occasionally it may also trigger challenges. Invite participants to take care of this diversity so that it can be a stimulating force in the training.

Hints for the facilitator

“Circle of identities” can also work with people that already know each-other. To make the activity more relevant to the training topic, you can ask people to propose statements that are connected in some way to interculturality (e.g.: “I don’t live in the country where I was born”).

In our practice we have not experienced any incidents during this activity, but we were told about one. In that situation a participant proposed “I identify as black”, to which a young man from Albania took a step forward. At this point a debate exploded, as other participants who identified as black did not recognize the Albanian participant as black. If something similar should happen, we recommend you do not try to clear the debate instantly, but give importance to the incident, and promise to address the issue later. Invite participant to take note of the emotions that the incident triggered, so that later on we can use those emotions as indicators to explore what actually happened.

After the “welcoming diversity” activity you can make a transition to “ground rules” necessary for a good collaboration (see the respective method sheet).



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Ressources (Who invented this activity or who inspired it)

If you invented it, please write the name of your colleague and institution as you'd like it to be referenced

If you used ideas /activities of others please put full reference as concretely as you can

We learnt both activities from LaXixa Theatre (Barcelona), who usually use them as two distinct activities, we connected them into this sequence.