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# Methodology Manual:

## Educating Against Racism, Xenophobia, and Hate Speech

A Human Rights-Based Approach with Practical Tools for Educators

Developed by joint working group members through the project “Unity in Diversity: Fostering Social Inclusion Through V4-Georgia Collaboration” funded by international Visegrad Fund



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# Introduction

This methodology manual is designed to support educators in addressing racism, xenophobia, and hate speech through civic education and participatory learning. Its purpose is to provide educators with both conceptual understanding and practical tools that can be applied in formal and non-formal educational settings, particularly within schools and civic education clubs.

The manual combines human rights principles with tested educational practices and interactive methods. It is intended not only to raise awareness, but also to support meaningful attitude and behavior change among pupils. Special emphasis is placed on early prevention, critical thinking, empathy development, and responsible civic engagement.

The primary target audience of this manual includes:

- Civic Education teachers and school-based educators
- Trainers and facilitators working with youth
- Non-formal education practitioners and CSO representatives
- School psychologists, social workers, and youth workers

While the manual is designed mainly for secondary school settings, many activities can be adapted for younger or older learners, as well as for community-based education initiatives.

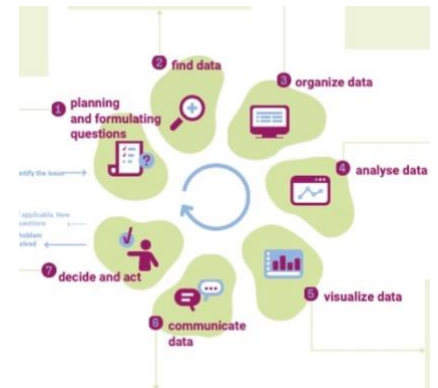
## **Context: Addressing Racism, Xenophobia, and Hate Speech in Georgia**

Georgia is a society characterized by cultural diversity, historical complexity, and ongoing social transformation. As a country located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Georgia has long been shaped by multiple ethnic, religious, and linguistic communities. Today, this diversity includes ethnic minorities, internally displaced persons, labor migrants, refugees, international students, and an increasing number of foreign residents living primarily in urban centers such as Tbilisi and Batumi.

At the same time, Georgian society is undergoing rapid political, economic, and technological changes. These changes influence public discourse, social relations, and young people's perceptions of identity and belonging. In this context, issues related to racism, xenophobia, and hate speech are becoming more visible, particularly in public debate and online spaces. Schools and educators are increasingly confronted with the challenge of responding to these phenomena in a professional, ethical, and educationally sound manner.

## **Social and Historical Factors Shaping Attitudes**

Understanding the context of discrimination in Georgia requires acknowledging historical experiences that have shaped collective identities and social attitudes. Georgia's history of occupation, conflict, and political transition has contributed to strong national narratives



centered on survival, cultural preservation, and sovereignty. While these narratives play an important role in fostering national identity, they can also unintentionally contribute to “us versus them” thinking when not critically examined.

In periods of uncertainty or social stress, fear of the “other” can intensify. Migrants, ethnic minorities, or individuals perceived as culturally different may become targets of stereotypes or misinformation. These attitudes are often not rooted in direct personal experience but are shaped by hearsay, media narratives, and social networks. Young people, who are still forming their worldview, are particularly influenced by these external factors. Education plays a crucial role in helping pupils understand historical context while developing inclusive attitudes that respect diversity and human dignity.

### **Migration, Diversity, and Urban Realities**

In recent years, Georgia has experienced increased mobility, including immigration for work, study, or humanitarian reasons. According to national statistics, Tbilisi and Batumi host the highest numbers of foreign residents and migrants. This growing diversity is reflected in schools, especially private and urban institutions, where pupils from different cultural backgrounds learn together.

While diversity enriches the educational environment, it can also expose gaps in preparedness. Many teachers report feeling uncertain about how to address cultural differences, discriminatory language, or conflicts rooted in prejudice. Without proper tools, these situations may be avoided rather than addressed, allowing stereotypes and harmful narratives to persist unchallenged.

This manual responds to the need for structured educational support that helps educators turn diversity into a learning opportunity rather than a source of tension.

### **Hate Speech and the Digital Environment**

One of the most significant challenges in Georgia, as in many countries, is the rise of hate speech in digital spaces. Social media platforms, comment sections, and messaging applications are often used to spread xenophobic, racist, or discriminatory language. Young people are both consumers and producers of online content, sometimes without fully understanding the consequences of their actions.

Hate speech online often appears normalized, disguised as humor, patriotism, or “freedom of expression.” This normalization makes it difficult for pupils to recognize harmful language and understand its real-life impact. Furthermore, misinformation and fake news can reinforce existing biases and deepen social divisions.

Schools are uniquely positioned to address digital hate speech by:

- Developing media literacy and critical thinking skills
- Encouraging responsible digital citizenship
- Linking online behavior to real-world consequences and human rights

### **Legal and Institutional Framework in Georgia**

Georgia has committed to international human rights standards and has legal frameworks that prohibit discrimination and promote equality. However, legal protections alone are not sufficient to change attitudes or everyday behavior. Many forms of discrimination and hate speech occur informally—in classrooms, peer interactions, or online environments—where legal mechanisms are not easily applied. The situation has worsened in last year, when several political figures use hate speech language towards opponents in their public statements.

Educators therefore play a complementary role to legal institutions by fostering a culture of respect, dialogue, and accountability within schools. Civic education, in particular, provides a space where pupils can learn about rights and responsibilities, democratic values, and peaceful coexistence.

This manual supports educators in translating abstract legal principles into concrete classroom practices.

### **Challenges Faced by Educators**

Teachers in Georgia often face multiple challenges when addressing racism and hate speech:

- Fear of escalating conflict or offending students or parents
- Lack of training on sensitive or controversial topics
- Time constraints within the formal curriculum
- Uncertainty about how to respond to discriminatory remarks

As a result, harmful language may go unaddressed, reinforcing the perception that such behavior is acceptable or normal. This manual emphasizes that silence can unintentionally validate discrimination and that educators, when equipped with appropriate tools, can intervene constructively and confidently.

### **The Role of Schools in Prevention and Social Change**

Schools are not only places of academic learning but also spaces where social norms and values are shaped. Pupils learn how to interact with others, resolve conflict, and understand their role in society. Early educational interventions are particularly effective in preventing the development of deeply rooted prejudices.

By integrating human rights education, empathy-building exercises, and critical discussion into everyday teaching, schools can:

- Reduce tolerance for discriminatory behavior
- Promote respect for diversity
- Empower pupils to become active and responsible citizens

Civic education clubs, extracurricular activities, and participatory learning methods provide additional opportunities for deeper engagement beyond the formal curriculum.

### **Role of V4 Best Practices in the Manual**

The manual builds on best practices and expertise from partner organizations in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia. These practices have been adapted to the Georgian context to ensure cultural relevance and feasibility. International experience contributes:

- Proven educational methodologies
- Innovative tools for discussing migration, identity, and inclusion
- Practical approaches to countering hate speech and misinformation

This cross-country collaboration strengthens the quality of the manual and promotes shared European values of dignity, equality, and respect.

### **Why This Manual Is Needed**

The Georgian educational context requires a practical, culturally sensitive, and rights-based resource that supports educators in addressing racism, xenophobia, and hate speech. This manual is designed to fill that gap by:

- Offering clear explanations and practical tools
- Supporting educators in managing sensitive discussions
- Encouraging reflection rather than moralization
- Promoting sustainable attitude and behavior change

By grounding international best practices in the Georgian reality, the manual aims to strengthen educators' confidence and competence in fostering inclusive learning environments.

Addressing racism, xenophobia, and hate speech in Georgia is a shared responsibility that involves educators, students, families, institutions, and civil society. Schools are uniquely positioned to initiate change by equipping young people with knowledge, empathy, and critical thinking skills.

This manual invites educators to see themselves not only as transmitters of information, but as facilitators of dialogue and role models for democratic values. Through consistent, informed, and reflective practice, education can contribute to a more inclusive and tolerant Georgian society.

## **Section A: Theoretical Foundations**

### **The Human Rights-Based Approach to Education**

The foundation of human rights is people's desire to live in dignity. Human rights can be interpreted as standards on which people agreed upon to ensure human dignity for all people. All people have human rights, even if in reality not everyone in the world have the same opportunities to exercise their rights or their rights are not protected. We have human rights because we are human beings, another authorization is not needed.

When teaching about human rights, we can rely on the concept of respect. Many games can be used where pupils realise that they are worth to be respected, to have their individuality or difference respected. Once pupils realise that they want to be respected, they are inclined to understand that

other people are also worth respecting, that therefore not respecting others is not only not acceptable in terms of general morality, but also because of their personal experience and ability to empathise with others.

The theme of human rights is reflected across all lectures that focus on migration, discrimination and inequality. Our aim is to make students aware of the equality of all human beings as beings who have the same right to dignity and respect.

## How Bias and Stereotypes Form, Prejudice vs. stereotype

Prejudices and stereotypes arise as a result of social, psychological, and cultural factors. They are simplified and often distorted perceptions of groups of people that we create based on limited experiences, upbringing, or social influences.

### 1. Psychological Factors

- **Categorization** – The human brain simplifies information processing by sorting people into groups (e.g., based on ethnicity, gender, or profession). This leads to oversimplified perceptions.
- **Confirmation Bias** – We tend to seek out and remember information that confirms our prior beliefs while ignoring information that contradicts them.
- **Emotions and Fear** – Prejudices often stem from fear or uncertainty about the unknown.

### 2. Social Factors

- **Family and Upbringing** – Children adopt attitudes and values from their parents and surroundings.
- **Media and Propaganda** – Movies, advertisements, and news can reinforce stereotypes through the way they portray certain groups of people.
- **Group Identity** – People tend to perceive their own group ("us") as superior to other groups ("them"), which can lead to prejudices against those who are seen as different.

### 3. Historical and Cultural Factors

- **Past Conflicts** – Historical events (such as wars, slavery, and colonialism) may have led to deeply rooted negative perceptions of certain groups.
- **Traditions and Customs** – Cultural heritage can sustain certain stereotypes as part of social norms.

We define a **prejudice** as an opinion we have before we have thought about a thing, before we have subjected it to consideration. It is something that we know before we conclude something - so we interpret the term quite etymologically. Preconceptions are opinions or attitudes that everyone has, and there is no need to deny or conceal them. On the contrary, we need to be aware of them and be willing to subject them to scrutiny. Prejudice is often negative and emotionally tinged (often even very emotionally charged - this also corresponds to the "before" judgment, which is much calmer and more factual). In this it is dangerous: its expression can be aggressive or lead to further conflict.

A **stereotype** is then interpreted as a fixed opinion or attitude, which has usually arisen as a generalization of experience (or also just a superstition or outdated information) to a whole group of people (of one race, one ethnicity, one hair color, poor, rich...). Stereotyping is also natural to humans in a way - everyone needs to somehow simplify and classify information about the world around them. A stereotype is then

exactly such a simplification: on the basis of one experience, I behave according to that experience in completely different situations, or I have the same opinion, e.g. about all strangers, because I have made such and such an opinion about one stranger. Apart from the fact that a stereotype can be negative, the main problem is its rigidity: it is very difficult to overcome or change, it is so fixed that if we accept it, it is hard to get rid of it and hard to open our stereotyped view to another view. And by doing so, we do not allow the stereotyped person to introduce himself to us and to really get to know him. On the contrary, we have a ready-made view of him and we hold on to it, often in spite of our own actual experience.

## **Definitions of Racism, Xenophobia, and Hate Speech**

**Racism** is discrimination and prejudice against people based on their race. Racism can be present in social actions, practices, or political systems (for example apartheid) that support the expression of prejudice or aversion in discriminatory practices. The ideology underlying racist practices often assumes that humans can be subdivided into distinct groups that are different in their social behaviour and innate capacities and that can be ranked as inferior or superior. Racists believe that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and traits of personality, intellect, morality, and other cultural and behavioural features; and that some races are innately superior to others.

**Xenophobia**, as a term from psychology, expresses a fear of everything foreign (people, environment, places, food, and so on). In the context of human rights and society, it is used to describe fear of foreign people, other nationalities, cultures or ethnicities. It involves prejudice, or hostility towards individuals perceived as foreign or different, often stemming from a sense of cultural superiority or a perceived threat to one's identity or community. It manifests in discrimination, exclusion, or violence directed at foreigners or minority groups based on their nationality, ethnicity, or immigration status. When a person does not have a sufficient repertoire of skills to dissolve their own fears, it is easy to slip into intolerance and hate speech. Additionally, they seek out like-minded thinkers and people with whom they confirm the legitimacy of their fear and resistance. The internet, social networks and closed groups on social media, serve wonderfully for this purpose. From there, it is only a small step towards sympathizing with ultra-right groups, which are organised based on the ideology of the superiority of one group of people over another (Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022).

**Hate speech** is any form of expression, including images, cartoons, memes, objects, gestures and symbols and it can be disseminated offline and online. It is „discriminatory“ (biased, bigoted or intolerant) or „pejorative“ (prejudiced, contemptuous or demeaning) of an individual or group. It calls out real or perceived „identity factors“ of an individual or a group, including: „religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender“ but also characteristics such as language, economic or social origin, disability, health status, or sexual orientation, among many others (United Nations, 2019). Hate speech incite stereotypes and prejudices and it is very often used to undermine unity, tolerance and cohesion, as well as to escalate tensions between population groups or between people themselves. Particularly in periods before or during conflict, in order to construct the image of the 'enemy' and thereby deprive him of human dignity in order to justify the violence against him.

## Legal Framework

In recent decades, the rise of hate speech in both public and online spaces has prompted renewed attention to its legal regulation. While freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, it is not absolute and may be limited to protect the rights and safety of others. Legal frameworks on hate speech aim to prevent the spread of harmful ideologies that fuel discrimination, social exclusion, and violence. Striking a careful balance between safeguarding open dialogue and protecting individuals from targeted harm is central to democratic societies.



This legal framework must also be understood in light of how key human rights bodies approach the constructed concept of “race.” All human beings belong to a single species (Committee of Ministers, CoE, 2022), and the concept of distinct human “races” has no scientific basis. Accordingly, the use of the term “race” is rejected by key human rights bodies such as the Committee of Ministers and European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. However, the term may still appear in legal and policy documents to ensure protection for those who are wrongly perceived as being of a different “race.” This usage reflects a legal necessity, not an endorsement of outdated racial classifications.

A milestone in the history of human rights was the development of [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR, 1948). The UDHR establishes the foundational principles of equality, dignity, and non-discrimination. Articles 1 and 2 affirm that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights, without distinction of any kind. Article 19 guarantees the right to freedom of opinion and expression. However, this right is not absolute, and the UDHR’s broader framework supports limiting expression that undermines the rights and safety of others – highlighting the ongoing tension between free speech and protection from hate.

[International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR, 1966) has strengthened the protections for freedom of expression in Article 19 while explicitly acknowledging that this right carries responsibilities and may be subject to restrictions for the protection of others' rights or public order. Importantly, Article 20(2) obliges states to prohibit any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that incites discrimination, hostility, or violence. This establishes a clear legal basis for regulating hate speech under international law.

The prohibition against racial discrimination is fundamental and deeply entrenched in international law. [The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#) (hereinafter “ICERD”) is the centerpiece of the international regime for the protection and enforcement of the right against racial discrimination. ICERD urges States to condemn all propaganda and all organisations which are based on the theory of the superiority

of one race and which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form. Member States must, based on the Article 4, criminalise the dissemination of racist ideas and incitement to racial hatred.

## Soft (International) Law

[The Rabat Plan of Action](#), adopted in 2012 by the Council of Europe and the OSCE, outlines a comprehensive framework for combating hate speech. It emphasises the importance of legal frameworks, education, and media literacy in addressing this pressing societal issue. In order to make the distinction between the criminally punishable hate speech and the other two type of hate speech, the Rabat Plan of Action proposes a six-part threshold test, that takes into account:

1. the Context of the speech
2. the Speaker
3. the Intent
4. the Content and the form of the speech
5. the Extent of the speech
6. the Likelihood of the speech to produce immediate actions against its targets

## European Legal Framework

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR, 1950) protects freedom of expression under Article 10 but allows for restrictions when necessary to protect the rights of others, public safety, or public order. Article 17 prohibits the abuse of rights, ensuring that individuals cannot invoke human rights protections to justify hate speech or actions aimed at destroying other rights.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has developed extensive jurisprudence on hate speech. In *Erbakan v. Turkey*, the Court emphasized the protection of pluralism and tolerance, while in *Garaudy v. France*, it upheld restrictions on Holocaust denial, applying Article 17 to limit speech incompatible with the Convention's values. These cases illustrate how the Court balances freedom of expression with the need to combat hate and protect democratic order.

The Council of Europe's [Recommendation No. R \(97\) 20 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on "hate speech" - Freedom of Expression](#) provides a comprehensive policy framework for combating hate speech. It defines hate speech broadly and urges member states to adopt legal, educational, and media-related strategies. The recommendation emphasises not only restrictions but also the importance of promoting tolerance and democratic values through education and public awareness.

The [EU Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA](#) requires member states to criminalise public incitement to violence or hatred based on race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin. It also targets the denial of Holocaust.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) monitors racism, xenophobia, and intolerance across Europe. [The ECRI General Policy Recommendation no. 15 on combating hate speech](#) (2015) provides guidance to member states on effective measures to prevent and

combat hate speech. It emphasises the importance of legal frameworks, education, and awareness-raising initiatives. The document is relevant because it offers practical recommendations for governments to address a pressing societal issue that can have serious consequences for individuals and communities.

Another important document in the European legal and policy framework on hate speech is the [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech](#), adopted in 2022. Although not legally binding, this recommendation carries significant political and normative weight. As a recommendation from the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, it reflects shared values and expectations among member states. It offers comprehensive guidance to member states on how to effectively combat hate speech while safeguarding freedom of expression. The recommendation emphasises a human rights-based, multi-sectoral approach, encouraging states to implement legal measures, support victims, and promote educational and preventive strategies. Its relevance lies in its modern and balanced approach: it not only addresses the need to restrict harmful expression but also underlines the importance of fostering inclusive public discourse and resilience through education, civil society engagement, and institutional support.

The European [Digital Services Act \(DSA\)](#) is a legally binding EU regulation that imposes clear responsibilities on large digital platforms to remove illegal content, including hate speech. It aims to create a safer digital environment by strengthening accountability and transparency online. It aims to regulate large online platforms and tackle illegal content, including hate speech and misinformation, and it holds digital platforms more accountable for the content they host. DSA strengthens the responsibility of digital platforms to swiftly remove illegal content, including hate speech, extremist rhetoric, and disinformation. It complements Slovakia's existing laws and helps curb online extremism and xenophobia while fostering a safer digital environment.

The [Code of Conduct+ on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online](#), revised and integrated into the Digital Services Act (DSA) framework on 20 January 2025, represents a significant step in the EU's regulatory efforts to combat illegal hate speech online. Building upon the original 2016 Code, the updated version enhances the obligations of online platforms in identifying and addressing hate speech that is illegal under EU and national laws. Its integration into the DSA framework means that compliance with the Code of Conduct+ can now serve as a recognised risk mitigation measure, particularly for platforms classified as Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) and Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSEs). The Code thus not only reinforces the ethical responsibility of digital platforms but also supports the effective enforcement of the DSA in regulating harmful online content.

## **International and Partner's countries Legal Frameworks**

### **Czech republic**

In the Czech Republic, human rights and protection against discrimination are enshrined in several key legal documents.

Constitutional Framework includes special Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. It is part of the constitutional order of the Czech Republic and guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms to all citizens. It prohibits discrimination based on gender, race, skin color, language, faith, religion, political or other beliefs, national or social origin, membership in a national or ethnic minority, property, birth, or other status (§ 3). It guarantees equality before the law, freedom of speech, privacy protection, freedom of movement, religious freedom, and other rights.

**Anti-Discrimination Act No. 198/2009 Coll., on Equal Treatment and Legal Means of Protection Against Discrimination** (the so-called Anti-Discrimination Act) defines what constitutes discrimination and how it can be addressed. It defines **direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, and persecution**. It protects rights in areas such as **employment, education, healthcare, housing, and access to goods and services**. It allows victims of discrimination to seek legal remedies through the courts.

Criminal Code (Act No. 40/2009 Coll.) and Labor Code (Act No. 262/2006 Coll.)

It penalizes hate crimes, such as inciting hatred against a group of people, defamation of a nation, race, ethnic, or other groups, and genocide denial. It increases penalties for offenses committed with racial, religious, or other hate-based motives.

It prohibits discrimination in employment relationships. It ensures **equal opportunities for men and women** in the workplace.

Other Legal Provisions

**The Public Defender of Rights (Ombudsman) Act** – The Ombudsman deals with cases of discrimination and protects citizens' rights against state institutions.

**Education Act** – Ensures equal access to education regardless of social background or other differences.

**Registered Partnership Act** – Regulates the rights of same-sex couples.

Czech legislation provides **broad protection against discrimination and guarantees human rights**, yet their enforcement depends on the efficiency of the judicial system and individuals' willingness to assert their rights.

## Slovakia

In Slovakia, hate speech is a criminal offence under the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code. Hate speech is not protected by freedom of expression.

Criminal Law (300/2005)

*§ 140a Specific motivation*

*§ 373 Defamation*

*§ 421 Establishment, support and promotion of a movement for the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms*

*§ 422 Manifestation of sympathy for a movement aimed at the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms*

*§ 422a Production of extremist material*

*§ 422b Dissemination of extremist material*

*§ 422c Possession of extremist materials*

*§ 423 Defamation of nation, race and beliefs*

*§ 424 Incitement to national, racial and ethnic hatred*

Most relevant is:

*§ 423 Defamation of nation, race and beliefs*

*(1) Whoever publicly defames (a) a nation, its language, a race or an ethnic group, or*

*(b) a group of persons or an individual because of their real or assumed affiliation to a race, nation, nationality, ethnic group, because of their real or assumed origin, colour, religion or because they are non-religious, shall be punished by imprisonment for one to three years.*

*(2) The offender shall be sentenced to imprisonment for two to five years if he commits an act referred to in paragraph (1) (a) as a member of an extremist group, (b) as a public official, (c) for a specific motivation.*

Other legal frameworks include: *Administrative Law (372/1990) § 47a Extremism offences § 49 Offences against civil coexistence And Civil Law § 11 - 13 Protection of personality*

**Constitution of the Slovak Republic. Title Two - Fundamental rights and freedoms. Section One - General provisions. Art. 12**

*(1) Human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights. Fundamental rights and freedoms are inalienable, inalienable, non-transferable, non-barred and irrevocable.*

*(2) Fundamental rights and freedoms shall be guaranteed to all within the territory of the Slovak Republic, irrespective of sex, race, colour, language, faith and religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, membership of a nationality or ethnic group, property, birth or other status. No one shall, on these grounds, be subjected to any detriment, favouritism or disadvantage.*

*And article 19 (a) Everyone has the right to the preservation of human dignity, personal honour and reputation and to the protection of name.*

## **Poland**

In Poland, hate speech is regulated primarily under criminal law. While freedom of expression is protected by the Constitution, expressions that incite hatred, promote totalitarian ideologies, or insult individuals or groups on protected grounds are excluded from protection and may result in criminal liability.

Criminal Law (Polish Criminal Code of 6 June 1997) - **Article 256** -Public promotion of a fascist or other totalitarian system of state; Incitement to hatred on grounds of national, ethnic, racial, religious differences, or lack of religious belief

**Article 257** - Publicly insulting a population group or an individual because of their national, ethnic, racial, or religious affiliation, or because of lack of religious belief

**Article 119** - Use of violence or unlawful threats against a person or group of persons because of their national, ethnic, racial, political, or religious affiliation

Most relevant provisions:

**Article 256 (1)** Whoever publicly promotes a fascist or other totalitarian system of state or incites hatred on grounds of national, ethnic, racial, religious differences or due to lack of

religious belief shall be subject to a fine, restriction of liberty, or imprisonment for up to two years.

**Article 257** Whoever publicly insults a population group or a particular person because of their national, ethnic, racial, or religious affiliation or because of their lack of religious belief shall be subject to imprisonment for up to three years.

### Other Legal Frameworks

**Civil Law (Civil Code, Articles 23–24)** on Protection of personal rights, including dignity, reputation, and identity. Victims of hate speech may seek civil remedies such as apologies, compensation, or injunctions

Also, Article 54 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, while allowing statutory limitations to protect public order and the rights of others

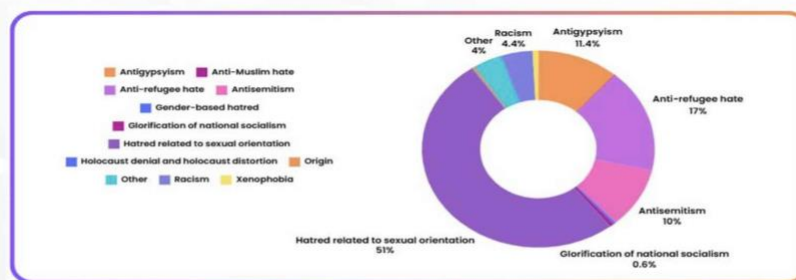
## Hate Speech in Digital Spaces

In the digital age, the anonymity and detachment of online interactions have contributed to a decline in sensitivity towards others, increased rudeness, and a disregard for shared values. This has resulted in a significant increase in online hate speech in recent years (United Nations, 2023; Council of Europe, 2025). Hate speech is a global problem because the internet, social networks through their algorithms have amplified their boundless reach and rampant distribution over time and (not only online) space. Hateful rhetoric divides our societies, deepens intolerances, denigrates and deprives individuals of humanity, evokes fear. It can contribute to radicalisation and can lead to serious acts. Hate speech is hurtful and in extreme cases it has a destructive impact, not only on the dignity and human rights of the victim and his/ her surroundings, but also

## SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING 2023

### HATE SPEECH CATEGORIES

the reported cases of hate speech, the majority relate to hatred based on sexual orientation, accounting for approximately 51% of reports. Anti-refugee hate follows with roughly 17%, while Antigypsyism and Antisemitism are reported at about 11% and 10%, respectively. Other significant categories include racism at 4%, and xenophobia at 1%. The least reported categories are Anti-Muslim hate, Holocaust denial and distortion, and hate based on origin and gender, each constituting less than 1% of total reports.



digiQ

on the democracy and the rule of law as such. The fight against hate speech is therefore a matter of defending and supporting the universal values of democracy, rule of law and human rights<sup>1</sup>.

Memes have increasingly become a tool for spreading hate speech. These images and videos, which often rely on satire or irony, are now being repurposed to propagate harmful content (Lamerichs et al. 2018). The simplicity and shareability of memes make them an especially effective way to disseminate hateful messages easily and widely (Aranda Serna, 2024). Memes containing hate speech can bypass traditional content moderation systems and reach a wide audience with reduced scrutiny. It is crucial for content moderators or teams assigned to categorise content to be familiar with at least the most common hate memes circulating on social media. This is linked to the issue of social media's algorithms; in particular, the reinforcement of echo chambers, where users are exposed primarily to content that aligns with their existing views is concerning. Algorithms prioritise sensational content, often amplifying misinformation, as it garners higher engagement. Users, unaware of these manipulations, often fall into echo chambers, reinforcing biases and promoting misinformation (Helberger, 2020). Undoubtedly, the algorithms are empowering the spread of disinformation, hate and other harmful content, which can lead to polarisation and radicalisation.

The internet environment gives attackers a sense of anonymity and elusiveness, and therefore individuals who might not have the predominance of physical strength in face-to-face contact can easily become attackers. On the Internet, people more often say, write, do what they would not do in a personal meeting; barriers are reduced when they sit in relative comfort, and especially in anonymity behind a computer or smartphone (Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022). This is explained by John Suler's (2004) disinhibition effect that describes the phenomenon where individuals exhibit less restraint or self-control in online environments compared to the offline world, manifesting as either benign or toxic disinhibition. Benign disinhibition manifests as openness, honesty, emotional expressiveness, and a willingness to share vulnerabilities, potentially deepening relationships and fostering self-discovery. Conversely, toxic disinhibition involves aggressive, offensive, or inappropriate behaviour unlikely to occur offline, including trolling, cyberbullying, hate speech, and other forms of antisocial conduct (Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022). Several factors contribute to this effect:

- Anonymity ("You don't know me"): concealed identity reduces accountability.
- Invisibility ("You can't see me"): absence of physical presence and nonverbal cues fosters boldness.
- Asynchronicity ("See you later"): delayed communication allows for more considered (or impulsive) responses.
- Solipsistic Introjection ("It's all in my head"): reduced emotional connection due to mental representations of others.
- Dissociation ("It's just a game"): online behaviour perceived as separate from real-world identity, lessening responsibility.

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<sup>1</sup> [conceptual framework for countering radicalisation and extremism by 2024](#)

- Minimisation of Authority ("Your rules don't apply here"): less evident online hierarchies can weaken adherence to norms.

The internet and social networks provide a false sense of protection and untouchability, and users often think that everything is allowed on the internet – but the opposite is true. Many have encountered negative, derisive responses to the address or of those they love. Given the understanding of how online environments and psychological effects contribute to the prevalence of hate speech, it becomes crucial to consider responsible online communication practices. Here are some practical tips on how to communicate online responsibly<sup>2</sup>:

- Express your thoughts respectfully, with a cool head, without denying the rights of others.
- Hate speech hurts. Think before you say/share something.
- If a message online upsets you greatly, take a few minutes break and respond afterwards.
- Do not react aggressively just because you disagree with someone/something.
- Think about your digital footprint - once on the internet, always on the internet.
- Even if you decide to take down an emotionally charged post, someone else might have taken a screenshot.
- Educate yourself - media literacy is an essential skill for the digital age we live.
- Strengthen your critical thinking.
- Do not consider every piece of information (such as friends' status) as verified and true. Always think about who is making the claim, why, whether the picture is real - especially when the information carries an emotional charge.
- Be an example to those around you - the tolerance you show in the way you treat and talk to others naturally sends a message to the whole your surroundings.
- Even in emotionally stressful situations do not forget basic courtesy.
- Build tolerance and mutual respect not only within your community.
- Remember, human rights are inalienable and belong to every human being from birth, regardless of his or her race, gender, ethnic or nationality.

## **(Cyber)bullying and Its Impact on Youth**

Bullying is the behaviour of an individual or a group, which intentionally harms another person/group physically and/or mentally, despite the victim's evident distress. With the expansion of high-speed Internet, social media and smartphones, cyberbullying has been added to the list of forms of bullying (Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022). Cyberbullying can be defined as the misuse of information and communication technologies for the purpose of deliberately harming others. It is therefore a conduct which is unpleasant to the victim but the victim, for subjective or objective reasons, cannot or is unable to protect themselves (Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022). Cyberbullying often occurs in the context of prejudiced intolerance of particular groups on the

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<sup>2</sup> [Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic and digiQ - "Nenávistné prejavy"](#)

grounds of identity factors, such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Cowie 2013; Low & Espelage, 2013).

Despite the fact that the literature uses the term "victim" we suggest using the term "target". Using the term "target" instead of "victim" when talking about cyberbullying is encouraged because it promotes a more empowering and respectful way of speaking about those affected. The word "victim" often implies helplessness, passivity, or even that the person is defined by what happened to them, which can reinforce feelings of shame or weakness. In contrast, "target" focuses on the harmful behaviour without labelling the person, preserving their sense of agency and resilience. This shift in language helps avoid reducing someone's identity to their negative experience and supports a more constructive approach to recovery and support. It also influences how others - such as peers, educators, or caregivers - perceive and respond to the situation, encouraging empathy and action rather than pity. While "victim" may still be used in legal or clinical contexts, in educational and prevention settings, "target" is generally preferred for its empowering tone.

Research indicates a significant overlap, with victims frequently experiencing both online and offline bullying, impacting their peer relationships (Kowalski et al., 2014; Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022). Bullying and cyberbullying share core elements: an imbalance of power favouring the aggressor and the presence of an audience. This audience provides feedback that can either reinforce or disrupt the bullying dynamic; their active intervention or passive inaction significantly influences the perpetuation and impact of the harmful behaviour. It is important to clearly state that "This behaviour is not and will not be accepted." (Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022). Cyberbullying's unique dangers stem from its pervasive nature, transcending physical boundaries and occurring anywhere. It often involves a broader range of aggressors, including anonymous individuals, and an indeterminate, potentially vast audience, creating profound uncertainty for the victim. The anonymity and online setting complicate identification of perpetrators and resolution, potentially diminishing perceived accountability. Unaddressed cyberbullying can deeply engrain harmful roles and experiences into the identities of both victims and aggressors, with lasting consequences that often extend beyond childhood. Indeed, research shows that the victim of bullying is often bullied at another school, often later in adulthood in the work team (Isaacs, Hodges & Salmivalli, 2008; Tokunaga, 2010; Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022). Recognising bullying and cyberbullying early is vital for minimising psychological harm in children. Victims often exhibit behavioural and emotional changes indicative of distress (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Tokunaga, 2010; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012) and mental health issues (Krug et al., 2002; Cowie, 2013; Low, & Espelage, 2013; Kowalski et al., 2014; Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022). Common manifestations include:

- **Psychosomatic symptoms:** unexplained headaches, abdominal pain, alterations in appetite, and sleep disturbances
- **Behavioural changes:** withdrawal from social interactions, diminished interest in previously enjoyed activities, academic decline, and decreased concentration

- **Emotional distress:** reduced self-esteem and confidence, potentially leading to social isolation and avoidance of peer interactions
- **Risky behaviours:** engagement in substance abuse, self-harm, delinquency, or truancy
- **Anxiety related to technology:** visible distress when using digital devices or discussing online activities.

Early identification of these indicators enables timely intervention, fostering a supportive environment to address and prevent further victimisation.

## How to react when a child tells you about bullying?

When a child discloses bullying, immediate and competent support is crucial. While peers are often the first confidantes, adults bear the ultimate responsibility for intervention (Williams, 2010; Winslade, 2013; Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022). In cyberbullying cases involving external perpetrators, engaging classmates to provide support and foster a sense of belonging for the victim can act as a form of "curatorial condition" for aggressors, encouraging them to take responsibility for repairing relationships as a consequence for their actions, rather than solely relying on punitive measures. Youth leaders and educators should be trained in providing initial assistance and subsequently involving legally responsible adults (Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022).

## Steps for Adult Support of Cyberbullying Victims:

1. Prioritize safety and open dialogue: establish a supportive environment through empathetic communication, reassuring the child of their safety and the positive step of seeking help. This initial support is the foundation for resolving the incident and engaging relevant support systems.
2. Mandatory reporting: within school settings, teachers have a legal obligation to address reported bullying. Regarding cyberbullying, even if occurring outside school grounds or difficult to trace, educators and youth workers have a duty to inform parents or legal guardians promptly<sup>3</sup>.
3. Immediate strategic guidance: while a victim's initial reaction might be to delete online content, advise them not to immediately delete potential evidence. Instead, guide them to:
  - Preserve evidence: save bullying communications (SMS, chats, photos, comments), take screenshots of online interactions, and record phone calls if relevant.

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<sup>3</sup> As of 1 February 2025, Slovakia has a new [Directive on preventing and addressing bullying of children and pupils in schools and in school facilities](#)

- Limit further contact: once evidence is secured, advise blocking the user and removing them from contacts.
  - Develop conflict resolution skills: recognize that bullying may persist and support the child in building skills for managing peer conflict and fostering healthy relationships.
4. Parental/guardian involvement: Engaging parents or legal guardians is a critical step. They can provide further support, block or report the perpetrator to platform administrators, and utilize the collected evidence to collaborate with law enforcement or relevant non-profit organizations.
  5. Activation of community support systems: initiate the established support system immediately. In schools, this procedure should be clearly outlined in school and classroom

## How to React When a Child Tells You About Bullying

Immediate support from adults is crucial.  
Engage classmates to help, and ensure aggressors take responsibility.



- Step 1: Prioritize Safety & Open Dialogue**  
Listen, reassure, and create a safe space.
- Step 2: Mandatory Reporting**  
Report to school and inform parents or guardians.
- Step 3: Immediate Strategic Guidance**  
Save Evidence | Block & Limit Contact | Build Conflict Skills
- Step 4: Parental / Guardian Involvement**  
Work with parents to support and report.
- Step 5: Activate Community Support**  
Sanctions | Restorative Actions | Victim Support | Counseling

### Key Principles

- Respond Quickly
- Save Evidence First
- Involve Guardians
- Involve Guardians
- Combine Accountability & Support
- Restorative Practices

rules, encompassing:

- Sanctions: implement clear boundaries and consequences for harmful actions.
- Restorative practices: utilise group activities to rebuild safety and positive relationships within the classroom.
- Victim support and relationship repair: follow specific procedures to ensure the victim's sense of security and address interpersonal dynamics.
- Psychological counselling: recommend individual or family psychological counselling as needed.

By implementing these steps, educators can provide effective and professional support to children experiencing bullying.

## **Respectful Communication**

Kindness, consideration for others, the freedom to express one's opinions, as well as personal boundaries and self-awareness – all of these aspects fall under the concept of respectful communication. It is more than just a way of speaking; it is a means of creating a space where individuals can share their perspectives, recognise the needs of others, and articulate their own. Respect in communication means demonstrating courtesy, attentiveness, consideration and empathy towards another person when exchanging thoughts, opinions, or feelings. It fosters a safe and open environment where everyone feels heard and valued. Without a respectful approach, even critical thinking cannot bridge the gap created by polarised opinions. True progress requires recognising each other as human beings rather than reducing people to opposing viewpoints. The goal is to seek common ground rather than division (digiQ, 2025).

Respectful communication is a powerful preventative tool against harmful online behaviours, such as cyberbullying and hate speech. Respect should be a fundamental value for every member of society, as its absence can lead to serious consequences – cyberbullying, for example, stems from a lack of respect for oneself and others (Keith & Martin, 2005). If respect is lacking, conflicts arise, and individuals may begin to doubt their own worth, leading to mental health challenges ranging from discomfort and frustration to anxiety and more serious psychological distress (Huo & Binning, 2008). By fostering a culture of respect, we can reduce misunderstandings, prevent conflicts from escalating, and promote social harmony.

Communication serves as a crucial tool in shaping social structures and relationships. When individuals engage in respectful dialogue, they contribute to a more cohesive society by strengthening social bonds. Disrespectful communication, on the other hand, can reinforce social inequalities and lead to the exclusion of certain groups. Research indicates that respect in interactions fosters positive emotions and psychological well-being. Mutual recognition and validation enhance self-esteem and social belonging, which are essential for mental health (Huo & Binning, 2008). Furthermore, studies on emotional intelligence suggest that respectful communication is linked to better emotional regulation and conflict resolution skills (Antonopoulou, 2024).

While respect is fundamental, it is closely linked to empathy and active listening. Respect alone may prevent conflict, but empathy deepens our understanding of others' perspectives, fostering genuine connections. Active listening – truly focusing on the speaker without judgment – reinforces respect by demonstrating that all voices matter. These elements together create a foundation for a more inclusive and constructive dialogue, both in personal interactions and within digital communities.

However, maintaining respectful communication, especially in emotionally charged or online interactions, can be challenging. To navigate these situations effectively, the following practical strategies can help foster a culture of respect and prevent misunderstandings from escalating.

### **Practical Tips for Respectful Communication:**

- **Disrespect may hide struggles:** let them speak. You might learn what is troubling them.
- **Observe your reactions:** what emotions does this situation trigger in you? What is behind them? Why does it make you angry?
- **Breathe in – breathe out. Create space to calm yourself:** do not let yourself be controlled by momentary emotions.
- **Stand up for someone who is being harmed:** you never know if what they need most is to feel supported.
- **Sometimes, just walk away:** especially in online spaces. Shift your focus and organise your thoughts.
- **Say no:** set clear boundaries and let others know what you will not tolerate.

By integrating these perspectives and practical strategies, we can cultivate a culture of respectful communication that enhances our interactions and strengthens our communities.

## **Respectful Communication and Digital Reputation**

The way individuals communicate online significantly impacts their e-reputation, which is a reflection of their digital presence and interactions. Every online interaction leaves a digital footprint, which can have lasting consequences. Ethical and respectful communication plays a key role in maintaining a positive digital reputation, as inappropriate behaviour, offensive comments, or spreading misinformation can harm one's credibility (Sheldon, 2023) and even affect future career and educational opportunities (Sharma, 2022). Research highlights that universities and employers often review social media activity as part of their selection process (Council of Europe, 2019; Better Internet for Kids, 2020). By fostering responsible digital engagement, individuals can ensure that their online identity reflects their values and professionalism, reinforcing the importance of respectful and mindful communication in digital spaces.

## **Cyber Hygiene, Online wellbeing and Digital Citizenship**

### **Digital Citizenship**

Digital citizenship has emerged as a critical framework for comprehending and guiding effective participation within the online sphere. It encompasses the norms of appropriate, responsible technology use (Council of Europe, 2019). As technology becomes more integrated into daily life, comprehending digital citizenship is essential for individuals, educators, and policymakers (Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022).

The concept of digital citizenship is multifaceted, including various elements that facilitate positive engagement with digital technologies. These facets include utilising technology to support democratic values, adhering to the rule of law, respecting human rights, and fostering respectful online communication across diverse viewpoints. This includes an understanding of

the benefits and risks associated with social media use, with a particular emphasis on the impact on mental health and well-being. Social media platforms are widely used; they facilitate connection and communication (Sala et al., 2024), allowing users to maintain contact with those who live in other countries, and to communicate during times when personal meetings are not possible, whether due to distance, scarcity of time, health issues, or unprecedented events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

A digital citizen is characterised by active engagement in online environments while demonstrating an awareness of safety and responsible technology use. It is a digitally literate citizen who critically evaluates the quality of online information, contributing to a more informed and discerning online community. This involves not only assessing the credibility of sources but also understanding how algorithms shape the information individuals receive, potentially leading to the reinforcement of similar viewpoints (Helberger, 2020). It also necessitates an awareness of online safety practices to protect personal information from unauthorised access and misuse, recognising that personal data has become a valuable commodity (Council of Europe, 2019; Sharma, 2022).

Educating digital citizens is vital for ensuring that individuals can utilise technology in ways that are beneficial to society and themselves. By promoting responsible online conduct, digital citizenship education helps to mitigate risks such as misinformation, cyberbullying, and privacy breaches, thereby fostering a safer online environment. Such education also empowers individuals to harness digital tools for constructive purposes, promoting civic engagement, and facilitating access to information and services.

### **Cyber hygiene and digital balance**

However, the use of digital technologies also presents potential dangers that users must be equipped to handle to protect themselves and others. The entertainment of online platforms allows humans to „escape“ the real world. By chasing dopamine, digital citizens are often overconsuming the online content, which might result in online addiction. Such behaviour is time-exhausting what has a negative impact on users' physical health, social relationships, concentration and productivity, which in turn can result in poor academic or working performance (Baltacı et al. 2021; Sala et al. 2024).

It is important to acknowledge that social media also has positive effects on mental health. These include facilitating access to other people's information and experiences, providing emotional support, enabling community building, and offering opportunities for self-expression and maintaining contacts (Nolan et al., 2017). Research has shown mixed and inconclusive findings related to the effect of Internet use by young people and psychological health and well-being. Social media can be particularly useful for youngsters in need – the online environment simplifies the access to online professional help (Sala et al 2024), while preserving anonymity. Such opportunities enhance the mental health of young individuals. In addition, via friends, and like-minded persons in case of being part of an online group, one can immediately receive emotional support (Nolan et al., 2017). Social media-based interventions offer potential for engaging individuals who are not currently receiving treatment but may be experiencing escalating mental

health symptoms (Naslund et al., 2022). Despite these benefits, it is crucial to avoid overconsumption of social media. Individuals should limit their social media consumption by being mindful of screen time, utilising features on many smartphones that allow users to set time limits for apps and receive notifications when those limits are exceeded (Sala et al., 2024). This conscious approach to social media use, coupled with practicing good cyber hygiene and digital balance, is essential. Cyber hygiene involves practices such as regularly updating software, using strong passwords, and being cautious about clicking on unknown links (Digital Guardian, 2023), but also digital balance, meaning the striving for a healthy balance between online and offline activities. Spending time away from screens, reducing digital distractions, engaging in physical activity, and nurturing in-person relationships are crucial aspects of this balance, contributing to overall well-being (Büchi, 2021; Cenef, DigiQ & AMO, 2022).

In conclusion, while digital platforms offer entertainment and social connection, their potential for overuse and negative health impacts necessitates user awareness and proactive self-regulation. By understanding both the risks and benefits, and by employing tools to manage screen time, individuals can mitigate the dangers of excessive technology use.

## **Section B. Interactive Learning Methods**

### **Creating an Inclusive Classroom Environment – 10 step model**

Creating an inclusive classroom environment is a foundational step in educating against racism, xenophobia, and hate speech. An inclusive classroom is not only a physical space, but a social and emotional environment in which all pupils feel respected, safe, and valued, regardless of their background, identity, or opinions. Such an environment enables open dialogue, critical thinking, and meaningful learning—especially when addressing sensitive and potentially controversial topics.

For educators, inclusion is an ongoing process that requires intentional planning, self-reflection, and responsiveness to students' needs. This section provides guidance on how to build and sustain an inclusive classroom that supports democratic values, human rights, and respectful interaction.

#### **Step 1. Foundations of an Inclusive Classroom**

An inclusive classroom is grounded in the principle of human dignity. Every pupil has the right to feel safe, heard, and respected. Inclusion does not mean avoiding disagreement or difficult conversations; rather, it means creating conditions where differences can be explored constructively. Key characteristics of an inclusive classroom include:

- Mutual respect between pupils and teachers
- Clear expectations regarding behavior and communication
- Recognition of diversity as a strength rather than a problem

- Active participation of all pupils

Educators play a central role as facilitators and role models. The language they use, the way they respond to conflict, and their openness to different perspectives all shape classroom culture.

### **Step 2. Establishing Clear Norms and Shared Responsibility**

Inclusive environments begin with clear, jointly agreed-upon norms. At the start of a course or activity, educators should work with pupils to establish basic rules for discussion and interaction. These may include:

- Listening without interruption
- Criticizing ideas, not people
- Using respectful language
- Acknowledging different experiences and viewpoints

When pupils participate in creating these rules, they are more likely to take ownership of them. Revisiting the norms regularly helps reinforce expectations and provides a reference point when challenges arise.

Shared responsibility also means encouraging pupils to support one another and intervene constructively when exclusion or harmful language occurs.

### **Step 3. Fostering Critical Thinking and Open Dialogue**

Critical thinking is essential for challenging stereotypes, misinformation, and simplistic narratives. Educators should encourage pupils to question assumptions, analyze sources, and consider multiple perspectives. Effective strategies include:

- Asking open-ended questions rather than yes/no questions
- Encouraging pupils to explain their reasoning
- Presenting diverse viewpoints on social issues
- Comparing media representations and narratives

Open dialogue does not require consensus. Disagreement can be productive if managed respectfully. Teachers should emphasize that differing opinions are acceptable, while discriminatory language or personal attacks are not.

### **Step 4. Encouraging Empathy and Perspective-Taking**

Empathy is a key competence in preventing prejudice and discrimination. Inclusive classrooms provide opportunities for pupils to understand experiences different from their own and to reflect on their attitudes and emotions. Perspective-taking can be encouraged through:

- Personal stories and narratives (real or fictional)
- Role-play and simulation exercises
- Reflective writing and journaling

- Group discussions focused on emotions and experiences

Educators should guide pupils to distinguish between understanding someone's perspective and agreeing with it. The goal is awareness and respect, not forced conformity.

### **Step 5. Language, Representation, and Visibility**

The language used in the classroom has a powerful impact on inclusion. Educators should be attentive to:

- Avoiding stereotypes and generalizations
- Using inclusive and respectful terminology
- Addressing harmful language immediately and constructively

Representation also matters. Teaching materials, examples, and visuals should reflect diversity in terms of ethnicity, culture, gender, and social background. When pupils see themselves represented positively, their sense of belonging increases.

At the same time, educators should avoid placing undue responsibility on minority pupils to represent or explain their identities.

### **Step 6. Managing Sensitive Topics and Emotional Responses**

Discussions about racism, xenophobia, and hate speech can evoke strong emotions, including anger, fear, or defensiveness. Educators should anticipate emotional reactions and plan accordingly. One should try following:

- Setting emotional boundaries and allowing pauses when needed
- Validating emotions without validating harmful behavior
- Offering alternative ways to participate (e.g., writing instead of speaking)
- Following up individually with pupils when necessary

Teachers should also be aware of their own emotional responses and seek support or reflection when needed.

### **Step 7. Conflict Resolution in the Classroom**

Conflict is not a failure of inclusion; it is an opportunity for learning. Inclusive classrooms address conflict openly and constructively.

- Naming the issue calmly and clearly
- Encouraging pupils to express feelings using "I" statements
- Helping pupils identify the impact of their words or actions
- Guiding the group toward solutions and agreements

When discriminatory remarks occur, educators should respond promptly and clearly, explaining why the language is harmful while maintaining the dignity of all pupils involved.

### **Step 8. Supporting Marginalized and Vulnerable Pupils**

Some pupils may experience exclusion or discrimination more frequently than others. Educators should be attentive to signs of withdrawal, silence, or distress and take proactive steps to ensure inclusion.

- Creating multiple opportunities for participation
- Offering encouragement and positive feedback
- Collaborating with school psychologists or counselors
- Engaging parents or guardians when appropriate

Inclusive classrooms do not single out pupils, but they ensure that support systems are accessible to those who need them.

### **Step 9. Teacher Self-Reflection and Professional Responsibility**

Educators bring their own experiences, beliefs, and biases into the classroom. Self-reflection is essential for maintaining an inclusive environment.

- How do my assumptions influence my teaching?
- Whose voices are heard most often in my classroom?
- How do I respond to views I strongly disagree with?

Continuous professional development, peer exchange, and engagement with educational resources help educators strengthen their inclusive practice.

### **Step 10. Inclusion Beyond the Classroom**

An inclusive classroom is part of a broader school culture. ETeachers/educators are encouraged to:

- Collaborate with colleagues on inclusive initiatives
- Engage pupils in school-wide campaigns and activities
- Connect classroom learning to community experiences

Civic education clubs and extracurricular activities offer additional spaces for deeper engagement and student leadership.

## **Useful methods based on our experience**

The approach we recommend uses the principles of experiential pedagogy. Experiential pedagogy is a pedagogical approach that uses experience as a means of learning and facilitates a deeper internalization of knowledge, including attitudinal change. At the same time, it also deepens self-knowledge and awareness of one's possibilities, including the possibility of change - in this case, a change in perspective on issues of norms regarding differences between people and multicultural societies.

Everyone intuitively feels what an experience is; the concept can be characterized as an experience that is well stored in memory because the participant in the "games" is actively involved and actively engages other senses in the cognition; the experience is all the more intense the more open one is.

To create the conditions for openness to new knowledge, the climate of the environment where any form of experiential pedagogy is applied is essential. Thus, the basic rules for a safe climate apply:

- Any openness in communication is allowed
- Everyone has the right to express their opinion, even though it may not be objectively "correct"
- Trust is deepened by the fact that controversial topics and opinions of participants are not encouraged to be discussed outside the programme
- An integral part of such a programme is the principle of using 'feedback', which is the joint sharing and confrontation of the experience of all members of the group - in this case the class - because only in this way can the participants in the activity become aware of their reactions, which can sometimes be surprising and allow them to become aware of their experience
- The whole process is illustrated by the so-called Kolb cycle: the Kolb cycle, which is made up of four phases (1. experience, 2. reflection, reflecting on the lived experience, 3. forming abstract concepts and ideas, 4. experimenting with conclusions, generalizing and forming new concepts. By the end of the fourth cycle, new concepts are tested and more experiences are gained, thus repeating the cycle.)

Working with experiential activities uses the natural process of experiential learning. In order to take advantage of all the possibilities it offers, we need to:

- choose an appropriate activity that matches the goal we want to achieve,
- motivate and enthuse for the game, explain and assign the activity in a clear way,
- observe the actual events, reflect on the process and experience,
- summarise the main experiences and insights and conclude the activity.

It must always be remembered that the goal is not the realisation of the activity, but that the activity is the means to achieve the stated goal.

## Interactive Learning Methods

The aims of our lectures are generally focused on the **formation of attitudes** (towards oneself, other people, social groups, people different socio-cultural backgrounds, values), **developing abilities and skills** (self-expression, perception of others, communication, cooperation, decision-making, evaluation), and of course **information** (about oneself and others, about their communication, their value patterns, etc.). We deliberately create the conditions for this, we use interactive forms of working with pupils and the classroom team. Throughout the programme, we therefore place a constant emphasis on guiding, we also use the term "learning about democracy and human rights".

Socialisation, social learning in the school and classroom environment is of course ongoing. Our aim is to emphasise that social skills can be developed deliberately - techniques often take the form of interactive games and exercises, using elements of social psychological training.

## Social-psychological games

The social-psychological games used in education are most often divided according to their main focus into familiarisation and warm-up games, didactic games, thematic games, games aimed at developing creativity, and self-discovery games. Social-psychological games are used for personality education, they allow to evoke different experiences (discrimination, group cooperation, group identity, the application of stereotypes and reactions to them, the otherness of pupils in a class that would be considered homogeneous...). The most important thing is the actual content of the game and the experience of it; children should have enough space to express creativity, compassion, solidarity and elements of civic

responsibility. They are less likely to succumb to appealing and often extremist proposals for simple solutions to complex problems. The guiding principle is cooperation and communication between the children themselves and between the children and the teacher.

Play and activities conceived in this way allow the development of positive social-interactive skills, the ability to empathise with others, to be able to work together; it is an opportunity for stimulation, the development of self-esteem, the experience of success and simple fun experienced together with the teacher and in the school environment. Children are not exposed to the pressure of assessment or the stress of failure. There are not many games where no one loses, older children are already willing to play to win at any cost; the games we offer in the modules and especially in the set of activities in the second part of the methodology allow for a different type of experience, where the participant is not forced to rejoice in the failure of others because it increases his chances of winning, but through games he learns cooperation, acceptance of himself and others.

For interactive games to be effective, certain conditions should be met:

- active participation of all children,
- the use of feedback,
- relatively clearly defined boundaries in time and content,
- openness of results (the goal is set, the outcome may be different),
- interaction (use of energy that can be distracting in normal teaching - joy of movement, verbal and non-verbal contacts, use of interaction between children),
- emphasis on cooperation (elements of competition rather limited),
- equal participation of all children in group activities (opportunities for those who are less successful at school, spontaneity and creativity are valued),
- group cohesion,
- the role of the group leader (ability to refrain from directive control, to be able to stand back).

These games are probably more often used in bullying work or in classroom team building. However, they can also be used in teaching about migration, the presence of migrants in the host society, teaching about human rights, or addressing stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes. They must be designed to achieve the goal of not identifying or eliminating bullying in the classroom, but to bring pupils to experience first-hand what they may never experience and to be able to name the experience.

## **Specific methods and techniques**

Role-playing - it does not focus on the performance of an artistic performance, on creating a role as in theatre, the purpose is to experience a certain situation. The child can play the role of themselves in a story that has happened to them, or they can play themselves in a possible situation, i.e. how they would act if they were in a situation that happened to someone else. The child may also play themselves in a particular social role, or they may play someone else and try to put themselves in the other person's point of view. The story is chosen in relation to the objectives; it can be real, fictional, a story with a given scenario and assigned roles in it; the search for possible solutions, the experience of empathy, the perception of mutual communication, etc. are important. We adopt a rule at the beginning that we do not criticize anyone, we do not insult anyone, we do not ridicule, we do not shout, we do not evaluate performance.

Other useful methods can be simulated situations, elements of sociodrama, but also elements from art therapy, serving for self-expression and communication with others (drawings, painting together in a group, conducting a dialogue by drawing or music...). We can use artistic means, where the primary tasks are not aesthetic education, but the child has the opportunity to express his opinion, his ideas, his experiences, his feelings, in a different way than with words; it is not the performance that is evaluated, it is not about art or non-art. Also, the teacher does not have to be shackled by the fact that he is not an artist. For example, a drawing or creating a collage can be used, which aims to express the child's experiences, both positive and negative, often symbolically (mood colour, metaphor). The artwork can also be the basis for a "chat", a verbal expression of feelings. Furthermore, we can use, for example, an illustration of a story or situation we have worked with that the children have acted out or an artistic expression of the child's perspective on the thesis presented, information, concepts, teacher's interpretation, which is also a way for the students to remember the desired knowledge better, or to process and accept it better. Again, we emphasize that this is not about performance assessment, but about social learning, for everyone, including the teacher, who is more of a facilitator, but who also realizes a lot about the children as well as himself.

Other methods that have worked very well in our teaching are: fun quizzes, motivating the topic of the lesson, independent work, brainstorming, independent formulating of questions to the teacher or lecturer. When working with media, students can analyse written text and photographs and discuss, as well as trying out genre and creative writing.

Working with film clips is very effective. 'Direct' examples, i.e. realistic films or documentaries, can be used. But we can also use parallels, we can let the pupils work imaginatively with the film and put themselves in the shoes of the characters.

Another method that can be used in teaching is to look for parallels with what we know ourselves, for example, when teaching about migration, to look for parallels between a foreign country and our own.

## **Peer-to-Peer Learning Approach**

The peer-to-peer learning approach is a dynamic and effective educational method that involves learners teaching and supporting one another (Cabrera et al., 2002). Rather than relying solely on traditional teacher-led instruction, this approach fosters an interactive and participatory learning environment, where students take an active role in both teaching and learning. By engaging in peer education, young people develop critical thinking, communication skills, and a sense of shared responsibility in their learning process (Smith & MacGregor, 1992; Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2014).

Peer-to-peer learning is based on the idea that individuals learn more effectively from those who share similar experiences, challenges, and perspectives. Research shows that students are often more receptive to information delivered by their peers, as it feels more relatable and less hierarchical than traditional instruction. This method encourages active engagement, discussion, and reflection, making learning more meaningful and impactful (Boud & Middleton, 2003; Topping, 2005).

By adopting this approach, teachers can create more open and student-driven learning experiences, where young people actively participate in shaping their understanding of social issues, such as hate speech, racism, and xenophobia.

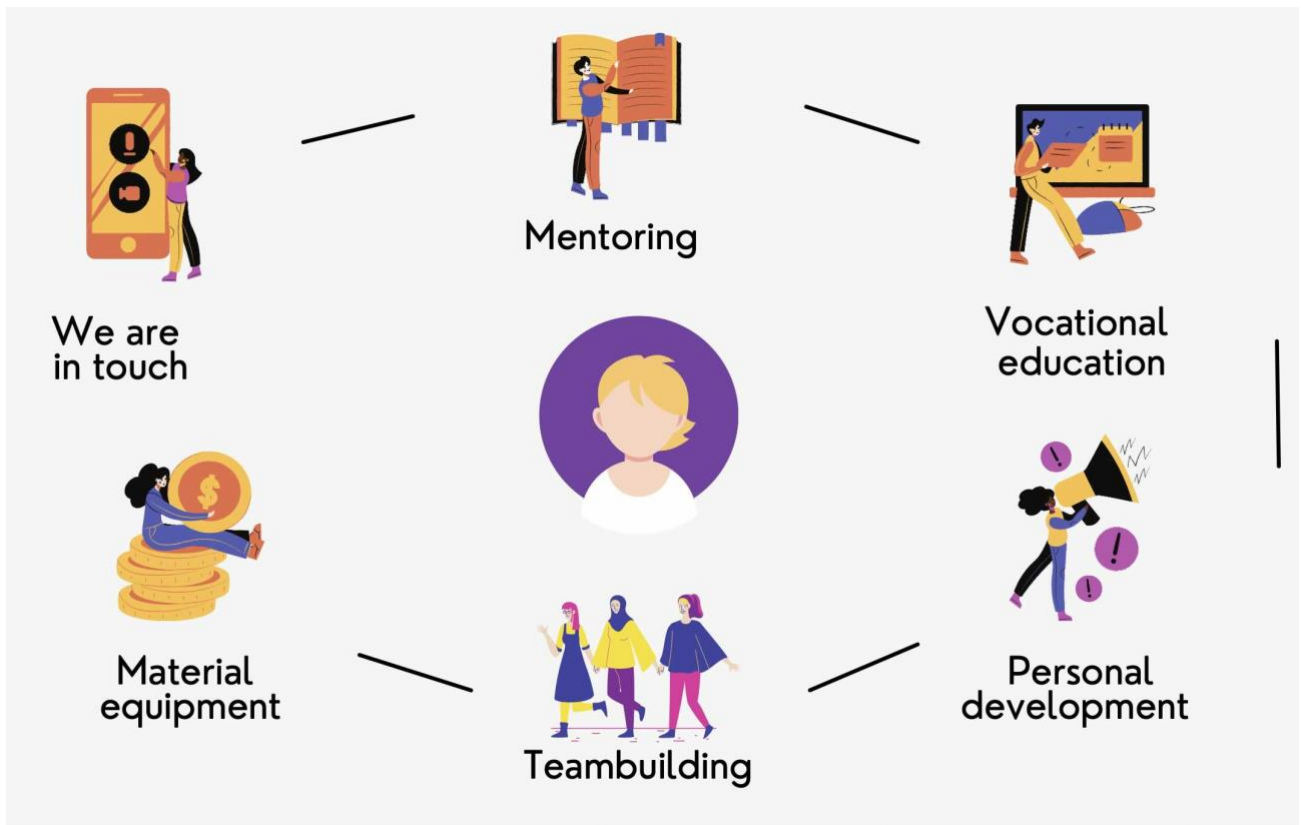
Through the integration of peer-led education, students can become critical thinkers, responsible digital citizens, and advocates for an inclusive society—an essential step toward combating online hate speech and discrimination processes (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2014).

The peer-to-peer learning model can serve as a valuable tool for educators seeking to promote an inclusive mindset and critical digital literacy among their students (Cabrera et al., 2002). By encouraging students to take an active role in knowledge-sharing, teachers can create a more engaging and student-centred learning environment. Here are some ways teachers can integrate this approach into their daily practice:

- **Student-Led Discussions** – instead of traditional lectures, encourage students to research and present topics related to digital citizenship, hate speech, and xenophobia. This allows students to take ownership of their learning while developing public speaking and analytical skills.
- **Project-Based Learning** – students can create educational campaigns, digital materials, or awareness projects on issues like online safety, cyberbullying or misinformation, fostering creativity and collaboration.
- **Mentorship and Leadership Roles** – assign students as peer mentors, enabling them to support other classmates in developing awareness of online risks and responsible digital behaviour.
- **Classroom Debates and Case Studies** – organising structured debates and case study discussions can help students to reflect on the complexities of (online) interactions enables them to critically analyse real-world examples and to reflect on the complexities of (online) interactions. These initiatives foster empathy and deeper understanding of hate speech and discrimination.
- **Collaborative Learning Spaces** – encouraging students to work in small groups on problem-solving tasks builds empathy, teamwork, and communication skills. By fostering collaboration rather than competition, peer learning creates an atmosphere of support and shared responsibility, where every student has an active role in their educational journey.

By incorporating peer-to-peer learning, teachers empower students to take ownership of their learning while also building a more inclusive and participatory classroom environment. This approach not only enhances engagement but also helps students develop skills that will benefit

them in both digital and real-world interactions (Falchikov, 2001). Furthermore, by embedding critical thinking and ethical reflection into daily educational practice, educators can contribute to a generation of responsible digital citizens committed to fostering respect, inclusion, and social cohesion.



## Section C. Ready-to-Use Activities and Materials



In this section we have gathered a selection of games, activities and themes that can be used in the field of integration through interactive education. The games and activities are described in details so that they can be used directly in the classroom with maximum clarity, with comments and supporting materials.

The activities described have been partly created by the authors of the project, partly taken from the offer of other projects and adapted to allow them to be thematised and interpreted specifically with an emphasis on the prevention of racism and xenophobia. Even commonly used games can be modify for our aim. These games can be relaxing, familiarising, warming up or motivating.

All the activities can be used during educational programme. Great emphasis is placed on communicating the goal of the game at the end. After everyone has tried and played the activity.

Every activity explain the Aim, Terms and Educational field. You can see time consumption and all materials.

## Activity 1: Beige dot

<b>Red dot</b>	
<b>Aim:</b> to bring the situation of people standing outside the society closer, to respect differences	 15 minutes
<b>Terms:</b> discrimination, respect, xenophobia, racism	 stickers with coloured dots of 2 to 4 colours and with 1 differently coloured dot
<b>Educational fields:</b> multicultural education, education of a democratic citizen, education in European and global context	

- Activity description

Participants stand in a line or circle and close their eyes. Point out that we will be touching them on their foreheads (or backs, depending on the location of the dots). Stick a sticker with a coloured mark on each person's forehead (or back). Alternate the colours so that players with different coloured dots are standing next to each other. One colour is represented by only one dot (e.g. black, red...). Point out to the pupils that they are not allowed to talk to each other throughout the game, that they can only communicate non-verbally. After sticking the dots, the players are given the task to open their eyes and group themselves according to a common sign (dots on the forehead, on the back). They are not allowed to talk to each other (which is quite difficult for the pupils and they tend to say the colours of the dots). The leader asks if everyone is already assigned, if everyone has a group, to encourage the completion of the self-grouping. Pupils form groups and the pupil with the different dot is left alone. After forming groups, pupils are given the task of talking in groups about their favourite food, the weather, plans for the holidays (the topic depends on the teacher or the game leader). The pupil with the different dot is again left alone and does not talk to anyone. After a while, we stop the game.

- Conclusion, evaluation At the end, we ask the pupils questions and discuss their experiences and insights from the game.

- We ask the student with the other dot what he/she experienced and how he/she felt during the game.
- We ask the pupils the same questions: what did they experience and how did they feel? How did they communicate with each other? What all happened during the game?
- How did they think the one they were rejecting felt? Was it difficult to reject a different individual? What do you suggest to make such a person feel better?
- Who felt comfortable in the group? Why?
- Have you ever experienced anything like this in your life? Which situations in life are similar to our game?
- What would you call the situation of an expelled pupil? Based on the answers to the last question, we will introduce or recall the concepts of exclusion, discrimination, racism and xenophobia.

- Note to teachers

It is very important for leaders to observe the flow of the game - how students communicate, how they group themselves, how they exclude the differently marked individual. It is crucial for the subsequent discussion if the teacher can give concrete examples (that a particular pupil pushed the marked one away;

that another indicated to kick him away; that another tried to help him by leading him by the hand; that one group mocked the other; that pupils found the exclusion of one strange and tried to find his group; that when they are allowed to speak, they protest against the exclusion of one...) - because the pupils can best understand how they behaved during the game, what they were thinking and what they were showing to others. The subsequent discussion is also helped by the fact that the pupils are still interested in the game, enjoy self-reflection and work well together in explaining the concepts. Pupils will experience the experience of the isolated individual in the game (we use the terms: distance, rejection, discrimination, xenophobia, racism) - it is important to name and remind pupils of this experience for the discussion. It was not only the excluded person who experienced it, but also the others because they excluded - so they too need to be aware of how and why they behaved.

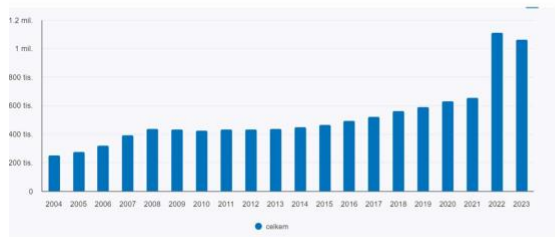
## Activity 2: Refugee journey

<b>The game: the journey of a refugee from Ukraine: What's next?</b>	
<p><b>Goal:</b> Through a simple situational game, put yourself in the shoes of refugees. To play the role of refugees in a refugee situation. To understand the meaning of important terms. Learning about the current situation of U k r a i n i a n refugees in the Czech Republic.</p> <p><b>Terms:</b> refugee, asylum, migration, application for international protection, subsidiary protection</p> <p><b>Educational areas:</b> Human and Society, Multicultural Education, Personal and Social Education, Education for Thinking in European and Global Contexts</p>	<p> min. 1 lesson</p> <p> printed game plan for teachers, envelopes with assignments, stationery, paper</p>

- Activity description

Students are divided by the teacher into several groups (minimum 2). Each group is given a basic starting scenario in an envelope (some groups envelope 1, some groups envelope 23 to make the game more varied. The pupils always read the scenario (story) and decide on one of the options offered to them. Then, according to their decision and the game plan, the teacher gives them the next envelope with the scenario that follows their decision (the envelopes are numbered). In this way, the pupils put themselves in the shoes of a Ukrainian family, especially a mother who, together with her two children, sets off from Ukraine on a journey to safety. The scenarios branch out according to different decisions. The pupils in groups always reach the Czech Republic, but on the way they experience something different and end up in different places (hostel, hotel, gym, private apartment of a stranger, etc.).

Total of **1 063 225** foreigners (6/2024)



Zdroj: ČSÚ

Foreigners in the CZ by country of origin (fyi from Georgia 862)

Státní příslušnost	Počet	tj. %
Ukrajina	559 836	53 %
Slovensko	119 920	11 %
Vietnam	68 431	6 %
Rusko	40 073	4 %
Rumunsko	20 826	2 %
Bulharsko	17 897	2 %
Polsko	17 711	2 %
Německo	13 390	1 %
Mongolsko	12 057	1 %
Maďarsko	11 420	1 %

zdroj: OAMP, MV

After the groups reach the end of the story, they wait for the others to finish as well. The teacher will follow up the game with questions:

► Share with others how your journey went. Describe your journey to others.

► What did you pack for

the trip and why? Was there a consensus in your group? What was the one thing you disagreed on the most?

► How did you feel when you played the game? Was there a moment during the story that stuck in your mind?

► Do you think you made the wrong decision at any point along the way? Why? (note: the aim is to conclude that refugees on their way to safety are always exposed to decisions and are never able to predict in advance what the consequences of their decisions will be)

► During the course of the game, have you encountered a situation in which you would normally act differently (when there is no war)? (note: this question refers to a situation that all players must go through. This is the moment when a strange woman asks for water and food for her children. You ask the pupils how they made their decision in this situation and whether they would have made the same decision in other circumstances).

► How do you think the story ended?

#### ● Conclusion, evaluation



At the end, the teacher tells the pupils that all the situations in the play are based on real stories of refugees from Ukraine. None of the situations are made up. They are different stories with different obstacles, and it is impossible to determine which decision is the right one (external circumstances play an influence) and which one cannot control. Whatever decision he makes, he may encounter both positive and negative consequences in the next step. All the next steps of the refugee's journey may be based on mere chance, luck or bad luck. The aim is to explain to the pupils that we do not always have our lives in our hands (whether it is to fight or flee war). The subsequent integration of refugees is also based not only on the efforts and diligence of individuals, but also on circumstances that are often beyond one's control (the effective functioning of the system, social assistance, housing opportunities, the economic situation, job offers, nursery vacancies, communication with the authorities, etc.).

#### ● Note to teachers, risks

Choose this activity only if you know your class well. In particular, the participation of a new classmate from Ukraine who is personally affected by the topic could lead to an emotionally tense situation. We recommend playing this activity in classes where there are no children who have specifically fled the war,

or discussing it with them personally beforehand and asking if they feel up to it. The text of some scripts is long. We recommend that students take turns reading in groups. As for sharing with other groups - it is important that pupils retell the story in their own words. This needs to be told to them at the beginning of the game - so that they pay attention and remember what is being read in the group.

### Activity 3: Made by

<b>Made by...</b>	
<b>Aim:</b> : To introduce students to the lives of some famous refugees. The aim is to break down some stereotypes (this is not a correct solution activity).	 10- 15 minutes
<b>Terms:</b> celebrities, refugees	 set of envelopes with printed cards of personalities and works see attachment <u>Made by</u>
<b>Educational fields:</b> Human and Society, Multicultural Education	

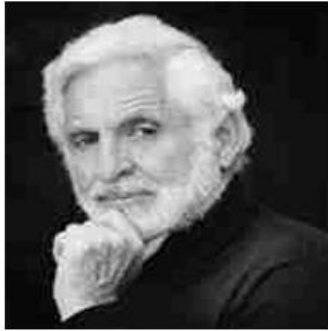
- Activity description

Pupils are given cards in groups and have to match them in pairs. Some of them have pictures of people, others have products/inventions/works of which these people are the authors. The products include Sriracha sauce, MiniCooper car, contraceptives, etc. A teacher and a foreigner-lecturer go among the students and help to make the correct pairs.

- Conclusion, evaluation The lecturer and the foreign lecturer then explain that they are refugees. A discussion may follow about what all can influence a person to become famous or invent something

FAMOUS REFUGEES AND THEIR WORK

Carl Djerassi, chemist



Contraception



Anne Frank, writer



diary



Felix Salten, writer



Bambi



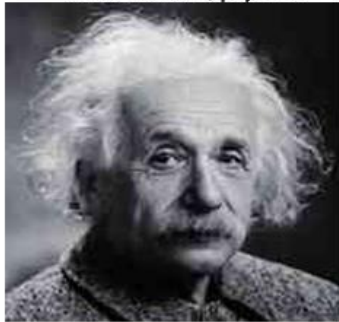
Bob Marley, singer



album Uprising



Albert Einstein, physicist



theory of reality

$$E=MC^2$$



Alec Issigonis, designer



Mini-Cooper



## Activity 4: Working with film clips - Documentary: The little one

Small	
<p><b>Aim:</b> To gain knowledge about the life of the Vietnamese minority in the Czech Republic. To gain an understanding of how children of foreigners may feel in a new environment where they do not understand the language.</p>	 30 - 35 minutes
<p><b>Concepts:</b> integration, home, Vietnamese traditions and cultural differences, autobiography</p>	 projection equipment, stationery, film demonstration
<p><b>Educational areas:</b> education for thinking in European and global contexts, multicultural education, personal and social education, language education and communication</p>	

- Activity description

1. The teacher first asks the pupils if they know what an autobiographical picture means. If they do not know, it is necessary to explain it. Before showing the film, the teacher asks the pupils to notice the main character Rong, and what feelings the main character might be experiencing. Then we will show the pupils the short animated film *Malá*, which is an autobiographical film by the author Diana Cam Van Nguyen, in which she materializes her feelings as a Vietnamese woman growing up in a small Czech town. Thanks to the cartoon, the pupils put themselves in the shoes of their peers, find out what a child - a foreigner experiences in a new environment, how she feels, what worries her. In this activity, reflection after the film is very important. Immediately after the screening, we will conduct a brief reflection using the one-word method (invite students to say one word that comes to mind). We write the words on the board, they can be repeated. After the film, ask students to briefly characterize Rong. We ask: "What bothered her the most?" "How was she different from her classmates?" "What did she need most?" We invite them to write a reflection using the free writing method, which can be approximated by the assignment, "Think you are Rong, and write what is running through your mind, what you are thinking about." Volunteers will read the results of their work.

2. Another task for students can also be to follow the day of the family of the heroine Rong during the screening of the film. The teacher asks if they notice any differences from their family's daily routine. The differences can then be linked back to the introductory presentation about Vietnam, where any cultural specifics are explained (e.g. pupils see in the film that the Rong family pray together at the family altar, which can be shown as an example of how each family has a sacred place at home where they pray to their deceased family members).



- Conclusion, evaluation

We ask students what they have concluded in their reflections. Can they imagine themselves coming into a collective where they would look different or have different traditions than everyone else? What would help them to fit in? What do you think is the key to human coexistence? We should conclude that different appearance/traditions should not prevent anyone from coexisting with others.

Film <https://vimeo.com/386909685>

<https://vimeo.com/386909685>

## Activity 5: Guess the country



Guess the country	
<b>Goal:</b> to show the similarities between our country and the migrants' country in terms of nature, architecture, customs (clothing, etc.). An introduction to the country, which we can develop in more detail later.  <b>Terms:</b> cultural differences, traditions and habits	 5-10 min
	 pictures

- Activity description

Find the similarities between your country and a foreign country. Prepare photos of nature, clothes, costumes, architecture, history, interesting buildings and places and guess which ones are from your state and which ones are from the foreign state.

- Conclusion, evaluation - After the game we will ask questions for the discussion:
  - ▶ How is it possible that we have an architecture that looks similar?
  - ▶ How come we are not able to distinguish which city is from which country?
  - ▶ Why do we have similar traditional costumes?
  - ▶ Did we have anything in common in any part of our history?

## Activity 6: Graffiti form Afghanistan

Afghan graffiti	
<b>Aim:</b> To get acquainted with the work of Afghan artist Shamsia Hassani and to learn about the situation of women in Afghanistan through her works.  <b>Concepts:</b> women's rights, Afghan art  <b>Educational areas:</b> multicultural education, Human and society, education of a democratic citizen,	 45 minutes
	 printed works, quarters, coloured crayons/fixes

- Target

To introduce students to the work of artist Samsie Hassani. To stimulate discussion about her works. To inform pupils through their graffiti works about women's rights in Afghanistan, letting them compare it with the situation in the Czech Republic. To develop awareness of cultural difference, to develop empathy and interest in respecting human rights. To present the possibility of drawing attention to a controversial issue through art.

- Activity description



Divide the pupils into groups, each group will be given a printed piece of work. The task for each group will be to examine the picture and try to describe in their own words what the artist wanted to draw attention to. They discuss in the group. Then each group will present their work and what they think it represents to the others. After all the groups have presented their work, the teacher starts a discussion.

- Reflection, conclusion Questions for discussion: "What emotions do the pictures evoke in you?" (can be by association) "What does graffiti say about the situation of women in Afghanistan?" "Can you compare the situation of women in Afghanistan and in your country?" "What can women do if they feel oppressed?" "What is another way to draw attention to injustice?" Next, the teacher reads a medallion about the author of the artwork.

- Note to managers: Medallion about the author Shamsa Hassani was born in 1988 and spent her childhood in Iran. Her parents moved there temporarily from Kandahar, Afghanistan, during the war. Hassani showed an interest in art and painting from a young age, but could not attend any classes because it was forbidden to Afghans living in Iran. After the fall of the Taliban, she returned with her family to Kabul, where she studied art at Kabul University. She later began lecturing there and eventually became an associate professor. Hassani creates colourful graffiti on the streets of Kabul, and around the world, trying to fight for women's rights through her images. Her works remind people of the tragedies that women in Afghanistan have faced and continue to face. Link to more information about the author: <https://www.shamsiahassani.net/>

- Sources Activity redrafted from: <https://shamsiahassani.net/kabul-exhibition-2019>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shamsia\\_Hassan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shamsia_Hassan)

### Activity 7: How other see us?

How others see us?	
<p><b>Goal:</b> Students become aware of stereotypes and culturally conditioned behaviour</p>	 time allocation
<p><b>Terms:</b> stereotypes, knowledge of countries</p>	 country name cards, list of countries on the board, 7 blank cards for each group

- Activity description

Divide the class into groups of four, each group draws a card of one country - Afghanistan, Belarus, Chechnya, DR Congo, Ukraine, Vietnam, other countries such as UK, USA, India, China, France... The group then writes down everything they know or think they know about their chosen country on paper (brainstorming). They then choose at least seven facts (describing the country) from their list and write them on cut strips of paper, without the name of the country. The teacher writes down on the strips of paper the impressions or opinions foreigners might have when they come to the Czech Republic. Part I.

65 The country data strips are placed on a bulletin board and the group appoints a spokesperson to read out the country data. The other groups write on a piece of paper what country they think it is. Finally, the teacher awards points for correct country guesses. The group with the highest number of points is rewarded (excellent classification, etc.)

- Conclusion, evaluation

Students will become aware of stereotypes and culturally conditioned behaviour.

At the end of the session, always have the group comment on "their country", the group should reveal why they have made such observations under the country, what is the source, what influences them and what shapes them - personal visit to the country, media, textbooks. Are the sources reliable? Do they reflect the perceptions of the whole country or just a group of people? How do pupils feel about the impressions that foreigners seem to form of our country.

### Activity 8: Prestigious profession

<b>"Prestigious" profession</b>	
<p><b>Aim:</b> To introduce pupils to positions filled by foreigners in the Czech Republic, to develop their ability to refute prejudices</p> <p><b>Concepts:</b> labour migration, prejudice</p> <p><b>Educational fields:</b> multicultural education, education for thinking in European and global contexts, Man and the world of work</p>	<p> 35 minutes</p> <hr/> <p> a table with occupations for each pupil</p>

- Activity description

Each pupil fills in a table with each profession. For each occupation, he/she chooses one of the options (I would have no problem doing it; I would have no problem doing it as a part-time job; I would mind doing it; I would mind doing it even if I were unemployed for a long time) under which circumstances he/she would do it. He/she will write or think of a short justification for his/her choice. After the pupils have completed the tables, select a pupil to record the results for the whole class. The selected pupil records the scores for each alternative and reports the aggregate results for the whole class. If the pupils feel the need to comment on the results, we let them and write down the opinions that we find interesting and want to work with further.

After evaluating the activity, we discuss the prestige of the occupations listed, whether these occupations are important and whether we can exist without them; are they occupations that are in demand or rather the opposite? What would the salary have to be in these jobs to make you willing to do them? Then we will inform the students that the positions mentioned are positions that are filled by foreigners in the Czech Republic. Their wages are often between 30-60 CZK/hour. The following is a discussion of the statement "Foreigners are taking our jobs". Is this statement true, are they taking jobs that Czech citizens are interested in?



- Conclusion, evaluation

At the end, the educator will summarize the issue of employment of foreigners, or let the lecturer-foreigner supplement the activity with his/her story and experience.

- List of professions

Helper, cleaner, housekeeper, garbage collector, chef ect.

## Activity 9: Can you tell what they're asking you?

Can you tell what they're asking you?	
<p><b>Aim:</b> To test one's own ability to think and communicate when encountering different cultures</p> <p><b>Terms:</b> lingala, integration, communication</p> <p><b>Educational fields:</b> multicultural education, personal and social education, language and linguistic communication</p>	<p> 25 minutes</p> <p> set of cards with questions in Lingala</p>

- Activity description

Each trio of students draws four cards. The group's task is to select three questions from the cards and suggest a way to ask them on the street in a foreign country, usually by staging a pantomime skit. The group can put aside the question they find most difficult. The groups then take turns to present their solutions to the others, comparing the different approaches and talking about the difficulties they encountered in finding a solution. Finally, the group reads out the question it has avoided and reveals why it finds it the most difficult to communicate. Alternatively, groups of students can be given just one question each, present it, and the other groups guess what the group wanted to ask. ●Aids: A set of cards with questions that students can ask people on the street in a foreign country. The cards will be in Lingala, but there will also be a small print translation into English.

To make the game more fun, we can use props - hat, umbrella, etc.

- ▶ Tangu nini sikoyo? (What time is it?)
- ▶ Epayi wapi ezali poste? (Is there a post office in the area?)
- ▶ Epayi wapi ezali pembeni Hopital? (Is there a hospital nearby?)
- ▶ Tangu nini okokende bus ya bitch? (When is the last bus leaving?)
- ▶ Epayi wapi akoki kokende on the toilet? (Where would I find the toilet?)
- ▶ Oyebi te, epayi wapi akoki kokuwa hotel? (Do you know where I can get accommodation here?)
- ▶ Bayibi ngai eloko, Oyebi te, epayi yakokende na Police? (I've been robbed, do you know where I can find the police?)

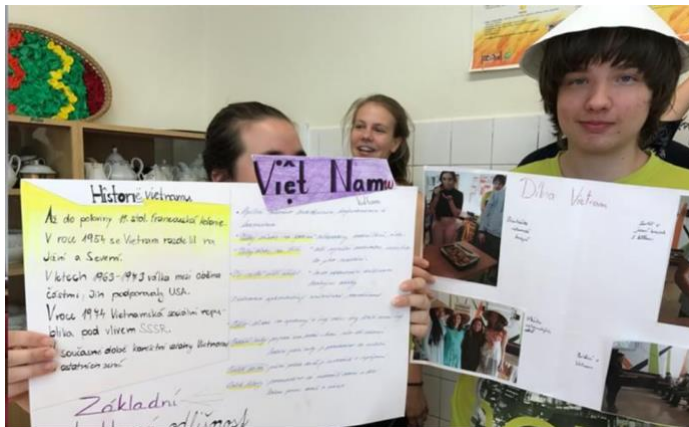
- Conclusion, evaluation The teacher discusses with the pupils the difficulties that foreigners may have after arriving in a new country if they do not know the language or if they only know the basics and want to speak it.

## Activity 10 – Learning definitions: recognize & reflect

### Activity Instructions:

1. **Form groups:** Divide into groups of four.
2. **Review terms, definitions and given examples:** Each group will receive cards with four key terms (inclusive mindset, racism, xenophobia, hate speech), their definitions, and some scenarios describing these attitudes.
3. **Match terms with the right definitions and their examples:** Alongside the definitions, you will find example scenarios. Discuss as a group and decide which example fits each term best.
4. **Discuss perspectives:** Explore why certain examples align with a particular term. Share your insights, experiences, or questions within the group to deepen understanding.
5. **Present findings:** Each group will present their matches and rationale to the entire class.
6. **Class discussion:** After presentations, we will discuss any insights or differing perspectives.

### EXAMPLES / SCENARIOS:



A project team includes members from diverse cultural backgrounds. During discussions, Sarah suggests using examples familiar to each member's culture to make the content relatable. Her team appreciates the effort, feeling valued and motivated to contribute fully.

A hiring manager considers two equally qualified candidates and recognises that hiring the candidate from a historically underrepresented group would bring a unique perspective. The manager decides on this candidate, seeing value in the diverse viewpoint to strengthen the team.

A community organises a protest when a new immigrant family moves in, fearing that "outsiders" might disrupt their traditional values. They openly discuss limiting any further settlement, advocating that "locals only" be allowed residency.

Alex, originally from a neighbouring country, applies for a job in a local business. Although qualified, he overhears a supervisor express concern about "outsiders" and their work ethic, resulting in his application being dismissed despite strong credentials.

A private school board decides to limit the enrolment of students from a specific ethnic group, arguing that they "might not fit in" with the institution's culture, despite equal qualifications. This affects the opportunities available to this ethnic group within the local education system.

During recruitment, a manager avoids hiring individuals from a specific racial background, assuming they "might not be committed." Although the applicants meet all qualifications, this underlying bias prevents them from advancing in the process.

A public figure posts a photo with someone of a different nationality, and the comments section quickly fills with hateful, stereotype-filled remarks about that group, labelling them as "inferior" and "unwelcome." The comments encourage others to agree, spreading intolerance.

A resident distributes leaflets depicting an ethnic group in a negative light, using offensive language to suggest they "don't belong here." The intent is to gather local support to prevent this group from participating in community events, fuelling prejudice.

## **Activity 11 – Civilized online discussion activity**

### **Activity rules:**

- **Recommended age group:** 15+
- **Participant count:** up to 30 participants
- **Activity duration:** 90 minutes
- **Methods of education:** group work, presentation, discussion, reflection
- **Aims of the activity:** describe human behaviour in the online space, introduce online community rules for safe communication, compare the rules of online communities and to state examples of breaking/disrespecting these rules, pick the most important rules of online communication, reflect on personal behaviour in an online community.
- **Equipment:** the internet or community standards printed in advance, post-it notes, A3-size paper, markers, sticky tape, (paper, writing tools)
- **Keywords:** online community standards, social networks, communication online

### **Activity Instructions:**

We distribute post-it notes to all of the participants, and they are supposed to use them to write the answer to the questions:

*Which social network do you use the most often?*

*Which one is the second?*

After writing the answer they stick the post-it notes to their t-shirts and are divided into groups of four so that each group member has the same answer. The second network choice is for practical purposes in case all of the participants pick the same network. The lecturer creates groups according to the second choice. For the following comparison of the results, it is better for the groups to address various social networks. The main terms should be clarified as we are to work with them: social network characteristics, what it is used for, types of social networks, etc.

2. The task of the groups is to answer the following questions regarding the social network they use the most often:

*a) How do the people usually behave on this social network? What do they usually do/say in their posts or comments? Why is it that way, in your opinion?*

*b) What do people not do on your social network or what do they only do rarely? Why is it that way, in your opinion?*

*c) Is it okay to discuss civic issues on your network? How do people do it the most often (what do they discuss)? What do they avoid?*

*d) Do you ever see people who disagree with each other? What does it look like?*

Everyone shares their answers. They can present them written on the flipchart paper. In the case of the same social networks, it can be beneficial to compare answers. Some of the interesting opinions/observations can be written on a flipchart board by the lecturer and used in later discussion.

3. We distribute the links to the online community standards to the groups, each group gets the standards of the network they worked with before. We may also have them find the standards online by themselves. We let them work for 20 – 30 minutes. In the case that we are trying to focus on a certain topic, we guide them to pay attention to a specific part of the rules or to divide the work within the group. For instance, we can choose the standards dedicated to crime, safety, respecting the differences in online communication, etc.

After reading the given community standards the groups answer the following questions:

*a) Which principles or regulations do you agree with and which are important to you? Why?*

*b) Which regulations do you see as less relevant or less important? Why?*

*c) What rules would you add? Why? They also write these answers on their posters and present them to the group.*

Then, in a discussion with all of the participants, everyone picks 5 rules they consider the most important regarding proper social network behaviour and/or 5 rules that should apply to all of

the social networks. We discuss the reasons for the choice. We thank the participants for their effort.

**Final analysis:** During the reflection, we can review the group work, satisfaction with the results, and the usefulness of the activity for the participants. Finally, we ask the participants the four following questions they are not supposed to answer out loud, only for themselves as they read them. Up until this point, we were talking about other people and their behaviour on social networks. Let the participants think about how they behave within the online forums and honestly answer the following questions now:

*How do I behave on social networks?*

*Do I respect the rules of my online community?*

*How do I react to improper communication/rule-breaking by others? What can I do to improve my communication online?*

## **Activity 12: digiPEERS**

A strong example of peer-to-peer learning in action is the digiPEERS programme, an initiative from Slovakia that empowers youngsters to educate their peers on digital citizenship. This programme serves as a valuable case study for how peer learning can be effectively implemented to combat online risks, hate speech, and discrimination. It is included in this manual as a practical model that educators worldwide can adapt and apply in their own contexts.

The digiPEERS programme is an innovative volunteer training initiative designed for young people aged 14 to 19. It is a year-long programme, funded by public resources and donations, and holds accreditation from the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic regarding the non-formal education aspect, whilst the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic accredited the programme in its volunteering dimension. Its primary goal is to spread awareness and educate peers on digital citizenship, equipping them with the skills needed to navigate the online world safely and responsibly. By employing a peer-to-peer learning approach, the programme enables young people to educate their peers on critical digital topics, including online safety, cyberbullying, hate speech, misinformation, and digital well-being.

Young people engage with digital technologies daily for education, entertainment, and communication. However, many lack sufficient knowledge about the risks of online harassment, misinformation, and digital threats. digiPEERS programme responds to this gap by training volunteers to become peer educators, empowering them to share their expertise and insights with others in a relatable and accessible way.

The vision of digiPEERS is to create **online world** that is **safe, respectful, and free from hate speech**. It envisions a society where individuals are **empathetic, well-educated in digital literacy, and actively engaged in fostering a responsible online environment**. To contribute to this vision,

education plays a central role. Through **learning, mentoring, and monitoring digital interactions**, individuals can develop the skills needed to navigate the online world safely and ethically. By fostering critical thinking and responsible digital behaviour, digiPEERS empowers young individuals to become active participants in creating an **inclusive and respectful digital society**. Through digiPEERS, young volunteers take on the role of educators, guiding their peers through topics such as online safety, cyberbullying, hate speech, disinformation and critical thinking and digital balance. By teaching others, they reinforce their own knowledge, develop essential life skills, and contribute to a safer online environment. This model ensures that learning is not only theoretical but also practical and experience-based, making it more effective and relevant.

### ***Structure and Activities***

The programme follows a structured one-year cycle, consisting of three phases:

- 1. Training Phase (September – December):** Participants receive vocational education and a kick-off training in public speaking, critical thinking, storytelling, and psychological support. They also attend workshops on digital safety, hate speech, and cyberbullying. This phase involves an interim evaluation that provides an opportunity to assess participants' progress, gather feedback on their learning experiences, and identify areas for improvement. This evaluation ensures that the training remains effective, allowing organizers to adjust content and methodologies as needed to better support the development of peer educators.
- 2. Implementation Phase (January – June):** Volunteers apply their knowledge by leading peer education activities in schools, creating digital content, and organising awareness campaigns. They receive continuous support and supervision from mentors. As part of this phase, volunteers also take part in the Safer Internet Day Challenge, an initiative which encourages participants to actively engage in awareness-raising activities, workshops, and campaigns aimed at promoting digital safety, responsible online behaviour, and the prevention of cyber threats among their peers. Beyond structured peer activities, volunteers also benefit from other educational opportunities, including specialised training sessions and collaborative projects that further enhance their knowledge and skills in digital citizenship, online safety, and media literacy.
- 3. Evaluation Phase (July – September):** The Evaluation Phase marks the culmination of the digiPEERS programme, providing participants with opportunities to reflect on their experiences, celebrate achievements, and share insights with broader audiences. This phase has two main milestones:
  - Summer Camp and Presentations on Festivals:** The programme concludes with an exciting summer camp designed to reinforce their learning and strengthen community bonds. Additionally, they present their projects and experiences at various summer festivals (including one of the biggest festivals in Slovakia „*Pohoda Festival*“), showcasing their work and promoting the principles of digital citizenship to diverse audiences.

· **Annual Program Evaluation Conference:** At the end of the one-year program, a comprehensive evaluation conference is held, where participants, mentors, and stakeholders gather to assess the program's impact, to reflect on experiences and achievements, discuss outcomes, and provide feedback. This reflective exercise informs future iterations of the program, ensuring continuous improvement and relevance.

### **Seven Steps of the digiPEERS Programme:**

The digiPEERS programme is structured into seven sequential steps, each designed to build participants' competencies and foster a supportive learning environment:

1. **Online Introduction Meeting:** An initial virtual session where prospective participants are introduced to the programme's objectives, expectations, and structure. This meeting facilitates mutual understanding and sets the foundation for the year-long journey.
2. **Offline Weekend Training and Teambuilding:** A face-to-face weekend session that combines intensive training with team-building activities. Participants engage with mentors, peer mentors, and trainers and forming collaborative relationships. Program attendees have not only the opportunity to get to know one another but they also gain a deeper understanding of the key topics covered in the digiPEERS programme, as well as the structure and objectives of its different phases.
3. **Mentorship Support (professional mentoring and peermentoring):** Throughout the programme, each volunteer receives continuous guidance from an assigned mentor. Each volunteer has a mentor who accompanies and supports him/her throughout the programme in the preparation and implementation of the activities. In addition, the peer mentors ("senior" digiPEERS from previous year), are there to pass on their experience and help overcome initial obstacles.
4. **Specialised Education and Preparation:** Ongoing educational sessions provide participants with in-depth knowledge related to digital citizenship, as well as with lector, presentation and communication skills. These sessions cover various topics and are designed to prepare volunteers for effective peer education with the support of the whole team.
5. **Participation/Collaboration in Activities of Senior Team Members:** Each of the digiPEERS has the opportunity to sit in on someone else's workshop and observe how it all works. In this way, they will also get a better idea of their own activities.
6. **Implementation of Peer Activities:** They can choose any role and topic from the digiPEERS portfolio that they want to pursue. In the second half of the programme, digiPEERS move on to implementing their own activities and apply their acquired knowledge by conducting peer education sessions in schools, all under the supervision and support of

their mentors and team. Mentors attend at least the first two workshops of their mentees.

7. **Evaluation, Reflection and Certification:** Participants for themselves and then together, evaluate how they have managed to meet their goals in activities and personal development, and what the programme has brought them. They engage in reflective practices to assess their activities, share experiences, and identify areas for improvement. This step ensures that volunteers learn from their experiences and continuously enhance their effectiveness. Upon successful completion of the programme, volunteers receive a certificate of completion of the training programme. This recognition serves to validate their efforts and encourage ongoing engagement in promoting digital citizenship.

These structured steps ensure that digiPEERS volunteers are well-prepared, supported, and recognised throughout their journey, fostering a community of informed and proactive digital citizens.

digiPEERS volunteers can choose from various roles, including:

- **Peer Lector**, conducting workshops and leading discussions on digital topics
- **Educational Content Creators**, producing blogs and articles, podcasts and interviews, as well as memes, animations and reels
- **Educational Game and Material Developers**, designing quizzes, posters, and educational games

Each volunteer dedicates 4 to 10 hours per month, including mentoring sessions, online training, and hands-on activities. Upon completion of at least 45 hours, participants receive an accredited certificate from the Slovak Ministry of Education.

### ***Impact on Participants and Their Peers***

The benefits of the programme extend beyond those who actively volunteer. Youngsters receiving peer-led lessons benefit from an approach that is relatable, interactive, and discussion-based (Falchikov, 2001). From a sociological perspective, this method fosters social cohesion and empathy, as students engage in collective learning and develop mutual understanding (Cabrera et al., 2002; Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2014). From a criminological standpoint, peer education contributes to prevention strategies by equipping young students with knowledge and tools to counteract hate speech, cyberbullying, and misinformation before they escalate into harmful actions (Topping, 2005). From a psychological viewpoint, peer-led interactions enhance self-confidence, resilience, and emotional intelligence. Research by Karcher (2009) indicates that adolescents participating in peer mentoring programs exhibit significant improvements in self-esteem and social skills, which are critical components of emotional intelligence. Additionally, a study by Gaffney et al. (2019) suggests that peer support initiatives contribute to increased resilience and better coping strategies in the face of online challenges. Such competencies equip

young people with the ability to critically assess online content and interactions, fostering responsible digital engagement.

Through a combination of interactive workshops, digital resources, and mentorship, digiPEERS directly impacts schools and online communities. Volunteers not only improve their own digital literacy and leadership skills but also contribute to a safer and more inclusive digital environment. By engaging with real-world issues like cyberbullying and hate speech, they play a key role in fostering critical thinking and responsible online behaviour among their peers. For more information, visit [www.digipeers.sk](http://www.digipeers.sk).

### **Activity 13: Quiz: Understanding Racism, Xenophobia, and Hate Speech**

It is possible to be creative and involve, for example, a quiz where students use their mobiles and the internet and then immediately share the results on a projector screen and talk about them.

The example the teacher can use: [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com). Bellow in one example:

#### **1. Multiple Choice:**

Question 1: Which of the following best describes racism?

- a. Fear of foreign people or cultures
- b. Discrimination and prejudice against people based on race, including belief in inherent superiority or inferiority
- c. Any expression of disagreement online
- d. An individual's dislike for someone due to their behavior

Answer: B

Question 2: Xenophobia refers to:

- a. The fear or prejudice against people from foreign countries or cultures
- b. Prejudice based solely on race
- c. Hate speech directed at people online
- d. A political ideology supporting equality among all groups

Answer: A

Question 3: Hate speech can target individuals or groups based on which of the following?

- a. Race, ethnicity, nationality
- b. Gender, language, economic or social origin
- c. Disability, health status, sexual orientation
- d. All of the above

Answer: D

#### **2. True or False:**

Question 4: Racism always requires violent actions to be considered harmful.

- True
- False

Answer: False

Question 5: Xenophobia can develop when people seek confirmation of their fears in like-minded social groups.

- True
- False

Answer: True

Question 6: Hate speech can be expressed only verbally.

- True
- False

Answer: False

### **3. Matching:**

Question 7: Match the term with its definition.

Term	Definition
A) Racism	1) Fear or prejudice against foreign people, cultures, or ethnicities
B) Xenophobia	2) Expression that discriminates, demeans, or incites prejudice against individuals or groups based on identity factors
C) Hate Speech	3) Discrimination and prejudice based on race, including belief in inherent superiority or inferiority

Answer:

- A → 3
- B → 1
- C → 2

## **Activity 14: Educational programme on the prevention of xenophobia and racism**

### **an example of good practice from the Czech Republic**

We have created a long-term educational project for primary school students and their teachers aimed at preventing xenophobia and racism. Whole classes enter the project, with whom the tutors work for a minimum of 10-14 months (i.e. at least 1 school year). At the beginning and end of the project, students are tested to assess and measure their progress.

Every class had 3 full days lessons (4 hours), which are aimed at:

- Introductory lecture - a lesson focusing on the topic of introduction to migration.
- Media around us - lessons focused on media literacy and critical reading.
- Lesson focusing on the countries of origin of migrants coming to the Czech Republic - Lessons aimed at informing about the countries of origin of foreigners, their reasons for leaving these countries and the realities of foreigners in their new country. The lesson is taught by two lecturers - one of whom is a foreigner who has migration experience himself.

In addition, each class in the project had to organize a Multicultural Day with their teacher at the end of the project for the other students and their parents.

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During the project we also organized a creative competition for all participating classes My world here and there. We wanted the students to put themselves in the shoes of the refugees and try to compare the lives of refugees before they left their countries of origin and now.

Throughout the project, we have also continuously trained teachers in schools on the topic of teaching about migration. We met with them every month, bringing them new activities to try with their students and reflecting back on their success. Together with them we worked on a methodology that can then be used by other teachers.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

### Encouraging Continuous Learning and Self-Reflection

Combating racism, xenophobia, and hate speech is not a one-time activity, but an ongoing process. Educators are encouraged to continuously reflect on:

- Their own biases and assumptions
- Classroom dynamics and student responses
- The effectiveness of chosen methods and tools

Self-reflection strengthens professional growth and helps educators remain responsive to students' needs. To do so, it is important to be updated on best practices, to engage with professional networks and CSOs, Participate in trainings, workshops, check online resources and exchange experiences with colleagues locally in Georgia and internationally

Staying informed about emerging trends, especially in digital spaces, is essential for addressing new forms of hate speech and misinformation.

## Additional Resources and Recommended Readings

This methodology manual is best to be used alongside international human rights instruments and online platforms and educational resources provided by project partners. Bellow is the list of bibliography, additional readings and online resources to support further learning and classroom implementation.

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