

Toolkit Workshop

Stories of

Structural Racism

ACTIVITY

STORIES OF STRUCTURAL RACISM



OBJECTIVE

The objective of this activity is to show students how structural racism affects various social groups in their immediate contexts. For this draw on the Spanish Law on Foreigners (Ley de Extranjería) as a starting point in order to illuminate how legal regulations condition the life of many individuals who are labelled as illegal by them, thus generating a sort of "second-class citizens" who have to go through labyrinthic bureaucratic procedures to stop suffering the violence associated to such labels. Below you may find information on how to use this exercise in a national setting different to the Spanish.

CONTEXT AND PREVIOUS CONSIDERATIONS

In this activity we will focus on understanding and addressing Structural Racism through a series of individual stories. We will address issues such as institutional racism, the Law on Foreigners and its relationship to citizenship. These stories illustrate multiply layers of discrimination based on the intersections of class, gender, sexual orientation, or functional diversity, among others, show the influence of different positions with respect to privilege. While this exercise focuses on discrimination based on origin or race, this should not go in detriment of understanding the importance of considering these stories as a result of all these intersections of different systems of oppression. Focusing on the implications of the Law on Foreigners allows us to understand how it impacts the lives of migrants and/or their families, fighting the ignorance that is present in wide sectors of our societies. We believe that a key aspect to do so is to generate knowledge from situated experiences such as those shown in the stories. Thus, in this exercise we seek to challenge the public to become aware and take a position on this issue.

Class activity, with participants and a facilitator (who may be an instructor or a teacher).

TIME BREAKDOWN

Present the topic and the exercise (15 M I N)

Split up in groups and distribution of cards (5 M I N)

Work in small groups (4 0 M I N)

Share the work in small groups (3 0 M I N)

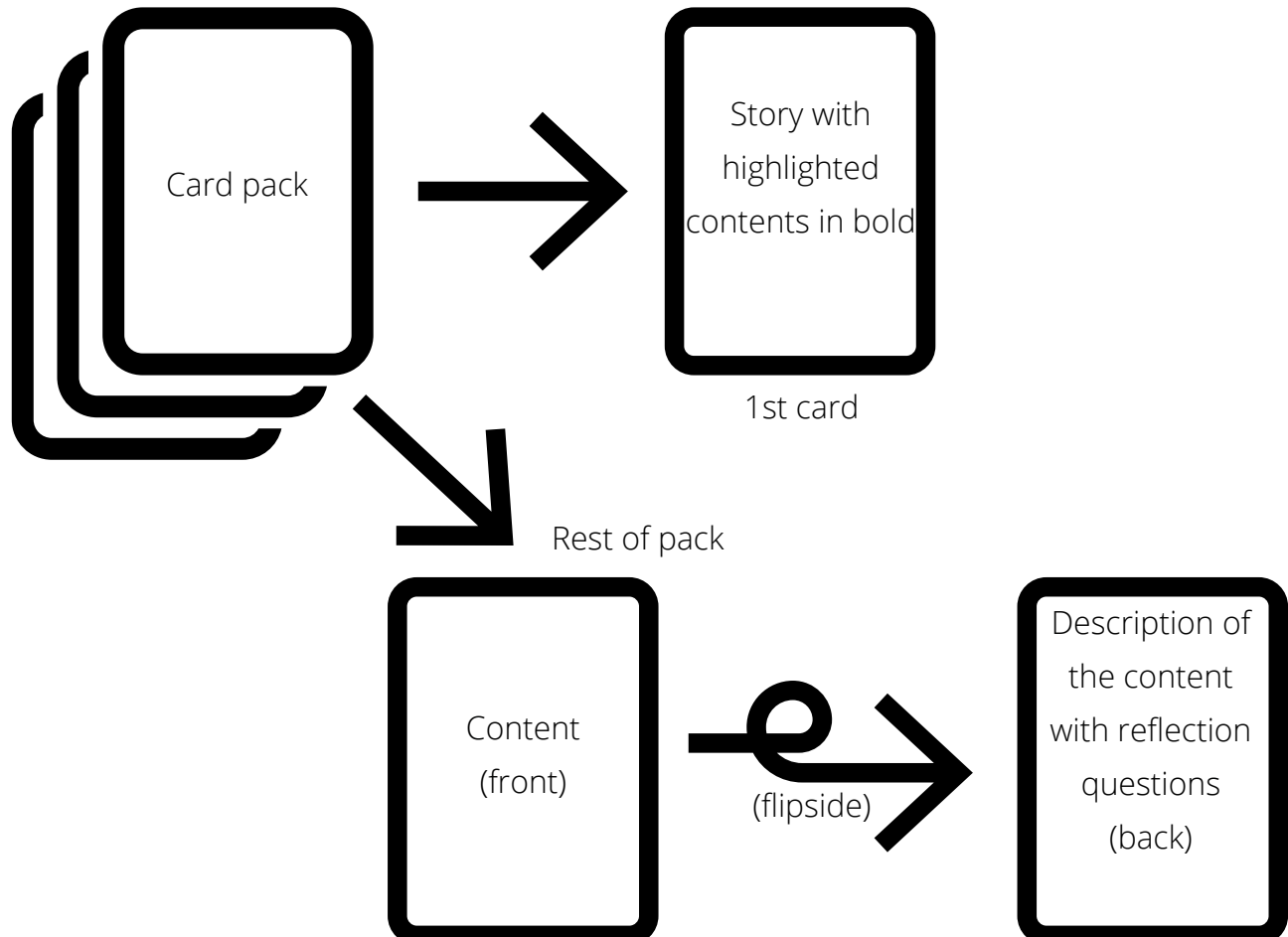
Final closing plenary (3 0 M I N)

PARTICIPANTS

Undergrad/graduate students. We recommend carrying it out with a group of between 10 and 20 participants that may be split in groups of 4 or 5 people.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Exercise sheet (this document).
- Facilitator's Guide: Includes some guidelines to conduct the exercise.
- Pack of stories: This activity is drawn on a set of cards including personal stories that are linked to concepts.



PREPARATION

Please see the Facilitator's Guide document for a detailed explanation on how to prepare and introduce the activity before its implementation.

DEVELOPMENT

- The exercise is introduced by giving an overview of human rights related to migration, refuge and asylum, as well as on existing national Laws regulating migration.
- Students are divided into groups of about 4-5 people.
- Each group will receive a set of cards including (a) a card with a personal story, as well as (b) various cards with different concepts related to different aspects of structural racism. The cards will be numbered.
- Once cards are distributed, each group will designate a spokesperson who will act as a reporter of the collective discussion in the small groups.
- Each group reads the first card of its pack (story) and as the different concepts appear in them, they look for and read the associated cards. While the first card is a presentation of this person's situation, the following cards specify aspects of institutional racism that affect her.
- Example: Saida is in an "irregular administrative situation" (the group stops reading the story to go read the card in their pack called "irregular administrative situation"). The content cards have the name of the content on one side and the definition on the other. Before reading the back of the card, the group discusses this concept. Have they ever heard it before? Then the card is turned over and the description is read and discussed in the group. Once this process is finished, the reading of the story continues, repeating the process with the other concepts that appear highlighted.
- Following that, the small group discusses the questions for reflection.
- When all the small groups have finished this process, they join in a plenary to share the results of their discussions. The discussion will try to find common points between stories. Questions to guide this reflection are proposed at the end of this document.

ADAPTATION TO DIFFERENT NATIONAL CONTEXTS

- Carry out the activity with the stories and content cards already created for the case of the Spanish State (see Annex story pack) and ask each subgroup to research similar cases to those proposed with respect to immigration or foreigner's laws in each context by answering the following questions: how do the laws act in that context? What similar cases can be found and how does the law affect them?

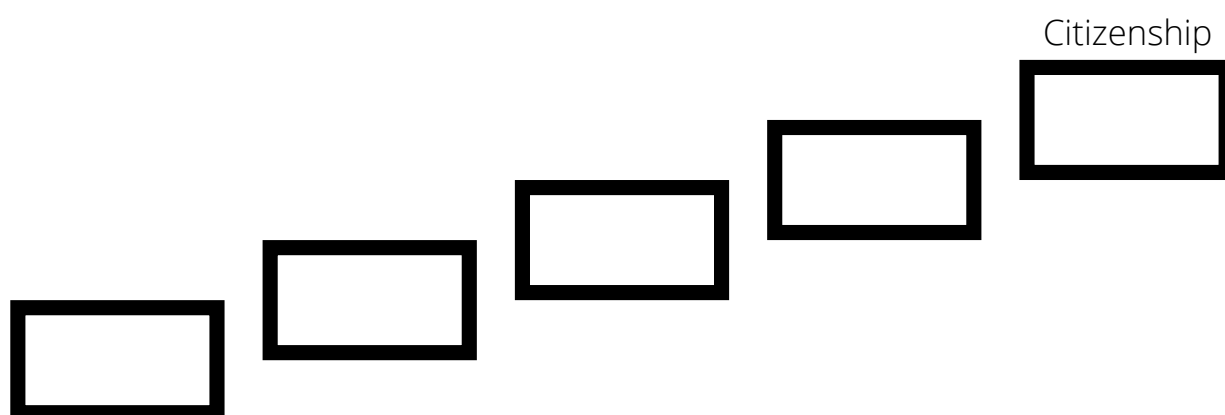
- The facilitator can create the story cards and content directly according to the legislation and situations of their context (see methodology used in the document Guide for the facilitator).
- As a preliminary activity, participants can be asked to create these cards with stories and definitions of the content associated with the Law on Foreigners themselves (see the methodology used in the document Guide for the Facilitator). During the activity, each group will read a pack of cards made by another group.

FINAL REFLECTION

Here are some suggested ideas to conduct the final collective reflection:

The “citizenship staircase”:

Once the plenary has discussed the possible connections between the stories they have worked on, the facilitator proposes to draw a “citizenship staircase” in a blackboard or any other visual support in order to guide the collective reflection. Draw a staircase with a variable number of steps:



- If we could locate the different characters of your Story cards in this staircase, who would be on each step and why?
- Do you think that there are different types of citizens? Some with more rights than others? “First” and “second class” citizens? Why?
- How do the various steps relate to different access to rights?
- What effect does this classification have for people on the lower steps?
- What subjective experiences can this staircase entail for people in each of the different steps?
- Which spaces of political and social participation are enabled or hindered depending on the position in this staircase? Why is it so?
- Do you think there’s a balance in between the rights that migrants are granted by states and duties they are required? Why?

Interpellation to participants: university, exclusion and transformation actions

- Where do the participants of the activity locate themselves in this staircase of citizenship?
- Are all of these steps represented in the university? Why/Why not?
- What actions to fight the exclusion of migrants in the university do you know? And in society in general?
- What examples of anti-racist organising do you know? Who leads them? Are any of them led by migrants? What do you think generates in migrants to participate and lead this struggle?

CLOSING OF THE ACTIVITY

To close the activity, the concept of "structural racism" is proposed. It is important to emphasize the way this concept relates to the stories participants have worked with. These are not isolated cases but represent situations that affect certain groups, therefore generating individual and collective suffering, inequality and rights violations, as well as a series of problems derived from going through a myriad of bureaucratic procedures.



This document is part of the BRIDGES Toolkit, a set of tools and strategies for addressing and dismantling structures of exclusion in Higher Education curricula. The Toolkit has been developed in the context of the Erasmus+ project **BRIDGES: Building Inclusive Societies: Diversifying Knowledge and Tackling Discrimination through Civil Society Participation in Universities**, whose working team consists of the following entities:

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