

MODULE 4: DISCRIMINATION

Time: 30 minutes

Objectives:

- Defining discrimination.
- Explaining the difference between discrimination and prejudices.
- Providing trainees with the tools to identify incidents of discrimination.
- Explore the kinds of discrimination vulnerable groups may face.
- Raising trainees' awareness on the consequences of discrimination on people's lives: social and economic and marginalisation.
- Displaying how discrimination may affect negatively the work, both of victims and perpetrators.

Materials:

Projector

Slides PP 3.1, PP 3.2 & PP 3.3

Flipchart

Markers

Cards/ paper

Tape

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Trainers ask the group to give their definitions for discrimination and trainers write them on the flipchart.
Or
Trainers pass cards/ paper and ask the trainees to write their own definitions for discrimination. Trainers collect the answers and post them on the flipchart/ wall/ board.
2. Trainers discuss the responds.
3. Trainers present PP 3.1.
4. Trainers explain the difference between discrimination and prejudices and show slide PP 3.2.
5. Trainers discuss with trainees specific incidents of discrimination, based on their own experience (that is of the trainers as well as the trainees) and/ or incidents reported in the news.
6. Trainers discuss the various forms of discrimination: racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia and present slide PP 3.3.
7. Trainers discuss the consequences of discrimination on people's lives, including social and economic and marginalisation, encouraging participants to share their own experiences.
8. Trainers discuss how discrimination affects negatively the work, both of victims and perpetrators.
9. Trainers are encouraged to use any of the activities below, depending on their time, if they are implementing an extended version or not, and on what they find useful for the group, taking into consideration also if the group is newly-arrived migrants or migrants who have already been in the country for a long time. For the current version of 7hour training, it is recommended that they use only one activity. For migrants who have been staying for long time in the host country and/ or migrants who are syndicalised and/ or migrants who are active in their communities and/ or

otherwise active in issues of integration in the workplace, all activities are recommended. For migrants who do not have such experience and/ or newcomers, activities A or/ and B are recommended. For migrants who have been staying for long time in the host country and/ or migrants who are syndicalised and/ or migrants who are active in their communities and/ or otherwise active in issues of integration in the workplace, activity C is also recommended. For a 7hours training, only one activity is recommended to be delivered.

Notes for Trainers:

Discrimination can be exercised by anybody, including nice and law-abiding people. Usually, people who exercise discrimination see little or no wrong with their actions. The main determinant is prejudice, which affects people's judgement, hindering them to acknowledge the harm their actions may cause. Such prejudice that leads to discrimination is most likely found in an environment that disrespects anybody who is "different," perceiving such difference to be threatening. In such an environment, people not only carry prejudices but also the conviction that society permits attacks on certain groups.

Target of discrimination can be anyone associated with a group that shares a protected characteristic/ vulnerable group.

Victims of discrimination may be targeted because of an actual or a perceived membership to a specific group.

Acts of discrimination can be criminal offences only if they are based on prejudice.

Other relevant concepts (recommended to deal in extended version/ for training migrants who are long-term in the country. Trainers may elaborate on them, provided they have good knowledge of their relevant national/ local legislation):

Hate speech: speech inciting to discrimination or/ and violence against a group. Hate speech can be complicated, depending on the definition in each country's legislation and therefore, hate speech requires specific training than cannot be addressed here.

Hate crime: any crime of the common penal code, the motive of which has been prejudice against a group of people. Hate crime also requires more specific training.

Activity A: Identifying discrimination in its various forms and protected characteristics

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

Chart Paper

Markers

Projector

Slide PPT 3.1

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Trainers ask participants to brainstorm on the various kinds of discrimination.
- 2) Trainers write answers on the flipchart.
- 3) Trainers present slide 3.1 and discuss the concept of discrimination and its various forms, referring back to participants' answers.
- 4) Trainers ask participants who can be a target of discrimination and write answers on the flipchart.
- 5) Trainers engage the group in identifying protected characteristics based on their answers above.

Notes for trainers

Highlight that prejudice is the focus of discrimination.

Emphasise that actual membership in a particular group is not important as long as the person discriminated is perceived to be a member of such a group.

Discrimination affects not only the particular victim, but the whole group in which the victim is perceived to belong as it sends a message of intolerance. Moreover, discrimination affects the whole community/society as it creates double standards leading to inequality and rejecting pluralism.

A protected characteristic is a common feature shared by a group, such as race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other similar common characteristic, which is important to identity. Some of these characteristic may be alterable (nationality, religion) and others not (skin colour, sexual orientation). Whether such a characteristic is may be altered or not is not relevant and nobody should be forced/ pressurised to alter features of their identity in order to be accepted.

Officially protected characteristics are decided by legislators of each country and legislations vary depending on the country. The characteristics commonly protected by legislation of EU member states are: race, colour of skin, nationality/ ethnic origin, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability.

Activity B – Case studies

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials:

Chart Paper

Markers

Handouts 3.1 & 3.2

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Trainers distribute handout 3.1 or read it to participants and ask whether the conduct can be considered discrimination and why, encouraging a discussion.

Handout 3.1

A man from Syria and a man from Egypt went to a coffee shop. The waitress comes to their table and tells them that “Arabs are not allowed in this coffee shop.”

- 2) Trainers distribute handout 3.2 or read it to participants and ask whether the conduct can be considered discrimination and why, encouraging a discussion.

Handout 3.2

Two Arab men enter a coffee shop holding hands, interlacing fingers. They sit and one of them leans on the shoulder of the other one. They are friends and these are common mannerisms of friendly affection between Arab men. The waitress comes to their table and tells them that “gays are not allowed in this coffee shop.”

Notes for trainers

Emphasize again that prejudice is the focus of discrimination and that actual membership in a particular group is not relevant as long as the person(s) discriminated is/ are perceived to be (a) member(s) of such a group.

Discuss multiple discrimination (racism and homophobia).

Discuss not only the acts of discrimination, but also the feelings of the victims and how such incidents may affect their lives (for example, generating feelings of disappointment, sadness, self-loathing, aversion for others; avoiding public spaces; being self-conscious; detaching from their own culture; etc.)

Activity C – Case study

Time: 20-40 minutes

Materials:

Chart Paper

Markers

Handouts 3.1 & 3.2

Notepads

Pens

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Trainers ask participants to form groups of 3-5.
- 2) Trainers distribute handout 3.3 to the participants and ask them to discuss it with their group. Trainers encourage groups to discuss particularly any incidents of discrimination/ prejudice/ stereotypes they can trace in the story.
- 3) Trainers ask the groups to present their findings.
- 4) Trainers discuss the findings of the groups and add to them, if necessary.

Handout 3.3

Amina is from Ethiopia. She came to Cyprus with a work permit as a domestic worker. She was working as a domestic worker for 2 years. In the meantime, she met with Ahmed, who is a migrant man and begun a relationship together. Amina got pregnant and informed her employer of her pregnancy. Her employer told her she cannot continue working for them anymore if she is pregnant and fired her.¹ Amina did not know that firing a pregnant woman is illegal in Cyprus and therefore, she did not submit a complaint. She tried to find another employer, but it was impossible, as nobody wanted to hire a pregnant woman.² Therefore, she became undocumented. Amina then moved with her partner, who lives in a small village. Their baby, Myriam, was later born.

Ahmed is an asylum seeker and he went to the Asylum Service asking to register Amina and Myriam in his asylum file. The Asylum Service accepted to register Myriam but not Amina.³ They told him he can only register her if they are married.⁴ Amina and Ahmed had an Islamic marriage, but the Asylum Service refused again to register Amina in Ahmed's file because their marriage was Islamic.⁵ Amina and Ahmed tried to have a civil marriage but it was impossible, as the municipalities were asking them to submit valid resident permits for both of them and Amina is undocumented. As a result, Amina remained undocumented and without basic social rights, including the right to access public health services free of charge.⁶ When she gave birth, she was charged with €2700 for the expenses of delivery and hospitalisation. Recently, somebody advised Amina and she applied for asylum on her own, independently from Ahmed so that to regularise her resident status.

Ahmed works at a farm in the village and his monthly salary is €390, as per the relevant collective agreement for workers in the agriculture and farming industry. As an asylum seeker, Ahmed has restricted access to the labour market and he can basically work only as an unskilled worker at the agriculture and farming industry.⁷

The family has no access to welfare benefits. According to the law for the Guaranteed Minimum Income, only Cypriots, EU citizens, persons with subsidiary protection, recognised refugees, and victims of trafficking in persons can apply for it.⁸ Asylum seekers are entitled to material reception conditions provided they are unemployed and seeking for employment, but Ahmed works and therefore, the family cannot apply for them. Moreover, they cannot apply for child benefit or for single parent benefit as, according to the relevant law, migrants can apply for such benefits only if they have a valid legal resident status for a minimum of 5 years.⁹ Besides, the relevant law defines as single parent families the families with at least one underage child living with only one of the parents. Such families have to submit court orders for the custody of the child and for alimony to prove it.¹⁰ The family of Amina and Ahmed fulfils none of such requirements.

The difficulties the family faces are not restricted to financial issues. The village in which they live is very conservative and the rest residents are very hostile, especially towards Amina. Ahmed was living there much before Amina moved with him. The residents of the village were not particularly supportive to him, but most of them were at least greeting him and talking to him. Once he had tried to enter one of the

village's coffee shops, but the waitress told him "no Arabs or blacks are allowed in this coffee-shop."¹¹ Ahmed had felt bitter, but he compromised as he could visit the other coffee shop. Amina could not go anywhere as only men go at the second coffee shop. She was not refused entry but she never tried to visit it, as she knew that only men were spending time to such traditional coffee shops and she never saw a woman sitting there. She knew women in general are not welcomed in traditional coffee shops.¹² She never tried to visit the other coffee shop, which is more modern and with a kids' playground, either, as Ahmed had told her about his experience there. As a result, Amina had to stay at home with the child.

In any case, Amina does not feel safe to go out of the house in general. The people of the village make it obvious they do not like her. She knows they do not approve of the fact she had had a child without being married – she was already pregnant when she moved with Ahmed.¹³ Some people even told Ahmed to check if he is really the biological father of the child. She can hear them calling her "mavri"¹⁴ and "ksimarismeni."¹⁵ Most importantly, lately they accuse her of burglaries and thefts. The last 6 months, there were more than 15 burglaries in this village and many people are accusing Amina for them. After the last burglary, Amina was even arrested by the police and detained with court orders for 2 days, after her neighbour found his house violated and some food missing from the fridge. He and another neighbour had told the police they were suspecting Amina¹⁶ and the police arrested her immediately and asked the court for detention orders for their investigation.¹⁷ The judge approved the police's request immediately.¹⁸ The child was taken to a state home for unaccompanied minors¹⁹ during the time Amina was in detention. Amina was finally released after 2 days and the police closed the case as they could find no incriminating element. Myriam told Amina that a woman working at the shelter had slapped her and pulled her hair twice. Myriam was also injured on her head when Amina took her back. Myriam said that she fell during playing with the other kids at the state home. After Amina's release, the Cypriot residents of the village asked the head of the community council and he called a meeting to discuss how to force her to leave from the village.²⁰ Most of them are convinced she is the one who did all the burglaries even though the police could not find any incriminating element against her.

After this incident, Amina is terrified. She does not feel safe at all. Ahmed is also afraid. Most people stopped greeting him as well after Amina's arrest and he knows that the whole village is against them.



Footnotes for trainers

- Gender discrimination/ sexism; discrimination at the workplace/ employment.
- ² Gender discrimination/ sexism; discrimination at the employment/ recruitment.
- ³ Institutional discrimination.
- ⁴ Discrimination against unmarried couples; institutional discrimination.
- ⁵ Religious discrimination; institutional discrimination.
- ⁶ Institutional discrimination.
- ⁷ Institutional discrimination; discrimination at the employment.
- ⁸ Institutional discrimination; indirect discrimination; discrimination on the basis of nationality and race/ racism.
- ⁹ Institutional discrimination; indirect discrimination; discrimination on the basis of nationality and race/ racism.
- ¹⁰ It is interesting to remember here that when Ahmed asked to register Amina in his asylum file as his partner, the state had refused because it did not recognise them as a family - they were not married/ their marriage was not recognised. Yet, here, the state recognises them as a family so that to refuse them access to the single parent benefit. The state recognises them as a family or does not recognise them as a family selectively, according to its own interests and in order to refuse them access to their rights.
- ¹¹ Discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, and skin colour/ racism.
- ¹² Gender discrimination/ sexism.
- ¹³ Gender discrimination/ sexism
- ¹⁴ It literally means “black woman,” but in Greek, it is still used in a derogatory manner.
- ¹⁵ “Filthy woman” – used both literally to say that somebody is “not clean” and metaphorically to say that somebody is “impure” and, especially when used for a woman, connoting that this woman is “foul” and “immoral.”
- ¹⁶ Gender discrimination/ sexism; discrimination on the basis of nationality and race/ racism; discrimination on the basis of social and economic status/ classism.
- ¹⁷ Gender discrimination/ sexism; discrimination on the basis of nationality and race/ racism; discrimination on the basis of social and economic status/ classism; institutional discrimination.
- ¹⁸ Gender discrimination/ sexism; discrimination on the basis of nationality and race/ racism; discrimination on the basis of social and economic status/ classism; institutional discrimination.
- ¹⁹ Forced separation of a child from her mother
- ²⁰ Gender discrimination/ sexism; discrimination on the basis of nationality and race/ racism; discrimination on the basis of social and economic status/ classism; institutional discrimination.

Notes for trainers

Emphasize again that prejudice is the focus of discrimination and that actual membership in a particular group is not relevant as long as the person(s) discriminated is/ are perceived to be (a) member(s) of such a group. The people of the village did not actually know if Amina and Ahmed were married when Amina was pregnant.

Discuss multiple discrimination and how the various kinds of discrimination intersect (racism, sexism, discrimination against unmarried couples, institutional discrimination, indirect discrimination, etc. – see footnotes for trainers).

Discuss not only the acts of discrimination, but also the feelings of the victims and how such incidents may affect their lives (for example, generating feelings of disappointment, sadness, self-loathing, aversion for others; avoiding public spaces; being self-conscious; detaching from their own culture; separation of the family; self-blaming; stigma; targeting; becoming undocumented; victimisation; criminalisation; deprivation of children’s rights; isolation; marginalisation; etc.)

Discuss how stereotypes and prejudices can lead to discrimination.

Discuss vulnerability and how it increases in incidents of multiple discrimination.

Discuss how things could be different for Amina and her family. For instance, if Amina had not been illegally fired or if the state had supported them.



