GO INCLUSIVE

LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Handbook

Handbook for Trainers

Building inclusive adult education
for LGBTQIA+ migrants across Europe



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From understanding to classroom practice

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01 / INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education begins with everyday practice

1.1 Purpose of this handbook

Adult education can offer opportunities to learn a language, build confidence, develop skills and connect with a new community. For LGBTQIA+ migrants, participation may also be shaped by discrimination, uncertainty about how their identity will be received, and barriers linked to language or migration status. A welcoming classroom therefore requires deliberate attention to communication, teaching materials, group relationships and institutional support.

The GO INCLUSIVE Handbook for Trainers helps educators translate inclusion into practical choices. It brings together findings from the project's state-of-play research, explanations of key concepts, guidance for everyday communication, approaches to discriminatory incidents, and activities that can be adapted to different learning settings. Its central aim is to support learning environments in which dignity, safety and meaningful participation are part of daily practice.

1.2 Who the handbook is for

This handbook is intended for adult educators, language teachers, trainers, facilitators, counsellors and professionals working in adult education and integration settings. It can support individual reflection, staff development and the planning of classroom sessions. Readers can use it whether they are beginning to explore inclusive practice or reviewing approaches already used in their organisation.

1.3 Seeing the whole person

LGBTQIA+ migrants are not a homogeneous group. Sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics can intersect with language, racialisation, religion, disability, age, economic circumstances and migration status. These intersections can influence access to education and experiences within it. At the same time, every learner brings interests, knowledge, skills and aspirations that extend beyond these categories. The handbook encourages educators to listen to individuals and avoid treating identity as a prediction of someone's needs or experiences.

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1.4 How to use the handbook

Chapters 2 and 3 establish the research findings and the context of LGBTQIA+ migrant inclusion. Chapter 4 introduces core terminology and concepts. Chapters 5 and 6 move into inclusive communication and practical teaching choices, while Chapter 7 addresses discriminatory incidents. Chapters 8 and 9 offer classroom exercises and examples of practice that readers can use as starting points for their own work.

You may read the chapters in sequence or turn directly to a current teaching need. Before using an activity, review its purpose, materials, language demands and adaptation notes. Consider the group's existing relationships, the learning context and the support available. Use the reflection questions and checklists to identify one concrete change, try it, and review its effect on participation and classroom climate.

1.5 Principles for responsible facilitation

Make participation in personal sharing voluntary and provide ways to contribute without disclosing identity, migration experiences or other sensitive information. Never assume that a learner is open about their identity in every setting. Respect the names and pronouns people use, protect privacy, and explain any limits to confidentiality that apply in your organisation.

Adapt vocabulary and examples to the language and cultural context rather than relying on literal translation. Establish clear expectations for respectful interaction, respond to discriminatory behaviour, and avoid making affected learners responsible for explaining or defending their identity. Inclusive practice also requires organisational support: know the relevant procedures and referral options, and recognise the limits of your professional role.

1.6 Learning through reflection and adaptation

This handbook is a practical learning resource, not a fixed script for every classroom or a substitute for specialist support. Terminology, contexts and learners' needs can change. Educators are encouraged to revisit assumptions, seek feedback without pressuring learners to disclose personal information, and discuss improvements with colleagues. Small, consistent changes in language, representation and facilitation can help make inclusion a shared and sustained part of adult education.

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CHAPTER 02

Key findings from the state-of-play research

Evidence, barriers and needs across partner countries



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Handbook for Trainers

Club for UNESCO of Piraeus and Islands

2. Key findings from the state-of-play research

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the main findings from national and international research, highlighting common trends, gaps, and needs across partner countries (Greece, Germany, Denmark, and Spain), based on desk research, focus groups, and national reports.

2.2 Learning aims and expected outcomes for trainers

By the end of this chapter, trainers and adult educators will be able to:

No.	Learning aim / expected outcome
1	Understand the main findings of the state-of-play research regarding the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ migrants in adult education across the partner countries.
2	Identify the key challenges, barriers, and support needs experienced by both LGBTQIA+ migrant learners and adult educators working in diverse learning environments.
3	Recognise the role of inclusive language, representation, and intersectional approaches in promoting participation, safety, and equal opportunities in adult education.
4	Apply the lessons learned from the research to strengthen inclusive teaching practices, learner support, and the creation of welcoming learning environments.

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2.3 Main analysis / content

2.3.1 Context and rationale

Across Europe, adult education plays an important role in supporting the integration, participation, and empowerment of migrants. At the same time, LGBTQIA+ migrants often experience multiple and overlapping forms of exclusion related to their migration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, language barriers, cultural background, and experiences of discrimination. These factors can affect their access to education, wellbeing, and sense of belonging within learning environments.

The state-of-play research conducted in Greece, Germany, Denmark, and Spain explored how inclusive language and inclusive educational practices are currently understood and applied in adult education settings. Drawing on desk research, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews, the research examined existing policies, educational practices, challenges, support needs, and the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ migrants. The state-of-play research was conducted from late January 2026 to April 2026, with approximately 50 participants in total across all countries, including adult educators, LGBTQIA+ migrants, stakeholders, social workers, and psychologists.

The findings reveal that while awareness of diversity and inclusion is growing across Europe, significant gaps remain between policy commitments and everyday educational practice. Educators often work without sufficient training, practical guidance, or institutional support to address the needs of LGBTQIA+ migrant learners effectively. Understanding these findings can help trainers and adult educators reflect on their own practice and identify ways to create safer, more inclusive, and learner-centred educational environments.

2.3.2 Key Findings from the State-of-Play Research

Finding 1: Inclusive policies exist, but implementation remains limited

All partner countries have broader equality, diversity, and anti-discrimination frameworks that support the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals and migrants. However, the research found a common gap between the existence of general protective frameworks and their practical implementation in adult education. None of the countries has a sufficiently specific and systematic framework for addressing inclusive language and the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ migrants in adult education. As a result, implementation often depends on individual institutions, professionals, and educators rather than on consistent institutional standards.

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The questionnaires indicate that this gap has different implications across national contexts. In Denmark, participants emphasised the absence of formal policies and guidelines, which contributes to the invisibility of LGBTQIA+ issues and leaves educators to rely on their own judgement. In Germany, the lack of a mandatory framework was linked to limited institutional accountability and uncertainty about whether educators are formally expected to address inclusive language, particularly within integration programmes. At the same time, Germany has a broader legal framework addressing equality and discrimination, including the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) (Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, n.d.). In Greece, participants highlighted the absence of practical guidance, low institutional awareness, and limited structured support. Nevertheless, practical guidance for professionals working with LGBTQIA+ refugees is available through civil society initiatives such as SolidarityNow (SolidarityNow, 2022). In Spain, although protective legislation exists (Government of Spain, 2022, 2023), participants noted that implementation may be affected by regional political decisions and that, in the absence of formalised institutional procedures, inclusive practices remain highly dependent on the willingness of individual professionals.

The research therefore identifies not only a policy gap, but also an implementation gap. A key need across countries is to translate general equality principles into practical institutional guidance, procedures, and standards that educators and other professionals can apply in everyday educational settings.

Finding 2: Inclusion often depends on the individual educator

Across all countries, participants highlighted that inclusive practices are frequently driven by the personal commitment, awareness, and sensitivity of individual educators rather than by systematic institutional frameworks. While many educators make significant efforts to create welcoming learning environments, the absence of clear guidance and consistent training can lead to uneven learner experiences.

The findings from the national contexts further indicate that educators experience this responsibility in different ways. In Denmark, participants described fear of making mistakes, uncertainty about appropriate language, and concerns about negative reactions from learners as barriers to engagement. In Germany, some educators reported uncertainty about the “right” language, while others indicated that they had little or no experience with LGBTQIA+ issues or considered themselves sufficiently neutral. This suggests that “neutrality” may sometimes result in the topic remaining unaddressed rather than actively supporting inclusion. In Greece, educators reported difficulties in balancing respect for learners' identities with the management of culturally and religiously diverse classrooms, sometimes requiring

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them to act as facilitators or mediators in addition to their teaching role. In Spain, participants placed greater emphasis on the need for educators to question and unlearn assumptions shaped by previous socialisation and to develop a broader understanding of cultural and identity differences.

These findings indicate a shared need to reduce the reliance on individual willingness and confidence. Institutional support should create conditions in which inclusive practice is an expected professional responsibility rather than an optional individual initiative.

Finding 3: LGBTQIA+ migrants face multiple and intersecting barriers

The research confirms that LGBTQIA+ migrants often experience overlapping forms of exclusion related to migration status, language barriers, racism, cultural expectations, gender identity, sexual orientation, social isolation and in some cases, previous experiences of persecution or trauma. These intersecting factors can affect participation, confidence, wellbeing, and access to educational opportunities.

The nature of these intersecting barriers varies across national contexts. In Denmark, participants particularly highlighted the “double minority” position of LGBTQIA+ migrants, who may experience racism or xenophobia alongside homophobia or transphobia, as well as pressure from family or community networks (Følner et al., 2022). The research also identified significant psychosocial vulnerabilities, including loneliness and mental health risks. In Germany, participants referred to language barriers, legal uncertainty, possible rejection within migrant communities, and trauma associated with persecution in countries of origin, while also highlighting the invisibility of LGBTQIA+ learners within predominantly non-LGBTQIA+ learning groups. In Greece, participants emphasised fear, isolation, reluctance to disclose identity, difficulties related to documentation and access to services, and limited availability of psychosocial and mental health support. In Spain, the intersection of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, racism, insecure documentation, hate speech, social prejudice, and economic vulnerability was particularly emphasised.

The findings therefore suggest that LGBTQIA+ inclusion in adult education cannot be addressed through language-related measures alone. Educational approaches need to recognise the wider social, cultural, legal, and psychosocial circumstances affecting learners and, where appropriate, connect educational settings with relevant support and referral structures.

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Finding 4: Inclusive language and representation matter

Participants consistently emphasised that inclusive language is more than the use of specific terms or pronouns. It involves recognising learners' identities, respecting self-definition, avoiding assumptions, and creating opportunities for all learners to participate without fear of judgement or exclusion. The visibility of diverse identities in teaching materials, examples, and classroom discussions was also identified as an important factor in fostering belonging and participation.

At the same time, the research shows that the practical challenges of inclusive language are strongly context-dependent. In Greece, the highly gendered structure of the Greek language, combined with learners' varying levels of Greek proficiency and familiarity with LGBTQIA+ terminology, can make consistent use of gender-neutral language difficult. In Denmark, educators and learners reported difficulties with the use of gender-neutral singular pronouns such as “de/dem”, which are traditionally associated with plural forms, as well as with changing habitual binary expressions. In Germany, linguistic difficulties are compounded by the wider political and social debate surrounding gender-inclusive language. The German language offers a range of possibilities for gender-inclusive expression, including gender-neutral terms and different forms of gender-inclusive person references (Duden Redaktion, n.d.). This can create uncertainty among educators, particularly in formal integration settings; inclusive forms may also increase linguistic complexity for learners at lower proficiency levels. In Spain, participants similarly identified the gendered nature of the language (Ministry of Equality & Instituto de las Mujeres, n.d.), while also highlighting generational differences in the acceptance and use of inclusive forms.

Representation was also identified as an important gap. In Denmark and Spain in particular, participants noted that teaching materials often provide limited visibility of LGBTQIA+ identities and diverse family or social experiences. Spanish participants additionally highlighted the value of racialised, migrant, and LGBTQIA+ people being represented among educators and organisational leaders, as this can strengthen identification and contribute to more inclusive institutional perspectives.

Finding 5: Educators need training, resources, and institutional support

The gaps identified across the national contexts point to a common need for stronger professional capacity, practical resources, and institutional support. Many participants reported limited confidence in applying inclusive language, responding to discriminatory behaviour, or addressing LGBTQIA+ and migration-related topics. The research highlights the importance of continuous professional development, inclusive teaching resources, collaboration with civil society organisations, and stronger institutional commitment to inclusion.

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However, the questionnaires show that the nature of the training and support needs differs across countries. In Denmark, participants particularly highlighted the need for practical guidance on inclusive language, support in managing cultural or religious resistance, and accessible teaching resources. In Germany, the need is strongly connected to clearer institutional guidance, professional development, and greater confidence in navigating the politically sensitive context surrounding gender-inclusive language. In Greece, participants emphasised limited opportunities for professional development, low institutional awareness, the need for practical guidance on terminology and self-identification, and stronger support for educators dealing with psychosocial and safeguarding concerns. In Spain, participants placed particular emphasis on intersectional training that connects LGBTQIA+ inclusion with migration, gender equality, racism, and broader diversity issues. They also stressed that training should extend beyond educators to professionals who interact directly with the public, including health, social, administrative, and other support services.

The research therefore identifies a common need for capacity building, but also demonstrates that this need cannot be addressed through the same training approach across all countries. The content and delivery of professional development should respond to national linguistic and institutional realities while maintaining shared principles of dignity, self-identification, non-discrimination, intersectionality, and respect for diversity.

2.3.3 Relevance for Adult Educators and Trainers

The findings of the state-of-play research demonstrate that inclusion cannot be achieved through policies alone. Adult educators play a crucial role in shaping learning environments where LGBTQIA+ migrants feel respected, represented, and able to participate fully.

The research highlights that many inclusive practices currently depend on the awareness and initiative of individual educators. This means that trainers often become the first point of support for learners who may have experienced discrimination, exclusion, or invisibility in other educational, social, or institutional settings. Even small actions, such as using respectful language, avoiding assumptions, and encouraging participation from all learners, can contribute to a more inclusive learning experience.

The findings also show that educators frequently face challenges of their own. Many report limited training, uncertainty about inclusive terminology, and a lack of practical resources or institutional guidance. Understanding these challenges is

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important, as creating inclusive learning environments requires not only commitment but also access to appropriate knowledge, tools, and support.

For adult educators, the research reinforces the importance of adopting learner-centred approaches that recognise the diversity of learners' identities and experiences. It also highlights the value of continuous professional development, self-reflection, and collaboration with community organisations that can provide additional expertise and support.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that inclusive adult education is not about treating learners differently, but about ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities to participate, express themselves, and feel safe within the learning environment.

2.3.4 Link with LGBTQIA+ Migrants and Intersectionality

The research findings underline the importance of understanding LGBTQIA+ migrants through an intersectional lens. The experiences of LGBTQIA+ migrants are shaped by the interaction of multiple aspects of identity and social position, including gender identity, sexual orientation, migration status, ethnicity, language, religion, age, disability, and socio-economic background. These factors do not operate separately but interact with one another, often creating unique experiences of inclusion or exclusion.

For LGBTQIA+ migrants, this intersection of identities can result in multiple and overlapping barriers. Learners may face challenges related to language acquisition, cultural adaptation, legal uncertainty, or limited access to services, while also experiencing discrimination linked to their sexual orientation or gender identity. In some cases, individuals may feel excluded both within mainstream society and within their own cultural, ethnic, or migrant communities.

The research also highlighted the impact of racism, heteronormativity, cisnormativity, and ethnocentric assumptions within educational and social environments. These factors can contribute to invisibility, misgendering, stereotyping, or the feeling that learners must hide parts of their identity in order to be accepted. Participants repeatedly emphasised the importance of being able to define themselves, participate without fear of judgement, and see their experiences reflected in educational materials and discussions.

For adult educators, adopting an intersectional approach means recognising that no two learners will have the same experiences or support needs. It involves avoiding assumptions, creating opportunities for self-expression, and acknowledging the diversity that exists both within LGBTQIA+ communities and within migrant communities. An intersectional perspective helps educators move beyond one-size-

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fits-all approaches and create learning environments that are responsive to the realities of diverse learners.

2.3.5 Practical Implications for Inclusive Adult Learning Environments

The findings of the state-of-play research highlight several practical considerations for educators, trainers, and organisations seeking to create more inclusive adult learning environments for LGBTQIA+ migrants.

First, inclusion should be embedded in everyday educational practice rather than treated as a separate topic or occasional activity. This includes using respectful and inclusive language, avoiding assumptions about learners' identities or backgrounds, and ensuring that all participants feel welcome and valued.

Second, learning environments should promote emotional and psychological safety. Establishing clear ground rules based on respect, confidentiality, and non-discrimination can help create spaces where learners feel comfortable participating without fear of judgement, exclusion, or unwanted disclosure of personal information.

Third, educators should review learning materials, examples, and classroom activities to ensure that diverse identities and experiences are represented. The inclusion of LGBTQIA+ perspectives, migrant experiences, and culturally diverse examples can contribute to greater visibility and a stronger sense of belonging among learners.

The research also highlights the importance of adopting learner-centred and participatory approaches. Activities such as group discussions, storytelling, reflective exercises, and collaborative learning can encourage dialogue, mutual understanding, and active participation while recognising the different experiences learners bring to the classroom.

In addition, educators should be prepared to respond constructively to discriminatory language, stereotypes, or exclusionary behaviour when they arise. Addressing such situations respectfully and consistently helps reinforce inclusive values and demonstrates a commitment to creating a safe learning environment for everyone.

Finally, inclusive adult education should not rely solely on the efforts of individual educators. Educational providers and organisations should invest in staff training, inclusive resources, partnerships with community organisations, and institutional policies that support diversity, equality, and non-discrimination. Sustainable inclusion is most effective when it is supported at both the individual and organisational level (European Commission, n.d.).

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2.4 Practical Guidance for Trainers

No.	Guidance / tip	Why it matters
1	Avoid making assumptions about learners' identities, experiences, or backgrounds.	LGBTQIA+ migrants have diverse life experiences and support needs that may not be immediately visible.
2	Use respectful and inclusive language in all interactions and learning materials.	Language plays an important role in creating a sense of safety, belonging, and participation.
3	Create opportunities for learners to participate without feeling pressured to disclose personal information.	Learners may have different levels of comfort regarding identity, migration experiences, or personal history.
4	Seek additional training, resources, and support when needed.	The research identified a strong need for professional development and practical guidance for educators.

2.5 Examples, mini-scenarios or case situations

Example / scenario	Situation	Suggested trainer response	Learning point
Example 1	At the beginning of a course, the trainer expects that learners may have different views on LGBTQIA+ identities, gender, culture and migration. The trainer wants to prevent discriminatory comments without	The trainer establishes a short classroom agreement together with the learners. It includes respect for different identities and backgrounds, confidentiality, no discriminatory or aggressive language, and a clear process	Inclusion can be built proactively. Clear, jointly agreed rules can create safety and trust before difficult situations arise and give trainers a framework for responding consistently to

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	making anyone feel singled out.	for addressing conflicts. The trainer can also explain that everyone has the right to participate without being required to disclose personal information.	discriminatory behavior.
Example 2	A trainer is working with a multilingual group that includes migrants with different levels of language proficiency and different cultural and personal experiences. A traditional discussion-based activity leaves some learners reluctant to participate.	The trainer adapts the activity by using images, cards, anonymous written responses or short word-based exercises before moving to group discussion. Examples and visuals are selected to represent different family structures, cultures, migrant experiences and LGBTQIA+ identities without asking learners to disclose their own identity.	Inclusive methods should be flexible and learner-centred. Combining accessible, participatory methods with diverse representation can increase participation and help learners feel recognized without putting pressure on them to share personal experiences.
Example 3	During a discussion about relationships, a learner makes a negative comment about LGBTQIA+ people. Other learners remain silent. The trainer is concerned that directly challenging the	The trainer addresses the comment immediately but without shaming the learner. They can explain that discriminatory language is not acceptable in the	Silence can be perceived as acceptance. Trainers should address discriminatory language while maintaining an open, non-judgmental space

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	comment could create conflict.	learning space and invite the group to explore why people may hold different views. The trainer can connect the issue to other forms of discrimination, such as racism or sexism, to encourage empathy and reflection.	where learners can question assumptions and develop greater understanding.

2.6 Practical activity / tool for trainers

Activity / tool title	Creating a Safe and Inclusive Classroom Agreement
Purpose	This activity helps trainers and adult learners jointly establish clear expectations for respectful, inclusive and non-discriminatory communication. It creates a shared framework for participation, confidentiality and responding to difficult or discriminatory situations.
Target group	Adult educators, adult learners, mixed group
Time	20-25 minutes
Materials	Flipchart or whiteboard, cards, pens
Steps	1. **Introduce the purpose:** Explain that the group will create a short agreement to help everyone feel safe, respected and able to participate. Emphasize that participants are not expected to share personal information or disclose aspects of their identity. 2. **Individual reflection:** Ask participants to write down two or three things they need from others in order to feel comfortable participating in the learning environment. For participants with lower language proficiency, offer examples

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	such as “respect”, “privacy”, “no interruptions” or “no discriminatory comments”. Use visual prompts and/or words in learners’ first language(s) or a language shared by everyone in the learning space. 3. **Build the agreement together:** Collect the suggestions and group similar ideas. Agree on 5–7 simple principles, such as: • We listen to each other and avoid interruptions. • We respect different identities, cultures and experiences. • We avoid discriminatory, racist, homophobic or transphobic language. • We do not pressure anyone to share personal information. • We respect confidentiality. • We address disagreements without attacking individuals. 4. **Agree on how to respond when the agreement is not respected:** Ask the group what should happen if someone uses discriminatory language, makes another learner uncomfortable, or otherwise goes against the agreed rules. Establish a clear and respectful response, such as reminding the person of the agreement, addressing the behavior rather than the individual, and giving space for clarification and reflection when appropriate. 5. **Make the agreement visible:** Display the final agreement in the classroom or online learning space. Revisit it when necessary, particularly if a difficult situation occurs.
Debrief questions	• Which rules were considered most important, and why? • How can we make sure that the agreement applies to everyone? • What should a trainer do when a rule is broken? • How can we address harmful behavior without humiliating the person who made the comment? • How can we make sure the agreement supports a safe environment without becoming too restrictive or controlling?
Adaptation notes	• For lower language levels: Use simple language, words in learners’ first language(s) or a shared language, icons, pictures or example cards. Participants can

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select principles rather than formulate them independently.

- **For sensitive groups:** Avoid asking participants to describe personal experiences of discrimination. Use hypothetical situations and focus on what the group needs from the learning environment.
- **For anonymous participation:** Give learners the option to contribute anonymously, for example through anonymous written notes, cards, an anonymous online poll or a digital board. This can be particularly important when discussing sensitive issues such as gender identity, sexual orientation, discrimination or personal safety. Anonymous participation can help learners express their views more freely and reduce fear of judgement or unwanted disclosure.
- **For trainers:** Before the activity, trainers can briefly research the needs, characteristics and context of their learner group. This can help them choose relevant examples, avoid assumptions or stereotypes, and anticipate possible sensitive issues.

2.7 Reflection Questions for Trainers

1. How are diversity, inclusion, and respect for different identities currently reflected in your educational practice?

2. What challenges have you experienced when supporting learners from diverse cultural, linguistic, migration, or identity backgrounds?

3. To what extent do your teaching materials, examples, and activities reflect the diversity of the learners you work with?

4. How confident do you feel when addressing topics related to LGBTQIA+ inclusion, migration, or discrimination in educational settings?

5. What changes could you make to further promote participation, safety, and belonging for all learners in your educational environment?

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2.8 Short Checklist / Key Messages

✓	Key message / checklist item
☐	Existing equality and diversity policies do not always translate into consistent inclusive practices in adult education settings.
☐	Across partner countries, inclusive practices often depend on the commitment and initiative of individual educators rather than on systematic institutional frameworks.
☐	LGBTQIA+ migrants may experience multiple and intersecting forms of exclusion related to migration status, language, culture, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
☐	Inclusive language, representation, and respectful communication contribute to learners' participation, wellbeing, and sense of belonging.
☐	Educators need access to training, practical resources, and institutional support to strengthen inclusive practice.

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CHAPTER 03

Understanding LGBTQIA+ migrant inclusion in adult education

Identity, intersectionality and belonging in adult learning



GO INCLUSIVE / HANDBOOK FOR TRAINERS

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3. Understanding LGBTQIA+ migrant inclusion in adult education

3.1 Chapter overview

LGBTQIA+ migrants may experience multiple and overlapping forms of exclusion in adult education settings. Their participation in learning is not shaped only by their migration background or language level, but also by factors such as sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, legal status, cultural expectations, previous experiences of discrimination, social isolation, and access to support networks. For this reason, inclusive adult education requires more than general openness: it requires awareness of how different dimensions of identity and vulnerability can interact in a learner's life.

This chapter introduces the broader educational and social context of LGBTQIA+ migrant inclusion in adult education. It explains why intersectionality matters, what barriers LGBTQIA+ migrant learners may face, and how adult educators can help create safer, more respectful and more accessible learning environments. The chapter is designed to support trainers in reflecting on their own practice and in translating inclusive values into concrete choices in communication, facilitation, classroom management and learner support.

Before we start, however, an important reminder: people are people as a whole, and not just the sum of different "components". Whether someone is a migrant, a refugee, and/or non-binary, they share the same chances as anyone else to find something funny or interesting, or to enjoy walking their dog.

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3.2 Learning aims and expected outcomes for trainers

No.	Learning aim / expected outcome
1	Understand why LGBTQIA+ migrant inclusion requires attention to multiple and intersecting forms of vulnerability.
2	Identify common barriers that LGBTQIA+ migrants may face when accessing and participating in adult education.
3	Recognise how classroom climate, language, group dynamics and institutional practices can either support or limit inclusion.
4	Apply practical strategies to create safer, more respectful and more participatory adult learning environments.

3.3 Main analysis / content

3.3.1 Context and rationale

Adult education can play a powerful role in social inclusion. It can support language learning, employability, civic participation, self-confidence, access to services and community connection. For migrants, adult education is often one of the first structured environments in which they interact with institutions, local communities, and other learners in the host country. For LGBTQIA+ migrants, however, these learning spaces may not automatically feel safe or accessible.

According to the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), four in ten LGBTQI+ respondents who self-identify as members of an ethnic minority or have an immigrant background report that ethnic origin or immigrant background constitutes an additional ground for discrimination (FRA, 2020). The more recent FRA report (2024) finds that 36% of LGBTIQ+ respondents felt discriminated in at least one area of life, with rates significantly higher for those with multiple marginalised identities (including migration background). This highlights an important reality for adult educators: LGBTQIA+ migrants are not just a subset of either "migrants" or "LGBTQIA+ people." Instead, they exist at an intersection, which results in distinct and compounded vulnerabilities. These responses also reveal another reality: Discrimination is not incidental but rather a chronic obstacle experienced by members of the LGBTQI immigrant community, obstructing their genuine integration, sense of security, and acceptance by the communities in which they live.

Some LGBTQIA+ migrants may have left countries or communities where sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression were criminalised, stigmatised or strongly silenced. Others may have experienced family rejection, social exclusion, violence, harassment, pressure to hide their identity, or fear of being "outed" without consent. In addition, migration itself can involve uncertainty, language barriers, administrative procedures, financial insecurity, trauma, isolation or dependence on community networks that may not always be accepting.

A major AMIF-funded study conducted across Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain and Germany found that professionals working with LGBTQI+ migrants consistently identified overlapping vulnerabilities (combining migration status, sexual

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orientation or gender identity, and frequently also ethnic origin, religion or disability) as the defining feature of this group's needs (@NCLUSION, 2025).

UNHCR (2021) guidance stresses that LGBTIQ+ people in forced displacement can face specific protection risks and barriers in accessing procedures, services and support, which makes confidentiality, safety and non-discrimination especially important in professional settings. UNESCO's work on inclusive education also emphasises that education systems should pay attention to all learners who may be excluded because of background, identity, ability or circumstances. At EU level, the LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2026–2030 explicitly recognises the compounded vulnerabilities of LGBTIQ+ migrants and establishes intersectionality as a guiding principle for policy and practice (European Commission, 2025).

In adult education, these issues matter because learners do not leave their identities, fears or previous experiences outside the classroom. A learner who does not feel safe may avoid speaking, avoid group work, stop attending, hide relevant personal information, or disengage from the learning process. Inclusion therefore cannot be limited to welcoming statements. It needs to be reflected in the way trainers design activities, use language, respond to bias, protect privacy, and manage interactions among learners.

3.3.2 Key concepts, principles or findings

Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality, first developed by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), describes how different aspects of a person's identity and social position interact to create specific experiences of privilege, exclusion, or discrimination. For LGBTQIA+ migrants, exclusion may not stem from one single factor. A learner may be affected at the same time by racism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, language barriers, poverty, legal insecurity, gender-based discrimination or limited access to information.

European survey data confirm this: LGBTQI+ people with a migration background report systematically higher rates of discrimination across employment, housing, education and healthcare when compared with LGBTQI+ people without a migration background (ILGA-Europe, 2023; FRA, 2024).

For example, a gay migrant man, a lesbian refugee woman and a trans asylum seeker may all belong to the broad category of "LGBTQIA+ migrants", but their needs and risks may be very different. A trans learner may face challenges related to documentation, names and gender markers. A lesbian migrant woman may face gendered expectations within family or community networks. An LGBTQIA+ asylum seeker may fear that personal information shared in class could reach people who might put them at risk.

An intersectional perspective helps educators avoid generalisations about LGBTQIA+ migrants by focusing on individual, contextual, and structural factors. According to the OECD (2022), using this approach can improve policy and practice targeting specific sub-groups. This principle is equally relevant in classroom settings.

Inclusion as participation, not only access

Inclusion is not only about allowing learners to enrol in a course. It is also about whether they can participate meaningfully, feel respected, contribute without fear, and see their realities reflected in the learning environment. An adult learning space may be formally open to everyone, yet still feel unsafe if jokes, assumptions, stereotypes or discriminatory comments go unaddressed.

UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report (2020) distinguishes between access to education and meaningful participation within it a distinction that is especially relevant for learners who are present but marginalised (UNESCO, 2020).

Safety and confidentiality

For LGBTQIA+ migrants, confidentiality can be essential. Not every learner is open about their sexual orientation, gender identity or personal history. Trainers should never pressure learners to disclose personal information. They should also avoid activities that require learners to speak about family, relationships, identity, religion, migration journey or trauma in ways that may expose them or make them uncomfortable.

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Respectful and non-assumptive communication

Inclusive communication means avoiding assumptions about learners' gender, partners, family structures, religion, culture, legal status or personal beliefs. It also means using neutral and respectful language where possible, allowing learners to self-identify if they choose, and correcting exclusionary language without humiliating the person who used it.

Trauma-aware facilitation

Some LGBTQIA+ migrants may have experienced violence, persecution, detention, family rejection, homelessness or dangerous migration journeys. A trauma-aware trainer does not need to act as a therapist. However, they should understand that some topics, images, questions or group discussions may be sensitive. Trauma-aware practice means offering choice, avoiding forced disclosure, explaining activities clearly, allowing opt-out options and signposting learners to appropriate support when needed.

Power dynamics in the classroom

The trainer has a position of authority. Learners may worry that disagreeing, asking for help or expressing discomfort could affect their participation or evaluation. This can be stronger for migrants who have had difficult experiences with institutions. Trainers should therefore create predictable, transparent and respectful learning conditions.

Another important aspect of classroom power dynamics is the influence of a predominantly Western, white, and ethnocentric worldview. This perspective can limit the recognition and inclusion of other cultural perspectives and may lead trainers or learners belonging to these groups to assume that their own values, experiences, or ways of learning and communicating are universal. Being aware of this bias helps trainers create a more culturally responsive and inclusive learning environment.

3.3.3 Relevance for adult educators and trainers

Adult educators are often among the first professionals who can make a learning environment feel either welcoming or unsafe. Their role is not limited to delivering content. They also shape the tone of interaction, the rules of participation, the examples used in class, the way conflict is handled, and the degree to which learners feel seen and respected.

The importance of this role is confirmed by European data: UNESCO and IGLYO (2023) found that fewer than half of Council of Europe member states have national action plans to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in education settings. In the absence of institutional policy support, the professional commitment of individual educators carries particular weight.(Source: UNESCO / IGLYO. (2023). Progress towards LGBTI inclusion in education in Europe.)

For LGBTQIA+ migrant learners, small choices can have a significant impact. For example, using examples that include diverse family structures can signal that different lives are recognised. Asking learners what name they would like to use in class can support dignity and self-identification. Setting ground rules against discriminatory comments can prevent harm before it happens. Responding calmly to biased language can protect the targeted learner while keeping the group open to learning.

Trainers do not need to know everything about every identity or cultural background. What matters is the willingness to learn, to avoid assumptions, to listen carefully, to protect confidentiality, and to take responsibility for the learning environment. Inclusive practice is not about being perfect. It is about being attentive, respectful and ready to adjust.

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3.3.4 Link with LGBTQIA+ migrants and intersectionality

In some community or family contexts - shaped by cultural, religious or social norms that differ from dominant host-country frameworks - LGBTQIA+ migrants may feel pressure to conceal their identity, while simultaneously facing racism or cultural exclusion in LGBTQIA+ spaces. This double tension is a direct consequence of the intersection of multiple marginalised identities.

They may also face barriers in mainstream migrant support services if these services are not LGBTQIA+ inclusive, or in LGBTQIA+ services if these services are not culturally and linguistically accessible.

This is why adult education settings should avoid treating learners as one-dimensional. A migrant learner is not only "a language learner". An LGBTQIA+ learner is not only "an LGBTQIA+ person". Each learner brings a combination of experiences, strengths, vulnerabilities, skills and aspirations.

Intersectionality also helps trainers avoid stereotypes. Not all LGBTQIA+ migrants are traumatised. Not all migrants come from homophobic or transphobic backgrounds. Not all LGBTQIA+ learners want to discuss their identity in class. Not all learners who are silent are disengaged. A respectful trainer does not assume, but creates conditions where different learners can participate safely and on their own terms.

3.3.5 Practical implications for inclusive adult learning environments

Inclusive adult learning environments are built through everyday decisions. Trainers can support LGBTQIA+ migrant inclusion by paying attention to the following areas:

Course design

Activities should not force personal disclosure. When discussing identity, family, relationships, migration or discrimination, trainers should give learners the option to speak generally, use fictional examples or pass.

Language and examples

Teaching examples should avoid assuming that all learners are heterosexual, cisgender, married, religious, child-raising or part of a traditional family structure. Instead of always saying "husband and wife", trainers can use "partner", "family member" or "person close to you". Inclusive language must be explicitly anti-racist. It should replace racist terminology with inclusive alternatives and eliminate dismissive or derogatory narratives associated with migrant and racialised communities. It should also incorporate diverse references in educational materials, including videos, books, posters, and other resources.

Group agreements

At the beginning of a course, trainers can co-create simple participation rules with learners: respect, confidentiality, no mocking, no personal attacks, and the right not to answer personal questions.

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Classroom response

If discriminatory language appears, the trainer should respond. Silence can be interpreted as acceptance. The response should be calm, clear and educational: name the issue, protect the learner or group affected, and redirect the discussion toward respect.

Privacy and documentation

Names, pronouns, gender markers and personal histories should be handled with care. If official documents contain a name or gender marker that differs from the learner's self-identification, the trainer should use the name the learner asks to use in class, unless there is a legal or administrative reason that prevents this in formal documents.

Signposting and support

Adult educators should know where to refer learners if they need specialised support. This may include counselling services, migrant support organisations, LGBTQIA+ organisations, legal aid, health services or anti-discrimination bodies.

3.4 Practical guidance for trainers

No.	Guidance / tip	Why it matters
1	Audit your teaching materials for heteronormative assumptions: do all examples assume a male/female binary, or heterosexual relationships? Review the images and illustrations as well. Do they mainly portray white people and reinforce a narrow representation of society?	Hidden assumptions in materials signal who "belongs" in the learning space, affecting learner engagement and safety
2	Use inclusive and non-assumptive language, such as “partner”, “family members” or “people close to you”.	It avoids excluding learners whose relationships or families do not fit dominant assumptions.
3	Do not ask learners to disclose personal information about sexuality, gender identity, migration history or trauma.	Learners may have personal or safety reasons for not disclosing information in group settings, regardless of their migration or legal status. Voluntary disclosure protects both dignity and safety.
4	Establish group agreements on respect, confidentiality and participation from the beginning.	Clear expectations help prevent harmful comments and support a safer learning climate.
5	Respond to discriminatory language calmly and clearly.	Silence can make targeted learners feel unprotected; a clear response reinforces safety.
6	Offer choices in activities, especially when topics are personal or sensitive.	Choice supports participation without forcing learners into exposure.

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No.	Guidance / tip	Why it matters
7	Know where to refer learners who may need specialist support. Familiarise yourself with local LGBTQIA+ and anti-racism organisations and services, including those that specifically support migrants, so that you can make appropriate referrals when needed.	Educators are not counsellors or caseworkers. Knowing when and where to refer is a key competence for inclusive practice
8	Reflect on your own cultural assumptions about gender, sexuality, and family. Also reflect on any assumptions, stereotypes, or prejudices you may hold about migrants and racialized people. Inclusive education begins with educator self-awareness.	Unconscious bias can undermine even well-intentioned inclusive practice.

3.5 Examples, mini-scenarios or case situations

Example / scenario	Situation	Suggested trainer response	Learning point
Example 1	During a language activity about family, a learner says: “Everyone has a mother and a father. That is normal.” Another learner becomes quiet and stops participating.	The trainer says: “Families can look different. Some people have a mother and father, some have one parent, two mothers, two fathers, adoptive families, chosen families or other important people in their lives. In this class, we use language that leaves space for everyone.”	Inclusive correction can be simple, respectful and educational. The trainer does not need to shame the learner, but should broaden the language.
Example 2	A learner asks another learner directly: “Are you a man or a woman? Why is your name different on the paper?”	The trainer intervenes: “We do not ask personal questions that may make someone uncomfortable. Everyone has the right to privacy. In class, we use the name each person asks us to use.”	Trainers should protect privacy and prevent learners from being pressured to explain their identity.
Example 3	In a discussion about migration, one learner says that LGBTQIA+ topics are “not part of our culture” and should not be discussed in adult education.	The trainer responds: “Different people may have different views, but our learning space must be respectful and safe for all learners. We can discuss	Trainers can allow discussion while setting clear boundaries against exclusion.

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Example / scenario	Situation	Suggested trainer response	Learning point
		values and differences, but we cannot deny anyone's dignity or right to participate."	
Example 4	A learner says: "People from X country do not want to integrate. I have a neighbour from X country, and although I say hello every morning, she never responds. She only spends time with people from her own country."	The trainer responds: "It is understandable that your personal experience has led you to this impression. However, we should be careful not to generalise the behaviour of one individual to an entire community. Integration is a complex process that is influenced by many factors, including language, previous experiences, cultural norms, opportunities for social interaction, and whether people feel welcomed in the host society. For example, people from the same migrant community may have very different levels of participation in local life. Many are involved in neighbourhood associations, schools, workplaces, businesses, sports clubs, and other community activities. At the same time, some people may initially rely more on members of their own community while they adapt to a new environment. It is also important to remember that inclusion is a shared responsibility. It depends not only on the efforts of migrants, but also on the openness and acceptance of the host society. Finally, cultural norms regarding greetings and social interaction vary considerably. Whatever the reason in this particular case, we cannot assume that one person's behaviour	Avoid drawing conclusions about an entire group based on individual experiences. Encourage learners to distinguish between personal anecdotes and evidence, and to recognise that integration is a two-way process shaped by both migrants and the host society. Challenging stereotypes with facts and promoting empathy helps create a more inclusive learning environment.

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Example / scenario	Situation	Suggested trainer response	Learning point
		represents an entire nationality or community."	
Example 5	A learner says: *"All the government financial aid is taken by migrants, while local people cannot access any benefits."*	The trainer responds: "This is a common misconception about migration, but it is not accurate. In this country, eligibility for social and financial support is based on criteria such as income level, personal circumstances, and vulnerability, not on a person's country of origin. Both migrants and nationals must meet the same legal requirements to access these benefits."	Trainers should address myths, misinformation, and stereotypes by providing accurate, evidence-based information from reliable sources. Encouraging learners to verify claims and critically assess information helps create a respectful and informed learning environment.

3.6 Practical activity / tool for trainers

Activity / tool title	Inclusive Learning Environment Check
Purpose	To help trainers assess whether their learning environment is safe, respectful and accessible for LGBTQIA+ migrant learners.
Target group	Adult educators, trainers, facilitators, counsellors, staff teams
Time	30–40 minutes
Materials	Printed checklist or online document, pens, optional flipchart/online board
Steps	1. Ask trainers to think of a course or learning activity they currently deliver. 2. Invite them to review the checklist below individually. 3. Ask them to identify two strengths and two areas for improvement. 4. In pairs or small groups, ask them to discuss one practical change they can apply in the next session. 5. Close with a short plenary discussion on realistic first steps.
Debrief questions	Which part of your learning environment already supports inclusion? Which part needs more attention? What can be changed immediately without extra resources?

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	What support would trainers need from their organisation? Do you know at least one local LGBTQIA+ organisation or migrant and anti-discrimination support service you could refer a learner to? If not, how could you find out?
Adaptation notes	For online delivery, use a shared document or anonymous polling tool. For sensitive groups, focus on general learning environment design rather than asking participants to share personal experiences.

Question	Yes	Partly	Not yet
Do I avoid assumptions about learners' gender, partners, family or personal life?	☐	☐	☐
Do I use images or illustrations representing people from diverse ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds?	☐	☐	☐
Do I use examples that reflect different family structures and life experiences?	☐	☐	☐
Have I established group agreements on respect and confidentiality?	☐	☐	☐
Do learners have the option not to answer personal questions?	☐	☐	☐
Do I know how to respond if discriminatory language appears in class?	☐	☐	☐
Do I know where to refer learners who need specialised support?	☐	☐	☐
Are my materials free from stereotypes about migrants, LGBTQIA+ people, gender or culture?	☐	☐	☐
Do I use the names and forms of address that learners ask me to use?	☐	☐	☐

3.7 Reflection questions for trainers

1. What assumptions might I unintentionally make about learners' gender, family, relationships, culture or migration, racial or ethnic background?
2. How do I currently respond when learners use discriminatory or exclusionary language?
3. Do my examples and materials reflect diverse lives, or do they mainly represent majority experiences?
4. How can I protect learners' privacy while still creating space for respectful discussion?
5. What is one concrete change I can make in my next session to support LGBTQIA+ migrant inclusion?

3.8 Short checklist / key messages

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✓	Key message / checklist item
☐	Inclusion means meaningful participation, not only access to a course.
☐	LGBTQIA+ migrants may face overlapping barriers linked to identity, migration, language, legal status, discrimination or social isolation.
☐	Trainers should avoid assumptions and follow learners' self-identification.
☐	Confidentiality and privacy are essential, especially when disclosure may create risk.
☐	Discriminatory language should be addressed calmly, clearly and educationally.
☐	Inclusive learning environments are created through everyday choices in language, examples, activities and group management.
☐	I know at least one local LGBTQIA+ organisation or anti-discrimination support service I could refer a learner to if needed

3.9 Further reading and useful resources

Title / resource	Source	Link / reference	Language	Why useful
Need to Know Guidance: Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Persons in Forced Displacement	UNHCR	UNHCR operational guidance, 2021 (Refworld)	English	Practical guidance on protection, confidentiality and barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ persons in forced displacement.
Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and Education – All Means All	UNESCO	UNESCO GEM Report, 2020 (UNESCO)	English and other languages	Provides a broad framework for understanding inclusion in education and

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Title / resource	Source	Link / reference	Language	Why useful
				barriers affecting excluded learners.
LGBTIQ Equality at a Crossroads: Progress and Challenges	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	FRA report, 2024 (fra.europa.eu)	English	Offers recent European evidence on discrimination, violence and challenges faced by LGBTIQ people.
Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on Combating Hate Speech	Council of Europe	Committee of Ministers Recommendation, 2022 (Portal)	English, French, Spanish and others	Useful for understanding hate speech prevention and response within a human rights framework.
The Inclusion of LGBTQI+ Students Across Education Systems	OECD Working Paper	https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/06/the-inclusion-of-lgbtqi-students-across-education-systems_cf82d15c/91775206-en.pdf	EN	Comprehensive review of intersectionality and inclusion in education; directly relevant to trainer context.
Progress towards LGBTI Inclusion in Education in Europe	UNESCO / IGLYO	https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/progress-towards-lgbti-inclusion-education-europe	EN	Data on national action plans and anti-discrimination laws across

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Title / resource	Source	Link / reference	Language	Why useful
				Council of Europe member states.
Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century	EAEA	https://eaea.org/our-work/influencing-policy/manifesto-for-adult-learning-in-the-21st-century/	EN (multilingual versions forthcoming)	Policy framework affirming adult education's role in supporting migrants and creating safe civic spaces.
Breaking Down Barriers: Improving Asylum Laws for Queer Migrants	AILA (American Immigration Lawyers Association)	https://www.aila.org/library/think-immigration-breaking-down-barriers-improving-asylum-laws-for-queer-migrants	EN	Accessible overview of the asylum challenges facing LGBTQIA+ migrants, useful for contextual understanding.
Intersectional Perspectives in Adult and Basic Education	EPALE (European Commission)	https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/intersectional-perspectives-adult-and-basic-education	EN	Practitioner-oriented discussion of intersectionality in adult education, drawing on Erasmus+ project experience.

3.10 References

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Council of Europe. (2022). Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2024). LGBTIQ equality at a crossroads: Progress and challenges.

UNESCO. (2020). Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and education – All means all.

UNHCR. (2021). Need to Know Guidance: Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Persons in Forced Displacement.

@NCLUSION Project. (2025). Professionals' attitudes and knowledge on the specific needs of LGBTQI+ migrants & refugees: Transnational Report. Available at: inclusionproject.eu

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex. University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989(1), 139–167

ILGA-Europe. (2023). Intersections: The LGBTI II Survey - Migrant and Racial, Ethnic and Religious Minorities

UNESCO (2023). Progress towards LGBTI inclusion in education in Europe

IGLYO (2023). Annual report downloadable here

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CHAPTER 04

Core terminology and concepts

Words and concepts for respectful communication



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4. Core terminology and concepts

4.1 Chapter overview

Language shapes the way people are seen, addressed and included in learning environments. For adult educators working with LGBTQIA+ migrants, terminology is not only a matter of correctness; it is closely connected with dignity, safety, trust and participation. When trainers use respectful and accurate language, they help create learning spaces where people do not feel invisible, exposed or reduced to stereotypes.

This chapter introduces key terms and concepts related to LGBTQIA+ identities, migration, inclusion, discrimination and respectful communication. It does not aim to turn adult educators into legal or clinical experts. Instead, it provides a practical foundation that can help trainers communicate with more confidence, avoid harmful assumptions, understand learners' self-identification, and respond more appropriately in diverse adult education settings.
It should be noted that many LGBTQIA+ terms do not translate directly across European languages. Where possible, this chapter offers guidance for educators working in multilingual settings, especially in the project's working languages.

4.2 Learning aims and expected outcomes for trainers

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No.	Learning aim / expected outcome
1	Understand key terms related to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, migration and inclusion.
2	Distinguish between concepts that are often confused, such as sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.
3	Use respectful and non-assumptive language, including correct pronouns and preferred names, when addressing or referring to LGBTQIA+ migrant learners.
4	Identify terms, expressions or practices that may be exclusionary, outdated or harmful in adult education settings.
5	Recognise the challenges of translating LGBTQIA+ terminology across different languages and adopt a context-sensitive approach to language use in multilingual adult education settings.
6	Hone the ability to apply the Do/Avoid framework in concrete classroom situations

4.3 Main analysis / content

4.3.1 Context and rationale

Adult educators often work with groups that are diverse in language, culture, religion, gender, family structure, migration experience, educational background and life history. In such settings, words matter. The terms used by trainers can either create openness and safety or reinforce exclusion and discomfort.

For LGBTQIA+ migrants, language can be particularly sensitive. Some learners may come from contexts where LGBTQIA+ identities are criminalised, stigmatised or rarely discussed openly. Others may not know the terminology used in the host country or may use different words in their own language or community. Some may not feel safe disclosing their identity at all. In addition, migration-related terms such as "refugee", "asylum seeker", "undocumented migrant" or "third-country national" can carry legal, social and emotional weight.

As UNHCR (2021) notes, people in forced displacement may have diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics, and they may face discrimination, prejudice, violence and difficulty accessing assistance. This makes careful, respectful and confidentiality-aware communication important in professional settings.

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For this reason, trainers need a basic vocabulary that is accurate, respectful, and practical. However, terminology should not be applied blindly. The most respectful method involves combining general understanding with active listening, humility, and paying close attention to how people describe themselves.

4.3.2 Key concepts, principles or findings

A. Sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics

*Before exploring individual terms, it is useful to understand the framework that organises them. The acronym SOGIESC — standing for **S**exual **O**rientation, **G**ender **I**dentity, Gender **E**xpression and **S**ex **C**haracteristics — offers a comprehensive way to describe the dimensions of a person's identity and embodiment relevant to LGBTQIA+ inclusion. It is widely used in human rights, migration and protection contexts precisely because it separates concepts that are often conflated in everyday language.*

The SOGIESC framework is recognised at both European and international levels. The Council of Europe maintains a dedicated SOGIESC Unit that addresses human rights challenges across its member states, and the Yogyakarta Principles (2006, updated 2017) establish SOGIESC as grounds on which no person may be discriminated against or persecuted under international human rights law.

For adult educators, its value is practical: it provides a shared vocabulary that is precise enough to avoid harmful conflations, and flexible enough to apply across cultural and linguistic contexts. The table below introduces each of the four dimensions in turn.

Term	Accessible definition	Example of respectful use
Sexual orientation	A person's emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to other people.	"Sexual orientation is personal information. Learners should not be asked to disclose it."
Gender identity	A person's deep, internal sense of gender. Gender identity is not determined by sex assigned at birth, and may or may not be expressed outwardly.	"Use the name and pronouns that correspond to the learner's gender identity, if they have shared them."
Gender expression	The way a person expresses gender externally through appearance, clothing, voice, behaviour or other forms of presentation.	"Do not assume someone's gender identity from their gender expression."
Sex characteristics	Physical characteristics related to sex, such as chromosomes, hormones, reproductive anatomy or secondary sex characteristics.	"Intersex people have variations in sex characteristics."

A key point for trainers is that these concepts are distinct. A person's gender identity does not determine their sexual orientation. A person's appearance does not necessarily reveal their gender identity. A person's legal documents may not reflect the name or gender they use in everyday life.

B. LGBTQIA+ umbrella terms

LGBTQIA+ is an umbrella acronym that commonly refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual/aromantic and other diverse identities. The "+" recognises that language evolves and that not all identities are captured by a fixed acronym.

Term	Accessible definition	Trainer note
Lesbian	A woman who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to women.	Some non-binary people may also use this term. Self-identification matters.

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Gay	Often used for a man attracted to men, but sometimes used more broadly for same-gender attraction.	Avoid assuming all LGBTQIA+ people identify as "gay".
Bisexual	A person attracted to more than one gender.	Do not present bisexuality as confusion or a temporary phase.
Pansexual	The pan- (all) signals attraction across the gender spectrum.	Do not treat pansexual and bisexual as interchangeable; follow the person's self-identification.
Transgender / trans	A person whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned at birth.	Use the terms as adjectives (e.g. "trans person"), rather than nouns, to avoid dehumanising or sensationalist language.
Cisgender / cis	A person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex assigned at birth.	Using the word cisgender creates symmetry: it avoids implying that being cisgender is the unmarked norm while transgender is the exception. When both terms are available, neither position has to do extra explanatory work.
Queer	A reclaimed umbrella term used by some people for non-normative sexual orientations and/or gender identities.	It can be empowering for some and hurtful for others depending on context. Do not apply it to someone unless they use it for themselves.
Questioning	A person who is exploring or reflecting on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	Allow time and privacy; do not press people to label themselves.
Intersex	A person born with physical sex characteristics (chromosomes, hormones, anatomy) that do not fit typical medical definitions of male or female. Intersex is about biological variation; it is distinct from gender identity and sexual orientation.	Intersex is about sex characteristics, not necessarily gender identity or sexual orientation.
Asexual	A person who experiences little or no sexual attraction. Asexuality is a spectrum and has variations.	Do not confuse asexuality with lack of emotion, intimacy or relationships.
Aromantic	A person who experiences little or no romantic attraction.	Aromantic people may or may not experience sexual attraction.
Non-binary	A person whose gender identity does not fit exclusively within the categories of man or woman.	Some non--binary people use they/them pronouns in English; others use different or multiple pronouns. In languages with grammatical gender (Spanish, German, Greek, etc.), expressing non-binary identity requires specific strategies. Always follow the person's preference.

C. Migration and ethnic minorities-related terms

When working with LGBTQIA+ migrants, trainers also need to understand basic migration-related vocabulary. These terms should be used carefully because they may describe legal status, lived experience or administrative categories.

Term	Accessible definition	Trainer note
Migrant	A broad term for a person who has moved from one place or country to another, temporarily or permanently.	Use neutrally. Do not assume the reason for migration.
Refugee	A person who has been recognised as needing international protection due to persecution, conflict, or serious harm.	Do not use "refugee" as a synonym for all migrants.
Asylum seeker	A person who has applied for international protection and is waiting for a decision.	Asylum status can be sensitive and should not be discussed publicly without consent.

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Undocumented migrant	A person who does not currently have regular migration status or valid residence documentation.	Do not use terms such as “illegal person”. A person is not illegal.
Third-country national	In the EU context, a person who is not a citizen of an EU Member State.	This is an administrative term and may not be meaningful to learners.
Migrant learner	A learner with a migration background participating in an educational setting.	Avoid reducing the learner only to their migration status.
Racialised	A term used to describe people or groups who are socially assigned a racial identity based on characteristics such as skin colour, ethnicity, ancestry, or physical appearance.	Do not assume that a racialised person is a migrant.
Ethnic minority	A group of people who share a common ancestry, cultural heritage, language, religion, history, or geographical origin and who represent a smaller proportion of the population within a particular country or region.	Members of ethnic minorities may experience discrimination because of their ethnic origin.

For LGBTQIA+ migrants, migration status can affect access to education, housing, healthcare, employment, legal support and community life. Trainers do not need to ask learners about their status unless it is strictly necessary for the educational context.

D. Inclusion, equality and discrimination

Term	Accessible definition	Trainer note
Inclusion	Creating conditions where all learners can participate meaningfully, safely and with dignity.	Inclusion is not only enrolment; it is participation and belonging.
Equality	Treating people with equal dignity and rights.	Equal treatment may still need different support depending on learners’ barriers.
Equity	Providing different forms of support according to different needs, so that people can participate fairly.	Equity recognises that learners may not start from the same position.
Discrimination	Unfair treatment based on characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, disability or migration status.	Discrimination may be direct, indirect, institutional or interpersonal.
Harassment	Unwanted behaviour that violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating environment.	Jokes, comments and repeated questions can become harassment.
Microaggression	A small or subtle comment/action that communicates disrespect, exclusion or stereotype, intentionally or unintentionally.	Example: repeatedly asking a trans learner about their “real name”.
Hate speech	Expressions that spread, incite, promote or justify hatred against a person or group.	The Council of Europe has specific guidance on combating hate speech. (Portal)
Outing	Disclosing someone's sexual orientation, gender identity or migration status without their consent. This can have serious safety consequences, particularly for LGBTQIA+ migrants with uncertain status or from hostile home contexts.	Never share a learner's identity with others without their explicit consent - including with other staff, even with good intentions.
Multiple discrimination	Discrimination that occurs on two or more grounds simultaneously (e.g. being discriminated against both as an LGBTQIA+ person and as a migrant).	Multiple discrimination is not simply the 'sum' of separate experiences; the interaction of grounds creates qualitatively distinct forms of exclusion.

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Heteronormativity	The social assumption that heterosexuality is the default or 'normal' sexual orientation, and that all people are either heterosexual or should be.	Heteronormative assumptions are embedded in language, materials, and practices that treat heterosexual relationships and identities as the standard.
Cisnormativity	The assumption that all people are cisgender (that their gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth), and that this is the 'normal' or natural state	. Like heteronormativity, cisnormativity is often invisible to those it does not affect.
Allyship	Active support for the rights, dignity and inclusion of people from marginalised groups, by those who are not members of those groups.	Allyship is a practice, not an identity. It involves listening, learning, and taking responsibility for one's own inclusive behaviour
Safe learning environment	A learning setting where learners are protected from humiliation, discrimination and forced disclosure, and where respectful participation is supported.	"Safe" does not mean avoiding all difficult topics; it means discussing them with clear boundaries.

E. Respectful communication and self-identification

Respectful communication is based on a simple principle: people should be addressed and described in ways that respect their dignity and, where known, their self-identification. This is especially important in adult education, where learners may already feel exposed due to language barriers, legal uncertainty or previous negative experiences with institutions.

Key principles include:

Principle	What this looks like in practice
Do not assume a learner's gender, sexual orientation, family structure, religion, legal status or personal history.	Use neutral language by default: "partner" rather than "husband/wife", "family member" rather than "mother/father", "person you trust" rather than assuming a support network exists.
Use the name and pronouns a learner asks you to use.	If a learner tells you their name is different from what appears on a document, use the name they give you in class. If they share their pronouns, use them consistently, including when speaking about them to others.
Do not ask intrusive questions about bodies, documents, relationships or migration history.	If personal information is not necessary for the learning activity, do not ask for it. If a topic comes up that touches on these areas, make participation optional and offer alternative ways to engage (e.g. fictional examples, general statements).
Do not disclose a learner's identity or status without their consent.	Never share that a learner is LGBTQIA+, undocumented, or seeking asylum, not with other learners, not with colleagues, not even with good intentions. Outing someone without consent can have serious safety consequences.
If you make a mistake, correct yourself briefly and move on.	Say: *"I'm sorry, [name]."* Then continue. Do not dwell on the error or apologise at length; this shifts the attention from the learner's needs to the trainer's discomfort. In languages where a non-binary or gender-neutral form exists (such as *hen* in Danish), use it consistently once a learner has indicated their preference. In languages where no established neutral form exists, follow the learner's own

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	lead on how they wish to be referred to, and discuss with your organisation how to handle this in administrative contexts.
Use neutral language when a learner's situation is unknown.	When addressing a group whose identities you do not know, use inclusive defaults: "everyone", "each person", "your partner or someone close to you". Avoid language that assumes a shared experience.

4.3.3 Relevance for adult educators and trainers

Terminology awareness helps trainers make better choices in everyday practice. It supports classroom communication, material development, group facilitation, learner support and response to difficult situations. When trainers understand the difference between sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, they are less likely to make inappropriate assumptions. When they understand migration-related terms, they are less likely to use labels that stigmatise learners or expose sensitive information.

This knowledge also helps trainers respond to questions from learners. Adult education groups may include people with different levels of familiarity with LGBTQIA+ issues. Some may use outdated or offensive language because they have never learned alternatives. Others may use terms from their own language that do not translate easily into English or the host-country language. A trainer with basic terminology can guide the group without shaming learners and without leaving harmful language unaddressed.

For example, if a learner says "illegal immigrant", the trainer can calmly model a more respectful term: "In this context, we usually say 'undocumented migrant' or 'person without regular status', because a person themselves is not illegal." This type of correction is practical, educational and respectful.

4.3.4 Link with LGBTQIA+ migrants and intersectionality

Terminology becomes more complex when LGBTQIA+ identities and migration experiences intersect. Some LGBTQIA+ migrants may not use Western identity labels such as "gay", "lesbian", "trans" or "queer", even if they have same-gender relationships or diverse gender experiences. Some may use terms from their own language or community. Others may avoid labels entirely because of safety concerns, personal preference, trauma or fear of being identified.

Trainers should therefore avoid forcing identity categories onto learners. The purpose of terminology is not to label people, but to foster shared understanding and respectful communication. A learner should not have to "prove" their identity, explain their body, describe their relationships or translate their life into a category that feels unsafe or unfamiliar.

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Intersectionality also means that words can carry different meanings depending on context (Crenshaw, 1989). For example, "queer" may be used positively in some activist or academic settings, but may be experienced as insulting by people who know it mainly as a slur. Similarly, "coming out" may be discussed as empowering in some contexts, but for some LGBTQIA+ migrants it may be unsafe, unrealistic or culturally complicated. Trainers should avoid presenting one model of LGBTQIA+ experience as universal.

4.3.5 Practical implications for inclusive adult learning environments

In practical terms, terminology should support safer participation. Trainers should use clear and accessible language, explain terms without assuming prior knowledge, and create space for questions without turning LGBTQIA+ learners into "teaching material" for the group.

Trainers should be aware that some words and expressions have racist or discriminatory origins, even if they have become normalised in everyday language. They should avoid using expressions that reinforce stereotypes or associate particular ethnic, racial, national, or cultural groups with negative characteristics. For instance, across many European languages, various everyday expressions carry deeply rooted anti-Roma bias, casually perpetuating racial prejudice against Romani communities, and equating them with deception or dishonesty.

Trainers should also be mindful of behaviours that may be experienced as disrespectful or discriminatory, such as imitating a learner's foreign accent, mocking the way someone speaks, or making jokes based on a person's nationality, ethnicity, race, or cultural background. Such behaviours can undermine learners' sense of belonging and create an unsafe or exclusionary learning environment.

When designing activities, trainers should avoid exercises that require learners to reveal family status, relationship status, gender identity, sexual orientation, migration journey or legal status. If such themes are relevant, learners should be allowed to use fictional examples, general statements or pass.

Training materials should also be reviewed. Forms, examples, dialogues, case studies and images should avoid heteronormative, cisnormative or culturally stereotyped assumptions, including assumptions based on race, ethnicity, or migration background. For example, a language exercise about "family" can include partner, chosen family, single parent, friend, sibling or community support person, rather than only "husband/wife/children". Another example is the representation of racialised and migrant people in teaching materials. Whenever possible, challenge stereotypes by portraying people from diverse racial, ethnic, and migration backgrounds in a wide range of roles, including positions of leadership, responsibility, and professional expertise.

Inclusion, or its absence, can also stem from factors outside an educator's direct control in the classroom. Administrative processes, such as forms and registration procedures, also deserve attention. Where possible, educators and organisations should push for forms that offer a non-binary or "prefer not to say" gender option and avoid requesting migration status or document type unless legally required. In the classroom, educators should use each learner's preferred name, regardless of the name on official documents.

Finally, trainers should remember that terminology changes. A good trainer does not need to know every term in advance. It is acceptable to say: "Thank you for explaining this term. I will make sure to use it respectfully." Humility and willingness to learn are part of inclusive practice.

4.4 Practical guidance for trainers

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No.	Guidance / tip	Why it matters
1	Use neutral words when you do not know someone's situation, such as "partner", "family member" or "person close to you".	Neutral language avoids assumptions about gender, sexuality or family structure.
2	Use the name and pronouns that a learner asks you to use and/or uses when introducing themselves.	Using a person's correct name and pronouns is one of the most direct ways of signalling respect. Consistently misgendering a learner is a form of microaggression, even if unintentional.
3	Avoid asking personal questions about bodies, documents, sexual orientation, gender identity or status.	Such questions can be intrusive, unsafe or irrelevant to learning.
4	Correct exclusionary language calmly and briefly.	It protects the learning environment without turning the correction into public humiliation.
5	Do not use LGBTQIA+ learners or migrant learners as examples without their consent.	Learners should not be made responsible for educating the group about their identity or experience.
6	Review your training materials periodically for exclusionary language, including assumptions about family structure, gender, relationships and migration.	The sample sentences in section 4.6 can serve as a starting checklist.
7	Review your language for racist or discriminatory terms and expressions. Choose words that promote respect and inclusion.	Some expressions may have become normalised in everyday communication, but this does not mean they are free from discriminatory or harmful connotations.

4.5 Examples, mini-scenarios or case situations

Example / scenario	Situation	Suggested trainer response	Learning point
Example 1	In a classroom dialogue, the trainer has written: "Every woman should talk to her	The trainer responds: "Yes, that is a good point. You can use 'partner' or 'spouse',	Small wording changes can make learning materials more inclusive.

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Example / scenario	Situation	Suggested trainer response	Learning point
	husband." A learner asks whether the sentence can use "partner" instead.	as they include all possible genders."	Positive input towards inclusion from learners is useful and should be praised and contextualised.
Example 2	A learner refers to another learner as "he" several times, although the learner uses "she".	The trainer says calmly: "Just a quick correction: Maria uses 'she'. Let's continue."	Corrections can be brief and respectful. Long explanations may embarrass the learner concerned.
Example 3	During a discussion, a learner asks another participant: "Are you a refugee? Why did you leave your country?"	The trainer intervenes: "We do not ask people to share personal migration stories unless they choose to. You can speak generally or use a fictional example."	Migration history may be sensitive. Trainers should protect privacy and choice.

4.6 Practical activity / tool for trainers

Activity / tool title	Inclusive Language Review
Purpose	To help trainers identify assumptions in educational language and replace them with more inclusive alternatives.
Target group	Adult educators, trainers, facilitators, staff teams
Time	30 minutes
Materials	Printed examples, course materials, handouts, slides or online shared document
Steps	1. Give participants 5–8 sample sentences from educational materials. 2. Ask them to underline words or assumptions that may exclude LGBTQIA+ migrants or other diverse learners. 3. In pairs, ask them to rewrite the sentences using more inclusive language. 4. Discuss the rewritten examples in plenary. 5. Ask each participant to identify one document or activity from their own teaching that they can review after the session.
Debrief questions	Which assumptions were easiest to identify? Which were more hidden? How can inclusive language remain natural and clear? What changes can be applied immediately in your own materials?

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Adaptation notes	For lower language levels, use fewer examples and focus on simple word choices such as *husband/wife* becomes *partner*, *mother/father* becomes *parent/family member*. For online delivery, use a shared document or collaborative board. For multilingual settings: some inclusive language alternatives (e.g. gender-neutral pronouns, singular "they") may not have direct equivalents in all project languages. Translators, and trainers adapting materials, should consult LGBTQIA+ community organisations in each country for current preferred practice.

Sample sentences for review

Original sentence	More inclusive alternative	Why it is more inclusive
"Ask your husband or wife to help you complete the form."	"Ask your partner, family member or someone you trust to help you complete the form."	It does not assume marital status or heterosexual relationships.
"Each student should write his name on the paper."	"Each learner should write their name on the paper."	It avoids unnecessary gendered language.
"Tell the class about your family and why you came to this country."	"You may share something about your background if you wish, or use a fictional example."	It avoids forced disclosure of personal or migration history.
"Men and women should stand in two groups."	"Please form two groups."	It avoids forcing learners into binary gender categories.
"What is your real name?"	"What name would you like us to use in class?" "How would you like us to call you?"	It respects self-identification and avoids invalidating the learner.

N.B: Regardless of LGBTQIA+ inclusive language and attitudes, the alternatives offered help create a generally more inclusive and secure environment. They prevent learners from feeling compelled to share personal information they might not feel comfortable or ready to disclose, such as details about their family, relationships, legal status, or life experiences. This approach benefits not only LGBTQIA+ migrants but also any learner who prefers to keep certain experiences or circumstances private. In this context, inclusive language isn't a special accommodation for a particular group but a better default for everyone.

4.7 Reflection questions for trainers

1. Which terms related to LGBTQIA+ identities or migration do I feel confident using, and which do I need to understand better?
2. Do my teaching materials assume that all learners are heterosexual, cisgender or part of traditional family structures?
3. How do I react when a learner uses outdated or discriminatory language?
4. How can I explain inclusive terminology without making LGBTQIA+ migrant learners feel exposed?
5. What procedures does my organisation have for names, pronouns, privacy and respectful communication?

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4.8 Short checklist / key messages

✓	Key message / checklist item
☐	Sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics are different concepts.
☐	LGBTQIA+ is an umbrella term; not every person will use the same label for themselves.
☐	Self-identification matters: use the terms, name and pronouns that a person chooses to share.
☐	Avoid intrusive questions about identity, body, documents, relationships or migration history.
☐	Review your language for racist or discriminatory terms and expressions. This also includes avoiding behaviours such as imitating a learner's foreign accent or making jokes based on a person's nationality or ethnicity.
☐	Use neutral and inclusive language when you do not know someone's situation.
☐	Follow community guidance in the host-country language, as LGBTQIA+ terms do not translate directly across all languages.
☐	Terminology should support dignity and participation, not force people into labels.

4.9 Further reading and useful resources

Title / resource	Source	Link / reference	Language	Why useful
Multilingual Glossary of Terms on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics	UNHCR	UNHCR / Refworld, 2024	Arabic, English, French, Spanish	Provides SOGIESC-related terms and definitions in several languages, useful for multilingual and migration-related

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Title / resource	Source	Link / reference	Language	Why useful
				settings. (Refworld)
Need to Know Guidance: Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Persons in Forced Displacement	UNHCR	UNHCR / Refworld, 2021	English	Useful for understanding respectful, safe and confidentiality-aware work with LGBTQIA+ people in forced displacement. (Refworld)
SOGIESC and working with LGBTIQ+ persons in forced displacement	UNHCR	UNHCR training package webpage	English	Offers training-oriented guidance for professionals working with forcibly displaced and stateless people with diverse SOGIESC. (UNHCR)
SOGIESC – Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics Unit	Council of Europe	Council of Europe	English	Useful institutional reference for human rights work related to SOGIESC in Europe. (Portal)
LGBTIQ equality at a crossroads: progress	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	FRA, 2024	English	Provides recent European evidence on discriminati

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Title / resource	Source	Link / reference	Language	Why useful
and challenges				on, violence and equality challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ people. (fra.europa.eu)
List of LGBTQ+ Terms and Inclusive Definitions	Stonewall.org.uk	https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/list-lgbtq-terms	English	The most widely used and regularly updated LGBTQIA+ terminology reference in European education contexts.
GLAAD Media Reference Guide-11th Edition	GLAAD	https://glaad.org/reference/terms	English	Nuanced, regularly updated definitions of LGBTQIA+ terms as used in professional and media contexts; particularly useful for terms where precise wording matters, such as "sexual orientation", "gender identity" and "transition".
The New Vocabulary	INCLUSION VOCABULA	https://inclusionvocabulary.infoproject.eu/	English	A multilingual

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Title / resource	Source	Link / reference	Language	Why useful
Handbook / Inclusion vocabulary Erasmus+ project	RY Consortium		Bulgarian Greek Italian Portuguese Serbian Spanish	inclusive vocabulary handbook targeting educators, with definitions, good and bad practices, and pedagogical guidance on LGBTQI+ terminology developed for an Erasmus+ project (2020-1-PTO1-KA201-078604)
Gender-fair translation: a case study beyond the binary	Taylor & Francis / Journal of Specialised Translation	https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0907676X.2023.2268654	English	Academic discussion of cross-linguistic challenges in non-binary gender expression; useful for translation teams.

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Council of Europe. (n.d.). SOGIESC: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics Unit.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex. University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989(1), 139–167.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2024). LGBTIQ equality at a crossroads: progress and challenges.

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UNHCR. (2021). Need to Know Guidance: Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Persons in Forced Displacement.

UNHCR. (2024). Multilingual Glossary of Terms on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics.

UNHCR. (n.d.). SOGIESC and working with LGBTIQ+ persons in forced displacement.

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CHAPTER 05

Principles of Inclusive Communication for Teachers

Inclusive language in everyday teaching



GO INCLUSIVE / HANDBOOK FOR TRAINERS

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5. Principles of Inclusive Communication for Teachers

Lead partner	CLAVIS
Target readers	Adult educators, trainers, facilitators, counsellors and professionals in adult education/integration settings

5.1 Chapter overview

Inclusive language in general means language that does not assume, stereotype or erase identities. It is especially relevant in classrooms where learners may identify as LGBTQIA+ and where assumptions about gender, family, and sexuality are easily embedded in language. Language habits are often unconscious, but language is never neutral — not even when you're "just" busy teaching grammar. Our words can implicitly signal who is included, who is seen, and who belongs.

This chapter explains the core principles of inclusive communication for teachers working in adult education. It focuses on how everyday language choices — in speaking, teaching materials and classroom interactions — can either affirm or exclude learners. By being aware of inclusive language practices, teachers can create learning environments where all learners can feel included and thus participate safely and authentically.

5.2 Learning aims and expected outcomes for trainers

No.	By the end of this chapter, trainers will be able to...
1	Understand the significance of inclusive language and how it affects learner well-being and participation.
2	Recognise heteronormative and gender-assumptive patterns in own language use and be willing to correct these patterns.
3	Apply gender-neutral and non-assumptive language in classroom communication.
4	Use the names, pronouns and identities that learners indicate as their own — also when these differ from official documents/online platforms.
5	Approach inclusive language as an ongoing, developmental practice rather than a fixed standard to be achieved at once.

5.3 Main analysis / content

5.3.1 Context and rationale

Language norms change slowly across society with time, and teachers — whether they are aware of it or not — have real influence on these norms in their classrooms. The goal of this

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chapter is to encourage reflection, small steps and a willingness to develop one's practice over time. Language habits do not change overnight.

Language holds power, also in a classroom. It communicates not only information but also norms, expectations, and belonging. Teachers can unconsciously and unwillingly signal that certain identities are more legitimate than others, when using language that assumes all learners have different-sex partners, binary gender identities or heteronormative family structures.

These implicit assumptions matter enormously in adult migrant education, where learners are already navigating language barriers, cultural adjustment and — in many cases — significant vulnerability. For LGBTQIA+ learners, including those who have not publicly disclosed their identity, the language of the classroom can either reinforce a sense of invisibility or, on the contrary, communicate safety and acceptance. The latter is crucial in a learning environment.

5.3.2 Key concepts, principles or findings

Inclusive communication rests on several interconnected principles:

Recognition of diversity: Inclusive language means your words don't assume everyone has the same gender identity, sexual orientation, or family and relationship structure — or that any one of these is the norm and the rest are exceptions.

Non-assumption of identity: Do not assume a learner's identity, gender or relationship structure based on their name, appearance, or background. Just as you cannot always see how someone identifies, you should not assign an identity to them before they have shared it.

Self-identification: Respect that each person knows best how they feel and identify. Using the names and pronouns a learner tells you they prefer — even if these differ from official documents or online platforms — is a basic form of respect, and it matters tremendously for them.

Visibility matters: Even if no learner explicitly identifies as LGBTQIA+ in your class, it is highly likely that someone does. Using inclusive language in the classroom means that person does not feel alienated, excluded or silenced, thereby creating safer conditions for learning.

Avoiding heteronormative language: Heteronormative language assumes that all learners are heterosexual and in different-sex relationships or family structures. Teachers should avoid questions and examples that are framed **exclusively** around different-sex partners, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, etc.

The right to make mistakes: No one achieves inclusive language overnight. Language development in society takes time, and it is an ongoing process. What matters is the willingness to try, to notice one's own habits, to correct oneself when needed and to keep going.

5.3.3 Relevance for adult educators and trainers

Inclusive communication is not an add-on to teaching — it is part of it. The language used in the classroom is a teaching language, and it carries influence — whether or not the teacher

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is conscious of it. A teacher who uses gender-neutral language when talking about families, professions and relationships is not doing something separate from language teaching: they are also demonstrating a richer and more accurate picture of the world.

For learners who are learning a new language, the language of the classroom is often their primary exposure to the norms and patterns of that language. If the teaching language is heteronormative or gender-assumptive, learners will absorb those patterns as the standard. Inclusive teaching language therefore also supports richer language learning.

Teachers may sometimes feel that inclusive communication is overwhelming or time-consuming. It is indeed a change of mindset, and a conscious change of habits. The important starting point is to acknowledge that your teaching language has power, whether you have been conscious of it before or not, and whether you want it or not. This chapter proposes a gradual approach: start with small steps, become curious about your own language habits, be open to learn something new, and don't be afraid to correct yourself.

5.3.4 Link with LGBTQIA+ migrants and intersectionality

LGBTQIA+ migrants face a specific set of intersecting challenges. They may be navigating a new language, a new cultural environment and a new legal and administrative system — all while potentially concealing or managing an identity that may have put them at risk in their country of origin. In language and integration classrooms, they often encounter a significant tension: they need to share personal information about their lives to practice the language, but that personal information may reveal an identity they are not ready or safe to disclose.

Inclusive communication directly addresses this tension. When a teacher uses gender-neutral language and open questions (e.g. "who is important in your life?" rather than "do you have a husband or wife?"), learners can answer honestly without being forced into either disclosure or active concealment. This reduces psychological load and supports authentic participation.

It is also important to remember that LGBTQIA+ identity is only one dimension of a learner's identity. A learner who identifies as LGBTQIA+ should not be reduced to that identity in the classroom. Inclusive communication means making space for the full complexity of each person — not singling anyone out but not erasing anyone either.

5.3.5 Practical implications for inclusive adult learning environments

The following practical implications should be taken into account:

- Language habits are often unconscious. You might be a supporter or part of the LGBTQIA+ community but still carry linguistic habits that are not as inclusive as you wish. Creating awareness of your own language patterns is the first and most important step.
- Learning without making mistakes is not realistic. If a teacher uses a non-inclusive term by habit, they can correct themselves, apologise briefly, and continue.
- Use gender-neutral language in whole-class situations, when addressing someone who has not indicated their gender, and when discussing family, relationships, professions and personal experiences. Consistent use avoids singling out LGBTQIA+ learners, which can be unsafe, embarrassing or unpleasant.
- Review teaching materials, images, names, role plays and dialogues for hidden assumptions about gender and sexuality. Include open and diverse representations without making an identity appear exotic or exceptional.

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- Small visible signals — such as a rainbow flag in the classroom or reception — communicate to LGBTQIA+ learners that the space is welcoming, even before any spoken interaction has taken place.

5.4 Practical guidance for trainers

These are words and phrases to be specifically aware of when using inclusive language.

Avoid / context	Use instead	Reason / note
Correcting other learners explicitly: “No, you should say ‘they’!”	Model the correct pronoun without unnecessary attention: “Yes, they say that …”. This is called recasting.	Recasting avoids shaming or drawing unnecessary attention to the learner. Address repeated misgendering using the Chapter 7 protocol.
Husband / wife, when the learner’s family structure and members are unknown	Partner / spouse	Gender-inclusive; avoids binary and heteronormative assumptions.
Mother / father, when the learner’s family structure and members are unknown	Parent / parents	Gender-inclusive; avoids binary assumptions.
Brother / sister, when the learner’s family structure and members are unknown	Sibling / siblings	Gender-inclusive; avoids binary assumptions.
Both genders	All genders	Gender-inclusive; avoids binary assumptions.
Boys and girls / ladies and gentlemen / you guys	Everyone / learners / folks / all of you	Inclusive address supports all gender identities in the room.
He or she or s/he (as generic pronouns)	They / them / their (singular); the person in question; that person	Gender-inclusive; avoids binary assumptions.
Chairman / fireman / stewardess	Chair / firefighter / flight attendant	Gender-neutral occupational titles.
Born a girl / born female / birth sex	Assigned female at birth / assigned male at birth	Respects that gender identity may differ from sex assigned at birth.
Female to male / male to female (transition)	Trans man / trans woman	Person-centred framing; avoids reducing identity to transition direction. Use the language the person uses for themselves.
Hermaphrodite / transsexual / tranny	Intersex / transgender person / trans person	Outdated or derogatory terms. Do not use them to refer to other people, even if they use them for themselves. Intersex and trans are distinct concepts.
Normal / natural (about gender or sexuality)	Common / typical / cisgender / heterosexual	Avoid implying that non-cisgender or non-heterosexual people are abnormal.
Sexual preference	Sexual orientation	“Preference” wrongly implies a conscious choice.

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Gay lifestyle / homosexual lifestyle	Being gay / same-sex relationship	"Lifestyle" trivialises a fundamental identity.
Admitted / openly gay	Is gay / identifies as gay	Framing coming out as a confession or revelation reinforces stigma.

5.5 Examples, mini-scenarios or case situations

Example / scenario	Situation	Suggested teacher response	Learning point
Example 1	A teacher asks learners to introduce their family and says: “Tell me about your husband or wife.” A learner with a gender-fluid partner says nothing.	Rephrase: “Tell me about your partner or someone important in your life.”	Hetero- and gender-normative phrasing creates silence. A simple adjustment opens space for all learners.
Example 2	A teacher accidentally uses the wrong pronoun when referring to a non-binary learner.	Say calmly: “Sorry — [correct pronoun]”, or even just repeat the correct pronoun, if in front of the whole classroom, in order to avoid unnecessary attention to the learner. Do not over-explain or make it a moment of drama.	Calm, brief correction models that language development is normal. It reassures the learner and the class.
Example 3	A teaching dialogue features a man named Lars who works as a nurse and his wife who stays at home. A learner asks: “Is Lars unusual?”	Acknowledge the question and reframe: “People work in many different jobs regardless of gender. Let’s look at what skills a nurse needs.” Adapt future materials to avoid gender-typed roles.	Teaching materials carry assumptions. Reviewing and adaptin them is part of inclusive practice.

5.6 Practical activity / tool for trainers

Activity / tool title	Language Habit Audit: Noticing my own language use
Purpose	Help trainers become aware of their own habitual language patterns and identify where inclusive alternatives can be introduced.
Target group	Adult educators
Time	20–30 minutes (individual or in pairs)

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Materials	Pen and paper or a printed checklist; access to one recent teaching plan or dialogue exercise
Steps	1. Take a recent lesson plan or a dialogue exercise you have used. Read through it as if you were an LGBTQIA+ learner. 2. Note any phrases, questions or examples that assume heterosexuality or a binary gender identity (e.g. “Do you have any brothers or sisters?”, “A husband is a man married to a woman”). 3. Write a more neutral alternative (e.g. “Do you have any siblings?”, “A husband is a man married to another person”). 4. Reflect: How often do these patterns appear? In which topics or exercises?
Debrief questions	What surprised you most? Which habits felt easiest to change? Which were hardest? What is one thing you could change from your next class onwards?
Adaptation notes	Can be done individually as private self-reflection or as a group activity in a staff meeting.

5.7 Reflection questions for trainers

1. Think about a topic you teach regularly — for example, family, work or daily routines. What language patterns do you use? Are there assumptions embedded in how you introduce the topic?

2. Do you remember accidentally using a non-inclusive term in class? What happened? How did you respond? How would you respond next time?

3. Do you assume that all your learners identify as heterosexual or with a binary gender? What would change in your practice if you assumed otherwise?

4. How do you feel about making mistakes when trying to use more inclusive language? What would help you move forward without feeling ashamed or embarrassed?

5. What is one small change you can make in your language from tomorrow?

5.8 Short checklist / key messages

✓	Key message / checklist item
☐	I use gender-neutral language when speaking about families, relationships and professions.
☐	I do not assume all learners are heterosexual or have a binary gender identity.
☐	I accept and use the names and pronouns learners use for themselves.
☐	I correct myself calmly and briefly when I accidentally use a non-inclusive term.

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☐	I look at my teaching materials and adapt examples or images that carry heteronormative or gender-binary assumptions.
☐	I behave as if there are LGBTQIA+ learners in the room, whether or not anyone has come out to me.
☐	I understand that inclusive language is a practice, not a perfect standard — and I am committed to developing it over time.

5.9 Further reading and useful resources

Title / resource	Source	Link / reference	Language	Why useful
Vær inkluderende – Københavns Kommunes guide til inkluderende sprogbrug	Københavns Kommune	https://www.kk.dk/sites/default/files/agenda/e4ae53f4-4353-4a3a-bee7-52cce8e7f30f/6472f39b-70a5-4c22-8637-e5720b2e8f30-bilag-3.pdf	Danish	Practical guide to inclusive language in a Danish public institution context.
Using inclusive language in education	UCL (University College London)	https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/publications/2023/jul/using-inclusive-language-education	English	Guidance on inclusive language specifically for educational settings.
Inclusive Language: LGBT+	University of Edinburgh Information Services	https://information-services.ed.ac.uk/editorial-style-guide/language-tone/inclusive-language/lgbt	English	Style guide for inclusive and respectful language around LGBTQIA+ identities.
APA Inclusive Language Guidelines	American Psychological Association	https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines	English	Comprehensive research-based guidelines on inclusive language across identity dimensions.

5.10 References

American Psychological Association. (2023). *APA inclusive language guidelines*, 2nd edition. https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines

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CHAPTER 06

Practical Tips for Teachers

Small changes for a more welcoming classroom



GO INCLUSIVE / HANDBOOK FOR TRAINERS

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6. Practical Tips for Teachers

Lead partner	CLAVIS
Target readers	Adult educators, trainers, and facilitators in adult education/integration settings

6.1 Chapter overview

This chapter translates the principles of inclusive communication into concrete, daily actions that teachers can take in their classrooms. Chapter 6 is deliberately practical, building on the principles of Chapter 5: it provides specific strategies that teachers can use immediately and revisit regularly.

Inclusive practice is usually built gradually — not overnight. This chapter supports teachers in making changes in a realistic and sustainable way.

6.2 Learning aims and expected outcomes for trainers

No.	Learning aim / expected outcome
1	Apply specific inclusive language substitutions in classroom communication (e.g. “partner” instead of “husband/wife”).
2	Use open questions that allow learners to participate without being forced to disclose sensitive personal information.
3	Adapt teaching materials — including images, names, dialogues and role plays — to reflect diverse identities and family forms.
4	Establish a classroom agreement that ensures safety and respect for all learners.
5	Use digital tools and AI responsibly in the preparation of inclusive materials.

6.3 Main analysis / content

6.3.1 Context and rationale

This chapter is built on the understanding that inclusive practice is a habit, and that habits are formed through small, repeated choices rather than through extensive transformations.

A starting point could be the classroom agreement: an explicit understanding of the linguistic norms in the classroom, that emphasizes a zero tolerance on discrimination. This agreement should be revisited and reinforced regularly. It communicates to all learners that this is a space where dignity and respect are non-negotiable. Teachers can support the agreement with referring to the European Convention on Human Rights.

6.3.2 Key concepts, principles or findings

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The following key principles underpin the practical tips in this chapter:

Language substitution: Simple, consistent substitutions in everyday classroom language have a cumulative effect. Replacements of “husband or wife” with “partner/spouse”, “mother and father” with “family” or “parents”, and “men and women” with “people”, “learners” or “everyone” are small adjustments but change the signal the language sends.

Open questions: Open-ended questions allow learners to share as much or as little as they choose. Asking “who is important in your life?” gives learners more freedom than “are you married?” or “what is the name of your wife?”.

Inclusive materials: Teaching materials are often implicitly heteronormative or gender-binary. Images showing only different-sex couples, names that are always paired by presumed gender, and role plays framed around stereotypical family structures all reinforce norms that exclude some learners. Materials can be reviewed and adapted to also include diverse family forms and identities — without making any identity exotic or abnormal.

Protecting privacy: Not all learners feel safe to share personal experiences — including about their family, relationship, or identity. Teachers should not require personal disclosure in activities involving sensitive topics. Using fictional cases, role cards or media texts allows learners to engage with the content without exposing themselves.

Navigating resistance: Some learners may come from cultures where LGBTQIA+ identities have been stigmatised or framed negatively. Teachers should not shame learners for lacking vocabulary or prior knowledge but must clearly uphold classroom norms of respect and non-discrimination. The goal is not to force personal agreement, but to ensure safe and respectful participation for all.

6.3.3 Relevance for adult educators and trainers

The practical tips in this chapter are directly applicable across a wide range of teaching situations, where learners who do not fit heteronormative or gender-binary assumptions are at risk of being excluded.

Teachers should also be prepared to respond when learners mock or make discriminatory comments about other learners. This is distinct from simply working with diverse vocabulary: it requires confident, clear facilitation, and it is addressed in more detail in Chapter 7.

6.3.4 Link with LGBTQIA+ migrants and intersectionality

For LGBTQIA+ migrants specifically, the classroom is often one of very few social spaces they inhabit in the new country. It may be where they first encounter the host language as a living language. The norms established in that space — through the teacher’s language, the materials used, and the classroom agreements maintained — will either reinforce or reduce the sense of safety.

LGBTQIA+ migrants may also be navigating active concealment of their identity. This places an additional cognitive and emotional load on them in the classroom. Inclusive teaching practices reduce this load by creating an environment where no one is pushed towards disclosure, but where LGBTQIA+ identities are not invisible or excluded either.

At the same time, some learners may have strong negative reactions to LGBTQIA+ content based on their cultural or religious background. Teachers must hold both of these realities:

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protecting learners who may be LGBTQIA+ and navigating learners who may resist or reject inclusive norms.

6.4 Practical guidance for trainers

No.	Guidance / tip	Why it matters
1	Establish and regularly revisit a classroom contract: “In this class, we accept each other as we are. We do not engage in discriminatory behaviour based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, appearance or anything else. We respect each other, and everyone has the right to be themselves.”	A visible, repeated agreement makes safety explicit and gives both teacher and learners a shared reference point.
2	Use language substitutions consistently: “partner” instead of “husband/wife”; “family” or “parents” instead of “mother and father”; “people”, “learners” or “everyone” instead of “men and women”.	These small, consistent substitutions signal inclusion to all learners, including those who have not come out.
3	Ask open questions: e.g. “who is important in your life?” instead of “are you married?”.	Open questions allow learners to share on their own terms, without being forced into disclosure or active concealment.
4	Review images, names, family examples, role plays and dialogues. Include different family forms, identities and migration experiences without making them appear exotic or abnormal. When discussing professions, focus on the competences used rather than assigning a gender to the role.	Materials can carry hidden assumptions. Reviewing and adapting them creates a more inclusive picture of the world.
5	Work with sensitive topics without requiring personal disclosure. Use fictional cases, role cards, public examples or media texts so that learners can engage with content without being exposed.	Not all learners are safe to share personal information. Protecting this option supports authentic participation.
6	Use digital tools and AI to adapt texts, create neutral examples, simplify language and check materials for bias — but always review the output manually before use.	AI tools can support inclusive material preparation, but require human oversight to catch errors, bias or contextual mismatches.
7	If possible, make your LGBTQIA+ inclusivity visible — for example, by displaying a small rainbow flag as part of the classroom decoration. Every small signal matters to those who see it.	Visible signals communicate welcome before any spoken interaction and are particularly significant for learners who have not yet decided whether to come out.

6.5 Practical activity / tool for trainers

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Activity / tool title	Classroom Contract: Building shared norms together
Purpose	To establish a shared, explicit and visible classroom agreement that protects all learners and creates a safe foundation for participation.
Target group	Adult learners in language or integration programmes (teacher-facilitated)
Time	15–20 minutes (first session); 5 minutes for each revisit
Materials	Flipchart or whiteboard; a printed or displayed version of the agreement after it is finalised
Steps	1. Introduce the idea of a classroom contract: “We are going to agree on how we treat each other in this class.” 2. Ask learners what they need to feel safe and comfortable while learning. Give them a few small pieces of paper, and ask them to write their suggestions anonymously on these. Collect the answers and include them in the contract. 3. Add any essential elements that are not yet covered — including: accepting each other regardless of background, religion, gender or sexuality; no discriminatory language or behaviour. 4. Display the contract visibly in the classroom. 5. Return briefly to the contract at the start of later sessions: “I remind you, that these are the agreements of this class.”
Adaptation notes	For lower language levels, use simple language and visual support. For online delivery, use a shared document or collaborative digital board. In contexts where learners may have strong cultural or religious resistance, the teacher may need to present the agreement as a non-negotiable institutional norm rather than a fully co-created document.

Example of a possible Classroom Contract:

In this classroom, we agree to:

1. *Treat everyone with dignity and respect — regardless of background, beliefs, family form, or identity.*
2. *Use inclusive language — for example, "partner" instead of assuming "husband/wife," and "family" instead of assuming "mother and father."*
3. *Respect privacy — no one is required to share personal details about their life, relationships, or identity. It's always okay to answer using "a friend" or a fictional example instead of your own life.*
4. *Speak up, not down — disagreement and questions are welcome; mockery, insults, or discriminatory comments are not.*
5. *Ask when unsure — it's okay not to know a word or custom. Curiosity is welcome; judgement is not.*

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This is a zero-tolerance space for discrimination. These norms are grounded in the principle that everyone has the right to be treated equally and with dignity, as reflected in the European Convention on Human Rights.

We will revisit this contract together at [regular interval, e.g. the start of each module] to check in and adjust it as a group.

6.6 Reflection questions for trainers

1. Look at the materials you most often use in class. Do the images, names and examples reflect a diverse range of family forms and identities? What would you change?

2. Do you currently have a classroom agreement? If so, how often do you revisit it? If not, what would you need to establish one?

3. Think about a recent lesson on a personal topic (family, daily life, work). Were there moments where learners could have been forced into uncomfortable disclosure? How could those moments be redesigned?

4. How do you respond if learners make discriminatory comments or mock another learner? Do you feel confident in your response? What support would help?

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CHAPTER 07

Responding to Discriminatory Incidents in the Classroom

Recognise discrimination and respond with care



GO INCLUSIVE / HANDBOOK FOR TRAINERS

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7. Responding to Discriminatory Incidents in the Classroom

Lead partner	FAM Y LIAS
Contributing partners	
Target readers	Adult educators, trainers, facilitators, counsellors and professionals in adult education/integration settings
Suggested length	[Insert expected number of pages / word count]
Version/date	Version 1- 05/06/2026

7.1 Chapter overview

Adult educators, as facilitators and guides of diverse groups of learners, may encounter situations involving racist, or LGBTQIA+-phobic attitudes and behaviours. As educators, they occupy a central position within the learning environment and therefore have a responsibility to address such behaviours, establish clear boundaries, and promote respect for all participants.

This chapter provides guidance on how to respond to situations of discrimination, exclusion, or prejudice in ways that help create and maintain safe and inclusive learning spaces for LGBTQIA+ migrant and racialised learners. It also offers discussion topics aimed at fostering learners' understanding of the root causes and impacts of racism, and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics.

7.2 Learning aims and expected outcomes for trainers

No.	Learning aim / expected outcome
1	Identify racist and LGBTQIA+-phobic attitudes and behaviours in educational settings.
2	Recognise their responsibility to address discriminatory attitudes and behaviours in the classroom, understand the importance of taking a clear stance and setting boundaries, and acknowledge that failing to respond may contribute to the normalisation of such behaviours.
3	Become familiar with different strategies and key steps for responding to situations involving discrimination, bias, or exclusion.
4	Gain an understanding of discussion topics that can help learners explore the historical roots and contemporary manifestations of racism and LGBTQIA+phobia.

7.3 Main analysis / content

7.3.1 Context and rationale

In order to effectively respond to situations of bias and discrimination affecting LGBTQIA+ migrants and racialised individuals, trainers must understand what racism and LGBTQIA+ prejudice and discrimination are and how they manifest in contemporary societies.

Various studies show that members of LGBTQIA+ migrant and racialised community report daily exposure to discrimination, harassment, and violence; exclusion from participation in community or religious structures due to their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression; barriers to accessing healthcare, mental health and psychosocial support services; lack of social support; homophobia and transphobia within migrant communities; and racism within LGBTQIA+ communities (Yarwood et al., 2022). Research on transgender women's experiences with police bias and discrimination also highlights the high levels of police violence experienced by this group, including surveillance, harassment, misgendering, and verbal, physical, and sexual abuse (Hereth, 2025). Other forms of discrimination, although less frequently analysed through an

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intersectional lens, are commonly reported by migrants and LGBTQIA+ individuals, such as difficulties accessing housing and employment opportunities.

There is a widespread belief that Western societies are no longer racist because openly racist expressions are less common today, particularly in the media and public institutions, where there is broad social consensus condemning overt racism. Nevertheless, such comments and behaviours continue to occur in various settings, including schools and workplaces.

Importantly, racism has evolved and often manifests through cultural prejudice rather than explicit references to race. As Aníbal Quijano argues through the concept of the coloniality of power, contemporary societies continue to reproduce hierarchies inherited from colonialism, placing Western knowledge, values, and ways of life in a position of superiority. Similarly, Edward Said's work on Orientalism highlights how non-Western people have often been represented as exotic, backward, irrational, or culturally deficient, contributing to the normalisation of unequal power relations. Racism frequently involves associating racialised individuals with a foreign culture perceived as different from or external to Western culture, while simultaneously considering these cultures—and, by extension, the people associated with them—as less valuable, less advanced, or subordinate.

Contemporary racism is often expressed through more subtle mechanisms, such as attributing stereotypes to specific cultures, adopting paternalistic attitudes, infantilising racialised individuals, minimising or denying racist behaviours, expressing feelings of superiority, or excluding and rejecting others through indifference, distrust, ridicule, or invisibilisation. Examples include expressing surprise when an Afro-descendant person occupies a highly qualified professional position; accepting without question that migrant or racialised people are absent from neighbourhood associations despite representing a significant proportion of local residents; touching a Black person's hair without consent; sexualising individuals based on their country of origin; using expressions with racist connotations; avoiding sitting next to a racialised person on public transport; or clutching one's belongings more tightly when crossing paths with a racialised individual.

Since racism is often considered a phenomenon of the past, many people find it difficult to identify racist attitudes, behaviours, and assumptions in their own environments and even in themselves.

LGBTQIA+ prejudice and discrimination refers to all negative attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and forms of hostility directed towards people who identify as LGBTQIA+ or who are perceived as belonging to this community. As Judith Butler has argued, social norms surrounding gender and sexuality establish expectations about how individuals should behave and identify, often marginalising those who do not conform to binary and heteronormative models (Butler, 1990). This means that anyone who challenges gender norms or heteronormative expectations may be exposed to discrimination.

Like racism, LGBTQIA+ phobia can take the form of verbal or physical aggression. However, it is often expressed through stereotypes, assumptions, and the attribution of specific roles or characteristics based on a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual characteristics. It can also manifest through the assumption that cisgender heterosexuality is the norm, while other identities and experiences remain invisible or unacknowledged.

Examples include the existence of only male and female toilet facilities without consideration for non-binary identities; healthcare professionals assuming that all patients are heterosexual and engage in heterosexual relationships; teachers presenting the nuclear family composed of a mother, father, and children as the only family model; or individuals assuming a person's gender identity based solely on physical appearance rather than asking for and respecting their pronouns.

People are often unaware of their racist or LGBTQIA+ discriminatory attitudes, prejudices, comments, or behaviours because both racism and LGBTQIA+ prejudice and discrimination are structural forms of discrimination. This means that they are embedded within institutions, public administrations, social norms, and power structures, and are reproduced across generations through socialisation processes, maintaining unequal distributions of privilege and disadvantage.

As Sara Ahmed (2012) argues, institutions are not neutral spaces; they are shaped by norms and histories that determine who is likely to feel included and who remains at the margins, even within contexts that explicitly promote diversity and equality. In a complementary way, Paul B. Preciado (2008) highlights how contemporary societies regulate bodies, identities, and sexualities through medical, legal, and educational frameworks that define what is considered normal or legitimate, reinforcing normative understandings of gender and sexuality.

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Together, these perspectives help trainers understand that discrimination is not only the result of individual attitudes, but also of institutional and social arrangements that produce and sustain inequality.

At this point, it is important to introduce the concept of privilege. Privileges are related to the degree of access individuals have to fundamental rights such as healthcare, education, employment, food, and housing. They are also connected to the level of recognition, legitimacy, influence, and power that individuals possess within their communities, workplaces, educational institutions, cities, or countries.

These factors help us understand the social position of individuals and groups, making visible situations of advantage and disadvantage. Privilege is closely linked to the different axes of inequality operating in society, including racism, LGBTQIA+ prejudice and discrimination, ableism, sexism, and social class. Following Peggy McIntosh's work on privilege, these advantages are often invisible to those who benefit from them, while they become highly visible to those who are excluded from them.

For example, a white cisgender heterosexual man without disabilities is generally more likely to obtain employment in many sectors than a Black transgender woman. Similarly, a white woman may encounter fewer obstacles in accessing rental housing than a Roma man. In these examples, the white man and the white woman benefit from certain privileges that are not equally available to the Black transgender woman or the Roma individual, who may experience discrimination based on racism, transphobia, antigypsyism, or multiple forms of exclusion simultaneously.

Trainers who are committed to addressing racism and LGBTQIA+ phobia should first become aware of their own privileges and of the different positions occupied by their learners within systems of power and inequality.

Another important aspect to consider is that, as Patricia Hill Collins and bell hooks have argued, a significant part of the knowledge and analysis concerning racism and LGBTQIA+ phobia comes from the voices and experiences of those who are directly affected by these forms of discrimination. They are often able to perceive dimensions of these realities that remain invisible to those who have not experienced them personally.

This does not mean that only racialised or LGBTQIA+ individuals can understand racism or LGBTQIA+ phobia. Rather, it highlights that their experiences and perspectives are essential for building a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of discrimination and social inequality.

Therefore, when a learner identifies or denounces a discriminatory behaviour, comment, or situation in the classroom, trainers should adopt a position of openness and active listening. They should take these contributions seriously, engage in reflection, and treat them as valuable opportunities for learning, self-criticism, personal growth, and the creation of safer and more inclusive educational environments.

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7.3.2 Key concepts, principles or findings

Protocol for addressing racist and LGBTQIA+ discrimination in the classroom

1. Continuous awareness and reflective stance (before, during and after class)

The trainer should maintain an active position of awareness, self-critique, and continuous analysis of classroom dynamics. This includes:

- Observing participation patterns and classroom interactions.
- Being attentive to how privileges and vulnerabilities are distributed among learners.
- Remaining open, accessible, and available to learners' perceptions and experiences.
- Practising active listening and creating conditions for learners to feel safe expressing concerns.

In this regard, particular attention should be paid to the experiences of LGBTQIA+ migrant and racialised learners, while also remaining attentive to the whole group. It is important not to assume identities: while racialisation is often socially read through visible markers, LGBTQIA+ identities, migration status, or belonging to specific communities cannot and should not be assumed.

2. Immediate response to discriminatory behaviour

When a racist or LGBTQIA+ discriminatory comment, attitude, or behaviour occurs (whether identified by the trainer or by another participant), the situation must be interrupted immediately.

The trainer should:

• Stop the behaviour clearly and calmly.
• Referring to the agreed classroom rules, set a firm boundary: "This kind of comment is not allowed in our class" or "This behaviour is not acceptable."
• Emphasise that the behaviour is causing harm and must not continue.

It is essential to interrupt the situation because discrimination produces immediate harm and cannot be allowed to escalate or persist.

3. Protection and care of affected persons

The trainer must ensure that:

- Affected learners are not forced to explain, justify, or defend themselves.
- Their dignity and emotional safety are protected at all times.
- Their perspective is acknowledged and validated without assumption.

It is also important not to assume how individuals will react: some may wish to speak, express themselves, or remain silent. The trainer must observe, ask, and not predetermine responses.

4. Deciding how to proceed: timing and space

The response depends on the classroom atmosphere:

If the classroom environment is tense or charged:

- Do not address the issue collectively at the moment.
- Speak separately with:
    - the person responsible for the behaviour

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    - the affected individuals
- Return to the issue with the group at a later time (e.g. next session), once the situation is stabilised.

If the classroom environment is safe and supportive:

- A collective reflection may be facilitated in the moment.
- Individual follow-up conversations should still take place afterwards.

5. Separate work with the people involved

With the person/group responsible for the behaviour:

- Help them understand why the behaviour is discriminatory.
- Compare it with another type of discrimination that this student is more familiar with.
- Avoid judging the person or assigning blame, and avoid framing them as inherently racist or LGBTQIA+ prejudiced.
- Reinforce that discrimination is structural and socially learned, and therefore requires active unlearning.
- The goal is awareness, responsibility, and possible repair of harm.

If the person refuses to reflect or repeatedly resists understanding:

- Clear boundaries must be set.
- Respect for classroom norms becomes a condition for participation in the learning space.

With affected individuals or groups:

- Communicate clear institutional and personal rejection of discriminatory behaviour.
- Ask how they feel and what they need in order to feel safe again.
- Ensure they feel supported and not isolated.
- Avoid placing them in a position where they must represent or explain their entire group.

6. Collective work with the group: debate vs. pedagogical reflection

The incident should be addressed with the whole class when appropriate:

- Promote collective awareness of what happened and why it matters.
- Avoid revictimisation or forcing affected individuals to relive the experience.
- Clearly explain that the goal is learning, and building a more equal and inclusive society, not punishment.

It is common that the person responsible for the comment or action is not aware of its discriminatory nature and may attempt to debate or justify it.

In these situations:

- It is not recommended to open a debate in front of the group, especially in the presence of affected individuals. A heated debate is not pedagogically appropriate when there is active harm or power imbalance in the classroom.
- Allowing debate about whether something is racist or LGBTQIA+ discriminatory may put the existence of a safe space into question.
- It may also force affected persons to relive or defend their experience.

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It is important to distinguish between open debate and structured pedagogical reflection. While open debate in the immediate aftermath of a discriminatory incident can place affected individuals at further risk, question the validity of their experiences, and undermine the sense of safety in the classroom, this does not mean that discussion should be avoided.

On the contrary, the objective is to move from spontaneous debate to guided reflection and analysis carried out in a safe, structured, and facilitated educational space. In this context, the focus shifts from contesting experiences to understanding what has happened, why it is discriminatory, and how it relates to broader structural inequalities.

This approach allows learning to take place without exposing affected individuals to further harm and ensures that reflection is pedagogically meaningful, supported, and inclusive.

In some cases, this process can be developed through texts or other educational materials that do not necessarily refer directly to the incident itself. Reflection may instead take place indirectly through activities, classroom dynamics, testimonies, case studies, or other resources, depending on how the affected individuals or groups feel and on the overall classroom climate. This flexibility can help create conditions for meaningful learning while protecting the well-being and participation of those affected.

7. Long-term educational process and follow-up

Addressing discriminatory incidents is not a one-time intervention but part of a broader educational process. Challenging prejudices, assumptions, and discriminatory behaviours requires time, reflection, and sustained engagement.

It is important to recognise that:

- Reflection and awareness are ongoing processes.
- A single intervention is rarely sufficient to produce deep and lasting change.
- Continued work through educational activities, discussions, critical reflection, and inclusive practices is necessary to foster meaningful learning and behavioural change.

Follow-up is therefore an essential part of the response. After an appropriate period of time, educators should, where possible:

- Check in with the affected person or group to understand how they are feeling and whether any further support is needed.
- Assess whether the classroom environment continues to feel safe, respectful, and inclusive.
- Follow up with the person or group responsible for the comment or behaviour to explore the reflections they have developed since the incident and any learning that has taken place.
- Monitor group dynamics to identify any continuing tensions, exclusion, or negative consequences resulting from the incident.

The purpose of this longer-term approach is not to repeatedly revisit the incident, but to ensure that those affected feel supported, that learning has been consolidated, and that the educational community continues to move towards greater inclusion, respect, and equality.

8. What NOT to do

- Do not ignore discriminatory comments or behaviours. **Silence reinforces harm.**
- Do not avoid intervention out of fear of conflict: tension is already present and often already experienced by affected learners.
- Do not treat these situations as neutral conflicts between equal positions.
- Do not apply mediation techniques: these are **not symmetrical conflicts**, but situations of structural inequality and harm.
- The priority is to protect safety and set clear boundaries, not to negotiate discriminatory behaviour.

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9. External support and resources

When situations exceed the trainer's competencies or the institutional capacity:

- Seek support from specialised organisations, collectives, or associations.
- Involve experts, educators, or facilitators from affected communities when possible and appropriate. This is not only a matter of external expertise, but also of educational relevance and representation.

7.3.3 Relevance for adult educators and trainers

As members of society, both educators and learners are influenced by the social structures, norms, and power relations that shape everyday interactions. These dynamics can contribute to the reproduction of prejudices, stereotypes, and forms of structural discrimination, which may also become visible within educational settings. Being able to recognise these dynamics and understand how they affect learning environments is therefore an essential professional competence. Educators have a responsibility to create safe, respectful, and inclusive spaces in which all learners feel valued and able to participate fully. This requires not only responding appropriately when discriminatory incidents occur, but also developing a critical awareness that allows them to identify subtle forms of discrimination, challenge stereotypes, and promote equality in everyday educational practice.

X.3.4 Link with LGBTQIA+ migrants and intersectionality

When working with LGBTQIA+ migrants, it is important to recognise that learners come from diverse social, cultural, religious, and political contexts, where norms, laws, and attitudes towards sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, and other aspects of identity may differ significantly. Some individuals may have experienced discrimination, criminalisation, social exclusion, or repression in their countries of origin. Others may have internalised negative beliefs about themselves or others, including forms of internalised racism or LGBTQIA+phobia, as a result of growing up in environments where prejudice and discrimination were normalised. It is important to note that these dynamics are not limited to countries of origin and may also be present in European contexts, although their forms and intensity can vary depending on the social, cultural, and political environment.
An intersectional perspective is therefore essential. LGBTQIA+ migrants may experience multiple and interconnected forms of discrimination related to their sexual orientation, gender identity, migration status, ethnicity, race, language, religion, socioeconomic background, or other factors. Understanding these overlapping experiences helps educators avoid simplistic assumptions and respond more effectively to learners' diverse needs. It also supports the creation of learning environments that are safe, inclusive, and sensitive to the different realities and challenges that participants may face.

7.4 Discussion prompts

The previous section of this chapter outlined a protocol for responding to discriminatory situations in the classroom, presenting practical steps for intervention, support, reflection, and follow-up. However, addressing discrimination effectively requires more than responding to specific incidents as they arise. Promoting more inclusive attitudes and behaviours is a medium- and long-term educational process that requires time, critical reflection, and the use of multiple pedagogical tools and approaches.
One such tool, suitable for advanced class settings, is structured discussion that encourages learners to explore and critically examine the social realities that shape discrimination and inequality.
By engaging with these themes, learners can develop critical thinking skills, strengthen their capacity for empathy, and gain a deeper understanding of the diverse experiences and forms of knowledge that are often excluded from dominant narratives. In this way, discussion becomes not only a learning activity, but also a means of fostering recognition, visibility, and respect for individuals and communities who have historically faced discrimination and marginalisation.

No.	Discussion Prompts	Why it matters
1	The historical roots of racism	Exploring the links between racism, colonialism, slavery, and processes of racialisation helps learners understand

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No.	Discussion Prompts	Why it matters
		that racism is not simply a matter of individual prejudice. It has historical roots and has been used to justify systems of domination and inequality. Understanding this history provides important context for contemporary forms of discrimination.
2	Dominant perspectives and the myth of neutrality	What is considered "objective", "normal", or "neutral" is often shaped by dominant social groups. Reflecting on how Western, white, heterosexual, and cisgender perspectives have historically been presented as universal can help learners question taken-for-granted assumptions and recognise the diversity of human experiences and ways of knowing.
3	Privilege and unequal social advantages	Discussing concepts such as white privilege, heterosexual privilege, or social class privilege helps learners understand how some social groups benefit from unearned advantages that often go unnoticed by those who possess them. Tools such as the "Flower of Privilege" can support reflection on how privilege operates in everyday life.
4	Learning from historical and contemporary experiences	Examining the experiences of individuals and communities affected by discrimination can make abstract concepts more tangible. Examples such as Rosa Parks, the Apartheid regime in South Africa, the Stonewall uprising, and the murder of George Floyd—a contemporary case that sparked global conversations about systemic racism and police violence—can encourage empathy, reflection, and discussion about resistance, rights, and social change. Learners may also explore the contributions of activists such as Marsha P. Johnson, whose work has become a symbol of both LGBTQIA+ liberation and the struggle against racial injustice.
5	Critical Analysis of Media, News, and Historical Narratives	Developing critical thinking skills involves questioning how people and events are represented in media, educational materials, and public discourse. Analysing news articles, images, or historical texts can help learners identify stereotypes, biases, omissions, and unequal power relations in the production of knowledge.

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CHAPTER 08

Practical classroom exercises for adult educators

Activities that turn inclusive principles into practice



GO INCLUSIVE / HANDBOOK FOR TRAINERS

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Handbook for Trainers

8. Practical classroom exercises for adult educators

8.1 Chapter overview

This chapter turns the principles and practical tips from chapters 5 to 7 into activities educators can use in their own classrooms. It is intended for adult educators, trainers, facilitators, and counsellors working with migrant learners in adult education in multilingual and mixed-identity classes.

8.2 Learning aims and expected outcomes for trainers

By the end of the chapter, trainers should be able to:

No.	Learning aim / expected outcome
1	Select a practical activity that fits their group's size and language level.
2	Facilitate identity-related activities in a way that learners feel comfortable and not pressured to share.
3	Adapt the activity for online classes and other language levels.
4	Link each activity to the other chapters of this handbook, e.g. chapters 4 & 5.

8.3 Main analysis / content

8.3.1 Context and rationale

Across the four partner countries, the synthesis report points to the same issue: educators want to be inclusive, but uncertainty or lack of formal support makes it difficult for them to implement inclusive language in their classes. Educators need practice-based activities with real-life scenarios and tools for handling discrimination in the classroom.

8.3.2 Key concepts, principles or findings

The four activities of this chapter cover various topics for inclusive learning exercises, from discussing language and terminology (A1), to sharing about one's identity (A2) to storytelling narration (A3) and finally to situational practice (A4). Reflection is built into every step, and a shared template across the four activities allows trainers to follow the same guidelines for implementation. The template covers aim, objectives, group size/level, materials needed, step-by-step implementation, reflection questions, and adaptation notes for varied class styles.

8.3.3 Relevance for adult educators and trainers

The four activities are not in a fixed order, and each activity can be used individually, combined into a session, or adapted to a specific group. Every exercise carries notes on how to adapt it for online classes or groups with other language levels.

8.3.4 Link with LGBTQIA+ migrants and intersectionality

LGBTQIA+ migrant learners may face several intersecting pressures at once: legal status, language barriers, separation from family and community, religious and cultural context, and being a double minority. The activities are designed to remain sensitive and work with these assumptions: disclosure is never required, and opting out is always an option. The room is multilingual and activities should embrace it as a resource, not an obstacle.

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8.4 Practical guidance for trainers

In order to ensure that the activities are relevant, here are some practical tips or recommendations to consider:

No.	Guidance / tip	Why it matters
1	Frame activity prompts around situations, not specific identities or people.	Keeps learners out of having to share anything about themselves that they don't want to.
2	Treat learners as multilingual experts, not as the dictionary of their language.	A learner speaks a language but may not know about the topic of inclusive language or how to discuss it.
3	Run the exercises yourself first.	Reveals which prompts lead to assumptions and help you to be vulnerable with your students to a welcoming learning environment.

8.5 Practical activities for trainers

Activity 1: Inclusive Language Café

Objectives	1. Gain awareness that "inclusive" vocabulary differs across languages and is not always available in a learner's first language. 2. Build a shared classroom vocabulary that learners can use comfortably in class. 3. Gain confidence to ask before assuming what term(s) someone uses for themselves.
Target group	Adult learners in mixed-language groups; 6–16 people; A2-C2.
Time	50–80 minutes.
Materials	• 6 to 8 **term cards** from the Chapter 4 glossary, prepared by the trainer. Each card shows one core term in the language of instruction, with the short Chapter 4 definition on the back. (NOTE: Simplify these definitions depending on the learner language level) • Blank post it notes or index cards. • A flip chart sheet labelled "Our classroom glossary."
Steps	**Step 1: Set up the table (5 min):** Lay the term cards face up on a table or pin them to the wall. Read each one aloud with its short Chapter 4 definition. Tell the group there are no right answers; the activity is about how each term translates across different languages. **Step 2: Pick and reflect (10 min):** Each learner picks one card. Working alone, they write on a post-it note: • How would they say this in their language? • Are there different ways to say the word? **Step 3: Pair share (5 min):** Learners pair up with someone who picked a different card. Each one explains their card and explains it to their partner. **Step 4: Build the glossary (10 min):** Together, the group fills in the flip chart. For each term: the language-of-instruction word, plus any translations or notes for the languages in the room.

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	Step 5: Closing (5 min): Ask the learners what they will take from today.
Reflection question	What surprised you about another language in the room?
Adaptation notes	**Online:** Upload the term cards to a Miro or Padlet board; pair share happens in breakout rooms. **Lower language level:** Use 4 terms instead of 8, simplify the terms or use graphics. For lower levels, have them group in small groups, so the very beginners could be supported by participants with some notions of the language.

Activity 2: Cultural Identity Mapping

In this activity, learners will visualize different parts of their identity and choose what they want to share with the group. It's designed as a learning activity to help learners to safely and inclusively discuss what makes them who they are.

Objectives	1. Build awareness that identity is layered, and that no single label represents a person. 2. Reflect on and express different parts of their identity using words, drawings, or symbols. 3. Practice active listening and respectful communication when talking with a partner about identity and personal experiences.
Target group	Adult learners; 4–12 people; any level.
Time	45 minutes.
Materials	• A4 paper with a small circle pre-drawn in the center, one per learner. • Colored pens and markers. • Post-it notes. • Optional: floor space to display the maps.
Steps	**Step 1: Set up (5 min):** Show an example map. Create your own map or provide a printed sample (https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/identity-chart-template). The circle in the middle is "me"; learners add anything around it that is part of who they are. Again, remind the learners they don't have to share anything they don't want to share. **Step 2: Draw your map (15 min):** Learners work alone on their cultural map; Some examples of what to include: languages spoken, places lived in, family, work, hobbies, things they love, parts of their journey. This can be in words, drawings, or symbols. **Step 3: Sharing in pairs (15 min):** Learners pair up and show their partner their map.

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	Step 4: Closing (5 min): Each learner shares one thing they added to their map, or one thing they learned from their partner.
Reflection Questions	Which part of your map was easy or difficult to draw? What is one thing you would like the group to know about you?
Adaptation notes	A1: Use more drawings or symbols, fewer words; pre-print some different symbols (ie. world maps, family figures, various foods, sports, school books, computer, etc) Online: Use a shared canvas (Miro, Padlet) with templates.

Activity 3: Storytelling Circle

In this activity, learners will share a short story about an object, photo, or place that matters to them. Through storytelling, the principles of inclusive communication (Chapter 5) will be put into practice.

Objectives	1. Develop confidence in sharing personal stories, experiences, or memories in a supportive group setting. 2. Practice setting personal boundaries by choosing what they want to share and what they prefer to keep private. 3. Reflect on what inclusive communication means to them.
Target group	Adult learners; 4–10 people; A1 and above (with adaptations).
Time	45 minutes.
Materials	• Each learner brings one small object, photo, or drawing (briefed one session in advance). • A large sheet of paper or wall area labelled "Our Story Web" with a central theme written in the middle (e.g. "journeys", "home", "people who matter"). • Colored markers. • Three colors of post-it notes: one for "word", one for "image", one for "feeling". • Optional: string or yarn to physically connect stickies.

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Steps	**Step 1: Set up (5 min):** Explain the activity steps: Each learner tells one story in a pair; the other person listens to the story, and together we build a Story Web on the wall. **Step 2: Trainer models the activity (5 min):** The trainer shares their own object and a 1-2 minute story with the whole group. This models the length and tone. Examples: • A place that feels like home: photo of a city, room, park, flag, street, or favorite place • Something important from my culture or family: food, recipe, clothing, music, holiday object • A skill I am proud of such as a certificate, work item, craft, hobby **Step 3: Pair sharing (15 min):** Each pair takes turns. Person A tells their story (3 min max). Person B listens and has to write down one WORD, draw one IMAGE, and identify one FEELING from A's story. Write/draw each on a separate colored post it note. Then switch so Person B tells their story and Person A writes/draws the post it notes. **Step 4: Build the Story Web (12 min):** Everyone places their post-it notes around the central theme on the wall. Quick walk-around: everyone reads what's been posted. As a group, the trainer asks: "What connections do you see between these?" Draw lines between post-its that connect across stories. **Step 5 : Circle Sharing (8 min):** Anyone who wants to share their full story, or tell the group about a story they heard (with their partner's permission), can. No one is forced to share. **Step 6. Closing (5 min):** Each person points to one post it on the wall and finishes the sentence: "This connects with me because..."
Reflection questions	Was there a story that connected with one of yours? Is there one thing you would like to ask about the story?
Adaptation notes	Online: Each person holds their object to the camera; pass the "talking object" by naming the next person. The trainer always participates and makes sure the conversations remain sensitive.

Activity 4: Bias Detection Workshop

In this activity, learners work together to detect bias, missing perspectives, and exclusionary language and work on how to counter it. It will be a hands-on activity for handling bias (Chapter 7) in classroom practice.

Objectives	1. Use the 5W+1 framework from journalism to analyse media items for bias, missing perspectives, and exclusionary language. 2. Reframe messages using inclusive vocabulary.
Target group	Adult learners; 6–12 people; A2 and above (with adaptations).

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Time	60 minutes.
Materials	• 4 to 6 short media items selected by the trainer in advance: a news headline, an advertisement, a social media post, a short video clip, or a public information leaflet. • A "5W+1 worksheet" per group (one column per question, plus a bias layer underneath: "Who is missing?" and "What words are NOT used?"). • A wall area labelled "Our Bias Map" divided into six zones (one per W). • Two colors of post it notes: one for "what we found" and one for "what we would change". • Chapter 4 glossary from Activity 1 and principles of inclusive communication from Chapter 5
Steps	**Step 1: Warm up with the 5W+1 (10 min):** Show one media item to the whole group. Walk through the six questions out loud as a group, noting answers on a flip chart. Explain to the group these are the questions journalists use – use the QYourself course as a helpful resource. Introduce them to the bias layer: "Who is missing?" and "What words are NOT used?" **Step 2: Small-group work (15 min):** Split into groups of 3 to 4. Each group gets one media item and one 5W+1 worksheet. They work through all six questions plus the bias questions. Observations on yellow post it notes. **Step 3: Build the Bias Map (10 min):** Each group brings their post its to the wall and places them in the allotted W zone. Go through the shared responses – the trainer pulls out two or three observations that recur across items (a missing perspective, a loaded word, a misleading source). **Step 4: Rewrite with inclusive language (15 min):** Take two or three of the observations. As a whole group, ask: "If we were writing this message, what could we say differently to make it more inclusive?" Check Chapter 5 and the Chapter 4 glossary on the wall to use more inclusive vocabulary. Write the new phrasing on blue post it notes and place them next to the original observation. **Step 5: Closing (10 min):** Each learner picks one 5W+1 question they will ask of a media message they see this week and ask them to note it down.
Reflection questions	Which W question opened up the discussion most in your small group? What is difficult about the language re-do?

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Adaptation notes	A1: Choose image-based items (social media posts, advertisements with photos). Online: Share items on a slide; breakout rooms for the small-group analysis; shared digital board (Miro/Padlet) for the Bias Map with six labelled zones. Choose items the group is likely to encounter in daily life (local news, ads on public transport, integration course materials, social media posts), not abstract examples. Avoid highly distressing material. For the 5W+1 framework and ready-made worksheets, see QYourself open course, Section 1 ("Elements of information").

8.6 Reflection questions for trainers

Throughout implementing these activities, it's important to pause and reflect on what it is you're teaching or discussing. Here are a few reflection questions to consider while working on these topics:

1. Which exercise would you struggle to run, and why?
2. How would you respond if a learner shared something highly sensitive and personal during an exercise?
3. How would you adapt these for a group where you are the only speaker of the language of instruction?
4. What does allowing participants to opt-out of an activity look like in a class? How can you support them that they feel comfortable enough to share?

8.7 Short checklist / key messages

Here you'll find a short checklist of key points to consider before implementing any of these activities.

✓	**Key message**
☐	*Disclosure is never required; if a learner is uncomfortable, they don't need to share.*
☐	*Use the handbook to give you guidance throughout these activities. Each activity is linked to one or more chapters.*

8.8 Further reading and useful resources

Title	**Source**	**Link**	**Lang.**	**Why useful**
Language Policy Toolkit	Council of Europe	https://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/to	EN & FR	European reference for multilingual adult education with migrant learners. The Toolkit consists of a set of 80 resources designed to guide educators (teachers and volunteers) providing language

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Title	Source	Link	Lang.	Why useful
		olkit-2024		support for adult migrants and migrant children in a wide range of contexts, with an accompanying training guide.
LGBTQI Inclusive Education Database	The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) Youth & Student Organisation - Brussels	https://www.iglyo.org/database	EN	Multilingual searchable database of inclusive education resources, indexing legislation and policies, inclusive curricula from formal or non-formal education, teacher training materials, awareness raising campaigns, trans and intersex specific resources, and resources on concrete themes such as comprehensive sexuality education.
Queer Refugees Terminology Resource	LSVD+ Queer Refugees Deutschland	https://queer-refugees.de/material-2/	DE, AR, EN, ES, FA, FR, RU, UR, TR	A multilingual terminology resource produced with Fluchtgrund Queer and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees: a brochure with terms in various languages specifically designed to sensitise language mediators and give them accurate terms in the context of sexual orientation and gender identity
Need to know guidance: Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer persons in forced displacement	UN High Commissioner for Refugees	https://www.refworld.org/policy/opguidance/unhcr/2021/123840	EN	The 48-page guidance is primarily aimed at UNHCR staff but is also a useful resource for anyone working with LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and refugees, and includes a glossary of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) terms.

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Annex

5W + 1 Worksheet, QYourself Course: https://canva.link/1m2ck17qwy762if

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CHAPTER 09

Good practices and inspirational examples

Learn from initiatives, communities and shared experience



GO INCLUSIVE / HANDBOOK FOR TRAINERS

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9. Good practices and inspirational examples

9.1 Chapter overview

This chapter is dedicated to showcasing good practices in adult education, highlighting four successful initiatives drawn from the findings of the Go Inclusive synthesis report. A "good practice" is broadly defined as an approach or method that, through experience or research, has been proven to consistently produce desired outcomes and can be replicated in similar contexts (UNESCO, 2025). In the framework of migrant LGBTQIA+ adult education, desired outcomes should center around establishing safe, respectful, and discrimination-free environments where learners can engage without fear of judgment, invisibility, or structural exclusion. To give you a broad perspective of what is working across Europe, this chapter features one practice from each partner country: Germany, Greece, Spain, and Denmark.

Educators should treat these examples as practical, real-world models to analyze and adapt to the unique linguistic, cultural, and social dynamics of their own learner groups.

9.2 Learning aims and expected outcomes for trainers

Through this chapter, the learning aims and expected outcomes are designed to help you:

No.	Learning aim / expected outcome
1	*Read a good practice card critically and determine what is transferable to your learners' needs.*
2	*Discover existing local LGBTQIA+ migrant support organisations, that learners can refer to.*
3	*Consider engaging and informal activities to foster participatory learning and open discussion.*

9.3 Main analysis / content

9.3.1 Context and rationale

In order to be inclusive, adult education programs need a shared terminology, institutional support for educators working with LGBTQIA+ migrants and dedicated policies. The national reports across all four countries document how, albeit a lack of real support, educators have developed approaches that work and provide real results. This chapter draws on those good examples so that trainers picking up this handbook have a starting point to build on.

9.3.2 Key concepts, principles or findings

For this handbook's purposes, a good practice is validated if it fulfills the following factors:

- Strengthens participatory learning: It centres the learner's voice and utilises learner-centred methodologies to build critical thinking and understanding of one another.
- **Establishes emotional safety:** It creates physical and social boundaries that respect personal privacy and ensure confidentiality so that all learners feel safe and welcome.
- **Embeds visible representation:** It ensures that classroom materials, language, and curriculum design actively represent diverse gender expressions, sexual orientations, and migrant identities.
- **Maintains an intersectional lens:** It does not assume that someone's gender, sexuality, cultural background, or migration experience can be understood through a single label and it actively avoids language that does.

9.3.3 Relevance for adult educators and trainers

The good practices drawn from the synthesis report are organised into the following functional categories:

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- **Peer support and mentoring** — Card 1 (Queer-to-Queer, Denmark): The core mechanism is pairing peer to peer, not doing the mentoring. A trainer without resources to run a full mentoring scheme can still extract this and scale it down to a single bridge connection.
- **Curriculum resource** — Card 2 (Vielfalt willkommen!, Germany): A free, classroom-ready booklet with teacher training attached. The most immediately usable resource in this chapter for educators running official integration courses.
- **Informal teaching methodology** — Card 3 (Beyond Gender Toolkit, Spain/France): Structured activities for exploring gender and identity without requiring direct disclosure.
- **Community event as entry point** — Card 4 (Movie Night, Greece): The lowest-threshold model in this chapter. The film does the work that direct conversation would otherwise have to do.

Educators working across different national contexts will find that the underlying mechanism of each practice can be transferred to their language and country context. The transferability section of each card helps you do so.

9.4 Practical guidance for trainers

4 tips on how to read and use the cards:

No.	Guidance / tip	Why it matters
1	*Look for transferability, don't try to copy the good practice word-for-word.*	*Good practice should be adapted to your unique learning group.*
2	*Identify the underlying mechanism of what works and why.*	*By identifying the mechanism and naming it, you can rebuild it for your context.*
3	*If partnering with other organisations, make sure to always ask consent before sharing any learner details.*	*Referral without consent is a safeguarding failure.*
4	*Update your local resource list once a year.*	*Keeping the list up to date makes it more useful and relevant for learners.*

9.5 Examples, mini-scenarios or case situations

3 vignettes showing how a trainer uses one of the practices (not the practices themselves):

Example	Situation	Trainer response	Learning point
Ex. 1	Learners want queer-friendly legal advice on their asylum claim.	Point to LSVD Queer Refugees (or similar service in your country) and offer to help write an email with the learner together.	Working together and providing real guidance is key.
Ex. 2	The trainer wants to add peer support but cannot run a full mentoring program.	Extract the core mechanism from LGBT+ Huset (1-to-1 matching with a more experienced peer) and run a scaled version inside your course.	The concept and mechanism transfer even when it needs to be scaled down.

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Example	Situation	Trainer response	Learning point
Ex. 3	The trainer wants to showcase a community voice in their classes without putting LGBTQIA+ learners on the spot.	Invite a community-led group to co-facilitate; brief them on the group agreement first.	Guest facilitation works when the guest speakers are introduced to the group dynamic beforehand and are aware of the safe, inclusive learning agreement.

9.6 Good practice cards

Card 1

Title	Queer to Queer Mentoring Program
Country / context	LGBT+ Huset — Aarhus, Denmark
What was done	Queer to Queer is a volunteer mentor program. It pairs a young LGBTQIA+ person with an LGBTQIA+ mentor who has been part of the community for longer. The pair meets a few times a month over a defined period, in casual settings: coffee, a museum visit, a board game café. The specific work of the pairing is bridging the mentee into a community. Together they identify what kind of LGBTQIA+ space the mentee would like to belong to, find one that fits, and attend it together for the first time. By doing so the mentor will become a safe person with whom you can seek out new and exciting communities. All mentors are volunteers.
Why it is relevant	Local LGBTQIA+ communities, events, and services exist in every partner country. For an LGBTQIA+ migrant learner, the vulnerability may be high and support may be needed. This could be due to language barriers, unfamiliarity with cultural codes, or overall uncertainty. Queer to Queer's approach is to tackle this uncertainty pairing the learner with a mentor (who also identifies as LGBTQIA+) to attend activities or events as a pair rather than alone.
Transferability	A full mentor program requires recruitment, matching, supervision, and ongoing coordination. This may not be available to an individual adult educator. Here are some ideas to scale it down: 1. **Identify one local space.** A queer-inclusive café event or an integration network with LGBTQIA+ visibility. Choose a specific one. 2. **Recruit one or two bridge buddies from outside the course.** You as the trainer contact the local LGBTQIA+ organisation to ask whether a volunteer would like to attend a single event with a learner. 3. **Present the offer to the class.** Do not have students publicly announce their interest — either talk to them one-on-one or have a private list for them to sign up. 4. **Connect the pair and step back.** Send an email introducing them, suggesting activities, and do not supervise. Debrief one-to-one with the

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	learner afterwards if they want to. The pair owns the visit, not the teacher.
Source	https://lgbthusaarhus.dk/en/queer-to-queer/

Card 2

Title	Welcome, Diversity! Sexual orientation and gender identity Booklet
Country / context	LSVD+'s Queer Refugees — Berlin, Germany
What was done	*Vielfalt willkommen! Sexuelle Orientierung und geschlechtliche Identität in Deutschland* (Welcome, Diversity! Sexual orientation and gender identity in Germany) is a free 20-page thematic supplementary booklet developed by LSVD+'s Queer Refugees Deutschland project, designed specifically for use in integration course teaching. It is available as a free PDF download or as a printed copy ordered through the project. Alongside the booklet, the project runs a free online training (via Zoom) for integration and language course teachers. The training covers three threads: a global context section on the causes and risks faced by queer people worldwide; a practice-oriented section on how to use the booklet in classroom teaching; and a discussion-based section on the challenges, questions, and internal barriers teachers themselves bring to the topic. Teachers receive a participation certificate.
Why it is relevant	*Vielfalt willkommen!* is a direct, free response to the need for LGBTQIA+ supplementary resources for trainers in official integration course offers.
Transferability	A short, free, supplementary course booklet paired with a free online training, closing a specific gap between curriculum mandate and commercial textbook content — specific use for German teachers in Germany for integration courses. The resource can be used as a model for other countries/languages: **Use the booklet as a template for a national version.** EU countries have their own integration curricula, usually with the same gap between what the curriculum requires and what commercial textbooks deliver. A national LGBTQIA+ organisation, partnering with an adult education provider, could produce an equivalent supplementary booklet, adapted to local law and cultural context. *Vielfalt willkommen!* can be used as a template for the structure as well as proof-of-concept.
Source	https://queer-refugees.de/material-2/ (Section 6: Material for integration courses): https://queer-refugees.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/vielfalt-willkommen-auflage_2.pdf

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Card 3

Title	Beyond Gender Theater Toolkit
Country / context	Erasmus+ Project from the following organizations: Elan interculturel – Paris ACATHI – Barcelona Brûlantes – Paris In Touch – Amsterdam LA XIXA – Barcelona ****the materials are only available in French as of now, however should also be produced in Spanish, Dutch, and English**
What was done	The Beyond Gender Theatre Toolbox is a free facilitator manual of 47 activities for exploring gender, sexual orientation, and emotional and sexual life through theatre, built on Augusto Boal's *Rainbow of Desire* method. It is the central output of the Erasmus+ project Beyond Gender. The toolbox was tested through workshop cycles in Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Paris in 2023, with participant ages ranging from 18 to 102 and the case studies of those workshops are published alongside the toolbox as a separate document. The toolbox sits inside a wider set of resources on the project site, including a glossary, a stereotypes analysis guide, individual ready-to-run activity sheets, and a facilitator logbook updated in October 2025. All materials are released under a Creative Commons BY-NC license and can be freely used/adapted.
Why it is relevant	The Beyond Gender Toolbox approaches gender and identity through structured theatre work rather than explicit talk. This is significant for LGBTQIA+ migrant learners, who often arrive at adult education from cultural and generational contexts where gender and sexuality were not topics of open discussion. Standard classroom methods tend to assume the topic can be approached cognitively - read about it, discuss it, and name the concepts. This toolbox provides an interactive and creative approach.
Transferability	How to use the free, structured, theater-based facilitator toolbox: **Download the toolbox and read it.** It is free, openly licensed, and made up of 47 activities. **Use the specific activity sheets.** The four individual activity sheets on the project site (*Archives corporelles*, *Nommer le privilège*, *Carte sensorielle collective*, *Du Théâtre-Images au Théâtre Forum*) are short, self-contained, and pair well with the Cultural Identity Mapping and Storytelling Circle exercises in Section 8. A trainer can use one Beyond Gender activity to open a session and then move into the Section 8 exercise that fits. **Treat the case studies as facilitator training.** The published documentation of the 2023 workshop cycles is a teaching text. A trainer who has never run theatre--based work can read the case studies and follow the choices the facilitators made: when to slow down, when to give participants permission to opt out, what to do when something difficult surfaces.
Source	https://beyondgender.elaninterculturel.com/ / https://acathi.org/beyond-gender-explorando-el-genero-a-traves-de-un-enfoque-intercultural-e-intergeneracional/ Link to one specific template for a theatre case study: https://beyondgender.elaninterculturel.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ArchivesCorporelles.pdf

Card 4

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Title	Movie Night / Community Workshops for LGBTQIA+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Country / context	Emantes - Athens, Greece
What was done	Emántes International LGBTQIA+ Solidarity is a Social Cooperative Enterprise founded in Athens in July 2018 by LGBTQIA+ refugees and experienced volunteers from the LGBTQIA+ refugee field. It grew out of the *LGBTQIA+ Refugees Welcome* collective, which had been running participatory bottom-up sessions in Athens since 2016. The Movie Night is a participatory community event for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and refugees. The Movie Night runs on the last Tuesday of every month. Each session has three components a screening of an international LGBTQIA+ film chosen by community members themselves a set of empowerment exercises a facilitated discussion led by Emántes' staff psychologist. Access is by self-referral via WhatsApp only, so people have to take the initiative to join but also ensure it is a safe space.
Why it is relevant	A monthly film screening sounds light, and that is part of why it works. The threshold for attending a film night is much lower than the threshold for attending a counselling appointment or a support group. The learner is committing to watching a film, not to disclose anything about themselves. The film does the work that direct conversation would otherwise have to do and opens the door to facilitated discussion afterwards. The presence of the psychologist gives the format clinical safety without making the evening feel too clinical. Letting community members choose the film matters and empowers them in the activity.
Transferability	**How adult educators in other partner countries can use this** **Run a monthly LGBTQIA+ film night as a complement to your course.** A trainer can host a screening as an outside of the class activity. The trainer's job is to set up the room, introduce the film, and facilitate the conversation afterwards. This can work alongside any adult education course. **Use community-chosen films.** The Emántes design choice empowers the participants by allowing them to choose the films. Ask the group what they want to watch next - it can be in their languages (with subtitles). Avoid the impulse to pick films that broadly "represent" the group's experience for them. **Pair the film with a structured discussion.** A trainer prepares three or four discussion prompts prepared in advance. These could be simple to just get conversation started: what was the film about? What was familiar with the film? What was unfamiliar? **Have someone with mental-health competence in the room.** Emántes uses their own staff psychologist. For an adult education provider that does not have one on staff, the practical equivalent is partnering with an existing LGBTQIA+ or refugee mental health service to co-facilitate two or three sessions per year, then handing the regular sessions back to the trainer once the format is established and the partner can act as a valuable resource. **Connect it to Section 8 Exercise 3, Storytelling Circle.** Use the film as a basis for a storytelling activity; a starting point that makes learners feel comfortable about talking openly without having to disclose their personal information.
Source	https://emantes.com/community-meetings/

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9.7 Reflection questions for trainers

After reading the above good practices cards, reflect on what was done and how it could be relevant for you.

Card 1 — Peer mentoring programs

- Who in your local network (NGO, a community center, a colleague) could you approach to find one volunteer for a peer mentoring program?
- What would you say to a learner to offer this without putting them on the spot?

Card 2 — Curriculum resource

- Does your current integration course curriculum have a gap between what it requires on diversity and what the textbook delivers? Where exactly is that gap?
- If you were to produce an equivalent booklet for your country, which local LGBTQIA+ organisation would you approach first?

Card 3 — Informal Teaching Methodology

- Which activity from Chapter 8 could you pair with a Beyond Gender exercise to open a session?
- What would you need in terms of space, preparation, or confidence before trying an activity like the theatre-based example?

Card 4 — Community Event

- How could you empower your learners by getting them involved in the design of the community event?
- Think of one film in a language your learners speak that centres an LGBTQIA+ experience. Would you feel comfortable introducing it? What would you say?

9.8 Key messages

After reading this chapter, assess your understanding of the key takeaway points:

✓	Key message
☐	*Adapt the mechanism of good practice for your unique learner group. Use the card as a starting point, not as a template to follow word-by-word.*
☐	*Reflect on what makes something a good practice and how it can be transferred to your needs. Do the activities you implement produce desired outcomes?*
☐	*Check for similar local initiatives to see if you can partner with them and conduct these kinds of activities.*

9.9 References

ACATHI, Élan Interculturel, Brûlant·e·s, In Touch, & La Xixa. (n.d.). *Beyond Gender: Explorando el género a través de un enfoque intercultural e intergeneracional*. ACATHI. Retrieved May 28, 2026, from https://acathi.org/beyond-gender-explorando-el-genero-a-traves-de-un-enfoque-intercultural-e-intergeneracional/

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