

# WELCOMM

**Supporting integration of third country nationals**  
through developing learning and collaboration tools to build welcoming  
and inclusive communities



# Stereotypes and prejudices

# stereotype

*the positive or negative beliefs that we hold about the characteristics of a social group*

- *French people are romantic.*
- *Old people are incompetent.*
- *College professors are absent minded.*

# prejudice

- An unjustifiable negative attitude toward an outgroup or toward the members of that outgroup.
- Prejudices are stable negative attitudes towards groups or persons belonging to this group. Prejudices are often **not based on own experiences**, but are taken over.

## Why there are stereotypes and prejudices?

Stereotypes and prejudices have functions:

- Stereotypes and prejudices are needed to simplify a complicated reality. They serve to make the world manageable and to reduce complexity. They create security for one's own actions. They relieve our everyday consciousness by not having to constantly re-evaluate and reinterpret situations and people.
- Prejudices take into account the human need to explain complicated facts in a simple way, but are ultimately sham knowledge that is not based on experience.

## Why are stereotypes and prejudices dangerous?

- Prejudices are problematic because they may create **discrimination**—unjustified negative behaviors toward members of outgroups based on their group membership.
- History shows us to what prejudices within a society can lead.

### Examples:

- Witchcraft in the Middle Ages
- Holocaust
- Apartheid in South Africa
- Genocide in Ruanda

## types of prejudices

- racist
- national
- between the generations
- based on gender
- sexual orientation
- against certain religions
- against certain professions

# Potato game

I have here a potato. I don't know about you, but I've never thought that much about potatoes. I've always taken them for granted. To me, potatoes are all pretty much alike. Sometimes I wonder if potatoes aren't a lot like people.

# Potato Game

Examine your potatoes, get to know its bumps, scars, and defects and make friends with it.

Get to know your potato well enough to be able to introduce your 'friend' to the group. Why your potato has its bumps and stains?

Introduce your potato to the group!

## Potato game

Well, perhaps potatoes are a little like people. Sometimes, we lump people of a group all together. When we think, ‘They’re all alike,’ we are really saying that we **haven’t taken the time** or thought it **important enough** to get to know the person. When we do, we find out **everyone is different and special** in some way, just like our potato friends.”

# Potato Game

- Think about groups in the community we tend to lump together!
- When we lump everyone from the same group together and assume they all have the same characteristics, what are we doing?
- Do you know a lot of people from the groups we tend to lump together? Do they all fit the stereotype?
- Why are stereotypes dangerous?

## What is typically...?

1. Find out which and how many nations are present in the group. Prepare a flipchart for each nation.
2. Walk around and write down things you think are characteristic / typical for people of the nations on the according flipcharts.

## What is typically...?

Now the members of the nations form together and get some time before reading out what is written on their flipchart and comment on it:

- What applies to me / us? At least to some extent?
- What does not apply to me / us?
- What actually is typical for .... in my / our opinion?
- Is there even such a thing as typical for *Italians/Croatians/Slovenes/Iranians/Austrians...?*

## What is typically...?

### **Reflection:**

What do we think about the countries/societies asylum seekers or refugees come from and how much of this might actually be true for the individual persons we are dealing with?

# Facts against prejudices!

- **#1 Europe can't take the whole world!?**
- **#2 Most of them aren't real refugees at all!?**
- **#3 Refugees are often better off than us!**
- **#4 Only men come to us. They abandon their wives and children in their homeland!**
- **#5 Our right to asylum can't solve the world's problems!**
- **#6 Asylum seekers are criminal and dangerous!**

# WELCOMM

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