

Background of this stage: Education that should help people to live well together must encourage and enable them to engage with the other person who is always a concrete other and never only part of a collective. Therefore it is important to express opposition towards unacceptable generalizations. Generalizations are not bad per se, but they must not prevent us from recognizing the individual reality of other people.

## Objectives

### Upon completion of this stage, students should:

- ✓ be able to perceive improper generalizations and prejudices in themselves and in others and find starting points for dealing with them.

## Content

- ✓ Generalizations and prejudices
- ✓ Strategies for dealing with them

## Methods

- ✓ Exercises to perceive generalizations and prejudices
- ✓ Testimony
- ✓ Role play for dealing with generalizations and prejudices

## Transition from Stage 4

Remind the students that the last time was about what rights refugees have who live with us and what we all need to live well together. Now we are talking about inappropriate generalisations and prejudices that prevent such good living together.

## Step #1/1

### Lemons are all the same, aren't they?

*Although this exercise is also suitable for younger children, it can also make older students think. Experience has shown that this exercise can be done very well with older students and even adults. It may seem a bit "childish", but it is also an entertaining change and nevertheless very substantial. If you think that an exercise of this kind could make your students feel treated too much "like children", you can choose Step 1/2 and/or 1/3 instead.*

1 Ask the students about typical characteristics of a lemon. Make a note of these characteristics on the blackboard/flip chart.

2 Two students receive a lemon together. Ask the students to look very closely at their lemon for a few minutes and remember what it looks like.

3 Collect the lemons again and spread all the lemons on a table. Ask the students to find "their" lemon again.

4 Although some students may not think this is possible ("They all look the same"), it usually works!

5 Ask the students what this little exercise might have to do with inappropriate generalizations and prejudices.

6 Explain briefly what this is about:

Although the lemons all look the same at first glance, the students have recognized "their" lemon and thus determined that we have to take a close look for an appropriate assessment. We also categorize people in our everyday lives. Many know the experience of having been "put in a box" because of our appearance, clothing style, language or the (presumed) history of migration. At the same time, in everyday life we ourselves fall back on inappropriate generalizations about certain groups of people which prevent us from perceiving the individual, concrete person adequately. Such generalizations can

lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, it is important to remain aware of one's own generalizations and to engage again and again in an attentive encounter with the concrete other person, who is always more than part of a collective.

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Ask the students to give examples - best from their own experience.

## Step #1/2

### Maybe we have more in common than what we think?

1

Ask students to watch this [3 minute video](#) and to reflect on the film by asking the following questions (Questions --> [worksheet for students](#))



2

Ask students to share their experiences in groups of 3.

3

Explain briefly what this is about:

We all often tend to assign people very quickly to groups and believe that "we" are very different from "them" and that little or nothing connects us to them. We put other people in boxes. Only by getting to know the other person better and by encountering him/her do we discover what connects us and what we have in common.

## Step #1/3

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### The danger of a single story

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1

Briefly explain the background of the video **"The danger of a single story"**



Although Chimamanda Adichie, a writer from Nigeria, came to the USA as a student and not as a refugee, she nevertheless had to experience being fixed to a certain image or a certain story ("single story"). In a speech she describes how she experienced this fixation and reduction as a denial of recognition, as the exercise of power, and even as a robbery of her dignity.

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2

Ask students to watch the video and to reflect on the film by asking the following questions (Questions → **worksheet for students**):

- ✓ Do I myself have the experience of being determined by others on the basis of a "single story"? If so, what stories have I been reduced to? How did I experience this and how did I deal with it?
  - ✓ When I think of my own dealings with other people: Have I myself ever reduced another person to a single story? If so, how do I deal with this? And: What helps me to open my mind and become open to other, diverse stories about other people?
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3

Ask students to share their experiences in groups of 3.

1 Explain briefly what this is about:

We tend to very quickly commit people to a single story because of their membership of a particular collective or because of certain characteristics, and to care little about whether that story is true and what stories those people would tell about themselves. Last but not least, refugees experience that only a few people are interested in their story(s). This prevents encounters, exchanges and mutual enrichment.

## Step #2

### Generalizations and prejudices: How to deal with them?

1 Ask students to name typical (often heard) generalizations and prejudices against refugees.

2 Write them down on the blackboard, flipchart or similar.

3 Ask the students whether it is "only" a generalization and how they come to this realisation.

4 Ask the students to form groups of six: Each group chooses one of the collected prejudices (alternatively you can choose one). Six students discuss at a time, three of them defending the slogan while the other three oppose it. The remaining students are involved as observers. They sit in a circle around the participants.

5 Reflect in the plenary (Questions → **worksheet for students**):

### Questions for the defendants of the prejudice:

- ✓ How did they feel when they were actively defending a prejudice?
- ✓ How did they experience the reactions of others?
- ✓ What questions or arguments made them think and doubt their own point of view?

**Questions for the opponents to the prejudice:**

- ✓ How did they experience the situation and themselves?
- ✓ What feelings did the defendants of the prejudice trigger in them?
- ✓ Were they able to counter the prejudice?
- ✓ What have they achieved?

**Questions for the observers:**

- ✓ What strategies did the opponents of the prejudice pursue, what means did they use to contradict the defendants of the prejudice and to make them think?
- ✓ Which feelings were recognizable among the participants? How did these feelings become apparent?
- ✓ What kind of emotions and reactions did you notice in those students who were defending prejudice and in those students who were opposing prejudice? Did you notice that the actions of one side could affect the emotions and reactions of the other side?

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6 Summarize challenges and key strategies for dealing with unacceptable generalisations and prejudices (→ **worksheet for students**):

- ✓ Generalizations and prejudices can be questioned while requesting to concretize and justify the statements (e.g. by putting the question: How do you know this?) or through confrontation with facts that contradict the prejudice. This presupposes, however, that one is already well-informed and that the other is still open to arguments/disagreements. Since this openness is not always the case, it is not always possible to convince the other. Nevertheless, one can and should say "no".
- ✓ Prejudices are often aggressively put forward and experienced as an exercise of power. This can create fear. It can therefore be helpful to ally oneself with others, especially in group situations or in public. But aggression can also produce counter-aggression. It is therefore important to remain as calm as possible (e.g. avoid shouting) and at the same time, to represent one's own position in an assertive way.
- ✓ Prejudices are often represented in a coarse and not very subtle way. This can provoke a person to react himself/herself in an arrogant way and to insult the aggressor. This makes the aggressor feel confirmed

in his/her position. Therefore it is important to reject the prejudice clearly and unambiguously, without putting down the other person.

- ✓ When I understand a statement as a prejudice, I sometimes feel violated in my own values (even if the prejudice is about other people), without always being able to say immediately what values are being questioned. For an appropriate and clear reaction it is therefore helpful to know what is important and valuable to me. The better I know my own values, the better I can stand up for them.

## Invitation to Reflection

Explain the reflection task for this stage (Reflection task → **worksheet for students**) By the next stage, please:



Try to draw a situation in which you or another person clearly experience a behaviour that is characterized by prejudices. This can be a real situation or even a cartoon. Take a picture of it.



Note three statements about yourself that you would reject because they do not adequately describe you as this concrete person or that do not respect you as the individual person that you are.

## Summary and Transition

Ask the students to explain in a few sentences what they have learned in this stage. After some students have said something about this question, you can summarize it in your own words (see the goals of the lesson above).

Then you can explain how the next stage will follow: *"For the next and final time we will explore starting points for own actions!"*

# LET'S GO TO LESSON 6