

ACCT

Anti-racism & Civic
Courage Training

Research & Evaluation Report

Developed By:

Comparative
Research
Network:

 **Perspekt**
INITIATIVE

 **Crossing Borders**

 Stowarzyszenie
Dla Ziemi

 **imagina**

 АСОЦИАЦИЯ
ЗА БЕЖАНЦИ
И МИГРАНТИ
БЪЛГАРИЯ
ASSOCIATION
ON REFUGEES
& MIGRANTS
BULGARIA



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Dla Ziemi



Perspekt **im**agina
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Introduction

Theoretical background of prejudice, discrimination and racism

Historically and politically racism and discrimination are embedded in the societal structures underlying colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and economic exploitation. Colonialism established racial hierarchies that justified exploitation and systemic inequalities. Post-colonialism highlights lasting impacts like economic dependency and social division, worsened by capitalist systems that prioritise profit over equity.

Imperialism and capitalism reinforce global racial and economic hierarchies, while the Eastern European experiment with real socialism also faced structural discrimination, despite its equality ideals, also faced structural discrimination.

The theoretical background of prejudice, discrimination, and racism is rooted in social psychology, sociology, and critical race theory. Prejudice refers to preconceived opinions or attitudes toward individuals or groups. Theories such as social identity theory explain prejudice as a way for individuals to enhance self-esteem by favouring their in-group and marginalising out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Similarly, the authoritarian personality theory posits that certain personality types are more prone to prejudiced thinking due to rigid, hierarchical worldviews (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950). Racism extends prejudice by embedding these biased beliefs in social structures and power relations, as explored in critical race theory, which examines how race and racism intersect with law, culture, and politics to perpetuate inequality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Discrimination, the behavioural manifestation of prejudice, occurs when individuals or groups are treated unfairly based on characteristics such as race, gender, or ethnicity. This can be explicit, such as through segregation or unequal treatment, or implicit, occurring subtly through unconscious biases or systemic inequities. Theories like structural discrimination emphasise how racism and prejudice are institutionalised in society, influencing laws, policies, and practises that disadvantage certain groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). These frameworks highlight how racism is not just an individual bias but a broader social phenomenon that reproduces power imbalances and limits opportunities for marginalised groups.

Prejudice, discrimination and racism all have their foundation in group behaviour and psychology. Starting from early socialisation and continuing throughout life, every human being establishes relationships with other people during their lifetime. People connected by relationships based on similar geography, interests or aims form groups. Based on “familiarity, attachment and preference”, we become a member of a group and identify with the similarities between the members.

These processes create a more or less strong group identity (Allport, 1954, cited by Brewer, 1999).

Evaluation and policy recommendations

Introduction

The link between the members of a group can also be strengthened by developing attitudes towards and highlighting differences to other groups (ibid.)

As a summary judgement of members of an “outgroup” these attitudes and simplifications constitute prejudices. Used as a group strengthening mechanism the other group and its members are perceived as inferior to their own; thus constituting a form of racism, defined as the conviction that different ethnic backgrounds are linked to distinct characteristics, abilities, or qualities, especially to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another.

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Anti-discrimination training in theory and practice

Anti-discrimination training, in theory, is designed to educate individuals and organisations on recognizing, understanding, and countering biases that lead to discriminatory behaviour. The training typically covers various forms of discrimination, including those based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and disability. The theoretical foundation of such training may draw from critical race theory, social psychology, cultural competence, and legal frameworks. It aims to promote awareness of unconscious biases, structural inequalities, and the legal consequences of discriminatory actions. The goal is to foster an inclusive environment where diversity is respected, and equal opportunities are provided to all.

In practice, anti-discrimination training varies in its effectiveness and application. Many organisations implement workshops, seminars, or e-learning modules to address specific issues like harassment, bias, and inequality. Interactive exercises, role-playing, and real-life scenarios are often employed to help participants identify and mitigate discriminatory behaviour. However, while training can raise awareness, its impact largely depends on factors like the quality of the training, organisational commitment, follow-up actions, and the broader cultural context. Without sustained effort and systemic changes, anti-discrimination training alone may struggle to achieve long-lasting behavioural change. Thus, it works best when integrated into a comprehensive strategy for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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The role of adult education

To foster inclusivity and social justice in diverse learning environments is crucial to include anti-discrimination training in adult education. One important aspect of this training is the focus on raising awareness about unconscious biases and stereotypes. Adults generally carry ingrained biases which are learned from early childhood, reflecting the discriminatory structures of our societies, and which can manifest in subtle discriminatory behaviours. Through interactive workshops, reflective discussions, and case studies, participants are encouraged to recognise their own biases and understand how they impact interactions with others. By addressing these unconscious biases, adult learners become more aware of the importance of creating equitable environments and gain practical tools to counteract discrimination in both personal and professional contexts. Another key aspect is the emphasis on the practical application of anti-discrimination principles. Adult education often involves learners from varied backgrounds, so the training must be tailored to specific professional or social contexts, such as the workplace, community groups, or public institutions. Role-playing scenarios, legal frameworks, and conflict resolution techniques are commonly used to equip participants with strategies for responding to discriminatory incidents in real-life situations. Additionally, fostering a commitment to continuous learning and reflection is essential, as combating discrimination requires ongoing effort. By making anti-discrimination training relevant to their daily lives, adult learners are more likely to apply what they've learned in meaningful ways.

The anti-discrimination and anti-racism training addresses the psychological and sociological mechanisms by explaining these mechanisms, demonstrating their effects and practising alternative behaviours as well as taking action to multiply these learnings beyond the training. Within the ACCT training we take participants of varied backgrounds through a learning process that starts from explaining theory and backgrounds of discrimination moves over to demonstrating non-discriminatory practices and culminates in practising non-discriminatory communication and taking action against discrimination.

Evaluation and policy recommendations

Introduction

ACCT Anti-Discrimination and Civil Courage Training

explains

the psychological and sociological mechanisms behind discrimination and anti-discriminatory action

demonstrates

- that group strength does not require ingroup / outgroup behaviour
- inclusive ways of strengthening identity
- the effect of prejudice on our communication
- the reception of such communication by members of the prejudiced group

practices

- reflection on own biases and own experiences of discrimination
- alternative ways of communicating about diversity, difference and inclusion

co-creates and **takes action** against discrimination and racism

Figure 1. Functions fulfilled by the ACCT Curriculum.

Evaluation and policy recommendations

ACCT Curriculum in Practice

Overview of the Curriculum

The ACCT curriculum has been thoughtfully developed as a four-day training guide, providing a structured framework for deep exploration and learning. Each day is carefully designed to build upon the previous one, allowing participants to delve into critical topics, engage in meaningful discussions, and develop strategies for creating lasting change. One of the key strengths of this curriculum is its emphasis on fostering a diverse and inclusive learning environment. It is designed to be run with a mixed group of participants comprising people of colour and white participants. This intentional diversity creates an opportunity for dialogue, shared perspectives, and a deeper understanding of the complexities of racism and different forms of discrimination.

Throughout the four days of training, participants will have the chance to engage in impactful activities, reflective exercises, and group discussions. By creating a safe and inclusive space, participants can explore their own biases, challenge stereotypes, and develop empathy and understanding across societal divisions.

The curriculum covers a wide range of topics, including understanding privilege, recognising biases, examining systemic racism, promoting allyship, and fostering civic courage. It encourages participants to critically analyse their own beliefs and assumptions, providing them with the tools to dismantle racism and discrimination within their personal and professional lives.

DAY	DAY	DAY	DAY
01.	02.	03.	04.
Becoming a Group. Defining our Work.	Finding Commonalities. Showing Courage.	Inner Reflections. Taking Action.	Local Actions for Global Questions
Welcome & Orientation	Arrival & Orientation	Arrival & Orientation	Arrival
Postcard Connection	Common Threads	All Those, Who	Site Visit
Workshop Guidelines	Introduction: Forum Theatre	Train Journey	Final Feedback Session
Crossing The Line	Columbian Hypnosis	Stop Rumours	
Intention & Effect	Image Of The World	Presentation: Registering Discriminatory Incidents	
Bag Of Destiny	Forum Theatre	Toaster, Blender & Washing Machine	
Reality Show	Guided Breath	Civic Courage Styles	
Step In, Step Out	Reflection & Feedback	Digital Civic Courage	
Input: Discrimination		Feedback	
Dice Game			
3 Finger Feedback			

Figure 2. Overview of the ACCT Curriculum. See the Trainers Manual Publication for the fully annotated curriculum.

Evaluation and policy recommendations

Adaptations to Local Societal Contexts

Social context and needs of the trainees The curriculum was adapted to the local context, history as well as to the diverse local groups and sensitivity and disposition to the issues of discrimination and racism. The local adaptation and quality of eventual trainings are a responsibility of each country's project partner. In the following we give an overview of the experiences, adaptations and issues of partners when implementing the ACCT curriculum.

Evaluating these experiences we include recommendations for trainers for future adaptations of the curriculum in the next chapter.

Perspekt Initiative, Hamburg, Germany

In alignment with the recommendations of the assessment report, the target group of the ACCT Training in Hamburg was youth of German, Turkish and other diverse backgrounds and thus reflective of the diversity of the society, the country and the region. Participants were between 18 and 27 years old.

Participants were chosen to increase contact between different groups and because many of them are young people of colour, who experience racism in their everyday lives, and other youth who do not experience the same degree of discrimination, to work on common identities and on civic courage and understanding.

The training was conducted by trainers chosen from the organisation's pool of qualified anti-racism trainers and people of colour themselves. Two of them took part in the multiplier training.

Figure 3. The ACCT Local Training in Hamburg was conducted in April 2024



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Adaptations to Local Societal Contexts

Adaptations

Topics and sensitivities were adapted to reflect local conditions. Some examples were changed in the methods and the schedule was altered to fit with the practicalities in the seminar room and lunch, as well as the availability of partner organisations for site visits.

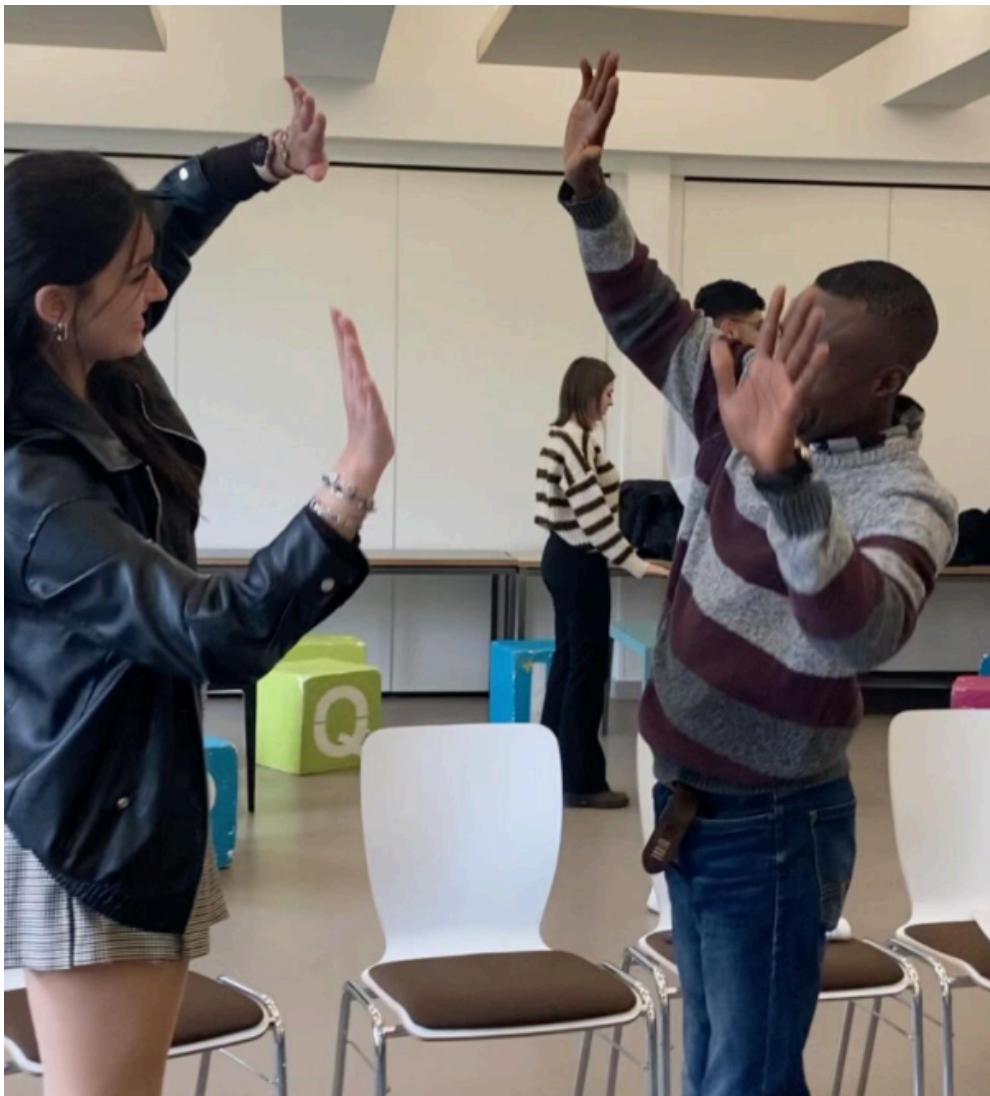


Figure 4. Interactive Exercises are at the centre of all ACCT activities.

Evaluation and policy recommendations

Adaptations to Local Societal Contexts

Imagina, Alora, Spain

The target group of the ACCT Training in Alora was adapted to local needs deviating from the recommendations in the assessment report.

Creating synergies with ongoing efforts to fight discrimination at local schools, teenagers between 15 and 16 years old from a secondary school, with ""difficult performance" and episodes of discrimination on a daily basis.

The training was conducted by experienced trainers, of which one took part in the multiplier training.

Adaptations

The language of the concepts and definitions were adapted to fit the understanding of the younger target group. Accordingly the activities were explained in an easier way.

Some activities needed to be shortened as the time allocated in the curriculum was not sufficient to cover all the contents with the participant group.

Specifically raising awareness and clarifying basic concepts was significantly more time consuming with the younger demographic than anticipated by the adult curriculum.

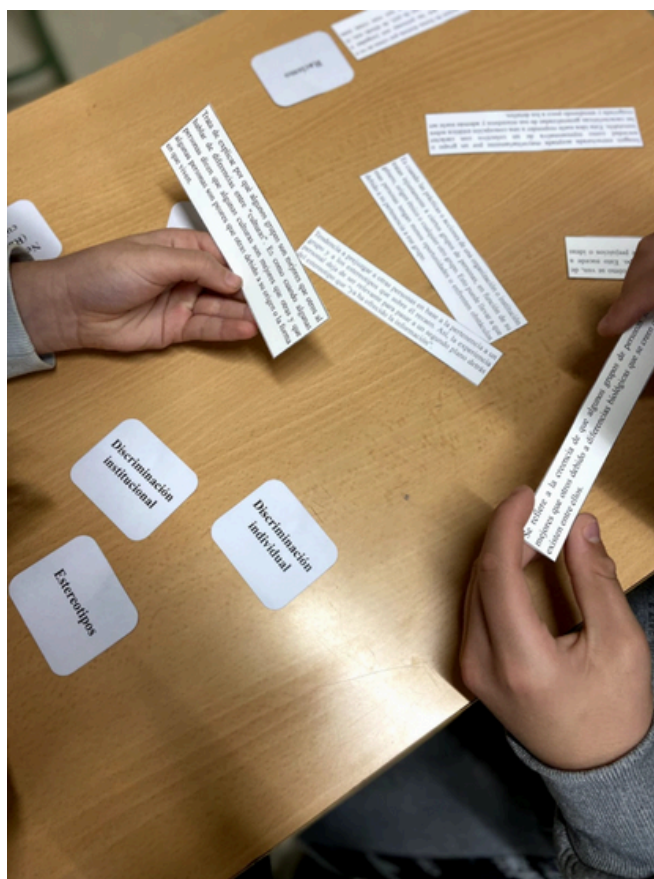


Figure 5. Adapted Definitions in the ACCT Training in Alora, Spain.

Evaluation and policy recommendations

Adaptations to Local Societal Contexts

Association on Refugees and Migrants in Bulgaria, Sofia, Bulgaria

The target group of the ACCT Training in Bulgaria was students aged 13-18 and young adults from diverse gender, ethnic, social and economic groups. The participants were chosen to present diverse groups from Bulgarian society.

The selection of trainers went according to their previous engagement with the issues of discrimination and racism, as well as according to their training skills, knowledge and experience in the field. Two of the three trainers conducting the implementation took part in the multiplier training in Berlin.

Adaptations

The curriculum was followed, although more emphasis was put on building and upgrading their awareness on the issues of discrimination and racism and on their capacity to actively promote anti-discrimination and anti-racism, starting with their own dispositions, attitudes and behaviour. Here social context and needs of the trainees were reflected. The curriculum was thus adapted to the local context, history as well as to the diverse local groups' sensitivity and disposition to the issues of discrimination and racism. Some of the exercises' contexts and highlights were changed, making more relevant reference to local needs.

Crossing Borders, Copenhagen, Denmark

The target group of the ACCT Training in Copenhagen was chosen to be high school students as recommended in the assessment report, since CB mostly works with engaging youth for dialogue at CB. The organisation chose to partner with an existing school workshops programme to guarantee participation. The training was then conducted with 10th grade students (40 participants, on average 16 year olds). The gender composition was roughly 40% male identifying, 40% female identifying, and 10% gender neutral.

More than one trainer took part in the multiplier training in Berlin. CB takes pride in diversity. All 4 trainers who participated in the Train the Trainers in Berlin come from either countries from the Global South (Egypt, Lebanon, Nepal) and/or having lived experiences of discrimination (religious minority, racialised group, LGBTQIA+ community). All 4 of them were facilitators in the local training. We also had a trainer of Ethiopian-Italian background, a trainer of Turkish background as well as a Danish woman, and a woman from Germany who took part. CB had 8 facilitators in total, although not all were present for all 4 days. CB had 2-4 hour meetings before each local training day in which they would go through the curriculum, review the methods, and prepare who was going to be the main facilitator and spread out the responsibilities.

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Adaptations to Local Societal Contexts

CB also used this time to adapt the methods to the local context and to the group. Trainers also got familiar with the ACCT report on discrimination, and online resources and videos about anti racism and civic courage styles.

Adaptations

The curriculum was followed, but adapted to reflect groups negatively affected by racism in Denmark and the level of public awareness of discrimination within the target group. Further instructions, inputs, and debriefing questions were adapted to the age group. The Danish partner decided to deviate from the compact curriculum and divided it into four trainings conducted on different occasions over 4 weeks.

This step was undertaken to accommodate the needs of the students as well as the partnering school. The partner reflected that a lot of technical terms or big theoretical concepts were difficult for the participants to engage with.

Figure 6. High School Students participating in the ACCT Training in Copenhagen, Denmark.



Evaluation and policy recommendations

Adaptations to Local Societal Contexts

Dla Ziemi, Lublin, Poland

The target group of the ACCT Training in Lublin, Poland was chosen from a place particularly exposed to challenges addressed in the ACCT project:

The environment of the Voluntary Labour Corps, due to its specifics, and due to the presence of Ukrainian youth, as well as the specifics of the small town of Radzyn Podlaski, the programme Voivodeship Lublin is a place exposed to the challenges faced in the ACCT project.

The participants were a group of Polish and Ukrainian teenagers aged 16-18 staying in Poland because of the war in Ukraine. These young people study on a daily basis at the Voluntary Labour Corps in the small town of Radzyn Podlaski in the Lublin region. They are either from difficult family backgrounds (especially Polish participants), or Ukrainian youths sent back to boarding schools from war-stricken Ukraine and cared for by tutors. This group is very diverse, as they come from both large cities (Kiev) and small towns, and from families of different social status. The Polish partner chose this place because it is a tiny town, where young people either witness discrimination regularly or are discriminated against.

In awareness of the educational difficulties, the partner worked with an intercultural assistant. One of the trainers attended all ACCT trainings and meetings and also participated in the Train The Trainers in Berlin. The other person is a refugee, affected by the war in Ukraine back in 2014, and is a member of the team. She graduated from the Intercultural Assistants school as part of the activities in the association. She works with Polish and Ukrainian youth on a daily basis, and is responsible for supporting parents and good communication. Olga deals with educational problems of young people on a daily basis.

Adaptations

The ACCT curriculum was adapted to the local context such as the diversity of society and the particular groups affected by discrimination and racism in Poland. Specifically, the partner simplified the curriculum to cater to young people of the age identified above. The ACCT training in Poland was further implemented bilingually and with language facilitation for the more difficult concepts. Examples were adapted to relate directly to the participant group. Definitions were simplified to match the language to the capabilities of the young people, without understating the level of content.

Evaluation and policy recommendations

Recommendations for ACCT Trainers

Adapting the training to the specific needs of each group of participants is essential for maximising the effectiveness of learning, particularly in anti-discrimination training. Different groups bring unique experiences, perspectives, and challenges that must be considered to create a meaningful and impactful experience. For instance, a group of corporate employees may require training that focuses on workplace discrimination, while a community organisation might benefit from understanding how discrimination manifests in public services. Tailoring the content and delivery to the participants ensures that the training is relevant, engaging, and practical, allowing learners to connect the material to their real-world experiences and challenges. Moreover, the diversity of the facilitating team needs to reflect the diversity of the topic and of the participating group, as lived experience shapes expertise and empathy while dealing with these challenging subjects. This was an important issue which was put into practice by all partner organisations during the implementation of the ACCT Trainings.

Furthermore, adult learners have diverse learning styles, backgrounds, levels of awareness regarding and own experiences regarding discrimination. Taking the latter into account, the learning group needs to be split at times to create safer spaces for participants of colour. Adapting the training to these variables fosters inclusivity within the learning environment, making the content accessible to everyone. Moreover, some participants may benefit from interactive activities and role-playing, while others might need more theoretical discussions or reflective exercises. By customising the training to the group's specific characteristics – such as cultural, professional, or educational backgrounds – trainers can create a more inclusive and empathetic learning environment, ensuring that all participants feel seen, respected, and able to engage fully with the material. This approach also enhances retention and encourages the application of anti-discrimination principles in everyday life.

In summary, the following adaptations of the ACCT Curriculum can be useful when working with different target groups:

Language Adaptations:

To foster understanding of the curriculum content different steps can be taken to support non-native speakers and target groups with lower language registers:

- o Use of easy language throughout the training, especially in the theory portion of the curriculum. Adapting the definitions and using variation of terms and number of terms covered can further ease understanding for these target groups.
- o Bilingual conduct of the training can be offered, if two languages are dominant among the participants.
- o Making language facilitation available can be a viable alternative to creating a completely bilingual version of the training.

Evaluation and policy recommendations

Recommendations for ACCT Trainers

Timeline Adaptations:

Often the conditions to conduct a 4 day training in one go are not ideal due to time, location or other circumstances. The following adaptations have been tried out by the partners to circumvent such conditions and enable a successful ACCT training:

- o Abbreviate exercise content or give more time for them to allow for the full content to be received and understood fully
- o Conduct the training on the separate occasions over a longer period of time, i.e. a series of training

Local Contexts:

o Adapt examples and exercises to reflect on local contexts such as diversity of society and groups affected by discrimination and racism as well as public perception of these issues in the city, region or country of the training.

○ In practise the local contexts can be considered by

- adapting the composition of the facilitator team to include local and national minorities
- making examples and chosen definitions significant for the local situation
- showing best practices of monitoring activities from own country if applicable or other countries if local and national initiatives are limited

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