



Intercultural and Interreligious Competence

FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Content

Introduction	2
PART 1 — THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....	3
1 Background and Relevance	3
1.1 Key Terms	4
1.2 Human Rights Education and Intercultural Learning.....	6
1.3 Reflecting on Your Own Cultural Background	6
2 Dimensions of Cultural and Religious Diversity	7
3 Attitudes and Key Competences	8
3.1 Stereotypes, Ethnocentrism, and Prejudice	9
3.2 Principles of Interreligious Dialogue	10
4 Interculturality, Religion, and Loneliness	11
5 Communication in Intercultural and Interreligious Encounters	13
5.1 Communicating Clearly and Respectfully	13
5.2 Responding Sensitive to Cultural and Religious Differences	14
5.3 Dealing Constructively with Different Opinions	14
5.4 Creating a Respectful Culture of Dialogue	15
PART 2 — PRACTICAL EXERCISES	16
Exercise Block A: Intercultural Encounters	16
Exercise Block B: Religion & Worldviews.....	17
Exercise Block C: From Prejudice to Dialogue.....	18
PART 3 — REFERENCES	19
Literature & Sources	19

Introduction

Welcome to this workshop module!

Intercultural and interreligious competence is an important prerequisite for successful coexistence in a diverse society. People differ in their culture, language, religion, traditions, and personal life experiences. This diversity enriches our communities, but it can also lead to misunderstandings or uncertainty. It is therefore all the more important to approach others with openness, respect, and appreciation.

These competences are particularly important when working with older people. As a volunteer or someone supporting older adults, you do not need to be an expert on cultures or religions. Rather, the aim is to see differences as an enrichment, to communicate with understanding, and to treat people with respect regardless of their background or beliefs. Genuine interest, active listening, and openness can already make a significant contribution to building trust and creating bridges between people.

This workshop module supports you in developing intercultural and interreligious competences for practical work with older people. It is based on the principles of the **COMPASS** manual of the Council of Europe on Human Rights Education with Young People, as well as the Council of Europe's concept of intercultural dialogue. Within the **Com(p)AGE** project, these approaches are transferred to intergenerational learning. At the heart of the project is the principle "**Everyone works together.**" Learning takes place through encounters, exchange, and shared reflection.

In the **first part**, you will learn the theoretical foundations. You will explore cultural and religious diversity, the causes of prejudice and ethnocentrism, and the basic principles of respectful interreligious dialogue. In the **second part**, you will apply this knowledge through field-tested exercises that have been specifically adapted for volunteer multipliers within the **Com(p)AGE** project. In the **third part**, you will find further literature and sources for those who wish to explore the topics in greater depth.

This module is **not** intended to make you an expert in intercultural or interreligious issues. Instead, its aim is to strengthen your awareness of diversity and provide you with practical guidance for treating people from different cultural and religious backgrounds with respect, openness, and appreciation.

Are you not yet involved in volunteering but would like to work with older people? Then we would be delighted to hear from you! We appreciate every volunteer and will support you step by step as you begin your volunteering journey—this course is the ideal place to start.

PART 1 — THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1 Background and Relevance

European societies are becoming increasingly diverse. People from different backgrounds, languages, cultures, religions, and worldviews live, work, and learn together. This diversity enriches society, but it can also lead to misunderstandings, uncertainty, or conflict. It is therefore increasingly important to develop the competences needed to interact with others in an open and respectful way.

Intercultural and interreligious competence refers to the ability to approach people with openness, respect, and appreciation, regardless of their cultural or religious background. It does not mean knowing every culture or religion in detail. Rather, it involves recognising different perspectives, acknowledging both similarities and differences, and engaging in respectful dialogue.

In intergenerational work with older people, volunteers and multipliers often meet individuals with different life stories, cultural backgrounds, and religious beliefs. An open attitude and a willingness to listen help build trust and promote mutual understanding. This creates encounters on an equal footing, strengthens social participation, and contributes to social cohesion.

For many years, the Council of Europe has promoted intercultural dialogue as an important contribution to democracy, human rights, and peaceful coexistence. This approach is based on the dignity of every individual and on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18) and the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 9).

1.1 Key Terms

To better understand intercultural and interreligious competence, it is helpful to become familiar with several key concepts.

Culture

Culture encompasses far more than food, clothing, or holidays. It describes the combination of values, language, traditions, customs, norms, and ways of life that people share. Culture is not static—it is constantly evolving and is shaped by encounters, experiences, and social developments.

Culture is expressed not only through visible characteristics such as language, clothing, food, or celebrations. A large part of culture remains invisible. This includes values, communication styles, ideas of politeness, attitudes towards time, family roles, and expectations about living and working together.

People often take their own culture for granted. It is usually through encounters with others that they realise the same situation can be interpreted in different ways. For example, while direct eye contact may be considered a sign of honesty in some cultures, it may be perceived as disrespectful in others. Similarly, attitudes towards personal space, punctuality, or decision-making can vary across cultures.

For this reason, intercultural competence does not mean knowing every cultural custom or tradition. More importantly, it involves recognising differences, asking questions, and avoiding premature judgments.

Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence refers to the ability to interact and communicate respectfully, openly, and appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds. It involves not only knowledge about other cultures but, above all, the willingness to reflect on one's own perspective and to take the perspectives of others seriously.

The key elements of intercultural competence include openness, empathy, curiosity, the ability to see situations from different perspectives, and a respectful attitude towards different values, norms, and ways of life. People with intercultural competence are willing to listen, ask questions, and avoid making quick judgments. They recognise that their own behaviour and perceptions are also shaped by their cultural background.

Intercultural competence does not mean knowing every culture or tradition in detail. Rather, it involves being able to tolerate uncertainty, seeing misunderstandings as opportunities for learning, and working together to build mutual understanding. It plays an important role in reducing prejudice, building trust, and promoting respectful coexistence in a diverse society.

Interreligious Dialogue

Interreligious dialogue refers to respectful encounters and open exchange between people of different religions or worldviews. The focus is not on determining which belief is "right," but on getting to know one another, understanding one another, and learning from one another.

Successful interreligious dialogue requires all participants to meet each other on an equal footing and to respect different religious beliefs and convictions. Its purpose is not to persuade others to adopt a particular religion or worldview, nor to change their beliefs. Instead, it seeks to discover common ground, acknowledge differences, and promote respectful relationships.

Interreligious dialogue makes an important contribution to peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society. It helps reduce prejudice, overcome uncertainty, and build mutual trust. Above all, personal encounters allow people to see one another as individuals with unique experiences and life stories, rather than defining them solely by their religious affiliation.

Worldview

A worldview refers to a person's fundamental beliefs about life, the world, humanity, and living together in society. It influences how people perceive the world around them, make decisions, and shape their lives. A worldview may be based on religion, but it can also be founded on philosophical, ethical, humanistic, or other non-religious beliefs.

Worldviews provide many people with guidance, shape their values, and influence their attitudes towards topics such as family, solidarity, responsibility, and relationships with others. At the same time, people with very different worldviews may share many of the same values and live together respectfully.

In a democratic society, everyone has the same rights and freedoms regardless of whether their worldview is religious or non-religious. These include, in particular, the freedoms of thought, conscience, and religion. Intercultural and interreligious competence therefore also means respecting different worldviews and approaching people with openness and appreciation regardless of their personal beliefs.

1.2 Human Rights Education and Intercultural Learning

The **COMPASS** manual of the Council of Europe understands intercultural learning as an educational process that supports people in appreciating diversity and building positive relationships with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Rather than focusing on differences, intercultural learning places emphasis on mutual respect, openness, and the willingness to learn from one another. It therefore involves not only gaining knowledge about other cultures but also reflecting on one's own perspectives and critically examining personal assumptions and prejudices.

The **Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue** (*Living Together as Equals in Dignity*, 2008) also emphasises that dialogue between people of different cultures, religions, and worldviews is an essential prerequisite for democratic stability, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence.

Within the **Com(p)AGE** project, this means that intercultural competence is not developed through factual knowledge alone. It grows primarily through personal encounters, active listening, shared experiences, and the willingness to understand different perspectives. Every respectful encounter has the potential to reduce prejudice, build trust, and encourage people to recognise one another as equal partners, regardless of their cultural background or religious beliefs.

1.3 Reflecting on Your Own Cultural Background

Intercultural competence begins not with knowledge about other people, but with reflecting on one's own cultural background. Every person grows up with certain values, norms, customs, and ways of thinking. These often influence, unconsciously, how situations are perceived and interpreted.

Questions such as "*What do I consider polite?*", "*How do I deal with conflict?*", or "*What role do family or religion play in my life?*" are often shaped by culture. When these personal assumptions are regarded as self-evident or universal, misunderstandings are more likely to arise in encounters with people from different cultural backgrounds.

People who are aware of their own cultural influences are better able to approach others with openness and to understand and appreciate differences. Self-reflection is therefore one of the most important foundations of intercultural competence.

2 Dimensions of Cultural and Religious Diversity

Cultural and religious diversity is expressed in many different ways. People differ not only in their origin or religion, but also in their language, traditions, values, worldviews, and personal life experiences. This diversity shapes our everyday lives and influences how people communicate, make decisions, and perceive the world around them.

Diversity offers many opportunities. Different perspectives promote mutual learning, creativity, and social cohesion. At the same time, differences can also lead to misunderstandings, uncertainty, or conflict—particularly when prejudice, stereotypes, or a lack of knowledge shape the way people interact with one another.

The **COMPASS** manual of the Council of Europe identifies different dimensions of diversity and links them to key human rights themes. The following overview presents important dimensions of cultural and religious diversity, together with possible areas of tension that may arise in everyday life.

Dimension	Possible Areas of Tension	COMPASS Theme
Culture and Tradition	Ethnocentrism, cultural stereotypes	Culture and Sport
Language	Communication barriers, exclusion	Migration / Discrimination
Religion	Prejudice, stigmatization, conflict	Religion and Belief
Worldview (non-religious)	Devaluation, lack of recognition	Religion and Belief
Migration and Origin	Racism, "us versus them" thinking	Migration

In practice, these dimensions rarely occur in isolation. They often overlap and influence one another. For example, a person may belong to a religious minority, speak a different mother tongue, and have a migration background at the same time. For this reason, it is important not to reduce people to a single characteristic, but to recognise them in their individuality.

People belong to several social groups simultaneously. For example, a person may be older, have a migration background, belong to a religious community, speak several languages, and at the same time be actively involved in volunteering.

These multiple identities influence people's lives and their experiences of participation or exclusion. Therefore, individuals should never be reduced to a single characteristic. Every person is more than their origin, religion, or language.

3 Attitudes and Key Competences

Intercultural and interreligious competence does not begin with expert knowledge about different cultures or religions, but with one's own attitude. It is impossible to know everything about every culture or religious community. What matters most is the willingness to approach others with openness, respect, and without making premature judgments.

A respectful attitude provides the foundation for effective communication and mutual trust. It enables people to see differences not as a threat, but as an opportunity to learn from one another and to appreciate diversity. Especially in intergenerational encounters, an open attitude helps build relationships, strengthen understanding, and prevent misunderstandings.

Successful communication does not depend solely on speaking the same language. Body language, facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, speaking pace, and communication styles can vary considerably across cultures. Some people communicate very directly, while others express criticism or disagreement more indirectly. As a result, misunderstandings often arise not because of bad intentions, but because of different communication habits.

Effective intercultural communication is characterised by active listening, clear and understandable language, asking questions, and avoiding premature assumptions or interpretations. People who openly acknowledge uncertainty and show genuine interest in the perspectives of others create trust and make dialogue easier.

The most important key competences for intercultural and interreligious encounters include:

- **Openness and curiosity:** Showing genuine interest in other people, their experiences, and their ways of life.
- **Empathy:** Being willing to understand the feelings, experiences, and perspectives of others.
- **Tolerance of ambiguity:** Accepting different opinions, values, and ways of life without feeling the need to judge them immediately.
- **Decentring:** Recognising that one's own perspective is only one of many possible viewpoints and being willing to consider alternative perspectives.
- **Willingness to engage in dialogue:** Listening openly, asking respectful questions, and engaging in constructive conversations with others.

These competences are not developed through theoretical knowledge alone. They grow primarily through personal encounters, reflection, and shared experiences.

3.1 Stereotypes, Ethnocentrism, and Prejudice

Every person perceives the world through their own life experiences, upbringing, and cultural background. As a result, we unconsciously develop ideas and assumptions about other people and social groups. While these assumptions can help us make sense of the world, they can also lead to oversimplified or inaccurate judgments.

An important concept in this context is **ethnocentrism**. It refers to the tendency to evaluate other cultures according to the values, norms, and customs of one's own culture. In doing so, people often regard their own culture as the standard or, in some cases, as superior to others.

Stereotypes are simplified beliefs or generalisations about particular groups of people. They often arise from limited personal experience or from representations in the media and society. Although stereotypes may sometimes appear positive, they reduce people to a few assumed characteristics instead of recognising them as unique individuals.

Prejudice goes a step further. It combines stereotypical beliefs with negative judgments or attitudes towards others. Prejudice can lead to exclusion, discrimination, and conflict and may prevent people from building respectful and meaningful relationships.

Intercultural learning helps people become aware of these mechanisms and critically reflect on them. The aim is not to judge people based on their culture, religion, or background, but to approach them with openness and to question one's own assumptions on a regular basis. Personal encounters and meaningful conversations play an important role in reducing prejudice and promoting mutual understanding.

Unconscious Bias

Many prejudices operate at an unconscious level. Our brains automatically categorise people into groups and rely on previous experiences, social influences, and cultural images to make quick judgments. These automatic patterns of thinking are known as **unconscious biases**. They influence the way we think, perceive, and behave, often without us being aware of it.

For this reason, intercultural competence does not mean being completely free of prejudice. Rather, it means becoming aware of our own unconscious assumptions, reflecting on them critically, and remaining open to new experiences and perspectives throughout life.

3.2 Principles of Interreligious Dialogue

Interreligious dialogue refers to respectful encounters between people of different religions and worldviews. Its purpose is not to eliminate differences or to convince others to adopt one's own beliefs. Instead, it is based on mutual exchange, understanding, and respect for diversity.

Successful interreligious dialogue is founded on several key principles:

Equal dignity	Every person deserves the same respect and dignity, regardless of their religion or worldview.
Sincere listening	Meaningful dialogue requires a genuine willingness to understand the perspectives of others through attentive and respectful listening.
No intention to convert	The aim of dialogue is not to persuade others or change their beliefs, but to promote mutual understanding.
Respect for similarities and differences	Differences are a natural part of human diversity and do not need to be eliminated in order for people to live together respectfully.
Openness to mutual learning	Every encounter offers an opportunity to broaden one's own perspective and learn from the experiences and beliefs of others.

The goal of interreligious dialogue is therefore not complete agreement, but peaceful and respectful coexistence within a diverse society. Within the **Com(p)AGE** project, this approach provides the foundation for intergenerational encounters in which people learn from one another and treat each other with respect, regardless of their cultural or religious background.

4 Interculturality, Religion, and Loneliness

Loneliness does not only arise when people live alone. It can also develop when individuals feel misunderstood, excluded, or unable to belong because of their cultural background, language, or religion. Social relationships are built on trust, mutual understanding, and the feeling of being accepted. When these experiences are missing, people may become socially isolated and experience loneliness.

Cultural and language differences can make communication more difficult and may reduce people's participation in social and community life. Experiences of discrimination, prejudice, or a lack of opportunities for meaningful interaction can also contribute to people withdrawing from society and no longer feeling that they belong to a community.

Older people with a migration background often face several challenges at the same time. Many have left their home countries during their lives and may have lost familiar social networks, neighbourhoods, or family structures. As they grow older, language barriers may become more pronounced, and access to information, healthcare, or support services may become increasingly difficult. At the same time, some older adults live in environments where their cultural traditions or religious practices are not widely recognised or understood. This may lead to a feeling of living between two cultures or of not fully belonging to either.

Members of religious minorities may also experience loneliness or social exclusion. Prejudice, limited knowledge about different religions, or uncertainty about religious diversity can discourage interaction and create misunderstandings. In many cases, however, it is not the differences themselves that create distance, but rather a lack of communication and mutual understanding.

Intercultural and interreligious competence helps to address these challenges. It promotes the ability to approach people with openness and respect, regardless of their cultural background, language, or religion. Those who are willing to listen, ask questions, and show genuine interest in the experiences of others create trust and make it easier to build meaningful social relationships.

This does not require detailed knowledge of every cultural tradition or religious belief. Much more important is a respectful and appreciative attitude. Such an attitude is reflected in respecting different ways of life, recognising cultural and religious needs, and avoiding judgments based on stereotypes or assumptions. Simple actions—such as pronouncing a person's name correctly, showing interest in their life story, or asking about their individual needs—can help people feel welcomed, respected, and included.

Intercultural competence also involves recognising potential barriers at an early stage and responding to them with sensitivity. This includes using clear and understandable language, showing patience during conversations, being open to different communication styles, and recognising that values, customs, and expectations are often shaped by culture. Rather than

making quick judgments, misunderstandings should be seen as opportunities for dialogue and learning.

When people interact with one another respectfully, regardless of their cultural or religious background, they build trust, strengthen mutual understanding, and create a stronger sense of belonging. In this way, intercultural and interreligious competence make an important contribution to social inclusion and can help reduce loneliness and social exclusion in the long term.

Diversity as a Resource

Cultural and religious diversity is not only a challenge but also a valuable resource. Different experiences, perspectives, traditions, and life stories broaden our understanding of the world and create opportunities for mutual learning. When people from different backgrounds come together, they bring unique knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking that can enrich both individuals and communities.

Especially in intergenerational settings, diversity creates valuable learning opportunities. Older and younger people contribute different experiences and competences, while cultural and religious diversity adds further perspectives that encourage dialogue and understanding. By sharing ideas and experiences, participants can learn from one another, challenge their own assumptions, and develop greater appreciation for different ways of life.

Diversity also promotes creativity, innovation, and problem-solving. People with different backgrounds often approach situations from different perspectives, leading to new ideas and more inclusive solutions. At the same time, respectful cooperation across cultural and religious differences strengthens trust, social cohesion, and a sense of belonging.

Recognising diversity as a resource means moving beyond simply accepting differences. It means valuing the unique contributions of every individual and creating opportunities for everyone to participate, share their experiences, and contribute to the community. In this way, diversity becomes a source of learning, personal growth, and stronger, more inclusive societies.

5 Communication in Intercultural and Interreligious Encounters

Intercultural and interreligious competence is demonstrated not only through knowledge about different cultures or religions, but above all through the way people communicate with one another. Conversations about cultural background, religion, personal values, or identity can be highly enriching, but they may also give rise to uncertainty or misunderstandings. Different communication styles, life experiences, and personal beliefs all influence how messages are expressed and interpreted.

Successful communication therefore requires people to approach one another with openness, respect, and genuine interest. The aim is not to convince others to adopt one's own perspective or to eliminate differences. Rather, it is to listen to one another, understand different viewpoints, and promote mutual understanding.

Volunteers and community multipliers play an especially important role in this process. They create opportunities for encounters, facilitate conversations, and help ensure that everyone feels welcomed, respected, and included. They do not need to be experts on cultures or religions. What matters most is a respectful attitude and the ability to communicate with sensitivity and appreciation.

5.1 Communicating Clearly and Respectfully

Successful communication begins with using clear and understandable language. People have different language skills, educational backgrounds, and cultural experiences. For this reason, information should be communicated as clearly, simply, and understandably as possible. The following principles are particularly helpful:

- Use short and easy-to-understand sentences.
- Avoid technical or specialised terms whenever possible, or explain them clearly.
- Allow sufficient time for conversations and questions.
- Listen actively and show genuine interest.
- Ask questions when something is unclear instead of making assumptions.
- Summarise important points in your own words to avoid misunderstandings.

Non-verbal communication is equally important. Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, and physical distance may be interpreted differently in different cultures. What is considered polite in one culture may seem unusual or even inappropriate in another. For this reason, non-verbal behaviour should not be judged too quickly. Openness, curiosity, and respectful questions are often more helpful than assumptions or interpretations. Respectful communication also means allowing people to finish speaking, taking their experiences seriously, and accepting different opinions. Even small gestures—such as a friendly smile, patience, or showing genuine interest—can make a significant contribution to building trust and creating positive relationships.

5.2 Responding Sensitively to Cultural and Religious Differences

Every person has a unique life story. Their background, family, religion, language, and personal experiences all shape the way they see the world. At the same time, people within the same culture or religious community often differ just as much from one another as people from completely different backgrounds. For this reason, it is important to avoid making assumptions or generalisations. Statements such as *"All people from this country are..."* or *"People of this religion always..."* do not reflect the diversity of individual experiences. Intercultural competence means recognising each person as an individual and approaching them with openness and respect.

A questioning rather than judgmental attitude is particularly helpful. Instead of making assumptions, open-ended questions can be asked, for example:

- *"How would you prefer to handle this?"*
- *"What does this tradition mean to you?"*
- *"Is there anything we should take into consideration?"*

This way of communicating demonstrates respect and genuine interest while giving people the opportunity to express their own needs, preferences, and experiences. It is equally important to recognise that cultural or religious differences do not automatically lead to problems. More often, misunderstandings arise because of limited communication, different expectations, or assumptions that remain unspoken. Openness, curiosity, and mutual respect help people address these situations together and find solutions that take everyone's perspectives into account.

5.3 Dealing Constructively with Different Opinions

Conversations about religion, culture, or worldviews may give rise to different opinions and, at times, controversial discussions. This is a normal part of dialogue and can provide valuable opportunities for learning and personal growth. Different perspectives enrich conversations and encourage participants to reflect on their own assumptions and experiences. An important principle is to distinguish between a person's opinion and the person themselves. Different viewpoints should be welcomed as long as they are expressed respectfully and uphold the dignity and rights of others. Respectful dialogue does not require everyone to agree, but it does require participants to listen to one another and communicate with consideration.

When tensions or misunderstandings arise, the following principles can be helpful:

- Remain calm and allow everyone enough time to express their thoughts.
- Listen attentively and ask clarifying questions.
- Use **"I" statements** rather than making generalisations.
- Highlight common ground without denying existing differences.
- Address discriminatory or disrespectful comments in a calm and respectful manner.
- Guide the conversation towards mutual understanding rather than persuasion or debate.

Not every conversation will end with a shared opinion, and this is neither necessary nor expected. The goal is to understand different perspectives, respect one another despite disagreements, and create an atmosphere in which constructive dialogue remains possible even when opinions differ.

5.4 Creating a Respectful Culture of Dialogue

An open and trusting atmosphere for discussion does not develop automatically. It grows when all participants feel safe, respected, and able to express their thoughts without fear of criticism or discrimination. This is particularly important when discussing topics such as religion, culture, identity, or personal beliefs, as these subjects are often closely connected to people's values and life experiences.

At the beginning of a workshop or group discussion, it can be helpful to agree on a set of shared ground rules. These provide a common framework for respectful communication and help create an environment in which everyone feels comfortable participating.

Examples of such ground rules include:

- We allow each other to finish speaking without interruption.
- We communicate respectfully at all times.
- Different opinions are accepted and respected.
- We speak from our own experiences and use "I" statements whenever possible.
- Personal experiences shared within the group remain confidential.
- No one is expected to justify or explain their religion, culture, or worldview..

A respectful culture of dialogue promotes trust, mutual appreciation, and openness. It creates a safe environment in which people can share experiences, learn from one another, and engage in meaningful intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

Intercultural and interreligious competence is expressed above all in everyday communication. People who communicate clearly, listen attentively, respect differences, and approach others without prejudice create the conditions for trust and mutual understanding. Successful coexistence in a diverse society is based not on complete agreement, but on openness, respect, and a genuine willingness to engage in dialogue.

PART 2 — PRACTICAL EXERCISES

This section contains practical exercises adapted from the **COMPASS** manual of the Council of Europe. The activities help participants experience cultural and religious diversity, become aware of prejudice, and practise respectful dialogue. The exercise descriptions have been summarised in the authors' own words; the complete original instructions can be found in the **COMPASS** manual.

Exercise Block A: Intercultural Encounters

🔑 Exercise A1: Language Barrier ⌚ 30 Min.

1	One participant tries to communicate a simple message without using the group's common language—only gestures, pictures, or sounds may be used.
2	The group guesses the message and reflects on possible misunderstandings.
3	Variation: Participants exchange a few simple words or expressions from their different languages.
4	Reflection: How did it feel not to understand or not to be understood? What helped communication?

💡 **Note:** Based on the COMPASS activity "Language Barrier" (Migration / War / Discrimination). The exercise helps participants experience language barriers and strengthens empathy and communication skills.

🔑 Exercise A2: Local Heritage Sites ⌚ 20 Min.

1	Small groups identify places in their local area that are important to different cultures or religions.
2	They research the history and significance of these places.
3	The findings are presented and combined on a shared map.
4	Reflection: Whose heritage is visible? Whose is not? How can we tell our shared history more inclusively?

💡 **Note:** Based on the COMPASS activity "Local Heritage Sites" (Human Rights / Discrimination / Religion). The exercise highlights shared cultural heritage and the diversity within local communities.

Exercise Block B: Religion & Worldviews

Exercise B1: A Mosque in Sleepyville ⌚ 40 Min.

1	Participants are introduced to a fictional community where the construction of a mosque has been proposed.
2	Each participant takes on a role (e.g. local residents, municipal representatives, religious communities, journalists).
3	A simulated public hearing is held in which participants exchange arguments and work towards a decision.
4	Reflection: Which stereotypes or prejudices became visible? How can different interests be balanced fairly?

 **Note:** Based on the COMPASS activity "A Mosque in Sleepyville" (Religion and Belief / Discrimination / Participation). The exercise promotes understanding of freedom of religion, democratic participation, and respectful dialogue.

Exercise B2: Soon to Be Outdated ⌚ 20 Min.

1	Participants receive a series of statements about religion, traditions, and social change.
2	In small groups, they discuss which aspects change over time and which remain important.
3	The groups present and compare their conclusions.
4	Reflection: How do religious beliefs, traditions, and ways of living together change across generations?

 **Note:** Based on the COMPASS activity "Soon to Be Outdated" (Religion and Belief / Globalisation / Education). The exercise encourages participants to reflect on changing traditions and different perspectives across generations.

Exercise Block C: From Prejudice to Dialogue

Exercise C1: Believers ⌚ 120 Min.

1	Participants collect common images, assumptions, and stereotypes about people from different religions and worldviews.
2	These assumptions are discussed and compared with real-life stories and experiences.
3	Participants meet or interview people from different religious or non-religious backgrounds (either in person or through prepared materials).
4	Reflection: Where do our assumptions come from? How does personal encounter change our perceptions?

Exercise C2: Final Reflection ⌚ 30 Min.

1	Each participant shares one sentence describing what they are taking away about intercultural and interreligious encounters.
2	Everyone writes down one concrete action they will take to promote dialogue and social inclusion in their daily lives.
3	Open questions are collected and discussed together.

PART 3 — REFERENCES

Literature & Sources

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*This training sheet is based on **COMPASS – the Council of Europe Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People** (coe.int/compass), the **White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue**, and additional educational resources published by the Council of Europe. The content and exercises have been summarised in the authors' own words and adapted for the **Com(p)AGE** platform training. Original materials © Council of Europe. | www.compage.at*