

The Danger of the Single Story

Aim

To increase participant's understanding how stereotypes and prejudices are being created, the origins of discrimination and to increase participants' intercultural awareness and tolerance through discussion and the sharing of personal experiences.

Preparation and materials

You will need to show the TED speech of novelist Chimamanda Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story", available online at www.ted.com. The session can be opened with an explanation of the terms "stereotype", "prejudice" and "discrimination", and the process how they are created.

With the help of this speech you can also tackle topic of assumptions, as well as challenging and breaking them.

Time

60 minutes.

Instructions

Open the exercise with the TED speech of novelist Chimamanda Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story". After the talk make sure that the participants understand the concept of a single story. Then give the participants 20 minutes to write their own "single story" –with themselves or someone else as the main character. It can be a single story about someone, some group of people or themselves. Ask participants to write about the moment they first understood that it is a single story. Allow time for 2–4 participants to read their stories for the whole group and encourage further sharing in pairs or trios.

Questions for

1. Is it possible for humans to be free of stereotypes and prejudices?
2. Have you experienced situations where you believe someone had an inaccurate perception of you due to cultural or other reasons? How did you react?
3. How are stereotypes and prejudices connected with discrimination and social exclusion?
4. What can we do to combat discrimination and exclusion?