



Language Support for Migrants *A Council of Europe Toolkit*

Tool 17 - A checklist for reflecting on differences within groups of migrants

Aim: To raise awareness of the differences that may exist between individuals in a group.

All of us have experience of dealing with or being part of mixed groups. Among the spectators at a football game or the audience in a theatre, people share a particular interest, but they are very different in many other respects.

When you are supporting the language learning of a group of migrants, whether they are adults or children, it is important to bear in mind that the people in the group are likely to be from diverse social, educational, and cultural backgrounds. They probably also have different attitudes and ambitions as far as learning a new language is concerned. It is important to give migrants, especially those over the age of 16, opportunities to decide what they want to learn and how, to enable them to learn at different speeds, and to use different activities and approaches to language learning (see also Tool 6 - *Supporting migrants of different ages who are learning a new language*).

Thinking about your group of language learners

The checklist below contains some of the main factors that contribute to the diversity to be found in groups of migrant learners whether they are adults, adolescents, or children of different ages. Read through the factors in the checklist and make brief notes on any which are relevant to your groups(s) of learners. If you think that any of the factors are important or very important, put a tick (✓) or double tick (✓✓) to highlight them and, if you need to think about how to deal with those factors in planning language support, put a question mark and write brief notes beside them.

Factors affecting diversity within a group		This factor is relevant (✓) or very relevant (✓✓)	I need to think about how I will manage this (?)	Notes to myself
1	A wide range of ages among the learners			
2	People who already have some skills in the new language e.g. speaking or listening, as well as people who do not know a word of it			
3	People who have never learned to read and write, so are not literate in any language, as well as people who can read and write, at least in their own languages			
4	Some people who start to speak without worrying about making mistakes, and others who remain silent until they are sure how to pronounce a word correctly or how to form a correct sentence			
5	People who are competent in more than two languages, as well as those who have never learned another language			
6	Well educated people, as well as people with little or no formal education			
7	People who have opportunities to use the new language outside the learning environment and people who do not			
8	Learners who have different levels of contact with the new language outside the learning environment (e.g. daily, rarely, only with mediation by others etc.)			
9	People with diverse personalities, levels of motivation, attitudes, ways of behaving, etc. which may affect group and individual learning in different ways			
10	People for whom external factors such as the family context, the community where they live, work or study commitments, level of familiarity with the education system etc., may affect the learning process differently.			
11	A difference of written script for some learners between their first languages (e.g. Arabic) and the new European language			
12	Diverse migration projects among learners, (e.g. asylum seekers who see the host country as a temporary bridge to reach another country, and others who have migrated to be reunited with their family who are already residents)			
13	Different levels of access to resources for learning, especially the internet, digital devices, software and apps, levels of digital competence, good Wi-Fi connection, etc.			
14	Learners with special needs (e.g. disabilities, visual impairments, dyslexia etc.)			