

# TAKE A STEP FORWARD/ PRIVILEGE WALK

INEX MESSENGER

ANTHONY VASILEIOU 2018

## DON'T DREAM IT BE IT

LONG-TERM  
EUROPEAN  
VOLUNTARY SERVICE

HOSTING ORGANISATION:  
**INEX SLOVAKIA**  
SENDING ORGANISATION:  
**ELIX**

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- Understanding the difference between being lucky and being privileged
- Locating privilege in real life examples
- Realising the impact of stereotypes



- Brainstorming on a suitable game
- Implementing social groups
- Challenge participants' creative thinking



- Categorisation of privilege
- Bring up various conversation topics
- Focus on the roots of modern social issues

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MOTIVATION

As a long term EVS volunteer in INEX Slovakia, I had the opportunity to create an activity focused on a topic of my liking and present or facilitate it during during the summer/ workcamp season. As a sociologist my intention was to touch on current and important social matters that are visible in the everyday life of the participants. Eventually, I decided to create an activity based on the notion of privilege. What really attracted me to the idea were several conversations I had with friends and family at that time. People around me were mentioning how lucky they were to have a new job or to enroll to a popular university whilst they didn't realise the socio-economic process behind these statements.

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One having opportunities like these is an outcome of privilege that affects -mainly positively- several aspects of their life. The main aim of the activity was to distinguish the difference between **being lucky** and **being privileged**. As a facilitator of an activity like this, I wasn't aiming to change anyone's mind or way of thinking, my sole intention was to gather new information and listen to other people's interpretations that would help me and the group structure an interesting and educational conversation.

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Trying to find a game fitting my expectations was quite a challenge. Locating a multilayered game that would allow the participants to expand their horizons and appreciate the situation seemed impossible at first. After online and offline research I came across a game/activity mentioned in [Compass: A Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People](#). Take a step forward is an interactive game where players can join without any preparation from their side. The activity is divided in 3 phases. After a short explanation, participants pick randomly a role card which mustn't be revealed to anyone during the game ([phase 1](#)).

Brander, P., et al. (2007). *Compass: A manual on human rights education with young people*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

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They form a line next to each other and during **phase 2** they are asked a series of several questions about their new character by the facilitator. This first round of questions serves the purpose of forming a new role since the questions are focused on the family, social, educational and professional background of the character. The players don't reply to any of the questions, they create their new role based on their answer without the group knowing anything about it.

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In **phase 3**, participants are presented with a second set of statements where they take a step forward every time they find themselves agreeing that the context fits the character of their role card. Up until this point, participants didn't really comprehend the true purpose of the activity. Although the goal of the game is to understand the inequalities caused by the various forms of privilege, deeper meaning is found in the character shaping phase and process. Deciding on the conditions of the character's upraise during phase 1 is connected with the social influence participants have encountered during their lifetime. Family, religion, school etc. are social institutions that shape the understanding of a person, already from a young age. It's a very important factor both in real life and during the game since it's a depiction of a modern society. In other words, each participant created their new character based on **stereotypes**, **structures** and **norms** they have been exposed to during their life.

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## Phase 1 role cards

- You are an unemployed single mother.
- You are a Muslim girl living with your parents who are devoutly religious people.
- You are a 17 year old Roma who never finished primary school.
- You are a 24 year old refugee in a European country.
- You are a 24 year old immigrant in a European country.
- You are a 30 year old man working as a lawyer.
- You are a 28 year old man working for an international company.
- You are a 23 year old graduate with a Master's degree searching for your first job.
- You are a 28 year old woman working for an international company.
- You are a person of colour living in a country where majority of the population is "white".
- You are a 25 year old homosexual woman.
- You are a 25 year old homosexual man.
- You are 20 year old farmer living in a remote village in the mountains.

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## Phase 2 questions

- How old are you?
- Where do you live?
- Is it a city, town or village?
- Do you have family and friends?
- Are you working?
- What do you do for work?
- How is your accommodation status?
- What do you do for fun? Do you go out? Do you go to the cinema?
- What was your childhood like?
- What sort of house did you live in?
- What kind of games did you play?
- Did your parents work?
- What sort of work did they do?
- How's your everyday life now?
- How much money do you earn?
- Do you go on holidays?
- What sort of lifestyle do you have now?

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## Phase 3 questions

- You live in a big city.
- You have access to the internet.
- You have access to news sources.
- You have a mobile phone.
- Both of your parents are alive
- Both of your parents work.
- You have friends.
- You have a university degree.
- You didn't have to work to pay/ afford your studies.
- You can afford using public transport.
- You live in the country you were born in.
- You are a legal citizen of the country you live in.
- You can work legally in the country you live in.
- You can vote on national elections.
- You can speak the language of the country you live in.
- You speak English.
- You speak more than 2 languages.
- You are "white" and you live in a country where majority of the population is white.

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- You have a Master's degree.
- You have a job.
- You earn enough money every month to sustain your lifestyle.
- You can buy new clothes whenever you need to.
- You can buy a new phone whenever you need to.
- You can go on holidays at least once a year.
- You have a life/ health insurance.
- You have access to free medical care.
- You can save money every month.
- You are able to go to the cinema at least twice per month.
- You afford going out at least twice a month.
- You're not afraid of being stopped by the police.
- You are a man/ male.
- You can publicly show affection to your partner without feeling you could be verbally or physically harassed.

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- You can legally marry your partner.
- You have never been teased or called names because of your sexual orientation.
- You have never felt discriminated.
- You can practise your religion freely.
- Your religion is also the main religion of the country you live in.
- Your religion respects both sexes/ genders.
- Your religion doesn't dictate your dress code.
- You have someone to turn for help.
- People ask for your opinion/ input on important matters.
- People appreciate your advice.
- You have a plan for your retirement.
- You are not afraid about your future.

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Photos during the game. Phase 1 (top) and final positions of the participants (bottom).



INEX Messenger  
Barlicka workcamp,  
Presov, August 2018

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The INEX messenger activity was facilitated in 3 INEX Slovakia workcamps, Lipovce, Cabrad and Barlicka and during EVS midterm training. The topics of discussion varied and were related to the group's main interests or concerns. Feminism and the position of **women in a modern society** was the main topic of discussion during the activity in Lipovce workcamp. Participants brainstormed on the matter by giving examples from their countries of origin. There were made several comparisons based on the job position, the status of a woman in society and the relation to men. Unfortunately, the volunteers of Cabrad workcamp didn't seem to be as enthusiastic as other teams. Even though the activity was executed as it should and efforts for discussion were made, the players believed that the game wasn't appropriate since they considered it as a political propaganda of liberal context.

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Claims like this should be taken into consideration even if the person expressing them isn't fully aware of the context and significance of their comment. In other words, a **sciolistic comment or point of view** managed to influence the group's dynamic causing a power struggle that ended when the workshop finished. Contrary to the previous outcome, the players during the midterm EVS training were quite enthusiastic and aware of the context and aim of the game/ activity to the point where they were comfortable jumping from **topic to topic** during the evaluation/ discussion process whilst I was holding the role of the observant and facilitator.

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In Barlicka, third INEX Slovakia workcamp, main topic of interest seemed to be **immigration** and **gender/ sex equality**. A discussion took place where the players talked about the refugee status in Europe and the European Union eventually in comparison to an immigrant/ immigration. Part of the discussion was also the question if the term "immigrant" should be ruled out as unethical. Apart from that, players continued to talk about homosexuality and equality in Europe and the world. They shared their ideas on the matter based on situations they've encountered or the general feeling and understanding their national communities have developed towards the social group.

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Photo from the  
discussion after  
the activity.

INEX Messenger  
Lipovce workcamp  
Lipovce, July 2018

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