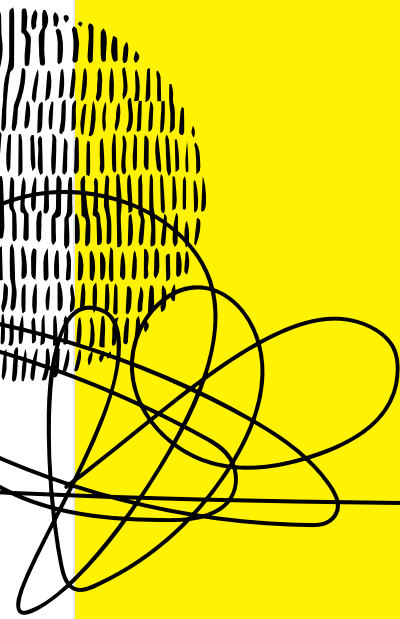


**XMEN**  
MASCULINITIES + EMPATHY + NONVIOLENCE



**X-MEN:  
MASCULINITIES, EMPATHY  
AND NON-VIOLENCE**

**A TOOLKIT TO WORK  
WITH YOUTH AT RISK**



**XMEN**  
MASCULINITIES + EMPATHY + NONVIOLENCE

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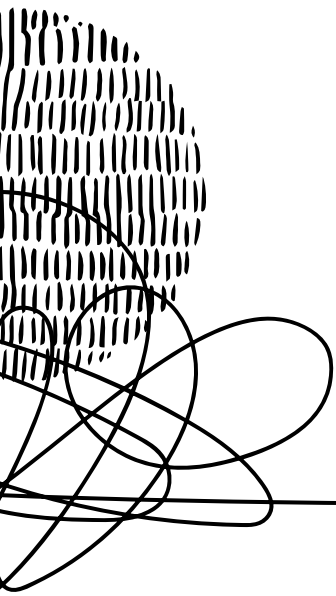
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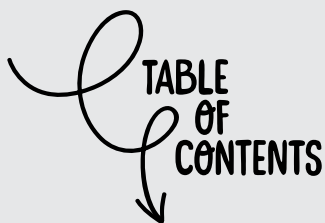


**XMEN**  
MASCULINITIES + EMPATHY + NONVIOLENCE



# X-MEN: MASCULINITIES, EMPATHY AND NON-VIOLENCE

A TOOLKIT TO WORK  
WITH YOUTH AT RISK



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION MASCULINITIES, EMPATHY AND  
NON-VIOLENCE: PATHS FOR INTERVENTION WITH  
YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK** 7

Tatiana Moura, Marta Mascarenhas

**#1.  
X-MEN MASCULINITIES, EMPATHY AND  
NON-VIOLENCE: THE HIDDEN METAPHOR** 11

Tatiana Moura, Anamarija Soco, Bakea Alonso

**#2.  
THE INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH WHEN WORKING  
WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS** 21

Valentina Longo

**#3.  
BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH CONVERSATIONS  
ABOUT EMOTIONS** 31

Tomislav Jeleković, Elizabeta Matković

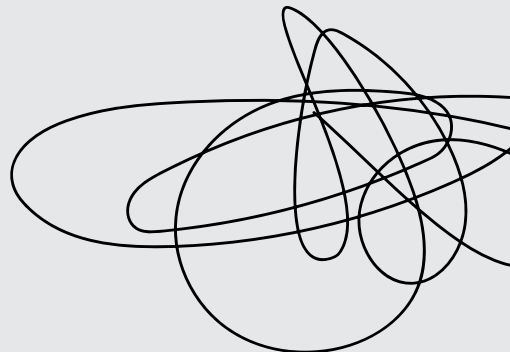
**#4.  
PROVIDING A MASCULINITY-INFORMED TRAUMA  
LENS WHEN WORKING WITH YOUTH AT RISK** 41

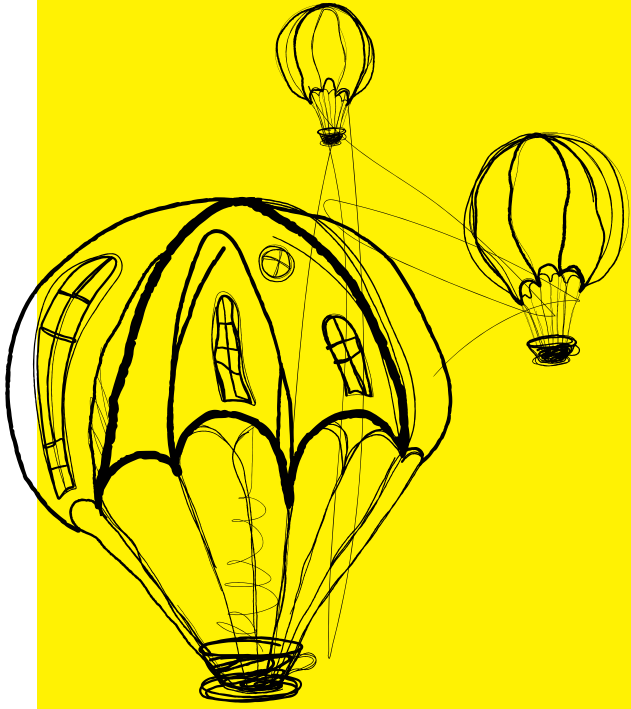
Jill Michiels

**#5.  
WHEN THE ADULT GAZE DEFINES THE WORLD  
OF EMIGRATING CHILDHOOD** 61

Violeta Assiego

<b>#6.</b>	<b>ARTS AND MASCULINITIES: BUILDING OTHER POSSIBILITIES OF BEING</b>	<b>71</b>
	Linda Cerdeira, Tatiana Moura	
<b>#7.</b>	<b>X-MEN TOOLKITS: GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE METHODOLOGIES TO IMPLEMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>#7.1.</b>	<b>X-MEN SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES WITH YOUTH AT RISK IN NATIONAL CONTEXTS: CROATIA</b>	<b>81</b>
	Elizabeta Matković [Status M]	
<b>#7.2.</b>	<b>X-MEN SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES WITH YOUTH AT RISK IN NATIONAL CONTEXTS: PORTUGAL</b>	<b>129</b>
	Marta Mascarenhas [Centre for Social Studies]	
<b>#7.3.</b>	<b>X-MEN SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES WITH YOUTH AT RISK IN NATIONAL CONTEXTS: SPAIN – WORKING WITH MINORS THAT MIGRATE ALONE</b>	<b>179</b>
	Álvaro Ruiz Garriga [Fundación Cepaim]	
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>209</b>







# INTRODUCTION: MASCULINITIES, EMPATHY AND NON-VIOLENCE: PATHS FOR INTERVENTION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK

Tatiana Moura, Marta Mascarenhas  
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This handbook and context-specific toolkits it encompasses serve as a guide for professionals, researchers and policy-makers committed to promoting gender equality, empowerment, and rehabilitation while working with young people at risk in these critical settings, namely working with unaccompanied minors and youngsters at youth detention centres.

Analysing the intersection of gender, youth vulnerability and the criminal justice system requires a holistic and differentiated approach. Each section of this handbook is crafted by experts in their respective fields, offering insights and practical strategies to foster positive outcomes and transformative change.

We delved into various topics that are essential to understanding and addressing the multifaceted realities faced by young people, both in youth detention centres (Portugal and Croatia) and unaccompanied minors (Spain). The specific toolkits were created based on the Project consortium's reflection and analysis of the needs and characteristics of each national context, as gathered while during the needs assessment

phase and based on the findings of the exploratory study on attitudes, behaviours and understandings of gender attitudes of young people at risk. A first version of an intervention programme was designed and piloted in youth detention centres in Croatia and Portugal, as well as in Centres for Unaccompanied Minors in Spain in 2023 and, based on this learning experience, the final toolkits were built in order to equip professionals with practical tools for working with these specific audiences.

Chapter 1 presents the X-MEN Methodology, a comprehensive approach aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of gender transformative interventions.

Chapter 2 explores the intricate intersections of gender and other social identities within migration centres' organisational cultures. Through a nuanced lens of intersectionality, perspectives are offered on dismantling barriers, promoting inclusion and fostering gender-sensitive practices in these contexts.

In Chapter 3, the authors delve into the realm of emotions, recognising their profound impact on the well-being and experiences of youth at risk. Through practical strategies and empathetic approaches, they provide guidance on navigating emotions effectively, promoting mental health, and cultivating supportive environments.

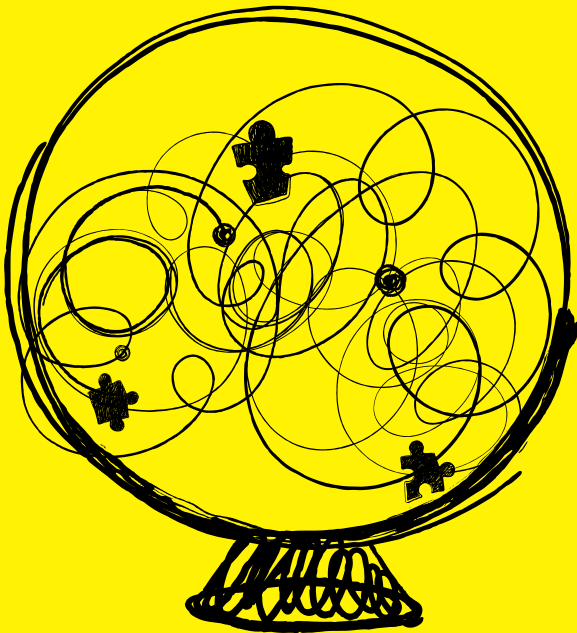
In Chapter 4, the author addresses the sensitive and critical topic of trauma and masculinities. Drawing on trauma-informed principles, the author offers insight into recognising, responding to and supporting individuals affected by trauma, promoting healing and resilience.

Chapter 5 deals specifically with minors who migrate alone and analyses the logic of the policies that underpin the reception of these adolescents, highlighting a "human security" approach rather than a "national security" approach. The chapter digs into the criminalisation of these young migrants, who are often socially constructed as dangerous people, as opposed to the violence they are and have been exposed to

before and during the migration process. This analysis is based on the example of Spain, considering that the X-MEN Project, in the intervention promoted by the Cepaim Foundation, dealt with the situation of unaccompanied minors in that country.

Chapter 6 highlights the transformative potential of activism in the context of gender transformative programming with young people at risk. Through creative expression and advocacy, they highlight how art can serve as a powerful tool to amplify voices, promote social change and foster solidarity.

Lastly, Chapter 7 comprehends a set of three Country-Specific X-MEN toolkits that correspond to the final script of the activities implemented in the context of this project in Croatia, Portugal and Spain. Acknowledging the diverse socio-economic landscapes in which these centres operate, this section offers insights into navigating country-specific challenges and opportunities. Experts provide tailored recommendations and resources to address contextual nuances effectively.



#1

**X-MEN: MASCULINITIES,  
EMPATHY AND NON-VIOLENCE.  
THE HIDDEN METAPHOR**

Tatiana Moura [Centre for Social Studies],  
Anamarija Soco [STATUS-M]  
and Bakea Alonso [Cepaim Foundation]

In the quest for gender equality, it is essential to recognise the transformative power of metaphors that resonate with diverse audiences. The X-MEN metaphor, drawn from the popular comic book and movie franchise, offers a compelling framework to promote gender-transformative approaches, particularly in fostering non-violent and caring masculinities among youth. By drawing parallels between the struggles of the X-MEN characters and the challenges faced by young individuals in navigating gender norms and choosing their processes of socialisation, we can inspire positive change and empower this generation to embrace more inclusive and equitable perspectives on masculinities.

### Understanding the X-MEN Metaphor

The X-MEN, a group of mutants with unique abilities, face societal prejudice and discrimination due to their differences. This mirrors the challenges that young people encounter when attempting to break free from traditional gender roles and expectations (or getting access to them). By using the X-MEN metaphor, we can frame the journey toward non-violent and empathetic masculinities as a possible and desirable quest, encouraging youth to embrace their unique qualities and challenge societal norms that perpetuate harmful behaviours.

One of the key themes in the X-MEN narrative is the struggle against a villainous force that seeks to impose its views on the world. Similarly, gender-transformative approaches aim to dismantle violent and dominant masculinities, leading young individuals to question harmful

stereotypes that contribute to violence and inequality. By highlighting positive role models within the X-MEN metaphor and project, we can encourage youth to reject harmful norms and redefine masculinity in a way that promotes empathy, communication, and respect.

## **We all have (super)powers**

The X-MEN metaphor also emphasizes the power of teamwork and collaboration. In the fight against prejudice and discrimination, the X-MEN draw strength from their diversity and unite against a common enemy – in the case of the X-MEN project, the sexist, patriarchal and unfair society. This serves as a powerful analogy for promoting inclusive communities that celebrate the diversity of gender expressions and identities. By fostering a sense of solidarity among young people, we can create environments where non-violent masculinities are not only accepted but celebrated.

The X-MEN metaphor encourages a shift in perspective, positioning youth as active participants in shaping a more just and equitable society. By empowering young individuals to see themselves as agents of change, we can instill a sense of responsibility and accountability for promoting caring masculinities. This approach goes beyond mere awareness, fostering a commitment to action and advocacy that extends beyond personal growth to contribute to broader social change.

The chosen methodology builds from data that shows that children's and young girls' and boys' exposure to violence (e.g., domestic violence, corporal punishment, community violence, school violence, war, and post-war violence) can lead to the normalization of violent behaviours, including gender-based violence (GBV) and a host of mental health problems, as well as influence the use of violence as an adult (Taylor et al., 2016; Till-Tentschert, 2017; Myers et al., 2018).

The exposure to violence can be defined as direct physical aggression, threats of physical and psychological harm, or being a witness and

may have implications for trajectories of anxiety and depressive symptoms with a described impact on young people's health when reaching adulthood (Felitti et al., 1998; Heinze et al., 2017). A recent study from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (Blum et al., 2019) showed that 46% of young adolescents of the study reported having experienced violence. The report also highlighted that boys are more likely to become violent as adults due to rigid gender norms, while girls tend to show higher levels of depression. Moreover, particular groups (e.g., migrants, refugees, youth at risk, etc.) may face more significant risks of GBV due to, for example, having been dislocated from families and communities or having witnessed or being exposed to extreme forms of violence, which can often be the case of 'children in conflict with the law' and 'young refugees and migrants.'

According to the *Study on the Role of Men in Gender Equality*, men's perpetration of violence, or victimisation, is age-dependent (Belghiti-Mahut et al., 2012), and violent behaviours and violence normalization can be generationally transmitted (Belghiti-Mahut et al., 2012; Till-Tentschert, 2017). Today, the link between young men's and women's exposure to violence and its intergenerational transmission is well established. Both witnessing and being victims of violence have similar associations with aggression and violence perpetration in its multiple forms. For example, the International Men and Gender Equality Survey on Urban Violence - IMAGES (Taylor et al., 2016) found that exposure to urban violence before the age of 18 was strongly linked to the perpetuation of violence as an adult. It also demonstrated that exposure to violence outside the home is highly related to the use of violence in the home (violence is also related to attitudes around gender equality, with both men and women questioned in the survey demonstrating less gender-equitable attitudes where exposure to violence was higher).

Likewise, Belghiyi-Mahut et al. (2012) also demonstrated that violence is often influenced by the institutional contexts of these boys and men. For example, although violence occurs in (almost) every sphere of society during adolescence (12-18 years of age), it might be exacerbated in specific institutions where the risk of being exposed to violence is



considerably higher than elsewhere, such as the military, prisons, juvenile detention centres, refugee camps, etc. Most of these are hierarchical institutions that are rather 'sealed off' from the outside world, thus presenting themselves as a challenge to the current strategies for promoting gender equality.

More recently, the goal of breaking the cycles of violence has been associated with the effort towards the promotion of positive and non-violent relationships, therefore targeting rigid gender norms, including masculinities. Several efforts have been made towards the engagement of men and masculinities within the framework of the Gender Equal Europe Agenda (Gender equality strategy 2020-2025; European Commission's Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019, Stockholm Program 2010-2014, EU Regulation N° 6060/2013, Directive 2012/29/EU, 2011/99/EU, 2011/36/EU, Istanbul Convention (2016), Directive 2011/99/EU on the European Protection Order (EPO), etc.).

According to this background, X-MEN highlights the necessity to target young boys and men who are at risk or socially excluded, who have been victims or witnesses of violence and/or perpetrators of violence, within the scope of actions and interventions that aim to combat GBV and promote GE. However, due to the framework's complexity, the transformative tools used needed to be both gender and age-sensitive, co-developed in a participatory way with the voices of the youth, using arts as means to foster debates and assure the project's sustainability (e.g., mainstreaming gender in these institutions).

### **The X-MEN method**

The project was designed around two youth groups considered to be at risk of social exclusion: "youth in conflict with the law" (in Portugal and Croatia) and "young unaccompanied foreign minors" (in Spain). We approached the first group in the space of what is designated in Portugal and Croatia as juvenile justice system. The second group was

approached considering the Spanish reception system for unaccompanied minors. The choice of Portugal and Croatia to work with “youth in conflict with the law” is due to the current insufficiency of strategies for this target group. This limitation was detected in previous projects carried out by the same consortium (e.g., EQUI-X). The same holds true for the Spanish case, where the school context is the target of several initiatives but in the case of young migrants, there is great difficulty in developing actions that aim to promote gender-equal attitudes with the focus on masculinity. Institutional establishment of gender equality practices and promotion strategies is vital for a future without gender-based violence. In this sense, X-MEN gender mainstream targeted professionals and in-service specialists (social services’ professionals, amongst others) working with our main youth target groups in order to provide them with internationally evaluated tools to deal with adverse childhood experiences and promote positive and non-violent relationships targeting rigid gender norms. By “in-service” we mean the professionals who are permanently part of the staff in the institutions where these young people are, such as directors, social workers, assistants, educators, psychologists, etc.

When we design an intervention with children who are institutionalised, in addition to ethical and methodological questions, it is necessary to ask ourselves about the organisational culture of the place where we want to carry out the activities/workshops. There is no neutrality in this. Each institution has its own dynamics, history, leadership style, decision making, models of masculinity/femininity, etc. In short, it has its own unique institutional culture. Organisational culture can be understood as a set of attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values that permeate an entity or organisation. The culture of an organisation is not permanent or rigid, but it can have difficulty adapting to changes or proposals to do things differently.

When a trainer approaches an institution, they must first know how the facility works, under what conditions the staff operate, not only social workers or educators, but also other staff such as security or kitchen staff. The success of our intervention will depend, in part, on the alli-

ances that we generate with the staff of the institution. Furthermore, when the activities end and we leave, the people who remain and who should secure the continuity of our programme must be the people who are in daily contact with the young people. We can't claim to make young people aware of the impact that sexism has on their lives while the educators at the centre may, through their practices and discourse, inadvertently continue to reinforce gender stereotypes. Similarly, we can't provoke reflection in young people on the violence they have experienced and suffered if it continues to be a reality in the internal dynamics of the institution.

X-MEN methodology uses gender-synchronized and gender-reflexive tools that address the construction of nonviolent identities of young boys and girls (12-18 years of age). These tools (or sessions, with a minimum of 12h of intervention) were co-developed with the target youth groups but they were designed for the professionals and in-service practitioners working at the institutional settings with these children. The tools provide the professionals with strategies to respond to adverse childhood experiences and promote positive and non-violent relationships targeting rigid gender norms, especially masculinities. Moreover, X-MEN conducted capacity-building initiatives of these professionals, raising awareness of the often-unconscious transmission of gender stereotypes by these professionals.

In a nutshell, X-MEN operates at the individual and institutional levels by:

**Promoting non-violent and caring masculinities**, encouraging young boys to take up care responsibilities and non-violent relationships, and engaging them in initiatives that tackle gender-based violence and promote gender equality.

**Engaging young men and women's voices and perspectives** in the development of tools that promote gender equality.

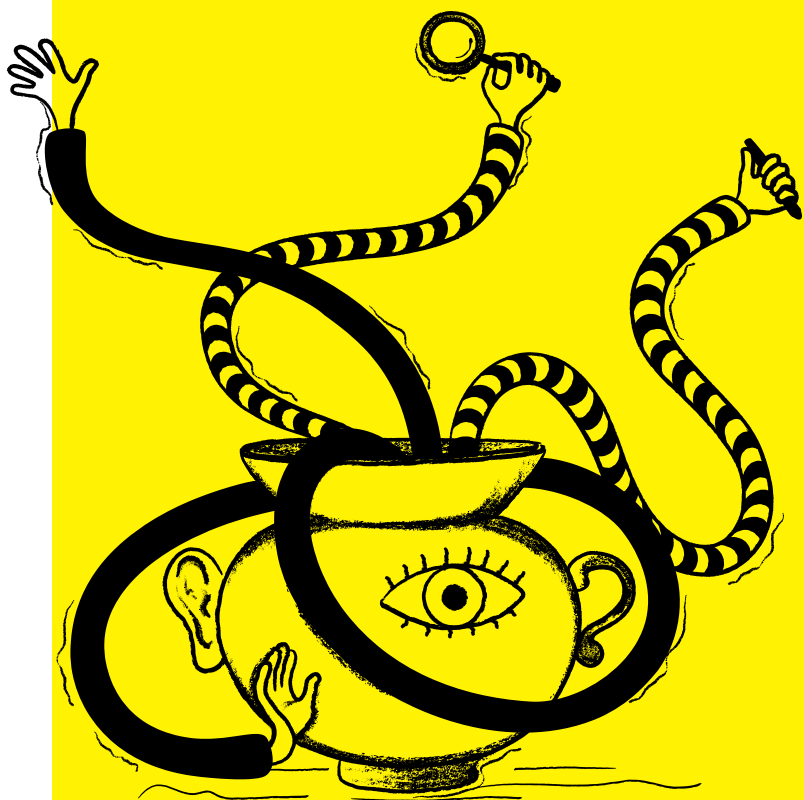
**Improving service delivery of youth at risk or socially excluded** by building capacities of professionals working with these youngsters (teachers, social services, shelters workers, etc.) via gender-transformative training programs on GBV prevention, increasing their capacity of engaging boys in prevention programs of this kind of violence and GE promotion.

**Strengthening institutional response** by enhancing government officials' and decision-makers' capacities & relations between academia & civil society organizations (CSOs) around GBV prevention & youth social inclusion program, strengthening multi-agency cooperation.

**Contributing to the implementation of 2030 Sustainable Goals, Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025**, European directives & national plans on GE & GBV prevention.

Incorporating the X-MEN metaphor into discussions about gender-transformative approaches for non-violent masculinities provides a fresh and engaging perspective. By tapping into the universal themes of empowerment, diversity, and resilience present in the X-MEN narrative, we can inspire meaningful dialogue and encourage positive change. The journey toward non-violent, caring and empathetic masculinities is not only a personal one but a collective endeavour that requires the collaboration of diverse voices and experiences. The X-MEN metaphor and methodology serve as a powerful catalyst for transforming the narrative around masculinity and creating a more inclusive and equitable future for all.





**#2**

**THE INTERSECTIONAL  
APPROACH WHEN WORKING  
WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN  
VULNERABLE SITUATIONS**

Valentina Longo  
[Cepaim Foundation]

In 1851, Sojourner Truth delivered her famous speech *Ain't I a woman?*<sup>1</sup> at the Akron (Ohio) Convention on women's rights. In a context of mobilisation for the abolition of slavery in the United States, Truth, an African-American woman and former slave, highlights the double subordination embodied in her life: being a woman and being a slave. She points out, as Angela Davis (2004) explains, the prejudice and racism that permeates the new women's movement, which leaves out of its analysis and demands all those who do not belong to the white bourgeoisie.

A century later, in 1978, the Combahee River Collective Statement makes clear that black women

"[...] also often find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously", making it clear that it is not about discrimination that simply adds up in the same person, but about a system of oppression that is embodied in concrete lives, magnifying each source of inequality: "We do not have racial, sexual, heterosexual, or class privilege to rely upon, nor do we have even the minimal access to resources and power that groups who possess anyone of these types of privilege have."

We review this genealogy because it allows us to broaden our understanding of how mechanisms of oppression/privilege operate, which is what we want to dismantle as much as possible when working with vulnerable young people.

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1 Available in English at: [https://thehermitage.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Sojourner--Truth\\_Aint-I-a-Woman\\_1851.pdf](https://thehermitage.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Sojourner--Truth_Aint-I-a-Woman_1851.pdf). You can read Truth's biography in Gilbert, O. (1850). *Narrative of Sojourner Truth: a northern slave, emancipated from bodily servitude by the state of New York, in 1828*. Boston, Printed for the author.



The idea is also to highlight the debt we owe to black feminism in terms of the arguments that underpin intersectionality. This debt extends to the coining of the concept, since it was another African-American woman, Kimberle Crenshaw, who named it in 1989, in the context of the *DeGraffenreid vs. General Motors* lawsuit. In the case in question, five black women who were refused employment in a factory claimed that the rejection was based on their identity. The court ruled that there was no discrimination, as the factory hired both black men and women. However, what the court failed to consider was that the factory did hire black men and white women, but systematically excluded black women. At the time there was no language to describe this phenomenon, so Crenshaw decided to create a theoretical framework to name and challenge the fabric of inequalities embodied in very uneven lives.

Adopting an intersectional perspective when working with vulnerable children and adolescents, whether they are migrants without family references or young people under judicial measures, is necessary to be able to plan and carry out transformative interventions. With this, we understand that our actions aim to disarticulate inequalities as they are expressed in each life, knowing that we are immersed in a world that is structurally inequitable and that manages to shape very unequal lives.

A powerful definition of intersectionality that allows for self-reflexivity – central to social intervention work – and manages to bring it into social intervention processes is the following:

Intersectionality promotes an understanding of human beings as shaped by the interaction of different social locations (e.g., 'race'/ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability/ability, migration status, religion). These interactions occur within a context of connected systems and structures of power (e.g., laws, policies, state governments and other political and economic unions, religious institutions, media). Through such processes, interdependent forms of privilege and oppression shaped by colonialism, imperialism, racism, homophobia, ableism and patriarchy are created. (Hankivsky, 2014, p. 2)

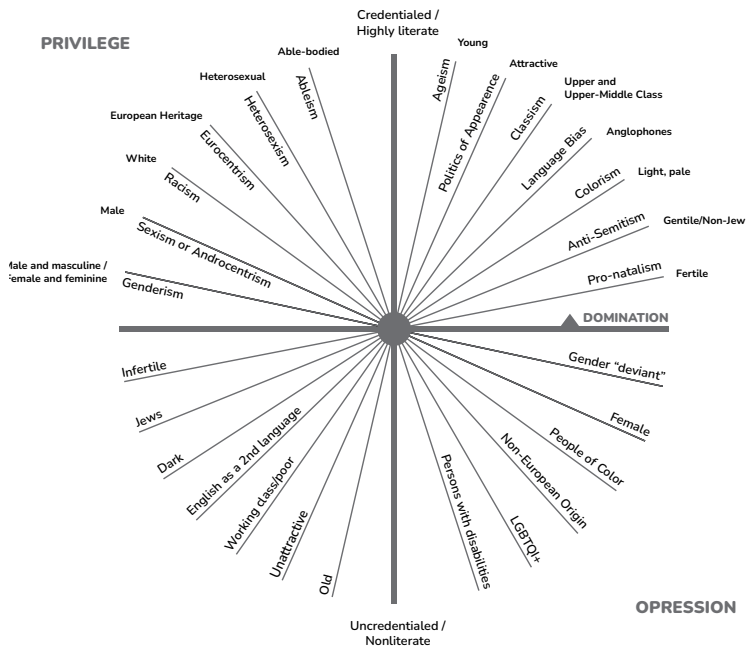
Transposing this view of the concept to a perspective of intervention with the children we work with, we recognise the need to broaden the way we look at them and the tools we use, moving from a monofocal to a multifocal view (Pérez Orozco, 2004). The multifocal vision allows us to see people with their embodied inequalities, without simplifying and flattening their lives and our intervention to a single dimension. It is not so much about working on identities as it is about the power relations that materialise in concrete situations and spaces, about discriminations in a system of structural inequalities.

As professionals, in most cases white with higher education who work with a gender perspective on masculinities, we inherit a Eurocentric vision. It is about deconstructing our own stereotypes based on colonial images and European concepts of modernity, reflecting on the interventions we carry out so that they do not become tools for disciplining. How we look at young people, and what we manage to see, translates into the ability – or lack of it – to get to what hurts them. The male privilege we want to address is complex and intertwined with other locations of inequality, such as migration status or skin colour, age, among others – and it requires asking: where are they in our society? What social locations do they inhabit?

As feminist educators, trainers and researchers, these questions help us to read them as boys in a racist reality, or, in other words, to enrich the gaze we have been learning for years about “male domination” (Bourdieu, 2000) with a racialized location that takes into account the colonial heritage, such as the racism experienced by many of the people we work with. And to ask them what are the wounds that hurt and that they are suffering from in order to be able to accompany them in a transition to adult life that is as decent as possible. By wounds that hurt, we refer to what Maria Rodó-Zárate calls “systemic or systematic discomforts” (2021, p. 108). These are those that arise from embodying positions of oppression in some system that produces inequality, such as being a black person in Europe. Rodó-Zárate links the structural perspective with discomforts which, in turn, generate emotions understood as social and cultural practices and not as psychological

states (*ibid.*, p. 114) and proposes to use the tool of **Relief Maps** to both conceptualise and explore the intersectionality embodied in each individual from a geographical, social and emotional approach.<sup>2</sup> Overcoming a reductionist and simple vision, the author proposes that we learn to embrace the intersectional wound, a paradox according to which we find ourselves in a position of subordination and privilege at the same time, depending on the specific situation and context.

Another way of visualising embodied intersectionality is that proposed by Morgan (1996) and presented below. At a glance, everyone can see the categories in which they find themselves, be they privileges at the top or oppressions at the bottom. This is not an exhaustive map, but rather an exercise in naming various dimensions of oppression/privilege and visualising the crossroads.



**FIGURE 1** – Intersecting axes of privilege, domination and oppression. Adapted from Morgan, 1996 [27] (p. 107).

2 To know more about Relief Maps, please visit: <https://www.reliefmaps.cat/es/>

Axes of oppression and privilege are made flesh and forge very unequal life possibilities. Cabezas and Berná (2013) underline how “non-white and non-male, non-enriched and non-heterosexual bodies are not considered normal; but automatically and essentially negative, inferior, dangerous, and contaminating with respect to, and for, [supposedly] normal bodies and identities” (p. 781). The authors, borrowing from Badinter (1996), emphasise that men define themselves according to a mechanism of differentiation (affirming that he is neither a woman nor a homosexual), misogyny and other means that end up being ways of producing otherness and, with it, of promoting violence understood as a mechanism of frontierisation (p. 796). Men on the margins inhabit a space of non-manliness or non-masculinity, which can go to one extreme to hypermasculinisation (being sexual predators), or to the other extreme, to hypomasculinisation (failing to be good providers), placing themselves outside of the human.

As bell hooks (2021) says, the narrative that dominance over women always engenders privileges, successes and benefits for men, is precisely functional for male indoctrination, a process that must hide all the failures and discomforts that patriarchy itself brings them. The multifocal – or intersectional – perspective in the work with the children we deal with means asking how racialisation is shaped along with inequalities of gender, social class, sexuality and nationality in order to de-centre the monofocal debates that reduce gender to the only analytical guides to reality. Breaking with the unitary conception of the male experience allows us to see the plurality of experiences formed by transversal social locations and identities and, therefore, diverse and unequal. Just as there is no universal male essence, there is also no universal Black essence, but there is a black history that needs to enter the narrative. In the case of Afro-American men,

“There is a radical difference between a repudiation of the idea that there is a black “essence” and recognition of the way black identity has been specifically constituted in the experience of exile and struggle” (hook, 1990, p. 30).

In this sense, the importance of “the authority of experience” (*ibid.*) is underlined, highlighting that the masculinities that boys embody need to be looked at from their life journeys, from a relational and contextual perspective, rather than a fixed positional and hierarchical one. Black feminisms teach us that it is fundamental to intervene by looking at concrete social relations, where the prism of intersectionality in which life experiences (black, class, sexual and gender dissidence) act as social locations and from which critical and self-reflexive interventions are designed. That is, looking at embodied lives, stigmas and the concrete configurations of gender and other inequalities that people inhabit.

Moreover, as gender and masculinities professionals, we must not forget the global structure of knowledge production in the world, in which “theory is produced in the northern metropolis and the periphery is only a source of data” (Connell, 2006, p. 305). This change of gaze goes hand in hand with the framework in which we signify the people with whom we intervene. Both for unaccompanied migrant children and for those under judicial measures, the hegemonic narrative – from which we have to start – has to do with the social dangerousness of the youth in their specific social location: in order to reach the social change we long for, it is (also) necessary to move from a position that looks at children as dangerous people to one that understands them as vulnerable people (see chapter 5 by Violeta Assiego on the way the adult gaze defines the world of emigrating childhood).

Recognising their vulnerability and the possible violence they have experienced implies another change of framework: it means moving from the ethic of self-sufficiency to the ethic of interdependence, from a mirage of “I alone can handle everything” to the recognition of the intrinsic need to cope with life together with other people. Self-sufficiency is defined as “able to supply one’s own needs without external assistance” and it is clear that no human being is self-sufficient, neither as a baby, nor as an adult, nor as an elderly person. The metaphor of the “mushroom worker” (Pérez Orozco, 2014) is powerful in making visible the dominant socio-economic narrative that imposes this supposed self-sufficiency, hiding the real processes that sustain lives. Imagine

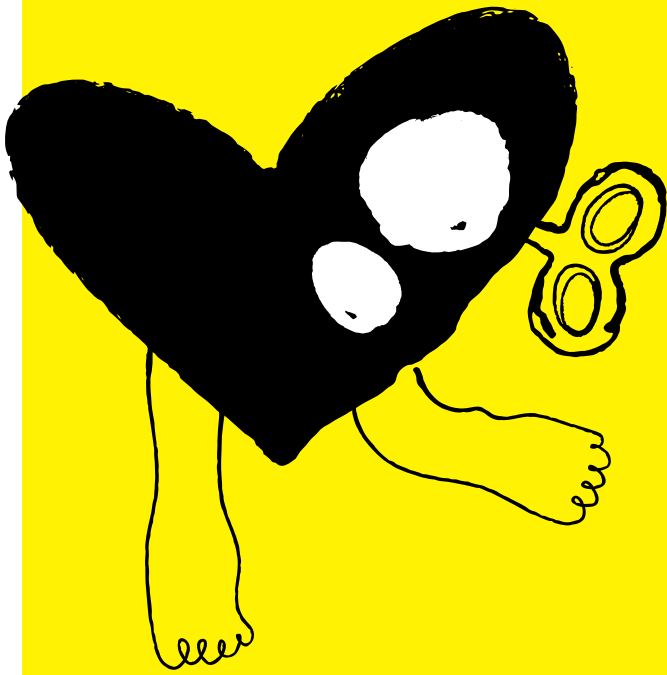
people like mushrooms, as if they sprout from the ground overnight and the next day they reach maturity, without any kind of mutual commitment and going to work as if they did not have to eat, rest, have affective relationships, have clean clothes... Pérez Orozco (*ibid.*) uses this metaphor to highlight how the labour market expects professionals to act: individuals who have no needs and desires beyond work and who are always ready for employment. However, this mirage hides the interdependent relationships that are the basis of social reproduction. Even in a clear power relationship, the most exploitative employer needs workers.

Applying this metaphor to migrant children or children under judicial measures, the challenge is not to provide “mushroom citizens” with a false self-sufficiency that is built on the exploitation of others, but to provide care that is based on nurturing personal autonomy within a framework of interdependence. It is a matter of basing our interventions on a perspective that does not reproduce relations of domination (paternalism, discrimination, exclusion, oppression, violence), aware that their lives, like ours, are crossed by structural dimensions of inequality and relations of domination.

To overcome these perverse dynamics, we can change the paradigm and put care relationships at the centre, especially when working with children. Intrinsic human vulnerability is resolved by giving and receiving care. There is an urgent need to ask the questions that have been central to gender studies and the feminist movement for decades and to extend them to interventions with boys and men: How to put care at the centre; are institutions and work teams able to recognise fragility and vulnerability, and thus organise interdependence? If we can make these questions reverberate in our daily work and seek answers, however partial, together with boys and girls, we will be able to build more dignified lives and fairer societies.

In the case of the Cepaim Foundation's work with young migrants without family references – all boys – adopting an intersectional perspective and methodology has meant, in the first place, an attitude of listening to the young people and a predisposition to continuous modifications in the workshops. In particular, some strategies that have proved to be appropriate have been:

- Art has been an important medium for working on certain content. In the activities, we have used materials by artists that they already knew, who are their references and have a geographical and cultural origin close to them, such as Morad.
- To establish partnerships with educators with whom they can identify, in our case with a Moroccan male educator, a Moroccan female mediator and a Senegalese intercultural mediator. Socially visible professionals who are very active in the anti-racist struggle.
- To rearticulate the workshop itineraries according to the young people's wounds, giving priority to issues, such as racism, that are close to their concerns.





**#3**

**BUILDING BRIDGES  
THROUGH CONVERSATIONS  
ABOUT EMOTIONS**

Tomislav Jeleković, Elizabeta Matković [Status M]

## Why should we talk about emotions?

To understand why addressing emotions is important in working with migrant youth and youth in detention facilities, we have to first understand why addressing and understanding emotions is useful in general.

Emotions are intricate facets of human experience, serving as automatic responses to various situations. While these emotional responses can manifest without conscious awareness, the depth of their conscious experience is influenced by an individual's ability to recognise, acknowledge, and appropriately respond to them, either through physical or verbal means. Emotions help us to navigate through life, help us make decisions, differentiate between what is important to us, and what is not, as well as protect us. Looking through the evolution perspective, we can see those emotions, both pleasant and unpleasant, were a necessary adaptation not only to survive, but also to thrive and create a community. Emotion of fear kept us safe and out of danger, disgust helped us to stay clear of diseases, unsafe food, and water, while love and trust helped us in bonding with others to create a group and make us stronger.

As society has become more complex, like the world we live in today, these same emotions continue to help us navigate nuanced relationships and discern between the overwhelming number of choices that are important to us. By not allowing the expression of certain kinds of emotions (usually labelled as “negative”, such as fear and sadness), we are limiting ourselves and denying ourselves a major part of life, as well as exposing ourselves to the risk of developing health and behaviour

issues (e.g., psychosomatic problems, mental health issues and addiction, to name a few).

The labelling of emotions as “positive” or “negative” is a common practice rooted in societal expectations. Over time, this categorization may lead to an imbalance where certain emotions are favoured and exaggerated, while others are suppressed. For instance, an emotion deemed acceptable, such as anger, can become a shield against experiencing a broader range of emotions, potentially hindering personal growth. Expressing emotions is a fundamental aspect of emotional well-being. All emotions, regardless of societal labels, serve essential functions. Emotions are neither inherently “good” nor “bad,” nor are they exclusive to a particular gender or a sign of weakness or strength. Instead, they are natural responses that offer valuable insights into our inner world. When emotional responses are blocked or suppressed, they may seek alternative outlets, leading to (self) destructive behaviours.

With that short introduction to emotions, we can acknowledge that emotions are an important part of life, but what are the specifics in working on emotional knowledge, self-regulation, and adequate expression with youth in correctional facilities and migrant youth?

With the transition to adolescence, young people are increasingly susceptible to emotional and behavioural difficulties (Merikangas *et al.*, 2010; Erdem *et al.*, 2016), and substantial numbers of youth experience mild to moderate levels of anxiety, depression, and behavioural problems (Erdem *et al.*, 2016). These are the difficulties that all young people face, not only youth in correctional facilities and young migrant. Both of those groups of youth have experienced in their life a traumatic or at least a highly stressful event, such as escaping a war-torn country, isolation, or witnessing (or committing) a violent and life threatening act. Many of the refugee children have endured extreme events as a result of armed conflict, political or religious persecution; they may have been forced to join militias as child soldiers, been victims of rape and sexual violence, witnessed the murder of family members (Ayotte, 2000; Deveci, 2012). All will have survived traumatic experiences both in their

countries of origin and during the dangerous journey to safety (Deveci, 2012.). All those experiences shape a person's worldview, as well as their emotional expression and even consciousness of their own emotions.

Traumatic events can lead to seeing the world as an unsafe place and people as untrustworthy. This type of belief is accompanied by a lot of anxiety, fear and stress, and can be overwhelming for a person. Without understanding the source of those feelings, and without the capacity to regulate them, a person can develop health issues as mentioned above, but also can develop behavioural problems.

Normally, we can distinguish between internal and external problems, with the former translating into isolation, self-mutilation, addiction (e.g. alcohol, drugs, gambling) and the latter manifesting in violent acts such as individual or group fights, sexual offences, theft and so on. In addition, a person can display behaviours from both groups of problems, but the origin is the same. By contrast, emotionally intelligent individuals are better equipped to deal with life's challenges and contribute positively to their communities. With this in mind, education and discussion about emotions should be a vital part of the rehabilitation programme, successful reintegration and adaptation to society.

### **Understanding youth – An Empathic Approach**

If we want to successfully educate young people in social skills and pro-social behaviour, we should approach the issue in a way that aims to understand them and connect with them on an emotional level. This applies to all young people, but is sometimes misapplied when working with young migrants and especially with young people in youth detention facilities. When working with young people who have committed some kind of criminal act, there can be an internal conflict: 'How can I support them when they've done something bad? They have to learn that every action has consequences.' This conflict is not only internal,

but is reflected in our system for dealing with external behavioural problems, where our main aim is to punish (at least in some countries).

As previously mentioned, both external and internal problems usually have a similar origin: a poor ability to regulate and cope with unpleasant emotions. By understanding their stories, we can connect more to the emotional suffering they are enduring and approach them with more empathy. Young migrants and youth in correctional facilities have specific socio-economic situations in which they are growing up. Their material conditions, the adequacy of their families and the level of parental engagement and support, acceptance by their peers, all play a role in their ability to process and understand their emotions and behaviour. Young people in correctional facilities, and especially young migrants, are also most often members of a minority group in their everyday environment, which, if they are not accepted by the community, can lead to a feeling of isolation and danger. All this can lead to young people feeling abandoned, on their own and unsafe in this world, which inhibits re-socialisation, rehabilitation and integration into society.

By approaching in an emphatic and understanding way, especially if the professional is outside of the young people's group, they will be able to make a connection and develop a relationship which is the most essential part of working with people in general. By creating a safe and trusting space in which all emotions (and thoughts, ideas) can be explored without judgement, the foundations for future work are being laid. By understanding their emotions and their conditions, you can reflect that knowledge more effectively and allow them to experiment with different types of emotional expression.

Returning to the conflict initially described, by understanding them and giving them emotional support, we are in no way condoning certain behaviours and acts, but rather classifying them as symptoms and rather than the main cause. By treating symptoms and completing our work, we are only making room for a new one to emerge. In this way we are supporting the growth and development of our young people and teaching them the means they can use to help themselves. More

than that, we are not punishing or rejecting them, just not tolerating their actions. And both in the case of young migrants and youth in correctional facilities, by accepting them we are teaching them to accept themselves. In both cases, through an empathic approach, we are facilitating personal growth and development, but not because society wants them to change, but because they themselves feel safe and motivated enough to create a better life for themselves and for the community that accepts them.

## Masculinity and Emotions

To understand the intricate tapestry of emotions, it is crucial to acknowledge the role that cultural constructions of masculinities play in shaping emotional expressions. The following delves into the complex interplay between masculine gender norms and emotional regulation, examining how social expectations influence emotional experiences, expression and, ultimately, mental well-being. Cultural definitions of masculinity often influence the way emotions are perceived and expressed, particularly in the realms of anger and aggression. Dutton (1998) and Gilligan (1996) emphasise the relationship between masculine gender roles and the use of aggression as a way to mask vulnerable emotions such as fear or shame. For young men, social expectations can create a reluctance to express vulnerable emotions, establishing a link between masculine identity and stoicism (Fivush, 1989; Kuebli & Fivush, 1992).

The environment plays a pivotal role in shaping emotional literacy and regulation. Gender norms surrounding the expression of emotions are learnt from educators, peers and the media. Furthermore, social norms around masculinity discourage the expression of emotions such as sadness, fear and shame, creating a gap in boys' emotional literacy. Boys and men tend to use aggression and hostility to end their experience of vulnerable emotions such as fear or shame (Dutton, 1998; Gilligan, 1996). If anger and aggression successfully mitigate vulnerable emotions in men, aggressive behaviours can be negatively reinforced, in-

creasing the likelihood that men will use these strategies in the future (Jakupcak *et al.*, 2005). From childhood, many male children are socialised to expect negative reactions from others following emotional displays (Fuchs & Thelen, 1988; Jakupcak *et al.*, 2005). Thus, boys and men may associate their masculine identity with extreme stoicism, such that experiences of strong emotions may cause men to feel intense shame (Jakupcak *et al.*, 2005). Boys have fewer opportunities to develop emotional literacy due to social expectations, contributing to gender differences in dealing with emotions and empathy.

Male gender norms have an impact on relationships, particularly friendships, as men can face challenges in forming deep bonds due to pressures to conform to traditional masculinity. Fear of intimacy and physical affection, driven by social expectations, contributes to men having fewer deep friendships. Having fewer deep friendships leads to having fewer support points and smaller support networks, which can be very impactful. Having a support system brings many benefits, especially in difficult times like being in a correctional institution or moving to a new country and unsafely travelling. Having fewer deep friendships and a smaller support system makes it harder to seek help from others. Traditional ideas of masculinity can dissuade men from seeking help for emotional problems, considering it a sign of weakness. Men are more likely to seek support from women who are part of their lives, such as mothers or partners, and less likely to seek professional help. Gender stereotypes further perpetuate the notion that men externalise problems through anger rather than internalising them, potentially contributing to the underdiagnosis of internalising problems such as depression.

Thus, working with youth in correctional institutions and migrant youth, which are largely boys and young men, we need to keep in mind social social norms around masculinity, what it means when it comes to expressing emotions and how boys and young men express various emotions through anger.

## Empowering youth

Understanding and embracing the intricate dynamics of emotions stands as a cornerstone in the effort to support young individuals facing legal challenges and migrants seeking to integrate into new environments. It is crucial to prioritise the emotional wellbeing of young people. Here, we delve into the exploration of emotions in the intricate landscape of masculinities. The amalgamation of these facets contributes substantially to the overall wellbeing and successful integration of these individuals.

In correctional institutions and among migrants, the psychological burden that young people carry is often substantial. Anxiety and distress, spawned from challenging experiences, require a differentiated approach to mental health. In addition to conventional therapeutic measures, instilling emotional strength emerges as a potent means not only of coping, but also of developing adaptive mechanisms to navigate the intricate maze of difficulties.

Providing young individuals with the tools to understand and manage their emotions not only improves their understanding of themselves, but also fosters empathy in their interactions with others. This emotional acuity becomes instrumental to promoting healthier social dynamics and relationships, creating a ripple effect in the broader community. Empowering young people in correctional institutions and migrants to navigate their emotions with discernment helps improve decision-making skills and cognitive adaptability. This cognitive resilience becomes paramount for the successful reintegration of these individuals into society, providing them with a solid foundation to overcome challenges. By imparting peaceful conflict resolution strategies to young people in correctional institutions and migrants, the reliance on violent means is diminished. This not only promotes harmony within institutional settings, but also contributes to the establishment of support networks in migrant communities, creating a sense of community resilience.



## How to approach those topics?

From what we have said so far, we can see that it's important to talk about emotions and help young people understand their emotions, but also that it is difficult to get them to talk about it due to a lot of resistance, some of which stems from traditional gender roles.

Firstly, it's important to be authentic and be prepared to share your own emotional reactions and be a role model that young people can use to understand and express themselves better. Authenticity builds trust and creates a safe space for emotional exploration.

Secondly, the approach should not be one-size-fits-all, but adjustable and individual, based on the young person or young people in front of you.

There are, however, some specificities that can be useful when working with young people who have a very traditional view of gender roles, which is the case in correctional facilities, as well as with some migrant groups. Expressive techniques offer a powerful means of delving into emotions without relying solely on verbal communication. These methods provide a platform for expressing feelings, thoughts and sensations that can be difficult to articulate verbally. Using methods and techniques that involve expressive styles and focuses on the body, we can reflect on emotions and their effect on us. Expressive techniques help us to express our feelings, thoughts and sensations for which we may not have the vocabulary and give us a broad base from which to open discussions and help us understand those who we are working with. As we have already said, expressing emotions can be very threatening, and using expressive techniques can also provoke a feeling of shame, so it is easier for them if they do it through a medium in which they feel comfortable and which is familiar to them. Boys and young men in correctional facilities may feel more at ease using sports or expressive techniques that are more traditionally masculine, such as the instrumentally use of rap songs, drums (Hallam *et al.*, 2008), or through street art styles and tattoos.



#4

**PROVIDING A  
MASCULINITY-INFORMED  
TRAUMA LENS WHEN WORKING  
WITH YOUTH AT RISK**

Jill Michiels

A gender informed, and more specifically, a masculinity informed trauma lens is of great importance to professionals working with young people for multiple reasons. Firstly, understanding trauma and its gendered components will help professionals recognise it in their daily work, which is a prerequisite for addressing it and dealing with it appropriately. Secondly, it can offer some counterbalance to the inevitable feelings of hesitation and insecurity when interacting with young people who have experienced disproportionate amounts of adversity and traumatic events. Thirdly, male trauma is widely underestimated and needs special attention in order to make it more visible. It is at the heart of the X-MEN project to specifically address masculinity and trauma.

There are similarities when it comes to experiencing and responding to trauma, regardless of sex or gender identity, however we need to acknowledge that gender socialisation also plays an important role. This chapter will shed light on how salient masculinity norms impact both the likelihood of boys and men being exposed to traumatic life experiences and the ability to cope effectively with such experiences. Highlighting the connection between masculinity and trauma in no way means ignoring the fact that girls, women and people belonging to gender minorities also face difficulties with trauma, in which gender norms also play an important role.

Before delving into the connection between masculinity and trauma, we start with a more general overview of trauma and how it affects people. At the end of the chapter, we present some practical guidelines for addressing sensitive topics with youth at risk.

## 1. What is trauma?

In simple terms, trauma can be described as an unprocessed negative life experience (van der Kolk, 2014). Although our brains are naturally wired to process stressful events, the intensely high stress levels that arise when there is a real or perceived threat can distort information processing in the brain. Since our brains are naturally prepared to process stressful events (LeDoux, 2000), not everyone who experiences adversity will develop trauma. The more severe the trauma in terms of intensity and duration, the more likely it is that information processing will be distorted. Additionally, a lack of support can diminish the ability to properly cope and can increase the risk of trauma (Brewin et al., 2000).

As facilitators, it is not your job to diagnose PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), but understanding what it is and how it looks like helps us to recognise trauma and respond appropriately. One of the prominent diagnostical manuals, the DSM V (APA, 2022), offers some criteria that we summarise:

- **Reliving the traumatic event**, in the form of nightmares or flashbacks, for example;
- **Avoidance** of trauma-related thoughts, feelings and external reminders;
- **Negative changes in thoughts and mood**, for example: exaggerated self-blame, decreased interest in activities, difficulty experiencing positive emotions;
- **Changes in irritability and reactivity** such as aggressiveness, risky or destructive behaviour, difficulty sleeping, hypervigilance;
- **Duration**: these symptoms last for longer than one month.

Re-enacting the traumatic situation, either as the victim or the per-

petrator is not uncommon. Although this may seem counterintuitive, people who have suffered trauma often consciously or unconsciously attempt to re-experience (and re-expose themselves to) similar situations or memories of the traumatic event. Repeating the event can be seen as a way of mastering or gaining control over the experience, but most of the times it causes more suffering (van der Kolk, 2014).

### 1.1. The window of tolerance

The **window of tolerance** (Siegel, 1999) is a concept that helps to understand trauma. The concept refers to a range of emotional and physiological states in which a person can effectively deal with stress and traumatic experiences. Think of it as a comfort zone where an individual can process and respond to various stimuli without becoming overwhelmed. Within this window, a person can maintain a sense of security, emotional regulation and an ability to handle challenges effectively.

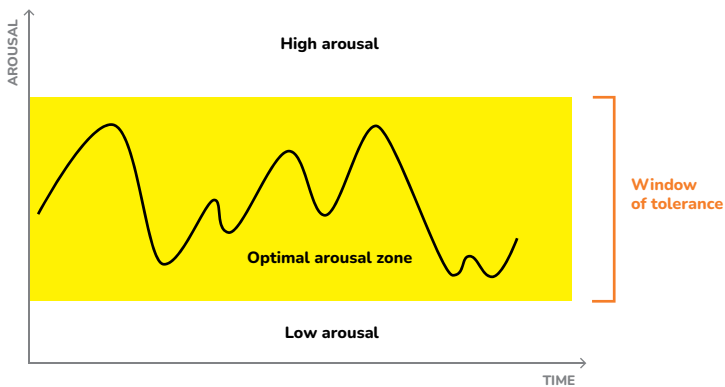


FIGURE 2 – Window of Tolerance (Siegel, 1999).

Trauma, whether it's a single distressing event or repeated negative experiences, can push individuals outside their window of tolerance. Stress levels rise due to a real or perceived threat and alarm bells go off in the brain. Our brain switches to survival mode. When this happens,

people may experience two main reactions that are automatic and involuntary survival responses:

1. **Hyperarousal:** The person becomes overwhelmed with intense emotions such as fear, anxiety, anger, or panic. This state is often associated with the “fight, flight, freeze or fawn” response and can lead to impulsive or reactive behaviours. The fawn response is the least commonly known among the four of them. It’s a survival strategy where someone attempts to avoid harm by being compliant, submissive, or accommodating, often at their own expense (Walker, 2013).
2. **Hypoarousal:** On the other end of the spectrum, the person may become emotionally numb and disengaged (often when other responses are insufficient to cope with the alarming situation). They might feel disconnected from their emotions, thoughts, body or from reality entirely. This state is often linked to dissociation, where the person feels immobilized and unable to respond effectively to the situation.

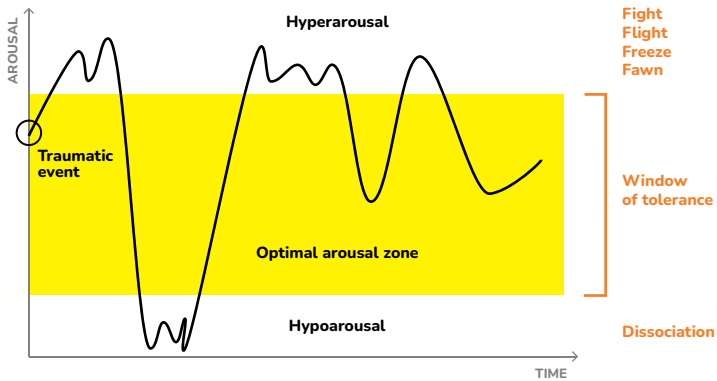


FIGURE 3 – Window of Tolerance: Trauma Responses (Siegel, 1999).

It is essential to recognise that each person’s window of tolerance is different and can be influenced by various factors, such as previous ex-

periences, genetics and the presence of a support system. Previous experiences and repeated traumas cause the window to become smaller, which can lead to a permanent state of alert in the brain and body.

The freeze response and dissociation are often mixed up, but it is important to note the difference: while the freeze response involves an increase in muscle tension and there is some awareness of the situation, dissociation means there is no muscle tension and no full awareness of reality, which makes it possible to mentally escape from the situation (van der Kolk, 2014).

## 1.2. Simple versus complex trauma

There is an important distinction between simple trauma and complex trauma (Cook *et al.*, 2003). This distinction lies in the duration, frequency and interpersonal aspects of traumatic experiences. Complex trauma tends to have a cumulative effect, impacting various aspects of a person's development and functioning over time.

Simple trauma	Complex trauma
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Single traumatic event</li><li>■ Within a relatively short period of time</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Multiple and chronic traumatic experiences</li><li>■ Within an extended period of time</li><li>■ Often involves personal betrayal by others</li><li>■ Can be the result of living in a war zone, human trafficking, captivity, among others</li></ul>

TABLE 1 – Differences between simple and complex trauma (Cook *et al.*, 2003).



Since the young people we work with are mostly subject to recurrent stressful events, we are more often confronted with complex trauma than simple trauma. Complex trauma can have a profound impact on the structure and function of the brain, creating what is often described as a trauma network (van der Kolk, 2014). This network of traumatic memories, each of them linked another, makes it more difficult to determine traumatic events as such, and to deal with them.

### 1.3. Childhood trauma

Traumatic experiences during childhood, especially in early years, can profoundly impact psychological development. These experiences can influence various aspects of a child's growth and functioning, including (Cicchetti & Toth, 2015; van der Kolk, 2014; Courtois & Ford, 2019; Deblinger *et al.*, 2001; Terr, 1991):

- **Emotional Regulation:** Children exposed to trauma might struggle with managing emotions due to a constant state of arousal.
- **Attachment and Relationships:** Trauma can affect a child's ability to form secure attachments and trust others. This may lead to challenges in forming and maintaining healthy relationships and separation anxiety.
- **Cognitive Development:** Trauma can interfere with cognitive processes, impacting attention, learning and problem-solving abilities.
- **Behavioural Issues:** Children might display behavioural problems such as aggression, impulsivity or withdrawal as a result of trauma.
- **Physical Health:** Trauma can have long-term physical health consequences due to the stress response affecting the body's systems.
- **Self-Blame:** Children often internalize traumatic experiences, believing they are somehow responsible for what happened.

This self-blame can stem from a lack of understanding about the events or from coping strategies aimed at regaining a sense of control.

- **Diminished Imagination:** Trauma can restrict a child's ability to explore and engage in imaginative play. When a child's world is dominated by fear or stress, their capacity to engage in creative or imaginative activities may be limited.
- **Decreased sense of hope:** A damaged sense of safety and trust can lead to a persistent belief that the world is unpredictable and unsafe, impacting their hope for a better future. Trauma can also contribute to the development of negative core beliefs about oneself, others and the world. These beliefs may manifest as a lack of hope or pessimism about the future.
- **"Splitting":** Individuals perceive the world in extreme and polarised terms, often dividing people into either "allies" or "enemies".

## 2. A masculinity informed trauma lens

Social norms around masculinity have a major impact on how we deal with trauma, both an individual and social level. On an **individual level**, gender norms that prescribe bravery, toughness and strength increase the likelihood that boys and men will engage in violence, adopt unhealthy lifestyles and even join extremist groups. In addition, these norms render boys and men less resilient and less able to effectively cope with trauma.

Socialisation of gender norms starts early in life. Boys are often encouraged from an early age to be independent, strong and to toughen up, values that are typically associated with masculinity. At the same time, vulnerability, fear and loneliness are often discouraged (Chodorow, 1978). This can be seen as an emotional deprivation and abandonment of their inner emotional experiences, making it harder for them to rec-

ognise trauma and leaving them less resilient to deal with it (Pollack, 1998). Furthermore, a narrative that emphasises bravery, honour, sacrifice and both physical and emotional strength promotes endurance of violence and suffering and tends to '*glorify the ability to appear unaffected by traumatic events*' (Slegh et al., 2021, p. 18). In this sense, trauma can be perceived as either a trophy of masculinity or it can be denied all together, which ultimately prevents the recognition of victimisation and effectively coping with and processing emotions and vulnerability. The loss of power and control, associated with traumatic events, can damage the self-image of being a strong man and can induce feelings of shame and humiliation. In order to maintain their sense of male identity, men and boys may act out, avoid, suppress or deny these unwanted feelings such as pain, insecurity and fear. Unresolved childhood trauma is not only linked to violence and aggression, but also to an increased likelihood of drug and alcohol misuse, depression and suicide ideation. Furthermore, an inability to comply with salient masculinity norms that prescribe earning an income and having to defend your family or country, might cause frustration, which can be used for the recruitment of boys into armed and/or extremist groups or gangs that promise to provide just that. Conversely, not conforming to traditional masculine norms in a culture dominated by such ideals might heighten vulnerability to traumatic events (*ibidem*).

On a **social level**, coping behaviour to maintain the self-image of a strong man in the face of trauma poses not only dangerous outcomes for the boys and men themselves, but also for everyone around them. Research suggests a strong association between male gender norms and the perpetration of traumatic events, particularly violence (Heilman & Barker, 2018). Along with an increase in harmful behaviours such as drug and alcohol misuse, depression and suicide ideation, male trauma has a profound impact on interpersonal and community relationships.

In the following sections, we address various forms of trauma to which at-risk youth are often exposed to, within the scope of the X-MEN project. These experiences are interconnected and may form an intricate web of complex traumas.

## 2.1. Masculinity and violence-related trauma

Violence is very present in many lives including men's, for instance: homicide rates around the world show that 80 per cent of all homicide deaths are male (UNODC, 2019). In this section, we will discuss how violence is present in the lives of boys and men and how this is related to the most salient masculinity norms. This focus in no way diminishes the vast amount of violence against women and girls.

During childhood, research shows that boys are more likely to suffer physical punishment than girls (Mahoney *et al.*, 2000). Boys are also frequently physically punished for behaviours that don't entirely fit the prescribed norms of masculinity, such as crying or whining (Sorbring *et al.*, 2003). Similarly, research suggests that boys who do not conform to dominant norms about masculinity, including with regard to their gender expression or sexual orientation, are more likely to be bullied at school. Boys also face physical forms of *bullying* more often, such as hitting, kicking and choking (Kosciw *et al.*, 2012). When school is not a safe environment, boys may experience generalised disengagement and an inability to concentrate, which leads to poorer progress and educational outcomes (Rosen & Nofziger, 2019).

Boys and men's experience of sexual violence has long been neglected, underreported and underrated, with norms related to masculinity playing a detrimental role. Research carried out in more than 10 European countries reveal that 16 per cent of men and boys over the age of 14 have experienced non-consensual sexual contact (Krahé *et al.*, 2015). Gay, bisexual and transgender men and boys, and men in emergency settings in particular, have an increased risk of becoming victims of sexual violence (Rothman *et al.*, 2011).

Experiencing these types of violence can be highly traumatising and have seriously negative effects on physical health, academic and intellectual achievements, leading to PTSD, depression, substance abuse, personality disorders, suicidal behaviour, aggression and criminality (Hughes *et al.*, 2017). It may also lead to an internalisation of vio-

lence as a legitimate or even necessary way of creating some security in a hostile world (Slegth *et al.*, 2021). Enforcing traditional masculine norms in boys through punishment can also lead to a disconnection with others and with their own inner lives, alienating them from their genuine desires and vulnerabilities and even exaggerating feelings of anger (Levant, 2010).

In short, the idea of male victimisation is incompatible with what dominant gender norms about masculinity prescribe, namely: toughness, invulnerability and control over emotions. Particularly with regard to sexual violence, men are being socialised to believe that they should never deny an opportunity to have sex. Moreover, in any case, they should be able to defend themselves against an aggressor, especially a woman. All this feeds into the notion that men cannot be victims of sexual violence, which makes it more difficult for them to recognise, acknowledge and report cases of sexual violence, which in turn creates barriers to dealing with the situation properly. Humiliation and fear of not being believed often inhibits boys and men to seek help (Petersson & Plantin, 2019).

## **2.2. Masculinity and trauma related to migration**

During a migration process, people may encounter a wide range of traumatic experiences. Serious and traumatic events in the country of origin, such as war, genocide, famine, the threat of persecution and human rights violations and violence, can be a reason to migrate. In addition, the migration journey from one place to another is often fraught with dangerous border crossings, harsh living conditions, hunger and exploitation. Once they arrive at their destination, they often find themselves in an overwhelmingly insecure position and in an unwelcoming environment. They remain extremely vulnerable to acts of violence, discrimination and marginalisation, homelessness and financial instability (Porter & Haslam, 2005). This section is particularly important for boys and men, as they make up a significant portion of migrant populations. For example, the majority of African migrants travelling to Europe

are boys and men (UNICEF, 2017). For many boys and men, feelings of insecurity, along with a lack of agency and purpose, may lead to anxiety, frustration and lower self-esteem. All of these circumstances add up and are difficult enough to deal with as such, but they are even more difficult to cope with in the absence of a social support network or a community, which is particularly relevant in the case of unaccompanied boys (CARE & Promundo, 2017).

Gender stereotypes surrounding migrant boys and men add to the negative effect on their well-being, mental health and provided care. The dominant narrative suggests that migrant men and boys are potential perpetrators of violence and troublemakers (Olivius, 2016). Furthermore, unaccompanied boys are more often considered to be tough, less vulnerable and capable to cope by themselves, not needing support (*idem*, 2017).

### **2.3. Masculinity and trauma related to racism, ethnic discrimination and oppression**

Trauma related to racism is often hidden and encompasses a wide range of experiences, from systemic and structural racism to overt violent acts of racism. Historical colonisation by European countries has left its mark on today's society and created a legacy of inequality from which communities of colour still suffer. Furthermore, regardless of individual experiences of racial and ethnic discrimination, large groups of people collectively carry the transgenerational impact of trauma from the adversity and injustice that the people from previous generations had to endure, such as genocide, slavery and war (Slegel et al., 2021).

People of all genders are subject to racism and oppression. However, we would like to focus on the experiences of boys and men and how social norms about masculinity interfere with these experiences. After all, these norms play an important role in how racial and ethnic discrimination is experienced and dealt with. On the one hand, boys and men are expected to feel pride, to be superior, to be in power and to be protectors and defenders, which contrasts sharply with the socially constructed hierarchy that places

ethnic minority boys and men in an inferior position, accompanied by powerlessness. The inability to achieve the desired social status of masculinity may elicit feelings of inadequacy, shame and frustration (*ibidem*). On the other hand, the restrictive emotionality associated with salient masculinity norms hinder boys and men from ethnic minorities to properly cope with discrimination (Hammond, 2012).

Furthermore, boys and men of colour are often viewed with fear, easily associated with criminality, and portrayed negatively in media. Nor are they regularly given the benefit of the doubt in the event of alleged criminality or misbehaviour (Wilson *et al.*, 2017). All of this heightens their risk of suffering violence and discrimination from authorities and institutions, such as the police and the criminal justice system. These extreme prejudices are not only present in the police and justice system, but are also omnipresent in education (Slegh *et al.*, 2021). For example, research suggests that at school, boys of colour receive disproportionate discipline and are often enrolled in mental health programmes without proper assessment (Marchbanks *et al.*, 2018; Shepard, 2021).

Racism and ethnic discrimination are major factors that have a profound impact on people's health and well-being, regardless of the minority population to which they belong. The most common negative mental health outcomes for boys and men include low self-esteem, psychological stress, anxiety, decrease in life satisfaction, PTSD, suicide ideation and paranoia (Paradies *et al.*, 2015). In an attempt to cope with their low self-esteem and lack of self-protection, boys and men are more likely to engage in risky behaviours such as smoking, substance abuse and violence (Powell, 2015). Additionally, boys and men who regularly face racial discrimination and have a lower sense of agency and control are more likely to face barriers when it comes to help-seeking behaviour (Powell *et al.*, 2016). But even when these boys and men do reach out for help, they often face a lack of access to mental health services, poor quality care and racialized gender bias on the part of service providers (Slegh *et al.*, 2021).

The experience of “othering” and social exclusion can have a profound impact on the sense of identity of boys and men, who feel disconnected from

their culture (*ibidem*). On a more interpersonal and social level, other common outcomes involve negative beliefs about and distrust towards others, expectations of harm and betrayal and a diminished sense of belonging and collective self-esteem (Nickerson *et al.*, 2014). Professionals need to be aware of this racial trauma in boys and men, which often presents as deviant behaviour, increased vulnerability to violence and abuse, vulnerability to rejection and accusation, increased self-awareness, feelings of being watched, judged, criticised and excluded (Slegel *et al.*, 2021).

### 3. Working with youth at risk

It is important to note that people do not coincide with their trauma. Every person, without exception, possesses resources, strengths, qualities, skills and resilience. For everyday survival, it is of great importance to keep the traumatic experiences, and the unbearable pain that comes along with it, at a distance through coping strategies (Shapiro, 2018). These coping strategies or defence reactions are often what we, as professionals, observe when the young people we are working with feel triggered. Know that these reactions have somehow helped them to survive in an unsafe environment.

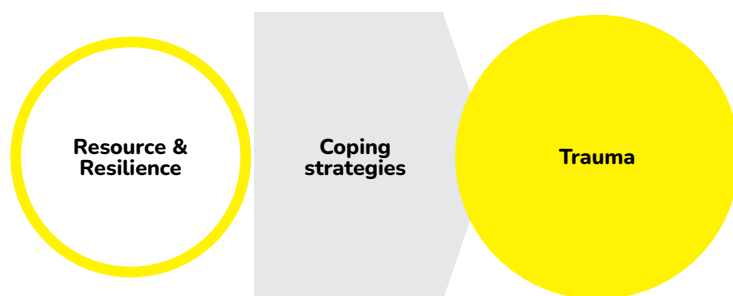


FIGURE 4 – The resourceful and resilient self needs coping strategies to keep trauma at a distance (Shapiro, 2018).



It is not in any way a facilitator’s job to fix or heal trauma. Instead, the focus should be on strengths and fulfilling young people’s potential by expanding their resources and resilience. Another challenging task for facilitators is accepting the defensive responses that the young people display as valuable ways of coping. This does not mean that we should accept aggressive or violent behaviour, but we should attempt to understand what’s hurting underneath and respond to what they feel and need.



FIGURE 5 – Strengthen resources and resilience and accepting defenses (Shapiro, 2018).

### 3.1. The three domains of trauma

There are three main domains in which trauma affects people: safety, control, and responsibility (van der Kolk, 2014). **Safety** refers to the need for a sense of safety and security, both during and after a traumatic event. **Control** is important because trauma often involves a loss of control and powerlessness. Trauma can also elicit a sense of **responsibility** for the traumatic event itself which can have a profound negative effect on self-worth. When triggered, each of these domains elicits a specific emotion, which requires professionals to respond accordingly.

- Within the domain of **safety**, the dominant emotion is **fear**. The fitting response would be to provide some reassurance in the present moment: “You are safe now”;

- The domain of **responsibility and self-worth** is mostly felt through emotions of **sadness, guilt and shame**. In that case, it is important to convey messages of (self-)compassion and validation. Attempt to externalize the responsibility: “It’s not your fault”;
- When a sense of control is being threatened, the most common emotion is **anger**. A suitable response to anger would be to increase a sense of agency and power: “What small things can you do?” Since boys are socialised to repress vulnerability that comes with fear and sadness, anger is often the primary reaction when triggered (Pollack, 1998).

Overall, when young people are triggered, they have a prominent need for predictability, control, safety and no judgement.

### 3.2. Addressing sensitive topics with youth at risk

Within the framework of the X-MEN project, in order to achieve a change in attitudes and behaviour towards masculinity, empathy and non-violence, it is essential and immensely valuable to address sensitive topics such as discrimination and violence. Knowing and acknowledging that this can trigger past traumas, it is extremely important to **nurture hope**, as this contributes to resilience (Snyder, 2002). Nurturing hope means installing the belief that what happened in the past does not necessarily determine the future.

Effective learning generally occurs within a space that is challenging, yet attainable with support (Vygotsky, 1978). This requires a **balance between safety and some degree of discomfort**. Addressing sensitive topics and the discomfort that goes along with it should, therefore, not be avoided, but should be embedded within a safe environment, with sufficient support from peers and facilitators. Another aspect to keep in mind is to help youth fulfil their potential and **focus on strengths**. The 5C model of Positive Youth Development (Lerner, 2009) can be a helpful framework to put this into practice. This model highlights five essential charac-

teristics or dimensions believed to contribute to healthy adolescent development and well-being:

- **Competence:** This refers to the development of skills, abilities and a sense of mastery in various areas such as academic, social, emotional, and vocational domains. It involves feeling capable and effective in handling different situations;
- **Confidence:** Confidence in this context refers to self-esteem, self-efficacy and a positive self-concept. It involves having belief in one's abilities, strengths and potential to achieve goals;
- **Connection:** Connection focuses on the development of positive relationships and connections with family, peers, school, community and other supportive adults. It emphasises the importance of social bonds and networks for healthy development;
- **Character:** Character encompasses the development of a strong moral and ethical compass, integrity, empathy and responsibility. It involves making ethical decisions and demonstrating positive values in actions and behaviour;
- **Caring/Compassion:** This dimension involves the capacity for empathy, concern for others and a commitment to contributing to the welfare of others and the community. It emphasises altruism and a sense of social responsibility.

The development of positive and safe relationships deserves some special emphasis since every positive and safe relationship (even a brief one) adds to resilience and can serve as a corrective emotional experience. Stemming from attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; 1982), there are three basic ingredients in forming a safe and positive relationship:

- **Accessibility:** "Can I reach you? Are you present?"

- **Responsiveness:** “Can I rely on you to tune in to me?”
- **Engagement:** “Do you have my best interest at heart?”

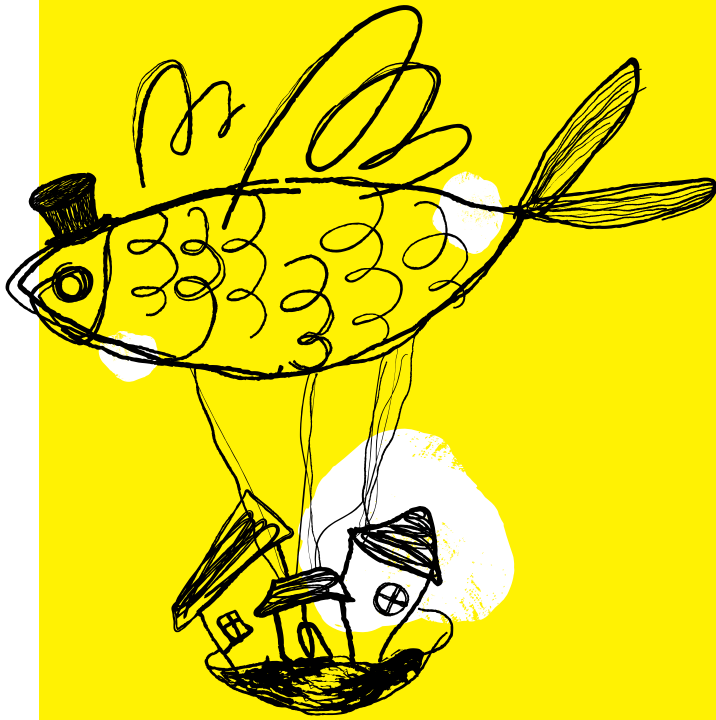
### 3.3. Reducing the risk of re-traumatisation

As stated earlier, touching on sensitive topics in youth groups, especially, but not exclusively, when asked to share personal experiences, can trigger memories, emotions or physical sensations associated with a past traumatic experience. This can be the case for both the young people and facilitators. Many professionals feel hesitant to discuss these topics, fearing that they will re-traumatise them. It is therefore important to offer some practical guidelines so that professionals feel calm and confident when addressing these topics, namely:

- Put the time and effort in creating a **safe environment** with clear agreements that everyone can agree upon, with well-defined limits and boundaries;
- Provide **predictability, transparency and structure**. Announce what you will be discussing in advance and provide trigger warnings for sensitive subjects. Give them the possibility to leave the room without having to justify their leaving;
- Do **regular check-ins**, both in group as a way to start and end a session, and individually when someone is clearly overwhelmed or leaves the room. Be available for a follow-up talk if needed;
- Give them a sense of **control** in how much they want to share. Don't force someone to share their thoughts and emotions if they are not ready for it;
- Make sure emotions and experiences are **validated and respected**;
- **Monitor reactions** (of distress or overwhelming discomfort) and adjust accordingly. Notice when they are about to exceed their window of tolerance;

- Provide **information on counselling services** where they can find professional help;
- **End on a positive note** of empowerment;
- Provide **stabilisation exercises** to keep yourself and the young people within the window of tolerance.

Stabilisation exercises usually activate different bodily senses, such as sight, hearing, smell, taste and skin sensation. When people are **hyperactivated** (above their window of tolerance), the main task is to calm their nervous system through relaxation exercises. Useful examples of such exercises are breathing exercises and visualisation exercises, such as the 'Safe space' exercise or the 'Light stream' exercise. When there is **hypoactivation** and people are below their window of tolerance, they need to activate the nervous system. Simply throwing a ball around or balancing on one leg is often sufficient to bring them back within their window.



**#5**

**WHEN THE ADULT GAZE  
DEFINES THE WORLD OF  
EMIGRATING CHILDHOOD**

Violeta Assiego

Migratory movements have been a persistent issue for decades and will continue to be so in the future, both in the European Union (EU) and in Spain. Migratory crises represent one of the greatest challenges of our time, but the difficulty and complexity of this issue in the geopolitical landscape does not mean that it cannot be addressed in the frame of human rights (HR) and with a gender, children's and intersectional perspective. The human rights perspective aims to guarantee that the people most vulnerable to violence have the necessary protection so that their integrity and lives are not at risk. The purpose of public policies on migration from a human rights perspective is to guarantee and preserve humane, empathetic and individualised treatment, especially for those people who belong to groups and collectives historically exposed to extreme violence, such as children and adolescents when they are considered "the others labelled as the enemy".

The recent approval of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum (EPMA) is not a positive step towards a construction of more democratic, supportive, egalitarian and evolved societies. Criticism of the Pact is strong from activists and human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, who point out that this agreement will lead to "increased suffering and will set back the European right to asylum for decades to come"<sup>3</sup>. Far from providing protection to those most vulnerable to human rights violations, this Pact not only leaves them exposed to violence during the migration journey, but also at borders and within the EU territory. The Pact legitimises state agents themselves having *carte*

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3 Amnesty International Press Release (20/12/2023). Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2023/12/eu-migration-pact-agreement-will-lead-to-a-surge-in-suffering/>



*blanche* to act in a manner contrary to international human rights instruments. The Pact contains exceptions and derogations in the field of asylum that will allow actions that, as we know beforehand, would be qualified as inhuman, cruel and degrading. Among others, it allows the refoulements at borders, normalizing the arbitrary use of detention of migrants (including families and children) or lowering the age for certain police actions that until now were only carried out with adults. It is precisely the treatment of children in need of enhanced protection that is one of the main concerns of human rights organisations. One of these is that there is no room for a corresponding assessment of the concrete and individual needs of children who migrate alone or accompanied in order to determine their best interests. In this way, the migrant status would be prioritised over that of a minor.

The final adoption of this Pact will be in the spring of 2024, before the European elections. This scenario leads us to the urgency of explaining and convincing public opinion and those who work in direct contact with migrant children, of the importance of not breaking the respect for international human rights commitments and, in particular, the protection of the integrity and dignity of minors, that respect for the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols should take precedence over the interests of countries to protect their borders.

It is essential that a “human security” rather than a “national security” approach takes the lead. Fortifying borders, erecting walls and imposing unjust and discretionary rules against the weakest only serves to fuel criminalisation and rejection of the migrant population and irrationally feed fear.

### **“Human Security” Approach**

The “human security” approach proposes a migration policy model that places the protection of people and their rights at the centre, as opposed to a model that interprets migration as a threat to national security.

The concept of “human security” is found in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report of 1994 and in UN General Assembly Resolution 66/290 of 2012. This resolution establishes one of its main paradigms, that of “human security”. This must serve to protect three types of people’s freedoms: freedom from fear (threats such as physical and direct violence), freedom from want (i.e., unemployment, poverty, disease) and freedom from indignity (including exclusion, exploitation and discrimination). This approach must be defended if we want migrant children to be treated as what they are, children and adolescents, otherwise we would be validating a nationalistic approach that polarises between bad migrants (the others) and good children (ours). We have to understand and defend that migrant children, because they are children, have the same rights as other children who are nationals or residents of our country, and that, under no circumstances, does the fact of being a migrant justify denigrating or discriminatory treatment.

Unfortunately, the EU has failed to prioritise the “human security” approach, falling into the trap of weaponisation (a war metaphor for a concept, idea or situation) that uses immigration as a weapon to achieve a political end. The “instrumentalisation of migrants” as a bargaining tool by third countries with the “intention to destabilise”, or the “ideologisation of migration” that reveals anti-immigrant discourses to divide the population and fuel a problem, have been decisive for the EPMA to be an anti-rights European Pact far removed from the “human security” approach of those who are, as we are, on the side of human rights.

As an example, in the last six years, rights organisations have been urging the Spanish government to address the migratory crises that occur at our borders in a planned, well-resourced and coordinated manner, with a strategy that takes into account the global causes of migratory movements, that offers regional responses and adopts joint decisions among all the agents involved, but above all, that takes a child rights approach. This planning should combine institutional strategies with community-based solutions and guarantee the best interests of the child based on multisectoral responses that consider the needs of mi-

nors who migrate alone or accompanied and those of the citizens who form part of the host communities.

Precisely, in May 2021, in view of the migratory crisis that was occurring in the Canary Islands, and before the crisis in Ceuta, the Ombudsman, faced with the situation of children migrating alone, called on the Ministry of Social Rights<sup>4</sup> to initiate the necessary work to, among other things, draw up the multi-year strategic plan for the integration of unaccompanied foreign minors provided for in article 2 ter section 3 of the Immigration Law. Furthermore, the Ombudsman considered essential for the General State Administration to plan, in coordination with the regional minors' protection bodies, the transition to adult life of unaccompanied children who reach the age of majority undocumented and without any possibility of supporting themselves. The work to draw up a Comprehensive strategy for the care of unaccompanied migrant children began in July of that year, but progress was only made on some aspects strictly related to the criteria for the distribution of unaccompanied migrant minors among the Autonomous Communities (CCAA).

With the future adoption of the EPMA, this is a challenge now more necessary than ever to avoid irreparable damage that would open the door to classifying children and adolescents into dangerous children versus children at risk. In other words, a return to a pre-constitutional model of care that is contrary to our domestic law and international instruments and decisions on children's rights.

## **Migrant Children and Statistics**

Whenever we look at "migration data", we must always bear in mind that these figures include children and adolescents, minors who migrate either alone on their own initiative –who are often victims of different situations of abuse by state agents in their own countries – and

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<sup>4</sup> Press release of the Ombudsman, available at <https://www.defensordelpueblo.es/noticias/ninos-ninas-solos/>

those who do so accompanied by their affective relatives or by adults, but also those who are direct victims of trafficking networks or who are in a position to apply for international protection. Therefore, we cannot talk about a single migrating childhood, but rather migrant childhoods, and all of them are deserving of the same protection for the fact that they are under 18 years of age according to what is established in most national legislations on child protection. The special situation of vulnerability represented by minors in a migratory context demands a reinforced protection of their rights that is diametrically distanced from the suspicion that they are “dangerous or problematic children”.

In any case, and in all scenarios, the reasons why migrant children make the journey from their country of origin to Spain are closely linked to the lives and experiences of the adults around them, to the social realities of their countries of origin – such as situations of poverty, inequality, violence, armed conflicts, consequences of climate change – and, of course, their own characteristics for which they could enjoy international protection – being LGTBI, belonging to certain racial, religious or ethnic minorities, coming from certain countries, having some kind of disability,.. It is necessary to evaluate the reasons why minors leave their own countries, assess their needs and individualise responses and solutions so that these are sustainable over time and in accordance with their rights.

Of particular concern in the case of unaccompanied migrant children is the lack of awareness among authorities of the violence to which migrant children are exposed, and the role that mafias play in their lives not only outside our borders but also, and especially in recent years, within our country. These criminal organisations use the structures of their criminal networks, such as drug trafficking or human trafficking, to move children and adolescents within Spanish territory and also beyond its borders with total impunity and without establishing clear strategies to guarantee their protection and safety.

The criminalisation of children who migrate alone, promoted in particular by extreme right-wing political groups, leaves the field open for

these mafias to act with impunity. This stigma and social rejection do not respond to reality, but to the disinformation and pre-judgements fed by the deniers of children's rights who want to repeal the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>5</sup> for a strictly political and partisan interest. This conceptualisation of children who migrate alone as dangerous only seeks to dehumanise them because only in this way (by making migrant children and adolescents not be seen as children) is it possible for public opinion to remain silent in the presence of the repeal of norms that are democratic pillars. In this dehumanisation, the use of impersonal language (such as "flows" or UAMs, *unaccompanied migrants*) is fundamental, hence the need to avoid the use of acronyms and expressions that distance us from seeing people as human beings. We must avoid the use of acronyms such as UAMs (*ibid.*) whose use originated in technical environments, and not to be used in a pejorative way. It is important to understand that dehumanisation never treats people specifically and seeks to make us see them as savage enemies, capable of anything.

This logic of criminalising immigration and identifying children and adolescents who migrate alone as dangerous respond to a punitive and populist model typical of extreme right-wing and fascist ideologies. However, the current normalisation of the belief that immigrants come to live on benefits and that "the UAMs" are criminals forces us to start from a very complex place when it comes to making public opinion understand, in a simple way, that this way of thinking is not real, that it is the product of disinformation campaigns by the extreme right to destabilise democracy, to generate distrust in the institutions and to be able to capture disenchanted votes. We need to stress that being a migrant is no more a crime than being a minor and that migrating alone is not a danger to the host society. What is dangerous are the discourses that use them as "scapegoats".

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5 Vox dissociates itself from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (2019). Available at: [https://elpais.com/politica/2019/11/18/actualidad/1574092474\\_576878.html](https://elpais.com/politica/2019/11/18/actualidad/1574092474_576878.html)

## Looking Ahead

Spain has the obligation to protect every child and adolescent in its territory, regardless of their migratory situation or the way in which they have entered it. The starting principle for all actions of identification, reception, care and protection of children, and even repatriation, must be their best interests, and it is their determination that must guide decision-making, including the adoption of the most appropriate durable solution for the migrant child or adolescent. Therefore, from a human rights and child-centred approach, public policy proposals for migrant children must take three directions.

First, understanding that the solution to migration does not lie at the borders and that a State response that offers a rights-based solution is needed, this should comprehensively address children on the move.

Second, there must be regularisation specifically aimed at those families headed by undocumented migrants with children so that the administrative, economic and educational those obstacles that interfere with their access to rights that, in Spain, should be universally guaranteed to all children without distinction of any kind can be eliminated.

Finally, policies should be established that provide resources to deal individually with the different situations that migrating children experience and avoid collective and discretionary responses that do not prioritise the best interests of the child.

In short, looking to the future means that civil society organisations, political groups and citizens demand policies that promote a change in the way we think about, look at and talk about migration in general and, in a very specific way, how we deal with migrant children, who require special care and protection. The migrant factor makes them more fragile and vulnerable, never more suspicious and threatening. Migrant children are also our responsibility.

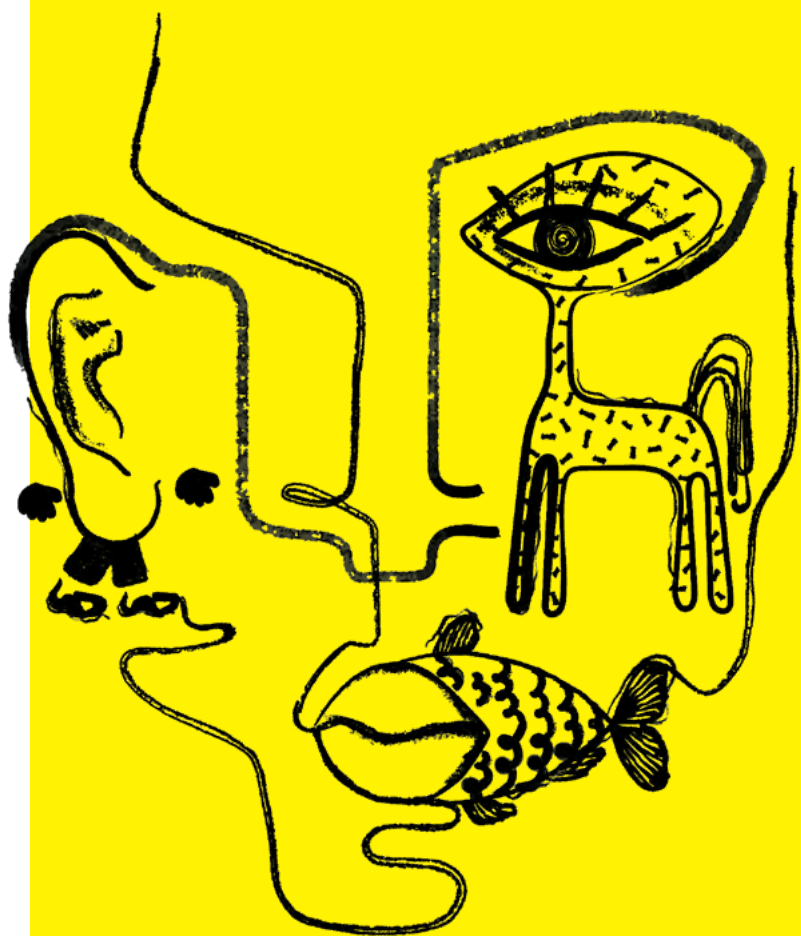
How can the arts contribute to reconstructing our perceptions and experiences of gender and social justice?

According to Cotta *et al.* (2021) and Moura and Cerdeira (2021), debates and questions about gender norms and constructions and, consequently, the debate about masculinities, have occupied a more relevant space in academic studies and debates over the last few decades. However, since academia tends to be a hierarchical and rigid in the way it produces issues, strategies inspired by more creative and experimental practices are not only desirable, but deeply necessary. The search for forms of dialogue and listening based on concerns for the multiplicity of being can create new territories for identities and the social practices associated with them, and a fairer and more caring society that contemplates and celebrates their different expressions, thus breaking with the intergenerational transmission of violence founded on and disseminated from heteropatriarchal and colonial socio-cultural constructions.

In this way, the creative and artistic capacity that is organically present in different societies and cultures presents itself as a possible and essential tool for broadening the debates and possibilities of transformation around these issues.

Art, in its multiple languages, as a device for social transformation, promotes counter-hegemonic narratives in relation to current normative standards and behaviours. The paths presented and explored through ethically and politically committed art contribute to a theoretical-practical essay with more possibilities, with processes of collective construction.

Talking about gender is also talking about the body and subjectivity. In this sense, it is impossible to ignore the debates about the body, the way it expresses itself (particularly through art) and, consequently, its impact on the expectations associated with ideas of what it is to “be a man” or “be a woman”. The Global North vision demeans and devalues artistic productions that emerge in diverse contexts within common sense, that is, art produced in and by the margins.





**#6**

**ARTS AND MASCULINITIES:  
BUILDING OTHER  
POSSIBILITIES OF BEING**

Linda Cerdeira, Tatiana Moura

Politically, we affirm the commitment to considering as artistic production the result of the creative processes of plural people, from diverse racial, cultural and social backgrounds, without these productions occupying a folklorised or exoticised place in relation to what is understood as hegemonic art. This exercise is the first step towards recognising the strength present in artistic discourses and giving visibility to the role they play in social and cultural formation.

This chapter reports on some of the artistic processes carried out during the implementation of the X-MEN project, where the choice was made to include an artistic approach during or after the implementation of the programme in Youth Detention Centres (Portugal and Croatia) and with children and adolescents who migrate alone (Spain). In particular, we refer to the inclusion of artistic methodologies as a way of reflecting on gender and masculinities, places of belonging, stereotypes and care. This approach leads to plural, diverse and illustrative discourses, through artistic practices that touch, that move, that cause discomfort and estrangement, and can thus have the capacity to transform and complement political and activist debates.

### **What about Artivism?**

Artivism, by uniting artistic production with social proposals, presents the relationship between art and politics, promoting the possibilities of art as actions of militancy, resistance and subversion. In this sense, art as an agent of social transformation is called artivism – which consists

of a social cause and claim and, at the same time, an artistic rupture against what is considered dominant.

In this sense, the “functions of art” within a given society can be understood in different ways: in addition to that society deciding which art is ‘legitimate’ and which is not, all these issues are relevant and show the need to look more closely at the artistic productions of groups that do not occupy the spaces of power in society and use their artistic productions to claim, denounce and/or present a different historical-cultural context from the one presented.

In this way, art can be a tool for transformation when it is used to challenge oppressive social relations, gender stereotypes and promote non-violence.

Art and its productions can bring about change in these established ideas, presenting alternative, more caring models committed to a fairer society and as a methodology to work issues that are difficult, painful, and lead to inertia and that can be worked with creative techniques.

### **The Artist Experience of X-MEN**

We imagine that, at birth, we are placed in “big boxes” that tell us at all times how to act or be, as if these categories were inherent to our biological sex observed at birth (or even before birth) and to other attributes that shape our vision and experience of life. Often, as a result of life journeys and places of belonging, we grow up with the possibility, and often the certainty, that in order to have a more dignified life and become visible (or invisible) in society, our life stories will not be easy, and the paths are determined from the outset.

In **Portugal**, the X-MEN project was present in the country’s six youth detention centres, including artistic components in some of its research and intervention techniques. In the case of research, ethnofiction – the

creation of a story based on characters and backgrounds similar to those of the young people in the Centres - was a technique used so that the group could then construct collective narratives very similar to their own. In the intervention phase, the same technique was used based on a short animation entitled “When Men Change<sup>6</sup>”, made up of 3 stories. The group was divided into three parts, each assigned one of the stories from the animation. Initially, they watched half of the story and then worked together to compose the rest of the story, which was finally compared with the full story of the animation. The work of creative writing, reflection and representation of close realities proved to be a very positive result for the debates that followed.

In the session on “Place of Belonging”, which aims to deconstruct stereotypes about where they live, where they come from, what surrounds them, they were asked to draw the place – any place – where they feel they belong, not necessarily physical or geographical. The result was a return to good memories, to what is good about these places, to memories that deconstruct, to a certain extent, much of what they hear about the place and about themselves.

The final process, following the reflective groups with the participants, resulted in the artistic interpretation (visual, sound, documentary), from the point of view of Hamilton Francisco (Babu), an artist, of the life trajectories of these young people who are, from his perspective, Between Places, leading to a travelling exhibition and online presence, so that all the young people who took part can have access.

In **Spain**, the Cepaim Foundation organised the artistic intervention around the creation of a hip-hop song with two groups of youngsters participating in the X-MEN workshops in Sevilla. The music genre was introduced from the very beginning of the workshop since all participants were fans or, at least, deeply familiarised with it. Some hip-hop songs were used in the first sessions of the workshop to introduce issues like violence, masculinity, care work and migrations. The use of

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6 This animation can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXaFRrl-L70>

well-known music by artists they loved, like Morad<sup>7</sup> and others that they didn't know, like Miss Raisa<sup>8</sup>, allowed the construction of good atmosphere, rising empathy, acknowledgement, energy and attention. The work on the lyrics of the songs opened the floor to self-reflection and to other activities of the workshop.

In the second part of the workshops, two sessions were devoted to the creation of the hip-hop song and a third one to the record of the song in a professional studio. In this process, the Cepaim educator was accompanied by a hip-hop specialist in order to merge the educational part with the artistic one. The two groups started working on the lyrics by answering to the questions: What would you say to a boy who thinks he is superior to another boy because of his skin colour? What would you say to a boy who thinks he is superior to women because he is a man? After giving some space for thinking, the boys shared their answers with the entire group while the hip-hop specialist was taking notes. Both debates were very rich, focusing on racism and gender equality.

In the following session, the specialist presented the rap (lyrics) proposal based on the work of the previous session, as well as the instrumental basis, and the kids could rehearse. After the preparation sessions, the groups were ready to record the piece and, in both cases, they could use a professional studio. Afterwards, an audiovisual professional edited two video clips with the songs and images of the kids. They highly appreciated the experience, feeling valued and, at the same time, having the chance to have a product that they can show to their families and friends with a positive message about themselves, thus creating a counter-narrative to what usually comes out in the mainstream media.

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7 Morad, alias Morad El Khattouti El Horami (Barcelona, 5 March 1999), is a Spanish rapper of Moroccan origin. The source of inspiration for his lyrics comes from his childhood and adolescent experiences and the way he managed to survive despite juvenile delinquency and the marginal situation in which he lived, recounting episodes he experienced on the street, such as the multiple abuses of the police.

8 Imane Raissali (born 1997), known professionally as Miss Raisa, is also a Spanish rapper of Moroccan origin. Known as a hip-hop artist, her musical style stands out for its controversial lyrics with a high social content that start from a female perspective and talk about racism, religion, gender, freedom of expression and integration.

In the following links both videos and songs can be checked:

- **Prejuicios a mí? RAP** (2min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZE2IJsMK-k>
- **Machi Rojola (No es de hombres)** (3,25min): [https://youtu.be/4sqzy\\_8X938](https://youtu.be/4sqzy_8X938)

Artistic intervention in **Croatia**, orchestrated by Status M, took place within two correctional institutions (one for young men and one for young women), engaging young people in two transformative sessions. These sessions became platforms for self-expression, channelling their thoughts and emotions into poignant written word and poems.

With guidance, answering different questions about what they feel, hear, see and think, these young individuals found a voice through art, fostering a space where their creativity could flourish. After two sessions in each correctional institution, Status M gathered some excellent material created by the young people. Moreover, recognising their interest in tattoos and tattooing, the sessions expanded to explore the historical and personal significance behind tattoos. Further two sessions in each correctional institution were organised to create space for artistic expressions led by a tattoo and street artist. Empowering these young people, the initiative allowed them to craft their own artistic expressions, by printing their designs on hoodies and t-shirts. Complementing their written word, the amalgam of sketches formed a fanzine, not just as an outlet, but as a tool for advocacy, amplifying their voices beyond the walls of their confinement.

Similar to Portugal and Spain, Croatia's artistic intervention strategy combined creativity and introspection. Just as Portugal's X-MEN project employed ethnofiction to spark collective narratives, Croatia's initiative encouraged these young people to reflect on their experiences, constructing stories that echoed their realities. Furthermore, akin to Spain's approach of using hip-hop to foster dialogue, the exploration of tat-

toos in Croatia served as a medium for conversations about identity, expression, and personal narratives. These interventions transcend mere artistic expression; they became avenues for self-reflection, dismantling stereotypes and fostering meaningful discussions on critical personal and social issues. The culmination of these sessions, showcased through wearable art and a collaborative fanzine in Croatia, two videoclips in Spain and an exhibition in Portugal, not only serves as a testimony to their creative prowess, but stands as a beacon of advocacy, shedding light on the stories and perspectives of these resilient young people.

### **As long as there's a road to walk on**

All the artistic processes that transform gender norms revolve around the collective capacity to build identity constructions through reflections on masculinities, empathy and non-violence, the main value of which has been listening attentively to the desire to transform unequal societies and live meaningful lives.

We exist through what we communicate, and art is a powerful form of communication, especially in colonial countries that often presuppose the annihilation of racialized bodies and subjectivities.

And it survives, above all, through the ability to transform our vision of the world in the face of oppressive structures. It is an ongoing endeavour to break away from the dichotomous view of the world.

There is an urgent need to make visible the productions of young people who need to break through the barrier of invisibility in order to survive. It is the responsibility of society as a whole to promote certain groups of young people being prioritised, and to praise their work, their artistic productions and promote learning spaces so that we can make visible positive models of masculinity capable of transforming futures.



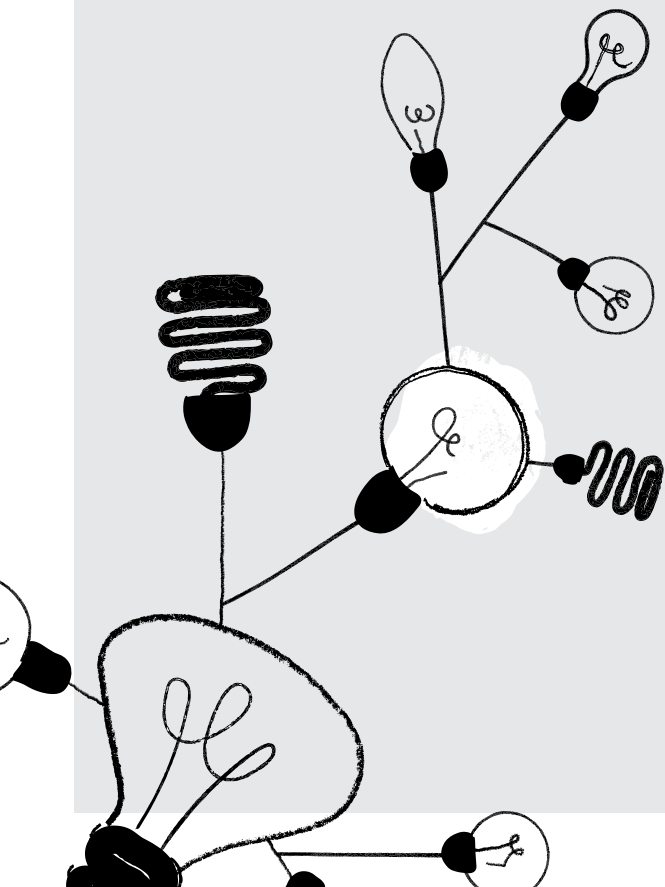


**#7**

# **X-MEN TOOLKITS:**

## **GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE METHODOLOGIES TO IMPLEMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK**

The second part of this toolkit is specifically dedicated to present the three different scripts that were used in Croatia, Portugal and Spain for the implementation of the X-MEN gender norm transformative methodologies with youngsters in youth detention centres and centres for unaccompanied minors, respectively.



**#7.1**

**X-MEN SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES  
WITH YOUTH AT RISK IN  
NATIONAL CONTEXTS: CROATIA**

Elizabeta Matković

[Status M]

The interventions took place in the context of Croatia's two correctional institutions for youth, one designed for young men and the other for young women. Within the correctional institution for young men, the intervention was strategically structured into three groups. The initial phase involved two closed groups, fostering a secure and confidential environment. However, the final group adopted an open format, granting participants the flexibility to enter and exit as circumstances allowed. This adjustment was necessitated by the practical challenges of maintaining a consistent group due to factors such as participants leaving the institution, facing varying disciplinary actions, or enjoying weekend privileges.

Meanwhile, within the correctional institution for young women, the intervention took a comprehensive approach, involving all girls in the institution. The dynamics of this group was characterized by some girls departing before the intervention concluded, while others joined the sessions at later stages. This fluidity in group composition added a unique dimension to the intervention, and the intervention lasted longer so that all the girls involved got an opportunity to learn and change.

Central to the sessions was a focused exploration of transforming gender norms, particularly honing in on masculine gender norms associated with violence and care. Topics like emotions, violence, empathy, and care were dissected through the lens of gender. The sessions centred on gender occurred later in the intervention, typically around the fourth or fifth session. This strategic timing was informed by a diagnostic study carried out in the project's first year, revealing the youth's entrenched traditional beliefs about gender. The gradual integration of

gender-focused sessions allowed for a more nuanced and receptive engagement with these transformative discussions.

## Evaluation

The evaluation of the interventions follows a structured pre- and post-testing methodology. Two primary assessment tools employed are the GEM scale and vignettes:

- **GEM Scale:** The GEM scale serves as a foundational baseline for evaluation and is derived from the diagnostic study conducted earlier. Participants, specifically those in the correctional institution for young men, complete the GEM scale before they departed from the institution. This initial assessment captures their attitudes and beliefs related to gender, providing a benchmark for measuring any changes post-intervention.
- **Vignettes:** Vignettes are another integral component of the evaluation process. Participants, both young men and women in the correctional institutions, filled out vignettes during the first session and again just before their exit from the institution. Vignettes present hypothetical scenarios or stories that participants respond to, offering insights into their perspectives, decision-making processes, and behavioural patterns.

Given that the group involving young men operated in an open format, allowing participants to enter and exit, collecting post-testing data posed a challenge. Consequently, post-testing data for this particular group could not be obtained in the traditional sense. To ensure objectivity and impartiality in the evaluation process, an external observer, not directly involved in the intervention sessions, was tasked with data collection. This observer, being detached from the session dynamics, collected information about the session's impact, participant engagement, and overall outcomes.

In essence, the evaluation process integrates both quantitative and qualitative measures, aiming to measure the shifts in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours regarding gender norms among the participants involved in the interventions. The utilization of established scales and scenario-based assessments provides a comprehensive understanding of the interventions' effectiveness.

## **Educators in correctional institutions**

Educational interventions within correctional institutions demand a nuanced approach, and the presence of educators working in pairs, comprising both a man and a woman. Working in pairs, specifically with a male and a female educator, allows participants to witness and experience a model of mutual respect, cooperation, and healthy interaction. The dynamics between educators exemplify an egalitarian relationship, offering a tangible demonstration of collaboration and teamwork. This setup is particularly crucial for youth within correctional facilities, as it exposes them to positive role models and fosters a healthy understanding of relationships, distinct from romantic affiliations.

Pairing educators who are a man and a woman contributes to breaking down gender stereotypes. Participants have the opportunity to observe that authority, guidance, and support are not exclusive to a particular gender. This approach challenges preconceived notions about gender roles, promoting a more inclusive and egalitarian perspective. The partnership underscores that competence and leadership qualities are attributes inherent to individuals, irrespective of gender.

Youth within correctional institutions often carry diverse and complex needs. Having educators with different professional backgrounds, such as social work, psychology, or social pedagogy and similar professions, enhances the intervention's effectiveness. These backgrounds bring unique perspectives and skill sets to address various aspects of the participants' well-being, encompassing emotional, psychological, and

social dimensions. Educators with backgrounds in social work, psychology, or social pedagogy possess a deeper understanding of behavioural patterns and can navigate the complexities of the youth's experiences. This knowledge allows for a more nuanced and empathetic approach to addressing the underlying issues that may contribute to problematic behaviours, enabling educators to tailor interventions effectively. The combination of different professional backgrounds encourages multidisciplinary collaboration. Educators can pool their expertise, drawing from various fields, to create comprehensive and holistic interventions. This collaborative approach is especially pertinent in correctional settings, where addressing diverse challenges requires a multifaceted strategy.

### Structure and duration of sessions:

- 10 sessions per group;
- Each session is 1 hour and 30 minutes;
- Sessions should occur every week or every 2 weeks;
- All sessions start with an Associative cards *check-in* activity and some sessions also with an ice-breaker activity;
- All sessions end with a Reflect and Release activity;
- The first and last sessions are also evaluation sessions (GEM scale and vignettes);
- One activity was done only with young men due to their specific needs – Men, Gender and Care;
- One activity was done only with young women due to their specific needs - Quiz on sexual and reproductive health;
- 4 artistic sessions were comprised.

## **X-MEN facilitation teams**

Each session required:

- A person to observe and elaborate the basis of the Field Diary (which was completed, at the end of each day/session, by the pair responsible for the session);
- A Facilitating duo (1 man and 1 woman).

### **Facilitators + Observer:**

- Elizabeta Matković
- Erol Beširević
- Luiza Bouharoua
- Tabita Crnoja
- Tihomir Krklec
- Tomislav Jeleković





## **PROGRAMMING OF THE X-MEN SESSIONS**

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## OPENING ACTIVITIES

### OPENING ACTIVITY

## ASSOCIATIVE CARDS CHECK-IN

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**OBJECTIVES:** Starting activity to stimulate sharing and continue the group process.

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**DURATION:** 15 minutes.

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**MATERIALS:** A deck of associative cards

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### DESCRIPTION:

Lay out the associative cards in front of the participants and invite them to choose one to three cards through which they can describe what happened in their lives since the last workshop, and how are they feeling at this moment. Explain to them that the cards themselves don't mean anything, but they are the ones giving them meaning.

### OPENING ACTIVITY

## HOW DO I FEEL?

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**OBJECTIVES:** To encourage thinking about feelings and to discuss the way how participants express and experience them.

---

**DURATION:** 15 minutes.

---

---

**MATERIALS:** -

---

**DESCRIPTION:**

Participants gather in a circular arrangement, taking turns expressing distinct emotions through actions. The rest of the participants attempt to identify the specific emotion being portrayed. Once correctly guessed, the person who identified the emotion takes on the role of expressing the next emotion. Focus on discerning and labeling various emotions, and in the event of repeated emotions, discuss how the same emotion can be conveyed in varied ways.

**OPENING ACTIVITY**

## **MOLECULES**

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**OBJECTIVES:** To strengthen group cohesion and divide group into smaller groups.

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**DURATION:** 5 minutes.

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**MATERIALS:** Music.

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**DESCRIPTION**

- Move chairs and tables to the edge of the room and encourage participants to move around freely;
- Instruct them to create small groups of a specified size, for instance, molecules.
- Announce a number, like five (5), and pause the music. Individuals unable to form a molecule during that round await the next attempt;

- Repeat this process several times, gradually specifying the number until everyone successfully assembles into a molecule.

### OPENING ACTIVITY

## OBSTACLES

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**OBJECTIVES:** To enhance communication, trust, and teamwork among participants.

---

**DURATION:** 15 minutes.

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**MATERIALS:** Scarfs; Box; Chairs; Other obstacles.

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### DESCRIPTION

Participants will be paired up, and one person in each pair will be blindfolded. Once half of the participants are blindfolded, various obstacles (such as paper, a ball, chair, table, box, etc.) are strategically placed around the room or space. The sighted partner guides their blindfolded counterpart through the area, ensuring they navigate without bumping into obstacles. After a period, the facilitator instructs the pairs to switch roles, and while the other person is blindfolded, the facilitator rearranges the obstacle layout. Finally, participants engage in a discussion about their emotions and experiences trusting someone else to guide and take care of them during the activity.

---

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

### SESSION 1

## INTRODUCTION AND GROUP BUILDING

---

**OBJECTIVES:** To create a positive and inclusive atmosphere, introducing participants to the educators, organisation and project, as well as to build connections among participants.

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**DURATION:** 1h30.

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**MATERIALS:**

- Soft ball;
- Large paper sheets or flip charts;
- Markers;
- Sticky notes or cards;
- Vignettes (scenarios for problem-solving activity).

---

### DESCRIPTION:

Educators introduce themselves, providing a brief overview of their roles and the organization. An overview of the project and its goals is presented, setting the context for the upcoming sessions.

### DEVELOPMENT:

- Participants stand in a circle, and a soft ball is passed from one participant to another. Each participant catching the ball introduces themselves, shares their age, and mentions an activity or hobby they enjoy. The ball continues circulating until everyone has had a turn.

- Explain to participants that they will create a map by physically positioning themselves in the space based on where they come from. Show a spot in the space which represents the city the institution is at and other participants should position themselves accordingly. Each participant explains their position on the map, and adjustments can be made collaboratively.
- Facilitators initiate a discussion on group norms and expectations. Group agreement is written on flipchart paper and will be visible on every session. Participants contribute ideas for the group agreement, discussing how they want to interact, communicate, and support each other. Each participant and educators then sign their names on the group agreement.
- Explain to the participants that the next activity is to compare if their answers will change after participating in the sessions. Participants receive vignettes with different scenarios or situations. Individually or in pairs, they discuss and write down three possible solutions for each scenario and circle the one they think is the best. Groups share their solutions, and the larger group discusses the solutions for each vignette.

## SESSION 2

# EXPRESS YOURSELF

---

### OBJECTIVES

To encourage participants to think about their own feelings and express them; to recognise the difficulties young people face in expressing certain feelings and to identify the consequences of not expressing feelings.

---

### DURATION

45 min.

---

### MATERIALS

- Flipchart paper;
  - Markers;
  - Post-it notes.
- 

### DESCRIPTION

Draw five columns on flipchart paper and write the following feelings as headlines: fear, love, sadness, happiness and anger (see Worksheet as an example of how words should be arranged and ranked according to the explanation that follows). Then explain to the participants how these are the feelings that will be discussed during this activity and ask them to think about how easy or difficult it is for young men and women to express these feelings. Explain to the participants what each emotion means.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Give each participant five pieces of paper and ask them to write a number from 1 to 5 on each piece of paper and to think about which of the feelings on the flipchart paper they express with ease or difficulty and ask participants to rank or pin them in the appropriate column on the flipchart.

2. For example, “Put number one (1) next to the feeling you find easiest to express and put number five (5) next to the feeling you find hardest to express.” When participants have finished ranking their feelings, count all the grades in each column and write the total at the bottom of each column (see example).
3. Concluding that - as a group, the easiest to express is the feeling with the smallest sum, and the hardest is the one with the largest sum.

### NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

If you are working with a mixed group of young men and women, prepare two flipchart papers with five columns of feelings written on each paper, and let the young men rank their feelings on one flipchart and the young women on the other. Add up the scores in each column on both flipcharts and compare the differences with the participants.

Use the following questions to start the discussion:

- Did you discover anything new about yourself from this activity?
- Why do some people find it easier to show some feelings and suppress others?
- What are the consequences of repressing feelings?
- Are there differences in the way men and women express their feelings? What are the differences?
- Why do men and women express their feelings in different ways? How do peers, family, community, media, etc., influence how men and women express feelings?
- How does the way we express our feelings affect our relationships with other people (partners, family, friends, etc.)?
- Is it easier or harder to express certain feelings towards peers? Towards family? Towards intimate partners?



- Why are feelings important? Give examples, if necessary: Fear helps us in dangerous situations; anger helps us defend ourselves. Also, ask participants to give some examples.
- What do you think, in what way can more openly expressing your feelings affect your well-being or your relationships with other people (romantic partners, family, friends, etc.)?
- What can you do to express your feelings more openly? How can you be more flexible in expressing what you feel?

## CLOSING

Emotions can be perceived as a type of energy that enables you to recognise and address what is oppressing or troubling you. Various emotions are essentially reflections of different needs, and it is beneficial to learn how to navigate and manage all your emotions as they arise in your life. Expressing your emotions in a way that doesn't harm others contributes to your individual strength and enhances your ability to connect with the world around you. The expression of emotions varies from person to person, but it's crucial to acknowledge certain tendencies, particularly influenced by how boys are raised. For instance, societal norms often encourage young men to conceal feelings of fear, sadness, and even kindness, while sometimes channeling their anger into violent expressions. While individuals are not accountable for experiencing specific emotions, they are responsible for how they choose to act on those emotions. It is essential to distinguish between the experience of emotions and the actions taken in response, finding constructive forms of expression that avoid harm to oneself or others.

FEAR	LOVE	SADNESS	HAPPINESS	ANGER
(enter the totalsum of grades at the end)	(enter the totalsum of grades at the end)	(enter the totalsum of grades at the end)	(enter the totalsum of grades at the end)	(enter the totalsum of grades at the end)

TABLE 2 – Worksheet for the Express yourself Activity (Status M, 2024).

### SESSION 3

## EMOTIONS AND BODY

---

**OBJECTIVES** To develop emotional vocabulary and to understand and recognise better their own emotions.

---

**DURATION** 1 hour.

---

**MATERIALS**

- Large paper (preferably a paper roll);
- Markers and drawing materials.

---

### DESCRIPTION

- Participants are paired up and their first task is to lay on a piece of paper that is cut to their size. Their pair must draw their shape on that paper.
- After each participant has their shape drawn, they each must find a place in the room where they can draw. The participants must draw different emotions as to where in the body they feel them. The facilitators job is to tell and describe emotions, one by one to the participants so that they can draw them.
- Give the participants enough time between each emotion so that they have enough time to think about those emotions and their influence on them.
- Use the six universal emotions (happiness, fear, sadness, anger, surprise, disgust), as well as other that you deem important for your group (such as anxiety, love, joy...).
- After all drawings are finished, each participant will be asked to present their drawings and explain how they experience each emotion.

- Let them find similarities between each other's drawings. Lead them through a discussion on which of those emotions has the most influence on them, and how do they cope with them. Also explain to them that the connection between emotions and our biology, as well as the fact that some emotions that "take control" of our bodies are evolutionary more important as they served a purpose in our survival (like fear). Also, that all emotions are perfectly natural and there are no right or wrong emotions or a right or wrong way to feel, only that we all feel them.

## SESSION 4

# WHAT TO DO WHEN I'M ANGRY?

---

**OBJECTIVES** To learn how to express anger and rage without using violence.

---

**DURATION** 45 minutes.

---

**MATERIALS**

- Flipchart paper;
- Markers.

---

### DESCRIPTION

This simple exercise is based mostly on discussion.

### DEVELOPMENT:

1. Participants are first invited to discuss how do they experience anger and what do they think its purpose is.
2. The discussion is turned to how do they react when they are angry, with providing examples of situations where they were angry and reacted in those ways.
3. All their reactions are then written on one side (left) of the flip-chart paper in a column as “how do I react when I’m angry”.
4. After that, they are invited to explain what the consequences of their reactions in those situations were and to reflect on them.
5. Direct them to think of other ways those situations could have been solved and their anger expressed. Then write the other column “How can I express my anger?” on the other side of the flip-chart paper.
6. Let them choose from their reactions, and previous ideas what are more appropriate ways of anger expression that doesn't hurt

themselves or others. Provide them with a few examples and ideas as well.

7. In the end you have a created poster that they can take a picture of or leave in their collective dormitory so that they can remind themselves of ways to regulate that they haven't thought about.

## SESSION 5

# STEPPING INTO CREATIVE WRITING

---

### OBJECTIVES

To empower participants to express themselves through writing, allowing them to explore their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a supportive and guided setting.

---

### DURATION

1h15.

---

### MATERIALS

- Papers;
  - Pens.
- 

### DESCRIPTION

The activity is designed for absolute beginners, specifically individuals with no prior experience in creative writing. Participants with no background in creative writing can actively engage in the process and contribute to the creation of a final product – a short poem.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. The workshop consists of brief written tasks, facilitated using props such as message-bearing pencils, storytelling dice, photographs, and everyday objects.
2. The workshop employs these props and tasks to stimulate participants' imagination, motivate collaboration through group and pair work, and teach the fundamentals of literary text creation through play and brainstorming – focusing on characters, character characterization, setting, plot, and resolution. Given the emphasis on group work and collaboration, even individuals who are not literate can participate in the workshop.
3. The task is to write a poem that emerges from small pieces, which

participants should write following the facilitator's instructions (such as my greatest success and my greatest fear).

4. Give participants the support throughout the activity with ideas and guidance.
5. When participants are done with their tasks invite them to share what they have written.
6. The session concludes with a reflection on the creative journey.



## SESSION 6

# STEPPING INTO CREATIVE WRITING 2

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### OBJECTIVES

To empower participants to express themselves through writing, allowing them to explore their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a supportive and guided setting.

---

### DURATION

1h15.

---

### MATERIALS

- Papers;
  - Pens.
- 

### DESCRIPTION

The activity is designed for absolute beginners, specifically individuals with no prior experience in creative writing. Participants with no background in creative writing can actively engage in the process and contribute to the creation of a final product – a short poem.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. The workshop consists of brief written tasks, facilitated using props such as message-bearing pencils, storytelling dice, photographs, and everyday objects. The workshop employs these props and tasks to stimulate participants' imagination, motivate collaboration through group and pair work, and teach the fundamentals of literary text creation through play and brainstorming – focusing on characters, character characterization, setting, plot, and resolution. Given the emphasis on group work and collaboration, even individuals who are not literate can participate in the workshop.
2. The task is to write a poem that emerges from small pieces, which participants should write following the facilitator's in-

structions, to write which colours do they see, choose one colour, to what that colour reminds them off and what they feel when they see that colour.

3. When participants are done with their tasks invite them to share what they have written.
4. The session concludes with a reflection on the creative journey.

## SESSION 7A

# MEN, GENDER AND CARE: WORKSHOP WITH BOYS

---

**OBJECTIVES** To raise the level of awareness about how young men are brought up and the health risks they face.

---

**DURATION** 45 min.

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**MATERIALS** A4 sheets of paper.

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### DESCRIPTION

This activity is inspired by Program M.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Move all chairs and tables to the edge of the room, stick A4 paper with the word 'Women' written on it on one wall, and stick A4 paper with the word 'Men' written on it on the opposite wall.
2. Explain to the group that you will read a series of questions and that there are four possible answers to each question: men, women, both or I don't know.
3. Ask the group to position themselves inside the room, after each question has been read out, in the direction of the answer they think is correct. If they think the correct answer is women, go to the side where the paper with the word 'Women' is displayed, if they think the correct answer is 'Men', stand on the side where the paper with the word 'Men' is displayed, if they think the answer is both women and men, or if they do not know the answer, go to the middle.
4. After each question has been read out, when everyone is positioned in the room, ask at least one person from each group for their opinion on why they sided with a particular answer, or why

they think that answer is the one. Explain that people can have different opinions based on their ideas or previous experiences and emphasise that is normal to have different opinions.

**5.** Read the questions:

- Who lives shorter?
- Who is more likely to die as a murder victim?
- Who is more likely to die in a car accident?
- Who is more likely to commit suicide?
- Who is more likely to consume alcohol and get drunk?
- Who is more likely to die because of an overdose (excessive use of narcotics)?
- Who is less likely to seek medical help?

**6.** After reading all the questions and commenting on the answers, explain to them that the correct answer to each question is 'men'. Go through each question individually and present the statistics listed in the additional material. Use the following questions to discuss:

- How is it that men die more often in car accidents?
- Why do you think men care less about their health?
- Do you see the above patterns of risky behaviour among men in your environment?
- What is the connection between these risks and the way young men socialize? (You can remind them of the previous discussion and the messages that girls and boys hear while growing up)
- What can you do to reduce the risks in your lives?

## CLOSING

Conclude this activity with the following ideas – Many male deaths stem from the self-destructive lifestyles that many men lead. Globally, men face societal pressures that push them towards certain behaviours, including a tendency to take risks, engage in more relationships, and exhibit aggression or violence in their interactions - actions that pose risks to themselves and their partners. It is crucial for young men to critically assess their lifestyles and risk-taking behaviours. While some may have grown up with the expectation of being confident and not worrying about health, it's important to recognise the significance of openly discussing problems and seeking support to guard against negative health outcomes like substance abuse, unsafe sexual practices, and a propensity for violence. By challenging these norms through critical thinking, men can realize that health is not exclusively a concern for women; instead, it is essential for men to prioritize their well-being and learn how to take better care of themselves.

## SESSION 7B

# PROTECT THE SEX: QUIZ ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH – WORKSHOP WITH GIRLS

---

### OBJECTIVES

To provide participants with comprehensive and accurate information about sexual and reproductive health.

---

### DURATION

45 min.

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### MATERIALS

- Questions and answers;
  - Reward (snacks).
- 

### DESCRIPTION

Notify the participants that you will be conducting a quiz, and the winner will receive a prize. Ensure the prize is something they can share with other participants, such as snacks.

### DEVELOPMENT:

1. Inform the participants that to answer a question, they must raise their hand. The person who first raises their hand will answer first. They can respond to the question once it has been read.
2. For each provided answer, inquire about the reasoning behind their response and where they acquired the information. Create space for discussion.
3. Pose the following questions:
  - What is the clitoris?
  - What does a gynaecological exam look like?
  - How long can menstruation last?

- How to protect oneself from unwanted pregnancy?
- It is impossible to get pregnant if the man interrupts sexual intercourse before ejaculation. (True/False)
- Only individuals with multiple partners can get sexually transmitted diseases. (True/False)
- The first gynaecological exam is performed when you first engage in sexual intercourse. (True/False)
- Birth control pills are the safest method of protection against unwanted pregnancy. (True/False)
- It is normal for a man to sometimes be unable to achieve an erection. (True/False)
- Protection from sexually transmitted diseases is possible only with a condom. (True/False)

4. During the discussion, share the correct answers:

- The clitoris is a small organ located above the vaginal opening in women. It plays a crucial role in female sexual arousal, enlarging and becoming sensitive during stimulation.
- A gynaecological exam should be scheduled during menstruation. It is advisable to wear comfortable clothing, preferably a skirt for ease of movement from the changing area to the gynaecological table. The exam typically involves the examination of a woman's internal reproductive organs, including the cervix, swab collection, palpation of the ovaries and uterus, and sometimes the use of a speculum to open the vagina for a better view.
- Menstruation usually lasts from 2 to 7 days, but this can vary among women.
- There are several methods of protection against unwanted pregnancy, including birth control pills, condoms, the

female condom (femidom), diaphragm and other forms of contraception.

- False. Even before ejaculation, sperm may be present in semen, increasing the risk of pregnancy.
- False. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) can be transmitted even with individuals who have only one sexual partner. Using condoms reduces the risk of STDs.
- False. The first gynaecological exam is recommended during adolescence to provide additional information about the exam, prevention and other sexual health advice. It is also advisable to go for an exam after the first sexual intercourse, if menstruation is irregular or if there are suspicions of infection.
- False. While effective when used correctly, no method is entirely risk-free. Birth control pills are one of the safest methods when used correctly. The typical effectiveness rate of birth control pills can be higher than 99%, but it is crucial to take them daily at the same time.
- True. Occasional erection problems are not uncommon and usually not a cause for concern. However, if problems become frequent, it may be useful to consult a doctor.
- False. While condoms provide effective protection, other methods and regular medical check-ups are essential for maintaining sexual health.



## SESSION 8

# GENDER WORD RACE

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### OBJECTIVES

To understand the difference between sex and gender, to think critically about gender roles and the socialization of men and women and to identify the factors that influence gender roles.

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### DURATION

1 hour.

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### MATERIALS

- Two flip chart papers;
  - Adhesive tape;
  - Coloured markers;
  - Post-it notes.
- 

### DESCRIPTION

The suggested activity involves a word race, adapted from the Program Y+ and EquiTeens program and inspired by the IMAGINE project.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Remove all chairs and tables to free up front and rear space for the two groups.
2. Stick flip chart papers on the front wall and label them with post-it notes, each one with one word 'Man' and 'Woman'.
3. Draw a large circle in the middle of the paper below the post-it note with the word Man. Draw a square in the middle of the paper below the Woman post-it note.
4. The suggestion is to use a pink or red marker to write the word man, and a black or blue marker to write the word woman.

5. At 1-2 meters from the wall on the floor, stick the tape that will mark the start.
6. Invite group 1 to line up in front of the flipchart with the word 'Woman', and invite group 2 to line up in front of the flipchart with the word 'Man'.
7. Before starting the game, emphasise to the participants to take care of themselves, others and the space, so as not to injure themselves or others and damage the space. Emphasize that if someone does not want to participate, that's ok, but invite them to give their comments or opinions.
8. Ask participants to write terms related to the word 'man' or 'woman' within the circle or square. Set the timer to 90 seconds. Tell participants that they have 90 seconds to alternately write the word on a piece of paper, then add a pencil to the person behind them and go to the back of the line.
9. Let the participants know that no word is forbidden, they just need to write the first thing that comes to mind. The team with the most different (i.e., non-duplicate) words wins.
10. If during the game you notice that the participants have a great focus on only one aspect of a woman's or man's life, help them during the game by giving them instructions to write something related to appearance or dress or behavior or occupation, etc.
11. After the race, switch the post-it notes.
12. Take a few minutes to review the list of participants. Go through some of the words and ask the following questions:
  - What do you notice when you look at the words on the men's list? Are there words that only apply to men?
  - What do you notice when you look at the words on the women's list? Are there words that only apply to women?
  - What is the difference between lists for men and lists for women? Why are some words on one side and not on the other?

- 13.** After going through all the words on the lists, explain that **sex is a biological construct** - people are born with male or female reproductive organs and hormones. **Gender represents the way we are socialised** – that is, the way attitudes, behaviour and expectations are formed based on what society associates with women or men. Explain to the participants that there are people who are intersex and are not unambiguously men or women by birth, and that there are people (transgender people) whose gender differs from the gender attributed to them at birth.
- Are there men who match all the words (characteristics and qualities) that are written on the flip chart for men? And, are there women who match all the words on the women’s flip chart?
  - What leads to such divisions?
  - Do you think men and women were raised the same way? What messages do boys hear growing up, and what messages do girls hear growing up?
- 14.** Emphasize that these stereotypes can be harmful to the individual as well as to society as a whole. This puts us in a limited framework that can lead to greater problems (lack of emotion, mental health problems, exclusion).
- 15.** Ask them a question: what happens if a man is not something on the list? For example, if a man is not brave, what is he called? Write those swear words and behaviours in a different colour outside the box.
- 16.** Do the same with the circle: What happens if a woman is not something written on the list? Write those swear words and behaviours in a different colour outside of the box.
- 17.** Explain that violence, both physical and psychological, has a role to the pressure us to conform to gender norms.

## CLOSING

Conclude the workshop by emphasising the idea that we receive messages from our families, the media and society about how we should behave as men and how we should treat women and other men. It is important to realise that, although there are differences between men and women, many of these differences have only been created by society and are not an integral part of our nature or biological complex. However, these differences have a fundamental impact on the daily lives of men and women and the relationships between them.

## SESSION 9

# ACT LIKE A WOMAN, ACT LIKE A MAN

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**OBJECTIVES** To understand how gender norms affect the lives of men and women.

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**DURATION** 45 min.

---

**MATERIALS**

- Flipchart papers;
- Markers.

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### DESCRIPTION

Remind the participants that during the previous workshops you talked about the differences between sex and gender. Gender as a set of unwritten social rules or socially expected norms about the roles, responsibilities and behaviour of men and women. Explain how the next workshop will open up a conversation about what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman and how to learn and adopt these rules.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Divide the participants into two smaller groups, each assigned a flipchart paper with titles like 'Act Like a Woman' or 'Act Like a Man'.
2. The task for each group is to discuss and record social expectations, detailing what women, girls, men and boys typically hear and what is expected of them in terms of behaviour, feelings and expressions.
3. After completing the task, the facilitator encourages a comparison between what was written for boys and men, as well as girls and women. Questions are posed to the participants:

- What are the similarities and differences?
- Which messages could potentially be harmful, and why?
- What other messages or beliefs might exist in society that reinforce stereotypes about men and women? How can these messages impact individuals?
- How do stereotypes about gender roles affect the mental health of men and women? How can societal pressure to adhere to certain roles contribute to stress?
- Can you provide examples of specific situations where women or men felt constrained by gender expectations? How did these situations impact their lives and relationships?
- How do the media shape and perpetuate stereotypes about men and women? What responsibilities do the media have in promoting gender equality?

### CLOSING

To comprehend how societal standards dictate distinct behavioural expectations for men and women, one must acknowledge the existence of “gender norms.” These norms delineate what is deemed typical or expected in terms of thoughts, emotions, and behaviours for men and women. However, adherence to these norms, as explored in subsequent activities, can frequently restrict individuals within the confines of ‘Act like a man’ or ‘Act like a woman’ frameworks, impacting their decision-making, health and relationships.

## SESSION 10

# WHAT KIND OF A MAN/WOMAN DO I WANT TO BE?

---

**OBJECTIVES** To set goals for personal growth as well as gender deconstruction.

---

**DURATION** 1 hour.

---

**MATERIALS**

- Papers;
- Markers.

---

### DESCRIPTION

Participants are separated to have their own space and are given the objective to write and/or draw the ideal version of a man/woman they want to become.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Each participant can describe or draw all the aspects of the version they want to become, from the physical to the psychological and social, as well as the roles in life they want to occupy.
2. If they are struggling to think about that, experience showed that some respond better to a variation in the objective as what kind of father/mother they want to be to their future kids.
3. After every participant finishes their work, they are asked to present it to the entire group.
4. The discussion is then directed to the differences between their presentations to show a wide variety of gender expressions. Ask them as well if there is anything they wrote because they thought it was expected of them as men or women, and if there is anything they would have written/drawn if they didn't care what their surroundings thought.

**Notes for facilitators:**

Some of the youth that feel the need to prove themselves to their peers, especially in correctional facilities, write traits that can be criminal behaviour or toxic traits. Try to guide them with additional questions to make them question their own authenticity in writing those. Do not feel discouraged if they stick to it.



## SESSION 11

# TREE OF RESILIENCE ACTIVITY

---

**OBJECTIVES** To self-discover personal resilience traits.

---

**DURATION** 1h15 min.

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**MATERIALS**

- Paper;
- Drawing materials;
- Source of music (speaker, laptop, mobile phone...).

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### DESCRIPTION

Tell the participants to find somewhere in the room where they feel and sit comfortably. Make them focus on their breathing with instructions to slow it down and to take deeper breaths. Then tell them to either close their eyes or find a spot where they will focus their vision so that they don't get distracted.

### DEVELOPMENT:

1. Talk them through a guided imagination that goes like this: "You are taking a stroll through nature and you find yourself in a dead place where it seems as though a catastrophe happened. It seems as though there used to be a huge forest here, but now it's all rotten, empty and dying. As you walk through this disastrous place, you come across a unique tree that, despite its surroundings, is alive and thriving. You come close to the tree and try to see its leaves, its trunk and its roots. Imagine as many details as you can."
2. After that, invite them to slowly open their eyes, and take a sheet of paper and find a place to sit down. Their goal is to draw this tree.

3. At this point play some instrumental music to help them concentrate. Let them draw for as long as they need, up to around half an hour (depending on the size of the group).
4. Once everyone has finished their drawings, let them present their trees one by one. Once a participant has presented their tree, guide them with additional questions such as:
  - How old is your tree?
  - Is it a specific tree or did you make it up?
  - Does it have fruit, flowers? Is it surrounded by animals?
  - How deep are its roots?
5. Also let other participants get involved with their own questions or observations. Once everyone has finished with their presentation, explain to them the concept of resilience (simple definition: psychological trait that helps us to keep going through difficult times) and lead them through a link between their own resilience and the tree they drew. You can also let them choose the tree they most identify with and which is not their own.

## SESSION 12

# DOODLE WITH STYLE

---

**OBJECTIVES** To foster creativity, to encourage collaboration to empower participants and to celebrate their unique artistic voices.

---

**DURATION** 1h15 min.

---

**MATERIALS**

- Papers with creative ideas;
- A4 papers;
- Pencils;
- Coloured pencils;
- Markers.

---

### DESCRIPTION

Participants are designing unique drawings for printing on t-shirts and hoodies.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Inform participants to draw their inspiration from a hat filled with intriguing ideas. Each participant randomly selects a paper with a description of a whimsical concept, such as an elephant playing drums or a giraffe on a skateboard.
2. Participants should bring their imagination to life on paper and add their own elements to it. Encourage the participants to play with colours, shapes, and personal styles.
3. Provide guidance and assistance, ensuring participants feel supported in translating their ideas into visually appealing doodles. The emphasis is on self-expression and embracing

the uniqueness of each creation.

4. As the doodles take shape, participants have the opportunity to share their progress with one another.
5. Towards the end of the activity, participants refine their doodles, ensuring they are print-ready for transfer onto t-shirts and hoodies. Encourage the participants to share their drawings with the rest of the group.
6. The session concludes with a reflection on the creative journey. The final designs are collected and prepared for printing on t-shirts and hoodies, transforming the youth's imaginative doodles into wearable art that they can proudly showcase.

## SESSION 13

# DOODLE WITH STYLE 2

---

**OBJECTIVES** To foster creativity, to encourage collaboration to empower participants and to celebrate their unique artistic voices.

---

**DURATION** 1h15 min.

---

**MATERIALS**

- A4 papers;
- Pencils;
- Coloured pencils;
- Markers.

---

### DESCRIPTION

Participants are designing unique drawings for printing on t-shirts and hoodies. Inform participants to draw their inspiration from their superpowers.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. The task is to create a person with the superpower they have or the superpower they wish to have. Remind the participants of the superpowers they have, what they like to do, what they are good at (giving support to a friend or cooking etc.).
2. Encourage the participants to play with colours, shapes, and personal styles. Provide guidance and assistance, ensuring participants feel supported in translating their ideas into visually appealing doodles. The emphasis is on self-expression and embracing the uniqueness of each creation.
3. As the doodles take shape, participants have the opportunity to

share their progress with one another.

4. Towards the end of the activity, participants refine their doodles, ensuring they are print-ready for transfer onto t-shirts and hoodies. Encourage the participants to share their drawings with the rest of the group.
5. The session concludes with a reflection on the creative journey. The final designs are collected and prepared for printing on t-shirts and hoodies, transforming the youth's imaginative doodles into wearable art that they can proudly showcase.

## SESSION 14

# FAN OF GRATITUDE ACTIVITY

---

**OBJECTIVES** To foster group cohesion and to reflect on positive and strong personal resources.

---

**DURATION** 1 hour.

---

**MATERIALS**

- Paper;
- Pens.

---

### DESCRIPTION

Each participant gets a piece of paper and has to write their name on the bottom of the page. Their objective is to pass the paper around in a circle and write personality traits and other things that they admire about the person whose name is on the bottom.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. After writing their statement or a short paragraph, they need to fold the paper in the part they wrote, so that the next person can't see what the previous person wrote. This way, if some characteristics appear several times, the person can know it's not just because others have copied from each other, rather because it is something that several people admire.
2. In addition, it is important to emphasise that participants should only write positive traits that they admire, not anything offensive or insulting.
3. The activity ends when each person receives the paper with their name on it. The final product should look like a fan with all the folds.
4. Each person is then invited to share the contents of their fans with the group, and reflect on how they feel when reading them, as well as whether they think they are true.

## CLOSING ACTIVITY

# REFLECTION & RELEASE

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### OBJECTIVES

To provide participants with an opportunity for reflection on the session, express their thoughts and contribute to shaping future programs, to create a supportive and open environment.

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### DURATION

10 - 15 min.

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### MATERIALS

- Post-it notes;
  - Marker pens.
- 

### DESCRIPTION

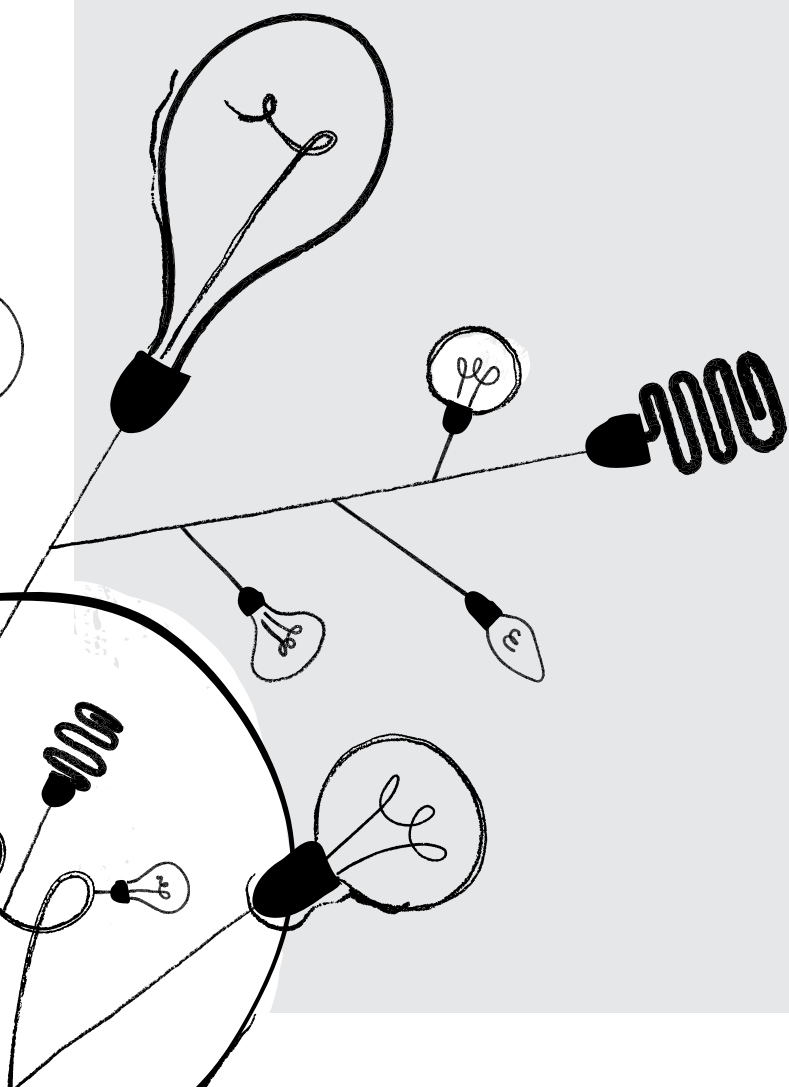
Facilitators explain the purpose of the closing activity: to reflect on the session and contribute feedback for continuous improvement.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Participants are given two post-it notes and markers, one for positive feedback and one for negative feedback;
2. They are asked to reflect individually on what they liked about the session and what they would like to keep (positive feedback), as well as aspects they didn't like (negative feedback).
3. Participants who feel comfortable are invited to share what they have written on the positive feedback post-it note. This fosters a sense of appreciation and celebration within the group.
4. For the negative feedback post-it notes, participants are invited to crumple them up and throw them into a designated space in the centre. Explain that this symbolic act represents letting go of aspects they didn't enjoy or want to change, ensuring that it is taken away from them and the institution.



5. The facilitators thank the participants for their openness and valuable feedback. Emphasise that constructive feedback is essential for improvement and reassure participants that their voices matter.



**#7.2**

**X-MEN SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES  
WITH YOUTH AT RISK IN  
NATIONAL CONTEXTS: PORTUGAL**

Marta Mascarenhas

[Centre for Social Studies/Observatory on Masculinities.pt]

## Background for the intervention

Based on the results of the diagnostic study carried out in the first year of the project (2022), namely with reference to young people's responses the survey, this intervention in the Youth Detention Centres in 2023 will aim to correlate these results and understand whether these youngsters are more inside the Masculinity Box (Manbox, which served as basis for this study), i.e., presenting stricter gender norms, or more outside the Box. It also aims to understand:

- Are those who are more 'outside the box' (of masculinities) healthier, happier, more equitable?
- Have those who are more 'inside the box' (of masculinities) been victims of violence at home or in other contexts during their socialisation process?

This intervention will serve, on the one hand, to question what it means to be a man for these young boys, in other words, to get to know their own concepts of masculinity, particularly with regard to the use of violence, misogyny and homophobia.

On the other hand, the intervention will be structured around the idea of Care and Empathy as essential traits for the construction of healthy and equitable masculinities, since the data collected so far attests to the practically unanimous recognition of the importance

of the paternal role in their children's lives (despite the fact that the majority had not lived with or even know their fathers).

The main thread of this intervention is based on the idea of mutants who, at the stage of development these young people find themselves, possess and aspire to superpowers which, when mobilised together, allow them to build something positive.

The main goal is to show them that it is possible to promote positive references about masculinities (and femininities), allowing them to think about the present and project a future that breaks the often intergenerational cycles of violence. Through reflection groups on gender norms, we intend to deepen the recognition of capacities and qualities often silenced and muffled by stereotypes.

It is essential to establish a positive partnership with the youth detention centres' management teams, fully involving them on the implementation process, which will not only allow the facilitating team to get a better understanding of the centre's daily life, but also as to be able to guarantee that the sessions can take place without the presence of elements from outside the group, which could make it impossible to establish bonds of trust and unbiased sharing for fear of consequences.

### **Structure and duration of the X-MEN sessions**

- 4 sessions, of 3 hours each, on alternate or consecutive days, according to the following themes:
  - Gender Stereotypes;
  - Masculinities;
  - Conflict and non-violence;
  - Empathy and Care.

- Each session was structured in 2 blocks of 1h30, with a 10-minute break, and the timetable had been agreed with each youth detention centre;
- All sessions started with a short check-in moment and an ice-breaker, avoiding the use of *powerpoints* during the sessions, which were structured around very practical activities that focus on these young people, what they think and what we think together with them;
- Similarly, all the workshops ended with a brief final evaluation moment in order to give the young people a chance to talk about how they felt during the workshop and to identify aspects for improvement, as well as their views on what worked well and what might not have worked in the proposed activities;
- **Check-in phase at the beginning of each workshop:** It is important to begin each workshop with a welcome to the group and questions about the participants' day-to-day/week. This moment allows for the sharing of thoughts, experiences and comments that have arisen following the previous workshops. It also allows the facilitating team to get to know the mood of the group and make adjustments when necessary;

### Notes for facilitators:

In order to avoid shortening the workshops, make sure that this part does not take too much time. Once the group is comfortable and relaxed, move on to the activities. Given the interactive format of the workshops, it is not uncommon for this moment to lead to discussions of relevant topics within the group.

- It is advisable to have a back-up activity in case you need to occupy any dead time;
- For each session, a field diary should be completed after a team meeting following the session to gather the collective team records as well as the group impressions. This meeting will also be useful to prepare for and introduce possible adjustments for the following session.
- Another aspect that should be considered as contributing to the potential success of the session is the Spatial layout: having a cosy, private space that guarantees both confidentiality for the young people to share and the conditions for carrying out the dynamics;
- When planning activities, it is very important to take into account the spaces where these activities will take place, as well as any restrictions on what can be brought into the institution. In youth detention centres in Portugal, for example, mobile phones are not allowed inside the centres, and special care should be taken with the type of materials that are made available to young people, given the risk of them being used for violent purposes or as leverage against other young people in the centres.

## **X-MEN FACILITATION TEAMS**

Since there are sessions that will take place simultaneously in different ECs, there is a need to ensure several teams, ideally comprising:

- Person to observe and elaborate the basis of the Field Diary (which will be completed, at the end of each day/session, by the pair responsible for the session);
- Facilitating Team, preferably with 1 man and 1 woman.

### **Facilitators + Observers who implemented the X-MEN Methodology at Portuguese Youth Detention Centres in 2023:**

- Flávio Gonçalves
- Ricardo Mellado Higuera
- Haydée Caruso
- Tatiana Moura
- Joana Torres
- Tiago Rolino
- Marta Mascarenhas





## **PROGRAMMING OF THE X-MEN SESSIONS**

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# SESSION 1 : GENDER NORMS AND STEREOTYPES

## [3 HOURS]

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### BLOCK 1 (1H30)

#### 1.CHECK-IN TIME

#### 2. PRESENTATION

### BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT:

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#### OBJECTIVES

To present the objectives of the X-MEN Project in a simple and clear way (in accessible language), centred on the structure of the sessions (days and hours), without delving into the content, and to present the research team.

---

#### DURATION

10 minutes.

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#### DESCRIPTION:

Idea of Mutants and Superpowers - We believe that all people have some kind of superpower or the ability to have one, so we will seek, over the next 4 days, to build something together from the potential and abilities of each.

### 3. ICEBREAKER

## TWO TRUTHS AND ONE LIE<sup>9</sup>

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**OBJECTIVES** To create a welcoming environment for the group participants to get to know each other better.

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**DURATION** 10 minutes.

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### DESCRIPTION

- Ask everyone, including the facilitating team, to think of three statements about themselves, two truths and one lie.
- Starting with the team of facilitators, ask each person to share their statements with the rest of the group.
- After each sharing, ask the group to vote on which statement they think is false. After the vote, ask the participant to reveal which statement was false. Then pass it on to the next participant, and so on.

### 4. ACTIVITY

## THE POWER OF WORDS

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**OBJECTIVES** To encourage dialogue based on respect and self-reflection; to define the rules of the group sessions.

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**DURATION** 40 minutes.

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9 Based on the EQUI-X Manual (Santos & Rolino, 2019, pp. 59 – 60).

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**MATERIALS**

- A small mirror;
  - Commitments' Sheet or flipchart;
  - Markers.
- 

**DESCRIPTION**

Ask the participants to sit in a circle. Explain the history of the power of words.

**DEVELOPMENT:**

1. The idea of the power of the word began with the Celts, who used this technique during their ceremonies. At the end of the day, when groups of men and women would sit in a circle to discuss some disagreement, to criticize something they did not like or even to give advice or explain traditions to the younger members, they would use a mirror to represent the power of the leader, the power of the head of the group. When someone picked up this mirror, it was a signal for the other people in the group to be quiet and to listen to their words. When another person wanted to speak, they would ask permission to hold the mirror and then they would have the recognition of the others to speak. Symbolically, passing the mirror meant passing the word and the right to be heard to the other people in the group.
2. The object was a mirror because it had the symbolic power that the one speaking could look at himself/herself and recognise him/herself while speaking. Thus, if he/she criticized someone else, he/she could see him/herself while criticizing and perhaps recognise that he/she could also have been wrong; if he/she gave a compliment, or advice, he/she could see in him/herself the beneficial effects of those words; if he/she told a story or passed on a tradition, he/she could observe that he/she was history in motion and an important piece in the group.
3. Before passing the mirror to someone else, ask the participants

to think for a few minutes about rules/commitments<sup>10</sup> that they feel will be important for the group in the X-MEN sessions.

4. Then pass the mirror to anyone who wants to share a rule/commitment, explaining that the person holding the mirror has the power at that moment to set one, but should look at himself/herself and reflect if he/she is capable of following it. Whenever someone wants to intervene, he/she should ask for the mirror.
5. Write down all the rules/commitments on the *flipchart*, or ask the group to write them down on the flipchart as they come up. The facilitating team can suggest some rules, if necessary, for the group's consideration.
6. At the end, ask everybody if they agree with the chosen commitments and, if so, to stand up and sign the Commitments' sheet.

**Notes for facilitators:**

- Try to keep the rules posted so that participants can look at them throughout the sessions. In discussions on more sensitive or controversial topics, the mirror/symbol can be used again to ensure that discussions take place in a respectful manner;
- Explore conflict now as a positive thing, without focussing on criticism, but rather on finding a consensus that is important to the group;
- Allow time for the activity, to make the most of young people's ideas.

---

10 Although we can talk about 'rules' in this activity, in the Youth Detention Centres we chose the term 'commitments', since these are highly hierarchical contexts in which these young people are constantly asked to comply with a wide range of rules for all kinds of daily activities. The choice to talk about compromises emphasises the negotiating aspect of this agreement, rather than its imposing nature.

## 5. ACTIVITY

# BOX OF SUPERPOWERS

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**OBJECTIVES** To promote reflection on one's own virtues and to project which qualities/capacities one would like to have in the future.

---

**DURATION** 30 minutes.

---

**MATERIALS**

- Post-it notes in various colours;
- Superpowers box;
- Pens.

---

### DESCRIPTION

Each person in the room will be invited to write and put inside the box coloured post-it notes without identifying themselves:

- Yellow post-it note for the superpowers they have;
- Green post-it note for the superpowers they wish they had.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Each participant can write several powers (one in each post-it note);
2. Explain that the box will be safely saved and will be resumed on the last session.

#### Notes for facilitators:

In this activity, the participants should be assured that the post-it notes will not be identified and that no one will read them at that time or without their consent.

## 6. BACK-UP ACTIVITY

# POWER RACE ACTIVITY (AIMED AT GENDER STEREOTYPES)<sup>11</sup>

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### OBJECTIVES

- Explore why the path is easier for white men;
  - Understand how gender, sexuality, racial origin, ethnicity and other factors influence the amount of power people have over others in society and how power can be used to restrict some people's progress in life.
- 

### DURATION

30 minutes.

---

### MATERIALS

- Set of character cards (check below Notes for Facilitators) + bag;
  - A room or open space large enough for participants to do the Power Race;
  - Handout for participants on 'Understanding Power' (optional).
- 

### DESCRIPTION

Listed below are the characters who will take part in the Power Race, as mentioned in the Materials section. These characters have been chosen to show participants the effects of a range of situations in which certain people have power over others, including patriarchy (based on gender), economic exploitation (linked to class), racism, xenophobia (hatred of foreigners), as well as discrimination based on disability. Adapt this set of characters to reflect the realities of oppressive 'power over' systems in your context.

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11 Based on the EQUI-X Manual (Santos & Rolino, 2019, pp. 164 – 168).

### Notes for facilitators:

Sometimes, during this exercise, participants may take more or fewer steps than you would expect. During the activity, do not question them, but take note. If you notice that all the participants are taking a step forward after almost every statement, this is an opportunity to investigate why they think their characters can have the same access to power or resources. It may be important to clarify the rules of the activity and start all over again. If there's a chance, this is a great workshop to be held outdoors.

### CHARACTER CARDS:

White Member of Parliament (MP)	Legalised immigrant woman working in a shoe factory
White MP's wife	Illegal immigrant man delivering parcels
Black businesswoman	Unemployed gay black man
White man working for a businesswoman	Unemployed woman receiving state subsidy
12-year-old girl living in a foster home	10-year-old boy living with a foster family
Wife and mother of 3 in a violent relationship	Physically disabled man
Nurse	Single black woman with 2 jobs
Black doctor	



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## BREAK (10 MINUTES)

If the youngsters are not allowed to leave the room during break time, play instrumental music to create a relaxing atmosphere.

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## BLOCK 2 (1H30)

### 1. ACTIVITY

# PARTICIPATED SCREENING OF THE “INVISIBLE PLAYERS FROM ESPN” VIDEO<sup>12</sup>

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**OBJECTIVES** To make young people confront their own gender stereotypes and to reflect on how boys/men and girls/women are expected to act.

---

**DURATION** 1h30.

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**MATERIALS**

- Flipchart;
- Markers;
- Post-it notes.

---

### DESCRIPTION

The video will be paused after each athlete is presented (before asking people), asking the youth to guess who it is about (facilitator will point on the board). Finally, present the final part of the video, in which the athletes are identified.

### DEVELOPMENT

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<sup>12</sup> Video on gender prejudices concerning sports. Available at: [espnW Brasil - Invisible Players \(youtube.com\) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoZrZ7qPqio](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoZrZ7qPqio)

1. Discussion with the young people on Gender Stereotypes triggered by the realisation, generated by the video, that we associate sporting success with a male athlete profile: Why did both the people in the video and you immediately assume that these athletes were men?
2. Propose to the young people to think about what it means to be a real man/woman and how they behave + how society describes what it is to be a real man and write on post-it notes.
3. Invite the young people to go and put their descriptions on the Flipchart with the following configuration:

	What does it mean to be a <b>real man</b> ? How do they behave?	What does it mean to be a <b>real woman</b> ? How do they behave?
<b>As you see</b> M/W		
<b>How society sees</b> M/W		

4. If there are many post-it notes, propose to the young people to group the behaviours/descriptions by thematic areas (e.g. - image, personal relations).

#### **Notes for facilitators:**

Start the discussion by drawing on the results of the video and exploring with the youngsters what they have written in the post-it notes. When proposing that the participants think about what it means to be a man/woman, it works well, if they have difficulty exploring this question, to get them to reflect on their attitudes as brothers and sisters – as carers of their sisters, which also allows facilitators to bring in the dimension of care from day one. Ask: ‘What if it was your sister?’ And then extend it to the other women.

## BACK-UP ACTIVITY

# WORKSHOP – VARIOUS WAYS OF BEING A MAN AND A WOMAN<sup>13</sup>

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**OBJECTIVES** To promote reflection on discrimination and the obstacles faced by women and men who do not act according to social and cultural expectations.

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**DURATION** 1 hour.

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**MATERIALS** Copies of the Handout with case studies or newspaper clippings chosen by the facilitation team.

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### DESCRIPTION

Divide the participants into two small groups and distribute to each group the stories of men and women on the handout. Ask the participants to read the case studies aloud with their group. Explain that they will have 20 minutes to discuss the two stories and develop possible endings.

### DEVELOPMENT:

1. Ask each group to share the endings they have created. If the participants like role play, they can act out the stories.
  2. Use the questions below to facilitate discussion about the stories and their similarities to what happens between men and women in their communities.
  3. Support Questions – To stimulate the discussion, the following questions can be used:
    - Do these situations exist in real life?
- 

13 Based on the EQUI-X Manual (Santos & Rolino, 2019, pp. 66 – 69).

- Are there other examples of women in your communities who don't fulfil expectations of how a woman should act or look? What kinds of challenges do these women face?
- Do you think that today the expectations of how a woman should look or act are different from when our mothers or grandmothers were young? If so, in what ways?
- Does a woman face extra challenges or prejudices depending on her social class, race/ethnicity or religion? If so, in what way?
- Are there other examples of men in your communities who don't fulfil the expectations of how a man should be or act? What challenges do they face?
- Are the expectations of how a man should be or act different from those of our parents or grandparents when they were young? parents or grandparents when they were young? If so, in what ways?
- Does a man face challenges or prejudices depending on his social class, ethnicity or religion? If so, in what way?
- What do you think can be done to help promote greater acceptance and respect for the different ways of being and acting as men and women?

## CLOSING ACTIVITY

# JOINT EVALUATION

Emphasise the role of young people in this pilot workshop in order to improve it for young people from other youth detention centres. Round of responses to each of the questions:

- What did you like best/think worked best in today's session (what would you keep from what was done);
- What they would change/what didn't work so well;
- Word of the Day – Each participant will mention a word to summarise the overall impression they were left with/what they felt

### Notes for facilitators:

- Explain one question at a time, reinforcing the message that we want to improve the pilot based on their feedback;
- At the final moment, everyone in the room (including the observer) should gather around the table and, after the young people, also say the word of the day, which will be recorded separately, so that it's a moment shared by everyone;
- The Word of the Day will be used to create a Word Cloud for each day, which will be displayed at the beginning of the following session.

### SPECIFIC NOTES FOR FACILITATORS ON SESSION I

- It is important that the facilitation team does not try to occupy all the time with non-stop activities, but provides the participants with enough time for reflection and sharing. In this sense, facilitators should pay attention to the following aspects:
- avoid trying to fill every silence or distract them while they are thinking about a task;
- not starting the next task before everyone has finished the previous one.
- Since we are dealing with youngsters in a context and a developmental stage in which peer pressure is high and there is a need for constant affirmation, facilitators should:
- Keep an eye on the informal group leaders, trying to create spaces for everyone to participate and not just the more extroverted youngsters;
- Adopt a non-judgemental perspective but not allow discussions to become too relativistic or the argument of cultural or ethnic difference to be mobilised to legitimise rigid or even violent practices (for example, some young people impose themselves by ethnicity);
- Be aware of and manage this leadership, which can manifest itself symbolically in the most diverse ways (for example, the need for the facilitators to remain seated during a session because one of the youngsters insisted on standing to be 'on the same level' as the animators).

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## SESSION 2: MASCULINITIES [3 HOURS]

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### BLOCK 1 (1H30)

#### 1. CHECK-IN TIME

When participants arrive, the word cloud of the previous session is on display.

#### 2. ICEBREAKER

### AGREE OR DISAGREE<sup>14</sup>

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**OBJECTIVES** To examine individual attitudes about gender differences, gender roles and inequalities and to question how individual attitudes about gender affect behaviour.

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**DURATION** 30 minutes.

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**MATERIALS**

- Sheets with “Agree” and “Disagree”;
- Script with statements to be used;
- White tape to put on the floor.

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#### DESCRIPTION:

- Place the sheets with “Agree” and “Disagree” on opposite sides of the room, making sure there is enough space for participants to

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14 *Ibid.* (2019, pp. 112 – 114).

move around.

- Explain to the participants that the activity aims to survey their values and attitudes. It also aims to challenge the way they think about gender roles. In that sense, a set of statements will be read out and that, at the end of each statement, each person should turn to either the sheet that says “I agree” or the one that says “I disagree”. Participants can change their opinion by moving to the other side. They can also choose a neutral position, standing midway between the two options.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Read out the first statement. Ask the participants to position themselves according to their opinion. After everyone has positioned themselves, ask two participants with opposing opinions to explain their choice.
2. The facilitating team should not respond to the statements. However, they should listen to the answers given and look for patterns. For example, do all the boys in the group have the same opinion? And is it contrary to that of the girls? Or are the opinions divided? If there are patterns, share them with the group and encourage the participants to reflect on them.
3. Ask the participants in the middle, if necessary, the reasons for their neutral position. It is a possibility to ask those on the “Agree” and “Disagree” side to try to convince these colleagues.
4. Continue reading the statements one by one and ask the participants to position themselves.

### NOTE

Alternatively, if the room/space allows, you can take some painters’ tape and stick it on the floor, dividing the room in two. Then place the participants on the line, saying that those who agree with the statement can go to the left side of the room, and those who disagree will go



to the right side (or vice-versa, it's your choice). Those who are neutral will stand in the middle, on top of the line.

Statements to be used during the exercise (preferably use phrases based on previous group sharing on gender relations):

- It is easier to be a man than a woman.
- Women are better carers of their children than men.
- The best thing for a child is to have a father and a mother.
- It's OK if a man gets emotional/weepy in public.
- It is OK if a woman/girl has condoms with her.
- Men need sex more than women.
- Men and women want the same things from a relationship.
- If someone questions my manhood/honour, I must defend my reputation, using force if necessary.

**Notes for facilitators:**

As the activity develops, the young people begin to debate their positions, with the aim that they end up changing their minds through discussion among themselves rather than through talking to the facilitators.

### 3. ACTIVITY

## EXHIBITION OF THE JB COMMERCIAL VIDEO<sup>15</sup>

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### OBJECTIVES

To expose young people to a stimulus that reconciles people outside the dominant pattern, in this case transgender individuals, and the importance of family ties in their personal and social acceptance, in order to deconstruct any prejudices in this regard.

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### DURATION

10 minutes

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### MATERIALS

Video.

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### DESCRIPTION

Present the commercial and observe young people's reactions as the video unfolds. Use their reactions as a basis for conversation to understand young people's perceptions.

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### BREAK (10 MINUTES)

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<sup>15</sup> Video available at: J&B - She, un cuento de J&B, English subs ("She, a tale by J&B", Diageo, Xmas, 2022) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOVVgEtuybk>

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## BLOCK 2 (1H30)

### 1. ACTIVITY

# EXHIBITION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE “TEA & CONSENT” VIDEO<sup>16</sup>

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**OBJECTIVES** To explore the importance of consent in established relationships, deconstructing the idea of masculinity based on a relationship of strength/dominance. The aim will be to explore consent itself and not the issue of sexual violence, although this topic can arise and should not be overlooked.

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**DURATION** 30 minutes

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**MATERIALS** Video.

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**DESCRIPTION** Since the video is quite fast, especially the subtitles, if the group has members with reading difficulties (an assessment made by the facilitation team in the previous days), one of the facilitators will read the subtitles as the video is shown.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. After showing the video, try to explore with the young people what they understood from it;
  2. Then ask: In what situations is consent important?
  3. The facilitator writes the situations identified by the young people
- 

16 Video available at: [Tea and Consent - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrXVavnQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrXVavnQ)

on the board;

4. Then link the situations and reflections made with the profile of masculinity, so that the following ideas become clear [even better if they come from the young people themselves]:
  - It's not enough to have a no, there has to be a yes when sexual consent is involved;
  - Explain that it is a criminal offence, but be open to the possibility of confusing situations because it's not always easy to understand boundaries (especially at their stage of development). Emphasise the golden rule in these cases: if in doubt, it's a NO.

## ICEBREAKER

# GAME OF CHAIRS

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### OBJECTIVES

It creates movement and leads young people, in a relaxed way, to take on some behaviours that they might not feel comfortable revealing without exposing them. It makes us realise that many of us have a lot more in common than we thought.

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### DURATION

30 minutes

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### MATERIALS

- Chairs;
  - Facilitators should be prepared to throw in a few statements to change the direction of the activity.
- 

### DESCRIPTION

Chairs are placed in a circle, a little apart, enough for everyone except the facilitator. The facilitator begins the activity by standing in the middle of the circle and explaining that he or she will say a sen-

tence and that all the people who recognise themselves in the sentence must change seats (e.g., all the people who are from football club A; all the people wearing white trainers). When this happens, the person in the middle tries to sit down. The person left standing says the next sentence.

### **DEVELOPMENT**

Given that the initial sentences will be about more innocuous aspects, the facilitator should, during the course of the activity, introduce sentences that allow young people to realise deeper links between them, such as:

- Who gets things off their chest with their friends;
- Who has a gay friend;
- Who has children;
- Who has ever cried in public;
- Who has ever committed a crime;
- Who has ever cried watching a film;
- Who has ever suffered for love.

## BACK-UP ACTIVITY

# “LIFE LOTTERY” ACTIVITY<sup>17</sup>

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**OBJECTIVES** To promote reflection on men’s attitudes towards their own health, encouraging preventive measures.

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**DURATION** 1h30

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**MATERIALS**

- Lottery of Life Handout;
- Markers.

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## DESCRIPTION

- Divide the participants into smaller groups and give each group a “Life Lottery” card. If the group is small, give each person one card;
- Present the Life Lottery to the large group, informing them that there are three columns: Man, Woman and Both. The group should answer the questions, marking with an ‘x’ the answer they think is correct.

## DEVELOPMENT

1. Give the group 20 minutes to discuss and mark their answers. In all of the columns, “Men” should be marked, but do not give this information to the group yet.
2. Explore the groups’ responses, asking for justifications for the answers, particularly when they marked “Women” or “Both”.

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17 Based on Workshop 2 of the PARENT Toolkit (Do Carmo et al., 2021, pp. 69-72).

3. At the end, clarify that, for all of the categories, the answer that should have been marked is “Men”.
4. Promote a discussion based on the following questions:
  - Were you aware of this information?
  - Why do you think this is?
  - How can it be avoided?
  - If men took more care of themselves, would this reality be like this?
  - Is the life of men very stressful? Why is it stressful?
  - Is life for women very stressful? Why is it so?
  - When you get sick, what do you do? Do you usually seek help as soon as you feel sick or do you wait a bit?
  - Do you often go to the doctor?
  - Can a man be vain? To what extent?
  - Who is vainer, man or woman? Why or why not?

### **CLOSING**

Finish the activity by reminding them that most of the causes of death among men are associated with the self-destructive lifestyle that many reproduce and that health care, through preventive measures, is one of the main paths to changing this situation.

### Notes for facilitators:

- We can use, in this part, data we collected in the surveys/ focus groups in the first phase of X-MEN intervention regarding the lack of health care of young people (e.g., oral health), as well as international data (e.g., higher male suicide rate, risky behaviours).
- In cases where the group has reading difficulties, the questions can be read aloud to make it easier to understand and carry out the activity.
- Assess the importance of rewriting the questions to have positive information and also where the answer is a woman and not a man (e.g. in one of the ECs where the activity was carried out, they felt that we were 'demonising' men).

### FINAL MOMENT

Joint evaluation of what they have learned from today's session, what they would change and/or what they would keep. Identify the Word of the Day to summarise the overall impression they were left with/what they felt.



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## SESSION 3 / 3 HOURS

### THEME: CONFLICT & NON-VIOLENCE

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#### BLOCK 1 (1H30)

##### 1. CHECK-IN TIME

When participants arrive, the word cloud of the previous session is on display.

##### 2. ICE-BREAKER

### ‘COEXISTENCE WITHOUT VIOLENCE’ WORKSHOP<sup>18</sup>

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#### OBJECTIVES

To lead young people to reflect on violence suffered and perpetrated, while understanding that it is an experience shared by all people at some point in their lives.

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#### DURATION

(Initial phase) 15/20 minutes

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#### MATERIALS

- 2 Clothes strings;
  - Clothes springs (4 per participant);
  - Sheets with the title ‘Violence suffered’ (one per participant);
  - Sheets with the title ‘Violence committed’ (one per participant);
- 

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18 Based on Workshop 7 of the PARENT Toolkit (Do Carmo et al., 2021, pp. 87-98).

- 
- 1 card saying 'Violence suffered' + 1 card saying 'Violence committed' to identify the strings;
  - Handouts for the facilitators.
- 

### DESCRIPTION

Find a space in the room and hang the 2 strings, duly marked with the cards “violence suffered” and “violence committed”, as well as the clothes springs. The group should gather in a circle.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Explain that there will be two cords and that the participants should write some words on sheets of paper and then hang them up;
2. Give each participant two sheets of paper and explain that, through this exercise, we will remember and reflect on experiences of violence in the family to talk about our feelings and learn from these experiences;
3. Ask them to write about an experience of violence that they suffered when they were a child. It can be any kind of violence according to their understanding of this concept (physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, etc.). Divide the paper into two parts and write at the top the situation they experienced and at the bottom how they felt at that moment. There is no need to write their name. If there are participants who do not know how to write, the facilitator can be asked to write down their answers or suggest the youngsters to draw them;
4. Next, they should write on the other sheet an experience of violence they committed;
5. Allow approximately 10 minutes for each task. Explain that they should not write too much, it is preferable that they use a few words or a sentence;

6. With the strings, make two clothes lines and put on each line one of the following titles: - Violence committed against me & - Violence I have committed. Next, ask people to put their sheets on the respective strings.



**The activity will be interrupted at this stage and resumed at the end of the session.**

### 3. ACTIVITY

## DISTINCTION BETWEEN CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

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#### OBJECTIVES

To clarify with young people the distinction between conflict and violence, presenting conflict and dissent as something positive, which generates reflection and new ideas if it is the engine of dialogue, cooperation and the construction of a shared vision, instead of choosing violence as a strategy to impose a single, unilateral vision of a given subject.

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#### DURATION

20 minutes;

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#### MATERIALS

Excerpt from António B. Guterres' "Invisible City"<sup>19</sup> podcast with a gang talk on *drill*, if relevant.

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#### DEVELOPMENT

1. Conversation round triggered by the opening question, "What do you think is the difference between conflict and violence? Can you give examples of each?"
2. Next, the conversation is oriented towards exploring the notion of conflict as something positive, which is part of life, with which it is important to know how to deal in a healthy way in order to create respect in the relationship with others (e.g., difference between a chair, which is a static object and society, as a dynamic body).
3. Possibility of using *drill* as an example, understood not as a

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<sup>19</sup> Podcast entitled 'Invisible City', in which António Brito Guterres, social worker and social intervener, gives a voice to those who really have no voice in our cities, namely in some areas of Lisbon. The aim of this podcast is to talk about the unconventional processes of acquiring knowledge that take place on the peripheries of society. Available at: [Cidade Invisível | Antena 1 - RTP](https://antena1.rtp.pt/antena1/cidade-invisivel/)  
<https://antena1.rtp.pt/antena1/cidade-invisivel/>

form of aggression but as a form of expression, of manifestation of lived experiences.

### Notes for facilitators:

The following key ideas should be explored with the young people [avoid monologues and sounding professorial or moralistic]:

- Make a link to 'Agree or Disagree' Activity (previous day's activity);
- Explore the notions of violence and conflict that they bring, asking each young person directly for examples of both;

Try to emphasise:

- Conflict as essential for society;
- The importance of seeking minimum consensus and not uniformity;

If the question of contact sports arises, clearly establish the difference between violence and boxing: Boxing/martial arts are a sport, with its specific rituals and structure (e.g., greeting, rules, consent, fouls/judge). It is not a power relationship in which I try to annihilate the other, because I need the opponent to be able to box. If I annihilate the other person, I have no sport. I can't use it outside of the boxing ring. It's not violent because I don't intend to hurt.

- In this respect, make the connection with the notion and importance of consent, which was explored the previous day.

### 3. ACTIVITY

## “THE PLACE WHERE I BELONG”

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#### OBJECTIVES

To get young people to draw or represent their ties of territorial belonging and to reflect on what they represent for them.

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#### DURATION

50 minutes.

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#### MATERIALS

- A4 X-MEN sheets – one per participant;
  - Large board with the title: ‘Where I came from/ Map of the World’;
  - Scratch paper;
  - Markers.
- 

#### DESCRIPTION

Each young person will be asked to draw/represent what they identify as their place of belonging, where they feel safest and where they are most afraid.

#### DEVELOPMENT

1. This activity is carried out individually at first, without identifying the drawings;
2. As they finish, they will post them on the World Map/Panel.



The activity will be interrupted at this stage and resumed at the end of the session.

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## BREAK (10 MINUTES)

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## BLOCK 2 (1H30)

### 1. ACTIVITY

# RESUMING THE WORKSHOP: COEXISTENCE WITHOUT VIOLENCE

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**DURATION** 40 minutes.

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### DEVELOPMENT

1. When the young people return from the break, they are asked to go to the cords of violence and spend some time reading the experiences shared on the posted sheets.
2. The group is then brought together so that everyone has a chance to share how they felt, if they were surprised by what they read, if there is anything that stands out.

Questions for the debate:

- What was it like for you to talk about the violence you suffered and practised?
- How do we feel when we do some violence?
- What are the common factors that cause violence against women in intimate relationships and violence against sons and daughters?
- In which situations is violence acceptable or tolerable? Why is it acceptable or tolerable?
- Is there a relationship between the violence we do and the violence we are victims of?

- It is said that violence is a cycle, that is, victims of violence are more likely to commit violent acts. This is what we call the intergenerational transmission of violence, when we reproduce in adulthood some situations we experienced in childhood, especially when we need to deal with certain emotions. If this is true, how can we break this cycle of violence?
- How can we resolve conflicts between couples and conflicts with sons and daughters without resorting to violence?

### CLOSING

Thank the participants for their courage in opening up and sharing their experiences of violence. Acknowledge the positive learning and reflections that these experiences have brought about, aimed at the practice of nonviolence, the expression of affection and the use of dialogue to solve their family problems. If you notice that someone wishes to talk more about the topic, be available to talk privately and be prepared to provide information or to refer to professional support services.

#### Notes for facilitators:

Key Ideas to explore in this activity:

- Connection between violence suffered and committed;
- Intergenerational cycle of violence (inter- and intra-generational).

#### Important note

It is important to be particularly attentive to the possibility of a young person becoming upset by the activity and, in that case, to have a support person who can take him/her to a separate space, so that they can manage their emotions in a protected way and with individualised support.



## 2. ACTIVITY

# RESUMING THE ACTIVITY: THE PLACE WHERE I BELONG?

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**DURATION** 50 minutes.

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### DEVELOPMENT

1. After everyone has finished, the young people are invited to go and look at everyone's drawings;
2. The larger group gathers round and each person presents their drawing;
3. If any young person doesn't want to present orally, the facilitator takes the drawing and explores it together with the remaining participants, if the author consents.

### CLOSING

The facilitator defines the importance of socio-cultural belonging, namely the idea that we can leave our place of origin, but the place doesn't leave us. It's important to give young people the chance to present the territories they come from not only in terms of their connection to a lack of opportunities and violence, but also by emphasising that it doesn't have to be summed up exclusively as a place of violence, but should also be explored in terms of its positive features, namely the fact that it gives young people a sense of belonging.

### 3. FINAL ACTIVITY

## WATCHING THE GILLETTE COMMERCIAL<sup>20</sup>

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#### OBJECTIVES

To get young people to start thinking about the importance of care as an antidote to violence and how each of us must be an ally in the fight for a fairer world, putting aside the vices of hegemonic masculinity.

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#### DURATION

5 minutes.

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#### MATERIALS

Video.

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#### DESCRIPTION

Briefly explore what they have learnt from the video, linking it to the topic of care that will be explored in the next session (focus on the idea that children absorb everything, especially the example of parental or reference figures).

#### FINAL MOMENT

Joint evaluation of what they have learned from today's session, what they would change, what they would keep. Identify the Word of the Day to summarise the overall impression they were left with/what they felt.

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<sup>20</sup> Gillette comercial on hegemonic masculinity traits. Available at: (92) Gillette's 'We believe: the best men can be' razors commercial takes on toxic masculinity - YouTube - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYaY2Kb\\_PkI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYaY2Kb_PkI)

#### 4. BACK-UP ACTIVITY

## “WHAT DOES TODAY’S VIOLENCE TELL US?” ACTIVITY

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**OBJECTIVES** To explore different examples from the news, based on the topics chosen, namely mental health; the increase in juvenile delinquency; dating violence.

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**DURATION** 50 minutes.

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**MATERIALS** Previously selected current news clippings [Themes: Mental health; increase in juvenile delinquency; dating violence].

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#### DESCRIPTION

The group will be divided in 2 or 3 sub-groups (3 - 4 young people in each group), each group will be given 1 or 2 short news clippings from current newspapers (Diário de Notícias, Público, Correio da Manhã), and the young people will be asked to analyse these clippings and look for clues in the news to answer the following questions:

- What forms of violence are represented in these articles?
- Have you had these experiences? How often?

#### DEVELOPMENT

With everyone in a circle, the representative of each group is asked to present the conclusions of the news items they have analysed and a discussion around their reflections is promoted. Questions for discussion:

- What do you think this news represents?
- Have you been through a similar situation?
- Do you know of any stories that are similar to this situation?
- How often do you think this type of situation happens?

- What is your opinion on this type of situation?
- How do you think you can contribute to the transformation of these realities?

#### Notes for facilitators:

- The facilitators should guide the conversation, in order to obtain, from the shared experience, a 'thermometer of absence of violence' and the portrait of which forms of violence are most identified as common/familiar by the young people, exploring their concepts (e.g., racism, symbolic violence, dating violence, gender violence, *bullying*). In this activity, it is particularly important to lead young people to reflect on behaviours they adopt daily and do not recognise as violence (unexpected violence), especially with regard to dating violence (e.g., control of social networks).
- Depending on the format of the clippings, it may be advisable to shorten them so they only have the lead paragraph and there are no additional challenges for reading skills.

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## SESSION 4: EMPATHY & CAREGIVING [3 HOURS]

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### BLOCK 1 (1H30)

#### 1. CHECK-IN TIME

When participants arrive, the word cloud of the previous session is on display.

#### 2. ICE-BREAKER

## “HOME CARE: IT ONLY EXISTS WHEN IT’S NOT DONE” WORKSHOP<sup>21</sup>

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#### OBJECTIVES

To discuss the invisibility and devaluation of daily domestic work. To reflect on male participation in these activities and problematise the sexual division of labour as well as the different patterns of socialisation of boys and girls for daily domestic work.

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#### DURATION

40 minutes.

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#### MATERIALS

Domestic material.

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#### DESCRIPTION

The facilitating team can include real objects in the scene, such as brooms, dusters, kitchen towels, etc. During the activity, questions or jokes about the masculinity of some of the participants may arise. The

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21 Based on the EQUI-X Manual (Santos & Rolino, 2019, pp. 252 – 253).

team should be aware of possible embarrassment and use minimisation strategies that do not involve coercion or exposing any of the participants. Most men have already carried out some form of daily domestic activity (even if only in the youth detention centre), even if it is not talked about much. Such experiences can be used as illustrations of other possibilities for action, showing that carrying out domestic activities does not affect masculinity in any way (using the cleaning and care routine they have to follow at the youth detention centre as an example).

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Ask the participants to act out the cleaning up of a house as a group. Each participant has a role;
2. Ask one of the participants to stop working and the others to distribute the activities among themselves;
3. Tell another participant to stop working. Do this until only one is left;
4. At the end, ask the last participant to stop working;
5. Ask the group: “one week later, how would this house look like?”
6. Start the discussion by inviting the participants to reflect on their personal involvement in these activities performed in their house and the value they assign to these tasks.
7. Questions for discussion:
  - How did each participant feel when the others stopped working?
  - How did the last person doing the tasks feel?
  - Which of the staged activities do the participants actually carry out at home?
  - Who generally carries out these activities?
  - Which domestic activities do men carry out most frequently?

- Which domestic activities do men rarely perform?
- Are people aware of this type of work or only when it is not done?
- During childhood who tends to be most stimulated to learn and carry out these tasks?
- Which toys imitate housework? Are these often associated with girls or boys?

### CLOSING

The facilitating team should emphasise the importance of daily work in the domestic context, which tends to be undervalued and misunderstood by those who don't do it. It should also emphasise that men and women are equally capable of carrying out domestic activities. There is nothing in women's nature that inclines them to perform domestic activities well. The differences in aptitude for these tasks and for care in general between men and women are only due to socially constructed models of masculinity and femininity.

### 3. ACTIVITY

## ETHNOFICTION: 'WHEN MEN CHANGE' [A PROMUNDO FILM<sup>22</sup>]

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### OBJECTIVES

Using one of the stories in the video, encourage young people to reflect on the importance of care, both in terms of the care they have adopted, for example, in the youth detention centre, according to data collected in the first phase of the project (e.g., health, self-care, concerns about self-image), and the care linked to parenthood.

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### DURATION

50 minutes (4-minute video).

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### MATERIALS

- Video 'When Men Change';
  - Paper and pens to write the stories..
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### DESCRIPTION

The challenge will be to construct the final part of the stories described in the video based on their own experiences and reflections and on everything they learnt during the sessions.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Explain the aims of the activity to the participants and play the first part of the video (stop the video at minute 1.26);
2. Next, divide the group into 2 or 3 small sub-groups (3 - 4 young people in each), assigning each group one of the stories. Ask each group construct the rest of the story based on their own experiences and reflections (allow 20 minutes);

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<sup>22</sup> Video available at: [When Men Change: A Promundo Film \(youtube.com\) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXaFRrl-L70](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXaFRrl-L70)



3. At the end, gather everyone in a circle, show the rest of the video and each group chooses a representative to tell the story (ethno-fiction) they wrote together.

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## BREAK (10 MINUTES)

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## BLOCK 2 (1H30)

### ACTIVITY

## SELF-CARE AND POWERS

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**OBJECTIVES** To revisit the Box of Superpowers, built together in the first session, and assess with the youngsters what potential they identified at that time, what other superpowers they could list today and, finally, how these perceptions have changed in their journey at youth detention centre and how they want to be seen by outside society. This activity also aims to show participants that they already possess characteristics that are, in fact, real powers for facing the challenges that life throws at them.

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**DURATION** 40 minutes.

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**MATERIALS**

- Box of Superpowers;
- Cardboard or poster board, divided into Powers we have (yellow post-it note) + Powers we want to have (green post-it note);
- Poster 'What does care mean to you?'.

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## DESCRIPTION

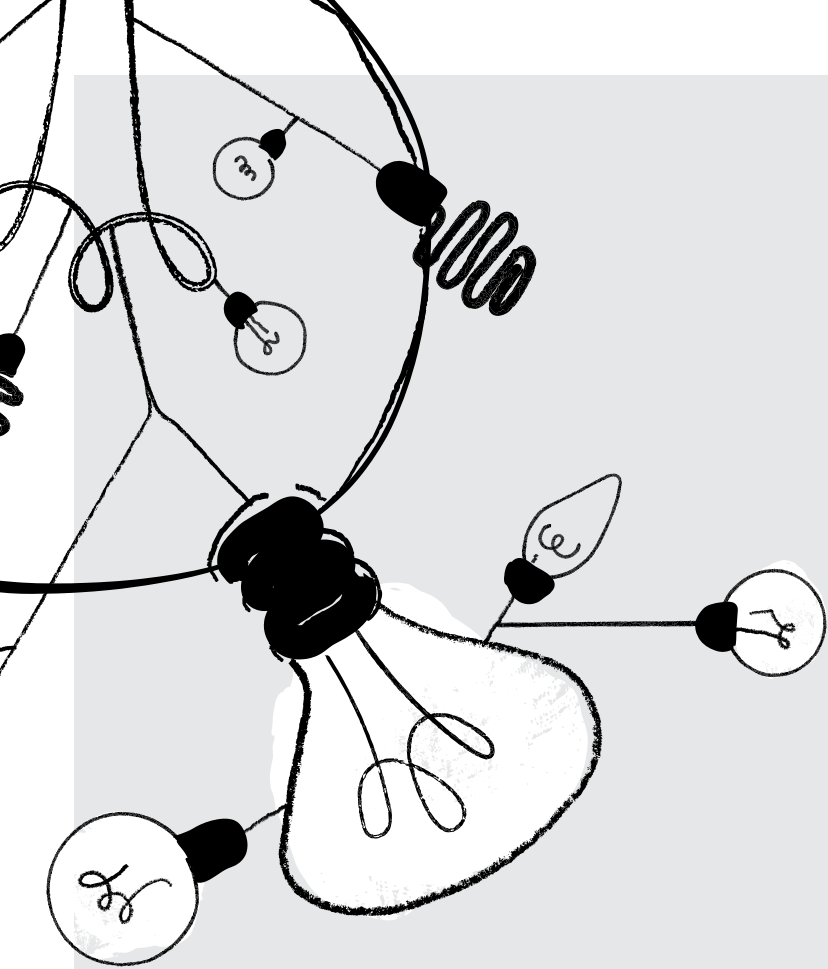
1. The initial activity of the Box of Superpowers is resumed, reminding all participants participating of what was asked in that first session;
2. With the consent of all the youngsters, the box is opened and each person is asked to randomly remove one post it note of each colour and go and post them on the panel, repeating this task until there are no papers left in the box;
3. Once all the superpowers are displayed, the participants are asked to organise them by type, if this makes sense (the facilitators can help with this task, if the participants have any difficulties);
4. The facilitator moderates the reflection based on the superpowers that have been identified, first those they think they have and then those they want to have, looking for coincidences/trends and exploring with the participants the meaning of these recurrences. Participants will be challenged to answer the following question: 'If it were today, would you write the same thing?'
5. As it is expected that no superpowers linked to caring will emerge, the POWER OF CARING should be explored at this phase: young people are asked to write on post-it notes and stick them on a new poster displayed at this moment what Care means to them, in order to start a conversation about the various types of care (personal and with others) and how, through caring, we can reach **the way we want to be** and *the way we want others to see us*.
6. The concept behind the project is presented, exploring the logic of mutants and superpowers, the idea that we are being transformed and that we can and should enhance and explore the various superpowers we are born with and that we acquire throughout our lives.

## FINAL MOMENT

- Joint evaluation of what they have learnt from the various sessions

and what superpowers they have and want to have now, after the intervention (are there differences?) - if there are differences, the facilitators can write the suggestions on the poster.

- Identify the Word of the Day to summarise the overall impression they had/feel and build a Word Cloud which is displayed at the end of the session for the group photo (if permitted);
- Award a certificate to each participant, emphasising their contribution to the success of the sessions.



**#7.3**

**X-MEN SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES WITH  
YOUTH AT RISK IN NATIONAL  
CONTEXTS: SPAIN – WORKING WITH  
MINORS THAT MIGRATE ALONE**

Álvaro Ruiz Garriga  
[Fundación Cepaim]

## Introduction

Intervention with children who migrate alone requires consideration of some basic ethical and strategic issues that should guide practice. In the course of the research, a series of elements were identified to improve socio-educational practices with children, appealing to the host institutions and the professionals responsible. Below, we list a series of factors that were taken into account when designing the intervention that has been carried out, which is specifically geared towards working with boys from Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa:

- a. **Motivation:** Migrant minors are placed in socio-occupational programmes in which work objectives are a priority or take precedence over socio-educational objectives. The vast majority of minors themselves are interested in attending vocational training, doing an **apprenticeship**, getting a work contract and aspiring to regularisation in Spain or another European country. For this reason, socio-educational interventions must be authorised and legitimised by institutions and professionals, giving them as much importance as vocational training. In this sense, it is also advisable to offer official recognition to the training, so that it can be useful in the participants' own job search, in obtaining a residence permit, etc.
- b. **Men (and women) providing training on gender and sexuality:** For most participants, it can be transgressive to talk openly about sexuality or even gender roles and norms. Moreover, if this task is carried out by a woman, the possibilities of taboo and transgression increase, with the consequent discomfort, which increases

the possibility of reactive attitudes. This does not necessarily have to be negative in the long term, but the cultural impact it can have must be taken into account. On the other hand, a man doing this kind of training can help to reduce defensive postures and offer a reference of masculinity in favour of equality with women.

- c. **The need for older references in the host place:** If, in addition to including men in this type of training, they share socio-cultural traits (country of origin, religion, racial status), the reference will be even more direct and legitimate in principle. In any case, it is advisable to link the minors to adults in their countries of origin who serve as positive references and defend the ideals of equality and non-violence promoted by the X-MEN project. These could be former minors who have managed to establish themselves, anti-racist activists, agents of social organisations, references in neighbourhoods, etc.
- d. **Breaking isolation with the local community:** The aim is to promote activities in contact with other people where they live. In this way, a path is created to break the circle of isolation or '*ghettoization*' that comes from being trapped in the urgency of looking for a job, which ends up creating a lack of roots, a lack of knowledge of safe spaces and support networks for them in the city, as well as a lack of information and, therefore, a lack of opportunities. It is recommended to find activities related to the project's objectives to be carried out in the area during the training period to take part in with the group.
- e. **Need to experience non-hierarchical relationships:** Minors who migrate alone have suffered different forms of structural, institutional, environmental and interpersonal violence, which in turn respond to previous social hierarchies that are more or less vertical, from kinship relationships to relations with state and institutional agents, including relations among with each other. In addition, the initial culture may have exerted a strong hierarchical pressure, of 'below' and 'above', of 'serving' and 'being served', etc., with a naturalising effect on inequality. It is important to be aware of

the hierarchy at different levels of the relationship: that of the residential facility and the beneficiaries; that of the group facilitators and the beneficiaries; and that of the beneficiaries among themselves. How is the hierarchy expressed in this space and if it is of a conscious or unconscious nature; what factors intervene to create a hierarchy in a relationship, for example among the beneficiaries; Are there issues of age, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, etc.; How can a conscious balance be created between the participants, how can a conscious balance be created? If we identify how these hierarchies work, we can create counterweights for democratic, egalitarian and cooperative relationships.

- f. Intersectional, intercultural and intergenerational sensitivity:** During the sessions, depending on the position of the facilitators, at least three risks must be taken into account: adultcentrism, ethnocentrism and **self-referentiality** of gender, class, ethno-racial, etc. It is advisable to take this into account when designing the sessions and in relating to the group, which will also be diverse. Therefore, the greater the ability to understand how the cultural and relational codes of the children's different cultures and situations work, the greater the ability to connect and empathise. It is this empathy that we want to encourage in the group: promoting empathy in an intersectional and intercultural sense implies understanding and being affected by situations of oppression of social groups that I do not belong to or am not associated with: men towards women, white people towards Arabs and blacks, heterosexual people towards homosexuals, adults towards minors, etc., and doing so from the complexity of knowing that these elements are not separate from each other.
- g. Evaluate:** The Cepaim project team decided that using the GEM scale was counterproductive and that another technique suitable for the group should be established. On the one hand, the GEM scale involves translating not only words or phrases, but concepts that are understood by some cultures but not others. On the other hand, it is a very complex language and format for children who do not master the language, and the bureaucratic style of a survey



results in the arid and hostile language they encounter from the moment they are institutionalised. As Rodriguez (2007) comments on the adultcentric difficulty of research techniques with children:

*In any case, far from there being a single recipe for the problem of techniques and their choice, we can assert here the fundamental principle of methodological pluralism: let the object of study itself determine the relevance of the research technique applied.*

An evaluation is still research, which is why we think it is preferable to start from the group itself, i.e., not to subordinate the group to the technique that the adults (usually native speakers) have selected for reasons and interests external to the group itself, but to submit the evaluation to the culture of the group we want to evaluate, making them active participants, if not in the design, at least in the evaluation activity. In this sense, qualitative and participatory techniques may be more appropriate, despite the difficulty of objectifying them as numerical data compared to a survey.

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## **PROGRAMMING OF THE X-MEN SESSIONS**

In the following section, we present 10 activities that have been implemented during the X-MEN project. As we say, they are inspired both by the objectives of the intervention and by the recommendations identified during the research. We divide the activities into 4 blocks: a first block contains two activities to “break the ice”, a second block of reflection-awareness activities, a third block of artistic activity through hip hop and a fourth block of evaluation activities:

# ORGANIZATION MAP

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**Icebreakers**     **Activity 1.** Find someone who... (30 - 45 min)

**Activity 2.** Parody of the silhouette of masculinity  
(15 - 25 min)

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**Reflection-Awareness**     **Activity 3.** Introduction to training. Discussion on the Moroccan expression *machi rojola* ("it is not for men").  
(30 - 45 min)

**Activity 4.** The Silhouette of Masculinity  
(1h15-30 minutes).

**Activity 5.** The Silhouette of Femininity  
(45 min - 1 hour)

**Activity 6.** What happens to you because of who you are: empathy through music (45 min - 1 hour)

**Activity 7.** Dialogue with older referents (1 hour).

**Activity 8.** Activities related to the objectives of the project outside the children's centre  
(2 - 3 hours).

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**Artistic Activity (Hip Hop)**     **Activity 9.** Collective creation of an anti-racist and anti-sexist song.  
(5 sessions of 1h30 approx.)

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**Evaluation**     **Activity 10.** Evaluation activities (1h:45min)

- Reminiscing (15 -20 min)
- Tell a friend (30 - 45 min)
- Content analysis of the lyrics of the song (30 - 40 min)

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## A. ICEBREAKERS

### ACTIVITY 1

## FIND SOMEONE WHO...

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**OBJECTIVES:** To facilitate getting to know each other, to remember names and to introduce in a relatively informal way questions related to the general objective of the intervention.

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**DURATION:** Approximately 30 - 45 minutes (depending on the number of people in the group).

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**MATERIALS:** For each person, a template with questions/items and a pen or marker to write down names.

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### DESCRIPTION

The template with the items is distributed, participants move freely around the space and interview each other in pairs. They write down the names of the people who answer yes to the question or item. Once everyone has connected, we return to the large group and the facilitator asks everyone to introduce aloud someone they have interviewed, saying their name and commenting on the answers they have given about experiences, qualities, tastes, anecdotes or situations. The facilitator can encourage with questions that help to get to know the person better. If necessary, the names can be written down on a large board on the wall so that everyone can see them and it is easier to retain them.

**Notes for facilitators:**

During the final group comments, the facilitator will energise the sharing with more questions or some reflection on the items most related to the objectives of the intervention. The template will be designed according to the specific characteristics or interests of the group. It is advisable for the facilitator to participate in the dynamic as one of the participants.

## ACTIVITY 2

# PARODY OF THE SILHOUETTE OF MASCULINITY

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**OBJECTIVES:** Energise the group. Minimize the importance of masculinity, generating a critical distance through humour and parody.

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**DURATION:** 15 - 25 minutes.

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**MATERIALS:** The silhouette of masculinity (see activity 4).

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### DESCRIPTION

This activity can be carried out after the silhouette activity, as it is a group creation: a silhouette on which ideals of masculinity have been written or expressed according to the group's different perceptions.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. For this activity, the silhouette should be placed on the floor and the group should surround it.
2. Lively music is played and the group starts to move around the silhouette. The music stops and one of the groups chooses a post-it note, pictogram or drawing of the silhouette, says what trait it is (strong, confident, flirtatious, hard-working, etc).
3. The facilitator asks people to move like that trait (how does one move very strong, confident, flirtatious, hardworking, etc.). The whole group should move "like that".
4. The music is switched on again and we walk around the silhouette with that pose or attitude. When the music stops, the person to the left of the first one chooses an element of the silhouette and repeats the operation until everyone has chosen.
5. If the group is very large or if preferred, they can go out in pairs

on one side of the silhouette while the group is on the other. The pair must agree on a trait or attitude that appears in the silhouette without telling the rest of the group, who will have to guess what the trait is from the silent theatre of the pair.

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## B. REFLECTION-AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY 3

## INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP. DISCUSSION ON THE MOROCCAN EXPRESSION *MACHI ROJOLA* ('IT IS NOT FOR MEN')

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**OBJECTIVES:** Identify cultural norms of masculinity specific to the culture of origin and discuss them. Learn about the host culture from a gender perspective.

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**DURATION:** 30 - 45 minutes.

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**MATERIALS:** No specific material is required, although if you want to enrich the dialogue you can use different images expressing typical male practices, rites of passage, roles, etc, from different cultures related to the participants' countries of origin (e.g. rite of circumcision) and host countries.

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### DESCRIPTION

The exercise consists of asking about the term *machi rojola* and launching questions and reflections based on its uses, as the sanction also reveals what is expected of a male in order to be recognised as such. *Rojola (rajel)* refers to the codes of masculinity in the Maghreb. It is mentioned by the Qur'an on different occasions, describing a model of Muslim male honourability. The term *machi rojola* expresses in Dariya (main language in Morocco) an insult that can be a great offence said to a man in certain contexts. It could be translated as "it is not for men" and is used to punish a man either for his lack of loyalty to other men, or for his inability to cope with male roles with women.



## DEVELOPMENT

1. In the debate we need to be attentive to the expectations to *provide, protect and procreate*. Throughout the discussion we will ask about expectations of women, paying attention to the divisions of spheres.
2. It is also important to compare this with the host culture and to pay attention to the issues that are most shocking to them, such as women's autonomy, their mobility in public spaces, the late age of marriage and procreation or the public expression of the LGBTBI+ reality.
3. At the end of the conversation, we will ask whether they reach any conclusions and invite them to reflect on the idea of 'patriarchy' in cultures, on why more men than women migrate, on the different conditions under which men and women migrate, etc.

### Notes for facilitators:

This activity makes sense if there is a significant presence of North Africans in the group. If it is a mixed group, with children from sub-Saharan countries, it can still work, as most of them have spent long periods of time in Morocco and know the language. In this case, ask for a similar expression in the languages of origin.

## ACTIVITY 4

# THE SILHOUETTE OF MASCULINITY

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**OBJECTIVES:** To explore in depth the stereotypes and expectations of masculinity that, consciously or unconsciously, the members of the group have and to critically discuss them, taking gender identity as something that can be distanced from, pointing out negative effects for women, girls and boys, other groups and men themselves and identifying needs for change in order to have equal relationships. The silhouette becomes a resource to return to in the following sessions.

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**DURATION:** 1 hour and 15-30 minutes.

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**MATERIALS:** Continuous paper, markers, post-it notes (also magazines, pictograms), glue.

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### DESCRIPTION

At least 2 volunteers are asked to draw the silhouette of the other on a continuous piece of paper on the floor. Once the human-shaped silhouette has been drawn, we ask them to give it a male name (that does NOT match anyone in the room). At the top of the panel the facilitator writes: "Name will be a man if...". We stick the silhouette on the wall.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Each person should write on the post-it note a feature that characterises a real man and place it on the silhouette, trying to relate the idea to a part of the body for some reason. To make it easier for those who have more problems with reading and writing to participate, they can write in their native language or use pictograms and magazines to cut out images or phrases.

2. Once the silhouette has been completed, we can go over “what is expected of a man” following an order from head to toe or vice versa. The facilitator can introduce an idea in the silhouette that he/she considers strategically important for the objectives of the session.
3. Each person is asked to explain what he/she has put. The facilitator should help to relate ideas to each other. In addition, through this activity we can detect many important issues to be addressed in the following sessions.

**Notes for facilitators:**

It is important to take photos and even transfer the information contained in the silhouette to a document, analysing and organising the patterns that appear, in order to be able to give an orderly report back to the group in future sessions.

## ACTIVITY 5

# THE SILHOUETTE OF FEMININITY

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**OBJECTIVES:** Identify expectations of girls and women and compare them with expectations of men, trying to mobilise empathy.

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**DURATION:** 45 minutes - 1 hour.

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**MATERIALS:** The same materials used for the creation of the silhouette of masculinity, as well as the silhouette of masculinity itself. Other magazines and pictograms and post-it notes of a different colour can be introduced.

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## DESCRIPTION

On the same silhouette, participants are told that there has been a mistake, that it was not the silhouette of a man, but of a woman, and they are asked to give her a name.

## DEVELOPMENT

1. Based on the written sentence “Name will be a woman if...”, the silhouette is filled in with post-it notes, pictograms and/or magazine cut-outs.
2. This provides an opportunity to go over the group’s stereotypes and expectations about women and discuss them based on everyone’s presentation of what they have included in the silhouette.
3. The facilitator should help to relate it to the silhouette of masculinity, pointing out differences and consequences related to gender-based violence against women and LGBTBI+ people, raising questions about ideals of non-violent, non-sexist and non-homophobic masculinity.

**Notes for facilitators:**

In order to activate empathy towards women or LGBTBI+ people, analogies can be drawn between racism and sexism, as two forms of structural and cultural violence that are created from the belief in their superiority by a group (men, whites, Europeans, Christians, etc.), in order to connect the group with the idea that there is violence or violent beliefs that I may have about women or homosexual people that are very similar to those that other people may have about me because of my skin colour, my religious beliefs, my age, etc. Biological and cultural differences do not justify inequalities.

## ACTIVITY 6

# WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE AND EMPATHY THROUGH MUSIC

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**OBJECTIVES:** Encourage empathy towards women through hip hop and mark the meaning of the creation of a song-video clip for equality.

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**DURATION:** 45 minutes - 1 hour.

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**MATERIALS:** Video clip of Morad and Miss Raisa, internet connection, laptop, projector and loudspeaker. Sheet of paper with lyrics (one per participant).

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## DESCRIPTION

In Spain, the trap singer Morad is an idol for minors who migrate alone, even permeating the musical culture of the minors' facilities, as he represents a kind of spokesman for the Maghrebi MDLR (*mec de la rue*) in Spain, and his lyrics and iconography refer to local cultural codes of Moroccan children, such as loyalty, the neighbourhood or love for one's mother. It should be kept in mind that he is not an idol for sub-Saharan Africans, so the activity may have a somewhat lesser impact on them, and may even be an opportunity for them to complain about Morad's excessive presence in the facility's common spaces and audio-visual resources, which tend to be monopolised by Moroccans when they are the majority.

## DEVELOPMENT

1. Participants are asked to choose a song from among their favourite songs and the group watches the video clip together.
2. A dialogue is then initiated about the song's messages, about why the singer says what he says, who is he addressing, the meaning of the scenes in the video, etc.

3. The facilitator should establish a link between what the singer says and his position in society: Morad is the son of Moroccans born in Spain who never felt welcomed as a Spaniard, so he identifies more with the country of origin of his parents and its culture.
4. Subsequently, the following interview can be displayed: *Morad talks about classism and racism in his time at a Jesuit school - Lo de Évole (La Sexta)*<sup>23</sup>, where Morad identifies and reflects on forms of racist and classist violence he experienced as a child in Spain.
5. The video is debated, exploring in depth what racism and classism are, two forms of violence that they can perceive first-hand as an oppressed group.
6. Then, based on the reflection, the group is asked about gender-based violence: who perpetrates it, who suffers from it, why, what are its consequences, what forms of gender-based violence are there, what do women complain about, what about LGBTBI+ people, do we listen to them? It is possible that because of cultural taboos, they themselves do not raise sexual violence or homophobic violence, so the facilitator may have to open the subject himself, as well as gender violence, economic dependence, exploitation as carers and in domestic work and other subtler forms, if they do not come out of the group itself.
7. Next, a video clip *Niña* by Miss Raisa will be watched, a girl of Moroccan origin who emigrated with her family at the age of 8 and who sings hip hop about the frontiers she encountered in Spain as a Muslim girl of Moroccan origin (for example, Islamophobic rejection for wearing the veil) and how she strengthened her self-esteem as she grew up. In the video clip she appears as a young Muslim woman who is active, strong, brave, direct, self-confident, protagonist and critical.
8. Once the video is watched, questions will be posed about their

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23 The interview is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qkaBvbSE94>

feelings and the content of the lyrics: did they shock them, did they like them or did they reject them? If necessary, a document with the lyrics can be distributed so that the group can read them carefully or translate the parts they don't understand.

9. Questions will be made to help them to identify the enunciative position of Miss Raisa: why is she talking about what she is talking about, where is she talking from, what has happened to her that would not happen to a boy, what is she complaining about, how has she reacted, had you thought before about what could be happening to a girl who also emigrated?

### **CLOSING**

The activity can close with a reflection on the words and ideas we have worked on: racism, classism, sexism and, in both cases, resilience in which the violence received is channelled into artistic expression practices. Finally, the facilitator should connect the activity with the meaning of the creation of a song (or other artistic practice) by the group.



## ACTIVITY 7

# DIALOGUE WITH OLDER REFERENTS

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**OBJECTIVES:** To provide legitimate references to the group of people who migrated from the same countries or in similar conditions and who are involved in organisations and activities in favour of racial, gender, religious equality, etc.

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**DURATION:** 1 hour.

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**MATERIALS:** Depending on the form of the activity, whether it is online or face-to-face.

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## DESCRIPTION

One of the difficulties or mistakes to overcome in the professional field, according to the study we have carried out in the first phase of the project, is the lack of contact of minors with adult referents who share socio-cultural and biographical traits with them. Therefore, it is desirable to carry out some activity with people who arrived as migrants from countries close to those of the members of the group, who carry out social action of some kind and who are sensitive to the objectives of the project, as well as to the situation of the migrant minors. To this end, it is necessary to know the associative network and the people of reference who can be invited to share a session to reflect on equality, on the difficulties encountered, on the group's own conflicts, on cultural clashes, on their strategies for inclusion in society, etc. Likewise, the participation of a woman who is sensitive to gender equality, who can introduce notions of Islamic feminism and problematize from her position as a woman who emigrated from the Maghreb and/or a sub-Saharan country, is also advisable. The facilitator should have provided background information on the group's reflections, difficulties, conflicts, strengths, etc., and should have given the group advance notice so that

they can take the opportunity to raise questions and concerns beyond finding a job and getting roles. Ideally, this should be a face-to-face activity, but it can be done online if it is difficult to do so.

**Notes for facilitators:**

This type of activity must be especially adapted to the context, so it is necessary to know the associative network and the reference people who can play this role, regardless of whether the facilitator already occupies a socio-cultural position similar to that of the group members, and therefore would already be fulfilling this reference function from the beginning of the relationship with the group.

## ACTIVITY 8

# ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT OUTSIDE THE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL CENTRE

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**OBJECTIVES:** To get out of the “indoor sessions” scheme to generate another way of relating and an affective experience in contact with the local community.

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**DURATION:** 2 - 3 hours.

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**MATERIALS:** Possibility of group travel to or within the locality by private or public transport.

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### DESCRIPTION

During the first phase of the research, one of the needs for improvement that was detected was the contact of children with the local community, beyond the attendance to an educational centre or to an internship. In this sense, the activities and relationships they establish in their free or leisure time are important. In the socio-educational context of X-MEN, it may be possible to mix leisure with educational activity.

### DEVELOPMENT

1. When programming the intervention, it is recommended to consider activities related to the objectives of the project and the socio-educational needs of the group. It could be a conference promoted by a social or neighbourhood group, a cultural or sport activity, etc.
2. Our experience was based on attending the screening of a documentary on unaccompanied migrant children in the context of the anti-racist days organised by a local neighbourhood group. There,

the members of the group came into contact with local people who were sensitive to the issue and with participants in the documentary who had experienced their situation. In addition, they took part in the colloquium as migrant minors and made some contacts to potentially go to when they come of age. In short, they got to know a 'safe place' in the city.

3. The facilitator's task here has more to do with coordinating with the professionals in the residential centre for minors and with the space to go to, if necessary, as well as taking care of the group for the duration of the activity.

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## C. ARTISTIC ACTIVITY

### ACTIVITY 9

## COLLECTIVE CREATION OF AN ANTI-RACIST AND GENDER-SENSITIVE SONG.

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**OBJECTIVES:** To promote the agency of unaccompanied migrant children in sending a message of gender and racial equality to the host society.

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**DURATION:** The duration has to be adapted to the possibilities of the context. A minimum of 5 sessions of 1h30 is recommended to carry out the indicative steps given in the description.

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**MATERIALS:** Audio-visual equipment (laptop, loudspeaker), Internet connection or downloaded reference videos, digital drum kit of musical bases, paper, pens, printer, large and comfortable rehearsal space.

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### DESCRIPTION

- Step 1.** Dialogue on music, hip hop, types of hip hop, hip hop for social denunciation, hip hop as a powerful tool for expression and communication. Examples of singers and other similar amateur creations.
- Step 2.** Focus on the following questions to inspire the creation of the lyrics:
  - What would you say to someone who thinks he/she is superior to someone else because of the colour of their skin?
  - What would you say to another boy who thinks he is superior to women just because he is a boy?

The aim of these 2 questions is to encourage anti-sexist interpellation among men and the empathetic connection between the racism they are likely to suffer (but also exercise among themselves) and the machismo they are likely to exercise.

3. **Step 3.** Choose a base from a set of short clips. Once they have been listened to, they can be voted on and grouped from highest to lowest until a consensus is reached.
4. **Step 4.** Lyrics creation is a process that can be done individually or in pairs, always with writing support. For children who have particular difficulty in writing because they come from oral cultures, a recorder can be used with a mobile phone or directly with someone to support them in writing. Different languages can be used, translating the content afterwards.
5. **Step 5.** Organisation of the lyrics by paragraphs and distribution of paragraphs among participants. Reflection on the lyrics, changes if necessary and closing of the text.
6. **Step 6.** Individual and group rehearsals with the chosen base.
7. **Step 7.** Recording the song and editing. If you do not have recording and editing equipment, you should have access to a studio, either by requesting it in advance from a public facility or by other means. If you have the resources, it is recommended that you record the process and make a video clip that allows you to return to the group, but also to society itself through its dissemination.
8. **Step 8.** Feedback, collective listening, comments, reflections.

**Notes for facilitators:**

It is recommended that these sessions are conducted by a professional specialised in social education through hip hop.

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## D. EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY 10

## EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

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**OBJECTIVES:** To activate the memory of what has been done and experienced in the sessions, to identify the thought forces and affection forces that the training has generated, to find out their degree of satisfaction in terms of whether or not they recommend the training and to analyse the group's discourse in relation to the objective of the training.

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**DURATION:** 1h45.

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**MATERIALS:** A paper panel, adhesive, post-it notes, markers, marker pens

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### DESCRIPTION

For evaluation purposes, the following three activities should be carried out consecutively:

- 1. Reminiscing (15 - 20 min):** Through a dynamic presentation, photos of all sessions held will be presented while the song the participants have created is played. While looking at the photos of each session, questions are asked:
  - What did we do that day?
  - What did we talk about?
  - What happened?

- What was the activity for?
- What did you learn that day? etc.

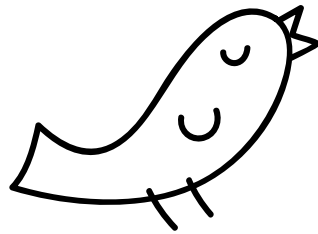
2. **Tell a friend** (30 - 45 min): A target is drawn on a board on the wall and participants are asked to respond in writing or drawing, in the language of their choice, to the following:

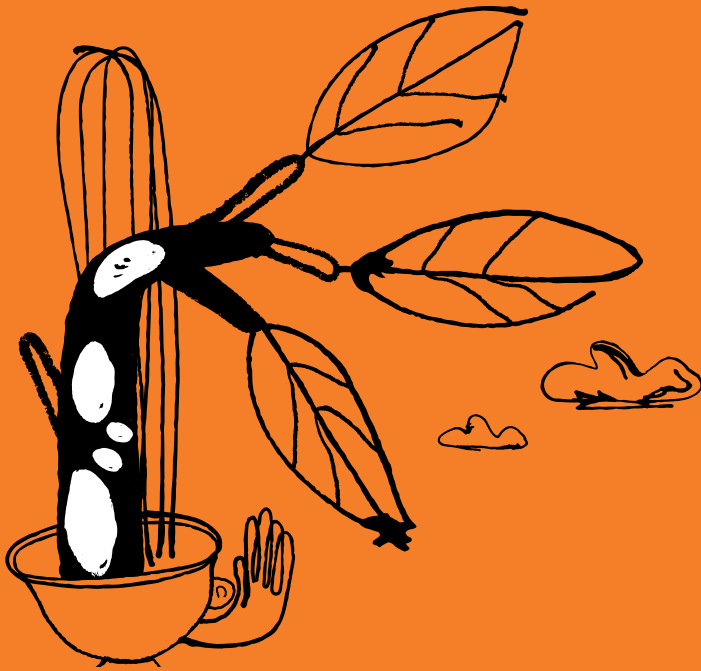
*Imagine you had to tell a friend what these workshops were about, what 3 important words would you need to explain it so that he/she would understand?*

Participants are asked to place the post-it notes inside the dartboard if they would recommend the training and outside the dartboard ring if they would not. Each idea should be on a post-it note (a word cloud can be made on the spot). Once they have been placed, anyone who wants to comment on their post-it notes and justify where they have placed them is asked to present them in front of the group. Another possibility is for the group to look at the panel and choose 3 ideas that appear that they agree with (which are not the ones they have put up) and comment on them.

3. **Content analysis of the lyrics of the song** (30 - 40 min): On the one hand, the lyrics can be presented in numbered paragraphs and each paragraph on a large sheet of paper on the wall. The group reads through the lyrics and each member chooses a favourite paragraph (not written by him/her) and justifies why he/she particularly likes it. On the other hand, from an adult specialised approach and outside the session, it is recommended to carry out a discourse analysis of the lyrics as evidence of the result of the reflections, as the lyrics should be a sample of the ideas of equality worked on in the sessions.







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**“When Men Change”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXaFRrl-L7O>

**“When Men Change”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bk69eDLS1RE>

**(91) J&B - She, un cuento de J&B, English subs (“She, a tale by J&B”, Diageo, Xmas, 2022) - YouTube**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOVVgEtuybk>

**Parent. – Engaging men to promote change in social attitudes and behaviour regarding gender roles in caregiving. (uc.pt)**

<https://parent.ces.uc.pt>

**(92) Gillette’s ‘We believe: the best men can be’ razors commercial takes on toxic masculinity - YouTube**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYaY2Kb\\_PKI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYaY2Kb_PKI)

**espnW Brasil - Invisible Players (youtube.com)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoZrZ7qPqio>

**Cidade Invisível | Antena 1 - RTP**

<https://antena1.rtp.pt/antena1/cidade-invisivel/>

**Interview “Morad habla del clasismo y racismo en su paso por un colegio jesuita - Lo de Évole**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qkaBvbSE94>

**Tea and Consent (youtube.com)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrXVavnQ>







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