



CRONOS STRATEGY

Optimized centralized resources for continuous non-discriminatory strategies

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Introduction

This guide has been designed primarily as a working tool for trainers, facilitators and professionals involved in education and training. At the same time, it is addressed to anyone interested in better understanding the phenomenon of discrimination and discovering concrete ways in which they can contribute to combating it in everyday life.

Discrimination is a present reality, sometimes visible, sometimes subtle, that influences relationships between people, access to opportunities and social cohesion. Many times, it does not arise from negative intentions, but from lack of information, stereotypes or mechanisms that we are not aware of. That is why education and reflection become essential tools for change.

This guide aims to provide not only theoretical information, but also practical tools, examples and methods that can be used in various contexts – from training sessions to situations in personal or professional life. It is a material that encourages questions, dialogue and the development of a more open and critical perspective on social reality.

This guide is part of the Erasmus+ CRONOS project, an international partnership initiative that aims to contribute to the prevention and reduction of discrimination through education, awareness-raising and skills development. The experiences and contributions of partners from different countries have informed the content of this material, providing a diverse and relevant perspective at European level.

1. History of Discrimination

Discrimination is not a recent phenomenon, nor is it accidental – it has been, throughout history, integrated into social, economic and political structures. In many historical contexts, differentiation between individuals based on membership in a particular group (ethnic, religious, gender, social) has not only been tolerated, but legitimized by legal norms or social customs.

Discrimination in pre-modern societies

Early forms of discrimination can be traced back to ancient times, in the organization of stratified societies. For example, in Ancient Greece or the Roman Empire, the legal and social status of individuals was determined by origin, citizenship, or condition of freedom. Slaves, women, or foreigners had limited (or no) access to political and civil rights. These distinctions were considered natural and necessary for the maintenance of social order (Fredrickson, 2002).

Institutionalized discrimination in the modern period

With European colonial expansion (15th–19th centuries), discrimination took on systematic forms, based on racial ideologies. Colonized populations were often considered biologically or culturally inferior, which justified economic exploitation and social exclusion (UNESCO, 2015).

In the 19th–20th centuries, discrimination was formalized in legislation in various states:

- Racial segregation in the United States (Jim Crow Laws);
- Apartheid in South Africa;
- Restrictions on women's rights in most Western societies (e.g., limited access to voting until the first half of the 20th century).

These systems not only separated social groups, but also perpetuated deep economic and educational inequalities (Pager & Shepherd, 2008).

The 20th Century: From Normalization to Contestation

After World War II and the experience of the Holocaust, the international community began to recognize discrimination as a serious violation of fundamental human rights. The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) marked a turning point, establishing the principle of equal rights and non-discrimination.

Subsequently, major social movements – such as the US civil rights movement or feminist movements – contributed to eliminating discrimination from legislation and promoting equal opportunities. However, contemporary research shows that while explicit forms of discrimination have largely been legally sanctioned, subtle, indirect or systemic forms persist (European Commission, 2023).

Discrimination as a historical phenomenon: from status to "social category"

Historically, discrimination has often been linked to status (who has rights and who does not), then to belonging (race/ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, social class). The important transition for training is this: discrimination does not only operate at the level of individual attitudes, but can become institutionalized (through laws, public policies, administrative practices) and, precisely for that reason, can also be dismantled through norms, protection mechanisms and cultural changes. A major rupture in the modern understanding of discrimination occurs after World War II, when the principle of equality and non-discrimination becomes an explicit international norm (United Nations, 1948).

Germany: from legalized exclusion to modern anti-discrimination architecture

Institutionalized discrimination during the Nazi period

Germany provides one of the clearest examples of the transformation of prejudice into state policy. Between 1933–1939, the Nazi regime gradually built a legislative framework that isolated and excluded Jews from social, economic, and civic life; a central point is the Nuremberg Laws (1935), which stripped Jews of German citizenship and prohibited relations/marriage between “Jews” and “non-Jews,” setting the stage for escalating persecution (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum [USHMM], n.d.-a; USHMM, n.d.-b). In training, this is a useful case study to show how

discrimination becomes “normalized” through a succession of administrative and legal measures, not through a single act.

After 1945: legal consolidation and protection mechanisms

In contemporary Germany, a practical reference point for trainers is the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), which came into force in 2006, which provides a framework for preventing and sanctioning discrimination in areas such as employment and access to goods and services (General Act on Equal Treatment [AGG], 2006; Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, nd). In the logic of training, the AGG is relevant not only as a law, but also as an example of standardizing protection and clarifying concepts (forms of discrimination, burden of proof, remedies).

Italy: the "racial laws" of 1938 and reconstruction through the constitutional principle of equality

1938: formal discrimination against Jews in the fascist state

In fascist Italy, the racial laws (1938) introduced legal discrimination against Jews (exclusions from education, professions, public life, civil restrictions), becoming part of the mechanisms of wartime persecution (Yad Vashem, nd). For the trainer's guide, the idea of a "normative framework that produces exclusion" is important - not only direct violence, but also administrative barriers that reduce access to rights.

Post-war: equality in the Constitution and the development of the anti-discrimination framework

Italy anchors its principle of equality in art. 3 of the Constitution (UNAR, nd). Subsequently, in the European context, Italy transposes EU standards through normative acts that become relevant in formation because they provide procedures and institutions: for example, Legislative Decree 215/2003 (equality of treatment regardless of race/ethnicity) and Legislative Decree 216/2003 (equality in employment, including on grounds of religion/belief, disability, age, sexual orientation) (UNAR, nd; United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 2006).

Turkey: minorities, citizenship and discriminatory economic policies in the 20th century

Minorities and "othering" in the construction of the nation-state

In modern Turkey, discussions of discrimination frequently intersect with the topic **of minorities** and models of citizenship. Public policy and minority rights analyses highlight historical pressures for assimilation and barriers to full participation in social life (Kurban, 2007; Hatemi & Kurban, 2016).

Wealth Tax (Varlık Vergisi), 1942: economic discrimination with structural effects

A major historical landmark is the Wealth Tax (Varlık Vergisi) of 1942, associated in the literature with disproportionate effects on non-Muslim minorities and severe economic consequences (Kaya, 2014; Karaosmanoğlu, 2010). In a training, this example helps to explain indirect/structural discrimination: a measure formally presented as “general” can produce systematically different effects on some groups, reinforcing already existing inequalities.

Romania: Roma slavery, wartime anti-Semitic policies and the institutionalization of anti-discrimination protection

Roma slavery: "status" discrimination transformed into social legacy

A distinctive element for Romania is the slavery of the Roma (maintained for centuries in the Romanian space), abolished in the 1850s through normative acts in Moldova and Wallachia. In the training, the topic is relevant not only as a historical fact, but for the connection between history and contemporary inequalities (Drăgan, 2024).

World War II period: discrimination and persecution

In the context of war, anti-Semitic policies in Europe (including legislation and administrative exclusion measures) show how discrimination can evolve into systematic persecution (United

States Holocaust Memorial Museum). In training materials, this period is often used to discuss the “ladder” of escalation: stereotype → stigma → administrative exclusion → violence.

Contemporary framework: Ordinance 137/2000 and CNCD

In post-2000 Romania, a central landmark is Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, which defines discrimination and establishes the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD) as the relevant authority in the field (Ordinance No. 137/2000, 2000; Council of Europe, 2015). For trainers, this is the “practical tool” that links theory to reality: criteria, facts, sanctions, notification mechanisms and remedy.

1.1 Early forms of social exclusion

Social exclusion is one of the oldest mechanisms by which societies have organized the distribution of power, resources, and opportunities among their members. Before discrimination was conceptualized as a violation of fundamental human rights, differentiation between individuals based on social status, origin, or religious affiliation was perceived as a necessary element for maintaining social order.

Status-based exclusion in ancient societies

In ancient societies, such as Greece and Rome, participation in civic and political life was conditioned by the individual’s legal status. Citizenship was the main criterion of social inclusion, clearly delimiting who had the right to participate in decision-making processes and who was excluded. In Athenian democracy, for example, political rights were reserved exclusively for adult male citizens, while women, slaves, and metecenes (foreign residents) did not have access to the mechanisms of government (Giddens & Sutton, 2017).

Similarly, in the Roman Empire, slavery was a legal institution that legitimized the exclusion of a significant segment of the population from economic and political rights. Slaves were considered property, without legal personality, and the possibility of social mobility was extremely limited.

This form of social organization reflects one of the earliest manifestations of institutionalized discrimination based on status and origin (Fredrickson, 2002).

Social exclusion in the European Middle Ages

In the medieval period, social exclusion was perpetuated through the feudal system, which structured society according to membership in a certain social class: nobility, clergy, and peasantry. Social mobility was almost nonexistent, and access to education, property, or political participation was strictly limited by hereditary social position.

In addition to social class, religion became another determinant of inclusion or exclusion. Religious minorities, such as the Jewish communities of medieval Europe, were frequently subject to restrictions on property rights, the exercise of certain professions, or freedom of movement, and were segregated into distinct urban spaces (e.g., Jewish neighborhoods) (Allport, 1954).

Exclusion in the Eastern European and Ottoman space

In Eastern Europe, including the territories that would later form Romania, social exclusion was directly associated with the legal status of certain ethnic groups. The slavery of the Roma, maintained until the mid-19th century, represents an example of structural exclusion based on ethnic origin, which had long-term effects on the socio-economic integration of this group (Achim, 2004).



In the Ottoman Empire, the organization of society based on the millet system allowed a certain autonomy for religious communities, but it also established a formal hierarchy between the Muslim population and non-Muslim minorities, especially in terms of access to administrative positions or fiscal obligations (Barkey, 2008). This model of organization illustrates how religious differences could be integrated into an administrative system that reproduced structural inequalities.

Relevance for contemporary training

For training participants, understanding early forms of social exclusion is essential in contextualizing contemporary discrimination. Many of today's inequalities are not the result of isolated individual practices, but reflect historical continuities of social systems that have limited access to resources and opportunities for certain groups. Thus, historical analysis of social exclusion can contribute to developing a critical perspective on the mechanisms through which discrimination is perpetuated or contested in modern societies.

1.2 Institutionalized discrimination throughout historical periods.

The analysis of institutionalized discrimination becomes clearer when studied in concrete historical and national contexts. In Europe and in nearby regions, different states have developed, in certain historical periods, policies or legal systems that excluded or disadvantaged certain social groups. The examples from Romania, Germany, Italy and Turkey illustrate how discrimination can be formalized through laws, economic policies or administrative structures.

Romania

In the Romanian space, one of the most well-known historical forms of institutionalized discrimination is the slavery of the Roma, which existed for several centuries in the Romanian Principalities. The Roma were considered the property of the boyars, monasteries or the state, being deprived of legal freedom and civil rights. This form of social organization persisted until the mid-19th century, when it was abolished through a series of legislative reforms adopted between 1843 and 1856 (Achim, 2004).

During World War II, anti-Semitic policies and deportation measures represented another form of institutionalized discrimination, affecting Jewish and Roma communities. Legislation and administrative policies contributed to the marginalization of these groups and the restriction of their fundamental rights (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.).

After 1989, Romania developed a legislative framework aimed at combating discrimination. Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination introduced a legal mechanism for the protection of equal opportunities and led to the establishment of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD), the institution responsible for monitoring and sanctioning discriminatory acts (Council of Europe, 2015).

Germany

Germany represents one of the most studied cases of institutionalized discrimination in the 20th century. During the Nazi regime, the state created a legal system based on racial ideology,

culminating in the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. These defined German citizenship in "racial" terms, excluded Jews from the political community, and prohibited marriages or relationships between Jews and Germans considered "Aryan" (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

These laws represented the legal foundation of a system of systematic discrimination that later led to persecution and genocide. This case study is important for training trainers because it shows how discrimination can be implemented gradually, through legislation and state institutions.

In contemporary Germany, historical experience has led to the development of a solid legal framework for combating discrimination. The General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), adopted in 2006, prohibits discrimination on grounds such as race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation in areas such as employment and access to goods and services.

Italy

In Italy, institutionalized discrimination became visible during the fascist regime led by Benito Mussolini. In 1938, the regime introduced the Italian Racial Laws, which restricted the rights of Jewish citizens in areas such as education, public office, and property. Jews were excluded from the educational system and certain professions, and intermarriage was prohibited (Yad Vashem, n.d.).

These measures were part of a broader process of aligning Italy with the racial ideology promoted by Nazi Germany. After the fall of the fascist regime and the adoption of the Italian Constitution of 1948, the principle of equality before the law became a central element of the Italian legal system.

Italy currently has institutions and mechanisms dedicated to combating discrimination, including UNAR (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali), which monitors and combats racial and ethnic discrimination.

Turkey

In Turkey, discussions of institutionalized discrimination are often linked to state policies towards ethnic and religious minorities. A significant episode is the introduction of the wealth tax (Varlık Vergisi) in 1942, an economic measure that disproportionately affected non-Muslim communities,

especially Greeks, Armenians and Jews. In many cases, people who could not pay this tax were sent to forced labor camps (Kaya, 2014).

This episode is frequently analyzed in academic literature as a form of institutionalized economic discrimination, as fiscal policy was applied differently depending on ethnic or religious affiliation.

In recent decades, legislative reforms inspired by the process of rapprochement with the European Union have introduced mechanisms aimed at reducing discrimination and strengthening the protection of minority rights, although debates regarding equality and minority rights continue to be present in contemporary Turkish society.

Relevance for trainings:

For trainers working in the field of civic education and combating discrimination, the comparative analysis of these four contexts offers several important lessons:

1. Institutionalized discrimination occurs when the state legitimizes differences between groups.
2. Legislation can be used both to create discrimination and to combat it.
3. History influences contemporary inequalities, and understanding the historical context is essential for developing effective educational interventions.

Thus, studying these historical examples contributes to developing a critical perspective on how institutions can reproduce or, conversely, reduce social inequalities.

1.3 Discrimination in the 20th century.

The 20th century represents one of the most important periods for the analysis of discrimination in human rights studies. This period was characterized by two major, seemingly contradictory trends: on the one hand, the development of extremely severe systems of institutionalized discrimination, and on the other hand, the emergence of the modern international legal framework for the protection of human rights and the fight against discrimination.

For trainers carrying out educational activities in the field of social inclusion and human rights, the 20th century provides important examples that illustrate how discrimination can become part of social and political structures, but also how it can be challenged and reduced through legislation, education and social mobilization.

The general context of discrimination in the 20th century

In the first half of the 20th century, many states developed policies based on racial, ethnic, or religious classifications. These classifications were incorporated into legislation and influenced access to civil rights, education, property, and political participation.

The concept of institutionalized discrimination describes situations in which discrimination is embedded in the political and administrative structures of society. In such cases, inequality does not result solely from individual prejudices, but is supported by laws, public policies, and institutional practices (Pager & Shepherd, 2008).

Several historical systems illustrate this reality, including racial legislation in fascist Europe, racial segregation in the United States, and the apartheid system in South Africa.

Germany: Racial Discrimination and the Nazi Regime

Nazi Germany is one of the most studied examples of institutionalized discrimination. After the Nazi Party came to power in 1933, the regime introduced a series of policies based on racial ideology.

A defining moment was the adoption of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, which redefined German citizenship on racial grounds. These laws established that only those considered to be of “German blood or related blood” could be citizens of the Reich. The Jewish population was excluded from the political community and lost many civil rights (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.).

The laws prohibited marriage between Jews and Germans and restricted Jewish access to education, professions, and property. In the following years, these measures were expanded,

contributing to the economic and social marginalization of the Jewish community and setting the stage for the systematic persecutions during the Holocaust.

For trainers, this case is relevant because it demonstrates how discrimination can evolve gradually, starting from administrative restrictions and reaching complete exclusion from society.

Italy: racial legislation during the fascist period

In Italy, institutionalized discrimination became evident during the fascist regime led by Benito Mussolini. In 1938, the Italian government passed the Fascist Racial Laws, which imposed restrictions on the Jewish community.

These laws prohibited Jews from holding public office, working in certain professions, or attending public schools. Marriages between Jews and Italian citizens considered "Aryan" were also prohibited (Yad Vashem, n.d.).

These measures were adopted in a political context marked by the influence of European racial ideology and the political rapprochement between fascist Italy and Nazi Germany.

For trainers, the example of Italy highlights how authoritarian regimes can use legislation to legitimize discrimination and social exclusion.

Romania: ethnic discrimination and legislative changes

In Romania, discrimination in the 20th century was influenced by the regional political context and developments during World War II.

During this period, anti-Semitic policies and administrative measures adopted by the state restricted the rights of Jewish communities. The Roma population was also subjected to forms of marginalization and deportation during the war (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.).

These policies had major consequences on the social and economic structures of the affected communities.

After 1989, Romania began to develop a legislative framework to combat discrimination. An important moment was the adoption of Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, which introduced legal mechanisms to protect equal opportunities and led to the establishment of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD).

For trainers, this example highlights the fact that societies can evolve from discriminatory systems to the development of institutional mechanisms for the protection of human rights.

Turkey: economic discrimination and the relationship with minorities

In Turkey, one of the most discussed forms of institutionalized discrimination in the 20th century is the introduction of the wealth tax (Varlık Vergisi) in 1942.

This tax was officially presented as an economic measure to support the economy during the war. However, in practice, the taxes imposed on non-Muslim minorities, including the Greek, Armenian and Jewish communities, were much higher than those applied to the Muslim population (Kaya, 2014).

Many who could not pay these taxes were sent to forced labor camps. This episode is often analyzed in academic literature as a form of institutionalized economic discrimination, as tax policies were applied differently depending on ethnicity or religion.

The emergence of the international human rights framework

After World War II, the international community began to develop legal instruments to prevent discrimination.

The adoption of **the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948** was a defining moment in this process. The document states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and prohibits discrimination on grounds such as race, religion, sex or social origin (United Nations, 1948). This declaration is not a legally binding treaty, but it has become the normative foundation for numerous international legal instruments.

The document influenced the development of anti-discrimination legislation in numerous states and formed the basis of subsequent international conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Aspects that trainers can highlight in training activities

In training programs on discrimination and social inclusion, the analysis of the 20th century can be used to highlight some fundamental ideas:

- discrimination can be supported by institutions and legislation;
- political ideologies and social context can influence how different social groups are treated;
- Major social changes are often the result of the interaction between civic activism, education, and legislative reforms;
- Human rights education plays an essential role in preventing the reproduction of stereotypes and prejudices.

For trainers, these historical examples can be used to stimulate critical reflection among participants and facilitate discussions about how discrimination manifests itself in contemporary society.

1.4 The emergence of the international human rights framework

Following the dramatic experiences of institutionalized discrimination in the first half of the 20th century – notably the Holocaust, totalitarian regimes and systems of racial segregation – the international community began to develop a global legal framework designed to protect fundamental human rights. The emergence of this framework represented a turning point in the

history of discrimination: for the first time, the principle of equality and non-discrimination was officially recognized as a universal standard.

In the following decades, the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration, mentioned in the previous chapter, were developed through a series of international treaties. Among the most important are the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). These legal instruments established concrete obligations for states to combat discrimination and promote equality.

For trainers, this development is essential because it demonstrates how the historical lessons of the 20th century have led to the creation of global mechanisms designed to prevent the recurrence of abuses. Integrating these milestones into training activities allows participants to understand that human rights are not abstract concepts, but the results of complex historical and political processes.

1.5 European benchmarks in combating discrimination

At the European level, the development of the anti-discrimination framework was influenced by the continent's historical experiences, in particular the consequences of World War II. European states began to create regional mechanisms aimed at protecting fundamental rights and preventing discrimination.

A significant moment was the adoption **of the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950** , within the Council of Europe. The Convention establishes a series of fundamental rights and includes the principle of non-discrimination in the exercise of these rights. The implementation of the Convention is overseen by **the European Court of Human Rights** , an institution that allows individuals to file complaints against states in the event of violations of their rights (Council of Europe, 1950).

Within the European Union, anti-discrimination policies have been strengthened since the 1990s and 2000s. **The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union** , adopted in 2000, affirms the principle of equality and prohibits discrimination on grounds such as sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation (European Union, 2000).

Another important milestone is the adoption of **European directives on equal treatment** , including the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC). These legal instruments oblige member states to adopt national legislation to prevent and punish discrimination.

In the context of these developments, many European states – including Romania, Germany and Italy – have developed national institutions dedicated to combating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities.

The relevance of these developments for trainers

For trainers working in the field of human rights education, these historical landmarks are important for several reasons:

- provides a **conceptual and legal framework** for discussions about discrimination;
- highlights how historical experiences have influenced the development of international norms;
- helps participants understand the role of national and international institutions in protecting fundamental rights;
- facilitates the connection between the history of discrimination and contemporary policies of inclusion and equality.

By integrating these benchmarks into training programs, trainers can contribute to the development of a critical perspective on human rights and the institutional mechanisms that support the fight against discrimination in contemporary society.

2. Why do people discriminate?

Understanding why people discriminate is a central element for training programs dedicated to human rights, social inclusion and combating discrimination. For trainers, simply defining discrimination is not enough. It is necessary to explore the psychological, social, cultural and political mechanisms that lead to the emergence and perpetuation of this phenomenon.

Discrimination does not occur in isolation. It is the result of a complex combination of factors: individual cognitive processes, historical social structures, cultural norms, economic interests, and political dynamics. The media environment and contemporary digital technologies can also amplify or reproduce existing prejudices.

This chapter provides a broad analysis of why people discriminate, integrating perspectives from psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Historical and contemporary examples from Germany, Italy, Romania, and Turkey are used to illustrate how these mechanisms manifest themselves in real-world contexts.

For trainers, the purpose of this analysis is twofold: on the one hand to provide a solid theoretical framework, and on the other hand to facilitate discussions and critical reflections within training activities.

2.1 Psychological perspectives

Social psychology explains the emergence of discrimination by the way people process information about the social environment. In everyday life, individuals are exposed to a very large volume of information about people, groups, and social situations. To manage this complexity, the human brain frequently uses **cognitive shortcuts (heuristics)** that allow for quick decision-making and efficient interpretation of social reality.

Although these cognitive mechanisms are essential for daily functioning, they can generate **systematic errors of judgment** and contribute to the emergence of stereotypes and prejudices (Kahneman, 2011). Heuristics allow for the simplification of reality, but this simplification often involves classifying people into social categories – such as ethnicity, gender, religion or nationality – which can lead to excessive generalizations.

Stereotypes and their role in discrimination

A central concept in the psychology of discrimination is that of **the stereotype** . Stereotypes are generalized mental representations about the characteristics of members of a particular social group. These can be positive, negative, or ambivalent, but become problematic when they are rigidly applied to all individuals in a group, ignoring their diversity and individuality.

Stereotypes arise because people tend to organize social information into categories to simplify cognitive processing. According to research in social psychology, social categorization is a natural process that allows people to more quickly understand the social environment (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). However, when these categories become associated with negative evaluations or rigid expectations, they can lead to **prejudice** and subsequently to **discriminatory behaviors** .

For example, stereotypes about certain ethnic or religious groups can influence how individuals interpret the behaviors of others. Research shows that people tend to interpret the actions of members of a negatively perceived group as confirmations of existing stereotypes, while positive behaviors are often considered exceptions (Allport, 1954).

A study conducted by **Eurobarometer (2019)** shows that approximately **59% of European Union citizens believe that discrimination based on ethnic criteria is widespread in society** , and stereotypes about minorities are one of the main factors in this perception (European Commission, 2019).

For trainers, it is important to emphasize that stereotypes do not always arise from explicit hostility. In many cases, they are the result of automatic cognitive mechanisms and repeated exposure to certain cultural or social messages.

Social identity and polarization between groups ("us" and "them")

Another important explanation for the emergence of discrimination is offered by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to this perspective, people tend to define their identity by belonging to certain social groups – family, nation, religion, ethnicity, political group or cultural community.

This process can lead to the emergence of favoritism towards one's own group (ingroup favoritism) and to the more negative evaluation of groups perceived as different (outgroup bias). Even in

situations where the differences between groups are minimal or arbitrary, individuals can show a tendency to favor members of their own group.

In tense social or political contexts, this differentiation between "us" and "them" can be amplified through public discourse, media or propaganda, contributing to social polarization and justifying the exclusion of certain groups.

For training activities, this perspective is relevant because it helps participants understand that discrimination does not only occur at the individual level, but also through mechanisms of social belonging and collective identity.

Implicit bias

Another important psychological mechanism is **implicit bias**. This concept refers to unconscious attitudes or associations that influence individuals' perceptions and decisions without them being aware of them.

Even people who claim to support equality and reject discrimination may exhibit implicit biases when evaluating others. These biases are the result of social experiences, cultural norms, and exposure to stereotypes in the media or social environment.

One of the most well-known instruments for measuring implicit bias is **the Implicit Association Test (IAT)**, developed by researchers at Harvard University. Analysis of millions of results obtained through Project Implicit shows that **approximately 70–75% of participants show an implicit preference for the majority group compared to minority groups**, even when they declare egalitarian attitudes (Greenwald, Banaji & Nosek, 2015).

For trainers, understanding implicit bias is important because many discriminatory behaviors are not always intentional or conscious by the people who exhibit them.

Implicit bias in recruitment processes

Implicit biases can significantly influence decisions in areas such as education, recruitment, or professional performance evaluation.

A highly influential study by **Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004)** in the United States examined how candidates' names influence their chances of getting hired. The researchers sent over 5,000 identical CVs to employers, the only difference being the candidates' names – some perceived as belonging to the white majority, others associated with African-American minorities.

The results showed that:

- Resumes with **names perceived as "white"** received **approximately 50% more interview invitations** than those with names associated with minorities.
- Candidates with minority names had to send **approximately 10 more resumes** to receive the same number of positive responses as those with majority names.

Similar studies conducted later in Europe have confirmed the existence of this phenomenon. For example, an analysis conducted in several European countries showed that **candidates with names perceived as belonging to ethnic minorities receive between 20% and 40% fewer invitations to interviews** compared to majority candidates (Heath & Di Stasio, 2019).

These examples are useful in training because they demonstrate that discrimination can occur even in the absence of explicit exclusionary intentions.

Fear, perceived threat, and competition for resources:

Discrimination can also be influenced by perceptions of social or economic threat. Some theories in social psychology, such as Realistic Conflict Theory, argue that intergroup tensions occur more frequently when people perceive competition for resources, jobs, social status, or political influence.

In times of economic crisis, political instability, or rapid social change, certain minority groups can become targets of collective frustrations. Political leaders or populist discourses can amplify these perceptions by identifying “culprit groups” for social or economic problems.

For trainers, this perspective is important because it explains why discrimination can increase during times marked by social anxiety, insecurity, or public polarization.

Propaganda and the manipulation of stereotypes: the example of Nazi Germany

History offers numerous examples where the psychological mechanisms of stereotypes and prejudice have been strategically used to legitimize discrimination.

In Nazi Germany, the regime's propaganda systematically exploited stereotypes and the process of **dehumanization** to create a negative image of Jews and other minority groups. Official propaganda presented Jews as dangerous, inferior, or responsible for the economic problems of German society.

Historical research shows that such repeated representations in the media and in education contributed to the normalization of discrimination and the social acceptance of antisemitic policies (Fredrickson, 2002).

For example, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) estimates that **approximately 25% of European adults still exhibit antisemitic attitudes**, demonstrating that historical stereotypes can have long-term effects on social perceptions (ADL Global Index, 2019).

2.2 Sociological perspectives

From a sociological perspective, discrimination is analyzed as a **structural and institutional phenomenon**, not simply as the result of negative individual attitudes. Sociologists emphasize

that discrimination often occurs when **social structures, institutions, and cultural norms produce or maintain inequalities between social groups** (Pager & Shepherd, 2008).

This perspective is important because it shifts the focus from individual behavior to **the organization of society** and how resources, opportunities, and power are distributed among different social groups.

Structural and institutional discrimination

The concept of **structural discrimination** refers to situations in which social inequalities are produced or perpetuated by institutional structures, even when there are no explicit intentions of discrimination.

Social institutions – such as the education system, the labor market, the legal system, or the political system – can reproduce inequalities through seemingly neutral mechanisms. For example, educational policies or recruitment practices can indirectly favor certain social groups and disadvantage others.

Sociologists highlight that **unequal access to social resources** is one of the main mechanisms through which structural discrimination is perpetuated. Resources such as education, economic capital or social networks strongly influence individuals' chances of social mobility (Bourdieu, 1986).

For example, limited access to quality education can lead to reduced opportunities in the labor market. These differences can be transmitted between generations, thus reinforcing **cycles of social inequality**.

Eurostat data, in the European Union, early school leaving rates are significantly higher among marginalized groups. In the case of Roma communities, approximately **63% of Roma youth do not complete secondary education**, compared to approximately **10% of the general EU population** (European Commission, 2022). These educational gaps subsequently influence access to the labor market and economic stability.

Structural inequalities in Romania

In Romania, the sociological analysis of discrimination highlights the situation of Roma communities as a relevant example of structural marginalization.

Historically, Roma communities have been affected by processes of social exclusion, including the period of Roma slavery in the Romanian Principalities and the marginalization policies of the following centuries. These historical processes had consequences on access to education, housing and economic opportunities.

According to **the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** , approximately **80% of Roma in Europe face the risk of poverty** , and in many Roma communities the unemployment rate is significantly higher than in the majority population (FRA, 2021).

In Romania, reports show that:

- over **70% of Roma live below the poverty line** ,
- approximately **50% of Roma do not have stable access to formal jobs** ,
- and the level of school segregation remains high in certain regions (European Commission, 2022).

These structural inequalities can perpetuate discrimination even in the absence of explicit discriminatory policies, as individuals from marginalized groups start from **disadvantaged social positions** .

Institutionalized discrimination in Germany and Italy

In sociology, historical examples of **institutionalized discrimination** are used to illustrate how institutions can legitimize and reproduce inequalities.

In Nazi Germany, **the Nuremberg Laws of 1935** redefined German citizenship and excluded the Jewish population from political and social life. These laws prohibited marriage between Jews and German citizens and restricted Jewish access to education, professions, and property (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.).

In Fascist Italy, **the 1938 racial laws** imposed similar restrictions, excluding Jewish citizens from the educational system and many professions. These measures were part of a political system that used legislation to legitimize racial discrimination (Yad Vashem, n.d.).

These examples demonstrate how discrimination can be embedded in institutions and legitimized through legislation.

Structural discrimination in the labor market

Sociologists have extensively analyzed discrimination in employment. Research shows that ethnic or religious minorities frequently face structural barriers to access to jobs.

A study conducted in several European countries shows that **candidates with names perceived as belonging to ethnic minorities receive between 20% and 40% fewer invitations to interviews** than majority candidates with identical qualifications (Heath & Di Stasio, 2019).

These results suggest that discrimination can occur even in systems that formally declare equal opportunities.

2.3 Anthropological perspectives

Anthropology offers a different perspective on discrimination, focusing on the **cultural, evolutionary, and symbolic origins of human behavior**. Unlike psychology, which analyzes individual cognitive processes, or sociology, which focuses on social structures, anthropology studies how **cultural norms, collective identities, and historical processes shape relationships between groups** (Eriksen, 2015).

The evolutionary origin of in-group preference

In pre-modern societies, people lived in relatively small communities, organized around kinship or tribal affiliation. Survival depended largely on cooperation between members of the group and its ability to protect itself from external threats.

In this context, anthropologists and evolutionary psychologists argue that humans have developed a natural tendency to favor members of their own group – a phenomenon known as **in-group favoritism** – and to show suspicion or distance towards members of other groups (**out-group**) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

This mechanism is sometimes described as **tribalism** , a term that refers to the tendency of individuals to identify strongly with their group and perceive other groups as fundamentally different or potentially threatening.

Experimental research in social psychology has shown that this tendency occurs even in artificial situations. In the famous **minimal group experiment** , Henri Tajfel showed that people can show favoritism towards their own group even when the groups are randomly created and there are no real differences between the participants (Tajfel, 1970).

Although these mechanisms had an adaptive role in the evolutionary context of the human species, in modern societies they can contribute to the emergence of phenomena of **xenophobia, ethnocentrism and discrimination** .

Ethnocentrism and the perception of cultural difference

Another central concept in anthropology is **ethnocentrism** , which refers to the tendency of individuals to interpret other cultures through the lens of their own cultural values and norms (Sumner, 1906).

Ethnocentrism is not necessarily negative in itself, as it provides individuals with a sense of belonging and cultural identity. However, when combined with perceptions of cultural superiority, it can lead to the **stigmatization or marginalization of other groups** .

For example, comparative research shows that perceptions of minorities or migrants are often influenced by the perceived level of “cultural distance.” The more religiously, linguistically, or

culturally different a group is perceived to be, the more likely it is to develop negative stereotypes (Eriksen, 2015).

Eurobarometer data (2019) , approximately **45% of European citizens believe that immigration from outside the European Union represents a major challenge to national cultural identity** , which reflects the tensions between cultural diversity and the perception of national identity.

Cultural identity and mechanisms for protecting traditions

Anthropologists emphasize that cultural identity plays a crucial role in how social groups define and organize themselves. Culture includes language, religion, traditions, values, and social practices that give meaning and cohesion to a community.

Social groups often develop **mechanisms to protect their cultural identity** , especially in the context of rapid social change or globalization. In certain situations, these mechanisms can contribute to the emergence of defensive attitudes towards other cultural groups.

For example, debates about immigration, minorities, or multiculturalism often reflect tensions between two different goals:

- protecting national cultural identity;
- promoting diversity and social inclusion.

These tensions can become more intense during periods of rapid economic or political change.

The example of Turkey: national identity and cultural diversity

A relevant example from an anthropological perspective is the case of Turkey, where discussions about national identity and minorities have been present throughout modern history.

The modern Turkish state was built in the 20th century around the idea of a common national identity. In this context, debates about ethnic or religious minorities – including Kurdish,

Armenian or Greek communities – have sometimes reflected tensions between **national unity and cultural pluralism** (Kurban, 2007).

Sociological research shows that public perceptions of minorities can vary depending on the political and economic context. For example, a study by **the Pew Research Center (2017)** shows that approximately **48% of respondents in Turkey consider cultural diversity a challenge for society**, while other respondents perceive it as a social resource.

These results reflect the complexity of the relationships between cultural identity and perceptions of diversity.

2.4 Contemporary situation

In contemporary society, discrimination no longer frequently occurs in explicitly legal forms, as it did in the past, when certain states adopted legislation that officially excluded certain social groups from political, economic, or educational life. Today, most democratic states have adopted laws that prohibit discrimination and promote the principle of equality before the law.

However, discrimination continues to exist, but it often manifests itself in **indirect, structural, or subtle forms** that are more difficult to identify and combat. In sociology and human rights studies, these forms are often described as **structural or systemic discrimination**, as they result from the way social institutions and practices are organized (Pager & Shepherd, 2008).

Contemporary forms of discrimination

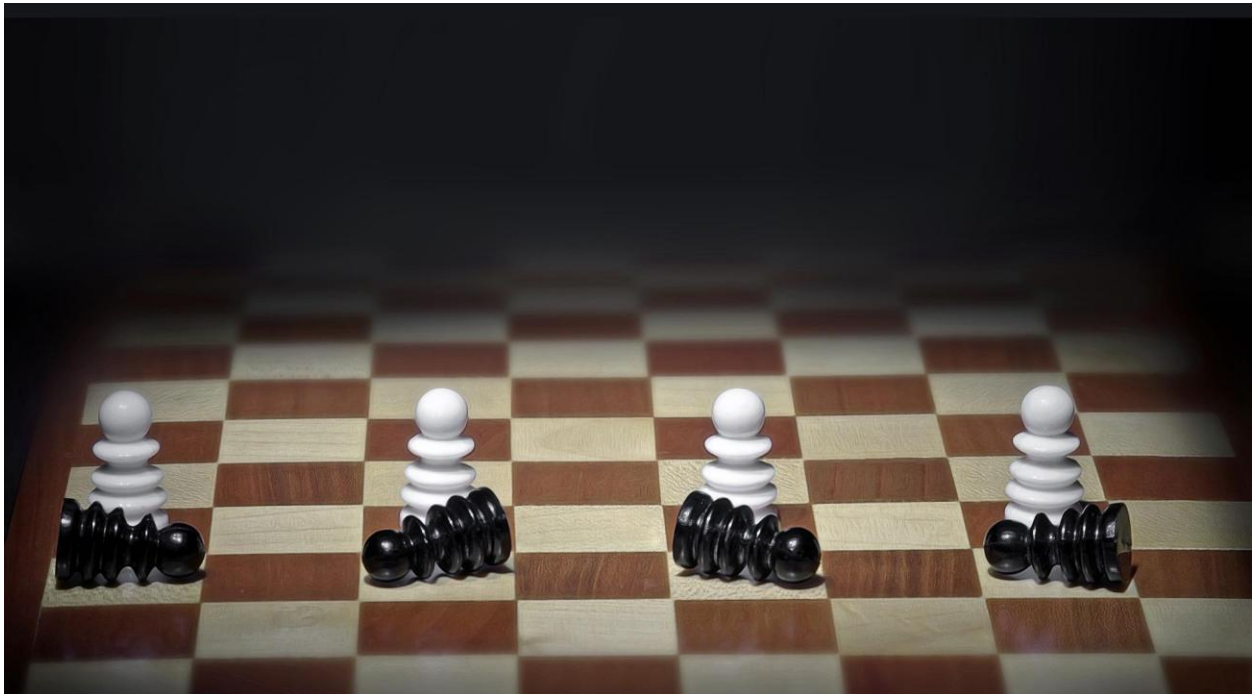
Modern discrimination can occur in multiple areas of social life, including:

- access to jobs;
- access to housing;
- access to education;
- access to public services and health services.

Sometimes these inequalities are not the result of explicitly discriminatory policies, but rather emerge as indirect effects of seemingly neutral institutional practices. For example, criteria such

as professional experience, social networks, or geographic location may favor certain groups and disadvantage others.

A frequently discussed example in the sociological literature is discrimination in the labor market. Research conducted in several European countries shows that people belonging to ethnic or religious minorities are often less likely to be invited to job interviews, even when they have similar qualifications to those of the majority candidates (Heath & Di Stasio, 2019).



Discrimination in contemporary Europe

In the European Union, numerous studies show that discrimination continues to be perceived as a significant social problem. According to **Eurobarometer (2019)** :

- **59% of European citizens believe that discrimination based on ethnic criteria is widespread in society;**
- **44% believe that discrimination based on sexual orientation is frequent;**
- **40% consider religious discrimination to be an important problem.**

These data suggest that although the legislative framework has evolved significantly, perceptions and experiences of discrimination remain present in social life.

Regarding access to employment, a study conducted by **the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** shows that approximately **39% of people belonging to ethnic minorities in Europe report having experienced discrimination in the employment process** (FRA, 2021).

Examples from Germany, Italy, Romania

In Germany, anti-discrimination legislation was strengthened with the adoption of **the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG)** in 2006, which prohibits discrimination on grounds such as ethnic origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation. However, reports from the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency show that complaints of discrimination continue to be frequent, particularly in the areas of employment and housing.

In Italy, anti-discrimination legislation is influenced by European Union directives and includes institutions such as **UNAR (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali)** . However, human rights organizations report that migrants and ethnic minorities still face difficulties in accessing housing and jobs.

In Romania, the legislative framework for combating discrimination was strengthened by **Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination** and by the activity of **the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD)** .

However, European reports show that certain social groups continue to be affected by structural inequalities. For example, **FRA data (2021)** shows that:

- approximately **80% of Roma in Europe are at risk of poverty**
- approximately **44% of Roma say they have experienced discrimination in the last 12 months**

This data suggests that contemporary discrimination is often linked to **broader social inequalities** , such as poverty, educational segregation, or economic marginalization.

In Turkey, the fight against discrimination is supported by institutions such as **the Turkish Human Rights and Equality Institution (TİHEK)** , but social challenges remain significant. The migration context has an important impact, given that Turkey hosts over 3.5 million Syrian refugees, and international reports indicate difficulties related to social integration, access to jobs and services.

Human rights organizations also highlight the existence of regional inequalities and forms of discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. These aspects show that, similar to other European countries, discrimination in Turkey is influenced by social and economic factors as well as the cultural and political context.

Migration, political polarization and new forms of discrimination

In recent decades, the phenomenon of international migration has become an important factor in debates about discrimination and cultural diversity. In many European societies, increasing ethnic and religious diversity has generated both social and economic opportunities and political tensions.

According to **the Pew Research Center (2018)** , approximately **49% of Europeans believe that immigration has significantly changed the cultural identity of their societies** , and these perceptions can influence attitudes towards minorities and migrants.

Political polarization and the spread of populist discourses can contribute to amplifying these tensions. In some contexts, minority groups are portrayed as responsible for economic or social problems, which can fuel stereotypes and prejudices.

2.5 Economic and political factors

Economic and political factors often play an important role in amplifying discrimination. In many historical and contemporary contexts, discrimination does not arise solely as a result of individual prejudices, but is influenced by **economic dynamics, competition for resources, and the political strategies of institutional actors** . Sociologists and political scientists emphasize that,

in times of economic uncertainty or social instability, certain social groups can become scapegoats for society's problems (Quillian, 1995).

Economic crises and the emergence of discriminatory discourses

In times of economic crisis, competition for resources such as jobs, housing, or public services can increase tensions between social groups. In such contexts, political leaders or public actors may use discourses that attribute responsibility for economic problems to certain minority groups.

Sociological research shows that negative perceptions of minorities often increase during periods of economic recession. For example, a comparative study conducted in European countries shows that **the perceived level of economic competition between groups is associated with an increase in xenophobic and anti-immigration attitudes** (Quillian, 1995).

data (2019) shows that approximately **38% of European Union citizens believe that immigration negatively affects the labor market**, which indicates the existence of a perception of economic competition between the majority population and migrants.

Interwar Europe: the economic crisis and the rise of xenophobic ideologies

An important historical example of the relationship between economic crises and discrimination is the interwar period in Europe. The global economic crisis of 1929 had profound effects on European economies, generating massive unemployment, social instability, and political tensions.

In this context, nationalist and xenophobic ideologies gained popularity in several European countries. In Germany, the economic crisis contributed to the rise of the Nazi Party, which promoted a racial ideology that identified Jews and other minorities as responsible for the economic difficulties of German society.

Similarly, in Fascist Italy, Benito Mussolini's regime adopted racial policies in 1938, influenced both by the European political context and by dominant nationalist ideologies (Fredrickson, 2002). These examples illustrate how **economic crises can create favorable conditions for the legitimization of discriminatory policies**.

Discriminatory economic policies: the example of Turkey

Another relevant example of the interaction between economics and discrimination is the introduction of **the wealth tax (Varlık Vergisi)** in Turkey in 1942. Officially, this tax was presented as an economic measure intended to support the economy during World War II.

In practice, however, historical research shows that this tax was disproportionately imposed on non-Muslim minorities, including the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities. In many cases, the taxes imposed on these groups were several times higher than those imposed on the majority Muslim population (Kaya, 2014).

Those who could not pay these taxes were sent to forced labor camps, and many minority-owned businesses were confiscated or transferred to the majority population. This policy had significant economic and social consequences for the affected communities and contributed to the reduction of the economic influence of minorities.

Economic inequalities and contemporary discrimination

In contemporary societies, the relationship between economic factors and discrimination continues to be relevant. Economic inequalities can contribute to the emergence of social tensions and the reinforcement of stereotypes about certain social groups.

According to **the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** , around **80% of Roma in Europe live at risk of poverty** , and unemployment rates among Roma are significantly higher than in the general population (FRA, 2021). These economic disparities can fuel stereotypes and perpetuate social marginalization.

At the same time, research shows that perceptions of economic competition can influence attitudes towards migrants or minorities. In many European countries, debates about immigration are closely linked to concerns about the labor market, social protection systems, and access to public resources.

Political instrumentalization of discrimination

Political factors can amplify or reduce discrimination depending on how public discourse and government policies are formulated. In some contexts, political actors may use nationalist or anti-immigration rhetoric to mobilize electoral support.

Research shows that political discourses that portray minorities or migrants as economic or cultural threats can contribute to increasing prejudice in society (Mudde, 2007). At the same time, public policies aimed at social inclusion can contribute to reducing discrimination and improving relations between groups.

2.6 Media and digital amplification of biases

The media play a crucial role in shaping social perceptions and in how individuals understand social reality. Over time, sociologists and communication researchers have shown that media representations can significantly influence how audiences perceive different social groups. The way ethnic, religious, or cultural minorities are portrayed in the media can contribute to either reducing prejudice or reinforcing existing stereotypes (Entman & Rojecki, 2001).

The media does not always reflect social reality in a neutral way. In many cases, certain groups are disproportionately represented in negative contexts, such as crime or social conflict. These types of representations can influence public perceptions and contribute to the emergence or reinforcement of stereotypes.

For example, research on the representation of minorities in the media shows that **the existence of negative or stereotypical media coverage can influence public perceptions of these groups** , even when people do not have direct experiences with members of these communities.



The role of the digital environment and algorithms

With the development of the internet and social networks, the role of mass media in shaping social perceptions has become even more complex. Digital platforms are not only channels for transmitting information, but also spaces where algorithms select and prioritize the content that users see.

The algorithms used by social platforms are designed to maintain user attention and maximize interactions. As a result, content that generates strong emotional reactions – including outrage or conflict – is often promoted more intensely.

This phenomenon can contribute to the amplification of polarizing content or existing stereotypes. In some situations, discriminatory content or hate speech can go viral, quickly reaching a wide audience.

According to a UNESCO report (2021) , approximately **67% of internet users have been exposed to hate speech online at least once** , and social networks are one of the main sources of this type of content.

The "echo chamber" phenomenon

An important concept in the analysis of the digital environment is the phenomenon known as the **"echo chamber"** . It describes the situation in which users are predominantly exposed to information and opinions similar to their own beliefs.

In online environments, algorithms personalize content based on users' preferences, browsing history, and past interactions. As a result, users may end up consuming information from sources that confirm existing opinions, avoiding exposure to different perspectives.

Research conducted by **the Pew Research Center (2021)** shows that approximately **64% of social media users say they frequently encounter political views similar to their own** , which can contribute to reinforcing social polarization.

In such environments, stereotypes and prejudices can become stronger because users constantly receive confirmation of their beliefs without being exposed to information that might contradict these perceptions.

Disinformation and stigmatization of social groups

The rapid spread of misinformation is another important factor in amplifying discrimination in the digital environment. False or distorted information about certain social groups can circulate quickly on social networks, contributing to their stigmatization.

Disinformation can take various forms, including:

- the spread of negative stereotypes about minorities;
- the association of certain groups with crime or terrorism;
- spreading conspiracy theories about migrants or religious minorities.

A report by **the European Commission (2022)** shows that **approximately 46% of European Union citizens consider online disinformation a major threat to democracy**, and one of the frequent consequences of disinformation is the increase in social tensions and discriminatory speech.

In certain contexts, such information can contribute to creating a hostile social climate towards certain groups. For example, research shows that hate speech against migrants or religious minorities increases significantly during times of social or political crisis.

2.7 Unconscious vs. intentional discrimination

Discrimination can occur in both intentional and unconscious forms. The distinction between these two types is important in analyzing the phenomenon of discrimination because they involve **different mechanisms and require different prevention and intervention strategies**.

Intentional discrimination

Intentional discrimination occurs when individuals or institutions deliberately adopt behaviors, policies, or practices that are intended to exclude or disadvantage certain social groups. In these situations, the actors involved are aware of the effects of their actions and explicitly aim to maintain power relations or social privileges.

Throughout history, intentional discrimination has often been formalized through legislation or public policy. Relevant examples include the racial legislation of Nazi Germany or the racial laws of Fascist Italy, which excluded Jewish communities from economic, social, and educational life. In these cases, discrimination was directly embedded in the institutional structures of the state.

In contemporary societies, intentional discrimination is prohibited by law in most European countries. However, it can still occur at the individual or institutional level, for example in situations where individuals or organizations deny access to certain opportunities on the basis of ethnicity, religion or gender.

According to **Eurobarometer (2019)** , approximately **21% of European Union citizens say they have experienced or witnessed situations of discrimination in their daily lives** , indicating that such behaviors have not completely disappeared from contemporary societies.

Unconscious discrimination

Unconscious discrimination occurs when individuals treat others differently without having the explicit intention to do so. In these situations, discriminatory behaviors are not motivated by direct hostility or a conscious desire for exclusion, but result from **internalized social patterns, cultural experiences, and institutional practices that influence everyday decisions** .

This type of discrimination is often more difficult to identify than intentional discrimination because the individuals involved do not perceive their own behaviors as problematic. In many cases, people believe they are acting objectively or neutrally, even if the outcome of their decisions produces inequalities between social groups.

How unconscious discrimination occurs in everyday life

Unconscious discrimination can manifest itself in numerous everyday situations, including social interactions, the professional environment, or public institutions.

For example, in recruitment processes, evaluators may perceive certain traits as more suitable for a professional role without realizing that these perceptions are influenced by cultural norms or social stereotypes. Thus, candidates who better fit the “typical” image of a particular role may be favored, even if other people have similar qualifications.

Another example occurs in professional performance evaluation. Studies show that managers can interpret employee behaviors differently depending on their social characteristics. For example, behavior perceived as "assertive" in one employee may be interpreted as "aggressive" in another, depending on gender or cultural background.

Unconscious discrimination can also occur in educational contexts. Research shows that teachers may have different expectations of students based on their social background or ethnicity, and these expectations can influence students' academic performance (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

Unconscious discrimination in institutions

At the institutional level, unconscious discrimination can occur when organizational rules or practices implicitly favor certain groups. This often happens when procedures are developed based on the experiences or perspectives of the majority.

For example, recruitment based on informal networks or personal recommendations may favor people who are part of the same social or professional circles as decision-makers. Similarly, promotion criteria that favor availability for extended working hours may disadvantage certain social categories.

These types of mechanisms can produce inequalities even when organizations declare that they support the principle of equal opportunities.

The cumulative effects of unconscious discrimination

An important aspect of unconscious discrimination is that **its effects are often cumulative** . A single seemingly minor decision may have a limited impact, but repeating these decisions over time can generate significant differences between social groups.

For example, if in an organization certain groups receive less professional training or leadership opportunities, these differences may over time influence access to leadership positions or higher salaries.

Research conducted in European countries shows that such mechanisms can contribute to maintaining significant differences in employment or professional representation between different social groups (Heath & Di Stasio, 2019).

Why awareness of unconscious discrimination is important

An essential element in combating unconscious discrimination is **awareness of the existence of this phenomenon** . Because the behaviors involved are not deliberate, they can be difficult to observe without critical reflection or institutional analysis.

In recent years, many public and private organizations have begun to introduce diversity and inclusion training programs. These programs aim to help participants identify the subtle mechanisms that can influence everyday decisions and develop strategies to reduce their effects.

Commonly used measures include:

- the use of standardized criteria in recruitment and evaluation processes;
- anonymous evaluation of certain applications or projects;
- diversification of decision-making teams;
- statistical monitoring of organizational results.

3. The main types of discrimination

In contemporary societies, discrimination can take many forms and affect individuals or social groups based on characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, gender, age or socio-economic status. Although legislation in most European countries prohibits discrimination, it continues to exist in various social, economic and institutional contexts.

In training programs dedicated to human rights and social inclusion, it is important for participants to understand that discrimination does not manifest itself in a single form. In reality, there are multiple types of discrimination that can occur simultaneously and affect individuals in different ways. A comparative analysis of the situation in Romania, Italy, Germany and Turkey highlights several major categories of discrimination that frequently occur in these societies.



3.1 Ethnic and racial discrimination

Ethnic and racial discrimination occurs when individuals are treated differently based on their ethnic origin, racial characteristics, or membership in a particular cultural group. This can include negative stereotypes, social segregation, limited access to education, or difficulty in obtaining employment.

In Europe, this type of discrimination frequently affects ethnic minorities, migrants and refugees. According to **the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2021)** , approximately **45% of people belonging to ethnic minorities in the EU report having experienced discrimination in the last five years** .

In Romania, the Roma community is one of the most affected groups. According to **the FRA Roma Survey (2021)** , approximately **80% of Roma in Europe live at risk of poverty** , and many of them face difficulties in accessing education and jobs.

In Germany and Italy, ethnic discrimination is often associated with migration. Studies on labor market recruitment show that people with names perceived as belonging to ethnic minorities receive fewer invitations to interviews compared to majority candidates.

In Turkey, debates about ethnic discrimination frequently arise in the context of relations between different ethnic groups, including the Kurdish community.

3.2 Religious discrimination

Religious discrimination occurs when individuals or groups are disadvantaged because of their religious beliefs or practices associated with them.

In Europe, the most discussed forms are **anti-Semitism and Islamophobia** . According to **Eurobarometer (2019)** , approximately **40% of European citizens believe that discrimination on religious grounds is widespread in society** .

In Germany, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic incidents are officially monitored, and attacks on places of worship have generated debates about the protection of religious communities.

In Italy, some Muslim communities have reported difficulties in building mosques or obtaining official recognition for places of worship.

In Romania, religious freedom is protected by law, but some smaller religious minorities may face social prejudice.

In Turkey, debates about religious freedom are often linked to the relations between different religious communities and the role of religion in the public space.

3.3. Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of people based on sex or gender.

One of the most visible forms is **the gender pay gap** . According to **Eurostat (2023)** , the average gender pay gap in the European Union is around **13%** .

In Germany, this difference is among the highest in the EU, at around **18%** .

In Italy and Romania, the wage gap is smaller, but women are less represented in management positions.

In Turkey, women's participation in the labor market is significantly lower than in many European countries, reflecting the influence of cultural and economic factors.

3.4. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

This type of discrimination affects people in the LGBTQ+ community. It can include social stigma, discrimination in the workplace, or limitations on civil rights.

According to **the EU LGBTI Survey (FRA, 2020)** , approximately **43% of LGBTQ+ people in Europe reported experiencing discrimination in the last year** .

In Germany and Italy, legislation has evolved to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ people, including by recognizing civil partnerships or same-sex marriage.

In Romania, anti-discrimination legislation includes protection of sexual orientation, but social debates about the rights of the LGBTQ+ community remain intense.

In Turkey, human rights organizations have reported restrictions on the public organization of LGBTQ+ events.

3.5. Discrimination on the basis of disability

People with disabilities frequently face barriers in accessing education, transportation, jobs, and public services.

According to **Eurostat (2022)** , the employment rate of people with disabilities in the EU is approximately **24% lower** than that of people without disabilities.

In Romania, the accessibility of urban infrastructure for people with disabilities still represents a challenge.

In Germany and Italy, legislation promotes the accessibility of public spaces and the professional integration of people with disabilities.

In Turkey, government inclusion programs have increased in recent years, but access to infrastructure remains unequal in some regions.

3.6. Age discrimination

Age discrimination occurs when individuals are treated differently or disadvantaged because of their age. It can affect both young and older people and can occur in different areas of social life, particularly in education, employment and access to services.

One of the most common forms of this type of discrimination occurs in the labor market. Older people are sometimes perceived as less adaptable to technological change or less productive, which can influence employers' decisions about recruitment or promotion. At the same time, young people at the beginning of their careers may have difficulty finding a job due to professional experience requirements.

According to **Eurobarometer (2019)** , around **40% of European citizens believe that age discrimination is widespread in society** . Eurostat data also shows that the employment rate of people over 55 is significantly lower than that of the active population in younger age groups.

In Germany and Italy, older people may face difficulties in re-entering the labour market after losing a job, especially in sectors that are changing rapidly from a technological perspective. In Romania, young people at the beginning of their careers often face difficulties in accessing their first job, as many positions require previous professional experience.

For trainers, discussing age discrimination can contribute to understanding how generational stereotypes can influence professional and social relationships.

3.7. Discrimination based on nationality or origin

Discrimination based on nationality or origin occurs when individuals are treated differently because of their citizenship, place of birth or geographical origin. This type of discrimination is frequently associated with processes of migration and international mobility.

Migrants and refugees may face difficulties in accessing housing, jobs or public services. In some cases, negative perceptions about migration can contribute to the emergence of stereotypes and social prejudices.

According to **the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** , around **38% of people belonging to ethnic minorities or migrants in the EU say they have experienced discrimination in recent years** .

In Germany and Italy, debates about discrimination based on nationality are often linked to the integration of migrants and refugees. Migrants may face difficulties in accessing housing or in the recruitment process on the job market.

In Turkey, discussions about discrimination based on origin are often associated with the presence of a large number of Syrian refugees. According to official estimates, Turkey hosts **over 3.5 million Syrian refugees** , and their integration into society represents a major challenge for social and economic policies.

In Romania, discrimination based on nationality is less frequently discussed compared to other European countries, but it can occur in the context of international mobility or relations with migrants.

3.8. Socio-economic discrimination

Socio-economic discrimination occurs when individuals are treated differently based on their economic or social status. People from disadvantaged backgrounds may have limited access to quality education, well-paid jobs, or social services.

This type of discrimination is often linked to structural inequalities in society. For example, access to educational resources or professional networks can vary significantly depending on a person's social background.

In Romania, differences between urban and rural areas often influence access to education and public services. Students in rural areas sometimes have limited access to educational infrastructure, digital resources, or professional development opportunities.

In Germany and Italy, debates about socio-economic discrimination are often linked to access to housing and the rising cost of living in large cities. In some urban areas, people on low incomes may face difficulties in finding affordable housing.

For trainers, the analysis of socio-economic discrimination is important because it highlights how structural inequalities can influence individuals' social and professional opportunities.

3.9. Regional or cultural discrimination

Regional or cultural discrimination occurs when individuals are disadvantaged because of their region of origin or cultural identity. This may include stereotypes about certain regions, negative perceptions about the level of economic development, or cultural prejudices.

In Italy, the economic differences between the north and south of the country have over time generated stereotypes about the population of certain regions. The north is often perceived as more economically developed, while the south is associated with higher unemployment rates and economic difficulties.

In Germany, historical differences between the east and west of the country, resulting from the period of political division during the Cold War, continue to sometimes influence social perceptions about economic development and professional opportunities.

In Romania, regional differences in economic development can contribute to stereotypes about certain areas of the country. For example, some regions are perceived as less economically developed, which can influence perceptions about the inhabitants of these areas.

In Turkey, economic and cultural differences between different regions of the country can influence access to social and professional opportunities.

3.10. Discrimination based on health status

Health-based discrimination occurs when individuals are stigmatized or excluded because of a disease or medical condition. This type of discrimination can affect access to jobs, health services, or participation in social life.

People living with HIV/AIDS or other chronic conditions may face social prejudice or difficulties in the professional environment. The stigma associated with certain diseases can lead to social isolation and limited access to health services.

According to **the World Health Organization (WHO)** , HIV-associated stigma remains a major obstacle to access to health services and the social integration of affected people.

In Germany and Italy, public health programs include information campaigns to reduce stigmatization of people living with HIV or other chronic conditions.

In Romania, non-governmental organizations carry out educational programs to combat stigma and promote the social inclusion of affected people.

In Turkey, access to medical services and social integration of people with certain conditions is an important topic in public health policies.

4. Existing tools and organizations

4.1 European legal framework and anti-discrimination directives

The European Union has developed a solid legal framework for combating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities, based on the fundamental principle of non-discrimination. This principle is enshrined both in the founding treaties of the European Union and in key documents such as **the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union** , which prohibits discrimination on grounds such as sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation.

The role of the European legal framework

The European legal framework has the role of:

- establish common standards for all Member States;
- protect the fundamental rights of citizens;
- ensure equal treatment in essential areas such as education, employment and access to services;
- prevent and sanction discriminatory behaviors.

This framework is implemented through European directives, which are legislative acts that must be transposed into the national legislation of each member state.

The main anti-discrimination directives

Two of the most important European directives in the field of combating discrimination are:

Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC)

This directive prohibits discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin in a wide range of areas, including:

- employment;
- education;
- social protection;
- access to goods and services.

This is one of the most extensive directives, as it covers both the public and private sectors.

Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC)

This directive establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of:

- religion or beliefs;
- disability;
- age;

- sexual orientation.

This applies in particular in the area of employment and working conditions.

Transposition into national law

The member states of the European Union are obliged to integrate these directives into national law. For example:

- **Romania** adopted **Government Ordinance No. 137/2000** , which prohibits all forms of discrimination.
- **Germany** has adopted **the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG)** , which regulates equal treatment in multiple areas.
- Italy** has implemented the directives through specific legislation and institutions dedicated to combating discrimination.

Although **Turkey is not an EU member state** , it has adopted some European standards in the field of human rights in the context of its relations with the European Union.

The importance of the legal framework for society

The European legal framework contributes to:

- protecting vulnerable people;
- reducing social inequalities;
- promoting diversity and inclusion;
- developing equitable public policies.

It also offers citizens the opportunity to defend their rights through national and European institutions.

Relevance for trainers

For trainers working in the field of human rights, knowledge of the European legal framework is essential. It allows:

- explaining the fundamental rights of participants;
- presentation of legal mechanisms for protection against discrimination;
- using real examples in training activities;
- developing a critical understanding of the relationship between legislation and social practice.

In trainings, this topic can be addressed through case studies, simulations, or discussions about real situations, to help participants understand how they can use these tools in everyday life.

4.2. National institutions for combating discrimination

For anti-discrimination legislation to be effective in practice, it is essential to have specialized institutions to ensure its application. These institutions, known at European level as **equality bodies**, represent fundamental mechanisms through which states guarantee respect for the principle of equality and the protection of citizens' fundamental rights.

They are not just administrative structures, but active actors in combating discrimination, having multiple roles that include **direct intervention in concrete cases, public education, and influencing public policies**.

The strategic role of anti-discrimination institutions

National anti-discrimination institutions do not limit themselves to law enforcement, but act as key actors in protecting fundamental rights and in translating legal norms into concrete social practices. Their functions can be understood more clearly by analysing the roles they fulfil:

1. Protection function

- Institutions provide direct support to people who have been victims of discrimination, helping to reduce feelings of vulnerability and increase access to justice. This support includes informing people about their rights and available legal options.

- They also provide free or affordable advice, explaining legal procedures in accessible language, which is essential for people who lack legal knowledge.
- In some cases, institutions can guide victims to other support mechanisms, such as courts, non-governmental organizations or social services, thus facilitating access to a wider network of protection.

2. Investigation function

- Institutions have the power to analyze discrimination cases objectively, based on evidence and the legal framework. This process involves collecting relevant information, including documents, statements, and other evidence.
- They may interview the people involved, including victims, witnesses and accused parties, to understand the full context of the situation.
- The investigation process helps clarify the facts and determine whether or not a form of discrimination has occurred, which is essential for the correct application of the law.

3. Sanctioning function

- In some legal systems, institutions have the authority to apply administrative sanctions, such as fines or warnings, if they find that discrimination has occurred.
- These sanctions play an important role not only in punishing discriminatory behavior, but also in preventing similar situations in the future, by discouraging other potential actors.
- In addition, institutions can issue recommendations to remedy the identified situations, thus contributing to correcting discriminatory practices in institutions or organizations.

4. Educational and preventive function

- Institutions conduct public information campaigns aimed at raising awareness about discrimination and fundamental rights. These campaigns may include educational materials, public events or collaborations with the media.
- They organize training programs for different target groups, including teachers, civil servants or employers, to prevent the occurrence of discriminatory behaviors.
- Through educational activities, these institutions contribute to changing social attitudes and promoting a culture of respect and inclusion.

5. Research and monitoring function

- Institutions collect and analyze data on discrimination, which allows for the identification of trends and vulnerable groups. This information is essential for the development of public policies.
- They publish annual or thematic reports that provide an overview of the discrimination situation at national level. These reports are used by governments, international organizations and civil society.
- Monitoring activity contributes to assessing the effectiveness of existing measures and identifying areas where additional interventions are needed.

Citizens' access to these institutions

- In most states, the complaint procedure is designed to be accessible, allowing complaints to be submitted online, by mail, or directly to the institution. This facilitates access to protection mechanisms for a greater number of people.
- The advice provided by these institutions is usually free of charge, which is essential for people who do not have the financial resources for legal assistance.
- However, studies show that a significant number of cases of discrimination remain unreported, either due to lack of information or fear of stigma or social consequences. This highlights the need for more effective information campaigns.

Systemic challenges

- One of the main challenges is the under-reporting of discrimination cases, which makes it difficult to truly assess the phenomenon and limits the capacity of

institutions to intervene effectively.

- Proving discrimination can be complex because many forms of discrimination are subtle or indirect, requiring more sophisticated methods of analysis and proof.
- Limited resources, both financial and human, can affect the capacity of institutions to manage a large number of cases and carry out prevention activities.
- In some contexts, low levels of trust in public institutions may discourage victims from filing complaints, which reduces the effectiveness of existing mechanisms.

Romania – National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD)

The CNCD is one of the most important institutions in Romania in the field of human rights. It is an autonomous authority, under parliamentary control.

Operation:

- Anyone can file a complaint (free of charge);
- The resolution period is usually several months;
- The CNCD analyzes the case and issues a decision.

Common types of cases: discrimination in the workplace, hate speech in public spaces, school segregation, discrimination based on ethnic or gender criteria.

Limitations: cannot grant compensation (this can only be obtained in court), depends on the level of reporting by the population

Germany – Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency

This institution has an important role in counseling victims and promoting equality.

Features: provides legal and psychological support, publishes national studies on discrimination, collaborates with federal and regional institutions

Important aspect:

Germany has a decentralized system, and some cases are also managed at the regional level.

Italy – UNAR (L'Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali)

UNAR is a government body specialized in combating racial and ethnic discrimination.

Activities: hotline for reporting discrimination, cooperation with NGOs, public anti-racism campaigns

Specific context:

Italy frequently faces discrimination in the context of migration, which influences UNAR's work.

Turkey – Human Rights and Equality Institution (TİHEK)

This institution reflects Turkey's efforts to align with international human rights standards.

Role:

- investigates cases of discrimination;
- monitors respect for human rights;
- issues recommendations to the authorities.

Challenges:

- sensitive political context;
- variable level of public trust.



4.3 Monitoring and reporting mechanisms

For anti-discrimination policies to be effective, it is essential to have mechanisms in place to **identify, document and analyse cases of discrimination**. Without such systems, discrimination remains invisible or underestimated, and public interventions become limited or ineffective.

Monitoring and reporting mechanisms aim to transform individual experiences into **data relevant to public policies**, thus contributing to the development of evidence-based strategies.

The role of monitoring mechanisms

These mechanisms perform several essential functions in combating discrimination:

1. Collecting data on discrimination

- Monitoring allows for the systematic collection of data on experiences of discrimination, either through surveys or official reporting. This data is essential for understanding the scale of the phenomenon.

- Institutions can identify patterns of discrimination (e.g., discrimination in the labor market or in education) and analyze the groups most affected.
- The data collected contributes to the foundation of public policies and the efficient allocation of resources.

2. Identifying social trends

- By analyzing data over time, institutions can observe the evolution of the phenomenon of discrimination and identify increases or decreases in certain types of discrimination.
- These trends can be correlated with social, economic or political factors, such as economic crises or increased migration.
- Identifying trends allows for proactive interventions, before problems become systemic.

3. Evaluating the effectiveness of public policies

- Monitoring mechanisms allow for the assessment of the impact of anti-discrimination legislation and programs.
- For example, if the number of reported cases decreases, this may indicate either a real reduction in discrimination or a decrease in reporting — both of which require careful analysis. These assessments are essential for adjusting strategies and improving interventions.

4. Increasing institutional accountability

- Reporting cases of discrimination contributes to holding public and private institutions accountable, which can be held accountable for discriminatory practices.
- Data transparency also increases public trust in institutions and protection mechanisms.

Reporting mechanisms

Reporting is an essential element in combating discrimination, constituting the first step through which existing legal and institutional mechanisms can be activated. Through the reporting process, situations of discrimination become visible, can be investigated and, subsequently, can generate corrective measures or sanctions. In the absence of reporting, many forms of discrimination remain invisible at the institutional level, which limits the ability of society to respond effectively to this phenomenon.

Persons who consider themselves discriminated against have the possibility of filing complaints with the competent national institutions in the field of combating discrimination. These complaints can be submitted both in physical format and online, the procedures being, in most cases, free of charge and designed to be accessible to the general public. In certain situations, victims can also turn to the courts or to non-governmental organizations, which offer legal support, advice and assistance in the reporting process.

In recent years, digital platforms have become an increasingly important tool in facilitating the rapid reporting of incidents, especially in the context of the rise of hate speech online. These tools contribute to increasing accessibility and reducing barriers to reporting, offering the possibility of rapid documentation and transmission of reports.

From an educational perspective, it is important that the reporting process is presented in a clear and structured manner. In general, it involves several successive steps, which begin with identifying the situation, namely the recognition that a behavior or action constitutes discrimination. This step is followed by the collection of evidence, which may include documents, messages, testimonies or other relevant elements to support the case. Subsequently, the complaint is filed with the competent institution, followed by the investigation of the situation by the responsible authorities. The process is completed by issuing a decision and, where appropriate, by applying sanctions or formulating recommendations.

This path can be used in training activities as a practical example, contributing to the development of participants' skills to act in real situations of discrimination.

At European level, there are monitoring mechanisms that help collect and analyse data on discrimination. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights collects comparative data

and publishes relevant studies, providing an overview of the phenomenon. Eurobarometer also provides information on the perceptions of European citizens regarding discrimination, contributing to understanding the social dimension of this phenomenon.

At national level, specialized institutions play a key role in the reporting and monitoring process. In Romania, the National Council for Combating Discrimination handles complaints and publishes annual reports on investigated situations. In Germany, dedicated institutions provide both counseling services and collect relevant data. In Italy and Turkey, national institutions frequently collaborate with non-governmental organizations to monitor cases and support victims.

Despite the existence of these mechanisms, the reporting process faces a number of challenges. A significant number of cases of discrimination are not reported, which affects the accuracy of the available data and the capacity of institutions to intervene. The main reasons include fear of stigmatization, lack of trust in institutions or lack of knowledge of procedures. In addition, certain forms of discrimination, especially indirect or subtle ones, are difficult to identify and demonstrate, which discourages the initiation of the reporting process.

From a training perspective, reporting mechanisms are an essential tool in human rights education. Trainers have an important role in facilitating the understanding of these processes, providing participants with the information they need to recognize discrimination and take appropriate action. In this regard, the use of concrete examples and real-life situations can help clarify the steps and increase confidence in the use of these mechanisms.

Integrating practical activities into the training process, such as simulating a discrimination case or analyzing case studies, can support the development of applied skills. Also, exercises in identifying evidence and formulating a complaint contribute to a concrete understanding of the process and prepare participants for real-life situations.

4.4 Educational and preventive tools (for trainers)

Education is one of the most effective and sustainable ways to prevent discrimination, as it directly acts on the cognitive and social mechanisms that underlie this phenomenon. Unlike legal interventions, which intervene reactively, after a discriminatory act has occurred, educational tools

have a preventive role, contributing to the development of a culture of respect, inclusion and social responsibility.

In the context of adult education and training programs, anti-discrimination education involves more than just imparting information. It involves facilitating critical reflection processes, in which participants are encouraged to examine their own attitudes, values, and behaviors. This process is essential because discrimination is not only an institutional or structural phenomenon, but also one that manifests itself at the individual level, through stereotypes, prejudices, and internalized biases.

The educational tools used in this field are generally based on interactive and participatory methods, which actively involve participants in the learning process. Such methods allow not only a conceptual understanding of discrimination, but also direct experience of relevant social situations. For example, case studies are frequently used to illustrate concrete forms of discrimination, giving participants the opportunity to analyze the context, the actors involved and the consequences of such situations. They contribute to the development of critical thinking and the ability to identify discrimination in real contexts.

Role-playing is another essential tool in anti-discrimination education. By assuming different roles – victim, witness or institutional actor – participants can gain a deeper understanding of the emotional and social impact of discrimination. These exercises facilitate the development of empathy and allow the practice of appropriate reactions in concrete situations, thus contributing to the formation of social and civic skills.

Debates and guided discussions also play an important role in this educational process. They provide a space where participants can explore different perspectives and understand the complexity of the phenomenon of discrimination. At the same time, these activities contribute to developing the capacity for argumentation and strengthening respect for the diversity of opinions. The role of the trainer is essential in facilitating these discussions, ensuring a safe and balanced framework in which all participants feel encouraged to contribute.

A central element of discrimination prevention education is personal reflection. Through self-analysis exercises, participants are encouraged to examine their own beliefs and reactions, and

how they may influence their behaviors towards others. This process of awareness is essential for reducing implicit biases and promoting inclusive behaviors.

At European level, there are numerous educational resources that support the work of trainers in this field. A relevant example is the manual “Compass – Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People”, developed by the Council of Europe, which offers a wide range of activities and methods for addressing topics related to human rights and discrimination. Also, the Erasmus+ programs support the development and implementation of educational projects that promote diversity, inclusion and intercultural dialogue, offering trainers opportunities for training and exchange of good practices at international level.

In addition to the methods and resources used, it is important for trainers to pay attention to how they structure the learning process. Creating a safe and inclusive environment is essential for the success of educational activities. This involves establishing clear rules of interaction, using inclusive language, and sensitively managing conflict situations that may arise within the group.

However, the use of educational tools in the field of combating discrimination is not without challenges. Trainers may face resistance from participants, especially when sensitive topics are addressed or when discussions touch on deeply held beliefs. Also, cultural and experience differences between participants can influence how activities are perceived and interpreted. In this context, the facilitator’s skills become essential to maintain a balance between the free expression of opinions and respect for the principles of inclusion and non-discrimination.

4.5 Civil society and non-governmental organizations active in the field (for trainers and the general public)

Civil society plays a key role in preventing and combating discrimination, complementing institutional and legal interventions through direct action in the community. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) contribute to the protection of human rights through a variety of activities, including advocacy, education, monitoring and direct support for victims of discrimination.

In many situations, NGOs are the first point of contact for people experiencing discrimination, offering a more accessible and less formal environment than public institutions. This is particularly

important for vulnerable groups, who may have low levels of trust in authorities or may have difficulty accessing formal mechanisms.

A central role of civil society organizations is advocacy, through which they influence public policies and contribute to the development of the legislative framework. NGOs monitor situations of discrimination, document relevant cases and formulate recommendations for improving legislation and institutional practices. In this sense, they act as a democratic control mechanism, ensuring the accountability of authorities.

Non-governmental organizations also provide direct assistance to victims of discrimination, including legal advice, psychological support, and support in reporting incidents. These services are essential for people who lack the resources to navigate the legal system or to advocate for their rights independently.

In the educational field, NGOs conduct training programs and awareness campaigns aimed at reducing prejudice and promoting social inclusion. These activities are often addressed to young people, teachers, employers or other relevant groups, contributing to changing attitudes and behaviors at a societal level.

Examples of relevant organizations

In Romania, several organizations are active in the field of combating discrimination:

- ACCEPT – one of the most well-known organizations promoting the rights of LGBTQ+ people, involved in advocacy, education, and legal support.
- ActiveWatch – monitors public discourse and the media, playing an important role in combating hate speech.
- Legal Resources Center (LRC) – provides legal assistance and monitors compliance with fundamental rights, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Romani CRISS – organization dedicated to the rights of the Roma community, involved in combating ethnic discrimination and promoting social inclusion.

At European and international level, there are organizations with significant impact:

- Amnesty International – monitors human rights violations globally and conducts advocacy campaigns.
- Human Rights Watch – documents and analyzes human rights abuses, influencing international public policies.
- European Network Against Racism (ENAR) – brings together organizations from Europe to combat racism and discrimination.
- ILGA-Europe – promotes the rights of LGBTQ+ people at the European level.

In Germany and Italy, NGOs frequently collaborate with public institutions to implement anti-discrimination policies, while in Turkey civil society plays an important role in the context of protecting minority rights and promoting social inclusion.

4.6 Digital platforms for reporting and awareness

In today's society, characterized by accelerated digitalization, online platforms have become essential tools in combating discrimination. They offer fast, accessible and often anonymous mechanisms for reporting incidents, as well as spaces for education, awareness-raising and civic mobilization. At the same time, the digital environment is also a space where discrimination frequently manifests itself, especially through hate speech, disinformation and stereotyping.

Digital platforms contribute to transforming individual experiences into relevant collective data, thus facilitating the development of public policies and intervention strategies. They reduce barriers to access to protection mechanisms and enable the active involvement of citizens in combating discrimination.

At European level, institutional initiatives provide a common framework for all the countries analysed. The **No Hate Speech Movement platform**, developed by the Council of Europe, is an important example of an educational and awareness-raising tool, being used in training programmes and international projects:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign>

The European Commission has also developed **the EU Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online** , a mechanism for cooperation with major digital platforms to identify and remove illegal content:

https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online_en

Romania

In Romania, reporting discrimination can be done through **the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD)** , which offers the possibility of filing complaints online: <https://www.cncd.ro/>

In parallel, civil society organizations use digital platforms to monitor hate speech and for awareness campaigns, especially in the social media environment. Although the digital infrastructure is developing, the use of these tools is increasing, especially among young people.

Germany

In Germany, digital reporting platforms are well developed and integrated into a broader system of human rights protection. A relevant example is the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, which offers online resources and the possibility to seek advice: <https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/>

Germany also has mechanisms dedicated to reporting illegal content online, including under the Social Media Act (NetzDG), which obliges digital platforms to quickly remove illegal content.

Italy

In Italy, reporting discrimination is supported by **UNAR (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali)** , which offers online services and support lines for victims: <https://www.unar.it/>

Digital platforms are used particularly in the context of ethnic discrimination and migration, and non-governmental organizations play an important role in data collection and awareness campaigns.

Turkey

In Turkey, reporting discrimination can be done through the national human rights institution: <https://www.tihek.gov.tr/>

In parallel, civil society organizations use digital platforms to document cases of discrimination and promote human rights. However, the social and political context can influence the degree of use and effectiveness of these tools.

5. About the project

5.1 Project context and justification

The CRONOS project was conceived as a response to a clearly identified need among adults: the difficulty in understanding and applying European values in everyday life, especially in terms of combating discrimination. The analysis carried out by the partner organisations highlighted the fact that a significant percentage of the training participants show difficulties in communication, empathy and relationships, and these difficulties are often linked to stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory behaviour. During the training sessions held prior to the project, it was found that approximately 61% of the responses of the adult participants were associated with experiences or perceptions related to discrimination, including on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, social status or disability.

At the same time, the project responds to a broader trend at European level, characterized by declining trust in the values of the European Union and increasing social polarization. Thus, CRONOS aims to contribute to the consolidation of democratic values, civic participation and social inclusion, by developing innovative educational tools adapted to the current context.

5.2 Objectives and expected results (for trainers)

The CRONOS project has as its general objective to increase civic engagement and understanding of European values by developing innovative educational methods in the field of combating discrimination. For trainers, the project objectives are directly relevant, as they translate into concrete tools and resources that can be used in training activities:

The first objective aims to increase the level of understanding of European values and how they can be applied in real contexts. This was achieved through the development of the educational strategy (CRONOS Strategy), which analyzed the context of discrimination in each partner country and proposed adapted solutions.

The second objective focuses on developing the capacity to recognize and avoid discriminatory behaviors in everyday life. In this regard, the project will produce digital tools (interactive educational videos) that simulate real-life situations and facilitate experiential learning.

The third objective aims to raise awareness about types of discrimination and promote inclusive behaviors, through dissemination and training activities.

The main results of the project include:

- a transnational anti-discrimination strategy (CRONOS Strategy);
- 20 digital educational tools;
- an educational card game (similar to the Dixit model);
- dissemination events at national and European level.

For trainers, these results represent concrete resources that can be directly integrated into educational activities.

5.3 Target groups

The main target group of the project is adults aged 35-52, who participate in training programs organized by the project partners. This group was selected because, according to the analysis, they are less exposed to modern educational initiatives on European values and combating discrimination, compared to young people.

A secondary target group is represented by trainers and educators, who will use the project results in their professional activity and will contribute to multiplying the impact. This approach allows for an intergenerational impact and the extension of the results to a wide audience.

5.4 Partners and roles

The CRONOS project is implemented by a partnership formed by four organizations from Romania, Italy, Germany and Turkey, each contributing with specific expertise:

- **Trainifique (Romania)** – project coordinator, responsible for overall management and development of educational content;
- **INFOR ELEA (Italy)** – expertise in professional training and development of digital tools;
- **Solaris FZU (Germany)** – experience in social inclusion and working with vulnerable groups;
- **IESA (Turkey)** – expertise in non-formal education and working with diverse communities and migrants.

The distribution of tasks is carried out according to the competences of each partner, ensuring a balanced and complementary contribution. Each organization is also involved in the development and testing of the results in its own national context.

5.5 Sustainability and transferability

The sustainability of the CRONOS project is designed for the long term, by integrating the results into the training programs of the partner organizations. The developed materials will be freely available and will be integrated into the digital platform and training curricula, ensuring their continued use after the project is completed.

The project also provides for:

- developing and maintaining the digital platform that presents the results;

- dissemination of results through European platforms such as EPALe and Erasmus+ Project Results Platform;
- use of the results in various educational contexts (formal, non-formal, professional).

In terms of transferability, the project has a high potential for replication in other national and organizational contexts, due to the modular nature of the tools and their adaptability to different target groups. In the long term, it is estimated that over 10,000 people will indirectly benefit from the project results, through their integration into educational and training activities.

6. Trends and needs regarding discrimination

6.1. Current European trends

The analysis carried out within the CRONOS project, based on national research, focus groups and direct experience of partners in working with adults, highlights the fact that discrimination remains a persistent and constantly changing phenomenon in the European space. Although the European legislative framework consistently promotes the values of equality, inclusion and diversity, the application of these values in everyday life is often limited by social, cultural and psychological factors.

A central aspect identified within the project is related to the discrepancy between declared values and actual behaviors of individuals. Although the European Union promotes the principle of "United in diversity", a significant part of citizens does not internalize these values in daily interactions, which leads to the emergence of forms of discrimination in communication, attitude and mentality. Following the training activities and research carried out in the project, it was found that discrimination is not perceived only as an institutional phenomenon, but also as a frequent personal experience. The data collected within the trainings show that a significant percentage of adults associate their personal and professional development difficulties with experiences of discrimination, prejudice and social labeling.

At European level, several general trends can be identified:

- increasing social polarization, fueled by cultural, economic and political differences;
- the intensification of hate speech, especially online;
- the decline in trust in European values among certain social groups;
- the emergence of significant differences between generations in terms of perception of diversity and inclusion;
- difficulties in managing interpersonal relationships in multicultural contexts.

These trends are influenced by factors such as digitalization, migration and socio-economic changes, which alter the dynamics of social interactions and generate new forms of tension.

Trends identified at national level

In Romania, the identified trends indicate a strong link between discrimination and traditional socio-cultural factors. Discrimination is frequently associated with stereotypes related to ethnicity, social status, gender or level of education. The analysis carried out by the Romanian partner, based on the interaction of adult beneficiaries, shows that a significant proportion of them perceive discrimination as a real obstacle to personal and professional development.

It was also observed: difficulties in empathic communication and interpersonal relationships; tendency to label and generalize; lack of awareness of one's own discriminatory behaviors, the influence of the social environment and cultural norms on attitudes. An important element is the fact that many discriminatory behaviors are not perceived as problematic, which indicates an increased need for education and awareness.

In Germany, the trends identified are closely linked to cultural diversity and the phenomenon of migration. The project data indicates that a significant percentage of people with a migrant background have experienced forms of discrimination, including in the educational and social environment.

For example, within the activities of the German partner, it was highlighted that:

- approximately 23% of people with a migrant background reported situations in which their children were subjected to offensive or threatening comments;

- up to 38% of respondents have experienced such situations directly or indirectly.

These data reflect: the existence of tensions related to the integration of migrants; the persistence of ethnic and cultural stereotypes; difficulties in managing diversity in educational and social contexts. At the same time, Germany has well-developed institutional and educational mechanisms, but the major challenge remains effective integration and the reduction of informal discrimination.

In Italy, trends are significantly influenced by the economic context and migration dynamics. The organizations involved in the project highlighted that discrimination frequently occurs in the professional environment and in the context of organizational changes.

Italy is facing:

- difficulties in integrating migrants and minorities;
- discrimination in the labor market;
- regional differences that influence access to opportunities;
- the need to adapt to technological and organizational changes.

The Italian partner stressed the importance of integrating project results into vocational training, to support adaptation to cultural and social changes.

In Turkey, the trends identified reflect a complex social context, marked by cultural diversity and the presence of a significant number of migrants and refugees.

The Turkish partner operates in a dynamic urban environment, characterized by:

- ethnic and cultural diversity;
- high population mobility;
- the impact of migration and internal displacement (including following natural disasters).

These conditions generate:

- social tensions between different groups;

- difficulties in integrating communities;
- the need to develop intercultural skills.

In this context, discrimination often appears in subtle forms, related to identity, belonging and cultural differences.

6.2 Emerging forms of discrimination

In contemporary society, discrimination is no longer predominantly expressed in direct, explicit and easily identifiable forms, as it was in previous historical periods. Today, it increasingly manifests itself in indirect, subtle or systemic forms, which are difficult to recognize both by those who experience them and by those who manifest them. This transformation is closely linked to social, technological and cultural developments, such as digitalisation, globalisation and changes in social norms. In this context, discrimination becomes less visible, but no less present or relevant, which creates significant challenges for education and intervention.

One of the most common types of emerging discrimination is **micro-discrimination**, also known as microaggressions. These consist of seemingly minor but repetitive remarks, gestures or behaviors that convey negative or stereotypical messages about a social group. For example, comments such as “You don’t look like you’re from here” or “You’re very articulate for someone from...”, while they may be made without explicit intent to hurt, can have a significant cumulative impact on the person targeted. Microaggressions are particularly relevant in professional and educational settings, where they frequently take the form of low expectations, jokes or subtle exclusion from interactions. For trainers, the major difficulty is that these behaviors are often normalized and not perceived as discriminatory.

Another emerging form is **algorithmic discrimination**, which occurs in the context of the use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence. Algorithms used in recruitment, crediting, selection or content moderation can reproduce and amplify existing biases in society, as they are trained on historical data that reflect structural inequalities. For example, automated recruitment systems can favor certain profiles over others, based on existing patterns, and digital platforms can promote content that reinforces stereotypes or social polarization. This form of discrimination is particularly

problematic because it is often invisible and difficult to challenge, being perceived as “neutral” or “objective”.

Discrimination in communication is another important dimension of emerging forms. It manifests itself through the use of subtle, exclusive language, irony, sarcasm or the intentional omission of certain people from social interactions. Unlike explicit forms, discrimination in communication is often ambivalent and can be justified as a “joke” or a “personal opinion”. In work environments or social groups, this form of discrimination can lead to marginalization, decreased trust and reduced active participation of some individuals. For trainers, it is essential to address these forms by developing inclusive communication skills and by being aware of the impact of language.

A less visible but highly relevant phenomenon is **self-discrimination**. This occurs when individuals internalize negative stereotypes associated with the group they belong to and limit their own behaviors or aspirations. For example, a person may avoid applying for certain professional opportunities because they believe they are “not a good fit” or “have no chance,” based on internalized beliefs. This type of discrimination contributes to the perpetuation of inequalities and is difficult to address because it does not involve a direct external actor.

Within the CRONOS project, it was observed that one of the main challenges is that participants do not recognize these emerging forms as discrimination. Many of the behaviors described are perceived as normal, acceptable or inevitable, which indicates a lack of awareness and social literacy in this area. This finding highlights a clear need for educational intervention, which goes beyond traditional approaches and includes concrete examples, practical exercises and critical reflection. For trainers, this involves developing methods that help participants identify these subtle forms and understand their impact on individuals and society.

6.3. Needs analysis

One of the fundamental conclusions of the CRONOS project is that discrimination cannot be explained solely by negative intentions or deliberate behaviors, but is often the result of more complex processes, including lack of awareness, insufficient education and the internalization of social and cultural norms. This perspective is essential for understanding the phenomenon in the

contemporary context, as it shifts the emphasis from the idea of “individual guilt” to an approach focused on learning, reflection and behavioral change. In the activities carried out in the project, it was observed that many participants do not manifest explicit discriminatory intentions, but their behaviors are influenced by stereotypes, biases and thinking patterns taken from the social environment.

The analysis of the data collected by the partners highlights the existence of significant educational needs, which need to be systematically addressed in training programmes. One of the most important needs is related to **the understanding of European values** and the ability to apply them in real contexts. Although concepts such as equality, diversity or inclusion are frequently mentioned at a discursive level, they are not always translated into concrete behaviours. Participants demonstrated difficulties in making the connection between these abstract values and everyday situations, which indicates the need for applied and contextualised educational methods.

Another major need identified is the development **of the capacity to recognize discrimination** , especially in **its subtle or indirect forms** . As highlighted in previous sections, many of the emerging forms of discrimination – such as microaggressions or discrimination in communication – are not perceived as problematic. This lack of recognition limits the possibility of intervention and contributes to the perpetuation of discriminatory behaviors.

Closely related to this is the need to **develop empathy and interpersonal communication skills** . The project highlighted that communication difficulties are an important factor in the emergence and escalation of discrimination situations. Lack of empathy, rigid interpretation of differences and inability to manage conflicts contribute to the reinforcement of stereotypes and the emergence of social tensions. Therefore, training programs must include components that develop these skills in a practical and experiential way.

Participants also expressed the need for **concrete tools for managing situations of discrimination** . In many cases, even when individuals recognize the existence of a discriminatory situation, they do not know how to react. This lack of practical skills leads to passivity or ineffective reactions. Therefore, it is necessary to develop training methods that provide clear intervention strategies, adapted to different social and professional contexts.

Another central element of the analysis is related to **the awareness of personal biases** . Many participants are not aware of their own prejudices or perceive them as “normal” or “justified”. This phenomenon is amplified by the fact that implicit biases operate at an unconscious level and influence decisions and behaviors without being recognized as such. In the absence of a process of critical reflection, these biases continue to shape social interactions and contribute to the reproduction of discrimination. A particularly relevant aspect highlighted in the project is the fact that many adults do not perceive their own behavior as discriminatory, even when it produces negative effects on other people. This discrepancy between intention and impact represents one of the main challenges in combating discrimination. It highlights the need for an educational approach that emphasizes social responsibility and understanding the consequences of individual behaviors.

6.4 Gaps in existing educational approaches

The analysis carried out within the CRONOS project highlights the fact that, although there are numerous educational initiatives dedicated to combating discrimination at European and national level, they present a series of structural and methodological limitations that reduce their effectiveness in producing real behavioral change.

One of the main gaps identified is **the predominant focus on the transmission of theoretical information** , to the detriment of the development of practical skills. Many educational programs approach discrimination from a legal or conceptual perspective, focusing on definitions, typologies and legislative frameworks. Although these elements are important, they are not sufficient to determine changes in attitudes and behaviors. Participants may understand the concept of discrimination at a theoretical level, without being able to recognize or manage it in real situations.

Another major limitation is **the lack of experiential and interactive approaches** . In many educational contexts, the methods used are predominantly face-to-face, based on presentations and limited discussions. This type of approach reduces participant involvement and limits the process of personal reflection. In the absence of methods such as role-playing, simulations or case analysis, participants do not have the opportunity to experience situations of discrimination and to practice appropriate responses.

It has also been found that **educational programs are not sufficiently adapted to the needs of adults** . Many initiatives are initially designed for young people and are subsequently applied in adult education contexts without being properly adjusted. However, adults have already consolidated experiences, values and thinking patterns, which require different learning methods, based on critical reflection, practical relevance and immediate applicability.

Another important gap is **the lack of integration of digital technologies and innovative tools** . In a context where discrimination increasingly manifests itself online, many educational programs do not include components related to digital literacy, hate speech analysis or the responsible use of digital platforms. This limitation reduces the relevance of educational interventions to contemporary realities. In addition, existing approaches are often **fragmented and lack interdisciplinarity** . Discrimination is a complex phenomenon, involving psychological, sociological and cultural dimensions, but many programs treat the subject from a single perspective. The lack of an integrated approach limits the deep understanding of the mechanisms underlying discrimination and reduces the effectiveness of interventions.

Another critical aspect identified is **the insufficient addressing of subtle and emerging forms of discrimination** . Educational programs tend to focus on obvious and historical forms of discrimination, neglecting contemporary forms, such as microaggressions, discrimination in communication or unconscious biases. This gap contributes to the perpetuation of these forms, as participants do not recognize them as problematic.

There is also a **lack of continuity and sustainability of educational interventions** . Many programs are implemented as one-off activities, without a long-term framework to support learning and behavioral change. In the absence of a systematic approach, the impact of these interventions remains limited.

Finally, another significant limitation is **the lack of development of trainers' skills** in facilitating sensitive discussions. Discussions about discrimination can generate resistance, strong emotions or conflicts, and trainers are not always prepared to manage these situations effectively. This affects the quality of the educational process and can reduce the impact of the activities.

6.5 Regional and cultural specificities

The analysis carried out within the CRONOS project highlights that discrimination cannot be adequately understood without taking into account the cultural and social context specific to each country. Although there are common trends at European level, the concrete forms of discrimination are deeply influenced by historical, economic, cultural and political factors. In this sense, effective educational approaches must be contextualized and adapted to local realities, avoiding the application of uniform models that do not reflect the diversity of social experiences.

In **Romania** , discrimination is frequently associated with traditional structural and cultural factors. Stereotypes related to ethnicity (especially regarding the Roma community), socio-economic status and differences between urban and rural areas continue to influence social perceptions and behaviors. There is also a tendency to normalize certain forms of discrimination, especially in everyday communication, which reduces the level of awareness and reaction. In this context, educational interventions should emphasize awareness, critical reflection and the development of empathy.

In **Germany** , the specificities are closely linked to cultural diversity and the migration context. The integration of people with a migrant background is one of the main social challenges, and discrimination frequently occurs in relation to ethnic, religious or cultural identity. Although there is a solid institutional framework and well-developed public policies, subtle forms of discrimination persist, especially in education and the labour market. In this context, the focus is on developing intercultural competences and promoting inclusion in diverse contexts.

In **Italy** , discrimination is influenced by economic dynamics and regional differences. The disparities between the north and the south of the country contribute to the emergence of stereotypes and social tensions. In addition, migration plays an important role in shaping social relations, and people from outside the European Union may encounter difficulties in integration. In this context, an educational approach is needed that integrates the socio-economic dimension and promotes social cohesion.

In **Turkey** , the specificities are marked by a complex social context, characterized by cultural diversity, high mobility and rapid social change. The presence of a large number of migrants and refugees, as well as cultural differences between various social groups, contribute to the emergence of tensions and discrimination. At the same time, cultural and social norms can influence the

perception of diversity and inclusion. In this context, educational interventions need to be sensitive to local dynamics and promote intercultural dialogue.

6.6. The impact of digitalization and migration

Digitalization and migration are two of the most important factors influencing the evolution of discrimination in contemporary society. These processes transform the way people interact, communicate and construct their social identity, generating both opportunities and challenges. Digitalization has fundamentally changed social space, extending interactions beyond physical boundaries. Online platforms allow for rapid communication and access to information, but at the same time facilitate the spread of stereotypes, disinformation and hate speech. Phenomena such as “echo chambers” contribute to the reinforcement of existing prejudices, as users are predominantly exposed to opinions similar to their own. In addition, digital platform algorithms can amplify polarizing or emotional content, which increases the visibility of discriminatory discourse. In this context, discrimination becomes faster, more visible and harder to control.

For trainers , this implies the need to develop digital literacy skills, both for themselves and for participants. It is important that they understand how the online environment works and are able to identify and combat discriminatory content.

Migration is another major factor influencing the dynamics of discrimination. Increased international mobility has led to the diversification of European societies, creating complex multicultural contexts. While diversity can be an important resource, the lack of effective integration mechanisms can generate social tensions and negative perceptions.

In Germany and Italy, migration is closely linked to debates on integration and social cohesion. In Turkey, the presence of a large number of refugees amplifies these challenges, while in Romania, migration mainly influences social perceptions and intercultural relations. The interaction between digitalization and migration creates new forms of discrimination, especially in the online environment, where stereotypes about migrants can be amplified and spread rapidly. This phenomenon highlights the need for educational interventions that address these two dimensions simultaneously.

6.7 Training needs identified for professionals

Considering the needs analysis carried out within the project, it highlights that, in order to effectively combat discrimination, it is not enough to train the final beneficiaries alone, but it is also essential to develop the skills of the professionals who facilitate the educational processes. Trainers, educators and other specialists involved in training play a central role in shaping attitudes and behaviors, and the effectiveness of interventions directly depends on their level of training. In this context, the project identified a series of specific training needs for professionals, which reflect the complexity of the phenomenon of discrimination and the transformations of contemporary society.



A first important need is related to **the development of skills to facilitate sensitive discussions** . Topics related to discrimination, identity, diversity or privilege can generate strong emotional reactions, resistance or conflicts among participants. Many trainers are not sufficiently prepared to manage these situations in a constructive way, which can affect the quality of the learning process. Therefore, it is necessary to develop specific facilitation skills, which allow the creation of a safe and balanced space, in which participants can express themselves freely but responsibly.

Another essential need is the use of **interactive and experiential methods** . The project highlighted that traditional methods, based on the transmission of information, are insufficient to produce behavioral changes. Trainers need skills in the use of methods such as role-playing, simulations, case studies or reflection exercises, which allow for the active involvement of participants and facilitate experiential learning.

At the same time, it is necessary **to integrate digital tools into the training process** . In a context where discrimination is increasingly manifested in the online environment, trainers must be able to use digital platforms, interactive resources and multimedia tools. This includes not only technical skills, but also the ability to critically analyze online content and develop the digital literacy of participants.

Another important aspect is **adapting the content to the diversity of the target groups** . Participants in trainings come from different backgrounds, with varying experiences, values and levels of understanding. Trainers must be able to adapt methods and content according to these differences, ensuring the relevance and accessibility of the educational process. The project also highlighted the need to develop **conflict management skills and intervene in real-time situations of discrimination** . Trainers must be prepared to intervene when discriminatory behaviors occur within the group, mediate conflicts and transform these situations into learning opportunities.

Another important dimension is **the development of critical reflection and self-awareness** among professionals. Trainers are not neutral in the educational process; they have their own values, experiences and biases, which can influence the way they facilitate activities. Therefore, it is essential that they develop their capacity for self-reflection and analyze their own attitudes and behaviors. In addition, the project emphasizes the need for an **interdisciplinary approach** , integrating perspectives from psychology, sociology and anthropology. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying discrimination and contributes to the development of more effective interventions.

7. CRONOS Strategy

7.1. Strategic vision and principles

The CRONOS strategy is built as an integrated framework for educational intervention, which aims not only to reduce discriminatory manifestations, but also to transform the way in which individuals understand and relate to diversity. This strategy starts from the premise that discrimination is not an isolated phenomenon, but the result of complex processes, involving cognitive, social and cultural factors. The strategic vision of the project is based on the idea that real change cannot be achieved exclusively through regulations or sanctions, but by developing skills and attitudes that allow individuals to act consciously and responsibly in their daily interactions. In this sense, the CRONOS strategy proposes an approach that combines formal and non-formal education with experiential, participant-centered methods.

A defining element of this vision is the orientation towards **behavioral change**, not just towards the accumulation of knowledge. The project recognizes that simply informing about discrimination is not enough to change attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, the strategy emphasizes the creation of learning contexts in which participants can experiment, reflect and test new ways of interacting. The CRONOS strategy is also built on the principle of **practical relevance**. The educational content and the methods used are adapted to the real situations that participants face in their daily lives, whether it is the professional, social or family environment. This practical orientation increases the degree of involvement and facilitates the transfer of learning to real contexts.

Another central principle is **the active participation of the beneficiaries**. Instead of a traditional model, in which the trainer is the main provider of information, the project strategy promotes a participatory model, in which the participants become co-creators of the learning process. This approach stimulates critical reflection and individual responsibility. We also emphasize the **psychological safety of the learning space**. Discussions about discrimination can generate vulnerability, strong emotions or conflicts. Therefore, it is essential that trainers create an environment in which participants feel respected and encouraged to express their opinions, without fear of judgment.

Another important element of the strategic vision is **adaptability** . The strategy recognizes the diversity of cultural and social contexts in which it is implemented and promotes flexibility in the application of methods and tools. This allows for the adjustment of interventions according to the specificities of target groups and identified needs.

Last but not least, the strategy is oriented towards **long-term impact** . Instead of one-off interventions, the project aims to develop skills and attitudes that will produce sustainable changes. Trainers are seen as multipliers of this impact, with the role of integrating the project results into their future activities.

7.1.1 Fundamental values (Equality, Inclusion, Human Dignity)

The project strategy is based on a set of core values that reflect both the principles of the European Union and the universal framework of human rights. These values are not just theoretical concepts, but represent operational benchmarks that guide the design of educational activities, the interaction between participants and the role of trainers in the training process. The integration of these values into training activities is essential to ensure coherence between the message conveyed and the learning experience of participants.

Equality is one of the central pillars of the strategy and involves ensuring fair treatment for all people, regardless of their individual characteristics or membership in a particular social group. In an educational context, equality does not mean uniformity, but the creation of conditions that allow each participant to actively contribute to and benefit from the learning process.

For trainers, promoting equality involves:

- equitable distribution of speaking time and participation opportunities;
- avoiding favoring certain participants based on experience, status or level of education;
- adapting methods to meet the different needs of the group.

Inclusion expands the concept of equality, emphasizing the recognition and valorization of diversity. Within the CRONOS strategy, inclusion is understood as an active process, which involves not only accepting differences, but also integrating them into the learning process.

This involves:

- creating an environment where all voices are heard and respected;
- using diverse examples and case studies that reflect the realities of different social groups;
- adapting language and methods to avoid implicit exclusion.

For trainers, inclusion requires constant attention to group dynamics and how participants interact, as well as the ability to intervene when situations of marginalization or exclusion arise.

Human dignity is the foundation of all interventions proposed within the strategy. It implies respect for each individual and recognition of the intrinsic value of each person, regardless of existing differences.

In practice, promoting human dignity involves:

- using respectful and non-discriminatory language;
- avoiding labeling and stereotypes;
- creating a safe space where participants can share personal experiences without fear of being judged.

For trainers, this value is essential in managing sensitive discussions, especially when addressing issues related to identity, discrimination or personal experiences. An important aspect is that these values do not operate independently, but are interconnected. Equality without inclusion can lead to uniformity, and inclusion without respect for dignity can become superficial. Therefore, the CRONOS strategy promotes an integrated approach, in which these values are applied simultaneously and coherently.

7.1.2 Rights-based approach and prevention

We have chosen a rights-based approach, which places the respect for fundamental rights at the heart of all educational interventions. This approach starts from the premise that equality, dignity and non-discrimination are not just moral or social values, but fundamental rights that must be

respected, promoted and protected in all contexts of social life. In this sense, combating discrimination is not seen exclusively as an individual responsibility, but as a group responsibility, involving both individuals and institutions and communities. The rights-based approach contributes to the development of a deeper understanding of the relationship between individual behaviors and their impact on the rights of others.

For trainers, this perspective involves integrating into training activities elements that help participants understand:

- what fundamental rights are involved in situations of discrimination;
- how these rights can be violated directly or indirectly;
- what responsibilities they have as individuals in respecting the rights of others.

At the same time, the CRONOS strategy places a strong emphasis on the **preventive dimension** of educational interventions. Unlike traditional approaches, which intervene after discrimination has occurred, this strategy aims to reduce the likelihood of discriminatory behaviors by developing the skills necessary to prevent them. The preventive approach involves intervening at the root causes of discrimination, such as:

- stereotypes and prejudices;
- lack of empathy;
- communication difficulties;
- lack of awareness of the impact of one's own behaviors.

By addressing these factors, our strategy aims to contribute to the development of inclusive behaviors and reduce social tensions before they turn into situations of explicit discrimination.

For trainers, this approach involves a change of role and perspective. Instead of focusing exclusively on explaining concepts or correcting behaviors, they become facilitators of a learning process oriented towards prevention and personal development.

This translates into:

- using methods that stimulate reflection and awareness;
- creating learning contexts in which participants can explore their own attitudes;

- developing skills to anticipate and manage situations of discrimination.

Another important element of the rights-based approach is the emphasis on **empowering participants** . They are encouraged to take an active role in promoting equality and inclusion, not only in training, but also in everyday life. Thus, the educational process becomes a tool for civic and social development. At the same time, the preventive approach helps to reduce the resistance of participants, as it is not based on blaming or sanctioning, but on learning and development. This allows for the creation of a more open and receptive learning environment, in which participants are willing to analyze their own behaviors and adopt changes.

7.1.3 Long-term structural change perspective

We do not limit ourselves to one-off interventions or individual behavioral changes, but propose a perspective of long-term structural transformation. This approach starts from the recognition that discrimination is not only the result of individual attitudes, but is often embedded in social, institutional and cultural structures that influence the way individuals think and act. In this sense, the CRONOS strategy aims to contribute to changing these structures through educational interventions that go beyond the individual level and have the potential to generate effects at the community and organizational level.

An essential component of this perspective is the multilevel approach, which simultaneously aims to:

- **the individual level** , by developing awareness, empathy and communication skills;
- **interpersonal level** , by improving relationships and reducing social tensions;
- **the organizational level** , by influencing practices, norms and institutional culture;
- **the social level** , by promoting the values of inclusion and equality.

This integrated approach is essential, because changes at the individual level are not sustainable in the absence of transformations at the social and institutional level.

Another central element of the long-term perspective is **the multiplication of impact through trainers** . Within the CRONOS strategy, trainers are considered key actors of change, with the

role of transmitting the knowledge, methods and values promoted in the project. Thus, the impact of the interventions is not limited to the direct participants, but extends to the communities and organizations in which they operate. This multiplication logic contributes to the creation of a "cascade" effect, in which each participant or trainer becomes, in turn, a vector of change.

The strategy also emphasizes **the sustainable integration of the results into existing educational practices** . The tools developed within the project – such as digital resources, interactive methods or educational games – are designed to be used in the long term and adapted to different contexts.

Another important aspect is **changing social norms and collective perceptions** . Through repeated interventions and the promotion of inclusive behavior models, the strategy contributes to redefining what is considered acceptable or desirable in society. Over time, this process can lead to a reduction in tolerance for discrimination and the strengthening of values based on respect and inclusion.

For trainers, this perspective implies a role shift: from facilitators of one-off sessions to heroes of social change. They are encouraged to extend their impact beyond the training, by integrating principles and methods into their current activities and by promoting an inclusive organizational culture.

7.2 Materials adapted to current developments in psychology, sociology and anthropology

We place particular emphasis on developing educational materials that reflect recent developments in the fields of psychology, sociology and anthropology. This approach is essential in the context in which discrimination is a complex phenomenon, influenced by cognitive processes, social dynamics and cultural contexts. The educational materials developed within the project are not built exclusively on traditional theoretical foundations, but integrate interdisciplinary perspectives that allow for a deeper understanding of discriminatory behaviors. In this sense, the CRONOS strategy recognizes that behavioral change requires interventions that simultaneously target the way people think (psychology), interact (sociology) and construct their identity (anthropology).

From a psychological perspective, the materials are designed to address mechanisms such as cognitive biases, stereotypes, and decision-making processes. From a sociological perspective,

they analyze how social norms, institutional structures, and power relations influence discrimination. At the same time, the anthropological perspective contributes to understanding cultural diversity and how identity and belonging influence social behaviors.

For trainers, this interdisciplinary integration provides a more complex and relevant framework for addressing discrimination, allowing the development of activities that go beyond the superficial level of information and facilitate deep learning.

CRONOS materials are designed to be:

- relevant to the current context;
- applicable in real situations;
- adaptable to various target groups;
- oriented towards developing skills, not just knowledge.

7.2.1 Evidence-based content

A fundamental principle of the strategy is the use of evidence-based educational content, which ensures the relevance, credibility and effectiveness of the proposed interventions. In the context of combating discrimination, this is essential, as perceptions, stereotypes and personal opinions can strongly influence the way in which information is understood and accepted by participants. Evidence-based content involves basing educational materials on empirical data, scientific research and validated analyses, avoiding the use of unjustified generalizations or simplified explanations of the phenomenon of discrimination. Within the CRONOS project, this approach was implemented by integrating the results of research carried out by partners, as well as by referring to the specialized literature in the field of social psychology, sociology and intercultural studies.

A first level of this approach is the use of **data collected within the project**, including through interviews, focus groups and feedback from training activities. This data provides a direct insight into the experiences and perceptions of the participants, allowing the content to be adapted to their real needs. Thus, the materials developed are not abstract or general, but reflect concrete situations encountered in everyday life.

Second, the content is grounded in **relevant academic research** that explains the mechanisms underlying discrimination. For example, studies on cognitive biases, stereotypes, or the influence of social norms are integrated into the educational materials to provide participants with a deeper understanding of their own behaviors. This integration helps to overcome superficial explanations and develop a critical perspective on the phenomenon.

Another important element is the use of **good practices at European level**, identified in similar programs and initiatives. These provide concrete examples of effective interventions and can be adapted to different national or organizational contexts. By integrating these good practices, the CRONOS strategy contributes to aligning with European standards and increasing the quality of educational materials.

For trainers, the use of evidence-based content has multiple benefits. First, it increases **the credibility of the training process**, because the information presented is supported by data and research, not just personal opinions. Second, it facilitates **the acceptance of the message by participants**, because evidence-based arguments are easier to validate and integrate. At the same time, this approach contributes to the development of **critical thinking** among participants. By exposing them to data and analysis, they are encouraged to re-evaluate their own beliefs and analyze information from a more objective perspective. Thus, the learning process becomes an active and reflective one. An essential aspect, however, is the way in which this content is presented. Although based on complex research and data, CRONOS materials are designed to be **accessible and easy to understand**, avoiding the excessive use of academic jargon. Trainers have the role of translating theoretical concepts into concrete and relevant examples for participants, thus facilitating their understanding and application. Evidence-based content is also used not just to inform, but also to **provoke reflection and dialogue**. Rather than providing definitive answers, the materials are designed to stimulate questions, discussions, and the exploration of different perspectives.

7.2.2. Bias awareness and critical thinking development modules

A central pillar of the strategy is the development of educational modules dedicated to bias awareness and the stimulation of critical thinking, aiming to reduce the cognitive mechanisms that underlie discriminatory behaviors. These modules start from a thorough understanding of how the human brain processes social information and the fact that most decisions and reactions are influenced by automatic, rapid and often unconscious processes. From a psychological perspective, cognitive biases represent effective but imperfect mental strategies that allow individuals to navigate the complexity of the social environment. However, in the context of social interactions, these mechanisms can lead to excessive simplifications, generalizations and erroneous attributions. In the absence of awareness, they become the foundation of stereotypes and prejudices, contributing to the emergence of discrimination, even in the absence of explicit intention.

CRONOS modules are designed to facilitate **the transition from automatic to reflective thinking**. This transition is essential because it allows participants to observe their own reactions, critically analyze them, and consciously regulate them. In this sense, the emphasis is not on eliminating biases, an unrealistic goal, but on developing the ability to recognize them and reduce their impact on behavior.

A first level of these modules is **the identification of automatic thought patterns**. Participants are guided to observe how they form impressions of others, how they categorize information and how they react in social situations. This process is achieved through structured exercises, which highlight the discrepancy between perception and reality. A second level aims at **the critical analysis of stereotypes and their sources**. Participants are encouraged to explore the origin of their beliefs, to identify the influence of the social environment, the media and personal experiences. This stage is essential for understanding the fact that many of the beliefs considered "natural" are, in fact, socially constructed.

A distinctive element of the modules is the integration **of critical thinking as an active and ongoing process**. Critical thinking is not treated as an abstract skill, but as a practical tool, which can be applied in concrete situations. Participants are encouraged to ask questions, analyze information from multiple perspectives and avoid jumping to conclusions.

For trainers, facilitating critical thinking involves creating learning contexts that:

- challenges participants to reevaluate their beliefs;
- avoid simplistic or polarizing answers;
- stimulates dialogue and exploration of differences of opinion.

Another important aspect is addressing the relationship between **emotion, identity and biases** . Many prejudices are supported by deep emotional reactions, such as fear of the unknown, anxiety or the need to belong. CRONOS modules include activities that help participants recognize these emotions and understand how they influence perceptions and behaviors. In this context, the development of **emotional self-regulation capacity is essential** , which allows participants to manage impulsive reactions and adopt more conscious and inclusive behaviors. The modules also pay special attention **to the social context and group pressure** . Individuals do not make decisions in isolation, but are influenced by the norms and expectations of the group to which they belong. Participants are encouraged to reflect on how these influences shape their behaviors and to develop the capacity to act independently of social pressures when they lead to discrimination. An innovative element of these modules is the integration of the concept of **metacognition** , i.e. the ability to think about one's own thinking process. By developing this skill, participants become more aware of how they make decisions and can actively intervene in this process.

From a methodological point of view, the modules are built on experiential principles that facilitate deep learning. These include:

- guided reflection exercises;
- simulated situations that highlight biases in action;
- analysis of ambiguous scenarios;
- facilitated discussions on personal experiences.

These methods allow participants to directly experience the effects of biases and understand their impact in a concrete and relevant way.

The influence of the digital environment and social algorithms

In the current context, developing critical thinking also involves understanding how the digital environment influences social perceptions and reinforces biases. Social platforms and digital algorithms tend to expose users to information similar to their own beliefs, a phenomenon known

as the “echo chamber” or “information bubble”. In this context, stereotypes and prejudices can be amplified by repeated exposure to polarizing content or misinformation.

CRONOS modules include activities that stimulate critical analysis of information sources, identification of emotional manipulation, and reflection on how the online environment influences perceptions about different social groups.

A key issue for trainers is managing participant resistance. Awareness of biases can generate discomfort or defensiveness, especially when participants perceive themselves as tolerant. Therefore, it is important that these modules are facilitated in a way that avoids blame and promotes learning in a safe environment.

7.2.3 Developing intercultural skills

In the context of globalization and increasing international mobility, the development of intercultural competences is an essential component of the CRONOS strategy. Cultural diversity is no longer an exception, but an everyday reality in most European societies, and the ability to interact effectively and respectfully with people from different cultural backgrounds is becoming a fundamental competence. Intercultural competences are defined as the set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow individuals to understand, respect and navigate cultural differences. They are not limited to knowledge of specific cultural elements, but involve the development of an open, flexible and reflective attitude towards diversity. The CRONOS strategy approaches the development of these competences through an integrated perspective, combining cognitive (understanding of differences), emotional (empathy) and behavioral (adaptation of interaction) dimensions.

A first central element is **awareness of one's own cultural framework** . Participants are encouraged to reflect on their own values, norms and patterns of behavior, understanding that these are not universal, but socially constructed. This stage is essential for reducing the tendency to evaluate other cultures through one's own standards (ethnocentrism).

A second element is the development of **perspective-taking** , which involves the ability to understand how a situation is perceived from the point of view of a person from another cultural context. This competence contributes to reducing stereotypes and improving communication.

The strategy also emphasizes **behavioral adaptability** , i.e. the ability to adjust communication and interaction patterns according to the cultural context. This includes sensitivity to differences in communication styles, social norms, or the way emotions are expressed.

Relevance in the context of partner countries.

The development of intercultural competences is particularly relevant in the context of the four countries involved in the project, each with distinct specificities:

In **Romania** , cultural diversity is often approached through the lens of ethnic and socio-economic differences. Intercultural challenges frequently arise in the relationship with Roma communities or in the context of urban-rural differences. In this context, the development of intercultural competences contributes to reducing stereotypes and improving social relations.

In **Germany** , intercultural competences are essential in the context of a deeply diverse society, marked by the presence of a significant number of people with a migrant background. Intercultural interactions are frequent in education, the labour market and everyday life, and the lack of these competences can lead to tensions and discrimination.

In **Italy** , diversity is influenced by both migration and regional differences. Intercultural interactions can be affected by socio-economic factors and perceptions of identity and belonging. In this context, intercultural competences contribute to social cohesion and conflict reduction.

In **Turkey** , the context is characterized by complex cultural diversity and the presence of a large number of migrants and refugees. Intercultural interactions are influenced by historical, religious and social factors, and the development of these skills is essential for facilitating dialogue and inclusion.

For trainers, developing intercultural competences involves facilitating learning processes that go beyond simply transmitting information about other cultures. The focus is on:

- exploring the personal experiences of participants;
- identifying stereotypes and prejudices;
- developing empathy and openness;
- practicing real situations of intercultural interaction.

The methods used include role-playing, simulations, case studies and reflection exercises, which allow participants to experience cultural differences in a safe and controlled way.

A key aspect is creating a learning space where diversity is valued and participants feel comfortable expressing their perspectives. Trainers must be prepared to manage potential tensions and transform differences into learning opportunities.

7.2.4 Trauma-sensitive and inclusion-oriented pedagogy

The CRONOS strategy integrates the principles of trauma-informed pedagogy and inclusive education, recognizing that experiences of discrimination are not only social events, but can have significant psychological and emotional consequences on individuals. In this context, the educational process must be conceived not only as a space for transmitting knowledge, but also as a safe, supportive and sensitive environment to the experiences of the participants. Trauma-informed pedagogy starts from the premise that a significant number of participants may have previous experiences of discrimination, exclusion or marginalization, which influence the way they perceive and react to learning situations. These experiences can generate intense emotional reactions, difficulties in participation or resistance in training activities. In this sense, the CRONOS strategy promotes an educational approach that takes these aspects into account and aims to minimize the risk of reactivating negative experiences.

A first essential principle is **creating a safe environment** . This involves establishing clear rules of interaction, based on respect, active listening, and confidentiality. For trainers, this involves facilitating a climate in which participants feel comfortable expressing their opinions and experiences, without fear of judgment or stigmatization.

A second principle is **predictability and transparency of the educational process** . Participants need to understand the structure of activities, objectives, and expectations to reduce anxiety and uncertainty. Clarity in communication helps create a sense of control and security.

Another central element is **respecting individual rhythm and boundaries** . Not all participants are prepared to openly discuss personal experiences or engage in emotionally intense activities. Therefore, it is important that participation is voluntary and that trainers offer alternatives for involvement. In parallel, inclusive pedagogy ensures that the learning process is adapted to the diversity of participants. This involves recognizing differences in experience, level of education, culture, language or learning style and adjusting methods accordingly.

Within the CRONOS strategy, this approach is reflected through:

- using accessible and non-discriminatory language;
- diversifying teaching and learning methods;
- including relevant examples for different social groups;
- avoiding generalizations and stereotypes.

Another important aspect is **sensitivity to group power dynamics** . In any learning context, there are differences in status, experience or confidence, which can influence participation. Trainers must be attentive to these dynamics and create equal opportunities for involvement for all participants. The CRONOS strategy also emphasizes **the management of emotions in the educational process** . Discussions about discrimination can generate strong emotional reactions, both from those who have experienced discrimination and from those who are confronted with their own biases. Trainers must be prepared to recognize these emotions and manage them in a constructive way, transforming them into learning opportunities.

For example, certain activities or discussions may reactivate previous experiences of exclusion, stigmatization, or humiliation. In such situations, the trainer's role is not to force emotional exposure, but to create a safe space in which participants can decide their own level of involvement.

For trainers, applying trauma-informed and inclusive pedagogy requires the development of specific skills, such as:

- empathy and active listening;
- the ability to observe group dynamics;
- flexibility in adapting activities;
- managing sensitive or conflict situations.

The role of self-reflection in facilitation:

An essential element in facilitating activities on discrimination is the trainer's capacity for self-reflection. Trainers, like participants, are influenced by their own experiences, values and cognitive biases. In this context, effective facilitation involves developing a reflective attitude and a willingness to analyze how one's own perceptions may influence interaction with the group.

The CRONOS strategy encourages trainers to constantly develop their capacity for self-observation, to reflect on their position in relation to the group, and to avoid assuming a position of "absolute neutrality", which may unintentionally hide certain perspectives or power relations.

Another important element is avoiding re-traumatization. Activities should be designed in a way that does not force participants to relive difficult experiences, but rather provides a safe framework for reflection and learning.

7.2.5 Adaptive and modular educational design

Adaptive and modular educational design is an essential component of the CRONOS strategy, designed to respond to the complexity of the phenomenon of discrimination and the diversity of training contexts in which it is addressed. In contrast to traditional teaching models, characterized by a rigid structure and a uniform approach to participants, this type of design promotes flexibility, personalization and the ability to continuously adjust the learning process. This approach starts from the premise that the learning process, especially in the field of social and behavioral skills, is deeply influenced by individual experiences, the social context and the level of awareness of the participants.

In training activities, participants do not represent a homogeneous group, but a set of different perspectives, values and experiences, which requires a constant adaptation of the educational intervention. In the absence of this adaptation, there is a risk that the learning process will become irrelevant or ineffective for some of the participants.

The modular dimension of educational design involves organizing content into autonomous units, each built around clear learning objectives and specific outcomes. These modules are designed so that they can be used independently or integrated into a more complex structure, depending on the objectives of the training program. This organization allows the construction of flexible educational paths, adapted to different types of interventions, from short sessions to extended training programs.

Each module integrates theoretical elements, experiential activities and reflection components, which allows the phenomenon of discrimination to be approached from multiple perspectives. At the same time, this structure facilitates the transfer of learning to real-world contexts, as participants are encouraged to connect the concepts discussed with their own experiences. The adaptive nature of the design is reflected in the ability to adjust the content, methods and pace of work according to the group dynamics. Trainers are encouraged to constantly observe the level of involvement of the participants, their reactions and the difficulties encountered, adapting the intervention accordingly. This adjustment does not imply abandoning the initial objectives, but rather making the learning path more flexible to ensure that they are achieved in an efficient manner.

Adapting content can involve simplifying or deepening concepts, depending on the level of experience of the participants. Similarly, facilitation methods can be adjusted to respond to different learning styles, alternating between experiential activities, reflective discussions, and case studies. The pace of work can also be modified to allow for in-depth exploration of topics that generate interest or difficulty.

A central element of this type of design is the possibility of building personalized learning paths. Depending on the program objectives and the profile of the participants, trainers can select and combine modules in a logical sequence, facilitating the progression from awareness to

understanding and, subsequently, to action. This progressive structure contributes to the consolidation of learning and the development of skills applicable in everyday life.

The modular design also facilitates the integration of a variety of educational resources, such as digital materials, case studies, reflection exercises or interactive activities. This methodological diversity contributes to increasing participant involvement and facilitating experiential learning, which is essential in the development of social skills. Within this model, the role of the trainer becomes a complex and dynamic one. He is no longer just a provider of information, but a facilitator of the learning process and a designer of the educational experience. The trainer has the responsibility to select and adapt the content, to manage the group dynamics and to create a framework in which participants can reflect and learn actively.

However, the effective implementation of an adaptive and modular design requires the existence of favorable conditions, such as adequate training of trainers, access to varied educational resources, and the willingness to reflect on the facilitation process. In the absence of these conditions, flexibility can be perceived as a lack of structure, which can affect the coherence of the intervention.

7.3. Implementation framework

The CRONOS implementation framework defines how the principles and materials developed within the project are put into practice. It provides an operational structure that ensures the coherence, efficiency and sustainability of educational interventions, integrating both the pedagogical and organizational dimensions. The effective implementation of a strategy to combat discrimination requires not only the existence of appropriate materials, but also the development of clear training, facilitation, monitoring and evaluation processes. In this sense, the CRONOS framework is designed as an integrated system, supporting trainers at all stages of the educational process, from planning to impact evaluation. This framework is structured into several interdependent components, which target both the content and methods of training, as well as the development of trainers' skills and ensuring the quality of interventions.

7.3.1 Structure of the training curriculum

The structure of the CRONOS training curriculum is designed as a progressive educational process, oriented towards the development of skills and behavioral change. This reflects a participant-centered pedagogical approach, in which learning is understood as a gradual process, involving awareness, critical understanding and practical application. In the field of combating discrimination, the simple transmission of information is not enough to produce significant changes. Therefore, the curriculum is structured in such a way as to facilitate the passage of successive stages, each having a specific role in the learning process.

The first stage of the curriculum is dedicated **to awareness** . In this phase, participants are invited to reflect on their own experiences, perceptions and reactions related to diversity and difference. The activities used in this stage are generally experiential and reflective in nature, with the role of creating a safe space in which participants can express their opinions and examine their own beliefs. This stage is essential for reducing resistance and for active engagement in the learning process.

Next, the curriculum introduces a **conceptual understanding phase** , in which notions such as cognitive biases, stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination are addressed, as well as the social and cultural mechanisms that support them. In this phase, the emphasis is placed on developing critical thinking and the ability of participants to analyze information from multiple perspectives. The trainers have the role of facilitating the connection between theoretical concepts and the concrete experiences of the participants, avoiding abstract or overly theoretical approaches.

The third stage is oriented towards **the analysis of real situations** , through the use of case studies, scenarios and examples from everyday life. This stage allows participants to apply the acquired knowledge and identify forms of discrimination in concrete contexts. At the same time, it facilitates the development of the capacity for interpretation and decision-making in complex situations.

The last stage of the curriculum is dedicated **to the development of intervention skills** . Participants are encouraged to identify concrete strategies for action, to practice appropriate responses in situations of discrimination and to develop their capacity to intervene in a responsible and effective manner. This stage is essential for the transfer of learning to real contexts and for the transformation of knowledge into behaviors. The structure of the curriculum is not rigid, but allows

for adaptations depending on the training context. Depending on the duration of the program, the profile of the participants and the specific objectives, the stages can be compressed, expanded or reconfigured. However, maintaining a progressive logic is essential to ensure the coherence of the learning process.

Another important element of the curriculum is the integration of reflection throughout the entire process. Reflection is not limited to a specific stage, but is present transversally, being stimulated through open questions, guided discussions and individual exercises. This contributes to the consolidation of learning and the development of a deep understanding of the topics addressed.

For trainers, using this type of curriculum requires careful planning and flexibility in implementation. They must be able to adjust the pace and content based on participant reactions, while maintaining the overall direction of the training process.

7.3.2 Delivery methods (blended, experiential, digital)

The CRONOS strategy promotes the use of a diverse set of delivery methods, designed to respond to both the complexity of the phenomenon of discrimination and the diversity of participants involved in the training process. The choice and combination of these methods is an essential element in ensuring the efficiency of educational interventions, as it directly influences the level of involvement, the quality of reflection and the capacity to transfer learning to real contexts. Within this model, delivery methods are not treated as isolated tools, but as interdependent components of an integrated educational process. The CRONOS strategy structures these methods into three main categories: blended methods, experiential methods and digital methods, each contributing to the achievement of specific learning objectives.

Blended methods (combined learning)

The blended learning approach involves the integration of face-to-face activities with those carried out online, providing a flexible and adaptable framework for the training process. This method reflects contemporary developments in education and responds to the need to extend the learning process beyond the limited space and time of traditional sessions. Within the CRONOS strategy, blended learning is used to create continuity between the stages of the educational process. For

example, participants can be involved in preparatory activities carried out online, which include familiarization with basic concepts, analysis of introductory materials or carrying out reflection exercises.

These activities contribute to creating a minimum common level of understanding and facilitate more efficient use of the time allocated to face-to-face sessions. The sessions held in a physical format are generally oriented towards interaction, application and reflection, providing adequate space for discussions, group activities and experiential exercises. After the completion of these sessions, the online components can be used to consolidate learning, through activities such as individual reflections, feedback or deepening the content. This structure allows for a balanced distribution of activities and supports autonomous learning, giving participants the opportunity to return to the materials and reflect at their own pace. At the same time, it facilitates adaptation to diverse contexts, including situations where physical participation is limited.

Experiential methods

Experiential methods are the central component of the training process within the CRONOS strategy, being essential for the development of social and behavioral skills. These methods are based on the principle of experiential learning, according to which knowledge is built through active involvement, reflection and application.

Role-playing is one of the most widely used experiential methods, allowing participants to explore different perspectives by assuming specific roles. This method facilitates the development of empathy and the ability to understand the impact of behaviors on other people. In the context of discrimination, role-playing allows the simulation of real situations, giving participants the opportunity to experience both the position of the affected person and that of the observer or intervener.

Simulations are a more complex form of experiential learning, involving structured scenarios that replicate real-life situations. They require participants to analyze information, make decisions, and manage their consequences. Simulations are particularly useful for developing intervention skills because they provide a safe setting in which participants can practice responding to difficult situations.

Case studies are an analytical method that allows for the exploration of concrete situations of discrimination. Participants are invited to identify problems, analyze the context and propose solutions, thus developing critical thinking and the ability to apply concepts. This method facilitates the connection between theory and practice and contributes to understanding the complexity of the phenomenon.

Reflective exercises are designed to stimulate awareness and self-analysis. They can include open-ended questions, reflection journals, or individual activities that invite participants to examine their own reactions and beliefs. Reflection is essential for consolidating learning and developing a critical perspective on their own behavior.

Guided discussions complement the experiential process, providing a space for processing experiences and exploring different perspectives. The trainer's role is to facilitate dialogue, maintain a balance between opinions, and encourage active participation.

Digital methods

Digital methods are a complementary component of the training process, contributing to the expansion and diversification of the learning experience. In the current context, in which social interactions are increasingly taking place online, the integration of these methods is essential for the relevance of educational interventions. Online learning platforms allow the distribution of materials, the organization of activities and the monitoring of the progress of participants. They provide a structured framework for asynchronous learning and facilitate access to various educational resources. Interactive tools, such as digital surveys or questionnaires, can be used to quickly assess the level of understanding and stimulate participation. They contribute to the creation of a dynamic learning process and allow the collection of feedback in real time.

Digital content analysis is a relevant method for developing critical thinking. Participants can be involved in analyzing real examples from the online environment, identifying forms of discrimination and discussing their impact. This method contributes to the development of the skills necessary for responsible navigation of the digital space.

Multimedia resources, such as video or audio, can be used to illustrate concrete situations and stimulate discussions. They provide visual and emotional support that facilitates understanding and engagement.

Integrating methods into the training process

The effectiveness of the training process does not only depend on the selection of methods used, but, crucially, on how they are integrated into a coherent pedagogical framework aimed at achieving learning objectives. In the absence of such integration, methods can remain isolated, without generating a deep or sustainable learning process.

The CRONOS strategy promotes an integrated approach, in which delivery methods are used complementary, depending on the role they play in the different stages of the learning process. This integration involves careful planning of the sequence of activities, so that each method contributes to the progressive development of the targeted competencies. A central principle of this approach is the alternation between experience, reflection and conceptualization.

The learning process is conceived as a cycle in which participants are actively involved in an experience, reflect on it, analyze it from a conceptual perspective, and subsequently integrate the learning into their own behaviors. In this sense, experiential methods, such as simulations or role-playing, are used to generate involvement and to provide participants with a direct experience of the phenomenon of discrimination. These activities have the role of activating emotions, highlighting spontaneous reactions, and creating a relevant context for learning.

Subsequently, reflective methods are integrated to facilitate the processing of the experience. Reflection exercises and guided discussions allow participants to analyze what they have experienced, identify their own reactions and understand their impact. This stage is essential for transforming the experience into conscious learning. Analytical methods, such as case studies or the introduction of theoretical concepts, contribute to structuring understanding and developing critical thinking. They allow participants to connect experiences with concepts and understand the mechanisms underlying discrimination. The integration of these types of methods allows for a complete learning process, which is not limited to the accumulation of information, but also includes the development of skills and application capacity.

Another important aspect of methodological integration is **the sequencing of activities** . The order in which methods are used directly influences the effectiveness of the learning process. For example, prematurely introducing theoretical concepts can reduce participant engagement, while starting with a concrete experience can stimulate interest and motivation. An effective structure generally involves initiating the process with awareness or reflection activities, followed by applied experiences, and then analysis and conceptualization. Finally, the process is completed with application-oriented activities that facilitate the transfer of learning to real-world contexts.

Integrating methods also means adapting them to the group dynamics. Trainers need to observe the level of involvement, emotional reactions and difficulties encountered by participants, adjusting the sequence and type of activities according to these elements. This flexibility is essential in the context of sensitive topics, such as discrimination, where reactions can vary significantly. An essential element of integration is ensuring coherence between methods and learning objectives. Each method used must have a clear purpose and contribute to the development of the targeted skills. Using methods only for diversity or dynamism, without a direct link to the objectives, can reduce the effectiveness of the training process.

7.3.3 Capacity building of trainers

The development of trainers' capacity is a central pillar of the CRONOS strategy, as the effectiveness of educational interventions in the field of combating discrimination directly depends on their skills and level of training. In this project, trainers are not considered simple providers of information, but facilitators of change, actors who actively contribute to transforming the way participants think, interact and react in situations of discrimination. This perspective requires a complex approach to the professional development of trainers, which includes both the pedagogical and the personal and reflective dimensions. The training process of trainers must go beyond the technical level and include the development of skills that allow the management of sensitive, dynamic and sometimes unpredictable educational contexts.

A first level of trainer capacity development is represented by **advanced pedagogical skills** . Trainers must be able to design and facilitate training sessions that integrate various methods, adapted to different learning styles. This implies a solid understanding of the principles of non-formal education and experiential learning, as well as the ability to structure the educational

process in a coherent and progressive way. Trainers must be able to create a balance between structure and flexibility, maintaining the direction of the learning process, but at the same time adapting to the dynamics of the group.

A second essential level is **thematic competences**, which aim to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of discrimination. Trainers need to be familiar with the psychological mechanisms, such as cognitive biases and stereotypes, the sociological dimensions of discrimination, such as structural inequalities, and the cultural aspects that influence perceptions and behaviors. This interdisciplinary understanding allows them to approach the subject in a nuanced way and to respond appropriately to questions or challenges from participants.

A distinctive element of the development of trainers' capacity within the CRONOS strategy is the emphasis on **self-reflection and personal awareness**. Trainers are encouraged to examine their own beliefs, values and biases, recognizing that these can influence the facilitation process. This reflective dimension is essential for ensuring a balanced educational process and for avoiding the reproduction of discriminatory patterns in training activities. Closely related to this is the development of skills in **managing group dynamics and sensitive discussions**. Topics related to discrimination can generate intense emotional reactions, conflicts or resistance from participants. Trainers must be prepared to create a safe space where opinions can be expressed, but also to intervene when problematic behaviors or discourses arise. This requires the ability to mediate conflicts, reframe ideas and guide discussions in a constructive way.

It is also essential to develop the skills of **adaptation and decision-making in real time**. The process of training in the field of discrimination cannot be completely predictable, and trainers must be able to adjust the initial plan according to the reactions of the participants. This flexibility requires a good capacity for context analysis and rapid pedagogical decision-making. The CRONOS strategy supports the development of the capacity of trainers through a continuous process, which includes initial training, mentoring and reflection on practice. Training of trainers sessions are designed not only to convey content, but also to provide opportunities for practice and feedback. The exchange of good practices between trainers is also an important element, contributing to the development of a professional community and the continuous improvement of interventions.

Also relevant is the development of a **culture of professional reflection** , in which trainers are encouraged to analyze facilitation experiences, identify challenges, and adjust their approach. This process contributes to strengthening skills and increasing the quality of training activities.

7.3.4 Monitoring and evaluation indicators

Monitoring and evaluation within the CRONOS strategy are built on a set of measurable indicators, which allow the assessment of both immediate results and medium and long-term impact. This approach aims to provide concrete data on the efficiency of interventions and the degree of use of the resources developed.

A first level of evaluation focuses on **access to and use of online resources** , especially the trainer's guide. In this regard, digital indicators are used that can be measured through tools such as Google Analytics or the website platform. The aim is to achieve a minimum of 1000–2000 downloads of the guide in the first 6–12 months after publication. A minimum of 3000–5000 page views, an average viewing time of over 2 minutes and a user return rate of at least 20–30% are also monitored. These values indicate not only access to the material, but also real interest in the content.

An innovative component of the evaluation system is **the interactive platform dedicated to trainers** , integrated into the project website. This allows monitoring the active involvement of users. It is estimated that a minimum of 100–200 registered users will be reached in the first year, of which at least 30–50% will be active users. Specific indicators include the number of questions asked (minimum 50–100 annually), the number of discussions generated and the number of new materials uploaded by users (minimum 20–30 relevant contributions). These data reflect the level of practical use of the guide and the degree of sustainability of the project.

A second level of evaluation refers to **participation in training activities** . The aim is to involve a minimum of 100–200 participants in total, depending on the scale of the project. The completion rate of the sessions must exceed 80%, and the level of active participation (interventions in discussions, involvement in activities) is estimated at a minimum of 70% of the participants. The evaluation of learning outcomes is carried out through comparative pre-test and post-test

instruments. The aim is to achieve a minimum 25–30% increase in scores on knowledge about discrimination and the ability to identify discriminatory situations.

Also, at least 70% of participants should demonstrate a significant improvement in understanding key concepts. Regarding **changes in attitude and behavior**, the evaluation is based on qualitative and semi-quantitative indicators. For example, it is aimed that at least 75% of participants declare an increase in the level of awareness of their own behaviors and biases. Also, at least 60% of participants should report that they feel better prepared to intervene in situations of discrimination. Participant feedback is an essential indicator of the quality of the training process. The aim is to obtain an average satisfaction score of at least 4 out of 5 for the relevance of the content, the usefulness of the methods and the quality of the facilitation. In addition, at least 80% of participants should consider the training useful for their professional or personal activity.

Another level of evaluation focuses on **the impact on trainers**. It is aimed that at least 50–70% of the trained trainers subsequently use the CRONOS methodology in their own activities. It is also possible to monitor the number of replicated sessions using the guide, with a target of at least 10–20 sessions in the first year after implementation. The medium-term impact evaluation may include data collection 3–6 months after the completion of the training. It is aimed that at least 40–50% of the participants have applied in practice at least one of the acquired skills, either in the professional environment or in their personal lives. As for the interactive platform, it also plays an important role in the continuous evaluation. Relevant indicators include the frequency of use (at least one monthly access for active users), the response rate to questions (at least 70% of the questions are answered) and the level of interaction between users.

7.3.5 Risk management and ethical measures

The implementation of training activities in the field of combating discrimination involves a series of specific risks, generated by the sensitive nature of the topics addressed and the diversity of participants. In this context, the CRONOS strategy includes a clear framework for identifying, preventing and managing risks, as well as a set of ethical principles that must be respected at all stages of the training process.

Risk management has as its main objective to ensure a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment, in which participants can explore sensitive topics without being exposed to negative or traumatic experiences.

A first type of risk is represented by **the emergence of conflicts between participants**, generated by differences in opinions, values or experiences. In the context of discussions about discrimination, it is possible that some participants express controversial or even discriminatory points of view, which can lead to tensions in the group. To prevent these situations, it is recommended to establish clear rules of interaction from the beginning of the session, such as mutual respect, active listening and avoiding personal attacks. In the event of a conflict, the trainer must intervene promptly, facilitating the dialogue and directing the discussion towards understanding and reflection, not confrontation.

A second important risk is related to **the reactivation of difficult or traumatic personal experiences**. Participants may have direct experiences of discrimination, and certain activities or discussions may trigger intense emotional reactions. To manage this risk, it is essential that trainers adopt a trauma-informed approach, avoid pressure on participants to share personal experiences, and offer the option not to participate in certain activities. It is also important to create a climate of psychological safety, in which participants feel comfortable withdrawing temporarily if necessary.

Another common risk is **participant resistance to the topic**. This can come in the form of denial of discrimination, minimization of the importance of the topic, or rejection of proposed activities. To manage this situation, trainers should use methods that encourage reflection and gradual engagement, avoiding direct confrontation or imposing perspectives. The use of concrete examples and relevant experiences can help reduce resistance.

There is also a risk of **unintentionally reproducing stereotypes or discriminatory behaviours** in training activities. This can occur both from the participants and, in certain situations, from the trainers. To prevent this risk, constant attention is needed to the language used, the way examples are formulated and the management of discussions. Trainers must be prepared to correct such situations in a constructive way, without stigmatising the participants.

Another relevant risk is related to **the emotional overload of the participants** . Intense activities, especially experiential ones, can generate fatigue or discomfort. To prevent this, it is recommended to alternate activities, introduce regular breaks and maintain a balance between cognitive and emotional content. Regarding the ethical dimension, the CRONOS strategy is based on respecting fundamental principles, which must be integrated into all training activities. These include respect for human dignity, the promotion of equality and inclusion, as well as ensuring fair treatment for all participants.

A key principle is **confidentiality** , especially in situations where participants choose to share personal experiences. Trainers should establish clear rules regarding the use of information discussed in sessions and ensure that it is not disclosed outside the group. Another important principle is **informed consent** . Participants should be informed about the nature of the activities, their objectives and any emotional implications. They should be free to choose their level of involvement and to refuse to participate in certain activities without being penalized.

The CRONOS strategy also includes concrete measures for monitoring and managing risks. For example, trainers can use short emotional state assessments at the beginning and end of sessions, observe the level of engagement and collect anonymous feedback on the comfort of participants. The interactive platform developed within the project can also function as a reporting and support space, where trainers can request support in managing difficult situations.

In terms of indicators, the aim is for at least 90% of participants to declare that they felt safe during the sessions, and the number of major incidents of conflict or discomfort to be reduced (ideally below 5% of all sessions). The trainers' ability to manage difficult situations can also be monitored through participant feedback and self-assessment.

7.3.6 Quality assurance mechanisms

Quality assurance is a fundamental component of the CRONOS implementation framework, with the role of guaranteeing the coherence, efficiency and sustainability of educational interventions. In the context of a project that addresses sensitive topics such as discrimination, maintaining high

quality standards is essential both for the credibility of the materials and for the real impact on the participants. The CRONOS strategy integrates a quality assurance system based on continuous monitoring, periodic evaluation and constant improvement of the training process. This system targets both the educational content and the facilitation and use of resources.

A first level of quality assurance is represented by **the validation and updating of the content** . The materials included in the guide and in the training programs are developed based on relevant sources and the experience of the partners, but they must be periodically revised to reflect social, legislative and educational developments. It is recommended to carry out a review at least once a year, during which the relevance of the content is analyzed and possible updates are integrated.

The interactive platform developed within the project contributes significantly to this process, providing the possibility of continuous collection of feedback and examples from practice. The number of improvement suggestions, new materials added and discussions generated on the platform can be used as indicators of the updating process. It is estimated that a minimum of 10–20 relevant updates will be integrated annually, based on user contributions and expert analysis.

A second level of quality assurance concerns **the quality of the training process** . This is assessed through participant feedback, trainer observation and analysis of the results obtained. The aim is to maintain an average satisfaction score of at least 4 out of 5 in participant evaluations, as well as the achievement of the established learning objectives. It is also important to assess **the consistency of the implementation of the CRONOS methodology** . Trainers are encouraged to use the structure and principles proposed in the guide, and the degree of fidelity to the methodology can be monitored through self-assessment, feedback or observation sessions. A relevant indicator is the percentage of sessions in which the methodology is applied in full or in an adapted manner, estimated at a minimum of 70–80%.

An important mechanism is also represented by **the continuous training of trainers** . The quality of interventions directly depends on their level of training, which is why it is recommended to periodically participate in training sessions, exchange of experience or mentoring activities. It can be aimed that at least 60–70% of trainers participate annually in at least one relevant professional development activity.

The quality assessment also includes the analysis **of the medium-term impact** , namely the way in which the acquired knowledge and skills are applied in practice. This aspect can be monitored through the interactive platform, by collecting examples of good practices or by follow-ups carried out a few months after the completion of the trainings. A relevant indicator is the number of sessions replicated or adapted by the trainers, estimated at a minimum of 10–20 per year.

Another essential point of quality assurance is **the coherence between objectives, methods and results** . Each intervention must be built on a clear logic, in which the methods used directly contribute to achieving the learning objectives. The evaluation of this coherence can be achieved by analyzing the session plans and the results obtained.

Last but not least, the quality assurance process involves developing an **organizational culture oriented towards learning and continuous improvement** . Trainers and project coordinators are encouraged to reflect on implementation experiences, identify challenges and propose solutions. The interactive platform can support this process, facilitating the exchange of ideas and collaboration between users.

Regarding general quality indicators, the following is aimed at:

- maintaining a high level of participant satisfaction (minimum 80% positive feedback);
- active use of the guide and the platform (minimum 100–200 active users);
- periodic updating of materials (minimum 10 updates annually);
- applying the methodology in various contexts (minimum 10–20 replicated sessions annually).

Conclusions

The CRONOS strategy highlights that discrimination is a complex phenomenon, influenced by cognitive, emotional, social, cultural and institutional factors, which cannot be approached exclusively from a legal or normative perspective. The analysis carried out within the project highlights that stereotypes, implicit biases, automatic social categorization processes and polarization mechanisms can contribute to the emergence and maintenance of discriminatory behaviors, including in the absence of explicit exclusionary intentions.

In this context, the CRONOS Strategy promotes an educational and preventive approach, oriented towards the development of critical thinking, self-reflection and social and intercultural skills. The results of the analysis highlight the importance of creating learning contexts that allow participants not only to accumulate theoretical information, but also to understand their own thinking mechanisms, the influence of stereotypes and the impact that social norms and cultural experiences can have on social relationships.

Within the project, the use of experiential and participatory methods is a central element of the educational process, as it facilitates the active involvement of participants and transforms the learning process into a practical, reflective and applied experience. Unlike exclusively theoretical or informative approaches, experiential methods allow participants to analyze concrete situations, explore their own cognitive and emotional reactions and gain a deeper understanding of how stereotypes, prejudices and exclusion mechanisms can influence social relations and everyday behaviors. In this context, the use of case studies, reflective exercises, simulations, group activities and role-playing games contribute to the development of an active and contextualized learning process, facilitating the identification of different forms of discrimination, including subtle or indirect ones, which are often difficult to recognize in everyday life. At the same time, these activities allow participants to observe the impact that language, social norms, group dynamics or automatic reactions can have on interpersonal perception and behavior, while contributing to the development of empathy, cognitive flexibility and the ability to have a social perspective. From a psychological perspective, these methods support the development of self-reflection and metacognition, encouraging participants to observe their own reactions, interpretations and social categorization tendencies, to analyze the influence of stereotypes and

cognitive biases on their own evaluations and to reflect on how personal experiences, social environment and cultural norms influence the relationship to diversity and social difference. Through their applied and interactive nature, these methods can facilitate the transfer of learning to real-life contexts and can contribute to the development of more conscious, responsible and inclusive social behaviors.

The CRONOS Strategy also highlights the importance of developing intercultural competences and the ability to relate in diverse social contexts. Positive contact between people belonging to different groups, dialogue and exposure to multiple perspectives can contribute to diminishing stereotypes and reducing tendencies towards polarization and social exclusion. From a psychological and social perspective, direct interactions and experiences of cooperation between people with different cultural, social or identity experiences can facilitate the reduction of rigid perceptions of “us versus them” and can support the development of forms of relationships based on empathy, mutual respect and understanding of individual and cultural differences. In this context, the training activities proposed within the CRONOS Strategy can contribute to the development of cognitive flexibility and the ability of participants to analyze social situations from multiple perspectives, reducing the tendency towards generalization and excessive categorization of individuals or social groups. Developing intercultural competences can support improved communication, more effective management of conflict situations, and increased capacity for adaptation and collaboration in educational, professional, and community contexts characterized by social and cultural diversity.

Another important aspect identified in the project is the need to maintain an educational climate based on psychological safety, respect and dialogue. Themes related to discrimination and exclusion can generate intense emotional reactions, defensiveness, discomfort or opposition, especially in situations where participants are confronted with their own stereotypes, difficult personal experiences or perspectives different from their own beliefs and values. For this reason, training activities must be facilitated in a balanced, non-blaming and inclusive way, allowing the expression of opinions and experiences in a safe and structured framework, without fear of ridicule, invalidation or labelling. In this sense, the role of the trainer goes beyond the simple transmission of information and involves facilitating complex cognitive, emotional and relational processes, by

managing group dynamics, moderating tense situations and supporting a climate conducive to reflection and constructive dialogue. At the same time, the trainer has the role of encouraging active participation, mutual listening and critical analysis of different perspectives, contributing to the development of an educational process based on openness, self-reflection and social responsibility. From a psychological perspective, maintaining a safe and balanced relational climate can facilitate the reduction of participants' defensiveness and can support authentic involvement in the learning and attitudinal change process.

The educational materials and training resources developed within the CRONOS Strategy represent one of the important elements of the project and an essential tool for supporting educational interventions and training activities. Their importance lies in their ability to transform complex concepts, such as discrimination, stereotypes, prejudices or cognitive biases, into accessible, applied and relevant learning experiences for participants. By integrating historical and contemporary examples, case studies, reflective exercises and experiential activities, the resources developed within the project can facilitate the development of critical thinking, awareness of automatic social categorization mechanisms and the improvement of participants' social and intercultural competences. The structured, applied and adaptive nature of the materials developed within the strategy can support trainers and facilitators in addressing sensitive topics in a coherent, balanced and accessible way, adapted to different categories of participants and educational or community contexts. These resources can provide clear methodological guidelines, practical examples and useful tools for facilitating dialogue, stimulating self-reflection and managing difficult or conflictual situations that may arise in training activities. From a psychological and educational perspective, the value of these materials is also supported by their ability to facilitate active and reflective learning processes, in which participants are not simple recipients of information, but people directly involved in the process of analyzing, interpreting and becoming aware of their own social reactions and behaviors. In this sense, the resources developed within the CRONOS Strategy can contribute to the development of sustainable and replicable educational interventions, applicable in school, community, organizational or vocational training contexts, supporting in the long term the development of

The strategy also highlights the importance of developing critical thinking in relation to the current digital and information environment. Repeated exposure to polarizing content, stereotypes or discriminatory discourses in the online environment can contribute to the consolidation of cognitive biases and the normalization of subtle forms of social exclusion. In this context, the development of skills for critical analysis of information and digital content is a relevant component of contemporary educational interventions.

Within the project, the prevention of discrimination is approached as a continuous process of educational and social development, based on reflection, dialogue, learning experiences and active involvement. Changing social attitudes and behaviors requires time, continuity and constant exposure to educational contexts that stimulate self-reflection, social responsibility and inclusive relationships. The CRONOS strategy promotes an integrated and psychologically informed approach to combating discrimination, based on education, critical reflection, the development of intercultural competences and the use of experiential training methods. By combining educational materials, training of trainers and participatory activities, the project can contribute to the development of more inclusive, reflective and sensitive educational and community contexts to human diversity, while also supporting the development of critical thinking, awareness of stereotypes and forms of relationships based on respect, dialogue and equal opportunities.

CRONOS training model (1 day) – applied version

Total	duration:	approximately	6–7	hours
Target	group:	15–25		participants
Format:	physical			

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Opening and setting the workbench.

Duration: 30 minutes

Participants are introduced and working rules are established. Creating a safe space is essential.

Practical **application:**

Knowledge exercise: "One thing about me and one thing I want to learn today."

References:

- 7.2.4. Inclusive pedagogy;
- 7.3.5. Risk management.

Analysis of participant needs

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Training begins with identifying the needs and expectations of participants. This stage is essential for adapting the content and increasing the relevance of the training process.

The trainer can use open-ended questions or quick tools (e.g. post-its, digital survey), through which participants answer questions such as:

- "In what situations have you faced discrimination?"
- "What would specifically help you after this training?"
- "What difficulties do you have in managing these situations?"

The responses are centralized and used to adjust the examples and activities.

Practical

application:

Participants write down expectations on post-its and group them by themes (e.g. "at work", "at school", "online").

References in the guide:

- 6.3. Needs analysis;
- 7.2.5. Adaptive design.

II. content

1. Awareness and initial reflection

Duration: 45 minutes

Participants reflect on their own perceptions.

Practical

application:

Exercise: "Position Line"

Participants position themselves in the room according to agreement/disagreement with statements (e.g. "Discrimination is no longer a major problem").

Guided discussion after the exercise.

References:

- 2.1. Psychological perspectives;
- 7.2.2. Bias awareness.

2. Theoretical foundations

Duration: 60 minutes

Basic concepts are introduced.

Practical**application:**

Group exercise: participants receive situations and must identify whether it is:

- stereotype;
- bias;
- discrimination.

References:

- Head. 2. Why People Discriminate;
- Chapter 3. Types of discrimination.

Break – 15 minutes

3. Types of discrimination

Duration: 60 minutes

Types of discrimination are analyzed.

Practical**application:**

Group case study: each group analyzes a real situation and identifies:

- the type of discrimination;
- the consequences;
- possible solutions.

References:

- Chapter 3;
- Examples by country.

4. Discrimination today

Duration: 45 minutes

Modern forms are discussed.

Practical**application:**

Analyzing a social media comment or post (real or simulated) and identifying discriminatory elements.

References:

- 6.1. Trends;
- 6.2. Emerging forms.

Lunch break – 30 min

5. Experiential activity (simulation)

Duration: 75 minutes

Main**application:**

Role

play

Possible situations:

- discrimination in the workplace;
- discriminatory comments in a group;
- situations in the educational environment.

Participants have roles:

- affected person;
- witness;
- person who discriminates.

Guided reflection follows.

References:

- 7.3.2 Experiential methods.

6. Analysis and critical thinking.

Duration: 45 minutes

The experience is analyzed.

Practical

application:

Structured discussion:

- What happened?
- Why?
- What alternatives were there?

References:

- 7.2.2. Critical thinking.;
- 6.3. Needs.

7. Reporting mechanisms.

Duration: 45 minutes

The reporting process is explained.

Practical

application:

Simulation:

Participants are given a case and must:

- identify the problem;
- define the evidence;
- write a simple complaint.

References:

- 4.3. Monitoring and Reporting;
- Chapter on reporting mechanisms.

8. Intervention strategies.

Duration: 45 minutes

Practical solutions are being developed.

Practical

application:

Exercise: “What do you do if...?”

The trainer provides scenarios, and participants propose reactions.

References:

- 4.4. Educational Tools;
- 7.2.3. Intercultural competence.

III. CONCLUSION

10. Evaluation and reflection

Duration: 30 minutes

Practical application:

- short questionnaire;
- exercise: "3 things learned, 1 thing I will apply."

References:

- 7.3.4. Evaluation;
- 7.3.6. Quality assurance.

11. Feedback and the CRONOS platform

Duration: 15 minutes

The platform is presented where participants:

- I can ask questions.
- can I ask for help?
- can add resources

Practical

application:

Participants formulate a question that they would post on the platform.

References:

- 7.3.4. Interactive platform;
- 4.6. Digital tools.

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Useful resources and platforms

Council of Europe – Compass Manual: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass>

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA): <https://fra.europa.eu>

European Commission – Anti-Discrimination Policies: <https://commission.europa.eu>

European Network Against Racism (ENAR): <https://www.enar-eu.org>

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights: <https://hatecrime.osce.org>

UNESCO – Global Citizenship Education: <https://www.unesco.org>

United Nations Human Rights: <https://www.ohchr.org>

World Health Organization (WHO): <https://www.who.int>