***SLOVAKIA***

***Building trust and connecting pre-school with different actors within the local community***

***Facing identity***

*How we see ourselves might not necessarily be the same as how others see us: an exercise about the (changing) faces of our identity...*

**Resources needed**

❑ Participants having had a basic introduction about concepts of identity

❑ A big sheet of paper and a pen for each person

❑ Different coloured pens and/or pencils

**Group Size**

Various

**Time**

Around 45 minutes personal, 45 minutes exchange

**Step-by-step**

1 every participant receives paper and pen and draws the profile of his/her face on the paper (alone or with the help of somebody else)

2 participants reflect personally about various aspects of their identity (elements to be put inside of the drawn face) and how others might see them (elements to be put outside of the drawn face). The participants should be given sufficient time for this, trying to think through different elements constituting identity (family, nationality, education, gender, religion, roles, group belongings...). They should be encouraged to think about both personal aspects and attitudes they both like and dislike.

3 In a second step, participants reflect on:

– the relation between what they see and others might see and the relation between different aspects (can be visualised with linking lines and flashes)

– the development of different aspects / attitudes throughout their life and the factors relevant for it (they can visualise this with colours signifying different moments in life, or indications on a “time scale” they draw beside the face, or different bubbles...)

4 Participants are asked to join together in small groups (maximum five) and exchange their reflections very personally, but just as far as they want to go: How do we see ourselves? How do others see us? What influences me? What were my reference points? How do perceptions

and attitudes change over time and why? Which dynamics can I perceive in terms of changes and how are they linked? How do I deal with elements of myself I dislike and where do they come from? Which linkage can I perceive between different aspects?

**Reflection and evaluation**

The sharing should probably remain in the small groups, but some general remarks can be brought back to plenary, or participants can give feedback on what they learnt from the exercise in one huge face drawn in plenary (with symbols or remarks). Continuing questions can be: How do we work with our own and others’ perception of ourselves? How far is identity a “dynamic concept” and what are relevant factors influencing changes? What impacts in this group on my identity? Which influences in society impact on my identity and how are they linked? (discussion about nationality, minorities, references...). Subjects to follow could be “perception & stereotypes”, “identity & encounter” “deepening research on elements of culture”.

**This method alive**

“Identity” is a vital aspect of intercultural learning, but not easy to deal with. Respect for personal differences and limits is essential, feedback given has to be extremely careful. It is better to rather share one’s own histories if possible instead of interpreting the ones of others.

A lot of time (respecting people’s different speeds) has to be given for personal

work and attention paid to creating an open atmosphere. The elements discovered here have to be deeply respected and should never be addressed personally, but can be important indicators to encourage people to go further in their discoveries or to point out themes for the group to explore further