

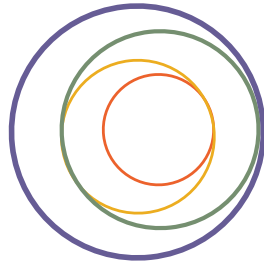
# not a toolkit!

## Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations A ReflAction

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# WAYS OF SENSING - INTERSECTIONALITY



# INTERSECTIONALITY AND INEQUALITIES

*Intersectionality describes the complexity with which various expressions and conditions of access to justice are assembled.* In this sense, as an instrument, it allows defining the different forms that arise concretely in individuals or groups that condition their capacities and opportunities to choose development options. Thus, dimensions such as gender, race or ethnicity, disability, economic status, citizenship, religion, the place where you are born and live, whether it is rural or urban, can determine, limit or enhance how the individuals and groups have access to social justice, or for the purposes of this process, intercultural dialogue for development.

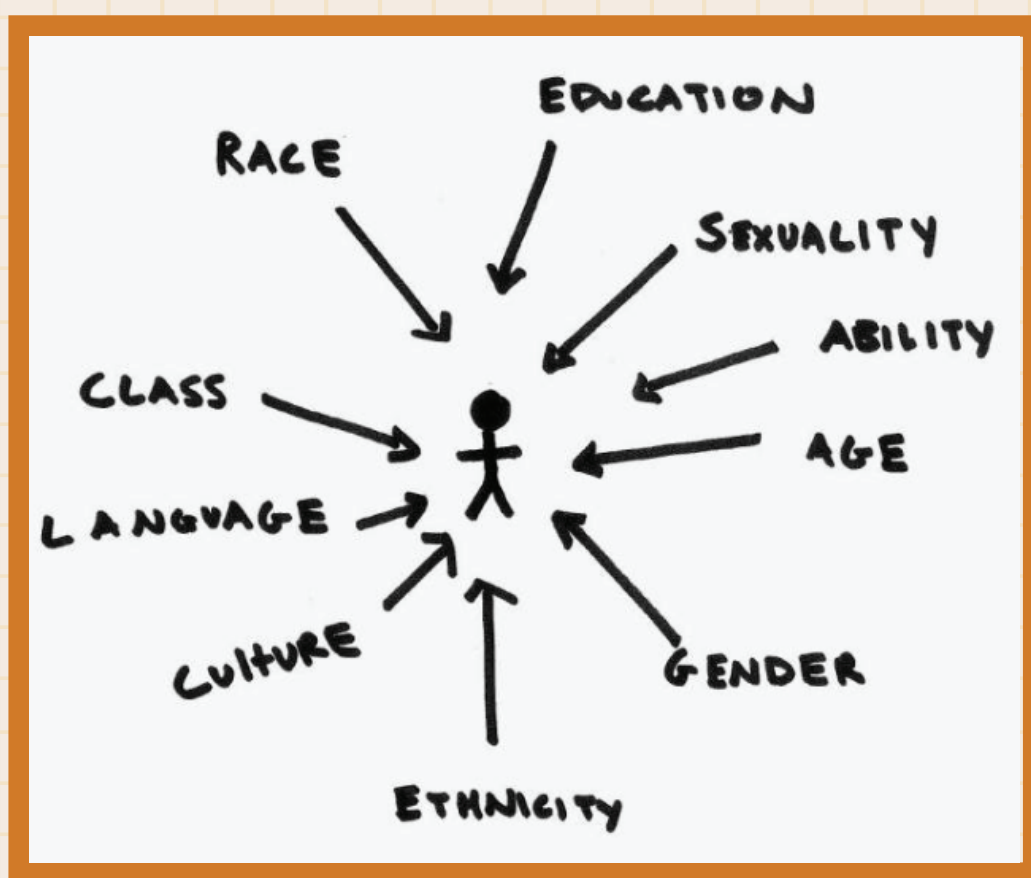
Intersectionality often has links with discrimination and oppression, both of which lead to inequality. There are multiple layers of inequality in our global world - such as increasing wealth inequalities, global (and regional and domestic) power imbalances and human rights abuses. International cultural relations operate in this complex and unequal world.

→ In this context, it is helpful to use an intersectional lens to understand how people experience inequality according to different intersecting aspects of their identities. In a UN Woman blog in 2020, **Kimberlé Crenshaw**, an American law professor, explained Intersectionality as, “a prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other,” in a recent interview with **Time**. She emphasised that “All inequality is not created equal.”

*“We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What’s often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts”*

An intersectional approach shows the way that people's social identities can overlap, creating compounding experiences of discrimination. Race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, immigration status, physical/mental 'ableness' or race are 'overlapping, concurrent forms of oppression'.

In this way we can begin to understand intersections of disadvantage (being low income and black) and intersections of both disadvantage and privilege (being white and living with a disability). The diagramme below illustrates some of the multiple identities we each carry with us.



What is missing from this diagramme is the place we are from or in which we are located as well as religion. This diagramme emphasises that intersectionality is different for each person. As Audre Lorde said "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives".

# HOW TO USE THIS TEXT?

-----> This text and the questions it asks could be used in workshops, seminars and also in regular staff meetings so that we can identify and address the multiple forms and structures of oppression and discrimination that exist within our institutions and that shape our everyday practice and experiences.

We need to be aware of not placing the burden and responsibility of asking those who experience these intersecting inequalities of 'teaching' us about oppression or discrimination. We need to constantly think about what those who have the power (and status quo) can do to address the structures of oppression that are being perpetuated (willingly or unwillingly).

A useful case study could be that of the European Foundation's commitment to inclusion and diversity ***Working Towards an Equitable Future***, especially the inclusive conversation and community guidelines outlined in its ***next steps***.

In relation to perspectives

**INDIVIDUAL** - what are our multiple identities and how have they shaped us and our life choices and opportunities? How do they help us view the 'other'?

**INSTITUTIONAL** - how does our organisation understand and define oppression and discrimination? What strategies and procedures are in place to address oppression and discrimination? How can the organisation deploy mechanisms to address intersecting structures of oppression and discrimination?

**SOCIETAL** - how does a global context of systemic oppression and discrimination affect the work of our organisation? What mechanisms might we adopt to address this global context in our work?

# WHAT KEY/OPEN QUESTIONS DO WE STILL NEED TO ASK?

How do our rates of pay, conditions of work, promotion opportunities and the like equally reflect systemic structures of oppression and discrimination (e.g. unequal pay for women, lack of BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of colour) in leadership positions, etc.), or ableism?

Has our organisation institutionalised a non-discrimination policy?  
Is it effective?

Are we familiar with mechanisms put in place to address discriminatory practices within our organisation? How are grievances related to oppression and discrimination concretely addressed?

Can we identify and redress situations or instances in which structures of oppression and discrimination can become replicated in our practices towards collaboration?

Do we or our organisation recognise CIS-normative acts - the acts of behaviour, reasoning, suggestions which uphold a gender binary and thus invalidate trans-identities? What about the recognition beyond heteronormativity?

Has our organisation adopted trans-exclusionary language - e.g. 'boys/guys and girls', 'men and women', 'ladies and gentlemen'? These binaries may exclude some of those within the group; for e.g. addressing a meeting with 'hey guys' to a group that includes women and/or trans individuals who don't identify as men

How does our organisation provide safe spaces for discussing, working, and collaborating?

Is our selection, recruitment and work with people living with physical disabilities equal and fair or does it show signs of ableism?

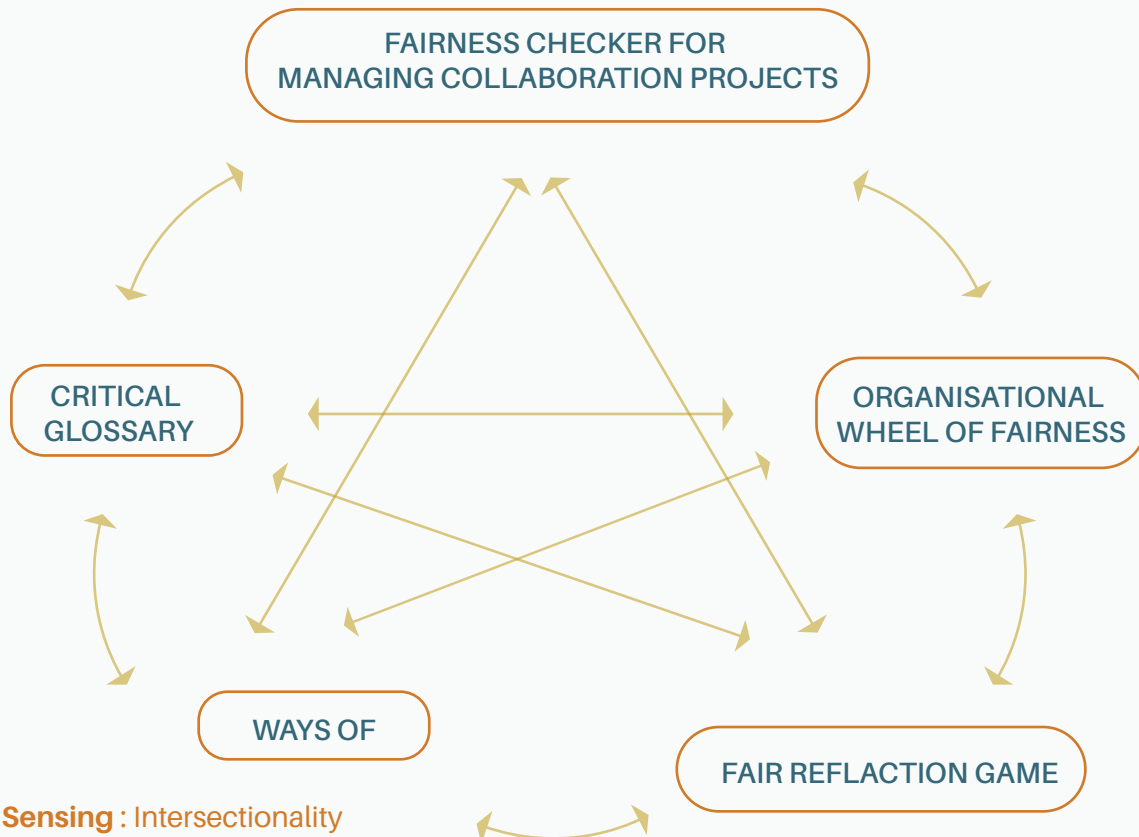
Are all religions accommodated, respected and valued in our conditions and practices of work?



# RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

- *The Covid Pandemics - why intersectionality matters*
- *Untangling inequalities: why power and intersectionality are essential concepts*
- *Race and poverty in Latin America*
- *Being black in North Africa and the Middle East*
- *Women with disabilities in Latin America are speaking up*
- *The biggest challenge is Ableism - voice from Africa*
- *Gender inequality in Africa: culture or poverty?*

Each component of the *Not a Toolkit! Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations - A ReflAction* is connected to all other components. After finishing your reflAction journey in this section continue journaling in the next part.



**Sensing** : Intersectionality

**Thinking** : Decolonisation & Racism

**Doing** : Fair Evaluation

**Connecting** : ReflAction

**Sensing** : Injustice

**Thinking** : Climate Emergency