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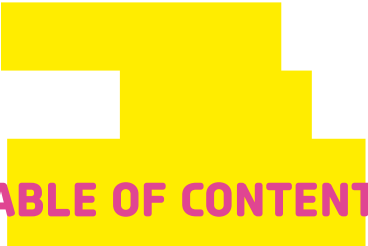


# this must be the PLACE

## **\*Note to facilitators, educators or anyone who wants to try and use this tool with their learning community\***

Here are three different non-formal activities which can be used with groups of learners to activate interior processes of transformation, critical thinking and reflection in your learning communities about the experiences of gender-based oppression and resistance which are presented in the This Must Be The Place podcast. Across the activities, learners are encouraged to engage—through empathy, simulation, sharing and critical rights-based thinking practices— with gender-based discrimination and oppression as a “systemic” issue. Systemic in the sense that they are everyday manifestations of a societal system of power reproduced across all of our spaces and services which still normalises the othering of people, bodies and subjectivities who do not enter into our current patriarchal, capitalist, white supremacist, ableist society’s normative human being: the white, cis-gender, male, able-bodied subject from the Global North. The activities hope to enable learners to recognise the importance of taking responsibility as active citizens to transform and question the oppressions normalised in this system, starting from themselves and their communities. As gender rights advocate Gloria Steinem said: “external and internal change are one full circle.”

<sup>1</sup>Spelman College (2016) A Conversation with Gloria Steinham and bell hooks.  
Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFHp8ViLR3k> (Accessed 16.01.2025).



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# Episode 1

## Public Spaces, Different Paths

**“When I’m crossing the public space of this city, in terms of barriers—whether they’re physical or mental—they exist and there are lots of them. Palermo... I love this city like crazy, but I would like it to be made with all of us in mind.”**

Adele, Italy

**“You don’t feel safe moving around. It’s about accessibility, it’s about safety. Very often we’re treated differently in public spaces because we’re women.”**

Evelina, Greece

**“The public space is a place we have claimed, reclaimed and reclaimed again. They’ve always tried to throw us out, but it’s clear that they won’t ever succeed. Across history, they haven’t done it, they won’t do it, we’re still here.”**

Violet, Spain

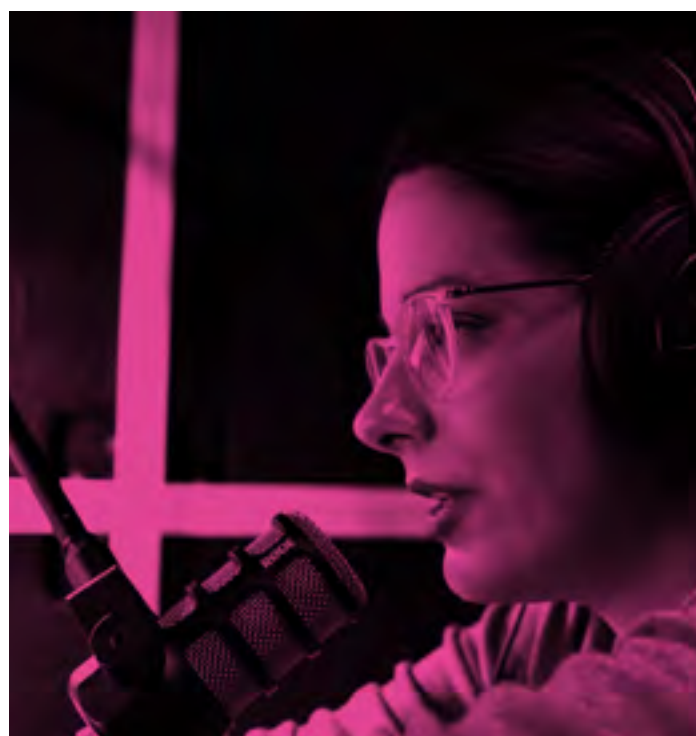
# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- \* How do you feel when you walk through a public space (the street, a shop, a post office, a bus or train station)?
- \* Why?
- \* What power do you think you hold in these public spaces?
- \* How come?
- \* Are you alert to and aware about the experiences of other people in public spaces as you move through them?
- \* Why/why not?

## Activity: **Becoming an Active Bystander**

### → Disclaimer for facilitators

Violence in the public space can be exercised both by members of the public and state forces (the police, the architecture of a city, city planners, people working for other state institutions - administrators in an immigration office, a post office, a bank, health institutions, janitors and caretakers of buildings). It's always very important to create a distinction between state violence and violence that occurs between groups or individuals. The activity we have shared here is imagined for gaining basic instruments and knowledge to intervene in violent or potentially situations between both groups and individuals and state actors and individuals; both possibilities of oppression are discussed in the interviews you listened to on the podcast.



### Time

10 minutes to introduce the concept of active bystanding  
25 minutes per scenario and the debrief that follows.

### Materials

Printed out versions of the roles (which you'll find in the annex section)  
Enough space for people to perform freely  
Chairs for the observers

### Instructions

Two volunteer "performers" are assigned the roles of aggressor and survivor, whose descriptions can be found for each scenario in the annex. Some scenes will also require extra volunteers, beyond those playing the role of survivor and aggressor. The rest of the group of learners sit in a circle and the facilitators read out the scenario description for All (observers) (in annex), as well as the location. The observers then watch the two (aggressor and the survivor) simulate a situation which is linked to the testimonies that were listened to during the podcast. No one in the circle is pre-asked to intervene, the idea is that they are encouraged to do so,

spontaneously. For every scenario, once the scene has finished, the facilitators ask a series of debrief questions and guide a discussion.

### Debrief questions

- How did you feel in the role of the survivor?
- How did you feel in the role of the aggressor?
- How did you feel in the role of the observer?
- What pushed you to act? Did it remind you of anything that's happened to you in real life in the public space?
- What is happening in this situation?
- What could be done to improve this situation?
- What do you need to consider to respond as well as possible?
- What could a positive intervention be?
- What could a negative intervention be?
- What do you think it means to take responsibility as a member of the public space?
- Next time you are moving through everyday public spaces, do you think perception will change at all, after participating in this simulation?

## Extra info and tips to help you talk about active bystanding

Key things to consider as an active bystander who takes responsibility for community wellbeing in the public space. These can be shared by facilitators with the group.

- Remember that active by-standing is a way of collectively resisting an individualist rape culture which perpetuates, normalises and accepts forms of violence, harassment and oppression.
- Be alert, with open eyes to the ways that systemic discrimination is reproduced by individuals' behaviour or state actors' behaviour in the public space.
- Always ask oneself "What's happening here" to avoid indifference and the normalisation of violent behaviours.
- Take an anti-oppression stance in relation to your community and the people who inhabit the public space. This means understanding that oppression, even if you do not experience it directly on your body or your identity, is still relevant to you and to the ways you interact with society.
- Be aware that there is not one pre-prepared answer or solution for situations of oppression, but that each situation must be approached with care and attention and the contributions that every different individual can make.
- Remember that active bystanding is a form of mutual aid and ensure that active bystander interventions are consensual and genuinely acts of solidarity: intervening in potentially violent situations or supporting survivors does not mean being a hero or saving someone and your role is never to resolve a situation or problem, but instead to "de-escalate". Also if you do intervene and you don't change a situation or support someone adequately you don't need to feel guilty or like you've failed. Finally, in many cases people will not want your help: we can always offer up help but if we insist on helping others it can become offensive and disempowering.

# Episode 2

## Health, Rights without Prejudice

**“Maybe the only real ‘trauma’ I was subjected to, which I immediately rejected, was dealing with the different levels of conscientious objection throughout the process; the experience of coming up against a system of religious beliefs and values that are far from my own and yet deeply ingrained into people who are working in jobs they should never have been hired for. Over time this has flared into a fire inside me, a burning fire which I share with everyone, but especially with the collective I’m part of—Non è un veleno [It’s not poison].”**

Sofia, Italy

**“...narratives often question women’s morality and are sometimes forms of bullying. At other times women are presented as the enemies of motherhood. Even if all of these narratives don’t directly obstruct abortion, they do construct an oppressive and hostile social environment, which is the same one that pressures women to make choices about their bodies and their lives.”**

Natassa, Greece

**“During the appointment, beyond being denied information, I perceived a profound lack of empathy from the midwife. I remember that she wouldn’t look me in the eye. She also expressed judgement about my habits and took my history with questions that had nothing to do with abortion, for example about my mental health.”**

Júlia, Spain



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

\* Do you know what the steps are in your context to access abortion? \* Do you know what the legal framework surrounding the right to free and safe abortion in your context is? \* And do you know when it became legal to access abortion in your country? \* Do you know how the different types of abortion (pharmaceutical) and (surgical) work? \* What do you think sexual and reproductive rights are?

## Activity: The Right to Free and Safe Abortion, Deconstructing the Obstacles

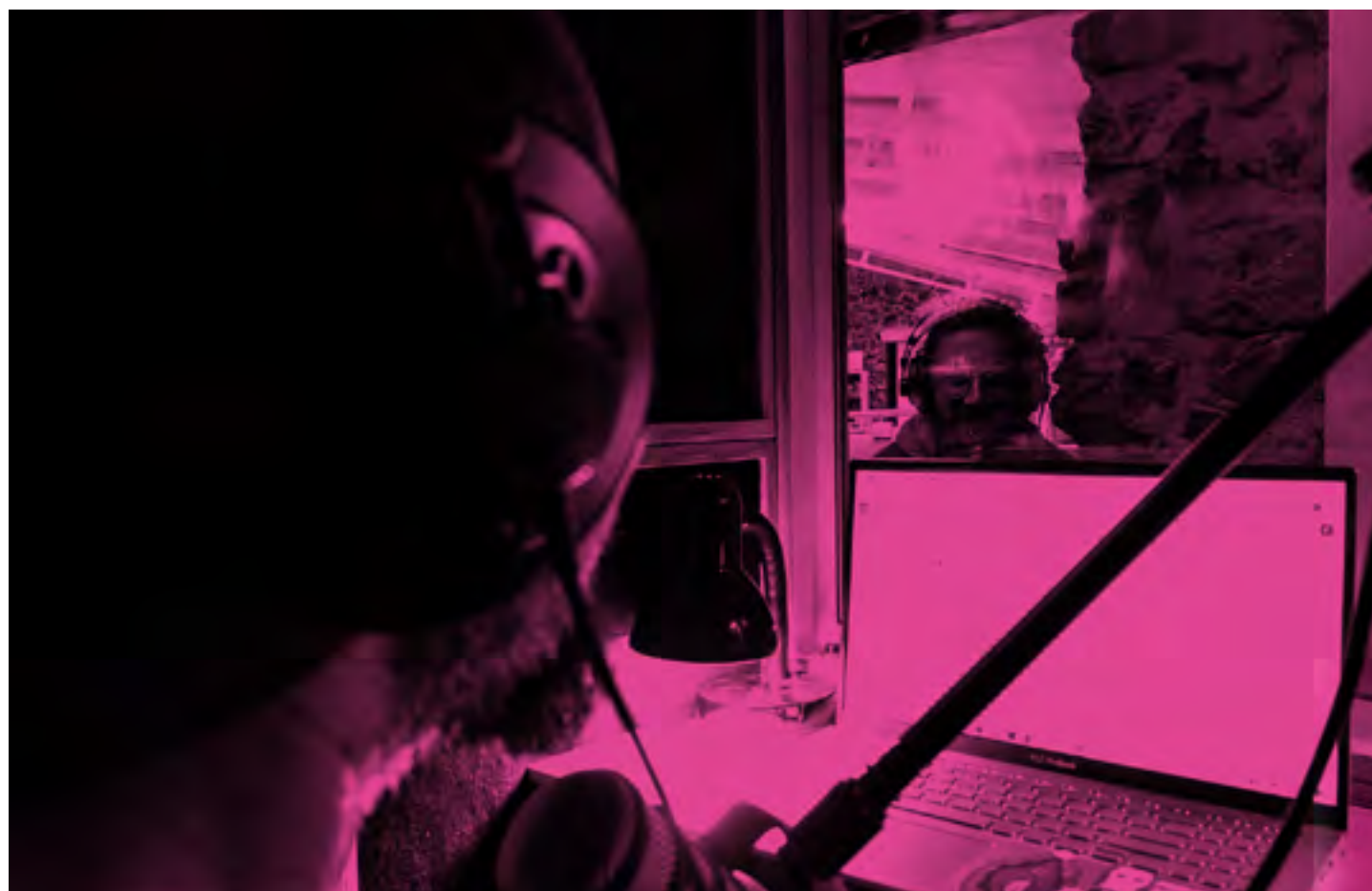
### Instructions

Divide participants into groups and ask them to answer the following questions:

- What obstacles did Sofia and Julia face when trying to realise their right to abortion? What was lacking in the assistance to Sofia and to Julia? (Participants can make lists, from the moment they found out they were pregnant, to the moment they received the care they needed).
- What do the two stories have in common? Compare lists and discuss and define who you think is responsible for the obstacles and gaps in their care, and why?
- What do you think could improve the experience of an abortion seeker, both within institutions and communities?

### Debrief Questions

- Why are the steps to accessing abortion unclear, obscured and not something we learn about openly?
- Do you know what the barriers are to accessing abortion in your country?
- How do you think we can contribute, as members of a community, to deconstructing the obstacles facing woman and people who want to have an abortion?
- What do you think are the key elements of a positive and non-judgemental narrative to abortion?
- What surprised you about Sofia and Julia's narratives?



# Episode 3

## Work, overcoming discrimination

The inaccessibility of the working world impacts us from many different points of view, especially since not all trans people have a family at their side. There are people who have been thrown out of their homes, who need somewhere to live... Without a job how do you pay for the visits you need to manage your gender affirmation process, pay for hormones, for tests? And there's the frustration. Being excluded, regardless of our potential and power as individuals, solely because we are trans people, is devastating, and something that goes beyond any kind of human logic. - Giulio, Italy

Giulio, Italy

"We should be reacting directly to this misuse of power, as a violation of a basic civil right. It's not a private matter... It's not a private issue. It's a political issue and it's about our coexistence as citizens in the same space, in the workplace, in the educational space."

Christina, Greece

"If you don't make use of collective networks, you look for an individual solution, which is usually money-based, not that much money, a bit of money. Often you end up leaving your job. This can save you during a moment of individual difficulty, but obviously this dynamic is not positive for the state protected right to work in general. Especially for people who are not cis-men."

Laura, Spain

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

\* What does it mean to be discriminated against? \* On what basis are people discriminated against? \* Who normally carries out discrimination in our society and who normally receives discrimination in our society? \* What do you think are the most common forms of discrimination against women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community? \* How do these forms of discrimination manifest in the workplace and how can we recognise them?

**TIP 1:** Use these questions to arrive at a common definition of what discrimination in the workplace means and looks like. Once you have this, you can proceed with the activity.

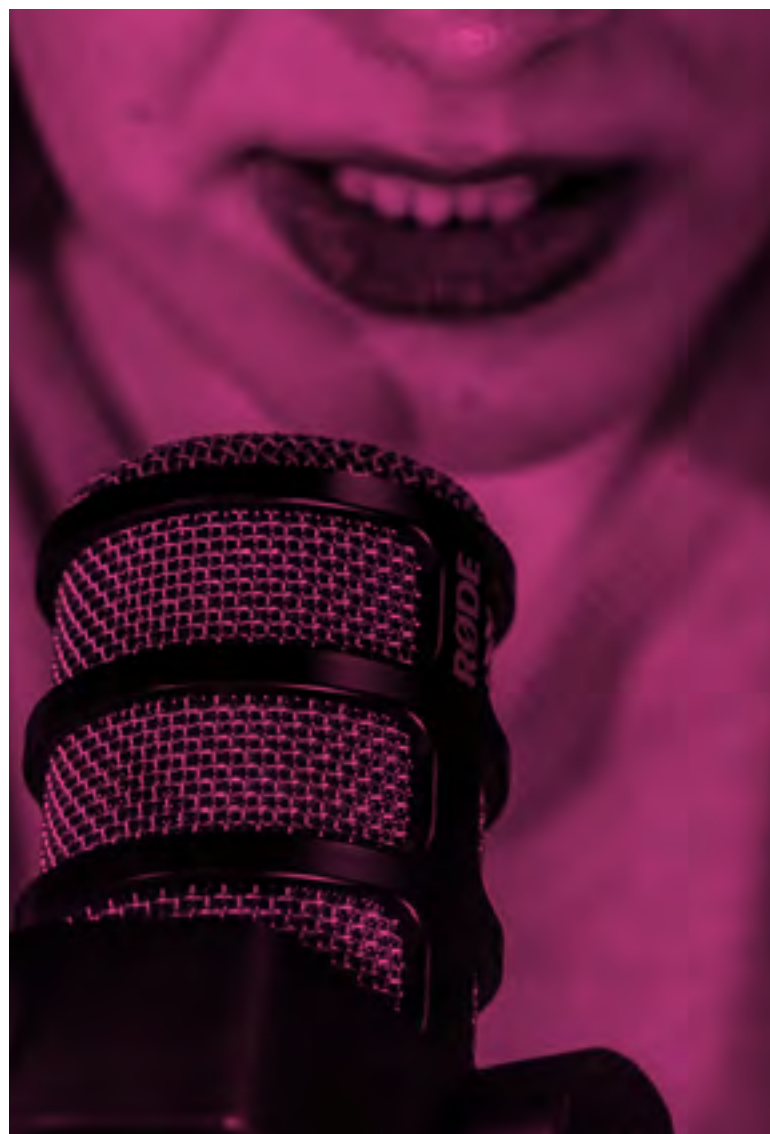
## Activity - Understanding Intersectionality: Discrimination and Resistance

### Instructions

Divide learners into 3 groups, assign to each group one Persona (You can find the Personas in the annex section). The task is to identify what potential situations of discrimination each persona might experience in their workplace. After each group has identified the different, potential discrimination, ask them to present their thoughts and use the debriefing questions to explore the concept of intersectional discrimination, and intersectional resistance.

### Debrief Questions

- Can you apply the different problems raised by all the groups to all the categories of personas we've looked at?
- What kinds of discrimination did these categories experience that are specific to the intersections of their identities?
- What forms of privilege or lack of privilege emerge from the stories?
- In workplaces it is common to be into power dynamics, how do these dynamics change if the people involved belong to vulnerable categories?
- Think of the power dynamics in your work place. How do you think these are related to the system of power we live in?
- How does gender identity influence power dynamics in the workplace? Have you ever experienced any discrimination in the workplace, or been involved, even unconsciously, in creating discrimination in the work place? If so, would you like to tell us about it and share your point of view?



**TIP 2:** A way of inviting learners to share things without them feeling too exposed is to get them to engage in written story sharing moments, where they can write their story, comments, observations or questions on pieces of paper anonymously which the facilitator can then gather and read out or invite other members of the group to read out.

## DEFINITIONS

**Privilege** means a "special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group" due to the position of power that they hold in society. For example, cis-male privilege refers to the advantages (access to services, acceptance, continuous power in the public space, unbattled for space to speak) unconsciously enjoyed by cis men in a patriarchal and cis normative society that still defines the cis man as the basis for the universal human and systemically defines people whose sex assigned at birth and gender identities correspond as normal. Or white privilege refers to the advantages unconsciously enjoyed by white people, since the "white race" and "whiteness" which are mere social constructions, are still naturalised as the hegemonic, superior and "supreme" racial category in a white supremacist society. Recognising one's privilege and being aware of it is crucial when it comes to allying oneself to intersectional resistance.

**Intersectionality** is a term coined by the great lawyer and activist Kimberlé Crenshaw and refers to the ways in which different elements of a person's identity, race, gender, economic status, (dis)ability, sexuality, geographical position interconnect to create specific, overlapping forms of discrimination (e.g the experience of racism and sexism at the same time, or transphobia and abilism at the same) or, when it comes to processes of change and deconstruction, united and interconnected forms of resistance.



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## **ANNEXES**



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# Activity 1

## Scenarios

### Scenario 1

#### Location

By the lift, inside a big old market building which has a vintage clothes shop located on the second floor.

#### All (Observers)

You're walking into a building to go to a vintage clothes shop which is on the second floor of a big building. You approach the lift and see a non binary person, with feminine gender expression, with a walking stick. The person is standing by the lift, sighing and the lift isn't working. You turn to find out where the stairs are, like most of the other people in the situation... But something makes you feel slow down. You sense that the person standing by the lift seems uncomfortable and ill at ease. They keep trying to make phone calls, but no one answers them and they hang up and try again, sighing even more.

#### Aggressor

You are the janitor of a big market building which contains various different shops where people can re-sell and recycle old objects and vintage clothes. You keep receiving calls from a person who is complaining about the lift not working. After the 4th call you come down to the ground floor of the building and see a young person, who looks like a girl to you, with a walking stick. You're wondering why "she" has a walking stick if "she's" so young and you smirk as you approach her and mutter under your breath about young people these days and how dramatic they are.

#### Survivor

You're a non-binary person with feminine gender expression who has various dynamic disabilities and you are extremely frustrated, because you came especially to this old market building and vintage shop to buy a present for your best friend, whose birthday party is tonight. You even checked on the facebook page to make sure there was a lift so you could access the shop, but it's not working. This makes it very difficult for you to arrive at the vintage shop autonomously. You don't want to ask for help, you want to be independent.

### Scenario 2

#### Location

Metro station bathrooms

#### All (Observers)

You've just got off the metro to go home on your way from work. You're very tired but you stop at the metro station to go to the bathroom. You're in the public bathrooms at the metro station and you see what you first think to be a man start putting very feminine make-up on and touching up their hair. This person then goes into the bathroom and returns wearing a dress and elaborate shoes, before being joined by another woman, who seems like a friend. They start talking about their plans for tonight about going to a bar. You carry on washing your hands and thinking about what you have to do when you get home. As they talk, you notice another woman has been washing her hands, watching them, for a very long time. She starts getting more and more red and eventually starts shouting at the two women "Get out! Get out!"

#### Aggressor

You're a cis woman and you feel threatened and afraid seeing what you think to be a man (simply dressed as a woman) and her friend putting makeup on and chatting in the metro's public bathrooms.

#### Survivor

You're washing your hands, talking about your own business with your friend and getting ready for the night out.

#### Character

You're a trans woman heading to the bathroom at the metro station. The security guard standing by the women's toilets stops you at the door, "what are you doing, you can't go in there, that's the ladies' room", perceiving you as a boy.

### Scenario 3

#### Location

On the pavement on the street in your local city or town

#### All (Observers)

You're walking in a hurry on the very narrow pavements of your city. It's getting dark and you're walking fast because this area is renowned for the unwanted attention of men. You see a woman with a young child holding onto her hand, pushing a pram. There are bags of shopping dangling from the pram. The woman looks very tired and distracted, while the child drags her hand and the baby cries in front. There is a man walking behind the woman, who stops every time she stops to take a rest. It looks like he's trying to get her attention. Every now and again he whistles.

#### Aggressor

Cis man, walking behind a woman, trying to get her attention, catcalling and whistling every now and again.

#### Survivor

You are a young mother of two small children, walking home in an overlooked part of the city with poor street lighting. You are very tired and full of shopping, but feeling nervous and on edge because you think the man behind you is following you, and you've seen him before.

#### Character

You are a young girl walking home alone from a party, in an overlooked part of the city with poor street lighting. You are very tired and can't wait to get home and go to bed, but you feel nervous and on edge because you think the man behind you is following you, and you've seen him before.

**TIP:** You can adapt the scenario according to your audience. If you work with young people, you could draft the following character, using the elements in this description to make roles for the aggressor and the observers as well.

# Activity 3

## Personas

### Persona 1

**Marcus** 27 year-old transgender man. Social media manager with sound experience in the field and lives in the same city as you do. He still has his dead name listed on his identification documents, which creates obstacles in applying for job positions. He works as a freelancer and he comes from a supportive upper-middle class family, who has accepted and affirmed his gender identity ever since he came out.

### Persona 2

**Mary** a 30 year old woman from the Ivory Coast, who migrated to your country and city/town in Europe three years ago. She works as a live-in carer for a couple with 3 young children and their elderly, disabled cis male relative without a regular contract. She doesn't have a residency permit. Her two children are still in the Ivory Coast and rely on her wage, which she sends back to her family monthly.

### Persona 3

**Cristina** a 40 year old woman who got married twenty-three years ago and has two daughters, one is 17 and the other is 13 years old. She got engaged before finishing high-school and didn't manage to finish her studies. She divorced two years ago and had to find a job. Before the divorce, she always relied on her husband's income, as he claimed she didn't need to find a job because he would always provide for her and the family. But after following the divorce, her ex-husband refused to paying alimony (maintenance) or give her sufficient money for her daughters and now she works in a poultry factory, without a formal contract.

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