



Chapter 3:

WORKING WITH ADULTS AT RISK OF EXCLUSION

| From Theory to Practice

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Defining the concepts and theoretical framework

Adult exclusion refers to the process through which individuals or groups of adults are prevented from participating fully in the economic, social, and political life of their communities. This can happen due to a variety of factors, such as:

- poverty
- lack of education
- discrimination
- mental health issues

Adult exclusion can lead to a range of negative outcomes, such as reduced access to resources and opportunities, social isolation, and poor physical and mental health.

The concept of adult exclusion is multidimensional and can be understood through different theoretical frameworks:

- Social exclusion theory argues that exclusion is a result of a combination of structural, cultural, and individual factors. Structural factors include economic, political, and social policies that create barriers to participation, such as unemployment, poverty, and discrimination. Cultural factors include norms, values, and beliefs that shape the way that people are treated and perceived, such as racism and sexism. Individual factors include personal characteristics and experiences that shape the way that people navigate the social world, such as education, skills, and mental health.
- Risk and Resilience Framework: Risk and resilience frameworks are used to identify, assess and address the risk factors that can lead to adult exclusion. This framework focuses on the ability of individuals and communities to cope with and recover from adversity. It seeks to understand the causes of vulnerability and the factors that can help to protect against it. By understanding the interplay between risks and protective factors, it can help to develop interventions and policies that support individuals and communities to overcome difficulties.
- Human Capital theory: This theory focuses on the individual assets and characteristics that shape people's ability to participate in the economy, such as education, skills, and health. It argues that investments in human capital can lead to increased economic growth and social mobility.
- Social Capital theory: This theory emphasizes the importance of social networks, norms, and trust in promoting social inclusion. It argues that individuals and communities with high levels of social capital are better able to access resources and opportunities and to participate in civic and political life.
- Social Identity theory: This theory argues that social identity, including gender, race, class, religion, sexuality, etc., shapes individuals experiences and opportunities to participate in society. Discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes can create barriers to participation, leading to social exclusion.
- Intersectionality: This theory builds on social identity theory by arguing that social identities, such as race, gender, and class, do not exist independently but rather intersect and interact to shape individuals' experiences of social exclusion. It highlights that individuals who are members of multiple marginalized groups are likely to face more disadvantages, compounding the effects of social exclusion.



It's important to note that adult exclusion is not a fixed or permanent state, but rather a dynamic process that can be influenced by changes in individuals' circumstances and the environment. Therefore, addressing adult exclusion requires a holistic and multidisciplinary approach that addresses the underlying causes and consequences.

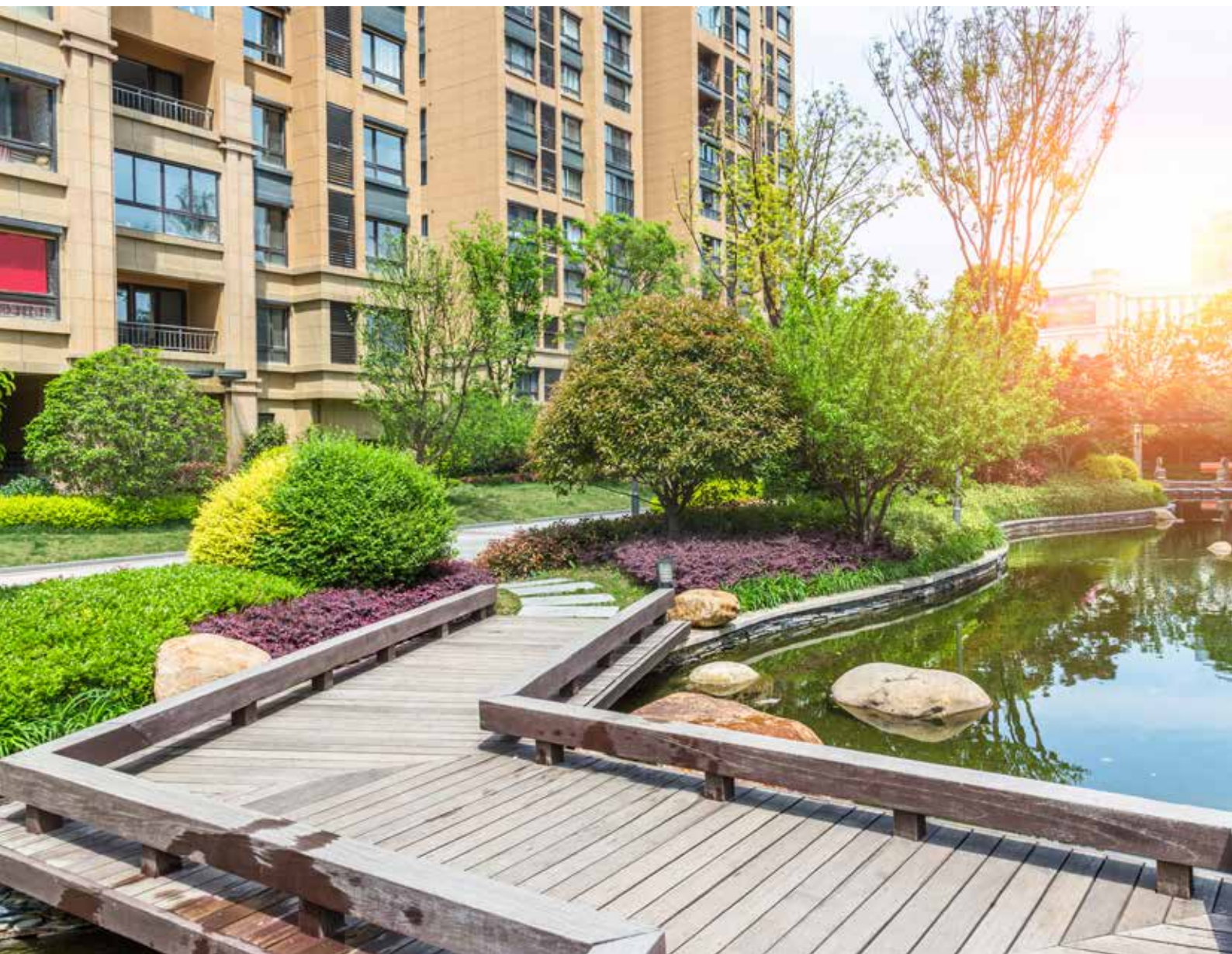
Characteristics of Adults at Risk of Exclusion

There are a number of demographic and socio-economic characteristics that have been found to be associated with increased risk of adult exclusion. These include:

- **Low income and poverty**
Adults living in poverty are at a higher risk of exclusion due to a lack of access to resources and opportunities. This includes having difficulty meeting basic needs such as food, housing, and healthcare.
- **Low educational attainment**
Adults with low levels of education are more likely to be excluded from the labor market, which can lead to reduced access to income and social networks.
- **Unemployment**
Adults who are unemployed are more likely to experience reduced access to income and social networks, which can lead to social isolation and exclusion.

- **Disability**
Adults with disabilities are more likely to experience barriers to participation in education, employment, and community life, which can lead to social exclusion.
- **Migration**
Adult migrants are often faced with a range of challenges including language barriers, discrimination and lack of access to social support networks, which can increase the risk of exclusion.
- **Racial and ethnic minority**
Adults belonging to certain ethnic or racial groups are more likely to experience discrimination and barriers to participation in education, employment, and community life, which can lead to social exclusion.
- **Gender**
Women are more likely to experience poverty, lower educational attainment, and limited access to paid employment, which can increase the risk of exclusion.
- **Age**
Older adults are at a higher risk of exclusion due to factors such as reduced access to income, reduced mobility, and reduced access to social networks.

Keep in mind that individuals may be at a greater risk of exclusion due to the intersection of multiple characteristics, such as being an ethnic minority, low-income, and having a disability. Therefore, addressing exclusion requires a holistic and multidisciplinary approach that addresses the underlying causes and consequences.





Approaches towards working with vulnerable adult learners

Here are some evidence-based approaches towards working with adults at risk of exclusion that you can base your activities on. Keep in mind that some of them are ideas that can be implemented by NGOs themselves, but some require collaboration with public institutions, such as municipalities, in order to achieve long lasting, sustainable results:

- **Employment programs**
Job training and employment programs can help to increase individuals' access to the economy and reduce their risk of exclusion. These programs can include skills training, job placement services, and work experience opportunities.
- **Income support**
Financial assistance and income support programs can help to alleviate poverty and reduce the risk of exclusion. These programs can include cash transfers, food assistance, and housing subsidies.
- **Education and training**
Educational and training programs can help to increase individuals' access to education, skills, and job opportunities, reducing their risk of exclusion.
- **Health and social services**
Health and social services can help to address the health and social needs of individuals and families, reducing their risk of exclusion. These services can include primary health care, mental health services, and case management.
- **Community-based approaches**
Community-based approaches involve working with individuals and families within the context of their communities. These approaches can include community development, community organizing, and participatory action research.

- Empowerment approach
Empowerment approach focus on building the individual and community capacities, skills and abilities to take action and solve their own problems, it aims to increase individuals' control over their lives and their ability to participate in their communities.
- Intersectional approach
Intersectional approach takes into account the multiple identities, experiences and social status of individuals, that can interact to create barriers and opportunities and address them.

It's important to consider that these interventions and approaches are not mutually exclusive and can be used in combination to address adult exclusion. Also, what is most suitable for one population or context might not be suitable for another. Therefore, interventions should be tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the individuals and communities affected. It's also important to monitor, evaluate and continuously improve these interventions.

Key principles of working with adults at risk of exclusion

There are several key principles that can guide the work with adults at risk of exclusion:

- Empowerment approach focuses on building the individual and community capacities, skills and abilities to take action and solve their own problems. It aims to increase individuals' control over their lives and their ability to participate in their communities.
- Strengths-based approach focuses on the assets and capabilities of individuals and communities, rather than their deficits and problems. By highlighting and building on their strengths, it can help to promote inclusion and improve overall well-being.
- Trauma-informed care recognizes the impact of past and current traumatic experiences on individuals and communities. It involves understanding, recognizing and responding to the trauma in a way that promotes safety and healing.
- Cultural sensitivity involves understanding and respecting the cultural backgrounds, traditions, beliefs, and values of individuals and communities. By being culturally sensitive, interventions can be more effective, inclusive and respectful.
- Participatory approach, which is a process that involves individuals, communities, and service providers in the design, implementation and evaluation of interventions. It is important to involve the individuals and communities who are most affected by the issue of exclusion in the development of solutions.
- Holistic approach involves addressing multiple and interacting factors that contribute to adult exclusion, such as poverty, lack of education, discrimination, and mental health issues.
- Evidence-based practice which involves the use of research and data to inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of interventions. This helps ensure that interventions are effective and grounded in best practices.
- Collaboration and partnership building with multiple stakeholders, including government, non-profit, community-based organizations, and the private sector, is important for developing and implementing effective interventions.

Adult education and sustainability

Working with adults at risk of exclusion and promoting sustainability are interconnected in several ways, mostly in a sense that education is the key to achieving a real change. Our role as NGO workers is to support our learners and provide them better opportunities to develop in all spheres

of life, so that they can build a more balanced, sustainable life.

Here are some strategies as for how to achieve that:

- **Reducing poverty**
Programs and interventions that address adult exclusion, such as income support and employment programs, can help to alleviate poverty and reduce the risk of exclusion. This in turn can promote sustainability by helping to ensure that everyone has access to the resources they need to lead a fulfilling life, and by reducing social and economic disparities.
- **Building resilience**
Resilience-building approaches that focus on the strengths and capabilities of individuals and communities can help to promote sustainability by building capacity and reducing vulnerability to future shocks and stresses.
- **Addressing discrimination**
Addressing discrimination and working to promote social inclusion can help to create a more equitable and inclusive society, which is one of the key components of sustainability.
- **Promoting community-based approaches**
Community-based approaches can help to foster a sense of belonging, promote social cohesion and empower communities to work together to address the issues they face, including issues related to exclusion.
- **Building sustainable cities and communities**
Many adults at risk of exclusion live in urban areas with poor living conditions such as lack of affordable housing, poor public transportation, environmental pollution, and lack of green spaces. These areas are often characterized by poverty, high crime rates, and limited access to services, which contribute to exclusion and poor health outcomes. Addressing these issues through sustainable urban development approaches can have a positive impact on the well-being of residents, including those at risk of exclusion.

The UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) specifically call for ending poverty, ensuring access to quality education and decent work for all, reducing inequality, and building inclusive and resilient communities. These goals can be achieved by addressing the drivers of adult exclusion, and by applying an intersectional and holistic approach to interventions.

Working with adults at risk of exclusion is an essential part of promoting sustainability as both are interconnected and work towards common goals. By addressing adult exclusion and working to create a more inclusive, equitable and resilient society, we can help to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the economy, community, and political life of their communities.

Task 1: Reflecting on Our Practice: Working with Adults at Risk of Exclusion

The aim of this exercise is to help you reflect on their own practice when working with adults at risk of exclusion and identify areas for improvement. By reflecting on a recent experience, you will be able to gain insight into the challenges you faced and successes you achieved, and identify specific areas where their practice may have deviated from best practices.

Step by step instructions:

1. Reflect on a recent experience you had working with an adult at risk of exclusion:
Take some time to think about a recent experience you had working with an adult at risk of exclusion. Write down your thoughts and feelings about the experience, including any challenges you faced and successes you achieved.
2. Identify the challenges and successes you encountered during the experience:
Reflect on the experience and identify the specific challenges and successes you encountered. This can include things like communication difficulties, lack of engagement from the adult, cultural differences, or a lack of understanding of the adult's needs.
3. Research best practices for working with adults at risk of exclusion:
Look into best practices for working with adults at risk of exclusion. This can include things like active listening, cultural sensitivity, and trauma-informed practice. Consider how these best practices align with your experience and identify any areas where your practice may have deviated from these best practices.
4. Reflect on your role as an educator in the experience:
Reflect on your own role as an educator in the experience. Consider any assumptions or biases you may have had and how they may have affected the experience. Think about how you could have approached the situation differently and what you could have done to better support the adult.
5. Identify areas for improvement in your practice and create a plan for addressing them:
Based on your reflection and research, identify areas for improvement in your practice. Create a plan for addressing these areas, including specific goals, strategies and actions you can take to improve your practice.
6. Share your reflection and plan with a colleague or mentor and receive feedback.

Task 2: Sustainability and Adult Education: Reflecting on Your Role as an Educator

This task is designed to help you understand your role and plan a strategy as for how to promote sustainability among your beneficiaries – adult learners at risk of exclusion.

Step by step instructions:

1. Read the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) and reflect on how adult education can contribute to achieving these goals.
2. Identify one specific SDG that you are particularly interested in and conduct research on the current challenges and opportunities for adult education in relation to that SDG.
3. Using your research, create a reflection paper that addresses the following questions:
 - How can adult education contribute to achieving the specific SDG you have chosen?
 - What are the main challenges and opportunities for adult education in relation to this SDG?
 - Reflect on your role as an educator and how you can integrate sustainability and adult education in your teaching practice.
 - What strategies and approaches can you use to combine adult education with sustainability?
 - How can you measure the impact of your teaching on the sustainability of the adults you work with?
4. Share your reflection paper with your coworkers and discuss together what activities your NGO could implement to promote knowledge about the SDG that you have chosen.

Task 3: Sustainability and Adult Education: Developing a Curriculum

This task is to help you reflect on the current curriculum and identify areas where sustainability can be integrated. By developing a plan and creating a list of activities and resources, you will be able to think critically about how to incorporate sustainability into the educational package offered by your organization.

Step by step instructions:

1. Review the current curriculum for the adult education program you are involved in.
2. Identify areas where sustainability could be integrated into the curriculum.
3. Develop a plan for incorporating sustainability into the curriculum, including specific goals, objectives, and learning outcomes.
4. Create a list of activities and resources that can be used to support the integration of sustainability into the curriculum.
5. Reflect on the ways in which the integration of sustainability into the curriculum can benefit adult learners, including how it can promote social inclusion and improve economic opportunities.
6. Share your plan with other educators in the program and receive feedback.

Workshop plan: Understanding Exclusion and Inclusion

Objectives:

- Understanding the concept of exclusion and inclusion
- Recognizing the different forms of exclusion and the impact it can have on individuals and communities
- Identifying examples of exclusion and inclusion in their own lives and in society
- Developing strategies for promoting inclusion in their personal and professional lives

Materials Needed:

- Handouts
- Examples of exclusion and inclusion in society
- Flipchart or whiteboard

Step by step instructions

1. Introduction (30 min)
Begin the workshop by introducing the topic of exclusion and inclusion. Provide handouts that define the concepts and explain the different forms of exclusion (see Handout 1) Ask learners to share any prior knowledge or experiences they have with these concepts.
2. Discussion (30 min)
Divide the class into small groups and provide each group with examples of exclusion and inclusion in society (See Handout 2). Encourage learners to discuss the examples and to identify the impact of exclusion and inclusion on individuals and communities.
3. Personal Reflection (20 min)
Ask learners to reflect on their own lives and identify examples of exclusion and inclusion that they have experienced or witnessed. Encourage them to share their reflections with the class.
4. Strategies for Promoting Inclusion (30 min)
Provide learners with information about strategies for promoting inclusion in their personal and professional lives (See Handout 3). Encourage them to brainstorm and share ideas.
5. Conclusion (15 min)
Summarize the main points of the workshop and invite learners to share their takeaways. Encourage them to think about ways they can promote inclusion in their personal and professional lives and provide them with resources that they can use to continue learning about these topics.

Handout 1: Definitions

Inclusion refers to the state or act of including or being included within a group, organization, or society. In the context of education and social inclusion, it refers to the practice of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their differences, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and are valued and respected for who they are. This can involve creating an inclusive environment, where everyone is made to feel welcome, valued and respected, and where different perspectives and experiences are acknowledged, understood and appreciated. Inclusion also means removing barriers that prevent individuals from fully participating in society, such as discrimination, prejudice, and lack of accessibility. It promotes the idea that everyone has the right to participate, learn and benefit from their environment. Inclusion is the opposite of exclusion.

Exclusion refers to the state or act of excluding or being excluded from a group, organization, or

society. In the context of education and social inclusion, it refers to the practice of not including or not providing equal access to opportunities and resources for certain individuals or groups, based on factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, ability, or other characteristics. This can result in individuals or groups being marginalized and isolated, and can have a negative impact on their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Exclusion can take many forms, including physical, social, economic, and political exclusion. For example, physical exclusion can occur when buildings or spaces are not accessible to people with disabilities. Social exclusion can occur when individuals or groups are discriminated against or marginalized because of their race, ethnicity, or other characteristics. Economic exclusion can occur when individuals or groups are denied access to education, employment, or other resources because of their socioeconomic status. Political exclusion can occur when individuals or groups are denied the right to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Handout 2: Examples of inclusion and exclusion

Examples of inclusion and exclusion in society can be found in many different areas, including education, employment, housing, health care, and political representation. Some examples include:

Education:

- Inclusion in education means that all students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, or other characteristics, have equal access to a quality education that meets their needs.
- Exclusion in education can occur when students are denied access to education because of discrimination or lack of resources. For example, students from low-income families may not have access to the same educational resources as students from more affluent families.

Employment:

- Inclusion in employment means that all individuals have equal opportunities to find and keep a job, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, or other characteristics.
- Exclusion in employment can occur when individuals are denied job opportunities because of discrimination or lack of resources. For example, women may be underrepresented in certain fields, such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)

Housing:

- Inclusion in housing means that all individuals have access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, or other characteristics.
- Exclusion in housing can occur when individuals are denied access to housing because of discrimination or lack of resources. For example, people with disabilities may face barriers to finding accessible housing.

Health Care:

- Inclusion in health care means that all individuals have access to quality health care, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, or other characteristics.
- Exclusion in health care can occur when individuals are denied access to health care because of discrimination or lack of resources. For example, people with low incomes may not have access to the same health care services as people with higher incomes.

Political representation:

- Inclusion in political representation means that all individuals have an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, or other characteristics.
- Exclusion in political representation can occur when individuals are denied the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes because of discrimination or lack of resources. For example, individuals from minority communities may not have the same representation in political offices.

Handout 3: Strategies for promoting social inclusion

There are many strategies that individuals can use to promote inclusion in their personal and professional lives. Some examples include:

1. Education
Educating oneself about different cultures, perspectives, and experiences can help to increase understanding and empathy for others.
2. Active listening to and valuing the perspectives of others can help to create a more inclusive environment.
3. Challenging stereotypes and biases
Being aware of one's own biases and taking steps to challenge stereotypes and prejudices can help to promote inclusion.
4. Creating inclusive spaces
Making physical and virtual spaces inclusive, including accessibility and language accommodations, can help to promote inclusion and accessibility.
5. Allying
Standing up for and supporting marginalized groups and individuals, and advocating for policies and practices that promote inclusion, can help to create a more inclusive society.
6. Reflecting on one's own privilege and how it may have affected one's experiences and opportunities, can help to promote empathy and understanding towards others.
7. Building relationships with people from diverse backgrounds can help to promote inclusion and understanding.
8. Encouraging diversity in hiring, promotion and decision-making processes can help to promote inclusion in professional settings.
9. Supporting policies and laws that promote inclusion and protect marginalized groups can help to create a more inclusive society.
10. Being open to feedback and learning from mistakes can help to promote inclusion and create a more inclusive environment.