

Online Dialogue Activity Bank

Virtual Activities Useful for Online Community Engagement

This Activity Bank includes information on the types of activities you will want to use, when it is advisable to use them, and step-by-step breakdowns of individual activities. These activities have been organized into stages and clusters in a Group Process Framework (GPF). The [Sharing Perspectives Foundation](#) has developed this GPF through online community engagement through Virtual Exchange with youth, and it can be adapted for use with any audience. This GPF will help you best assess your groups' stages and dynamics and plan activities and interventions accordingly. Have a look at the Framework [here](#).

In the GPF, activities are categorized into the following main clusters:

1. Icebreakers and Introductions
2. Relationship Building
3. Content and Process Reflection
4. Identity
5. Conflict Resolution
6. Forward Thinking
7. Youth Empowerment
8. Winding Down

In this document, you will find some of the best activities for each cluster.

Contents

You can click on any of the links below to jump directly to any of the activities in this document.

Ice-breakers and Introductions

- INTRODUCE A PARTNER
- QUICK INTERACTIVE CHECK-IN
- TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE
- TERMINOLOGY ACTIVITY
- INFORMAL GROUND RULES

Relationship Building

- MOON LANDING
- APPRECIATION ACTIVITY

Content and Process Reflection

- META-DISCUSSION
- HAND EVALUATION

Identity

- THE CULTURE CHEST
- THE BIG EIGHT

Conflict Resolution

- AWARENESS TEST
- TREE ANALYSIS

Forward Thinking

- LISTING ASSETS
- APPROACHES TO CHANGE

Youth Empowerment

- YOUR ROLE
- YOUNG PEOPLE AS PROTAGONISTS

Winding down

- RUCKSACK
- VIRTUAL GIFTS

Ice-breakers and Introductions

Whether you have a completely new group or are adding people to an existing group, providing a smooth way for everyone to get to know each other can make all the difference. Ice-breakers and introductions are activities to start group sessions in an OCEA. These activities aim to create a warm atmosphere, kickstart group formation, build relationships and trust, and set the stage for future discussions. This cluster also includes energizers, which you can use to transition between activities and address problems such as disengaged or tired groups.

Ice-breakers and introductions can range from activities helping them get to know one another to activities that lead them in defining the terms and guidelines that they will utilise in sessions. Simple activities often used both online and offline are Introduce a Partner, Two Truths and a Lie, The Terminology Activity and Informal Ground Rules. Below you can find them in their online format.

INTRODUCE A PARTNER

Time frame: 10-15 minutes.

Purpose: This activity is an opportunity for participants to get to know the group better, find similarities and differences, and introduce tech features like private chat and breakout rooms.

Instructions: Divide participants into pairs. If the breakout room feature is supported by the platform you are using, place each pair in a separate breakout room. If it is not, ask each person to use the private chat feature to interview their partner. Tell them they have a set amount of time (five minutes is usually sufficient) and set a timer for yourself. You can provide a few questions you want them to ask, or allow them to ask their own. When the group reconvenes, each person introduces their partner to the rest of the group. Be sure to invite the introduced person to add anything to their introduction that was missing or should be corrected.

Some possible questions:

- Where do you come from?
- What do you like to do in general?
- What makes you feel good?
- How do your friends describe you?
- What is one thing that you would keep with yourself anytime?

You may also decide to take part in this activity with your co-facilitator, if you have one, and introduce each other to the group. This should be done only after careful consideration, however, as sharing certain information with participants might damage your ability to be seen as neutral.

Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity participants will be able to introduce their group members, identify some similarities and differences, and be proficient in their use of some of the platform's tech features.

QUICK INTERACTIVE CHECK-IN

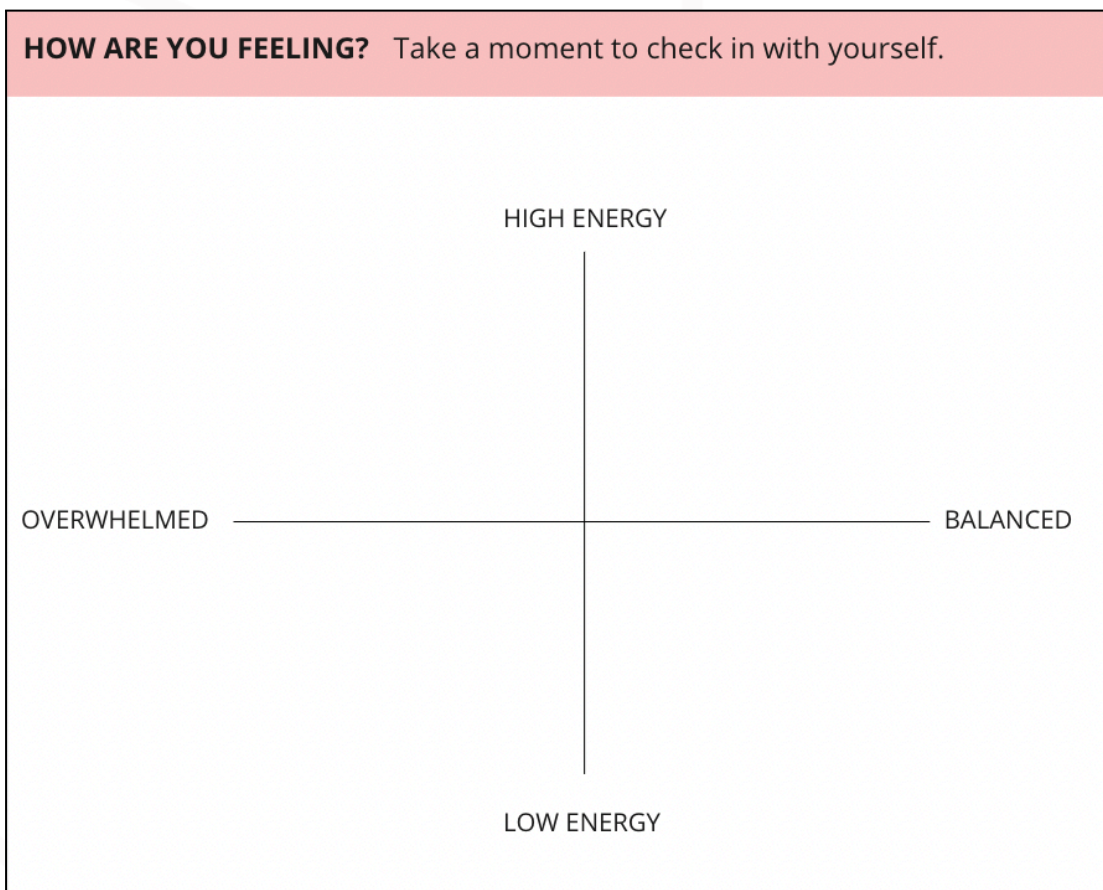
Time frame: 5-10 minutes.

Purpose: This short activity is helpful to get a sense of the overall mood of the group. It also serves as a simple interactive exercise for example at the start of a session or after a break.

Instructions: Share the following image via an interactive whiteboard, via Zoom in annotation mode or using a collaboration tool like [Miro](#). Ask the participants to take a minute and check-in with how they are feeling and to place an X (or another mark) on the grid that reflects their current state of mind.

After people placed themselves on the grid, you can ask the group;

- How would you describe the group temperature looking at this grid?
- Is there anyone that would like to elaborate on how they are feeling?
 - Is there anything that the group should be aware of or take into consideration in relation to how you are feeling?



Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity participants have reflected on their state of mind and are aware of the group temperature. This is helpful as a conversation starter, and getting to know each other better as it gives participants a chance to share something going on in their daily lives. It also aids the facilitator in assessing the group's needs.

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

Time frame: 20-40 minutes.

This game can take more time than expected. If you have 10-12 group members, it is recommended that you book at least 30 to 40 minutes to play the game.

Purpose: This is an icebreaker game that allows participants to learn new facts about one another. Generally best played during the first or second meeting, it can also be considered a “starting the session” activity - something that the group can do while waiting for additional group members to join.

Instructions: In this game each person is asked to present three things about themselves. Two of the things are true, the third is a lie. After each person presents their three things, the group guesses which one is a lie.

To set the game up, simply explain how it works (as above) and give everyone a few minutes to think about their three things. Then ask for a volunteer to start. Generally in this medium it is best to have everyone guess which thing is true via the chat box, as it can take a long time to have each person guess out loud.

If you feel like gamifying this activity, you can offer a “Sherlock Holmes” trophy to whoever guesses the most lies.

Note: This game can take up quite some time if players start to ask each other questions about the statements they hear. If you feel you have the time to spare on this activity you could encourage this, and model questions yourself. If time is an issue, then make sure the group stays on track.

Prospective outcomes: This activity allows participants to learn interesting or surprising facts about each other, which can spark laughter and curiosity. By the end of this activity participants will know more about what makes each person unique, what they have in common, and start opening up in the following discussions.

TERMINOLOGY ACTIVITY

Time Frame: 30-45 minutes

Purpose: This activity supports generative discussions of concepts and terminology that fits well near the beginning of a dialogue experience. It brings attention to how participants (and facilitators) can attribute different meanings to a key concept or term based on their life experiences or identities.

Instructions: Divide participants into three small groups in breakout rooms and ask them to create working definitions of a selection of the key terms in the OCEA you facilitate. For example if the topic is migration, the following terms could be relevant to define: refugee, migrant, economic migrant, crisis, citizenship, European, asylum, asylum seeker, refuge.

Next, bring the small groups back into one room and have them present their definitions to the larger group. Initiate a dialogue about the meanings of the terms and the process of defining them.

Sample questions you can ask:

- Was there consensus on definitions? Why or why not?
- Is there disparity in legal definitions vs social definitions?
- What definitions do you think are used by the media, politicians, or society?

Summarise the themes of their discussion thus far, and acknowledge that these working definitions will likely evolve as the dialogue progresses. Stress the importance of clarifying the meaning attached to a term or concept before assuming there is consensus or disagreement.

Prospective outcomes: This activity helps participants avoid conversations in which they all have different interpretations of the terms and erroneously assume that they are all on the same page. It helps them to discern what each person is actually trying to say, and engage with their ideas in a productive way. It also helps participants notice that words are defined and understood through the lens of an individual's experiences, and that an ongoing practice of clarifying personal interpretation is important to the dialogue process.

INFORMAL GROUND RULES

Time Frame: 5 - 15 minutes (depending upon how engaged participants are with the question).

Purpose: To encourage group ownership and set the stage for successful discussions, it is important to give participants an opportunity to discuss and set some ground rules to assist them in establishing a fertile, safe learning environment. Recommended for either session 1 or 2

Note: Spending a long time on ground rules in this medium can lead participants to disengage. Nevertheless, it is important to get them thinking, from the beginning, about how they want to talk. This becomes particularly important if your OCEA will delve into sensitive topics.

Instructions: Ask the group: "Are there any guidelines that you would like to set for our conversations?" You can remind them that this is their group and you want them to set guidelines that make sense for them, and that will allow them to have a better conversation. Mention that your job as a facilitator is just to help them follow the guidelines that they set. You can elicit ideas from them either in the form of a round or an open discussion, depending upon the dynamics of your group.

Sometimes participant contributions can be vague, such as "be respectful." Depending upon how much time you have, ask follow-up questions such as "how do you show respect?" Prompt them to contribute specific behaviours, and agree on what respect will look like.

Keep a record of what is said in the chat section, and save the answers so that you can share them with the group later in the process. Once the ground rules have been established, make sure that the final list is distributed to the students via email. Let participants know that they can continue to add to this list whenever they would like.

Note: Don't just frame the group norms as something necessary for "safety." Group norms should create an active learning space, not just a safe space.

Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity the participants will have a concrete list of ground rules and what following those rules looks like in practice. They will have already begun to reflect and agree upon what skills and behaviours constitute a good dialogue, and develop their listening, communication, and conflict resolution skills. This list will be something they can refer back to in later sessions if the communication isn't going well or if they experience a conflict, in order to help them realign with their basic guiding principles.

Relationship Building

Reaching a state of genuine exchange of ideas, perspectives, and forward thinking entails intensive work on building robust group relationships and trust. Many multi-purpose activities like Introduce a Partner (which can be used as an ice-breaker and for relationship building) or Moon Landing (appropriate for both relationship building and conflict resolution) can move the group in this direction.

There are no rules as to when to use relationship-building activities. It is a continuous process that starts with the first meeting and can continue even after the OCEA ends. The more work facilitators invest in relationship building, the more they yield in terms of trust building, in-depth discussions, and sustainable connections. However, it is particularly advantageous to use relationship-building activities in the following situations:

- As starters in the OCEA
- When discussions are on a superficial level and participants are hesitant to express their true thoughts and opinions
- Before engaging with a sensitive topic
- When participants are still not fully acquainted with the virtual setting and doubting their skills and position in the group

Carefully working on building trust and group ownership using relationship-building activities is key to success. Here are some examples of activities you could use to achieve this objective.

MOON LANDING

Time Frame: 30-45 minutes

Purpose: Although the topic might be completely unrelated to your OCEA, this team-building activity highlights the value of multiple voices and perspectives to solve problems.

Instructions: Tell your participants: “Grab a piece of paper or open a note on the computer to record on. You are all members of a space crew scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. However, due to mechanical difficulties your own ship was forced to land at a spot 200 miles from the rendezvous point.

During re-entry and landing, much of the equipment aboard was damaged and, since survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 200-mile trip.

15 items are listed as being intact and undamaged after landing. Your task is to rank them in terms of their importance for your crew, to allow you to reach the rendezvous point. Place the number 1 by the most important item, the number 2 by the second most important, and so on through to number 15 for the least important.

Next, take the following steps:

1. Display the 'moon landing ranking chart' using screen sharing or a whiteboard application.

My ranking	Salvaged items	Team ranking
	Box of matches	
	Food concentrate	
	50 feet of nylon rope	
	Parachute silk	
	Two .45 caliber pistols	
	One case of dehydrated milk	
	Two 100-pound tanks of oxygen	
	Stellar map	
	Self-inflating life raft	
	Magnetic compass	
	Five gallons of water	
	Signal flares	
	First aid kit containing injection needles	
	Solar powered FM receiver	
	Portable heating unit	
Score		Score

2. Ask everyone to take 5 minutes to decide their own rankings, and to write down the choices they would put in the left-hand 'My Ranking' column.
3. Now ask them to do the same ranking in the larger group. They should discuss the reasoning behind their individual choices and refine their rankings based on the collective thoughts of the team. Once they all agree on a ranking, record it in the 'Team Ranking' column on your whiteboard, or if screen sharing, write it down in the chat.
4. Tell them that the correct answers were compiled by a team of scientists and engineers at NASA. Display the NASA 'expert' rankings.

Item	NASA Ranking	NASA's Reasoning
Box of matches	15	Virtually worthless -- there's no oxygen on the moon to sustain combustion.
Food concentrate	4	Efficient means of supplying energy requirements.
50 feet of nylon rope	6	Useful in scaling cliffs and tying injured together.
Parachute silk	8	Protection from the sun's rays.
Portable heating unit	13	Not needed unless on the dark side.
Two .45 caliber pistols	11	Possible means of self-propulsion.
One case of dehydrated milk	12	Bulkier duplication of food concentrate.
Two 100 lb. tanks of oxygen	1	Most pressing survival need (weight is not a factor since gravity is one-sixth of the Earth's -- each tank would weigh only about 17 lbs. on the moon.)
Stellar map	3	Primary means of navigation - star patterns appear essentially identical on the moon as on Earth.
Self-inflating life raft	9	CO ₂ bottle in military raft may be used for propulsion.

Magnetic compass	14	The magnetic field on the moon is not polarized, so it's worthless for navigation.
5 gallons of water	2	Needed for replacement of tremendous liquid loss on the light side.
Signal flares	10	Use as distress signal when the mother ship is sighted.
First aid kit, including injection needle	7	Needles connected to vials of vitamins, medicines, etc. will fit special aperture in NASA space suit.
Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter	5	For communication with mother ship (but FM requires line-of-sight transmission and can only be used over short ranges.)

- Have them compare their individual and group answers with the correct answers and determine a score. For each item, they should mark the number of points that their score differs from the NASA ranking (for example if they put what NASA ranked as number one as their number four, then they should write down three points) and then add up all the points. The lower the total, the better the score.

Lead them in a follow-up discussion. Ask them: "What do you think about the individual vs. collective scores? What from this activity can be applied to our dialogue? What, if anything, from this activity can be applied to the topics we're discussing?"

Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity, participants will be able to express their opinions, discuss them with fellow group members, and come to collective group decisions. This activity can also reveal the social and power dynamics in the group and help the facilitator understand them

better. The follow-up discussion gives participants the opportunity to express their thoughts and positions, fostering equal participation and acknowledgement of different opinions.

APPRECIATION ACTIVITY

Time-frame: 15- 20 minutes

Purpose: This activity should be used once the participants have had a few sessions to get to know one another. It can be useful for accelerating group bonding and giving the participants added confidence that they are listened to in sessions and that what they have to say is of value to the other group members.

Instructions:

Step 1: Divide the participants into pairs, but keep them in the main meeting room. Ask the participants to spend one minute thinking about their partner and identify one thing about this person that is either:

- Something they like about them
- Something they learned from them
- Something about them they are impressed with, or
- Something they said that sparked their interest in learning more about something

Step 2: Invite them to go in a round and each share what they thought of for that person.

If there's enough time, you can extend the activity by assigning new pairs and repeating the exercise.

Prospective outcome:

This activity usually results in closer bonds with and warm feelings towards other group members. Participants often are surprised and gratified to learn that they have made an impression on someone else, or that they contributed something that was valued by the others. It can make them more confident in sharing, and also more likely to compliment or acknowledge each other in future sessions. You can place this activity in your final session if you want to end on a high note.

Content and Process Reflection

Content and process reflection activities aim to stimulate critical thinking, collect feedback, and sustain group ownership. They can be beneficial at any stage of your community engagement, but are particularly advisable when your group reaches certain points.

One of these points is after long activities or discussions of sensitive topics in which participants underwent a challenging or emotional discussion. A reflection activity here helps participants to process what they encountered, what their experience was, and what emotions they felt. It gives them opportunities to discuss what, if anything, helped support them during the discussion, and what could be done better in the future. This can be a great time to generate discussions on any ground rules they might want to set, communication or listening styles they want to work on, what value they might be able to see in engaging in sensitive conversations, and what impact this conversation had on their group process. Reflection activities at this point therefore serve as tools for inclusion, conflict resolution, and relationship strengthening.

Likewise, reflection activities are well suited for a midpoint review during an OCEA with multiple synchronous interactions. The opportunity to ask participants to elaborate on their reflections and pose follow-up questions distinguishes reflection activities from traditional survey-based evaluation techniques, and can result in more honest and reflective responses than you might receive from a list of checked boxes in a survey. This use of reflection activities allows both the participants and the facilitators to analyse their performance, interactions, and outcomes of the OCEA so far. It gives an indication of the progress of the group in achieving their goals and expectations, and helps facilitators refine their plans for upcoming activities. It also stimulates group and process awareness among participants, which in turn supports participants to take ownership. Similarly, reflection activities are creative ways of evaluating the OCEA in the closing round of a session/meeting/workshop. The insights they produce combined with surveys constitute a foundation for after-action reviews.

META-DISCUSSION

Time frame: 10-20 min

Purpose: Having a dialogue about the dialogue creates an opportunity to reflect on the quality of the process and to raise buried concerns and feelings. Even though participants and facilitators may actively work toward creating an open, honest and reciprocal environment, hidden emotions, thoughts, fears, and needs related to group dynamics (whether intrapersonal, intragroup or intergroup) may need to surface in order to deepen the conversation.

A meta-discussion can be used any time a group faces roadblocks in the process, though it can be helpful to use it right after the first or second 'hot topic' sessions. Doing so helps identify any covert dynamics that may be stifling the process.

Instructions: Tell participants that they'll now have a chance to step back and have a brief dialogue about the discussions so far.

Possible questions:

- How are we communicating as a group?
- What is working? What is getting in the way?
- Are there any particular dynamics or tensions that you felt or saw during this session or other sessions that are affecting your ability to participate fully?
- What are some ways we are using dialogic skills? What are some ways we are not?

The discussion that emerges from these questions encourages participants to identify any underlying dynamics, and also gives them an opportunity to link them to dynamics in society (e.g. men dominating the conversation while women politely let others talk before them, or white people being less vocal when talking about personal experiences with race). Once dynamics are identified, you can help participants engage in an open discussion about how they affect individuals in the group and the group as a whole. The group can also decide whether, how, and what to change or work on with regard to the group's dynamics.

Note: Toward the end of this conversation, it can be helpful to revisit any group process guidelines or ground rules developed by participants in the first or second session. Participants can re-read the guidelines and suggest additional ones to include.

Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity the group will be able to identify group dynamics and power dynamics, and recognize the extent of their ownership of their discussions. It is also an opportunity for facilitators to plan future sessions that address any power imbalances or unhealthy group dynamics, and incorporate participant suggestions.

HAND EVALUATION

Time frame: 5 -10 min

Purpose: A simple evaluation to close a session, giving an opportunity for participants to express how they felt and what they want to improve for future interactions. It can also indicate to a facilitator what is working well and what might be missing from the dialogue.

Instructions: Have each participant go around and share a prompt for a finger. Prompts can be modified. To make it more fun, let each participant choose who goes next and choose the finger.

Example - Samia (holding her thumb up): "Something I enjoyed today was that we're listening to each other better. Next I want Mark to answer the index finger prompt."

Thumb → Something good, something they enjoyed

Index finger → Something they would like to point out (could be good or bad)

Middle finger → Something they learned

Ring finger → A question they still have or something they would like to learn more about

Little finger → Something they want to add

Palm → A prediction for the future - What are they going to do next?

Prospective outcomes: By the end of the activity participants will have had the opportunity to reflect on the process and content of the session, as well as on their preferences and needs for upcoming events or activities. It is useful when you would like a reflection activity that is short, easy, and less 'heavy' than a meta-discussion.

Identity

Exploring the different identities in a group can help the group and the facilitator move forward with rich discussions and genuine exchanges. Working with sensitive topics and diverse groups is a challenge and an added value at the same time. To best bring out the advantages of a diverse group, a facilitator should foster an environment in which the group can bring forward their identities, histories, differences and similarities, and meet them with respect and appreciation.

Identity activities and their powerful outcomes can be well-placed in multiple stages of a group's process, but they work best when the group has developed some sense of ownership over the discussion and have built enough trust that they are ready to share more aspects of who they are. In an OCEA that takes place over a span of more than 4 weeks, it is likely that identity activities will be most rewarding starting in week 3. When working with different identities, facilitators often need more time to tailor the activities to their group's needs. They should also be prepared to encounter strong emotions and conflict, as well as many inspiring moments.

Identity activities play a key role in defining the power dynamics in a group. If these activities are not well debriefed and reflected, it may have a negative impact on group dynamics. Facilitators should invest more time in preparing these activities with different possible scenarios in mind. Nevertheless, when well implemented, identity activities will foster empathy, stimulate curiosity about each other, and help participants recognize diversity as a source of synergy in the group.

THE CULTURE CHEST

Time Frame: 45 - 60 minutes:

Purpose: This activity invites participants to explore and share their multiple social identities through storytelling. They can reflect on and speak about the significance of a range of social identities that affect their lives, including any that are central to the dialogue. Because The Culture Chest emphasises storytelling, speaking, and listening, this activity often deepens the level of sharing and relationship building in the group. Despite the name, participants do not need to be from different cultures for this activity. Members of the same community have a multiplicity of social identities, histories, and experiences. This activity helps participants 'find the difference' within the group, even if it seems homogenous at first.

Instructions: This activity requires preparation. Tell participants in advance to bring a 'culture chest' containing three objects or photos that are personally significant in connection to three of their social identities. They can show physical objects by holding them up to their webcams, and share photos via links or screen sharing.

During the activity, each participant is allotted an amount of time to share the objects in their chest with the group and tell stories associated with the objects while everyone else actively listens.

Once everyone has had a chance to share, debrief the activity. Topics of conversation that may ensue include commonalities and differences in participants' social identities, visible and invisible social identities, and the role society plays in encouraging or silencing the articulation of particular social identities.

Possible debrief questions include:

- How did you feel participating in this activity?
- What thoughts did you have during the course of the activity?
- What similar experiences have you had elsewhere? Do you have opportunities to talk about / share your various identities?
- How does awareness about your and others' multifaceted identities apply to situations outside the dialogue group? How does it apply to our dialogue process?

Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity participants will be able to recognize the diversity in the group and learn more about what experiences, feelings and self-perceptions underpin the perspectives and actions of other group members. The activity is expected to also develop empathy between participants, and build stronger group relationships.

THE BIG EIGHT

Time Frame: 15-20 min

Purpose: The Big Eight activity aims to help participants understand parts of who they are by exploring eight major identities, and give them an opportunity to explore some of their social group memberships. Understanding the similarities and differences between them and others help them develop empathy, challenge their biases, and create their own safe and diverse space.

Instructions: First, tell participants: "We're going to do an activity called 'The Big Eight.' While there are lots of different aspects of our identities, there are overarching ones that some call 'the big eight.' These are: 1: Ability (mental or physical) 2: Age 3: Ethnicity (first language; country of origin) 4: Gender 5: Race 6: Religion/Spirituality 7: Sexual Orientation 8: Socioeconomic Status. [Post these in the chat box]

In a minute I'm going to read out a question that has a blank in it. Choose which one of these eight identities most applies to that blank and type it into the chat. If none of them apply, you can type 'None.'"

Read out the first question. Once they have all written their answers in the chat, ask if anyone would like to talk about why they choose that identity or what their lived experience is like with that identity. Allow for a few different people to share their thoughts.

Repeat this process until you have asked all your questions or you sense they might be getting tired. Be sure to do a debrief of the activity.

Possible questions include:

1. The part of my identity that I am most aware of on a daily basis is_____.
2. The part of my identity that I am the least aware of on a daily basis is_____.
3. The part of my identity that was most emphasised or important in my family growing up was _____.

4. The part of my identity that I wish I knew more about is _____.
5. The part of my identity that garners me the most privilege is _____.
6. The part of my identity that I believe is the most misunderstood by others is _____.
7. The part of my identity that I feel is difficult to discuss with others who identify differently _____.
8. The part of my identity that makes me feel the most discriminated against is _____.

During the debrief you can:

- Ask what people found surprising about the activity, or if anyone had anything more to add.
- Discuss what it was like to do the activity. Participants often share that they didn't realise how much they have in common with one another or that they were surprised about how they answered the questions.
- Ask how these identity categories affect our other identities as students, citizens, etc.

Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity participants will have learned to critically analyse their identities, understand and sympathise with the others' experiences with their identities, and recognize similarities and differences in a diverse group. The Big Eight activity will help both the facilitator and the participants avoid making assumptions about others and set a framework of self and group reflection.

Conflict Resolution

In any engagement, conflicts might arise. Conflict doesn't always have to have a negative connotation, however. In fact, it can often lead to transformative moments, bring issues that need to be addressed into the open so they can finally be discussed, and, if handled well, actually be the catalyst for much stronger relationships within the group.

As a facilitator it's important to address conflict rather than avoid it. You can use it as an opportunity to bring out deeper discussions on the roots and causes of the conflict, encourage the group to further develop their listening and communication skills in order to resolve it, and help maintain mutual respect and trust in the group. Conflict resolution activities are there to aid facilitators in this endeavour. They are designed to help participants explore their biases, consider the perspectives of "the other," dig deeper into the experiences, values, assumptions etc. that gave rise to a particular action or opinion, and challenge their viewpoints.

Facilitators should choose the activity that best suits their group and the conflict they are experiencing. These activities can be planned ahead if you feel there's some conflict that the group has not addressed, or kept as a stand-by when discussing a heavy topic. They can also be used as 'devil's advocates' to stimulate a group that avoids anything potentially controversial. The latter is a way to provoke participants to express themselves and their opinions through a very strategic conflict.

Conflict resolution activities range from simple awareness tests to deeper analysis activities like The Tree Analysis. It is worth noting that some activities are multi-purpose and can be used as identity, conflict resolution, reflection, and relationship-building activities.

AWARENESS TEST

Time frame: 5 - 10 min

Purpose: The Awareness Test is a way to critical/self-awareness. It addresses the issue of seeing what you want or expect to see and/or 'hearing' other perspectives without actually listening to or acknowledging them. It is usually used as a light intro activity to bring your group's attention to this before you delve into deeper discussions, or while waiting for others to arrive or sort out technical problems.

Instructions: Tell participants that they will watch a 2-minute video individually and then reflect on it as a group. Ask them to make sure they are muted when watching the video to avoid chaos and noise. Share the link with participants and ask them to type 'done' or 'ready' in the chat box when they are done.

Here is the [Awareness Test Video](#).

When all the group members are done, ask them to use thumbs up or down to indicate whether they saw the "moonwalking bear" or not. Ask those who gave a thumbs up if they knew about the test before, then allow everyone to reflect on why they think we took this test together, what is the lesson learnt, and how we could apply that lesson in our daily lives.

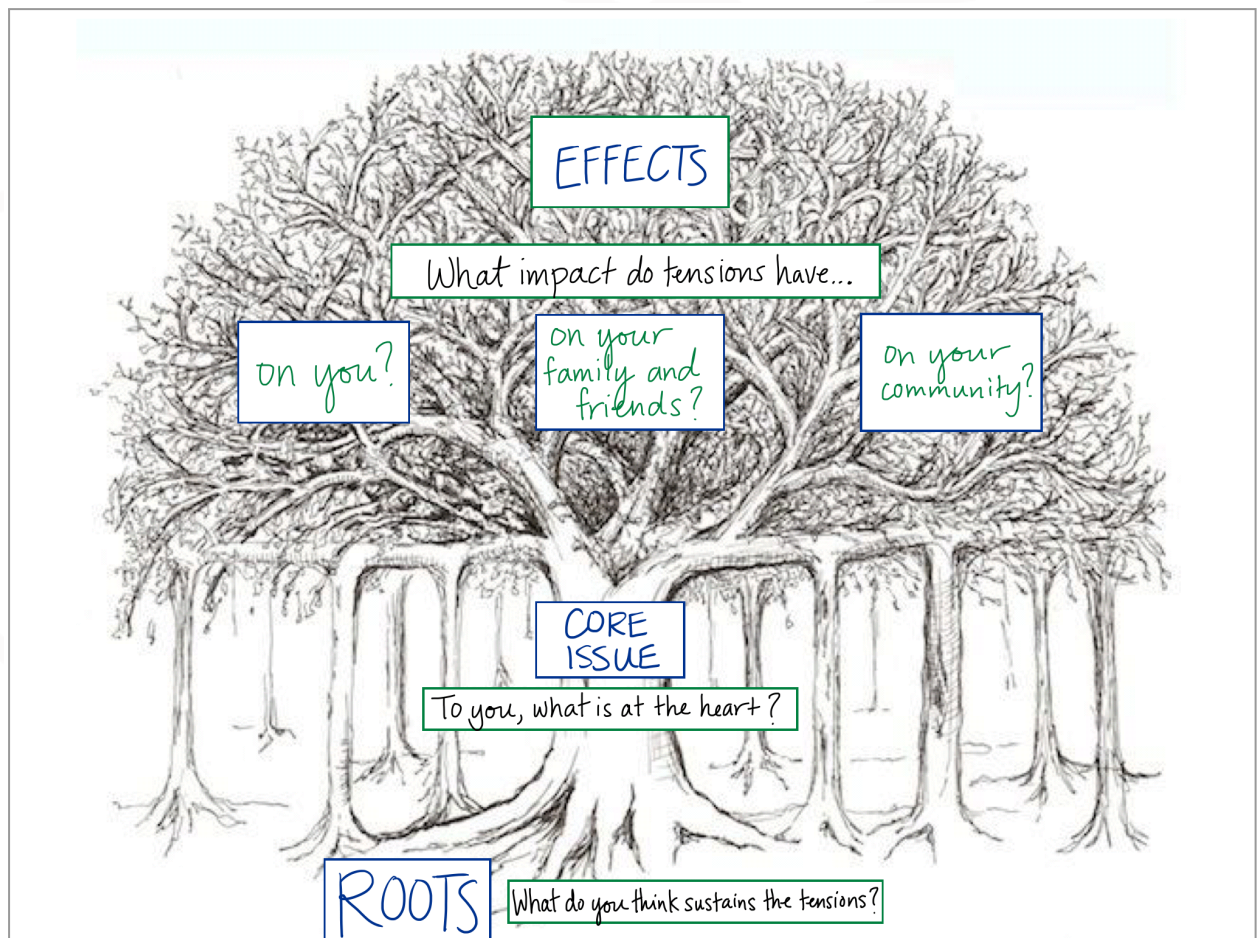
Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity participants will be able to challenge themselves to see the bigger picture rather than focusing on their assumed outcomes, and recognize what they focus on.

TREE ANALYSIS

Time-frame: 30-40 minutes

Purpose: This simple analysis activity will allow participants to engage with each other using personal experiences in order to have a targeted discussion on a conflict relevant to the discussion. It can help the group get to the roots, experiences, and positions of power that inform their own and others' opinions and worldviews. Ideally, it can provide a window to explore national or community perspectives not represented in the room and give an opportunity to revisit the social tensions that reinforce the marginalisation of vulnerable groups. Tree Analysis is best used as a tool to explore conflicts when they arise in a group, or to further discussions on the OCEA theme when dealing with a conflict.

Instructions: Frame the activity by highlighting the conversations the group has already had about the social tensions most relevant to the OCEA themes. Explain that this activity will be an opportunity to map what they consider the core effects, causes, and essence of those conflicts. Share the following picture of a conflict tree, using either screen share or a whiteboard application:



Give participants a few minutes to think (on their own) of key issues and where they would put them on the tree - at the roots, trunk, or leaves.

Beginning at the top, ask:

- What are some of the effects or consequences of these tensions/conflicts?
- What impact do these tensions/conflicts have on you? On your family and friends? In your community?

Move on down the tree as the discussion naturally progresses. Be sure to continue to ask questions that are both personal and analytical.

Emphasise that this is flexible. Good discussion comes in the process of collaborative mapping. Ask a lot of 'why' questions about the placement of issues.

Note: While participants are mentally placing and replacing different issues in each category, it can be helpful for the facilitator to take notes to be able to periodically summarise their progress and ask if there are any issues they would like to move somewhere else.

Possible debrief questions:

- How did you feel going through this activity?
- What insights, if any, came to you through the discussion?
- What were some of the major issues that arose during this activity?
- Why do you think the tree used in the photo is a Banyan tree? Are there any other metaphors that suit these tensions better?

Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity participants will have learned how to analyse the roots of conflict through diverse experiences, and about positions of power that inform their own and others' opinions and worldviews.

Forward Thinking

When planning your community engagement activities, a general objective is usually to achieve sustainability in your OCEA. This means that the momentum created during the OCEA does not dissipate after it ends, that positive actions are self-perpetuating, and that ideas or solutions generated in the discussions continue to inspire further engagement. Sustainability can be reached during the implementation of your OCEA by building trust and robust relationships, mechanisms for conflict resolution, and acceptance of diversity. This combination can lead to innovative forward thinking and creative initiatives. Catalysing forward thinking among participants should be built into the design of your sessions in order to achieve the long-term goals of the OCEA, and help participants think about their capacities and roles they can play in causing change as a step towards continued activation.

Forward thinking activities are best used towards the end of the OCEA, when participants have built good relationships, initiated their own mechanism for conflict resolution, and opened up to freely sharing and reflecting on opinions in the group. At this stage of group development, forward thinking activities add a layer of collective interaction and planning.

Forward thinking activities have many forms. Some like 'Listing Assets' explore strengths and synergies in a group, whereas 'Approaches to Change' identifies potential focus points for endeavours to create positive change.

LISTING ASSETS

Time frame: 15-20 min

Purpose: This activity can help the group realise the latent resources present amongst themselves and their collective potential. It can inspire ideas, facilitate action planning, and lay a foundation for sustainability after the OCEA.

Instructions: Explain: "While we have been talking about action and change, we are going to make a list of our assets. Every community has strengths or assets. Assets can be people, places, or institutions. They are things that we have or use to help ourselves and each other."

Make sure you have a pre-prepared whiteboard, Google Doc, or any other collaborative tool you prefer to use. Ask participants to type on the board or doc all their personal assets, and what they think their group assets are.

Possible question to help the group:

- What are some things you know a lot about?
- What are some talents or skills of other members in this dialogue? How about other people in the community?
- What groups do you belong to? How can they help?

- What organisations, groups, or government agencies, or individuals in the community are already working on the issues we've identified as important? How can they help?
- What physical resources do we have — like land, buildings, space, tools, or even money?
- What assets do we have to support our action ideas?

Note: If you are working with a trans-national group, emphasise that the setting they are in now is an asset!

End the activity with a debrief discussion. Encourage them to discuss the similarities and assets they identified within the group. You can also ask what is missing and needs to be worked on or added. Keep a copy of the final output and share it with the group after the OCEA.

Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity participants will have identified their key strengths and resources and discussed how these can be leveraged to take action in their community. It provokes them to focus on specifics, rather than abstract intentions for change. This can be a crucial step in the action planning stage of an OCEA.

APPROACHES TO CHANGE

Time frame: 30-40 min

Purpose: Approaches to Change is an activity used to explore ways to create positive change on community, national, or global levels. This activity is best used after a sufficient discussion on the problems, challenges, and obstacles faced on these levels, as a way to identify solutions or create ideas for change.

Instructions: Explain: "We've talked about problems, challenges, obstacles, and the situation in general on a community, national, or global level. Let's continue to explore some ways to improve things."

Display the photo of the approaches to change, either by sharing your screen or (if possible) putting it on a whiteboard that participants can mark, such as Miro. Give participants a minute to look at it.

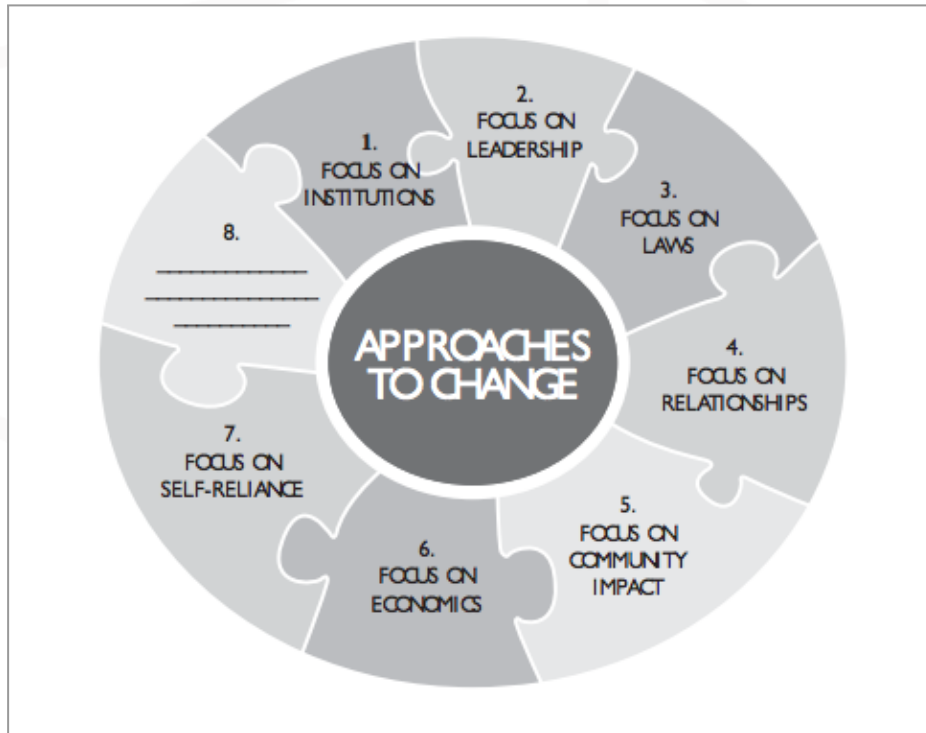
Say: "I will ask you some questions and you can show which focus you think best reflects your answer."

Technical notes:

1. If screen sharing in a platform like Zoom: stop screen sharing, type the different foci (with their corresponding numbers!) in the chat and ask them to type in the chat or show on their fingers which they choose. If they can think of another important focus they can tell the group and you can write it in the chat.
2. If on a collaborative whiteboard: have them put a mark on or next to the one they choose. Make sure each person has a mark unique to them (it could be a certain colored sticky note,

an emoji, their initials etc). If they can think of another focus they can write it on one of the blank lines in number 8.

Give them opportunities to elaborate on their answers and follow-up on each other's contributions after each question you ask.




Possible questions:

- What approaches will work well?
- What will help us deal with problems that we've talked about throughout the OCEA?
- Have any of these approaches been tried (by us or others)? If so, what happened?
- Which approaches do you like best? Why?
- What other approaches can you think of?
- Which approaches address what you consider to be the core problem?
- What approaches won't work? Why?

Summarise the approaches they discussed, their preferences, and what they think will or won't work.

Ask them if they have tried any other approaches, or if they plan to implement any of these approaches in the near future. As much as possible encourage them to think about exactly when, where, how, with who, etc. so they can have something concrete to build on and move more easily from the 'imagination stage' to the action stage. Ask if any of them want to work on this together, and if they do help them decide when and where they would like to meet so that they can carry this momentum forward.



Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity participants will be able to identify different approaches to change, assess their effectiveness and potential for their communities, nations, or the global community, add other approaches from their expertise, and look forward to using them for creating change.

Youth Empowerment

The Youth Empowerment cluster is designed to help youth reflect on their capacities for creating change and for taking an active role in society. These activities can serve as a bridge between the online and the offline, a means by which youth can take what they have gained from their online experience and put it to use in their community. Activities like Approaches to Change, Your Role, or Young People as Protagonists are ideal for stimulating youth to explore their unique strengths and assets, and move them into an action-oriented mindset.

YOUR ROLE

Time frame: 30-45 min

Purpose: This activity should get participants thinking about their role as the new generation of world citizens and what changes they would like to make. It can be placed at any stage in the OCEA in which you would like to provoke youth participants to engage in forward thinking and begin action planning. It can be particularly effective, however, when participants have become comfortable with leading their discussions and require less prompting.

Instructions:

- Ask participants to close their eyes for a minute or two and think about “What would you like the world to look like in 10 years?”
- Have participants share their wishes with the group. Ask them to think for two more minutes about “What would need to happen in your country to make that vision possible?”
- Now ask them to think about “What would need to happen in other countries/continents/regions to make your vision possible?”
- Have participants share their thoughts on the second and third questions. You can also allot five minutes for discussion and follow-up questions.
- Next, ask participants to reflect on what they have achieved, learned, and felt throughout their sessions together. “Do you think you have the power to contribute to that vision? Do you feel that the time we have spent together has taught you something about what you and other young people are capable of?”
- Finally, ask them to think about “What can you do, or what can we do as a group to start on the path towards that vision?”

Another way to initiate this conversation is to post the five questions in the chat and give participants five minutes to think about their answers (and write them down, so they can remember them). You can then open up for conversation by asking the first question.

During the debrief, ask participants to think about:

1. “What do you think of this activity, and why do you think we did it?”
 - a. Give participants time to reflect and share

- b. If they don't bring it up you can point to the synergy they have as a group (particularly as a diverse/multinational group, if this is the case)
2. Ask the group: "Now that we've had these discussions, what actions will you be doing in the future?"

Prospective outcomes: By the end of the activity participants will be able to identify their ideal vision for the world, actions that they think need to happen to make it a reality, and their role in achieving their desired change. They will also have reflected on what they have gained in the OCEA, and decided on some concrete actions they can take both as a group and individually in the future.

YOUNG PEOPLE AS PROTAGONISTS

Time frame: 30-40 min

Purpose: To have participants identify the role that young people have played in history and encourage them to consider how to be leaders in their own communities. The Young People As Protagonists activity is best utilised as an empowerment activity for youth, to help them understand their role as actors of change in history and their potential to act now for their desired change. It can be conducted at any point during your OCEA in which you want youth to take the lead.

Instructions: Read the following phrase to the group: "Nothing significant in history has ever happened without the involvement of young people." Ask the participants if they agree or disagree with that statement and why.

Ask if there are any specific examples that they can point to in which youth had a significant impact on political events. Possible examples:

- The Arab Spring
- The Otpor movement that brought down Milosevic
- Student movements in Iran
- The participation of youth in the Al-Aqsa Intifada
- Or any other examples that would be more familiar to youth in your context

Have a discussion about the role of young people in creating social or political change. One way to do this is simply to have a facilitated dialogue addressing the questions below. The goal is to follow a line of questioning that will help youth talk about the roles they and their peer networks have in changemaking. This could be done in a big group or in uni-country/regional pairs.

- What is the role of young people in your society?
- What sort of power do young people have? Has your understanding of this been influenced by our discussions together?

- What is the role of youth in conflict?
- What is the role of youth in the conflict that we've been discussing? (Only if you've been discussing a conflict)
- You may find that you need to prompt them a bit. Ask: Are youth simply passive victims? Are they soldiers? Ideologues? Peace builders?
- What do you think about that role?
- Why do you think this?
- What is the role that you wish that youth played? If young people were organised, what could they possibly achieve?
- How do you think you can use what you gained from this experience to take a more active role in your community?

Prospective outcomes: By the end of this activity youth participants will have talked about the roles they and their peer networks have to play in creating change, recognized the importance of their role, and identified possible actions to take.

Published Februari 2, 2022

The [Sharing Perspectives Foundation](#) is a not-for-profit offering contemporary online learning experiences for people to interact constructively across divides, whether national, cultural, social, or political. We use Virtual Exchange as an inclusive pedagogical approach offering people a meaningful international and cross-cultural experience. We provide training and consultations to businesses as well as educational institutions and nonprofit organisations who need support in the online engagement they offer or use as part of their work.

Winding down

Each project, program, or activity cycle must come to an end. Winding down and activation activities can be used to ensure that the OCEA is sustainable after its closure. These activities acknowledge collectively shared experiences, draw on opportunities for maintaining contact, and frame future collaboration and active engagement in the related topics or themes. In winding down activities, participants usually emphasize their learning, express their feelings for the group one last time, and say farewell.

Winding down activities are best used during the final session of an OCEA, to close it in a positive and motivational atmosphere. They help ensure a smooth closure of the OCEA that highlights the group's accomplishments.

RUCKSACK

Time frame: 20-40 minutes

Purpose: This is a low-pressure reflection activity that lets participants get a bit creative. It is a great opportunity for participants to reflect on what they have learned, what they want to keep building on in the future, and what they want to leave behind. This activity serves also as an opportunity for facilitators to evaluate the process of their OCEA, and make adaptations for future OCEAs with other groups.

Instructions: Participants will need a paper and pen. Ask them to grab these if they don't have them nearby.

Ask participants to think about what they have learned during the program, and to draw themselves waving goodbye and wearing a large rucksack containing, for example, the items, ideas and hopes that they are carrying away with them.

Ask them to consider everything that they have gained and want to keep. This may include items such as books or pictures, feelings, people, ideas, new ways of seeing the world, strength they gained from overcoming a difficulty, and values.

They can also show the things that they want to leave behind in a rubbish bin. These might be things such as bad habits, old ideas, or difficult moments.

Reassure participants that they do not have to be great artists. Stickmen, words and symbols are perfectly acceptable.

Prospective outcomes: By reflecting on and illustrating what they have gained throughout the OCEA, participants will have identified specific things that they want to incorporate into their lives once the OCEA is over. Thinking of what they want to leave behind will also have prompted them to identify ways they want to grow or change. Facilitators can encourage participants to keep these drawings with them, so that they can be reminded of what their intentions were at the close of the OCEA. This can help the OCEA have a lasting effect on its participants.

VIRTUAL GIFTS

Time Frame: 15-20 min (with preparation instructions given the week before).

Purpose: Ending the OCEA on a light note, with participants having the opportunity to both share something with the group and take with them fond reminders of their group members.

Instructions: A week before the closing session, tell participants (adapt as needed): "The OCEA has now come to a close, and we want to give you the opportunity to say goodbye (or see you later) to your peers and colleagues that have learned and contributed alongside you.

In a final activity, we'll be exchanging parting gifts. You are invited to contribute a little virtual gift as a way of saying goodbye to this group.

These 'gifts' should be online, free, and they should come from you! Examples could be: a funny youtube video, a favorite quote or a poem, a great resource, a joke, a recipe, an academic article, a song etc. Feel free to get creative."

During the final session, allow time for everyone to give and explain their gifts to the group. Usually this will come in the form of pasting links into the chat, or using the screen share option.

Prospective outcomes: Participants usually come away from this activity with a variety of links that can bring them enjoyment and remind them of their fellow participants and their time together.
