



The World in Us

CIEP Culture Partner + Coffee Chat Calls: Discussion Guide

These questions are only meant as a starting point for what we hope is an enlightening, enjoyable, and comfortable conversation. Feel free to ask as many or as few as you'd like. Above all, allow the conversation to flow naturally, ask any questions you may have, and enjoy this opportunity to meet someone from across the world from you!

We recommend starting with at least the first 4 Starter questions to get a feel for who your partner is. We also recommend discussing at least 3 of the topic questions for each week. Happy conversing!

Ice Breaker + Friendship-building Questions

Starter Questions

- What city, state/province, and country are you from?
 - Is it a diverse area with many cultures? Or perhaps is it a more homogenous region? How has that affected you growing up?
- Why did you join this Intercultural Exchange Program? Are there previous intercultural experiences that attracted you to this opportunity?
 - What were those intercultural experiences?
- What are the top 4 words you would use to describe yourself?
 - These could be character traits, cultural identity, or anything else you feel people should first think of when they think of you!
- What extracurricular activities or hobbies do you engage in? Why do you enjoy/do them?
- What do you want to do/study after high school?
- What countries/regions have you visited previously? Where would you like to go in the future, and why?



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Additional Friendship-building Questions

- Do you enjoy school? What is your school structure/schedule/stress like?
- Are you studying any languages right now? What drew you to study them?
- What is your favorite subject to study?
- What is your family like? Whom do you live with?
- Do you have any pets or want any pets?
- Is your school out for the summer? What do you like doing during breaks?
- Are there particular issues or current events you are passionate about? Why?
- Do you have a favorite book, movie, TV show, and/or musical artist? If so, why is it your favorite?
- If you could recommend any media item (book, show, song, podcast, etc.) to your partner right now, what would it be?
- Do you consider yourself more of a future-oriented, stay-in-the-present, or nostalgic kind of person? Why?

Weekly Topic (Global Issue) Questions

1: CULTURE

- How would you describe your culture to someone who knew nothing about it?
 - Consider the material objects and immaterial ideas you and those around you interact with everyday, whether that's the brands you use, the form of government you have, or the type of house and family structure you live in.
- What perceptions or misperceptions of your culture do you believe outsiders may have?
- How is your culture portrayed in media, both domestically and abroad? How accurate do you think this portrayal is?
- What elements of your culture are most important/meaningful to you? Why?
- What foods from your culture do you enjoy the most?
- Are there different cultural groups where you live? How are they treated the same or differently?
- How do you think your culture has affected how you view other cultures?



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2: IMMIGRATION

- What is immigration? Where does the word immigration come from? What is the relationship among immigration, migration, and emigration?
- What is citizenship? What does it mean to be a citizen of a particular country or region? Why might someone want to change their citizenship? What privileges come with being citizens of different countries or regions? What challenges might come with being citizens of different countries or regions?
- What are some of the things that cause people to immigrate? What have been some historical causes of waves of immigration?
- How does immigration work? What are some of the different ways that people immigrate from one country to another? What are some of the obstacles immigrants might face, and how does this vary depending on where they come from, or where they are going?
- In your country, what have been some historical entry points for immigrants? What does it look like at these places? What has made them logical entry points?
- Why do many groups of immigrants tend to cluster in particular neighborhoods or towns? What are some of the benefits that come from living this way? What are some of the disadvantages?
- To what extent does immigration intersect with politics and political decision-making in particular countries? What kinds of laws help or hurt immigrants? What is your opinion about these laws, and why?
- To what extent does immigration intersect with economics and the economic state of a particular country or region? What economic policies or systems help and hurt immigrants? What is your opinion about these issues, and why?
- How has education in your country evolved to meet the needs of immigrants? How has this looked different depending on the specific characteristics of an immigrant population?
- Describe the different waves of immigration that have occurred in your country. How have these waves of immigration been similar to and different from each other? What are the major factors that lead to these similarities and differences?
- It is sometimes said that the United States is entirely a country of immigrants. Why might this argument be made? To what extent do you agree with it, and why or why not? How has immigration shaped the history and identity of the United States?



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- What is the connection between religion, moral or value systems, and immigration? What happens when different religious, moral, or value systems intersect because of immigration?
- What places in your town or community offer up immigration narratives? Why is it important to a local history to understand the history of immigration in the community?

3: MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

- What are some events that helped mental health awareness in the history of your country?
- How do different generations in your country perceive and treat mental health awareness?
- What is social stigma, and how does it apply to mental health?
- How does society view mental and physical health differently? Do you think the two should be addressed in the same manner? Why or why not?
- Would you be cautious about sharing a mental health issue with a potential employer? Why or why not? What about a physical health issue? Do you think it's necessary to share these details?
- Some celebrities have come to the forefront and shared about their mental health. Do you think this helps break down the social stigma surrounding mental illness? Why or why not?
- Should society change its view of mental health? If so, how can you help to make this happen?

4: YOUTH POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

- What issues show a major divide in opinion between the old and young of your culture?
- Do youth in your country ever participate in politics? What issues are they most engaged and/or informed on?
- What is the youngest member of your national legislature/parliament?
- What are some major youth-dominated political groups or movements in your country?
- How do you think the youth could be more involved in politics?
- Do youth have different rates of civic participation (i.e., voting) or means of engaging in politics (e.g, via social media) compared to older generations? If so, why do you think that is?



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- What historical events or developments have shaped your generation's political views? What events/developments shape the views of other generations in your country?

5: ENVIRONMENT

- How is the environment reflected or represented in your culture?
 - Consider food, art, natural resources, architecture, spirituality, etc.
- Are climate change and other environmental topics (clean water, food security, clean energy, etc.) prominent issues in your community?
 - What type of pollution plagues your community the most?
- What are your opinions of climate change? How does the government or other people in your community feel about climate change?
- How much of a political priority is addressing climate change in your country?
- What actions do you and others in your community take to promote environmentalism?
- What are common barriers that prevent you and others from talking about sustainability or taking action for the environment?
- Are there certain topics regarding environmentalism that are taboo to talk about in social circles?
- How can we start normalizing and encouraging more conversation about sustainability and environmentalism?
- How can we mediate conversations between groups with differing views regarding sustainability?