



Dreams

One characteristic that we, as human beings, all share is the ability to dream and imagine a better future. This activity strengthens feeling of equality within the group through the sharing of dreams and visions.

Issues addressed

- Equality beyond cultural or ethnic origin
- Solidarity and empathy between members of the group

Aims

- To stress equality within the group
- To generate solidarity and empathy and to create a positive atmosphere in the group
- To encourage co-operation
- To get to know each other

Time: One hour

Group size: Any size between 6 and 40

Preparation

- Flip chart and markers - one set per working group

Instructions

1. How you organise this activity will depend on the size of your group. If it is a medium-size group (10 people) do it as a whole group brainstorm. If the group is large, divide people up into small groups of 5-6.
2. Tell them to spend the first five minutes reflecting on their own, how they would like things to be the future - in terms of family, job, hobbies, housing, personal development, civil rights, etc.
3. Then ask people to share their dreams and aspirations saying what they are and giving reasons. They should write down, or preferably draw, any common features on a flip chart e.g. having a job, travelling, having children, their own house, etc.
4. Ask each group to present their drawings or conclusions to the plenary.
5. Continue by asking people individually or in the groups to identify 3 concrete things that prevent them from pursuing their aspirations and 3 concrete things that, they as a group (or an organisation) can do together to get a bit nearer to seeing their dreams come true.

Debriefing and evaluation

Start by asking people to share the feelings they experienced while doing this activity and then to say what they enjoyed about the exercise.

Follow with other questions:

- Was there anything that surprised you?

- Do you think that everybody should have the right to pursue his/her own aspirations?
- Do you feel that some people may have more chances than others? Who and why and is it fair?
- How can you support each other in practical ways to overcome the barriers and make your dreams come true?

Tips for the facilitator

This activity can be a good stimulus to the group and to individuals providing they manage to be specific about their dreams and to identify practical things which they can do together. It is important to stress this collective approach in order to overcome individual shortcomings e.g. "I do not know how to do this or that".... 'I don't have the tools..'

The activity works better if the visions are put together in a creative way. If the group has difficulties in drawing, you can make use of collage techniques with old colour magazines, scissors and glue. Alternatively, you can invite people to present their vision as a short drama (sketch). Any method which facilitates creative and spontaneous expression is preferable to using only written or verbal communication.

It is easier to make the links with racism, xenophobia and anti-semitism if the group is multi-cultural. Otherwise, the question "Do you think everybody has the right to pursue their dreams" should help lead the discussion and reflection in this direction.

Suggestions for follow up

Try the activity 'Balloons' (page 65) to provide a good immediate follow up to generate positive feelings in the group.

Work on the concrete ideas for practical action that people thought of during the activity or plan another session to think again of what practical steps they can take.