



EXPLORING YOUR IDENTITY

Purpose: to explore our personal and cultural identity (what shaped our identity? by whom and how our identity was shaped? how our identity influences the decisions we take in our life and work?). This exercise also helps participants to both explore and understand better themselves and the beliefs participants have about themselves, their surrounding environment, work, life, society.

Duration: 1.5 - 2 hours long

Group size: 15-20 participants

Age: 18+

Materials needed: A4 paper, pens, soft background music

Process:

Step 1, - 5 min

Framing the session by introducing the purpose of the workshop and giving examples from your life (5 min)

Note: It is recommended that you do this exercise for yourself first before offering it to others. This will give you a better feeling and understanding about the exercise and will enable you to facilitate a deeper and more impactful journey for others.

Step 2, - 30 min

Once you have framed the session, ask participants to draw a personal "flower" with your name in the centre and as many petals as elements/criteria you need to define your identity. Let participants know that if they don't feel like drawing a flower, they can choose their own image that they feel defines them better (ex. hot air balloon, geometrical figure, river, tree, etc.). Participants are invited to draw a symbol that represents them.

Explain to participants that they need to write in each petal a word or a sentence, which represent a part of their identity. For example, I am a social entrepreneur; healer; daughter; son; citizenship; education; interests or hobbies, religion, language, spirituality, etc. Participants can draw as many petals as they want and need to explore the different parts of their identity.

Give participants 30 min to work individually and tell them that afterwards they will have time to share with others.



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Step 3, - 10 min

After participants have drawn their flower or whatever image they chose, now it is time to reflect a little more. Below are some questions that you can use to guide your participants further and go a little deeper into their inner exploration and help participants understand themselves and their identity better. Introduce the questions to participants. It would be good, if you showed them on a screen, so that they can always come back to the questions and don't need to keep on asking you. At this point, participants are still working on their own, but you can go around the room and check if they need your support.

- Who shaped your identity?
- Was it shaped by you or by your family, friends, school, society you grew up in?
- Are there any parts of your identity that you no longer need or desire to carry with you through life?
- Would your flower be the same in ten years?
- Would your flower be the same in a different context?
- What factors influence how you define your flower?
- Can you think about any beliefs that are directly linked to a certain part of your identity?

Step 4, - 20 min

Once participants have spent a good amount of time reflecting on their own, it is time to give them a chance to share with peers about their identity and beliefs related to the different parts of identity. Invite participants to peer up and tell them that they will have 20 min to share with another person what they have found out about themselves. Remind them that they can share as much or as little as they want, whatever feels comfortable for them.

Step 5, - 30

Debriefing in the whole group. Invite participants to join a circle and facilitate a group reflection process. Below are some questions, you can use as guidance for the debriefing of the activity and group discussion.

- Was there something very difficult about this activity?
- Did you realize during this exercise that you didn't think about certain groups? What might be the reason for this?
- What links identity, values and behaviour?
- Is it a natural process to belong to a group? Do we always "look for it"? Why?
- What makes the group identity and the sense of belonging? Which elements help in creating that identity? How this sense is an influence for perceiving the other people, the other groups?

Step 6, - 5 min

Check-out. Invite each participant to share 1 word, which defines what they are taking away with them and how they are leaving the session. **Note:** this exercise was adopted from Anna Lindh Intercultural Citizenship Education Handbook



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