

Activity 6.1 Values of Cooperation

Goals: Participants identify challenges and opportunities of cooperation and collective action in their everyday life setting; participants identify values of cooperation and collective action in an alternative cultural setting

Methods: Group work, game, storytelling, plenary sharing

Materials: Comfortable space

Estimated Time: 3 h

Level: 2

Description: The activity is divided into two parts.

The first part includes group work and sharing ideas with regards to the challenges and opportunities for cooperation. Participants are divided into groups of 4-5 and discuss about everyday life experiences trying to identify key points that help people either cooperate or hinder their cooperation. Each group shared the discussed points to the rest of the participants. (45 mins)

The second part involves a social experience in a form of a small game. It is suggested to use an open space, such as a park or a big hall to implement the game. The facilitator has already prepared a bag full of goodies placed on the one side of the space. The facilitator asks participants to stand in line at the opposite side of the space with their face looking at the goody bag. With his or her mark, participants should run and pick up the goody bag. The first person that picks it, wins the bag. In the meantime, the facilitator pays attention to the attitudes of and discussions between the participants for the debriefing.

After this small game, the facilitator calls everyone to sit on a circle to share their initial thoughts, observations and feelings. Then, the facilitator reads the following story to the group: *“Once upon a time, there was an anthropologist who had been studying the habits and culture of a remote African tribe. One day, he put together a gift basket filled with delicious fruits and wrapped it in a ribbon. He placed the basket under a tree and then he gathered up the children in the village. The man did a similar social experiment as we did during the workshop. When he told them to run, they all took each other’s hands and ran together to the tree. Then they sat together around the basket and enjoyed their treat as a group. Back then, the anthropologist was wondering why they would all go together when one of them could have won all the fruits. Then, a little girl explained to him that no one could be happy if the other one was not. It was basically in their ethics of their community to feel responsible for one another. “*

Questions to the participants: What are your first reactions to this story? What do you feel? What do you think about this tribe? Have you heard this story before? Can you make a comparison to your own life experiences of similar events or perceptions?

The story in relation the participants’ attitudes during the game, is expected to open an interesting discussion about the modern society, the values promoted by the current system and our personal attitudes. Allow at least 1 hour and 30 minutes for debriefing.

Notes for the facilitator

Years later, the well known former President of South Africa and activist Desmond Tutu would describe the little girl's thought process by using the word ubuntu, which means "I am because we are." Here's how Tutu explained the concept: *"Africans have a thing called ubuntu. We believe that a person is a person through other persons. That my humanity is caught up, bound up, inextricably, with yours. When I dehumanize you, I dehumanize myself. The solitary human being is a contradiction in terms. Therefore you seek to work for the common good because your humanity comes into its own in community, in belonging."* Source of the article: <https://jamesclear.com/how-can-i-be-happy-if-you-are-sad>

According to the Ubuntu philosophy, to be human you must practice giving, receiving, and passing on the goods of life to others. These others are our ancestors from whom we receive life as we know it; our neighbors and people of our community with whom we share life; and the future generations to whom we may pass life to which makes us also question our environmental responsibility.

This is an ethical position that to be a human being is to care for oneself and others. A human is being and becoming in relation to and independence with others, a critical aspect for sustainability.