

## Week 2 Report

### What Other Groups Did & Group Dynamics

This week, groups continued to deepen the process of getting to know each other, and most groups continue to report good or excellent dynamics, though a handful have reported average dynamics due to attendance issues in the group. To continue the process of building students' comfort and familiarity with each other, most groups started with an icebreaker, such as Two Truths and a Lie in which students had to share 3 statements about themselves and allow the group to figure out which one is a lie. This process was deepened during the Identity and Culture Activity, which allowed students to explore their individual identities, and engage with issues of identity development in the context of intercultural dialogue. In many groups, this provoked interesting discussions and sharing of personal stories, around themes such as self-identification, religion, nationality and what these terms mean to different people.

Groups then used these activities to segue into the discussion on global and social challenges, where they discussed the readings and explored the issues they found most pressing in the world today. Some of the topics students identified as important included gender roles and inequality, the refugee crisis, the environment and global warming, interstate conflict and cultural stereotypes. In many groups, students also went into free-flowing discussions on these topics, and demonstrated cross-cultural communication and collaboration skills as they worked together to build their groups' agendas for the semester. As students are generally not comfortable engaging each other actively in dialogue in the first couple weeks of the Program, this was great to see in the second week!

### Attendance & Technology Update

This week, 32% of students were absent from their sessions, which is a slight increase from last week. Given how important student attendance is to the quality of dialogue in sessions, we do not want the rate of absences to increase and would love your help in managing this issue. If any of your students were absent this week, we'd like to ask you to encourage them to ensure they are attending all their remaining sessions because that their absence has a direct effect on their experience and their groupmates' experiences.

We are happy to report that our students experienced far fewer technical issues during their sessions this week than last week, and that our tech team was able to resolve the majority of microphone and connection issues that occurred in-session. Our tech team is following up with specific students and university technical coordinators to resolve any outstanding issues.

### Next Week

Next week, groups are likely to take different directions based on students' interest. Every group has spent some time this past week identifying students' areas of interest, and will likely focus discussions on one or two topics in sessions this week.

As students become more comfortable with one another, facilitators are also focusing on encouraging students to take greater ownership of the dialogue process, and pushing them towards thinking more critically about the topics they discuss.