

Week 6 Report

What Other Groups Did & Group Dynamics

Facilitators reported good dynamics in most groups this week, with many adding that their students are not only taking the initiative to share their thoughts but also demonstrating the skills they've acquired over the semester. The majority of facilitators mainly reported that students are being honest, are willing to raise controversial issues and are challenging each other in respectful, constructive ways. Facilitators also noted that students are learning to work through the tensions without prompting from their facilitators and have begun using a forward-thinking approach, as they approach the end of the semester.

Most groups began by doing the Change activity, in which students explore the concept of change and their relationship with this concept. Students looked into how they view change, the underlying social/cultural norms, assumptions and values, and how they interact with change. Most groups showed some really developed cross-cultural communication skills, and students showed an awareness of other perspectives and voiced perspectives that were not their own. They've therefore formed a solid relationship of respect and understanding of each other's differences and appreciation of each other's honest perspectives. Other groups did the Youth Empowerment activities where they discussed what can be done to address the global and social challenges they have explored over the semester at both the local, community level and the global scale, and then grappling with the question, "what can we – as young people – do to promote this change." Discussions then branched out in many directions, based on each group's interests, and groups had free-flowing conversations on a broad range of topics, including Gender and Conflict, Stereotypes and Cultural Misunderstandings, Values and Social Norms, individual roles in affecting change, youth empowerment and influences that shaped their understanding of other cultures. Many groups also moved to more personal discussions around topics such as students' religious beliefs, their experiences with gender roles in their society, and how stereotypes are impacting their everyday lives.

Attendance & Technology Update

We continue to address the technical challenges that arise during sessions, and we would like to report that there are few unresolved technical difficulties disrupting the sessions that we are currently working on resolving with your respective technical coordinators. That said, we have also seen continued improvement in attendance levels, with 10% less students absent compared to the previous week. Thank you for your efforts in ensuring your students attend their sessions! **Since next week (week 7) is the final session and in many ways the most important and memorable one, we would be greatly appreciative of you could encourage your students to attend the full, 2-hour session.**

Next Week

Students will be using the final week of sessions to discuss any topics they have not had a chance to raise over these past seven weeks. Facilitators have asked students to reflect independently on the pressing issues and questions they would like to explore with their group-mates before the program ends, and we expect that this will bring a colorful and varied range of discussions in the group meetings. In addition to that, facilitators are working to pull together what the students have learned through their online dialogue process. Most groups will thereby take some time to reflect on the discussions and what they have learned throughout the past six weeks.