

Connect Global US-MENA: Week Three Report

Main Activities and Group Dynamics:

On the third week of the program, students started their sessions with icebreakers. Then, they engaged in activities that allowed them to develop good questions and understand their role in the dialogue process. After the activities, most groups practiced asking good questions while they led discussions about topics of their choice. Some chose to share thoughts about stereotypes and cultural misunderstanding. Others discussed values and social norms.

Outside of the sessions, participants used the questions they prepared with their peers during the second week of the program to bring their communities' voices into the group discussions. Last Thursday, participants submitted the first set of interviews they will use for the final projects.

This week, most facilitators reported that the group dynamics were good or excellent. Some facilitators shared how they took a step back as participants gained ownership over the dialogue. During the discussions, some facilitators reported that participants reacted to their peers' personal stories with respect and discovered how they shared similar values with other students from different cultural backgrounds.

Attendance and Technology:

Although most students attended their sessions this week, we will still need your support in reminding your students about the importance of attendance. Each session has an important impact on their virtual exchange experience.

On the technical front, no major issues were reported this week. We still highly encourage your students to reach out to student-tech@soliya.net if they face any potential issues.

Next week:

During their fourth session, students will discuss the second set of required readings about intercultural communication. Students will share thoughts about the challenges that affect the process of communicating across cultures. Then, they will share thoughts on their peers' final project videos. During the session, students will split into smaller groups to help each other prepare the questions they will use in the second set of interviews. While they work on their final projects and required readings, facilitators will keep encouraging students to reflect on what they have been learning throughout the program.