

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. While confinement and social distancing periods are being extended in most countries, facilitators found ways to engage their groups constructively around how they are coping with the current events. Some participants chose to talk about social connections and well-being while others shared thoughts about how the pandemic is affecting employment and global education.

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 videos 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, participants reacted to their peers' personal stories with respect and discovered similarities in the way they are dealing with the current global challenges.

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.