

Connect Global US-MENA: Week Five Report

Main Activities and Group Dynamics:

On the fifth week of the program, students started their sessions with warm-up activities. Then, they engaged around the Sharing Circles activity. This was an opportunity for students to open up and share personal stories and experiences in a deep and powerful way. During the activity, facilitators reminded groups that the discussions are a safe space in which they can share their stories with honesty. Participants were also encouraged to practice their listening skills and ask good questions that will allow them to learn more from their peers. After the activities, most groups practiced asking good questions while they led discussions about topics of their choice. Some continued sharing about how social distancing is affecting their lives while others lead conversations about global and social issues.

Outside of the sessions, participants submitted the second set of final project interviews. Before submitting the videos, participants collaborated in smaller groups to agree on the questions they used in the videos.

Last week, most facilitators reported that the group dynamics were excellent. Some facilitators shared how they took a step back as participants gained ownership over the dialogue. In most groups, facilitators reported how they took a step back as participants took ownership over the dialogue process and the choice of topics.

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 last week. Some students faced internet issues and our team provided assistance to participants who reached out before and during sessions.

This week:

The week, students will delve into free-flowing conversations that will allow them to engage with difference more constructively. Some students will continue conversations about current events and media while others will explore environmental issues and stereotypes on a deeper level. In addition to the conversations, participants will take time to share thoughts about their final projects and reflect on each other's videos.