

Connect Global US-MENA: Week 6 Report

Main Activities and Group Dynamics

This week, some groups started their sessions with a critical thinking and self-awareness activity during which they reflected on how they perceived and reacted to conflicts of opinions. Others practiced listening through the “What in the World” activity where they realized how active listening can affect their way of addressing differences. Then, groups engaged in thought-provoking discussions about topics of their choice. Among the discussed topics are inequality, gender issues, social issues and how Covid-19 is affecting current global events.

After the discussions, participants took time to thoroughly reflect on the opinions they gathered in their interviews. Most students shared details on how they brought the voices of their respective communities into the dialogue and how their community members’ opinions differ from other their peers’ collected opinions. As they split into smaller groups to discuss the community interviews, facilitators highly encouraged participants to share constructive feedback with their peers. Now that participants are more familiar with the dialogue process, they are encouraged to share their opinions openly and to be more open to differences.

Most facilitators rated the groups as “good” or “excellent”. Facilitators are noticing a positive development in students’ communication and critical thinking skills. With the exception of some students who faced technical issues that affected their participation, most participants felt more comfortable sharing their opinions openly while maintaining a balance between honesty and respect.

Attendance and Technology

This week, we noticed that a large number of students missed their sessions. We appreciate your efforts in encouraging your students to attend the remaining sessions and successfully complete the Program.

Except for a few students who missed their sessions due to Internet speed, no major issues were reported by the facilitators on the technical front. Students are welcome to contact our technical support team before and during the session if they face any issues.

Next week

Next week, participants will also lead a free-flowing conversation about a topic of their choice. Students are encouraged to engage in constructive conversations about global and social challenges, how they are affecting their lives and their perception of the world. At this stage of the Program, participants are expected to keep full ownership of their discussions by driving the conversation themselves, asking one another questions, listening carefully to responses then, reflecting on how differences might affect their views.