

Connect Global: Week One Report

Main activities and group dynamics:

This week, participants attended their first sessions of the Connect Program. Before the first sessions begin, students were encouraged to introduce themselves on their group streams, share their perception of dialogue and reflect on the topics they would like to discuss with their group members throughout the Program. This week, participants opened their first sessions with activities during which they introduced themselves and their respective countries to their peers. Then, facilitators took time to share information about the Program and the role of participants in the dialogue process.

After the introductions, participants started discussions about their required readings. Some participants discussed the current world risks and their impact on their respective societies while others shared thoughts about the global issues that millennials identified. Based on the readings, participants expressed their opinions on some of the social and global issues listed in the readings and delved into conversations about climate change, unemployment, education and poverty.

Most facilitators rated their group dynamics “good” or “excellent” while a few others had a slightly slower start. Many facilitators reported how their group participants quickly gained confidence and reached a significant level of comfort. This will encourage shy and quiet participants to share more in the upcoming sessions. Throughout the Program, facilitators will support participants in developing a better understanding of their role in the dialogue process. As participants grow more comfortable around each other, they will take a more active role and engage with difference more constructively.

Attendance and technical updates

This week, around 80% of participants attended their sessions successfully. Thank you so much for encouraging your students to join their first sessions. On the technical front, no major issues were reported and our team was able to support students who reached out for help on connecting to their online sessions. To make sure participants join their dialogue sessions on time, please remind your students to log into their accounts on the Exchange Portal at their group meeting time and click on their Group Meeting Room under 'Meeting Rooms' to access their Zoom Room. If they have any questions or need additional support, please ask them to reach out to student-tech@soliya.net for technical support, and to students@soliya.net for all other issues.

Next week:

During the second session, groups will continue engaging in discussions about global and social issues and will continue to build comfort and reinforce their confidence through active listening and follow up questions. Then, participants will start working on their final projects by picking a program-related topic with their groupmates and discussing it further with the community members they will identify by the end of the week.