

ENERGISERS

Theme	Duration	No. of participants	Short Description	Preparation	Materials
Diversity, conflict, etc.	5–20 min	10–45	Different, see each.	None	None

ACTIVITY AIM:

Activity Type: Energiser, movement, social activity

- To raise energy levels in the room between presentations
- To emphasise a learning point by experiencing it and then to incorporate the experience
- To raise group spirits and create a good learning environment

EXAMPLES OF ENERGISERS:

1: FORM A LINE (10–15 MIN)

Ask all participants to stand up and form a line in the room, front to back, with the shortest person in front, and the tallest at the back. It has to be done quickly, so the participants need to move fast! The facilitator hurries on the group and afterwards goes through the line and asks participants their height.

Ask participants to form a new line with the one born earliest in the year in front and the one born latest in the year at the back. The participants are not allowed to talk, but can only use sign language! The facilitator hurries on the group and afterwards goes through the line and asks participants the date of their birth.

Closing comments: When working with human rights we need to be observant of each other and our differences, even though we might not speak the same language. Specify in accordance with your target group.

2: ALL THOSE WHO... (15–20 MIN)

Form a circle of chairs but with one chair placed in the middle. The number of chairs should match the number of participants. The facilitator starts by sitting on the chair in the middle. Your task is to move to a vacant seat among the chairs in the circle occupied by the participants. To do so you share a personal feature about yourself; such as “I’m a mother/father” (or grandmother, teacher, speak Spanish, or other personal skill, accomplishment, etc.). All the participants who also fit this description now have to stand up and change seats and in the confusion of swapping seats the person in the middle should try to move to a chair in the circle. That means another person has to sit in the middle and share a new feature, etc.

Closing comments: The point of the exercise is to get to know each other better. Ask participants how they felt about the exercise. Tell them that although we are all different, we share many common features. We all belong to many different groups.

3. FIST FIGHT (8–10 MIN)

Ask participants to stand up and get into pairs facing each other. Ask one person in each pair to close his/her hand tight in a fist. Ask the other person to try to open the fist using any means they can think of. After a while ask them to change roles.

Closing comments: Ask the whole group whether anyone succeeded in opening the other persons' hand. If they did, ask them to explain how. Tell them that most of them probably have tried to use force to open the hand of the other person. This is something we sometimes do without even thinking. But did anyone try just to ask: 'Would you be so kind as to open your hand?' Many conflicts could be avoided if we simply thought about the measures we use, and how we choose to use them. Contact with each other, and with human rights should be as gentle as possible.

4. GYMNASTICS (5–10 MIN)

Ask participants to stand up and guide them through a short gym and stretching class: reach for the sky and remember all those wonderful new ideas you got today. Touch your toes and think about how you have used your experiences and knowledge today. Stretch to the left and remember what you have learned from that person today, stretch to the right – yes that person also taught you something. Roll your shoulders forwards, roll your shoulders backwards. Roll your head to the left, roll your head to the right. If culturally acceptable ask participants to give each other a shoulder massage in pairs, or in a line or a circle. You can end the session by asking all participants to stand in a circle, reach out their right hand, pat their neighbour's shoulder and say: 'well done! Thank you for nice session!'

5. DANCE YOUR TRADITIONAL DANCE (15–20 MIN)

If you have a group of people with many different ethnic origins you can ask them to show the rest of the group how they dance where they come from. They can also choose one person from another country and teach them a traditional dance, and then later present this. Alternatively, everyone could be taught the dance.

Closing comments: Observing each others different dance traditions reminds us of the cultural diversity of the group at the same time as it teaches us something about the participant dancing, and his or her cultural background.

6. SING YOUR NATIONAL ANTHEM (5 MIN)

You could also ask all the participants to stand up and sing the first verse of their national anthem – at the same time! If the participants are from the same country you can ask them to sing their favourite song at the same time. It might sound horrible but it has a very energising effect

Closing comments: Even though we come from many different countries we aren't that different from one another. Our music and languages might be quite different but there are many similar tones and structures.

7. UNTANGLE US! (15 MIN)

Ask someone from the group to leave the room. Ask the rest of the group to stand in a circle hand in hand. Then ask them to tangle themselves up by walking over and under each other's arms without letting go of each other's hands and making 'knots' in the circle. Ask the person who left the room to come back and try to untangle the group. Often it is very difficult but after a while you can ask the group to help the person.

Closing comments: We experience many challenges but if we help each other we can untangle most of them.

8. WE STAND TOGETHER (10 MIN)

Ask the participants to get together in pairs. Tell them to sit down on the floor back to back, hook their arms together, and then stand up leaning against each other. Some will not be able to do this.

Closing comments: Ask them what the activity meant to them, what does it symbolise? We can support each other, lean on each other, etc.

9. DEMOCRATIC WEB

Cut 5–6 pieces of twine into 4–5 metre sections and place them in a spider web shape on the floor, with all strands crossing each other in the middle. The facilitator then takes a short piece of string and ties the other strands together in the middle. He/she then ties a pen to the middle facing downwards and places a bottle underneath. The participants are asked to form a circle and each hold on to one end of a string. Select a person to guide the rest to work together to get the pen into the bottle. Repeat the exercise with different guides, with the participants holding the string between their teeth, and in their hand with their eyes closed.

Closing comments: Ask participants to reflect on the exercise. Ask them how it relates to issues as leadership, democracy, etc.

Source: Devised by Garba Diallo at Krogerup Højskole at DIHR conflict management courses.

