



Power, Peace, Poetry Women's Perspectives on Society's Divisions

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This session was facilitated in adult education

Activity title	Stella's story
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to develop self-awareness about one's own reactions and behavior in dealing with different points of view and values • to discover and explore one's value system • to develop critical thinking
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one copy of the story for each participant (on the bottom of this paper) • one piece of draft paper per each participant • 2-3 pieces of draft paper per table (tables of 4-5 people) • pens and markers • one big paper / poster as a result paper
Time	1 hours and a half - 2 hours
Group size	Around 20 participants
Instructions for trainers	<p>Create a calm and listening spot. Explain that there will be 3 steps: individual, small group and plenary. All the activity is based on one story, titled Stella's Story.</p> <p>The first step begins: invite the participants to read the story and silently rank the characters according to their behavior: who acted the worst, the second worst, etc. (5-10 minutes)</p> <p>Second step: ask the participants to take a place around one of the tables, to be divided in groups of 4-5 people. The aim of this second step is to talk and agree on a shared ranking. Mathematical methods are allowed: the point is to share and get to a common understanding and consensus. (20-30 minutes)</p> <p>During this second step, observe the groups and try to be aware of the sensibilities of each one. After some time ask how they are doing. If ever the situation demands it: invite them to at least find consensus on one or two characters, instead of all the group.</p> <p>When the group has finished or the time has passed, collect the rankings and write them on the result sheet.</p> <p>Third step is debriefing: back in plenary on a circle.</p>
Debriefing and evaluation	<p>Third step is debriefing: back in plenary on a circle. Show to everybody the result sheet. Often, participants will be surprised by the big differences in the results. Explain that on this third step you are not going to find a common plenary ranking, but that you will share how it went. The idea is then, not for each group to explain why they ranked this and the other character in that way, but to share how the process has gone.</p> <p>First, invite each participant to share in one word how the process in small group was.</p> <p>Ask then, about the individual ranking. Was it easy? What has been easier and what has been more difficult?</p>

Once in groups, were your rankings quite similar or very different? Was it surprising? How did you react to discovering the points of view of the other?
Could you finally have a common agreement as a group?
Did you change your mind during the discussion? Did your own individual ranking change?
Which factors influenced our rankings?

If it doesn't come out of the debriefing, you can suggest that values are profoundly enrooted in each of us and that is ok also to agree to disagree. The aim is not to have a common list or to get to common values (it may be just impossible!), but to discover his/her own.

Tips for trainers

This activity can be shocking. It pushes participants to get out of their comfort zone, but it can even hurt them. Do it only in a group in which there is benevolence, goodwill and attention to each individual and be extremely aware of everybody's reaction.

Small groups are usually a safer zone than plenary. This is why in this version of this activity; we do not propose to find a common list on the third step. This is also the reason why we suggest to avoid bringing the debate to the plenary: it can be safer to keep the sharing in plenary on debriefing the process.

This activity can be useful also to underline how values may be shaped by individual background and factors that are not necessarily linked to each own nationality or religion for example: profoundly different ranking can result from groups of life-long friends; on the other side, people can discover his/her ranking was much like the one of a person he/she would not imagine.

This activity is described in several toolkits, called "Abigale's Story" or "The Alligator River Story". Our version is an adaptation of "The river story" from the publication by Tudorache Andreea-Loredana, *Differences, Challenges, Assumptions. Manual for facilitators in Diversity and Sensitivity Learning*, 2018, A.R.T. Fusion Association

Stella's story

Stella loves David who lives on the other side of the river. A flood has destroyed all bridges across the river and has left only one boat afloat. Stella asks Tommy, the owner of the boat, to take her to the other side. Tommy agrees but insists that Stella has to sleep with him in return. Stella does not know what to do and runs to her mother and asks her what she should do. Her mother tells Stella that she does not want to interfere with Stella's own business. In her desperation Stella sleeps with Tommy who, afterwards, brings her across the river. Stella runs to David to happily embrace him and tell him everything that has happened. David pushes her away bluntly and Stella runs away. Not far from David's house, Stella meets William, David's best friend. She tells everything that has happened to him as well. William hits David for what he has done to Stella and walks away with her.