



Form Facilitate

# WORKSHOP

for the SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

## A few icebreakers to start with

Breaking the ice isn't just about creating a friendly climate. Breaking the ice from a perspective of social transformation can be...

- Above all, get out of the presentations by what you do in life or what status you occupy:
  - In our collective spaces, we try to define ourselves differently and not to enter into the usual hierarchizations in order to give legitimacy to each of the words.
  - On the contrary, sometimes we can dare to question existing power relations in order to visualize them later on.
- Discovering and telling each other :
  - Allows certain participants to find themselves in the group by taking a door that is not theoretical but lived experience. By snowball effect, we try to encourage the interaction of everyone in the group, to make it possible to express oneself from the outset.
  - It can also lead us to start connecting our experiences to a theme: bridging our personal stories with the theme of the moment.
- To situate oneself in relation to society or in relation to a theme :
  - Before embarking on major debates, it is often very useful to situate what each person has to say in order to better understand the positions resulting from them. For example: if the theme of the meeting is the creation of collectives, we can assume that if we learn during the icebreaker that such and such has a room while such and such a no, their opinions will certainly be different.
  - On the other hand, it can allow us to come together around common concerns: *"Well, we both come from rural areas that we would like to come back to: maybe we have common things to share"*.

### The gesture and the first name

#### **A Game of inter-knowledge to know first names**

**Duration: quick // Number of participants: small to medium group**

In a circle, a first person throws himself and associates his first name with a gesture. His neighbour must then repeat the first name that has just been pronounced + the associated gesture, then give his own name in turn and associate it with a new gesture.



The next person will have to repeat the first name pronounced + the associated gesture + the second name pronounced and the gesture and then in turn his or her own with another new gesture. And so on until the last person who has to repeat the whole demonstration!

### Cross presentation

#### **A Time of inter-knowledge in pairs to start quietly.**

**Duration: variable**

Around a question (or several), invite the participants to tell each other in pairs.

Listing of possible questions :

- What's the history of your / your last name?
- Describe where you live in three words
- How did you end up here?
- What makes you want to come to training?
- In the past month, what has revolted you?
- In the last week, what have you learned?

Either there is restitution in a large group and the person introduces his/her neighbour(s), or two pairs get together and talk again.

### What binds us

**Duration: 10/20 minutes // Number of participants : - of 20 // Material: string**

A Group with participants who already know each other

Une Technique de visualisation des liens entre les participants

In a circle, each person gives his or her first name and throws the ball to the person of his or her choice while keeping the end of the string. He then explains the link that unites him to the person he has chosen (e.g. belonging to the same collective, similar place of residence, core business, etc.). The participant with the ball in his hands starts again, until all the participants are linked together with the string.

## Look for someone in the group who ...

*Duration: variable according to the sentences on the fly // Number of players: limit, possible with a large group*

**For an animated version :** people are invited to wander through space, the facilitator launches on the fly : « *Look for someone in the group who...*»

- Sometimes you can start with repairable features (... has red shoes!)  
land on the theme of training (... has already animated an icebreaker!)  
to reveal inequalities (... is proprietary!).



### **For a longer version and more in dialogue :**

Beforehand, the facilitator creates a grid with information that seems interesting to investigate.

He then invites participants to move around the room and question the other participants on this basis. When a participant gives a positive answer, he or she writes his or her name in the corresponding box and asks another person for the next question.

Speaks more than three languages	Ever stood up for anyone	Participates in local politics	Takes over an hour to get here
Thinks he's happier than his parents	Is part of a collective	Doesn't like to talk in public	Has a mandate
...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...

### **For a really dynamic version :**

The participants are placed in a circle, all seated on a chair. There should not be more chairs available than there are people sitting (excess chairs are put aside).

One volunteer is placed standing in the centre. This person makes a statement that qualifies him or her and other members of the group :

She can say « *I'm putting out a storm warning for all those who [...] for example : don't want to give up* » ou alors « *I have just received a call for those who [...] are discriminated against because of their gender.* ».

People who feel concerned get up to go and sit on another chair.

If a person gets up, they can't sit down in their place. The goal of the person making the statement is to find a chair to sit on. There will therefore necessarily be one person in the middle, without a chair, who in turn throws a statement.

## Positioning in space

**Duration: minimum 10 minutes // Number of participants: from 5 to 20**

Technique for visualizing the participants' positions (in relation to a subject, a personal experience, etc....) in space

The trainer first defines a scale for positioning in space (negative or positive poles, graduated scale of duration or time...) between two walls or across a room.

The host asks questions on the fly:

- How long did it take you to get here?
- How long have you been working at your facility?



Faced with these questions, the participants "answer" by placing themselves on the spatial scale. As the questions go by, they cross each other on this scale.

One can also position oneself on an **imaginary map** (of the country, of the region, of the neighbourhood, of the world) defined in the space of the room (with the question "where did I grow up", "where do I work", "where do I spend the most time"...).

**Objectives :**

Getting to know each other better, connecting with each other, finding group landmarks [...] : they vary according to the techniques proposed and their adaptation.

**Practical use :**

These group facilitation techniques are not exclusive to the training, they can also be used at the beginning of a meeting day, before a meeting or other !

**Inspired by:**

- [L'engrenage : pourquoi se présenter autrement ?](#)
- [Energisiers : annexe du livre « du je au nous », association Flora, Bxl > pour citer le livre : page 2](#)

**URL of the article :** <http://atelier.fdh.org/en/take-action/our-tools/facilitate/article/a-few-icebreakers-to-start-with>

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