

Bridge the Gap

Aim

to examine barriers to participation

Age

12 years and older

Time

30 minutes

Materials

old newspapers, chairs, string/wool, other available materials as appropriate, large space, chalk or masking tape

What to do

Before the activity, mark out three consecutive areas on the floor or ground – A, B and C. Split into three groups A, B and C and each group stands in one of the areas. Explain that the groups have to work together to complete a task using the materials provided. They have 15 minutes for this.

Tell group A that they have to design a bridge. They can only communicate with group B. Group B is not allowed to talk or draw, but has to pass the design on to group C whose task is to build the bridge. Make sure that group C don't hear group A.

After 15 minutes, bring the group together. What happened? Ask what group A thinks of the completed bridge. How does group C feel? Ignore group B completely at this stage.

Now explain the game is over. Get people to mix and ask how the participants felt about their level of participation in the activity? Which group participated most in the activity and which group least? What supported or hindered participation in building the bridge? Ask if participants were ever supported to participate or were prevented from participating in real life. How did it make them feel?

Adapted From Susan Coughlan (1995). Far Out! NYCI

Starter Games from Around the World

Drop-Peter-Drop (Ghana)

Everyone stands in a circle chanting 'Drop-Peter-Drop'. One player runs around the outside of the group with a small stone and has to try to drop it down another player's back without them realising. If the other person senses that a stone is about to be dropped, they run as fast as they can around the circle. If the player with the stone catches them before they get back, they become 'Peter' and the game begins again. Instead of a stone you could use a cap which has to be put on someone's head.

Source: Catherine McNamara and Francis Provencal (2001). Nii Kwei's Day: From Dawn to Dusk in a Ghanaian City.

