



# Change chairs! 20 min

UNDERSTANDING FORB IN CONTEXT

GAME

PLENARY EXERCISE

## About the exercise

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Best suited to grassroots-level groups/faith communities, civil society organisations and human rights defenders.

### PURPOSE

To enable participants to explore their attitudes towards conflict.

### DESCRIPTION

A fun, physical and thought-provoking game in which participants swap chairs if they agree with a statement read out. A good opening exercise for a session on conflict analysis as the statements given relate to understandings of conflict.



## Instructions

### RESOURCES AND ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Envelope containing short paper notes with statements written on them (see below).
- Review the key points for the plenary discussion (see below) and think of illustrative examples from the participants' context.
- Ensure there is enough space in the training room for participants to arrange their chairs in a ring. Ask participants to move tables if necessary.

### HOW TO INTRODUCE THE EXERCISE 4 MIN

Ask participants to arrange their chairs in a ring and sit down. (There should be a chair for each participant but no chair for you as the facilitator.) Place an envelope containing small paper notes with statements written on in the middle of the ring. Each statement starts with the phrase "Change chairs if you think that...". (See suggested statements below.)

Explain that the group is going to do a fun, physical game to get us all thinking about the theme of our session – conflict. Explain to participants that the person in the middle of the ring should take a random piece of paper from the envelope and read it out. Everyone who agrees with the statement should change chairs. Anyone who does not agree or isn't sure should remain seated. The person left without a chair then reads the next statement.

### HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE 15 MIN

#### • PLAY THE GAME (5 MIN)

Kick the game off by standing in the middle, reading a statement, and then trying to sit down so that someone else is left without a chair. The person left standing takes a new statement from the envelope and reads it out loud. Ask participants to keep the note after reading it out, not put it back in the envelope. The same procedure follows until all statements in the envelope have been read or time runs out.

**SUGGESTED STATEMENTS:**

- Change chairs if you find conflicts hard to deal with.
- Change chairs if you think that a conflict can always be solved if you put enough effort in to it.
- Change chairs if you think that it can sometimes be a good thing that a conflict happens.
- Change chairs if you think that conflicts in themselves are neutral, it is how we manage the conflict that matters.
- Change chairs if you think conflicts are exciting.
- Change chairs if you have at some point failed to solve a conflict in a good way.
- Change chairs if you think conflicts sometimes need to be solved by resorting to violence.
- Change chairs if you think conflicts never need to be resolved using violence.
- Change chairs if you think that it is a form of violence to not be able to express your opinion freely.
- Change chairs if you think that requiring government permission to hold worship and build/maintain worship facilities is a form of violence.
- Change chairs if you think that peace building is an important part of promoting freedom of religion or belief.
- Change chairs if you think that conflicts cannot be solved if there is no attempt to create justice between the parties.

**TIP!** Why not adapt the statements to your context, or create your own?

• **PLENARY DISCUSSION** (10 MIN)

Lead the group in a discussion about what conflict is, by asking:

- Were there any statements that you strongly agreed with? Why?
- Were there any statements that you strongly disagreed with? Why?
- How does conflict relate to human rights?

**KEY POINTS**

Aim to draw out the following key points in the discussion, using examples from your own context:

- A conflict is when different individuals or groups have different interests.
- Conflict in itself is neither positive nor negative. What makes conflict positive or negative is the way it is handled.
- Almost all social change, good and bad, involves conflict as the balance between different people's interests changes.
- Sometimes you need to escalate a conflict – making it clearer, in order for the conflict issue to be resolved.
- Claiming rights usually involves escalating a conflict by making the conflict more apparent – for example by protesting about an injustice. Working for equal rights involves shifting the balance of power over political and economic resources between groups – for example requiring majorities to give up traditional privileges.
- Conflicts that are handled constructively can lead to positive social change.
- Suppressing or avoiding a conflict is not usually a constructive strategy.
- It's great to seek win-win solutions. However, justice may require win-lose solutions if powerful groups/individuals need to let go of power/resources, so that others can have their rights respected.
- The tricky thing is to find constructive ways to challenge injustices (making a conflict more apparent in the short term) without increasing the overall level of conflict in the medium to long term.

**HOW TO CONCLUDE THE EXERCISE** 1 MIN

Thank everyone for their active participation and say you hope the exercise helped them to explore (and perhaps challenge) their ideas about conflict.

**Source**

SMC Faith in Development, <https://www.smc.global/en/>



'A FORB map of our town'

“Participants enjoyed the FORB in our town exercise – it worked perfectly. It gave them a chance to reflect on violations they encounter in daily life and triggered deep conversations. It’s great for developing creative, analytical, critical thinking and teamwork skills.”

**HAMMAM HADDAD**, FACILITATOR, JORDAN