

# Self-portraits 30-50 min



ICEBREAKERS AND ENERGISERS

DRAW AND DISCUSS

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 introduce themselves in a fun and thoughtful way.

### DESCRIPTION

A drawing exercise in which participants introduce themselves by creating a self-portrait showing their head, heart, and hands. Words are added to help depict the values and beliefs, people and community, work and other activities they take part in that are most meaningful to them.



## Instructions

### RESOURCES

- Flipchart sheets and marker pens for each participant.

### ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Draw your own self-portrait on flipchart paper to help explain the task to participants and set a fun tone for the exercise. Make sure to include your heart and your hands, leaving space to add words later. Write your name on your self-portrait in large letters. Don't make your self-portrait too good – participants need to know that it is ok to be bad at drawing!
- Think about the words you will write on your own self-portrait as you demonstrate the exercise in front of the group.

### HOW TO INTRODUCE THE EXERCISE 2 MIN

Give each participant a flipchart sheet and marker pens. Explain that we are going to introduce ourselves by drawing a self-portrait. This self-portrait is going to be a bit different as it will show not just what we think we look like, but also what is important to us.

### HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE 25-45 MIN

- **DRAWING TIME** (5 MIN)  
Show your own self-portrait and say participants will start by drawing something similar that includes their head, heart, and hands. Tell participants to leave some space around the head, heart, and hands areas so that they can add more detail at the next stage of the exercise. There are no other 'rules' for the self-portrait – drawings can be as fun, quirky or simple as they like! Remind participants to add their name, making it clearly visible to others.
- **THINKING TIME** (5-10 MIN)  
The next step is to add the things that are important to them to their own self-portrait. Demonstrate the exercise by writing three words that represent

values and beliefs that are important to you around the head on your own self-portrait. For example, 'equality', 'Islam', 'justice', 'respect', or 'kindness'.

Around the heart, write words that represent people who are important to you. Demonstrate by writing three words on your own self-portrait. Ask participants to think beyond their immediate families to include their wider community as well. Ask, 'Who has been an important influence in your life?'

Around the hands, write words that represent the things you do in life that are most meaningful for you. Demonstrate by writing three words on your own self-portrait. For example, 'facilitating trainings', 'baking for friends', 'volunteering', 'gardening'. Ask, 'Apart from your day-to-day work, what do you do that gives meaning to your life?'

Tell participants they can add as many words as they have time for.

• **PRESENT IN THE ROUND** (15-30 MIN)

Tell participants they are now going to use their self-portrait to introduce themselves to the rest of the group. Tell them they will have just one minute each, so they won't have time to explain their self-portrait in detail. Ask, 'What would you most like other participants to know about you?' Tell them to choose one or two things to focus on. Model this for participants by holding up your own self-portrait and introducing yourself in one minute or less! Invite each participant to do the same one by one.

**TIP!** If you have a very large group, you could do the presentation round in groups of 6-10.

**HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE** 3 MIN

Conclude the exercise by thanking everyone for introducing themselves. Make the point that we are all unique and creative in our own ways! Each of us brings different values, skills, and experiences to the training. Tell participants that their self-portraits will be displayed on the wall throughout the training. Encourage them to take a closer look at other participants' self-portraits and ask questions to learn more about each other.

**Source**  
Rachel Fleming



'Self-portraits'