

WORKING TOGETHER, COOPERATION



The following activities will help participants develop an appreciation for working together and cooperation. They will learn to recognize the value of the different roles that individuals play when cooperating to achieve a common goal. Participants will come to understand how cooperation can lead to richer experiences and outcomes for the whole community.

Reflection Points

- Respect, tolerance and compassion provide a foundation for cooperation.
- 'If you light a lamp for someone else it will also brighten your path.' – **Lord Buddha**
- 'When we cooperate, we embrace our differences and use them creatively, because differences are what make the whole greater than the parts.' – **Mahatma Gandhi**
- 'If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.' – **Nelson Mandela**
- 'Leadership is based on inspiration, not domination; on cooperation, not intimidation.' – **William Arthur Wood**
- 'No matter what accomplishments you make, somebody helped you.' – **Althea Gibson**
- Many hands make light work.
- 'Individually, we are one drop. Together we are an ocean.' -**Ryunosuke Satoro**

Activity 7.1 - Ingredients for cooperation

As a facilitator, you might recall a time when your group cooperated. Tell them a story about what you remember from that time; point out what they did, how they worked together, the different roles they played, and what the outcome was. Or use an example of group cooperation from your community that the participants will be familiar with.

Say, cooperation is when people work together to achieve a common goal.

Ask:

- What do you need cooperation for?
- Is there a situation in your life or a time when you need more cooperation than you get?
- How do you feel when the people you are cooperating with are happy to help?
- How about if they are not so happy to help?
- What are the ingredients of successful cooperation?

List the ingredients of successful cooperation and point out how many of them are values that have been learned so far.

Activity 7.2 – Working together

Ask the group to stand up and form a circle facing outside (so everyone's backs face to the middle of the circle). Invite them to link arms at the elbow and sit down. The participants may be divided into smaller groups depending on sensitivities such as gender and age. Now ask the group to stand up without breaking the circle.

Ask questions about cooperation:

- Did everyone cooperate?
- Did you have to work together to be successful?
- What helped you to get up?
- What made it difficult to get up?

Activity 7.3 – Language and Actions that support Cooperation

Make two columns on a board, one with the heading Language and the other Action.

Ask the group to call out language related to cooperation, what kind of words do people use when they cooperate? What other words relate to cooperation? Write their responses in the first column.

Then ask the group to call out examples of cooperative actions. Write these in the second column. Suggest to the participants that, when they go home, they could practice using some of the language or actions that they have never used before and report back at the next meeting.

Activity 7.4 – Cooperation in Sri Lanka

Ask each participant to write down one issue or situation where they think Sri Lanka needs more cooperation (it could be related to anything at all).

Then divide the participants into groups of four. In the small groups, each member should share the area that they think needs the most cooperation. Then the group is to select one of the areas in need of cooperation which has already been put forward by one member of the group. Instruct them to discuss this area and explore the ways cooperation between individuals, groups, organizations or government officers could help address this issue or situation.

Activity 7.5 – Ball and Sarong

In this activity, you are going to encourage the group to think about the different roles that people play when they cooperate.

Depending on the number of participants, you might need to divide the group into two or three teams. Each team should stand around the edges of a sarong. Place a light weight ball in the middle. Without touching the ball, the team has to throw the ball up into the air and catch it ten times.

Once each group has finished, discuss the roles of different people in this exercise? For example: leader, supporter, team player etc.

Activity 7.6 – Role playing: Cooperation and Lack of Cooperation

Have the participants form small groups and role play the following scenarios:

- A blind person crossing the road
- Cooking a meal for a large group
- Clearing out a neighbor's house that was flooded
- Add to this list by thinking of your own scenarios

In their small groups, participants should identify all the roles involved in the scenario and assign each member a role.

After practicing a few scenarios in each group, have each group perform one of the plays in front of the group. After each act, ask:

1. Why is cooperation and helping others important in this scenario?
2. What would happen if we didn't cooperate?
3. How do you imagine you would feel if you were one of the people in this scenario?
4. What other benefits does cooperating bring about?

Activity 7.7 – Practicing Working Together

A code of conduct is a set of agreed upon guidelines that outline how people should behave for a particular purpose.

Divide the participants into small groups. In this activity, participants will use their understanding of cooperative language and behavior to work together to create a code of conduct. This code will determine how to keep the youth club or community peaceful and safe.

In developing the code of conduct, invite the groups to use only positive language.

For example, rather than writing: 'Don't use nasty words to describe other people', the group could write: 'Please use peaceful and respectful language to describe other people.' Overall, they should seek an outcome that embodies respect for others and inclusiveness.

Once they have finished, they can swap their codes of conduct with other groups and ask for feedback. Facilitate a discussion on the codes of conduct, ask:

- How did you feel when you read the codes of conduct from other groups?
- Are there things that you would like to change? Why?
- Would anyone like to share their experience of this exercise? What helped the group to cooperate?
- Did you enjoy cooperating?



When participants are involved in making up the rules or code of conduct, they learn responsibility and feel respected. They are also more likely to follow the rules if they have made them up!

Activity 7.8 Role Playing

In this activity participants are going to take turns pretending to be service providers, maybe in a local government office or a private company.

Set up a table for a service provider with two chairs so the service provider and customer can face each other (maybe have two or three tables depending on group size). Other participants, pretending to be a customer, should approach the service provider requesting information or help. The provider has to practice listening and be cooperative. You might like to use other props to create the scene.

Once the role playing is complete, discuss with participants what they noticed during the exercise:

- How did the service provider behave?
- What was helpful about his/her behavior?
- What was not so helpful?
- What challenges did the service provider face in being cooperative?