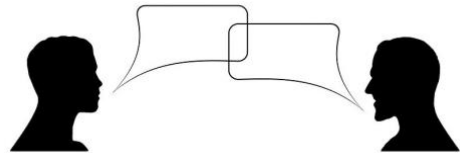


The Story of my Name

A name can reveal a lot about the context in which a person was born and its cultural references. This exercise can be used as an icebreaker and it is an interesting way for people to introduce themselves to others in culturally diverse groups, as they will share the meaning of their names, that are usually connected with cultural aspects. The exercise can help build intercultural sharing, understanding and respect.

How to use it?

- 1- Ask participants to sit in a circle.
- 2- Afterwards, each participant must turn to the partner at his/her right and explain them the meaning and origin of their name. Suggestion of topics for development:
 - who named them;
 - who were they named after and why;
 - what is the etymology of their names, i.e. the origin and the meaning of the name;
 - memories or stories about their names;
 - whether they like or not their given name.
- 3- If the number of participants is odd, you can make a group of three or the facilitator can make a pair with one of the participants.
- 4- The partner that heard the explanation repeats with his/her own words the explanation his/her name, in order that the colleague can assure the explanations were understood.
- 5- They now must exchange roles and the participant that first explained his/her name will now hear the explanation of the name of his/her colleague.
- 6- Finally, ask each person to introduce his/her partner to all group by explaining the story of his/her name.
- 7- Optional: if pertinent, the activity can be extended into revealing the background behind other names, like their nicknames or the name of their partners/children.



Names can reveal a surprising amount of interesting information depending on their origins and the meanings behind them. The greater the cultural diversity in the group, the better this exercise tends to work.

If any participants experience unease about their given name, be open for them to share the story of other of their names or surnames they feel more comfortable with.

Resources/References:

<https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/2017/08/23/name-story/>

<http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/NameStory.html>