

Peace Labs

for Uniting Communities

TOOLKIT

A practical resource
for youth workers across Europe



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



WELCOME TO THE PEACE LABS TOOLKIT

This resource was created during an Erasmus+ training course that brought together youth workers, facilitators, and educators from six countries — Poland, Greece, Lithuania, Turkey, Italy, and Spain — in Zakopane, Poland, from 13 to 20 March 2026.

The project was coordinated by FUNDACJA INSTYTUT PARTNERSTWA STRATEGICZNEGO (Poland), together with partners ACTION SYNERGY SA (Greece), Lietuvos etnosporto komitetas (Lithuania), Genc Zihin Dernegi (Turkey), LA CASA DEL FARO APS (Italy), and Asociación Cultural Maditerránea (Spain).

Over the course of that week, participants explored what it really means to build peace through hands-on activities, discussions and debates, and a lot of creative approaches. The focus was on peacebuilding, intercultural dialogue, and finding ways to work with young people who are navigating division, polarisation, and conflict in their everyday lives.

Everything you'll find in this toolkit was developed and tested during that week.

Our hope is that it will bring new approaches and methods to your work with young people, whatever context you're coming from.





WHAT ARE PEACE LABS?



Peace Labs are structured, facilitated spaces where young people and youth workers come together to explore the roots and dynamics of conflict, polarisation, and division — and to actively practice the skills and perspectives needed to build bridges across differences.



Unlike traditional conflict resolution approaches, Peace Labs are fundamentally experiential, relational, and non-formal. The term 'lab' is intentional: these are spaces for experimentation, for trying approaches that might not work perfectly the first time, and for reflecting honestly on what we learn.

Foundations of Non-Formal Peace Education

1 Experiential Learning Participants learn by doing, feeling, and reflecting — not by receiving information passively. Every activity generates a direct, embodied experience that becomes the basis for dialogue.

2 Psychological Safety First Before any meaningful dialogue can happen, participants need to feel safe. Facilitators actively build a container of trust through careful contracting, check-ins, and attentiveness to dynamics.

3 Multiple Perspectives as Wealth Diversity of perspective — cultural, generational, political — is treated as a resource to be explored, not a problem to be resolved.

4 Whole-Person Engagement Effective peace education engages the mind, heart, and body. Activities move across cognitive reflection, emotional processing, creative expression, and somatic awareness.

5 Power Awareness Facilitators remain conscious of power dynamics — including their own — and actively create conditions of equity within the group.

6 Action Orientation Peace Labs connect learning to action. Every session closes with a prompt for participants to consider how insights might translate into their daily lives and communities.



The Facilitator's Role

In Peace Labs, the facilitator is not a teacher delivering content — their primary job is to create and maintain conditions in which participants can engage authentically with themselves and each other.

Before the Session

- Read the session plan thoroughly. Know your timing.
- Prepare all materials in advance.
- Consider the group composition: nationalities, language levels, potential sensitivities.
- Arrange the physical space intentionally — circle seating signals equality.
- Prepare yourself: check your own biases, energy level, and emotional readiness.
- Have a co-facilitator when possible. Debrief with them after every session.

Find all additional
materials for your
sessions here:



The following activity plans were developed and tested by participant groups during the Peace Labs training programme. Each follows the standard 45-minute session format and includes full facilitation flow, materials, debrief questions, and adaptation notes



WORKSHOP

ACTIVITY PLANS

DRONES & DILEMMAS



Overview

Mixed international groups sit with an uncomfortable ethics case study that has no clean answer. The goal isn't consensus — it's noticing how a group stays constructive while facing an impossible decision together.



Overarching Goal

Practice intercultural collective decision-making; build a peacebuilding mindset around civilian protection; sharpen critical thinking on technology's impact (drones, AI) on human life and rights.



Learning Outcomes

Apply core concepts of International Humanitarian Law; manage internal conflict from impossible choices; design alternative strategies for communication under restricted access.



“Simulated geopolitical crisis shows firsthand how communities polarize under pressure — and how central a peacebuilding mindset is to restoring dialogue in impossible situations.”



Materials Needed

- Pre-written ethical case study / dilemma card
- Space for mixed small-group discussion



Format

Mixed teams (one person per country per group) work through a drone-ethics case study together.

TIMING AT A GLANCE

0–5 min	Warm-Up	Energizer game
5–15 min	Introduction	Mixed teams formed; case study presented
15–35 min	Core Activity	Teams design solutions
35–42 min	Debrief	Internal conflict, feelings, hesitations
42–45 min	Closing	Link to real-world peacebuilding



Step-by-Step Facilitation

1

Warm-Up | 0–5 min

Run a brief name or movement game to build group energy.

2

Introduction & Context | 5–15 min

Form mixed teams (one person per country per group). Present the case study: "Today we are looking at the human cost of precision," introducing the drone ethics dilemma.

3

Core Activity — Instructions | 15–35 min

Explain that the group is about to work through a realistic but fictional ethical dilemma, not a debate with a "correct" answer. Read the scenario aloud once, slowly, and hand out a printed copy to each mixed team so they can refer back to it.

- Individual reflection (3 min): Each person silently writes down their own initial answer and one sentence on why, before anyone speaks.
- Team discussion (12 min): Teams talk through their individual answers and try to build a shared team recommendation — or clearly map out where and why they disagree.
- Design a response (5 min): Ask each team to write one sentence they would actually say to the commanding officer.

4

Reflection & Debrief | 35–42 min

Where did your team disagree, and how did you handle that disagreement?

5

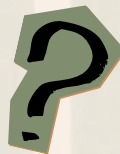
Closing & Take-Away | [10 min]

Bring the group into a circle. Focus on internal conflict, feelings, and hesitations managed. Link back to the importance of a peacebuilding mindset in impossible situations.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

What feelings arose when the case was first presented, versus once you started working on it?

How did you manage to overcome any hesitations within yourself?



CLOSING PROMPT

Go around the circle and ask each person for one word only: how they'd describe the feeling of making a decision like this as a group, rather than alone.

ADAPTATION TIP

If a group reaches consensus too fast, introduce a sudden variable (e.g. a communication blackout). If a group is too shy to debate, assign roles like "Civilian Advocate" vs. "Security Commander."

FACILITATOR NOTE

This session pairs well directly after Borderlands Trade — both use crisis framing, but this one shifts the focus from negotiation to individual ethical reasoning.

THE PEACE ENIGMA



Overview

Four teams race through mapped clues and physical challenges to defuse a fictional bomb — until they realize that the final code only works if every team calls it out together. What starts as competition resolves into all-or-nothing cooperation.





Overarching Goal

To demonstrate and create a setting where collaboration is necessary to resolve conflicts.



Learning Outcomes

Work in a team, listen to each other, be respectful, and understand that collaboration produces more positive results than competition.

“

“Positive outcomes are only possible through collaboration with one another.”

”



Materials Needed

- Paper for clues & challenges
- Markers and pens/pencils
- Cards
- 1 blindfold



Format

3 teams, spread across a mapped outdoor/indoor space with staged clues and challenges.

TIMING AT A GLANCE

0–5 min	Warm-Up	Build teams through enegizer
5–15 min	Introduction	Introduce the story, choose team name
15–35 min	Core Activity	Challenges + Clues leading to the code
35–42 min	Debrief	Group discussion
42–45 min	Closing	Why does collaboration matter?



Step-by-Step Facilitation

- 1 Warm-Up** | 0–5 min
Build 3 teams through an energizer of your choice or randomly.

- 2 Introduction & Context** | 5–15 min
"Your city is under threat. You are all spies from different agencies who must solve how to deactivate the bomb." Each group chooses a team name and a strategy.

- 3 Core Activity — Instructions** | 15–35 min
Each group gets a map with hidden tasks that give them letters or instructions and must stay together throughout. There are clues and challenges located across the map; groups compete in each challenge before combining their answers into a final code.

Challenge 1 - Card Tower Relay: build the tallest tower with cards
Challenge 2 - Guide the Blind: guide a blindfolded teammate through a task.
Challenge 3 - Draw & Guess: one teammate draws a word, the team guesses together.

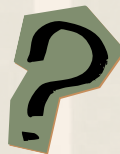
Each team collects a different 3-letter fragment as they go
Final Code - COOPERATE: all three teams combine their fragments and say it together.

- 4 Reflection & Debrief** | 35–42 min
How did it feel collaborating with the other groups? What did you learn?

- 5 Closing & Take-Away** | [10 min]
Why does collaboration between nations matter?

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

How did you feel collaborating with the other groups?
What did you learn in this activity?
Which challenge did you like most?
What would you change?



CLOSING PROMPT

In one sentence: why is collaboration between countries and governments important?

ADAPTATION TIP

If a participant has health considerations, all challenges can be adapted to run within a single room.

FACILITATOR NOTE

Careful logistics — organising challenge locations, materials, and timing across the space takes advance setup so it is better to know the space of a workshop in advance.

BORDERLANDS TRADE



Overview

Six teams trade unequal resources freely — until a scripted embargo cuts two of them off from each other, forcing the rest to invent neutral mediators on the spot. It's loud, competitive, and surprisingly tense by design.



Overarching Goal

To simulate resource scarcity and political polarization, forcing participants to practice negotiation, empathy, and crisis mediation under pressure.



Learning Outcomes

Experience the frustration of resource inequality and embargoes; practice acting as a neutral mediator; analyse your own negotiation style under pressure.



“Placing youth in a simulated geopolitical crisis shows firsthand how easily communities polarize over resources — and how essential a neutral facilitator is to restoring communication.”



Materials Needed

- Post-its in 4 colors or printed Resource Tokens: Blue (Water), Green (Food), Red (Energy), Yellow (Tech)
- 6 blank envelopes



Format

6 teams, unequal resource envelopes, free trade — interrupted by a scripted embargo.

TIMING AT A GLANCE

0–5 min	Warm-Up	High-energy game
5–15 min	Introduction	6 teams formed; envelopes distributed
15–35 min	Core Activity	Free trade, then a surprise embargo
35–42 min	Debrief	Feelings, tactics, mediation challenges
42–45 min	Closing	Link to real-world dialogue facilitation



Step-by-Step Facilitation

- 1 Warm-Up** | 0–5 min
Run a brief name or movement game to build group energy.

- 2 Introduction & Context** | 5–15 min
"You are 6 different communities. To survive until the end of the game, you must collect 3 of every color resource. You may trade freely, create agreements, negotiate or bluff."

- 3 Core Activity — Instructions** | 15–35 min
Hand out deliberately unequal envelopes. Remind participants they may bluff about what's actually in their envelopes while they trade with other teams. They may choose their own strategies and priorities based on what they already have in their envelopes.

For 10 minutes let trading run wild while teams create their strategies and start negotiations.

At minute 10, read the Crisis Card aloud: "Embargo! Team 1 and Team 3 can no longer talk or trade directly — you must use a third team as mediator."

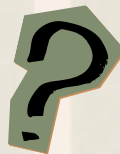
Observe the change in trading and team dynamics.

- 4 Reflection & Debrief** | 35–42 min
How did it feel when you lacked a resource? How hard was it to act as mediator?

- 5 Closing & Take-Away** | [10 min]
Link the simulation back to real-world scenario of nations trading resources and the strategies used and how they are similar to what you observed.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

How did your communication style change when desperate for a resource?
Mediators — how difficult was it to negotiate between two sides who couldn't speak directly?



CLOSING PROMPT

Write or say one word describing how you felt when the sudden embargo was announced.

ADAPTATION TIP

If teams finish too fast, add a second embargo or a "Natural Disaster" that wipes out one color. If groups are too shy, impose an "Ambassador vs. Minister" structure.

FACILITATOR NOTE

Things can get loud — make sure the room is large enough. Watch for genuine frustration or over-competitiveness; remind the group it's a simulation.

COLOR FOR PEACE



Overview

The toolkit's quiet session: participants close their eyes, draw a single unbroken fractal line, then color it in while discussing what peace and conflict look like to them. The goal is to show that inner calm comes before outer peace — expect a hushed room and soft music.



Overarching Goal

To calm down and wind down using fractal drawing and coloring as a form of meditation.



Learning Outcomes

Understand how we each visualise peace and conflict, and explore how others portray and understand the same ideas.



“Peace starts from us. With this workshop we invite participants to explore their own inner peace.”



Materials Needed

- A4 paper
- Pens & pencils
- Markers
- Coloring pens
- Discussion Prompt Card



Format

Individual creative work in a shared space — participants draw and color at their own pace while talking in small groups.

TIMING AT A GLANCE

0–5 min	Warm-Up	Breathing exercise
5–15 min	Introduction	Peace starts from us; preparing fractals
15–35 min	Core Activity	Fractal coloring
35–42 min	Debrief	Group discussion
42–45 min	Closing	Did you feel inner peace?



Step-by-Step Facilitation

- 1 Warm-Up** | 0–5 min
Guide the group through a simple breathing exercise to settle the room.

- 2 Introduction & Context** | 5–15 min
Explain that coloring is a useful activity to wind down, relax, and concentrate on something outside our worries — "peace starts from us."

- 3 Core Activity — Instructions** | 15–35 min
Ask participants to close their eyes and draw random lines and shapes without lifting the pen, so the whole fractal comes from a single continuous line. After a few minutes, they open their eyes and close off any loose ends.

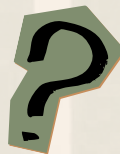
Participants color in their fractal while discussing in small groups:
 1. What color represents Peace to you?
 2. What color represents War to you?
 3. When do you feel most unsafe? Most safe?
 4. What's a core childhood memory?
 5. What do you think creates peace?

- 4 Reflection & Debrief** | 35–42 min
How did it feel? Did you prefer to color while talking, or in silence?

- 5 Closing & Take-Away** | [10 min]
Is it important to build in moments like this daily? Is it important to have these inner conversations with yourself?

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

What color represents Peace to you? War to you? When do you feel most safe / unsafe? What do you think creates peace?



CLOSING PROMPT

Is it important to have such inner discussions with yourself, daily?

ADAPTATION TIP

Play soft, relaxing ambient or zen music throughout the activity to support the meditative atmosphere.

FACILITATOR NOTE

This session works well as a low-energy session after a heavier or more intense activity — use it to reset the group.

THE MEANING OF PHOTOS



Overview

Small groups stage and shoot photographs representing war, bullying, and kindness under simple constraints (indoors, outdoors, something red). The goal is to show that empathy can be built by making something together, not just discussing it.





Overarching Goal

Through creative collaboration, participants build empathy for those affected by war and conflict by visually representing these difficult themes together.



Learning Outcomes

Become more informed about the topic of war and conflict; practice translating difficult themes into visual, collaborative creative work.

“

"Creativity has no limits — you can represent anything."



Materials Needed

- A phone/camera per group
- Paper Colors & markers
- Access to both an indoor and outdoor space



Format

Small groups plan and shoot three photos (war/ bullying/kindness themes) under simple staging rules.

TIMING AT A GLANCE

0–5 min	Warm-Up	Energiser to loosen the group up
5–15 min	Introduction	Groups formed; rules explained
15–35 min	Core Activity	Groups plan, stage, and shoot photos
35–42 min	Debrief	Reflect on the work and the topic
42–45 min	Closing	Link to real-world peacebuilding



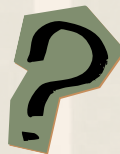
Step-by-Step Facilitation

- 1 Warm-Up** | 0–5 min
A short energiser to get the group moving and comfortable working together.
- 2 Introduction & Context** | 5–15 min
Divide participants into small groups and explain the activity: they will create photographs representing war, bullying, and an act of kindness.
- 3 Core Activity — Instructions** | 15–35 min
Explain the constraints: one photo must be staged outdoors, one indoors, and the images must include an object that is red (can be any object that they are able to find). Encourage creativity over technical perfection.

Groups organise themselves, decide on locations, staging, and poses, and take their photos. Editing or retouching afterwards is welcome — the important thing is creativity and collaboration. The red object isn't random — it's the one thing that ties three otherwise unconnected photos (war, bullying, kindness) into a single visual thread. Without it, groups just produce three separate images. With it, they have to ask: "what's the one thing that shows up in all three, and what does it mean differently each time?"
- 4 Reflection & Debrief** | 35–42 min
Have each group lay their three printed or displayed photos side by side and do a quick gallery walk before the final debrief circle. Reflect together on the process.
- 5 Closing & Take-Away** | [10 min]
The red object is the proof: the same small thing can mean danger in one context and warmth in another, which is exactly how perspective works in real conflicts too.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

Did your group agree quickly on how to represent "war" or "bullying," or did people see it differently at first? Looking at another group's photos, did anything surprise you?



CLOSING PROMPT

One sentence, one person at a time: name your group's red object and the one thing it taught you about seeing conflict, bullying, or kindness differently.

ADAPTATION TIP

If a group is hesitant to stage the photo directly, let them represent it through objects or shadows instead of people — an empty chair, a broken toy, a silhouette.

FACILITATOR NOTE

Keep an eye on group dynamics during the shoot, not just the debrief, and don't be afraid to let a group swap to the object/shadow approach mid-session if it's clearly the better fit for them.

FINGERS AND THUMBS



Overview

Groups of five play a rigged hand-signal game where cooperating pays off for everyone — but defecting alone pays off more for one person. It reliably recreates, in miniature, exactly why real-world agreements collapse.



Overarching Goal

To simulate a cooperation-vs-competition dilemma, exploring trust, self-interest, and the fragility of agreements between groups.



Learning Outcomes

Experience the tension between individual gain and group welfare; reflect on why agreements break down; connect to real-world negotiations such as international climate accords.



This game models almost exactly how cooperation collapses under self-interest, a foundational dynamic behind polarization and unresolved conflict between communities and nations.



Materials Needed

- One instruction/score sheet per group of 5
- One pen per group
- Groups of 5 seated in small circles



Format

Groups of 5 (4 players + 1 scorekeeper) play repeated rounds of a hand-signal game, deciding each round whether to cooperate or act selfishly.

TIMING AT A GLANCE

0–5 min	Warm-Up	Form groups of 5; quick rules overview
5–15 min	Introduction	Hand out sheets; appoint scorekeepers
15–35 min	Core Activity	Play 7 scored rounds
35–42 min	Debrief	Trust and agreements
42–45 min	Closing	Link to real-world cooperation

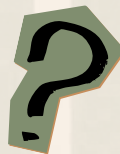


Step-by-Step Facilitation

- 1 Warm-Up** | 0–5 min
Form groups of 5: four players and one scorekeeper.
- 2 Introduction & Context** | 5–15 min
Hand each scorekeeper the instruction and score sheet. They explain the scoring to their group: cooperating (thumbs) scores best for everyone only if all four do it; anyone who breaks ranks alone gains at the group's expense. Play one practice round.
- 3 Core Activity — Instructions** | 15–35 min
Play 7 scored rounds. A few of these are bonus rounds where the score is multiplied — raising the stakes and usually the moment where trust breaks down most visibly, since the temptation to defect for a bigger personal gain is strongest. Players may not talk to each other during rounds, except for a short discussion window allowed just before each bonus round.
 - If everyone chooses thumb (full cooperation), every player scores well and the group benefits together.
 - If one player chooses finger while the rest choose thumb, that one player scores more than they would have by cooperating — but it comes directly at the expense of the group's total score.
 - The more players who break away and choose finger, the worse the outcome gets for the whole group.
- 4 Reflection & Debrief** | 35–42 min
Bring the whole group back together. Ask who ended up with the highest and lowest scores, whether anyone felt cheated by a teammate's choice, and whether any agreements were made during the discussion windows — and whether those agreements were actually kept.
- 5 Closing & Take-Away** | [10 min]
Connect the pattern in the game to real-world cooperation problems. International agreements on climate or trade work well as a concrete example

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

Who got the most points — how did you play to win?
Does anyone feel cheated? Why?
Did anyone break an agreement? Why?



CLOSING PROMPT

How does this mirror real-world agreements — e.g. international climate negotiations — and what would make cooperation easier to sustain?

ADAPTATION TIP

For a shorter or calmer group, drop to 5 rounds and keep only the final bonus round for a quicker but still effective version.

FACILITATOR NOTE

Competitive players may try to signal or bluff outside the allowed communication windows — hold the rule firmly, since the tension is the point.

SWITCH SIDES



Overview

Pairs are assigned to argue the side of a polarising issue they personally disagree with, then debate it in short rounds. The goal is to show that opposing positions are more persuasive from the inside than they look from outside.



Overarching Goal

To help participants recognise and challenge their own biases by constructing a genuine, convincing case for a viewpoint they personally disagree with.



Learning Outcomes

Practice articulating arguments outside one's own worldview; build cognitive empathy for opposing views; reflect on how polarization forms and how structured dialogue can bridge it.



Facilitating respectful, structured debate on divisive topics without escalation is a core skill for youth workers navigating polarised communities.



Materials Needed

- Pre-written statement cards on 3–4 topical, polarising issues
- Timer
- Flip chart or whiteboard



Format

Pairs are assigned the side of a debate they personally disagree with, prepare briefly, then debate in short structured rounds.

TIMING AT A GLANCE

0–5 min	Warm-Up	Opinion spectrum
5–15 min	Introduction	Explain the format; assign statements
15–35 min	Core Activity	Prepare, then debate in structured rounds
35–42 min	Debrief	How did it feel arguing the other side?
42–45 min	Closing	Reflection on empathy and shifting perspectives



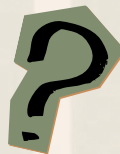
Step-by-Step Facilitation

- 1 Warm-Up** | 0–5 min
Read out a mildly polarising statement and ask participants to physically stand along an imaginary line from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."
- 2 Introduction & Context** | 5–15 min
Explain that in this session, everyone will argue for the side of an issue they personally disagree with. Distribute statement cards; each pair is deliberately assigned their non-preferred side.
- 3 Core Activity — Instructions** | 15–35 min
Each pair is given time to build the strongest, most convincing case they can for their assigned side — the side they personally disagree with. The goal is not to mock or exaggerate that position, but to find its most reasonable and sympathetic version, as if arguing it sincerely on someone else's behalf. Encourage pairs to think about what a genuine supporter of that view would actually say, and why it might make sense to someone who holds it.

Run short structured debate rounds (3 minutes per side, one rebuttal each) between pairs holding opposite assigned positions on the same statement. Rotate so several statements get debated.
- 4 Reflection & Debrief** | 35–42 min
Ask: what was hardest about arguing the other side? Did building the case change how you see the issue, even slightly?
- 5 Closing & Take-Away** | [10 min]
Invite one honest sentence from each participant about a view they understand differently now.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

What was hardest about arguing a position you disagree with? Did anything about your own view shift, even slightly? Where else could this exercise be in daily life?



CLOSING PROMPT

The point isn't agreement, it's recognizing that the strongest version of an opposing argument is usually more convincing than expected.

ADAPTATION TIP

For groups not ready for direct confrontation, have pairs simply present their case to the whole room one at a time, without a back-and-forth exchange.

FACILITATOR NOTE

Avoid any topic that touches directly on a participant's own identity or lived experience — the exercise works best when it challenges opinions, not personal history.

WHERE I'M FROM



Overview

Small circles share short personal stories about home, built from concrete sensory details rather than abstract facts. The goal is to quietly dissolve the "otherness" between nationalities through specific, recognisable detail.



Overarching Goal

To build empathy and connection across cultural backgrounds by sharing personal stories tied to home, identity, and belonging.



Learning Outcomes

Practice active listening across cultures; recognise shared human experience beneath cultural differences; build trust within the wider group.



Storytelling is one of the oldest peacebuilding tools there is — understanding another person's lived experience directly reduces the "othering" that drives polarization.



Materials Needed

- A small object to pass as a talking token
- Chairs arranged in circles of 4-5
- Optional soft lighting for atmosphere



Format

Small circles of 4-5; each person shares a short personal story using a simple sensory storytelling template.

TIMING AT A GLANCE

0-5 min	Warm-Up	One-word check-in circle
5-15 min	Introduction	Explain the storytelling template
15-35 min	Core Activity	Each person shares a short personal story
35-42 min	Debrief	What surprised you about someone's story?
42-45 min	Closing	One shared word or phrase from the circle



Step-by-Step Facilitation

- 1 Warm-Up** | 0–5 min
Go around the full group and have each person share one word describing how they feel now.

- 2 Introduction & Context** | 5–15 min
Introduce a simple storytelling scaffold built from repeating, concrete prompts about home — a sound you remember, an object on a shelf, a phrase someone in your family always says, a smell from a particular season. Form small circles of 4–5.

- 3 Core Activity — Instructions** | 15–35 min
Explain that each person will have about 3 minutes to speak, uninterrupted, using the prompts as loosely or closely as they like. The token being held is the only person speaking; everyone else just listens.

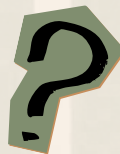
The reasoning behind it: if listeners could react or ask questions, the exercise would turn into a conversation, and the person speaking might start shaping their story around the group's response instead of just describing home as they remember it. Removing that pressure is what lets the sensory details come out honestly. The "point" for the listeners is internal — noticing what feels unexpectedly familiar in someone else's story despite a different background — and that only gets addressed afterward, in the small-circle debrief.

- 4 Reflection & Debrief** | 35–42 min
In the small circle, ask what surprised participants about someone else's story, and what felt familiar despite different backgrounds.

- 5 Closing & Take-Away** | [10 min]
Each circle shares one word or short phrase that captured something from their conversation with the wider group.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

What surprised you about someone else's story? What felt unexpectedly familiar, despite different backgrounds? How did it feel to just listen, without responding?



CLOSING PROMPT

As a group, notice how many different homes, all described in such different words, still sound familiar to everyone listening.

ADAPTATION TIP

If there are fewer people per circle, use the extra time to allow brief, gentle follow-up questions after each story instead of moving straight to the next person.

FACILITATOR NOTE

Some participants may find personal sharing harder than others — never force participation; allow a pass option.

[09]

CAFÉ FOR PEACE

DISCUSSION



Overview

Participants rotate through short table conversations on open questions about peace and inclusion, while a host at each table carries the thread between rounds. The goal is to harvest collective insight no single conversation could reach alone.



Overarching Goal

To generate collective insight on what peace and inclusion mean across cultures, through rotating small-group conversation.



Learning Outcomes

Practice building on others' ideas rather than just stating your own; synthesise diverse perspectives; identify common threads across many separate conversations.



The World Café format models exactly the kind of open, non-hierarchical dialogue that community peacebuilding depends on — everyone's voice shapes the shared picture.



Materials Needed

- 4–5 small tables Large paper "tablecloths" + markers per table
- One designated table host per table
- Bell or chime to signal rotations



Format

Rounds of short small-group conversation at rotating tables, each with a different guiding question.

TIMING AT A GLANCE

0–5 min	Warm-Up	Quick mingling icebreaker
5–15 min	Introduction	Explain café etiquette & present 3 questions
15–35 min	Core Activity	Rounds of table conversation
35–42 min	Debrief	Table hosts share key patterns
42–45 min	Closing	One-word of the session's insight



Step-by-Step Facilitation

- 1 Warm-Up** | 0–5 min
Run a quick mingling icebreaker so participants are moving and talking before the café begins.

- 2 Introduction & Context** | 5–15 min
Explain the World Café etiquette: listen to contribute, connect ideas, write and doodle on the tablecloth. Present guiding questions that will rotate across rounds.

- 3 Core Activity — Instructions** | 15–35 min
Small groups will discuss the same big question multiple times, but with different people each round, so ideas carry over and build rather than staying stuck at one table. Assign one host per table — they stay in place for all three rounds and act as the table's "memory," briefly recapping the previous conversation for each new group so nothing gets lost. Everyone else rotates to a new table between rounds. As people talk, they jot down or doodle key ideas on the paper tablecloth, so thoughts are captured in the moment without needing a note-taker.

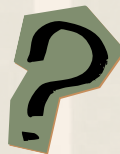
Run three rounds of about 6–7 minutes each. Circulate between tables to check conversations are actually happening — some tables may need a nudge if they've gone quiet or drifted off-topic.

- 4 Reflection & Debrief** | 35–42 min
Bring the whole group together. Ask each table host to summarise the key patterns or surprises that emerged across their table's three rounds.

- 5 Closing & Take-Away** | [10 min]
Go around the room and collect one word or short insight from each person as a final "harvest" of the session.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

What pattern showed up across more than one table? What disagreement or tension surfaced — and was it resolved?



CLOSING PROMPT

Go around the circle and ask each person for one word only: how they'd describe the feeling of making a decision like this as a group, rather than alone.

ADAPTATION TIP

If materials are limited, use sticky notes or a shared whiteboard instead of paper tablecloths at each table.

FACILITATOR NOTE

Rotations can get chaotic in a small room — mark table numbers clearly and keep rotation timing visible.

TALKING ACROSS THE DIVIDE

Overview

A small inner circle discusses a real, polarising topic while everyone else listens from an outer ring, with one chair always left empty for new voices to join. The goal is a repeatable format for the hardest conversations participants will face back home.



Overarching Goal

To model respectful, structured dialogue on a genuinely polarising topic relevant to participants' home contexts, using the fishbowl method.

Learning Outcomes

Practice speaking and listening in a structured public format; observe dialogue dynamics from the outside; build comfort engaging with disagreement without escalation.

“

The fishbowl method gives youth workers a concrete, repeatable tool for facilitating the most sensitive, polarised conversations they'll encounter in their own communities.

Materials Needed

- 5–6 chairs in an inner circle (one left empty)
- Chairs for the outer circle
- A clear discussion prompt on a real, relevant topic
- Visible ground rules poster

Format

An inner circle of 5–6 discusses; an outer circle listens and can join via one rotating empty chair.

TIMING AT A GLANCE

0–5 min	Warm-Up	Frame ground rules for respectful dialogue
5–15 min	Introduction	Present the topic & format; seat the inner circle
15–35 min	Core Activity	Fishbowl discussion runs
35–42 min	Debrief	Reflections from inner and outer circle
42–45 min	Closing	One takeaway on dialogue across difference



Step-by-Step Facilitation

- 1 Warm-Up** | 0–5 min
Briefly frame ground rules for respectful dialogue: listen fully before responding, disagree with ideas not people, no interrupting.

- 2 Introduction & Context** | 5–15 min
Present a real, relevant, and genuinely polarising discussion topic drawn from participants' own national contexts. Explain the fishbowl format and seat 5–6 volunteers in the inner circle, with one chair left empty.

- 3 Core Activity — Instructions** | 15–35 min
Explain that only people in the inner circle may speak. Anyone from the outer circle may sit in the empty chair at any time to join in — but as soon as they do, someone already inside must return to the outer circle, keeping one seat always empty

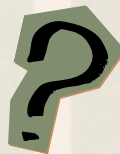
Let the discussion run, with facilitators intervening only to protect the ground rules, not the content of what's said. Encourage rotation through the empty chair so multiple voices are heard.

- 4 Reflection & Debrief** | 35–42 min
Ask both inner and outer circle members to reflect: what was it like to speak inside the circle? What did you notice observing from outside that you might have missed while speaking?

- 5 Closing & Take-Away** | [10 min]
Ask each person for one takeaway about having — or witnessing — a respectful conversation across real disagreement.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

What was it like to speak inside the circle, knowing you were being watched? What did you notice from outside that you might have missed while speaking?



CLOSING PROMPT

Name one moment in the discussion where someone changed how you saw the topic, even slightly.

ADAPTATION TIP

For a more cautious group, allow written questions to be passed to inner-circle speakers via facilitators instead of open floor challenges.

FACILITATOR NOTE

Choose a topic specific and real enough to matter, but not one that singles out an individual participant's identity or experience directly.

PEACE STARTS IN THE ROOM

Thank you for picking up this toolkit and bringing it into yours.

This resource grew out of one week in Zakopane, shaped by youth workers from six countries who showed up ready to build, test, and sometimes stumble through these sessions together. If even one of them helps your group have a better conversation, it's done its job.

We'd love to hear how it went for you. Whether you ran a session exactly as written, adapted it for your own context, or built something new on top of it, we're always open to hearing from fellow youth workers and exploring future collaboration.

Get in touch: info@spiwarsaw.eu

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