

## DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?

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### Source

This activity was developed by Oana Nestian Sandu.

### Themes

- ▶ Differences in perspectives
  - ▶ Stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination
- Other topics addressed: ethnocentrism, misunderstandings and conflicts

### Competences addressed

- ▶ Knowledge of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination; knowledge of cultural differences in communication

**Complexity** : Level 1

**Group size** : 12 or more people

**Time** : 30 minutes

### Objectives

- ▶ To understand that more than one perspective can be true at the same time
- ▶ To discuss the way in which our cultural and socio-economic background influences our perception of reality
- ▶ To reflect upon the potential for conflict between opposing views and on ways to address them and use them for social transformation.

### Preparation

This activity can be an introductory activity to most activities focused on intercultural learning.

### Materials

Two different-coloured sticky notes, stuck together back to back.

### Instructions

1. The facilitator holds the two different-coloured sticky notes, stuck together back to back, and places him/herself in the middle of the group of participants.
2. The facilitator tells the participants that they will see one sticky note and they need to shout out its colour.
3. The facilitator shows participants the sticky note so that half the room sees one side and the other half the other side.
4. When the participants shout two different colours the facilitator looks confused and asks them to shout again.
5. The facilitator turns the sticky note around so that everybody can see both sides and the two different colours.
6. A debriefing discussion follows.

## Debriefing and evaluation

- ▶ How did your positioning in the room influence what you saw?
- ▶ What did you think when you heard people shouting out a different colour?
- ▶ Was there anyone who did not clearly see the sticky note? How did that person feel?
- ▶ How can this be translated to real-life situations when people have access to only a part of the reality or no access at all?
- ▶ Can two completely opposing opinions coexist?
- ▶ Sometimes conflicts are generated over situations like this, in which people cannot comprehend that reality is complex and only want to see their side of the story. Can you give any examples from real life?
- ▶ What can be done to show people with opposing views “the other side”, the other’s perspective?

## Tips for facilitators

Try not to give too much information to participants at the beginning. Just tell them that you will show them a sticky note. This way they will have no expectations and no time to think about what you are trying to do.

Encourage participants to make connections between this simple way of representing opposing views and more complex situations from their own life or from international relations or conflicts.

## Variations

This activity calls for the use of sticky notes in order to show how even something as simple as a piece of paper can create controversy. The aim is to engage participants in a process of extrapolating from this simple exercise the more complex realities in which they live. However, the facilitators can use other materials such as an image with a double meaning or an abstract image or sculpture that leaves room for interpretation. Another variation is to give some of the participants paper glasses with lenses made of cellophane paper that alters the colours seen with a naked eye (for example, when participants wearing yellow glasses are asked to look at a blue image they will see it as green).

## Suggestions for follow-up

This activity can be followed by the “Autobiography of intercultural encounters”. In this flow, participants discuss how perception is influenced by our background, world view and position in society before doing an in-depth analysis of an intercultural encounter. It can also be followed by “Where do you stand?”, giving participants the opportunity to share different perspectives on various real-life issues.