Democratic Dialogue at school: An online game-based training tool on Democratic Dialogue for Teachers

Training course for school teams, teachers and school leaders in Europe

Module 1 - Activity 1

Statements and reflective questions about politics

Ice-breaker (reflection and group activity)

Short description	The exercise 'Statements and reflective questions about politics' can be used as an ice-breaker activity for teachers/adult learners and students helping them to reflect about different topics concerning the politics. The exercise helps them to reflect as an individual and in a group.
Objectives	● Learn to deal with different visions, opinions and perspectives within a group ● Learn to listen carefully to others opinions without judging them ● Facilitate an open mindset towards others' opinions ● Learn to take a position and provide arguments for it ● To create a safe space through discussing openly about general statements ● To cultivate a culture of democratic dialogue and cooperation
Indicative time	● 20 - 30 minutes
Facilitator & target group	Facilitator: one adult trainer (teacher/educator) Target group: < 20 participants (students)
Methodology – steps for the facilitator	Instructions for the facilitator: 1. Empty the classroom: all tables and chairs should be put aside as much as possible. Ask the participants to stand in a long line in the middle of the room 2. Explain that the line in the middle is the neutral position. Explain how the debate works. Establish ground rules, e.g.: "this is a safe open space, there are no bad answers. Every opinion is important and equally valued. We show respect to each other by listening to different opinions. 3. You as a trainer read a statement/reflective question loudly. The participants are then given a short time to think about what they think of

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this statement/reflective question. Then each participant walks to the position that he/she has in relation to the statement:

- if you completely agree with the statement: Then you go all the way to the right on the imaginary line (totally agree)
- if you completely disagree with the statement: Then you go all the way to the left on the imaginary line (totally disagree)
- if you have your doubts about the statement, but do you tend to one side? Then you go between the neutral position and the side you lean towards.
- Do you not (yet) have an opinion about the statement? Then you stay in the neutral position

4. The participants are free to change their point of view and can change their position.
5. Ask if someone wants to share why he/she positioned him-/herself to that specific place. If nobody reacts, pick 1 or 2 participant(s) and ask their point of view.
6. Ask further questions to determine on which argument the opinion is based. Participants can ask questions too.
7. Conclude the activity by asking the participants questions like the following:
   - What insight has the activity given them?
   - Which arguments did they find best?
   - What have they learned about the theme(s)?
   - How did the activity make them feel?
   - Are there any feedback points?
   - Would they like to do this activity again?

Statements (some examples):

- I believe in Europe's future
- I am politically active
- All humans are equal
- Democracy is the best political system for any country
- I feel 100% European
- Refugees have to adapt to our culture if they want to stay here
- "Maybe we should close our borders" (statement of a Belgian politician)
- To be free, you need boundaries

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	- Our society needs more love - Sometimes, violence is necessary - The freedom to express any opinion is important - We are all responsible for poverty in the world - Some societies are better than others - We need a revolution if we want to change the society - Extreme parties are good to provide some counterbalance - A monarchy and royal state has become outdated **Reflective questions** - Do European values exist? - Is there a European identity? If yes, what does this look like? - Are all refugees welcome? - Do the politicians determine my future? - Can politicians change the world? - How is your belief in our political leaders? - Do you trust our political leaders? - Is being poor one's own fault? - Is an ideal society possible? - Can our youth change society? - Why is it that most leaders are men? - What would the world look like if women were in charge? - Can we live with everyone?
Materials & Resources – tools	- A (class)room with enough space to walk freely - Sheet with statements/reflective questions
Reference/ source:	Workshops of Democratic Dialogue
Additional resources and related material	