Building Bridges through Intergroup Dialogue

*Please note that order of presentations and some of the speakers may change.*

**Facilitator:**

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**Course Description:**

Peacebuilding practitioners and others working in conflict-affected countries often face the challenge of working with groups that are experiencing divisions rooted in identity. Practitioners have the opportunity to bring such groups together in order to increase understanding of the “other” and eventually explore common action. Building these bridges serves to strengthen communities by allowing alienated groups to come together as allies.

While identity-based differences may or may not be the source of conflict, they can be contributing factors which can continue to hinder peacebuilding processes well after violent hostilities have abated. Intergroup Dialogue (ID) is a tool practitioners can use to engage alienated groups in conversation about their identities in a safe, trusting environment. Dialogue around differences takes both time and careful facilitation. It involves skills that cannot be gained by reading theory alone.

This course is designed to help prepare participants to engage people from one or more identity groups in dialogue about the similarities and differences of experience that exist within and between groups, in order to increase understanding and dismantle the perceptions of the “other” that can contribute to conflict. The goal of the dialogue process is for participants to emerge with a better understanding of and relationship with those from a different identity group. While there are many goals for dialogue processes, this course will focus primarily on addressing identity-based differences through dialogue.
Objectives:

- Participants will explore the process of dialogue by engaging in an identity-based dialogue.
- Participants will learn about the application of ID in various contexts including Track II peace processes.
- Participants will understand and apply the theory of ID.
- Participants will develop facilitation skills, which will help prepare them to facilitate dialogues on their own.

Teaching Methodology:

The primary learning approach in this course is experiential learning, through which participants will engage in the thinking, sharing, experimenting, trusting, and learning that they will engage others in when they facilitate dialogues. Experiential learning enables students to acquire and apply knowledge and skills as well as process feelings in an immediate setting. It involves a direct encounter with a phenomenon rather than thinking about an encounter. Reflection is a key component of experiential learning and will be a part of the dialogue program.

Course Requirements:

**Participation:** The nature of dialogue is cumulative; understanding concepts and experiences discussed in later dialogues is, to some degree, contingent upon having attended and participated in earlier sessions. Therefore, it is essential that participants attend the entire course.

**Readings:** Readings provided include ones that are necessary in preparation for the conversations and presentations each day. The facilitator will indicate each day which readings should be reviewed for the next day’s sessions. All readings including those that supplement your understanding of the theory, process, and cases of intergroup dialogue can be accessed online by following the steps below:

- Log on to Moodle by clicking at: https://academyonline.usip.org/login/index.php
- Your user name is your first initial followed by your last name, for example, Adam Smith would use: asmith
- Your initial password is Usip!123 – this password is case sensitive. You may change your password after your first log-in.

**Reflections:** Dialogue is a process involving extensive self-reflection, both during the dialogue and after. We will ask participants to write about their experience each day – what they noticed, what they felt, what they thought, etc… and will ask volunteers to share a sentence or two from their reflections.

**Micro-Facilitation:** On the last day of the course, each participant will practice their dialogue facilitation skills by co-facilitating a 20-minute dialogue for their peers. Course facilitators and invited guest coaches, as well as peers, will provide feedback after each practice dialogue.
Course Schedule: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every day. There will be a lunch break from 1 – 2 p.m. There will be a morning break around 11:00 a.m. Coffee and dessert will be served in the classroom at 2 p.m. every day.

Course Outline:

Day 1

Morning

1) Introductions and Course Overview
   - Introductions to each other; expectations
   - Course overview
   - Exercise
   - Group norms

2) Defining Dialogue
   - What is Dialogue?
   - Why and when do we need Dialogue? Under what conditions?
   - How is Dialogue different from other modes of communication and conflict intervention?
   - Governing Principles of Dialogue
   - What is the role of the facilitator in Dialogue?

Readings:

Handout: Powerpoint

Group Lunch -- (Note: lunch will be your free time on other days but on the first day, we will have lunch together as a way to help us set the stage for dialogue in the afternoon)
4) Experiencing Dialogue: Setting the stage for a dialogue on identity

Day 2

Morning

1) Building Skills: Communication in Dialogue
   - What are the challenges of dialogue across differences?
   - What are the skills and mindset needed to dialogue effectively?
   - Communication exercise

Readings:
   - Deborah Tannen, The Argument Culture: Stopping America's War of Words

Handout:
   - Active Listening

2) Experiencing Dialogue: Exploring Commonalities and Differences
   Begin exploring and mapping our experiences around identity

Afternoon

3) Experiencing Dialogue: Probing Differences / Exploring Controversial Issues

Day 3

Morning

1) Experiencing Dialogue: Closure -- realizations; decisions; and/or living with ambiguity

2) Intergroup Dialogue in Track II Peace Processes: Seeds of Peace Program in Israel/Palestine
   Guest Presenter: Dr. Ned Lazarus, FIPSE Post-Doctoral Fellow at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University

Afternoon

3) The Role of Identity in Conflict
Guest Presenter: Dr. Ayse Kadayifce-Orellana, Associate Professor, Georgetown University

4) Group check-in

Day 4

Morning

1) Building Skills: Elements of Facilitation
Guest Facilitator: Dr. Alison Milofsky, Senior Program Officer, USIP’s Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding
- What makes a good facilitator?
- How and when should we use exercises or external content in Intergroup Dialogue?
- What are the challenges of facilitation and how can we overcome them?

Reading:
- Joellen P. Killion and Lynn A. Simmons. The Zen of Facilitation

2) Interfaith Dialogue (IFD) and Spiritual Dimensions of ID
Guest Presenter: Ms. Susan Hayward, Senior Program Officer, USIP’s Center for Religion and Peacemaking
Case Presentation and Discussion (Susan and Maria): USIP Ecumenical Dialogue Project in Colombia
Reading: TBD

Afternoon

3) Building Skills: Designing a Dialogue Process

Readings:
- Bettye Pruitt and Philip Thomas, Chapters 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 in “Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners,” GS/OAS, International IDEA, UNDP (2007)
- Maggie Herzig & Laura Chasin, Chapter 3 in “Fostering Dialogue Across Divides: A Nuts and Bolts Guide from the Public Conversations Project” (JAMS)
Day 5

Morning

1) Building Skills: The Art of Asking Questions

2) Building Skills: Structuring a Dialogue Session
   - Exercise in designing a dialogue session

   • Reading: Maggie Herzig & Laura Chasin, Chapter 4, “Fostering Dialogue Across Divides: A Nuts and Bolts Guide from the Public Conversations Project” (JAMS)

3) Facilitation Practice

Afternoon

4) Facilitation Practice and De-brief

5) Closing reflections and course evaluation