

CRA EMERGING FUTURES INITIATIVE TWO WORKING PARTY

Self-Organising Groups

A simple guide

Purpose

The purpose of a Self-Organising Group is to deepen awareness, explore new insights and expand our knowledge about interculturality. Some areas to explore have emerged, namely:

- What is Interculturality?
- Cultural competencies
- Interculturality and Community Living;
- Leading in an intercultural context
- Shadow side of Interculturality...racism, prejudice;
- Interculturality and Charism

It requires our collective capacity to:

- Reframe our worldviews
- Explore our beliefs and assumptions
- Listen deeply to what is stirring within us individually and communally.

A Self-Organising Group consists of a group of invited people who have an interest in the topic. They may belong to the same congregation or another, a person with an experience of intercultural living e.g. A volunteer with a congregation, or any person who would like to participate and can contribute to the discussion.

A Self-Organising Group enables participants to take a long and loving look at their reality and to engage in conversation around matters that have emerged.

The Self-Organising Group Process

A person may either convene a Self-Organising Group or respond to an invitation to join one. The group meets for approximately 1½ hours to share the thoughts, reflections or questions on the nominated topic. Further meetings may be arranged if the group feels it needs more time to discuss the topic.

Time-frame

Information and resource material, like video clips and readings, will be made available at different times. From time to time, the committee will ask for feedback so an accompanying guide and feedback sheet will be sent out.

Role of the Convenor

The convenor chooses the topic and invites a small group – say no more than 6-7 people – to attend a Self-Organising Group. It is often good for the convenor to choose participants who do not share the same views – if they do so, the emphasis must be on the empathetic listening (see below) and establishing some group ground rules prior to the conversation beginning. They nominate the date, time and venue and then facilitates the conversation.

The convenor provides a safe, welcoming environment for the conversation. The convenor coordinates the session, introduces the topic and participates in the conversation.

If the group wishes to provide some feedback, the convenor may ask one of the participants to note the group's response.

Self-Organising Group Guidelines

Theory U identifies four ever-deepening stages of listening:

1. We listen for what is Familiar.
2. The focus of Factual Listening is to debate or confirm what we already think.
3. We may listen Empathetically when we listen to the other with an open mind and heart.
4. Generative listening occurs when one listens from one's deepest self.

Therefore, our guidelines encourage Empathetic and Generative listening through:

- Engaging with people who have a different life experience so that you hear a variety of perspectives
- Creating a space of trust and acceptance
- Focusing on what really matters
- Linking the conversation to the global reality
- Listening in order to understand and make connections
- Respecting each person's unique point of view
- Sharing your own experience and truth.

Expect to be surprised and gain new insights!

When the Self-Organising Group gathers

- Create a comfortable gathering space
- Begin with a simple prayer or centering exercise
- Enable Group conversation
- Identify the insights, reflections and responses that this Self-Organising Group wishes to share
- Conclude with a Prayer.

You may the following reflection questions helpful:

- What did I find challenging?
- What did I find life-giving or affirming?
- What questions did the video raise for me?
- What did the video have to say about living religious life at this time?