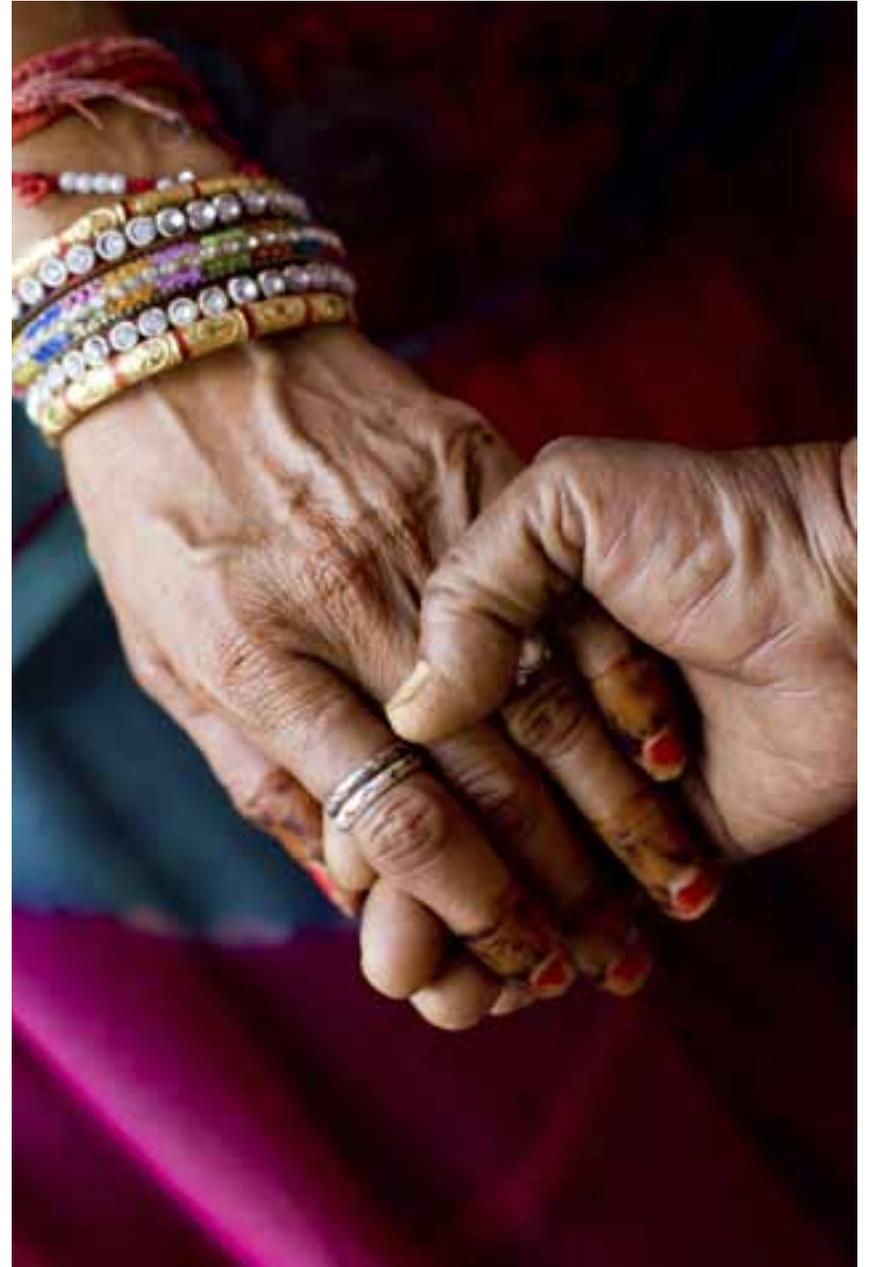


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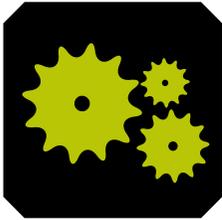
Alternative Exercises



3.3 Alternative Exercises



Title	Selection considerations	When to use	Timing
Opening ceremony	Design and adapt this opening ceremony carefully, as it sets the tone for the workshop. This can be as simple as sitting in silence as a group or as elaborate as a full greeting ceremony.	Day One	30 minutes
Archetypes – who did I bring into this room?	Excellent if the group needs to strengthen connections and some participants are becoming dominant or are holding back.	Day Two <i>or</i> Day Three	30 minutes
Talk about the passion: why I became an activist	Similar to archetypes in that it surprises participants and leads them to relinquish some of their ‘shields’ and share some of their ‘stories’.	Day Two <i>or</i> Day Three	45 minutes
What do I want from . . . ?	Very good to help a group recalibrate and be reminded of maintaining a safe and respectful space.	<i>Anytime</i>	20 minutes
When was the last time I . . . ?	Excellent for establishing deeper connections and understanding common bonds; combines humour and strong emotions. Facilitators must gauge what will work for different cultures and mixed gender groups.	Day Two <i>or</i> Day Three	30 minutes
Speaking the Unspoken	Excellent for establishing deeper connections and understanding common bonds; helpful for participants who are holding back from opening up safely. This is a very powerful exercise, and requires care with regard to sequencing and managing energy shift. This should be followed by something that respects the emotions released, but careful to lift the mood of the group.	Day Two <i>or</i> Day Three	30 minutes
I have the power	A very strong exercise that increases the individual’s sense of strength as well as the group’s sense of solidarity, respect and support.	Day Two <i>or</i> Day Three	30 minutes
Lineage line	A good means of closure if group members need to feel a stronger sense of support and solidarity as they leave the workshop or end the day. Particularly good for groups that are very isolated. Potentially also useful for groups coping with a high level of grief or loss.	<i>End of</i> Day Two <i>or</i> Day Three	20 minutes
Letting go and commitments	A good, ‘grounded’ closure. It can also be a strong balancing exercise if the ‘speaking the unspoken’ exercise has been used earlier .	<i>End of</i> Day Two <i>or</i> Day Three	30 minutes



EXERCISE:

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FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

Opening Ceremony

(Example from the Kenya Integrated Security Workshop)

TIME: 30 MIN

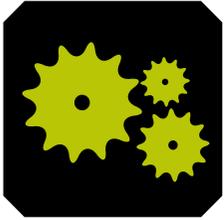
REQUIRED MATERIALS: ONE LARGE CANDLE, ONE LARGE WOODEN PLATTER, GREEN MATERIAL, ONE ROSE (OR OTHER FLOWER) PER PARTICIPANT, ONE SMALL BOWL PER PARTICIPANT, TWO PITCHERS OF WATER, MATCHES OR A LIGHTER

SUMMARY:

This is an example of an opening ceremony for the Kenya Integrated Security Workshop. It is a welcoming for each of the participants that helps to step away from the stress of daily life and focus on creating a safe space together, as a group.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Prior to participants arrival, facilitators should place a large candle on top of a round wooden platter in the centre of the workshop space. Put this on top of a large piece of green material. Lay out a scarf from a past workshop, and postcards from the workshops (these are important for the introductions exercise that follows). Lay a red rose on the seat of each participant's chair and put a small bowl on the floor in front of them (set to the side of the chair). Two pitchers of water are on the facilitators' table.
- When all of the participants are seated, the facilitator explains that this is an opening ceremony to mark the beginning of the workshop.
- The facilitator introduces the candle lighting by explaining that first we begin with light – bringing us clarity, energy, warmth – literally light to counter the darkness and the difficulties that you face in your work.
- One participant, or the facilitator, then lights the candle in the middle of the circle and initiates a moment of silence.
- The facilitator introduces the water element by saying: 'next, we pour water for each other – as a symbol of refreshment and renewal'.
- The facilitator then pours water for the second facilitator from a pitcher into the empty bowl, then the second facilitator pours water for the the first. Next, ask each participant to pour for the person next to them (facilitators can also pour for the participants if necessary).
- The facilitator then introduces the earth element by saying: 'next, we lay down flowers – as a celebration of beauty. A celebration of ourselves – and each other. To celebrate the fact that we made it here safely to this place, that we are here together and that we have three days for ourselves, alone. The earth supports us, nourishes our physical bodies and it gently grounds us in place – here, with each other, in the moment.'
- Ask each participant to lay down their rose in the bowl of water, and then to place them in the inner circle closest to the candle. As they lay it down, keep in their minds, that this is their space, it is for no one else. For their well-being and their safety. A place where they can impart worries that are unspoken – remove weights from their shoulders, from their hearts and bodies – and share their concerns safely.



EXERCISE:

PAGE 2/2

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

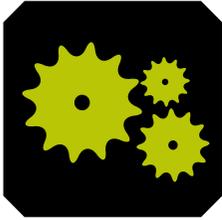
Opening Ceremony

(Example from the Kenya Integrated Security Workshop)

- The facilitator introduces the air element by saying: ‘finally, we celebrate air – and breathe! Many of you have travelled a long way to get here. You have left behind loved ones. All of you are leaving behind a lot of work – and that may weigh heavily on your heart – because a part of you may want to be fully here, and a part of you is still with the work – the reports you need to write, people you need to see, etc. This is a time to release that tension.’
- Finally facilitator leads a simple hara breathing exercise to release tension and to set focus (see ‘hara breathing’ exercise in the section on integrated wellness exercises for details).

FACILITATION NOTES:

- This is a very peaceful and grounding opening. It may appeal more in certain cultures than others – for example, while this worked well in Kenya, it may not have been as well-received in some of the former Soviet Union contexts.

EXERCISE:

Archetypes: Who did I Bring into this Room?

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 30 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: BLANK CARDS, COLOURED CRAYONS OR MARKER PENS (OPTIONAL)

SUMMARY:

This is an unusual exercise that helps participants introduce themselves to each other and to build trust and group cohesion.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

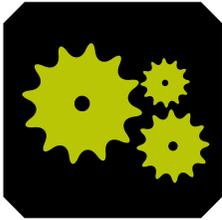
- Hand out blank paper in the shape of cards or blank index cards.
- Explain that, in almost every situation, we enter a space with one of our 'archetypes' by default – the persona that we use to be in that space and with others. This persona is like a shield – it protects us. It can be anything – the mother, the joker, the trickster, the leader, the maverick, the scholar, the bitch, the martyr...
- Ask participants to think about 'who I am in this space?'; 'which personality have I brought in?'
- Try to give it a name if you can. On one side, write down that name and, if inspired to do so, draw some simple representations of that archetype.
- When everyone is finished, ask them to lay out their cards and to describe who they chose and why.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- Explain that our 'archetypes' or 'public identities' are our shields – how we want others to see us – but that they also put distance between us. Sometimes, especially in a safe place, we need to lay down those shields and to be the person who is underneath. That makes us vulnerable, and it is scary, but it is one of the ways in which we establish safety and trust with each other – by taking that risk, and speaking from that place.

Alternative option:

- For a more detailed discussion – and one that mirrors the 'pros' and 'cons' of all our integrated security strategies – have participants turn the card over. On the reverse, at one end of the card, have them write down the positive aspects of their chosen archetype. Then turn it around and, at the other end, write down the negative aspects. Have them incorporate their observations into their description of the card that they chose.

EXERCISE:

Talking About our Passion: Why I Became an Activist

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 60 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: NONE

SUMMARY:

This exercise is used to introduce participants to each other on a deeper level. It is useful for establishing group connections and commonalities, and to begin to explore issues of motivation, passion and the personal history behind the public work.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask participants to take a few minutes to think about why they became an activist.
- Once they are ready, and have that story in their mind, tell them to forget it – that is not the one you want them to talk about.
- Ask them to tell the real reason they became an activist... the story underneath.

FACILITATION NOTES:

Explain that everyone has their ‘first’ story – the one we hold on the surface, the one that we are comfortable with. This is the intimate story we share on occasion, the one that becomes our history. But it is the other stories we want to unearth, the ones that reveal the deeper, truer reasons behind our activism – that help us to reconnect to ourselves, to the passion and those beginnings.

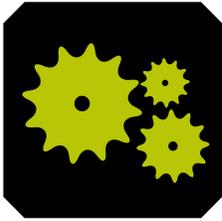
And when these deeper truths are shared in this space, we connect to each other on another level. We see that we have a lot more in common than we ever expected.

In addition, this helps us to form connections before ideological differences regarding our organisational or theoretical frameworks emerge – first we see each other as coming from similar places.

This exercise can then flow naturally into discussions about our identities: who we are as activists and what connects us.

Alternative Option:

This exercise can be used any time you want to encourage participants to leave their comfort zone and get to a deeper truth. You could, for example, ask for an example of a situation in which they were hurt or betrayed by another activist – then ask for a different story, in which they were the one to hurt or betray someone.

EXERCISE:

What do I Want from Myself? From the Group?

FORMAT:

INDIVIDUAL
AND GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 15 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: TWO BLANK CARDS PER PARTICIPANT IN TWO DIFFERENT COLOURS, TWO BOWLS OR CONTAINERSSUMMARY:

This is a quick exercise that helps to create a safe and trusting space by asking participants to identify both what they want the group to offer to them (for example, trust, respect, honesty, compassion) and what they want to be able to bring to the group. This is important for ensuring that participants are taking responsibility for being present and participative themselves, as well as taking responsibility for the group dynamic.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Hand out two blank cards to each participant.
- Ask participants to write down quickly the answers to the following questions (in one or a few words):
 - a) *What do I want from myself today?*
 - b) *What do I want from the group today?*
- Make sure these are colour coded – that is, that everyone answers the questions using the same colour card.
- Tell participants the answers will be anonymous, and they need to go with their first instincts.
- Have participants fold their answers and place them in corresponding containers (put a coloured card with the question on top of the container as a guide).
- When completed, facilitators either can post them around the room (particularly answers to ‘what I want from the group’) and/or the facilitators or participants can read them out aloud.

FACILITATION NOTES:

This is a good exercise if you are finding that the group is struggling to bond or connect and you need to do more to bring members together, or to get issues into the open. This can be a standalone exercise, and can take place before the ‘unspoken fears’ exercise. Alternately, it could be used during the opening of day two.

EXERCISE:

When Was the Last Time I...?

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 30 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: BLANK CARDS (PREPARED WITH QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE)SUMMARY:

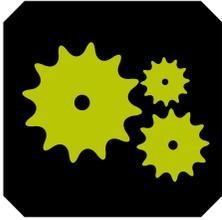
This is a moderately complex exercise that can be used to open up discussions of well-being strategies – it requires some preparation beforehand and a good sense of the participants' needs and experiences.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Prior to the exercise, facilitators design a set of cards, one per participant, plus a few extras. Each card is blank on one side and has one question on the other side. The questions are designed with the participants in mind, and are intended to reveal and release stories that need to come out at this stage (that is, before we move deeper into strategy development).
- Examples of questions from past workshops include: 'When was the last time you: 'screamed out your anger?'; 'felt unconditional love?'; 'wept for your loss?'; 'had great, satisfying sex (with or without a partner)?'; 'forgave a betrayal?'; or 'laughed until you cried?'
- Hand out the cards with questions face down and tell participants not to turn them over.
- Explain that, while each card was written with a particular participant in mind, they are being distributed randomly so you do not know if you have received your own card or a card designed for someone else.
- Then, ask each person (one at a time) to turn over their card and answer the question.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- Facilitators should use this exercise if they think they could comfortably design questions that would work for the group. One way of doing this is to sit quietly, think about each participant individually, and ask yourself – what does this person need to feel or release?
- A nice part of never knowing if you got the card that was meant for you is that you have an even deeper investment in everyone else's answers – because every answer could have been meant for you.
- This is a very personal exercise and it connects people in the group very quickly. However, it could be off-putting for participants who are not ready to move this quickly.

EXERCISE:

Speaking the Unspoken

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 30 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: ONE BLANK CARD PER PARTICIPANT, A METAL BOWL, MATCHES AND WATERSUMMARY:

This is a very powerful exercise that can shift a group and build a deep connection between participants. It is intended to help participants talk about the issues that they are holding back. While it was initially developed to talk about unspoken fears, it can be used for any issue that facilitators want to draw out from the group.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Hand out one piece of paper (or small card) to each participant. Then ask them to write down their deepest, unspoken fear (using one word or a few words). Tell them not to hesitate, and emphasise that the answers will be anonymous. When finished, they should put the paper, folded, in a bowl in the middle of the circle.
- The facilitator mixes these up, and then asks everyone to select one piece of paper randomly from the bowl. Once all of the participants have one in their hands, tell everyone to take a deep breath. Each person then reads their paper aloud. After all have been read, they are returned to the bowl.
- Next, the facilitator offers one (or several) participants the opportunity to set the papers alight. Wait in silence while they burn. Then put out the fire with water and take the bowl out of the room.
- Follow this with a simple breathing exercise. This is important to ensure that the exercise closes properly.
- Afterwards, the facilitator offers a brief reflection, for example, in the case of an unspoken fear:

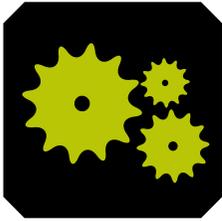
This is the strategy – how we deal with fear. We name it. We extricate it from our bodies, from our nightmares; we bring it into the light of day. We share it – with people we trust. We look at it, together, in a safe place.

And, just as we looked at threats, we look at where our fears come from, the ‘why’, the ‘who’ and the ‘what’.

This is a safe place, which we have created together – where we can hold each other’s fears, where we listen, with love and respect. We understand that our fears are common and shared. And that together, we release them.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- This is a very challenging exercise, but it is very powerful. If it is used, take care to make sure there is time after the reflection for reactions.
- Ensure that the exercise is used once there is enough trust within the group and that there is enough time afterwards to work with any emotions triggered – this means that, ideally, it occurs on the morning of Day Two – in the middle of the workshop.

EXERCISE:

I Have the Power

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 30 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: NONESUMMARY:

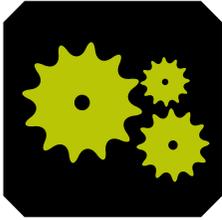
This is a seemingly simple, but very moving, exercise to support participants in recognising the power and strength they have within to keep themselves safe and well.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Each participant sits in the middle of the room on a chair, with the facilitator behind him/her (the facilitator could put his/her hands on the participant's shoulders to offer support if that is culturally/contextually appropriate—remember that physical touch can be supportive or upsetting, so always ask permission to touch a participant).
- The participant is asked to tell the group the powers they have within themselves.
- When all participants have spoken, the facilitator explains that this exercise is: to remind you of how strong you are, and how much you have within you. So often we hear about power that is scary, destructive; this is about the power to keep ourselves strong and safe.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- Use this exercise at the end of the day, as a strong and positive closing exercise.
- While it is important not to limit the participants as they describe the power they have, as a guideline, facilitators could suggest they list 3–5 powers.

EXERCISE:

Lineage Line

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 20 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: NONESUMMARY:

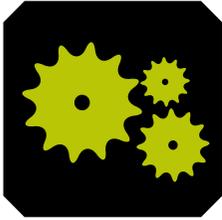
This is a strong exercise that is useful for closing a day and particularly helpful for groups dealing with grief or loss. In the exercise, participants are asked to acknowledge and connect to the people who have supported them in the past, support them now and will support them in the future.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask all participants to stand up in a circle.
- Ask them to honour and recognise everyone who stands 'behind them' – those people who struggled before them in the past, who brought them to where they are: family, leaders, other activists, historical figures.
- Then everyone who stands with them, supporting and inspiring them today.
- Then everyone who will come next, following after us – those we support and cherish.
- A facilitator explains that this reminds everyone that they are never alone – these are the people who stand behind us and with us.

FACILITATION NOTES:

This exercise can be very emotional and inspiring, as it is an acknowledgement of all the people in our lives who have supported us, which includes those who are no longer physically with us. Facilitators need to frame this as honouring everyone who has touched our lives as activists, and to keep the overall mood positive and uplifting, without negating the emotions that arise from recognising our 'lineage'.

EXERCISE:

*Letting Go and Commitments*³⁸

FORMAT:

GROUP
EXERCISE

TIME: 20 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: TWO CARDS OR PIECES OF PAPER PER PARTICIPANTSUMMARY:

This is a nice exercise to close a workshop, or a section of a workshop. In it, we ask participants to both 'let go' of difficult emotions and to 'commit to' positive actions.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Each person writes, on two slips of paper, one thing they are letting go of (for example, fear, anger, disappointment, mistrust, hopelessness) and one thing that they want to commit to (for example, loving myself more, trusting others, taking care of my safety).
- Each person puts them into two separate bowls.
- They can share what they have written if they so choose.
- Someone sets the 'letting go' papers alight and pours water on the 'commitment' papers.
- Participants put the ashes and the mulch (wet papers) in a hole in the ground and then plants a tree on top. Alternately, plant a flower in a large pot.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- This is a good exercise to consolidate the outcomes of the workshop, and can be a very gentle and positive closing exercise.
- It could also be followed by the 'goodbye cocktail party' exercise (see ice-breakers) or a celebration.