

# Breakfast from the world



## Brief description of the activity

Breakfast from the world is an aggregative event aimed at discovering new cultures by highlighting a crucial moment of its daily routine: the breakfast.

## Breakfast from the world

### Objectives:

The objective of this activity is to get in touch with different cultures in a way that overcomes the oleographic or stereotyped vision of them. The choice of breakfast is not so much about presenting food or recipes from different countries, but rather it is a guise to share a crucial moment of daily life in different cultures.

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### Methodology:

Therefore the methodology used is to create a non-formal context in which participants from different countries can show how do they usually have breakfast in their home country, can share it with other participants, and recreate a moment of home life with people with different cultural backgrounds.

The activity consists of four main moments:

- Preparation,
- Having breakfast,

- International press review,
- Debriefing.



**Preparation:** In order to maximize the impact of the activity it is important to involve a small group of participants (those who will be in charge of preparing the breakfasts) from the very beginning of the organization of the event. This involvement into organizational aspects is a guise to start, within this small group, a process of reflection on cultural aspects that boosts cultural awareness and encourages the exchange with others.

**Having breakfast:** This part is where spontaneous aggregation occurs. Once the location is set up, participants are just invited to join the tables with breakfasts that arouse their curiosity the most, and then move to other tables. This phase should be as informal as possible, so the role of facilitator is just to ease the encounter of participants at different tables. In order to encourage a horizontal transfer of knowledge among participants, where possible, the breakfast itself should be prepared together with participants.

**International press release:** This phase is intended to make participants aware on how priorities change from country to

country, by reading the first page of newspapers from different parts of the world.

When the breakfast is over, in turns, participants read some articles from the first page of their country newspapers. After a short explanation of the content of the article, other participants are invited to comment it. It can be something unknown before by the audience, so the person who read has the chance to introduce his/her country through what national media say in it. It can also be a news the audience knows about (ex. international politics, public figures...) In this latter case the activity allows the comparison the weight that this news is given by the media in different parts of the world, as well as the view of the public opinion about it.

**Debriefing:** Once the experiential part of the activity is over, it is important to re-conceptualize it with participants.

The objective of this phase is to allow everyone to have an overview of the activity that has taken place and to get conscious of what has been learned.

Sharing personal impressions allows everyone to become

aware of a wider vision; it also helps to identify with the experiences of others, increasing the sense of empathy. The verbal processing of the experience also allows everyone to understand the role taken and the attitude had during the activity.

Eventually participants will feel more alike and find that they have a lot more in common than when they started.

Final goal of this phase is to make participants understand what has been learned during the activity and to reflect on how to apply it when dealing with people from other cultures.

For the conduction of the debriefing, these methodological aspects should be taken into account:

Have mediation capacity: the discussion must be guided so that all the participants have their say, but that no one imposes their opinion on the others. It must involve everyone: everyone has their own time, so the facilitator must not force anyone to express their opinion if they do not feel like doing it, but everyone must remain focused on the discussion until

its end.

*Ask the group open questions:* a yes-or-no question can be useful for checking concepts but here the point is to encourage participants to expand on their answers, which requires them to construct longer examples of language. Questions therefore must give the chance to participants to explain concepts, stimulate creativity and broaden the individual's point of view, so as to make all the members of the group reflect.

*Do not judge:* no answer is right or wrong, the facilitator must bring out what people have perceived, not universal truths.

*Listen:* do not give answers, but stimulate the right questions. Instead, it is up to the participants to give the answers, which will be different according to their experience and personality. As a facilitator, just follow the flow of the conversation and "be on the ball" of what is being said.

**Duration:**

The activity should take place early in the morning, preferably on Sunday or non-working day. It should take at least two hours and it can be either a one-day activity when different cultures are presented at the same time (advisable), or a recurring event (in this case each day could be dedicated to the presentation of one different culture)

**Location:**

As it is a moment of social gathering, the choice of the location is crucial. If the weather conditions allow, it is good to have this event outdoor, or however in an informal context, such as a bar or cafeteria. According to the meals to prepare, and if they can be prepared before or at the moment, there should be some facilities nearby (kettle, socket, stove...).

**Materials:**

- Tables (one for each different breakfast)
- Chairs (according to the number of participants expected)

- Cooking facilities
- Food according with the breakfast to prepare (agreed in advance with the participants in charge of preparation)
- Newspapers or printing of their first pages (in alternative, computers and wifi)

**Staff needed and eventual specific skills required:**

No particular skills are required, as long as participants themselves prepare the breakfast

**Participants involved :**

Participants must be at least of three different nationalities, if you choose the version of presenting breakfast from one single country. The success of the activity is directly proportional to the heterogeneity of the group, so the best is to have as many nationalities as possible involved, both on the side of preparation and as guests.

## Steps:

### Before

The preparation of the activity has its own weight in terms of promotion of interculture, and should then be performed in a proper way to optimize the outcomes of the activity.

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Recruit in advance the people in charge of preparing breakfast. Once found, a preliminary meeting with all of them is useful to arrange times and logistics.

Agree with them what is representative of this moment of the day in their culture, which food is needed and eventually the equipment required.

Remind the participants you intend to involve that no specific cooking skills are required, and that they are asked to prepare nothing more than what they usually prepare for themselves in the morning.

Where possible, ask participants to prefer food that can be prepared at the moment, with the involvement of other participants.

Elicit among participants a reflection on the role and importance that breakfast has in their culture, as well as particular traditions laying behind it, the origin of the food that will be eaten and curious stories connected to it. In this way, you will move from a mere organizational meeting to an occasion of growth, in participants, of their cultural awareness, that will make the following activity way more significant and effective.

Agree with the group the location where the activity will take place: when suggesting possible locations keep in mind that the context is crucial for its success, the venue should then be as informal as possible. Take into account the suggestions coming from the group and discuss together about their feasibility and possible strategies to overcome problems in case the group decides to perform the activity somewhere else than

your youth centre.

Check your audience and make sure that each participant at this phase agrees with the place chosen by the majority, also taking into account that religious beliefs and cultural habits may make someone feel uncomfortable with the chosen location (ex. bar mainly frequented by men, places that serve alcohol, conflictive neighbourhood...).

Extend this reflection to all and try to figure out together if the other participants you intend to involve will be as comfortable as those present with the location chosen.

As a final step, elaborate with the group a strategy to promote the initiative, with the goal of involving as many participants as possible, from different countries.

End this session with the preparation of the international press review: ask each participant to find a copy of a newspaper from their country and to bring it the day of the activity (it can be either a copy from that

day or few days before). If it is not possible to find a paper copy, look for an on-line version and print the first or few pages for the event.

As the contents are written in their national language, it may be useful to pick in advance the articles to be read in order to previously translate them in English, the local language or any other language understandable by all.

## During

### Having breakfast

Once the space has been divided in order to have one different breakfast per table, invite the participants to join one of the tables and to ask for, taste, or prepare something they have never tried before. Dedicate the proper time to this phase, according with the size of the group, ensuring that this phase can proceed in a relaxed way, just like breakfast on non-working days. To ensure this, it is helpful to remember that not all the time has to be

filled with structured activities because the spontaneous aggregation and cultural exchange needs empty time, as different people take a different amount of time to get out of their comfort zone and try something new.

### **International press review**

Ask participants to sit in circle and, to those who participated to the preparation phase, to read the articles they previously chose from the newspapers. As mentioned above, the topics can vary, as long as they are of any interest for the audience: international politics, news that have attracted international attention or linked with famous public figures, but also relevant news of domestic policy.

Encourage the discussion among participants by asking key questions such as:

- Did you know about this news?
- Has it the same relevance on the media of your country?

- Does press in your country consider and therefore talk about this event/public figure in a different way? How?

### **After**

#### **Debriefing**

Guide the conversation between the participants, through questions and new food for thought.

The discussion can also take place spontaneously, in this case the facilitator must make sure that everyone respects their turn and that everyone is listened to.

Alternatively, the discussion can be conducted through a series of targeted questions. Here following a series of questions to guide the debriefing, grouped by topic. Choose the ones you think fit the best with the group and the development of the activity, assuming that they must analyse all aspects of the experience and bearing in mind that all the questions must be open and stimulate discussion.

## 1. Overall experience

- How did the experience go?
- Was the experience overall positive or negative?
- Did it go as you expected? What happened that you didn't expect? Why?
- Were the objectives of this activity clear?

## 2. The group

- How was the relationship with other participants?
- Have you learned anything more about them?
- What obstacles did you have to overcome together?
- How did you manage to overcome them?

## 3. The participants

- How did you behave with the other participants?

- What did you think during the activity?
- What were your fears towards this experience?
- And what were your hopes instead?
- Why was what you expected different from what happened?
- What could you have done differently?

## 4. Future

- What did you learn from this experience?
- Knowing what you learned today and having to repeat the activity, would you behave differently next time?
- How is your connection with other participants now?
- Do you think you come out stronger from today's experience

Alternatively to the questions, or even as an additional phase, role play can be organized to better involve all the participants.

The advantage of this kind of task is that approaching a concept in a practical way rather than just talking about it generally has a bigger impact on the participants.

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- **Write a log page:** Ask participants to collect their thoughts in writing. Give 10 to 20 minutes. Maybe not everyone is used to writing down feelings. But this mental exercise allows participants to reflect deeply on everything that has been experienced during the activity, on what they have learned and on the relationship with others. After writing, everyone can share their reflections aloud. Sharing is not mandatory but it is very useful. It allows others to remember things they may have forgotten and to discover new points of view.
- **Create an advertising flyer:** Divide participants into teams and provide them with all the necessary material. With a good dose of creativity, they will have to rethink

the activity and express it through images with promotional purposes. They can create a collage of images cut from magazines, or create something original.

## Do's and don'ts

During the International press review phase some participants can be more sensitive to certain topics than others. Especially regarding international politics, pay attention to the news that are selected in the preparatory phase, trying to avoid those news that can directly regard some participants or groups of participants that can react in a conflictive way. Keep in mind that the point of the activity is not to discuss about politics (even if it can be an interesting part, and you may decide to dedicate a separated and differently prepared session to it), but rather to reflect on how priorities and perspectives changes in different cultures, through national press.

## Innovative aspects for the promotion of interculture

Breakfast from the world is innovative because it uses food as a tool to introduce daily life habits in different countries. Food is one of the most used (and abused) ways to promote interculture, often with the high risk that it remains a folklorist moment in which an encounter of different cultures happens, but without any effective exchange. While other meals are more and more influenced by the cultural fusion that globalization makes nowadays possible, breakfast still remains an identifying moment of different cultures. It is the first act of the day, so it naturally introduces the daily routine of one culture.

To de-construct this moment, by making it “social” and shared, means to let other people enter in one’s daily routine, presenting it in a genuine way beyond stereotypes. The connection this moment offers to the news-

paper reading and the discussion that can derive of it, namely, a formal activity performed in a non-formal context, is then crucial to deepen this encounter of cultures and combine an experiential enrichment with an exchange of knowledge.