

Making the longest line



Why use this activity?

This activity helps a group to think about what they can do with their own resources.

Please note: in using this exercise it is important to be sensitive to local culture and tradition. For example, taking off some items of clothing may be seen as inappropriate in some contexts.



A brief description

Participants are split into teams and asked to make the longest possible line using anything they have on them. The team that wins is the one that forms the longest line. A discussion follows to explore lessons about sharing our resources.



You will need

- A large length of space. It may be best to do this activity outside, or in a large room.



Timeline

This activity can take 30-45 minutes.



What to do

- Ask the group to form two lines with an equal number of people in each line.
- Explain they are going to use anything they have on them to make the longest possible line (shoe laces, belts, shirts etc). Each person must be in contact with another person either by means of a part of the body or an article of clothing.
- The team that wins is the one that forms the longest line.
- Bring the groups back together for a time of discussion using the following questions:
 - To what lengths were people prepared to go to make the line as long as possible?
 - What were the barriers to people sharing what they had?
 - What does this exercise teach us about using our own resources?

- Listed here are a number of learning points from this exercise. Discuss any that haven't yet been discussed with the group:
 - It can surprise us when we see what we can achieve by only using what we have.
 - Sometimes challenging situations produce natural leaders.
 - Once people have a clear vision of what is needed they become motivated and energised.
 - Challenging situations can produce creativity. For example, people may decide to lie down on the ground to make the line longer or find creative uses for their clothes and accessories.
 - For some people this exercise may be uncomfortable and sometimes giving up our resources for the common good can be challenging and uncomfortable too. It can also be risky for the poorest who have more to lose if their social investment does not bring a return.



Notes

This activity is adapted from Tearfund (2009) *Umoja Facilitator's Guide* - <https://learn.tearfund.org/en/themes/church/umoja/>