

## Teambuilding and Commonalities Icebreakers

### **Step In/Step Out**

*(also duplicated in the Getting to Know Each Other icebreakers)*

Ask participants to stand in a circle facing each other. Explain that you will read a statement, and participants will decide if that statement applies to them or not. If the statement applies, the participant will take one step forward toward the center of the circle. If the statement does not apply, the participant will remain standing where they are. Ask participants to reflect on each statement before making the decision to step forward or not. Remind participants that the interpretation of statements is completely individual, and that there is no right or wrong interpretation.

Read the statements one by one. Give time for participants to make their decision, time for discussion if needed, and then ask participants to step back if they have stepped into the circle.

This is a nice activity to allow participants to identify similarities and differences, whether between cultures, countries of origin, or individuals. You can select statements that relate directly to your topic, or some low-risk statements such as those below:

1. I had breakfast today.
2. I like the snow.
3. I consider where I live to be my home.
4. I like to play or watch sports.
5. I was born in the United States.
6. I speak more than one language.
7. I like to cook.
8. I like to eat.
9. I have children.
10. I like how I sing, even if other people don't.
11. At some point during this exercise I chose not to respond even though the statement applied to me.

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### **Kwasa-Kwasa**

*(also duplicated in the Energizing Through Movement icebreakers)*

This is a good, quick activity to break the silence and wake participants up after sitting through each in a series of presentations. Following each presentation, have all participants stand up and face the presenter(s). Participants rub their flattened hands together in a circle-like motion, saying “Kwasa-kwasa-kwasa”), clap hands together, and extend one hand toward the presenter(s). The gesture is meant to say “well-done” to the presenter(s).

This activity was generated in southern Africa, and the words represent the name of a dance, the “kwasa-kwasa”. You can use any other word, phrase, or made-up sound, and/or any other type of movement your group may enjoy, of course. The point is that the participants, by offering appreciation to the presenter through physical expression, remain engaged in the session. This can be used throughout a training session, a conference, or within a classroom regularly.

### **Spider Web**

*(also duplicated in the Energizing Through Movement icebreakers)*

(This commonly used activity involves a fair bit of physical contact and may be difficult for people in long dresses or loose clothing, so you must determine whether or not it is appropriate for your group.)

Create groups of 5-8 participants, and ask each group to move to an area where they can stand in a small circle. Tell participants to hold hands with two different people in their group, one hand per person, but only with someone who is not immediately to their right or left. Once all participants are holding hands with two different individuals, tell them they have created a spider web and they cannot let go of each other’s hands. Each group must then untangle its spider web while not releasing hands.

After the groups have finished, facilitators can lead a discussion with the groups on communication, teamwork, and the different roles team members may have played.

This communication and teamwork exercise works best in groups of five to eight participants, but can also be effective with larger groups. If working with a larger group, try conducting the exercise twice: first with smaller groups, and then with one large group.