

Dear workshop attendees,

We hope this message finds you well, and that you've had some time to reflect on our recent "32 Steps to Togetherness" workshop that took place last Wednesday. We're excited to share with you a summary of the event to help capture the key takeaways and moments of inspiration.

As you will remember, we divided into focus groups to discuss four of the key themes highlighted in the 32 Steps manual. These thematic areas were:

1. Change your habits
2. Help Out & Join Something
3. Get Political
4. Be a Great Neighbour

Some of the key points and ideas that were discussed included:

Change your Habits

- It's okay to show up alone. You can gain a lot from going to social events by yourself, and forcing yourself to socialise with new people.
- Using faith to inspire connection with others. Not only is this a great way to connect to others through spiritualism and belief, but it also connects you deeper to your own faith.
- Sometimes the 'conditions' you find yourself in affect how much you are able to change your habits - we are so heavily influenced by the people around us and the societies/cultures we live in. For example, traditional systems of schooling often repress children's ability to think critically, and to express their own opinion with confidence. We need to help change the environment around us before we can fully work on changing our own habits.

Help Out and Join Something

- GP's and other civil servants should be more in touch with their local community and with the people they are working to support. Without this connection between service providers and members of the community, we struggle to put in place the appropriate support systems needed within communities.

- Working with schools and involving parents more in the community through their children. Parents can help fill the gaps that perhaps overworked teachers cannot (e.g. being a reading buddy for children)
- Charities can be encouraged to engage service users as volunteers themselves.
- Understand that helping out can also include helping yourself (e.g. improving mental health). Volunteering should be advertised as a way to help/improve yourself, as well as others.
- Creative projects are a fantastic way to connect - we should try to branch out from the more 'traditional' social activities (e.g. going out drinking) because these are not always inclusive for everyone.
- Treat everything as a positive experience and make the best of a bad situation - there is always something new to be learned.
- Use apps and social media to promote meet-ups with new people. Oftentimes social clubs and activities do not have enough promotion to reach a wide audience - social media can be a good tool to help spread the word.
- Don't be afraid to ask people questions about themselves and their backgrounds. It is always better to politely ask than to assume that you know!

Get Political

- Many people have different views, understanding and mindsets when it comes to politics. Almost like a split. Some people (often 2nd generation migrants) view politics to be in the same bubble as fraud, untrustworthy, and unreliable. Is this a cultural difference? Is this because of colonialism?
- How do we fairly distribute political power? How do we encourage people to vote? How do we break down the mindsets that people may have towards politics? Is that our responsibility, or should councillors and politicians be more clear and aim to gain the trust from the nation?
- Politics doesn't connect so much to everyday people anymore. It can be hard to talk about politics on a social level, and can make people uncomfortable and awkward. Usually small talk consists of weather, routine and family. It can help to remember that politics infiltrates every aspect of our lives, and that every decision we make is, to some degree, a political decision.

- Start from the family, and engage more in political discussions within the household (e.g. through the news, social media).
- Doing nothing is also a political statement. Break your silence.
- Hold people in positions of power accountable - know your rights as a voter and as a citizen of a democracy!
- Encourage others around you to vote. Help build their knowledge of political parties and their campaigns, even just through informal conversation.

Be a Great Neighbour

- Share information with each other and invest in creating trust.
- 'Breaking bread' with others is a fantastic way of forming connections, but also keeping an eye on somebody else's mental health.
- Compliment people! It may seem nerve-wracking to compliment someone you don't know that well - but it will make you both feel good!
- Organise big group events so that everyone is meeting new people at the same time and is in the same position (e.g. street parties, or a big dinner)
- Connect through religion, or shared cultural/national/ethnic heritage - don't be afraid to ask questions. As long as you are polite and respectful, there is always room to learn and grow.

We were absolutely delighted to see so many new ideas being brought to the table, and we are looking forward to implementing these within our future work on the 32 Steps project. We hope you too feel inspired by the many conversations that took place.

We sincerely thank you all again for your support with this project, and for making the effort to attend the workshop and provide such a positive contribution to this important conversation. We want to thank in particular Emmanuel Achiri, Mustafa Field and Zoë Garbett for their inspiring words.

It was an absolute pleasure to see everyone present in-person, in the spirit of togetherness!

In solidarity,
The ENORB Team