

# CRITICAL THINKING



## WHAT IF?

GROUP ACTIVITY AIMED AT DEVELOPING AND CRITIQUING IDEAS FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

**The goal is to learn** the skill of asking the right questions about new ideas. Questioning is a dialogical process that works best in small group situations. It also requires participants in the process to take up various roles, such as defending an idea or trying to predict its consequences. This simple activity provides a framework for making these roles explicit and for practising the art of asking the right question.

### Objectives:

- To develop an understanding of the consequences of ideas
- To develop critical thinking skills.
- To distinguish between 'feeling' or intuition, and sensing when considering ideas.
- To promote creative thinking
- To develop the idea of scenario planning

**Advice:** Make sure that all participants are allowed to speak and that the whole group is supportive of each other. The four roles should be clarified as follows:

**Warrior:** a person who takes ownership of the idea and promotes or 'sells' it to others.

**Seer:** a person with vision, who sees the further potential of the idea and how it might stimulate change, at any level from local to global.

**Wizard:** a person who gets things done and can find solutions to problems.

**Sceptic:** a person who always finds a downside to any idea, foresees risks and what might go wrong.

### Instructions

The activity involves plenary (whole class) and small group work (groups of 4 persons). It should take around 90 minutes but this is flexible.

#### Part 1

1. Within groups of 4, each member spends 2 minutes thinking of a business or social-entrepreneurial idea, and describes it in one sentence.
2. Next, the ideas are shared with the group, in Chat if using Zoom/Skype, or on a flip chart.
3. Group members adopt one of four roles (using dice), each with a question:
  - Warrior: Why is this a good idea?
  - Seer: What might happen?
  - Wizard: How can we make it happen?
  - Sceptic: What could go wrong?
4. The group takes each idea in turn, with each member taking a different role, and asking their question as above (5 mins per idea = 20 mins total)



5. Group members have 5 mins to agree on the best idea.
6. This idea goes forward to a plenary session and is posted in chat or on the board.
7. Participants can vote on the winning idea

## Part 2: Debriefing/Evaluation

- Did you enjoy the activity?
- Did it meet these goals:
  - To develop an understanding of the consequences of ideas
  - To develop critical thinking skills.
  - To promote creative thinking
- What did you learn about asking questions?
- Any other comments?

### Reflection in the learning community: Feedback on activity

- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- How might the activity be improved?
- Was there enough time for each task?
- What opportunities were there for self-reflection?
- What opportunities were there to learn from other group members?
- Which roles were easy to play?
- Which roles were more difficult and why?
- Could other roles be added?
- Could you imagine using this activity in your workplace?
- If so, in its original form or adapted?
- If adapted, please explain how.

### Tips for facilitators

- Make sure everyone has a chance to speak and has their ideas valued.
- Record and retain the ideas presented during the activity, to stimulate further discussion and increase ownership. Use posters and video posts where possible.
- Where online discussion is taking place, e.g. in break-out rooms, check in on groups to ensure that turn-taking and time limits are respected.
- Look for ideas that are specific rather than general

