VIRTUAL EXCHANGE IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL
CONNECT GLOBAL US-MENA
FALL 2019

INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUAL

Welcome to the Soliya Connect Program and our community of Virtual Exchange implementers!
Thank you for becoming actively involved and incorporating the program at your institution.

This is the most important resource for you as a Virtual Exchange implementer. Please find all major deadlines for you and your students in the calendar at the start of the manual. This manual is designed to be a comprehensive guide for those who are professors or project coordinators implementing the Connect Program, offering important information and suggestions that will be helpful over the course of the semester.   We have developed the manual using feedback and comments given by implementers, facilitators, and students from previous semesters, and each implementer can incorporate those components of the manual that best fit the needs of his or her group of participants.

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What is the Connect Program

The Connect Program – Soliya's flagship Virtual Exchange initiative – is an online cross-cultural education program that provides young adults with a unique opportunity to establish a deeper understanding for the perspectives of others around the world on important sociopolitical issues and develop 21st Century skills such as critical thinking, cross-cultural communication, and collaborative problem-solving.

The Connect Program has three distinct iterations that cater to the needs and learning goals of our diverse community of young adults and partner institutions:

- **Connect Global US-MENA** is an 8-week program, supported by the Stevens Initiative for Virtual Exchange, in which participants explore key global issues with fellow group members through a series of guided discussions, readings, and an independent project. Connect Global also has a specialized track – Connect Global Foreign Affairs – that focuses on the nature of the relationship between Western and Predominantly Muslim societies within the context of the larger global setting.
- **Connect Express** is a 4-week program in which participants engage in an exploration of their identity, analyze how their identity impacts their engagement with others in their personal context and the context of the digital world, and build competencies to foster constructive communication.
- **Connect Collaborate** is a 5-week program in which participants have the opportunity to work with peers around the world on developing an awareness campaign on a critical social issue, and, through that process, build their communication and collaboration skills.
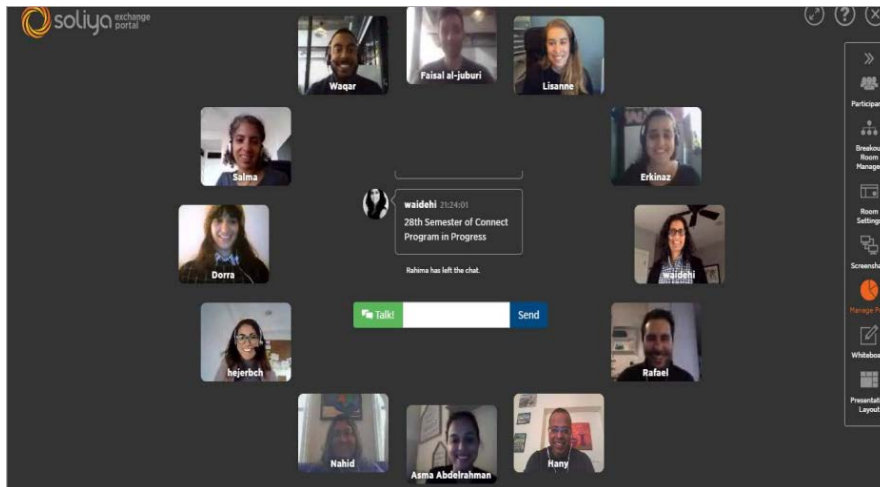
How Connect Global US-MENA Works

Each student is placed in a different online group with approximately ten other students from the Middle East, North Africa, and The United States. Students will login each week for their two-hour group sessions over an eight week period, and each group is led by 2 Soliya-trained facilitators who guide the discussions and the dialogue process. During the sessions, students are able to see and hear their fellow group members in real time via Soliya's videoconferencing platform.

Soliya has developed an online dialogue process intended to allow students to engage in an active, dynamic and collaborative learning process. While we have a variety of topics (outlined in the calendar below) that all online groups discuss, Soliya encourages active learning on the part of the students: asking them to identify the issues that they want to discuss, and developing their own questions to address these issues.   We hope that in doing so, students will take ownership of their own learning process.

Because we strive to ensure consistency from group to group, we have developed a list of goals for each week, and have indicated some activities and topics that are required over the course of the semester. **There are two weeks of required readings for all students as well as a final project assignment that they are required to complete.** Though it is not a required component of the Program, students will also be encouraged to complete weekly 'journal' style entries, to help them reflect on the dialogue process and deepen their learning experience.

Early on in the process, students do an analysis of what they see as the most pressing global challenges and social issues in the world today. Then, over the course of the semester, they explore these key issues collaboratively with their group members. As such, every group's discussion takes a slightly different path, based on the areas of interest of the students in that group, and their joint diagnosis of the global and social challenges. During the semester, students will also examine the process of dialogue through a series of "learning components" which use structured activities to highlight critical cross-cultural communication skills and build upon their capacity to engage with differences constructively.

To enable facilitators to effectively lead their groups, Soliya provides them with an extensive toolkit with a variety of activities and resources that they can use to enable the group to discuss both the required topics, and a broad range of "optional topics." Facilitators are encouraged to tailor their approach to each topic based on the specific interests, knowledge base and learning styles of the students in their group.

In addition, nearly every week the session begins with a brief discussion of a more personal topic, selected by the students themselves. In most groups students also formulate the questions and lead the discussions. Frequently discussed topics include:
- Family
- Culture/ Traditions
- Role of Women & Men in Society
- Stereotypes

In the last sessions, groups shift their focus to discussions around youth empowerment and activation, where students can share their vision for the future, and brainstorm together on how they can make a difference – individually and collectively – with a focus on the role of young people as change-makers.

For a detailed breakdown of the program structure please see the calendar below, which outlines the main objective, deadlines and assignments, key online activities and discussion topics for each week.

Soliya Calendar: Fall 2019

I. **REGISTRATION PERIOD**

Online Activity	Important Dates & Deadlines
Weeks of August 19th – September 23rd: *Ongoing Technology Tests, Implementer & Student Registration and Student Orientations*	
• **Implementers will introduce Soliya to technical coordinators on their campus.** Soliya will then work with these coordinators to ensure that technology is fully functional and lab space is reserved. *Please make sure to connect us with a technical coordinator at your university as soon as possible so that we may begin the initial technology tests.* • **Students begin online registration process**, signing up for their dialogue group times and providing information for their student profile on the Soliya website • **Soliya will provide regular updates to implementers** regarding their students' progress in the registration process. • **All students are required to watch the Connect Program Orientation Video,** and we ask that you ensure they do so by October 4th at the latest, to learn about the key elements of program, and what they can expect during their participation. If students have any questions or concerns, please ask them to contact the Soliya team at students@soliya.net.	• **August 19th: Implementer Registration Links Available** Once ready, the registration link will be sent to you by the Program Manager. • **August 26th: Initial Technology Tests Due** Initial technology tests on all campuses must be completed by this date. Technical coordinators will need to complete their registration and initial diagnostic testing so that we can address any technical issues before setting up the computers and completing the final technology tests. • **August 28th: Implementer Registration Due** Your registration as a Virtual Exchange Implementer is crucial as it allows us to collect important information about the course or project through which your students are participating in the Program. Please complete the online registration by **August 28th** • **September 6th: Student Registration Links Available** • **September 23rd: Student Registration Due** Students should complete the online registration process by this date. It will be very difficult to accommodate students who do not meet this deadline. *If you anticipate that these deadlines will be difficult for your university to meet, please discuss this with the Program Manager immediately.*

Week of September 30th: *Technology Tests and Orientations Deadline*	
• **Implementers who have not already done so should ensure their students have watched the orientation video** (described above). *Please make clear to students that they must provide their accurate schedule availability to Soliya when they register online. They will not be able to change their group meeting time once the Program has begun.*	• **September 30th: Final Technology Tests** Soliya aims to complete all final technology tests on all campuses by this date. • **September 30th: Students' schedules locked** All students' schedules will be locked on September 30th, which means any students who wish to change the times they selected during their registration must do so prior to this date.
Week of October 7th: *Schedule Information Distributed*	
• Students will be assigned their dialogue group and meeting time, and they will be given access to their group's website • Soliya will send implementers a summary of schedule assignments	• **October 9th: Students Notified of Schedule** Students will receive e-mails containing schedule information by this date. • After students are sent their schedules, they will only have **24 hours to request any final schedule changes if needed.** No changes can be made once the online dialogue sessions begin.

II. ONLINE DIALOGUE SESSIONS

Week of October 14th: *Online Dialogue Sessions Begin: Introductions & an Exploration of Global and Social Challenges*	
Objectives	Online Activity & Discussion Topics
• To introduce students to each other, to the facilitators, and to the key topics they will be discussing throughout the Program • To develop a positive group rapport • To introduce the idea of dialogue and the students' role in making it successful • To enable students to develop comfort in the online medium to discuss the first set of required readings in which students are presented with expert views and global trends on what constitute the most pressing global risks and social challenges to provide a broad perspective on the topic and spark discussions on issues that are important to them. • To provide students with a sense of ownership over the group process	• Introduction to group members, the online dialogue process, and the Connect Program • What is dialogue, how does it differ from debate, or discussions? Why is it important to learn to engage with difference? • What is your role in dialogue, and how can you contribute to making it successful? • What do you think are the most pressing global and social challenges in the world today? What are the most pressing issues in your country / community? How do those two sets of challenges compare? • How and why do different countries and regions perceive global and social challenges differently? What do you think of the issues your peers raised that were different from your own?

	• **Readings:** Which of the global risks explored in the articles that you read this week did you agree with most? Which did you disagree with? Why? What do you think are the most important global and social challenges?

Assignments & Deadlines:
Required Readings
☑ Discussion this week will be based on readings for "Global and Social Challenges"

Week of October 21st: *Identity & Deeper Exploration of Global Challenges*	
Objectives	Online Activity & Discussion Topics
• To allow students to explore their individual identities, and engage with issues of identity development in the context of intercultural dialogue • To identify major issues that will be discussed over the course of the semester • To enable students to develop comfort in the online medium • To provide students with a sense of ownership over the group process	• **Introduction to Identity and Culture:** Students participate in activities that enable them to explore identity issues and share cultural information. • How have your identity and experiences affected your understanding of and perspective on these issues? • Continued exploration of what students perceive to be the most pressing global challenges. • Students think about, and identify topics they want to discuss in the dialogue sessions. • **Final Project Discussion:** students work with their fellow group members to decide on their Final Project topic, and collaboratively develop the opening question (Question 1) for their community interviews.

Assignments & Deadlines:
Final Project
☑ Students select the two community members with whom they will conduct two short interviews over the course of the Program. Selection guidelines are provided in the Student Assignments document.

Week of October 28th: *Group Selected Topic*	
Objectives	Online Activity & Discussion Topics
• To allow the group to more deeply explore one or two of the issues that they identified as a global or social challenge • To begin to build an understanding of alternate perspectives and the sources of those perspectives • To explore the learning component activity on listening, and examine how it impacts dialogue • To empower students to engage with one another more fluidly, and ask and answer each other's questions around the topics of discussion • To encourage differences to emerge and begin exploring the underlying emotions, assumptions and experiences that lead to these positions	** Details about optional discussion topics are listed below the calendar.* • **Learning Component:** Listening Students examine the importance of listening, and work on developing their active listening skills in an activity that also promotes empathy and relationship-building amongst groupmates.

Assignments & Deadlines:

Final Project
- ☑ Students conduct the first set of 90-second video interviews with the two community members they selected. Students complete the Community Member Interview Record and upload their interviews on the Exchange Portal by Thursday of this week.

Week of November 4th: *Intercultural Communication*

Objectives	Online Activity & Discussion Topics
• To discuss the second set of required readings, which allow students to explore various facets of intercultural communication through theoretical perspectives and practical approaches • To have students reflect on their communication skills and examine how issues of intercultural communication impact the dialogue process • To continue to build students' comfort and ability to take leadership in the medium	• **Learning Component:** Intercultural Communication Students explore intercultural communication by examining concepts such as the definition of culture and ethnocentrism vs. cultural relativism, exploring the challenges that prevent effective communication across cultures, and brainstorming ways to address such challenges. • How do you define "culture"? What are the main elements that make up a culture? • Is cultural sensitivity important? How do you engage with cultural differences? What are the best ways to address such differences? • What are the main barriers to effective cross-cultural communication, and how do they impact intercultural communication and relations? What are some ways to address these challenges? • **Readings:** Which of the authors that you read this week did you agree with most? Which did you disagree with? Why? • **Final Project Discussion:** students discuss the views they gathered in their interviews, and develop the follow up question (Question 2).

Assignments & Deadlines:

Required Readings & Final Project
- ☑ Discussion this week will be based on readings for "Intercultural Communication"
- ☑ Students watch the interviews gathered by their fellow group members prior to their group meeting.

Week of November 11th: *Life Stories*

Objectives	Online Activity & Discussion Topics
• To give group members a chance to know each other on a deeper, more personal level • To help groups members recognize how different personal experiences can lead to different worldviews • To encourage group members to understand the perspective of the other side by re-thinking their experience and frame of reference	• What experiences in your life have been most important in terms of making you the person that you are today? • How have your life experiences affected your worldview and your political perspective?

Assignments & Deadlines:

Final Project
- ☑ Students conduct the second set of 90-second video interviews with the two community members they selected. Students then upload their interviews on the Exchange Portal by Thursday of this week.

Week of November 18th: *Group Selected Topic*	
Objectives	Online Activity & Discussion Topics
• To allow the group to more deeply explore one or two of the issues that they identified as a global or social challenge • To explore the learning component activity on critical awareness, and examine how their values, norms and assumptions impact the dialogue process • To encourage students to drive the conversation, asking one another questions and listening carefully to responses • To more deeply explore differences and challenge students to re-examine where their positions come from	** Details about optional discussion topics are listed below the calendar.* • **Learning Component:** Critical Awareness Students reflect on their own perspectives to gain greater awareness of the assumptions and values underlying their views, discuss the best ways to understand and engage with perspectives different from their own, and think critically about how they address differences and conflict. • **Final Project Discussion:** students discuss the views they gathered in their interviews.

Assignments & Deadlines:

Final Project

☑ Students watch the interviews gathered by their fellow group members prior to their group meeting.

Week of November 25th: *Group Selected Topic*	
Objectives	Online Activity & Discussion Topics
• To encourage a thought-provoking conversation about the global and social challenges that students feel are most important • To enable students to better understand one another's perspectives about this issue and the elements that led to the development of these perspectives • To further enable an honest, open group dynamic in which students can address differences and build understanding	** Details about optional discussion topics are listed below the calendar.*

Week of December 2nd: *Youth Empowerment & Working for Change*	
Objectives	Online Activity & Discussion Topics
• To encourage participants to develop ideas about ways that they might effect change, and to feel increasingly motivated and empowered to work for this change • To end the group on a positive note, with participants feeling that they and others learned through the dialogue process	• **Recognitions Activity:** Students take the time to recognize what they learned from their peers over the course of the semester. • **Working for Change:** Group members formulate ideas as to what they can do individually and as a group to address the global and social challenges they have explored over the semester at both the local, community level and the global scale.
Assignments & Deadlines:	

Final Project Submission & Student Evaluations

☑   Students submit their Final Project papers to Soliya and to you by Friday, December 6th

☑   If they have not already done so during their last group sessions, students must complete their online evaluations of the program by December 9th

Implementer Evaluations

☑   Implementers complete online evaluations of the program by December 9th

*Optional Topics

For Weeks 3, 6 and 7 of the Program, students are encouraged to discuss an issue or issues of their choice, relevant to the global and social challenges they identified as most important early on in the semester. As indicated above, we really want this to be an active learning process for students, so their leadership in selecting topics is important. As such, we ask you to encourage them to think proactively about what they want to discuss. Topics that students have frequently raised in past semesters include, but are not limited to:

- Immigration / integration
- The role of religion in society and students' personal lives
- Media
- Extremism
- Inequality
- Gender issues
- Culture and stereotypes
- Environment and natural resources

The Curriculum

Participants in the Connect Program come from a wide range of backgrounds, countries and intellectual interests, ensuring that students are exposed to a variety of perspectives and opinions in their dialogue groups. The assignments and readings are designed to delve into that experience further by: exposing students to various ways of thinking and understanding the topic at hand, providing a common base on which group discussions will be built, and allowing students to engage their fellow participants in an in-depth exploration of a topic that is important to them.

Required Readings

During the course of the semester, students will be required to complete two sets of readings on the following subjects: global and social challenges (discussed in 1st week of the program - during the week of October 14th), and intercultural communication (discussed in 4th week of the program – during the week of November 4th). The readings are assigned to help broaden students' perspectives and deepen their knowledge on two of the most important topics discussed during the semester. We have selected these two topics based on feedback from implementers, students, and facilitators in past semesters.

We recommend that Virtual Exchange implementers integrate these readings as part of their course curriculum or project requirements to ensure that all participating students will complete the readings prior to their sessions. Many implementers also choose to discuss the readings with their students in the classroom or in offline group meetings in advance of the week they are due, to complement the discussions in the online sessions.

Prior to the start of the semester, Soliya will send the full required readings list.

Final Project

During the Final Project, students will engage with diverse perspectives in their local communities, and connect members of their community to others around the world through asynchronous exchange. Students will begin by working with their Connect Program group members to develop interview questions. Then, they will select two members of their community with whom they will conduct 90-second video interviews in weeks 3 and 5 of the Program. During these interviews, students will also share the video responses gathered by their group members from *their* respective communities and facilitate an exchange of perspectives. At the end of the Final Project, students will write a paper in which they will share an analytical summary of the exchange, and reflect on the process of engaging with different perspectives, their role in enabling cross-cultural exchange, and their Soliya experience. Students should submit one copy of their paper to Soliya and one to you by Friday, December 6th.

Optional: Weekly Journal Entries

We recommend students write weekly journal entries during their participation in the Connect Program, and use their journal as a tool to reflect on both the content and the process of dialogue. To facilitate their reflection and encourage them to think critically about the discussions they're having with their group each week, we will share with students suggested themes and weekly focus questions. Though the weekly journal entries are not a required component of the program curriculum, we highly recommend it because feedback from implementers and past participants indicate that when students keep a weekly journal, it has a significant and positive impact on their overall experience.

Student Participation & Active Learning

Soliya encourages active learning on the part of the students: asking them to identify the issues that they want to discuss, and developing their own questions to address these issues. We ask that you encourage your students to see this as an opportunity to speak up, ask all the questions they have to students from other countries and other cultures, share their thoughts openly, bring up hard issues, challenge their peers, but also challenge their own assumptions, and finally, not shy away from hot or controversial topics. **If your students feel that there are key issues that are not being discussed, please encourage them to share their concerns with their group members and bring this to their facilitators' attention.**

In the first two or three weeks students are generally very polite and somewhat guarded, avoiding conflict and downplaying potential tensions or conflicts. As they become more comfortable with one another, they will gradually become more honest and begin to open up to their peers about their opinions and share more personal details. **If your students feel like their peers in the dialogue group are holding back about a particular issue please encourage them to take an active role in their group by asking questions about culture, politics or identity.**

It can also be very helpful to ask your students to think about why some students may be reluctant to discuss certain issues, or downplay controversial issues and prefer to talk about "safer" subjects where it is easy to find commonalities.

Implementer's Role during the Connect Program

Soliya Integration

Required Components:

The way you are integrating the Connect Program US/MENA at your institution will determine the level of engagement students have with the Program outside their weekly sessions (please see recommended components, below), but we ask that you make the following key elements of the Program required for all students who participate:

1. Attendance to all 8 online dialogue sessions during the Program,
2. The two sets of required readings, and
3. The final project.

Certificate Criteria

Students who successfully complete the Connect Program will receive the Connect Program Certificate of Participation, attesting to the skills and experiences gained through their participation.

Please note the criteria for obtaining each the Certificate of Participation:

1. Attend a minimum of 75% of the Connect Program sessions
2. Complete and submit the End of Semester Evaluation by the deadline (Dec 9th)
3. Complete and submit the Final Project Reflection Paper by Friday, December 6th

Certificates will be sent electronically to eligible students by the end of December.

Recommended Components:

Virtual Exchange implementers have used various ways to engage with Soliya's Connect Program, and we hope you will find the right balance for your participants. Based on feedback from past participants and implementers, we also recommend integrating the following components that other implementers have found to be valuable for their students' experiences:

Offline group discussions: Typically, implementers create an offline space for students to discuss their online experiences in a group setting of their peers at regular intervals, so that they are able to share what they have learned in their sessions, take time outside their online sessions to reflect on the discussions they've had with their online group, and help them figure out how they want to approach certain issues in the coming sessions. For ideas on how to structure these discussions and questions, please see the section below, titled "Offline Discussion Ideas".

Integration of reading topics: We found that students are able to get the most out of the Connect Program when there is a sense of strong integration between the Connect Program and the course or project they are participating in at your institution. Assigning time in the classroom or in regular group meetings to discuss the topics of the readings given by Soliya can be very helpful for your students in engaging with the contours of these issues more fully.

Writing weekly reflections: A number of implementers ask their students to write short, weekly journal-style entries documenting and reflecting upon their experiences. This helps the implementer be in tune with each student's experiences, and it allows the students a chance to reflect on their experience and gain a sense of progress over time. For more information and recommendations, please see above, in the section titled Optional: Weekly Journal Entries.

Ensuring Student Commitment

We have found that participating fully in all the components of the Connect Program requires students to spend approximately 25 hours on Program-related activities during the semester. Students who are provided with a strong incentive to participate are much more actively engaged in the Program, and are more willing to commit the time necessary to have a positive learning experience.

Thus, we recommend that you make participation in the required components of the Connect Program compulsory, by either offering it as a graded part of an academic course or creating a compelling incentive structure to ensure that students will fully commit to the elements that will shape their experience, and to reward them for their efforts.

Attendance

Students must attend the ALL their Soliya online sessions: full attendance, being on time and staying for the duration of the two-hour session are all critical for the success of the Program. Student absences have a great adverse effect on the quality of the discussions in each group, and it also impacts other students who feel they have made an effort to attend their sessions, while their peers haven't. **We therefore ask that you make attendance and timeliness mandatory, and where possible, part of your students' grade or final assessment.**

One model that has been successful for many of our partners is to have a certain number of points linked to missing a session. For example: missing one session detracts 10 points, two detracts 25. There are plenty of options in terms of how you hold your students accountable for attendance, and to optimize their experience we strongly urge you to apply a stringent attendance policy.

Please note: Because the Program only runs for 8 weeks – meaning that students who have been absent for 3 sessions have missed almost half the Program semester – 3 unexcused absences (i.e. there was no official holiday and the student was absent) leads to the student being dropped out of the Program.

Offline Discussion Ideas

We recommend having offline discussions reflecting on the program at regular intervals. For those participating in the Program as part of an academic course, we recommend setting aside at least 15

minutes each week for in-class discussions. For those who are participating as part of a non-academic project, we recommend a 30-minute group discussion every other week.

Virtual Exchange implementers differ on how they structure the offline discussion time, though many have noted that simply inviting students to talk about their sessions in an open forum does not result in constructive, in-depth conversations. As a result, several implementers suggested that it was more productive when they asked more focused questions. Please find below some guiding questions for different elements you may want to address in your offline discussions.

Engaging with differences: Questions to look more closely at the issues and perspectives discussed during the dialogue, and help students address the differences that may have arisen
1. What did your group discuss this week? What were the different perspectives in the group about issue x?
2. How is that different/ similar to your perspective on the issue? How is it similar/ different from the perspectives you've heard in our community?
3. [If the views are very different from the students' or the community's] Why do you think they see it the way they do? What might their reasons be? What are their sources of information?
4. Are there any issues that you want to discuss, that you are worried about raising? How might you approach these sensitive topics?

Facilitating better understanding: Questions to check if students understand the issues being discussed in their groups, and to help them better grasp the contours of a topic
1. Did you feel that you had a good understanding of the issues being discussed?   What didn't you understand?
2. Was there any confusion about any of the terms or issues being discussed?
3. If there are any perspectives being presented that you don't understand, what questions can you ask to try to gain clarity about them?

Addressing dynamics: Questions to help students think about group dynamics, and reflect on the process of dialogue
1. What kind of dynamics did you see amongst your group members during your discussion? Were some students more active than others? Were some quieter?
2. Was there a balance in who asked the questions and who answered them? If not, which students were asking the questions and which were answering them?
3. Why do you think these dynamics existed in your group? How did they affect your discussion?
4. Was the discussion balanced by different views from your group? Was there a lot of agreement amongst the group? Was there any conflict?
5. [If students expected some difference of opinion or conflict, and the group is avoiding conflict] Do you feel you were sharing your views fully? What strategies can you use to try to bring greater honesty into the conversation?
6. [If the group is in conflict] Do you feel you were able to get a good understanding of the different views? What strategies can you use to try to build understanding between alternative perspectives?

Reviewing larger themes: Questions to help students contextualize the weekly discussions and reflect on the larger themes of the dialogue process
1. What are the most pressing global and social challenges in the world today? How do these issues compare to those that are most important in your community / country?

2. What differences did you notice between issues that were important to your group and those important to you? Are there any issues that seem more / less important than they did at the beginning? Why?
3. What role does your identity play in how you think about global challenges and how do they impact your understanding of these issues? How do your experiences affect your views? How have your discussions with your group impacted your views of these issues?
4. How should these challenges be addressed? Who is responsible for addressing them? What role do you / could you play in engaging with and addressing these issues?

Support for Implementers during the Connect Program

Attendance Reports

At the beginning of the semester, Soliya will send implementers a link for weekly reports on student attendance. At the end of each Program week (typically on Sundays), the link will be updated with students' attendance information for that week. Soliya staff will also contact students who accumulate 2 unexcused absences, to warn them that they are at risk of being dropped. Due to the importance of regular and full attendance, we ask that implementers follow up on the weekly attendance reports, enforcing student attendance and timeliness as necessary.

Weekly Reports

At the end of each week, Soliya will send implementers an e-mail with information about the issues that were discussed the previous week, and the topics that will be discussed the following week. This e-mail will focus in on the specific areas where there was extensive debate or discussion so that can pursue these topics with your students in offline discussions.

We will also send you reminders in the weekly reports regarding important updates and information on students' deadlines and assignments before they are due, and we will send regular reminders to students as well. This said, we hope you will play an important role in ensuring your students meet the Program deadlines.

Student Performance Reports

At the end of the semester, facilitators complete a short, quantitative assessment of each student in their respective groups, describing the quantity and quality of your student's overall participation and engagement in the Program. We will provide you with this information to help you assess your students' performance in their dialogue groups, and assign a grade or final assessment based on that.

Technical Overview

Each week, students will meet with their group members and facilitators in virtual meeting rooms on Soliya's video conferencing platform, which provides a unique, technologically flexible environment in which students are able to connect with their peers around the world through live audio and video sessions. Accessed through Soliya's Exchange Portal, our custom-built platform has been developed with the principles of effective dialogue in mind and contains a suite of tools that allow facilitators to use the virtual environment creatively to enable rich, dynamic cross-cultural exchange.

Technical Logistics

Soliya's IT team will work with a technical coordinator or point person at each partner university to setup and test the computers, connectivity and equipment students will need in order to login to and participate in their dialogue sessions prior to the start of the semester.

Technical Issues: Although Soliya does its best to work with technical coordinators at partner universities to eliminate technical glitches, **it is important to stress to students that small technical problems will occur, especially during the first weeks of the program.** If one of your students has a technical problem that is not resolved during their online session, please ask them to email student-tech@soliya.net . This is the best way to ensure that Soliya staff members are aware of the problem and working with the technical coordinator to resolve it.

Soliya's Exchange Portal

Each student logs into the Exchange Portal by clicking on the login button at www.exchangeportal.net and entering his/ her username and password. Inside the exchange portal, participants can: access their groups' meeting rooms and launch the videoconferencing platform for their weekly sessions, interact with their group members as well as with the broader Soliya community via blogposts and direct messages, explore online resources including all of the articles and materials included in the Soliya curriculum, upload and share their partner / group projects, and request support from the Soliya team.

Tech Support
Soliya is committed to helping all Program participants promptly address technical problems. During the hours of the online sessions there will always be staff members from our IT team proactively working to address issues that arise. In addition, Soliya technical support can be emailed at student-tech@soliya.net at any time to answer your questions.

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

There will be about 2000 students from approximately 75 partners in 22 countries participating across the various Connect Program iterations in the Fall 2019 semester. We will be finalizing the list of partner institutions over the coming weeks. Institutions include the following for the Fall 19 Program:

- Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco
- Al Maaref University, Lebanon
- American Language Centers in El Jadida, Marrakesh, and Tangiers, Morocco
- American Center in Tunis, Tunisia
- American Corner in Sousse, Tunisia
- American University in Cairo, Egypt
- American University of Kuwait, Kuwait
- An Najah University, Palestine
- Arab International University, Syria
- Bielefeld University, Germany
- Bluefield State College, West Virginia, USA
- Bowie State University, Maryland, USA
- British Council, Egypt
- Campbell University, North Carolina, USA
- Chimie Paris Tech, France
- Connecticut College, Connecticut, USA
- Coventry University, United Kingdom
- Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, France
- Ecole Supérieure de Physique et de Chimie Industrielles de la ville de Paris, France
- EDU-Syria, Jordan
- Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Turkey
- Faculte des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Sousse, Tunisia
- Fayetteville State University, North Carolina, USA
- Forman Christian College University, Pakistan
- Future University in Egypt, Egypt
- Hanze University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands
- The Higher Institute of Computer Science and the Higher Institute of Human Sciences at the University of Tunis El Manar, Tunisia
- Islamic University of Gaza, Palestine
- Islamic University of Indonesia, Indonesia
- Istanbul Sehir University, Turkey
- Jovesolides Egypt, Egypt
- Junior Chamber International, Syria
- Jusoor Center for Studies and Development, Libya
- Kennesaw State University, Georgia, USA
- Lebanese International University, Lebanon
- Misurata University, Libya
- Moomken Organization for Media and Awareness, Libya
- National Engineering School of Bizerta, Tunisia
- Northwestern Michigan College, Michigan, USA
- Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary
- San Jose Community College, California, USA
- Sagesse University, Lebanon
- Soran University, Iraq
- State University of New York Potsdam, New York, USA
- Tunis Business School, Tunisia
- Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland
- Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy
- Università Degli Studi di Udine, Italy
- Université Euromed de Fès, Morocco
- Université Paris-Saclay, France
- University College London, United Kingdom
- University of Applied Sciences for Health Professionals, Austria
- University of Carthage, Tunisia
- University of Gabes, Tunisia
- University of Jordan, Jordan
- University of Jyväskylä, Finland
- University of Maryland, Maryland, USA
- University of Monastir, Tunisia
- University of Northern Colorado, Colorado, USA
- University of Padova, Italy
- University of Pavia, Italy
- University of Nebraska-Omaha, Nebraska, USA
- University of Sfax, Tunisia
- University of Sheffield, United Kingdom
- University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, USA
- Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia, USA
- Worcester State University, Massachusetts, USA
- Yarmouk University, Jordan