

The economy and me

Exploring our relationship with "the economy"

Overview

This method is suitable as an introductory activity, and explores the question of just what the economy has to do with us personally. The goal is to dispel the common perception of economy as dull statistics and dry theory, helping participants realise that the economic system has a great deal of influence on our lives, and is therefore something we should concern ourselves with. Participants walk around the room to music; whenever the music stops, they find a partner and discuss a particular question.


Instructions

Preparation

The questions are attached to the pinboard, covered. A number of empty moderation cards and a marker are laid out. Music and equipment are prepared.

Execution

1. The participants wander around the room to the sound of music. When the music stops, each participant finds a partner. The facilitator uncovers the first question and reads it out: "What economic activity did you engage in during the last week?". The participants now have a maximum of three minutes in which to discuss the question with their partner. They are then asked to report their findings back to the rest of the group. The facilitator lists the various fields identified on the pinboard.
2. The participants then go back to wandering around the room to the sound of music and find a new partner when it stops. The second question is revealed: "What is economy? And why do we engage in economic activity? Find a short definition of economy together." The participants discuss the question for a maximum of three minutes. Their definitions are then compiled and displayed in summarised form. If necessary, further definitions can be added by the facilitator.

	10-24
	30 minutes
	Music, laptop, speakers, pinboard, moderation cards, markers, a way of displaying the questions and definitions; Downloadable materials (< www.endlich-wachstum.de >): Definitions

3. At this point, the main aspects of the participants' definitions can be compared. What are the similarities and differences between them? What is behind these different perceptions?
4. The music is started for a third time, and the participants walk around the room. When the music stops, the participants come together in pairs once again. The third question is revealed and read out: "Which areas of your life are influenced by economy?" The participants discuss the question for a maximum of three minutes, and are once again asked to share their findings with the group. A facilitator lists the areas identified on the pinboard. If necessary, additional areas can be added (e.g. consumption, work, distribution of wealth, basic needs, public spending on social programmes, health, education, child and youth work, the state of the ecosystem, media, mobility, urban landscape, time management, etc.).

The activity should make it clear how much of a part in all our lives is played by "the economy", which is so often perceived as something abstract and distant from our lives.

<p>Tips for facilitators</p>	<p>For this method, it is important to work with the participants to establish connections between their lives and the economy. Participants sometimes find it difficult to answer the first question if they do not have a precise idea of what exactly the economy is. If this is the case, they can be encouraged to answer according to their own understanding of the term, without an externally provided definition. Ultimately, the goal of the exercise is to come up with a definition of economy together.</p>
<p>Suggestions for follow-up</p>	<p>This activity can be followed by an introduction to the topic of growth, e.g. with the quiz "Eins, zwei oder drei" ("One, two or three", chapter 1, currently only available in German - see <www.endlich-wachstum.de>).</p>