



## Dialogue as a form of resistance

The following perspectives show different ways of understanding the WSF. What are the implications of each perspective in relation to the inclusion or exclusion of actors in the Forum? What are the implications in relation to the construction of another possible world?

**"The WSF should only be open to organisations that are against neo-liberalism. The aim of the Forum is to create a united front for another possible world."**

**"My first experience at the Forum was very frustrating. The organisations seem to be concerned only about shouting their messages. This is not about the promotion of dialogue. I don't know how they can make another world possible by trying to impose their views in this way. I was made to feel bad because I expressed dissent and questioned some of the points of view. I felt as excluded as I feel in the capitalist system..."**

**"Who is going to define what this other possible world looks like? A lot of people who wanted to change the world have ended up reproducing exactly the same mechanisms of violence that they wanted to fight against."**

**"The word neoliberalism can be interpreted in many ways – and yet many people have never heard this word before. Should we exclude these people from the Forum? If we do, aren't we then only preaching to the converted?"**

**"The WSF is indirectly funded by political parties and serves as a platform for political actors. This cannot be avoided."**

**"The WSF is a space that belongs to the civil society. Political parties should not take part in the process."**

**"I wonder if people who are really affected by neo-liberal policies are here at the event. Would they approve of what is happening here? The messages that I see in the demonstrations are contradictory. Different people see the other possible world in very different ways."**

**"In my professional context I am one of the most progressive thinkers. I own a business and I want to make it work for a better and fairer world. It is not about profit, but about people. I know this is not what most people in business think and this needs to change. But at the moment, I do not find much support – not in my context, not here. In this space, I feel like a conservative without a voice."**

### Questions for personal reflection

What made you come to to the WSF?

What is wrong with the world and what made you reach this conclusion?

What, in your opinion, would make the world a better place?

How do you position yourself in relation to the perspectives presented?

What are the weaknesses and strengths of the WSF from your perspective?

### Questions for group discussion

Please read the list of questions, add your own questions and choose three questions for discussion in your group.

1. What do you understand by 'neoliberalism' and by 'justice'?
2. How do you define the 'open spaces' methodology? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this methodology in the contexts where you work?
3. In what ways does the WSF go beyond traditional ways of doing politics? In what ways does it reproduce the same forms of organisation?
4. What is the function of the WSF today? What should this function be?
5. Who should be included/excluded from the WSF (in terms of organisation and participation)?
6. What does the 'other possible world' look like from your perspective? What made you think like that?
7. How will this other possible world be constructed?
8. In this other world, will everyone think in the same way? Who will define what people will think or desire? What will happen to differences and minority groups?
9. Do you think it is possible to change the world without reproducing the same mechanisms of violence that led to the construction of the world today?
10. What are the advantages and limitations of a united front against neoliberalism?

### Debriefing

Think about your learning process today. What have you learned about yourself? What have you learned about others? What have you learned about knowledge and about learning? What could be done to improve the learning process of the group and the relationships within the space?

### OSDE – Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry

OSDE is a collective initiative hosted by the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice (at Nottingham University). It promotes a set of procedures (or methodology) to structure educational spaces where participants are able to talk, listen and reflect about the idea of interdependence in a safe environment without being told what they should think or what they should do. In these spaces, participants are invited to analyse different perspectives and think in a critical and independent way – examining the origins and implications of their own and other people's perspectives. The principles below form the basis of the dialogue/reflection process:

1. Every individual brings to the space valid and legitimate knowledge constructed in their own contexts  
We look at the world through lenses constructed in a complex web in our contexts, influenced by several external forces (cultures, media, religions, education, upbringing), internal forces (personality, reactions, conflicts) and encounters and relationships. The image these lenses project represent our knowledge of ourselves and of the world and therefore, whether they are close or far from what is considered 'normal', they have a history and their validity needs to be acknowledged within the space
2. All knowledge is partial and incomplete  
As our lenses are constructed in specific contexts, we lack the knowledge constructed in other different contexts and therefore we need to listen to different perspectives in order to see/imagine beyond the boundaries of our own lenses
3. All knowledge can be questioned  
Critical engagement in the project is defined as the attempt to understand where perspectives are coming from and where they are leading to (origins and implications). Therefore, questioning is not an attempt to break the lenses (to destroy or de-legitimise perspectives), but to sharpen and broaden the vision.

For more information, please visit the site [www.osdemethodology.org.uk](http://www.osdemethodology.org.uk) or contact [osde@osdemethodology.org.uk](mailto:osde@osdemethodology.org.uk) .