

Interdependency Game

You need a fairly long room for this game, although participants can be encouraged to take very small steps if space is limited!

Ask for 2 volunteers. Stand them side-by-side at one end of the room. Explain that they are going to take it in turns to decide whether to take one step forward, two steps forward or one step back. Their aim is to get to the other side of the room, but their actions may have some unanticipated consequences.

NB: DO NOT say that it is a competition. Neither should you say that it is not a competition – simply say that the aim is to get to the other side of the room. If participants ask directly if it's a race, say 'not necessarily'.

Person A should go first. In every case, person A should advance the number of steps they have chosen and person B should move according to the rules detailed below. These rules should NOT be explained to participants in advance but announced by the game leader at each stage:

- Two steps forward: causes person B to take 2 steps forward as well.
- One step forward: causes person B to take 2 steps forward.
- One step back: causes person B to take one step forward.

Person B should also progress according to the number of steps they have chosen. The rules of the effect of this on person A are different, however:

- Two steps forward: causes person A to take one step back.
- One step forward: causes person A to take one step forward as well.
- One step back: causes person A to take one step forward.

It should quickly become clear that person B has all the power in the game. Whatever person A does, B will also advance. B can choose whether to allow A to take single steps forward alongside him, or whether to 'race' to the other end regardless of A.

Most participants will automatically treat it as a competition and delight in leaving their 'opponent' trailing miles behind!

Points to draw out:

- We live in an interdependent world – decisions taken in the West necessarily have implications in developing countries, especially when it comes to development and world trade.
- Sometimes it almost seems as if it is treated as a competition, with countries racing to be the most developed, the richest or the most technologically advanced.
- If participants have treated it as a competition, point out that you did not say that it was a competition! They could have worked together and both got to the end of the room at the same time.

Step forward

