

AMAZING RACE

Objectives:

- Overcome fear
- Enable greater independence and self-sufficiency
- Build understanding of context and systems

Suggested Scheduling: End of week one

Time Required: 6-8 hours

BACKGROUND AND ORGANIZATIONAL INSIGHT

The Amazing Race is a fun and intentional way to build confidence in navigating India and introducing public engagement and personal safety skill sets. During Indicorps, we organized teams of two or three and incorporated riding local buses, navigating directions, buying water, using a payphone, etc. We provided the teams with two envelopes: (1) an envelope containing an official letter explaining the race, emergency contact information, and emergency funds in case the fellows got in a bind and (2) an envelope with instructions, dedicated race funds, and an accounting sheet to track expenses. Indicorps recruited community youth to surreptitiously follow the teams. The best part was introducing the sleuth youth at the end of the Amazing Race and pointing out that in India you are always being watched! The sleuth youth are also a nice safety measure for a first outing. For the winners, Indicorps arranged a chore swap. The first team who completed the tasks and arrived home safe could swap any set of chores for a week.

PREPARATION FOR THE FACILITATOR

Create a list of tasks that are important to the volunteer being independent and confident in the new town. Create a task loop that sends the volunteer across the city to complete the tasks. Engage public transportation and public amenities. Include check-ins, observations, and safety measures. Limit the use of technology and money/funds. Include bonus questions/tasks that involve community engagement and/or conversation(s) – i.e. help someone cross the street, etc.

ACTIVITY

This activity is essentially a team-based task challenge around the city/town/culture you have entered. Your goal is to complete several tasks in a limited time frame and in the format of a race. You will complete a round of tasks, engage different mediums of transportation, observe your surroundings and fellow teammates, and learn from cues around you on how this society functions. Ideally, this experience will give you the courage and sense of independence needed to feel empowered to get things done in this new space.

ADAPT EXERCISE FOR A SOLO FELLOW OR VOLUNTEER

To adapt the Amazing Race for a solo volunteer, the volunteer might ask someone in his/her organization to create an errand list of all the things the organization might need to complete in town that week. Ask if you can get a mentor and/or someone who can silently accompany you in trying to complete the office errands in a day. Get information on the types of public transportation available and any notable landmarks/green spaces along the way.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Describe your confidence level at the beginning and at the end of the Amazing Race.
- What were your favorite moments?
- What was the most difficult moment?
- How were team dynamics? What would you do differently to maximize everyone's learning?
- What surprised you most?
- How can you turn any perceived failures/errors into learning opportunities ahead?

