Overview:

This lesson plan will challenge participants to push back against stereotypes and biases that get perpetuated as a result of "single stories." They will watch a TED Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and discuss the concept of stories and how they impact how we view others.

Background and Information:

This activity was created by Florence Adibu, former CILMAR staff member. It uses Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Ted Talk, "Danger of a Single Story" (see citation below).

Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the ways in which narratives and stories can create stereotypes about people and places.

2. Analyze "single stories" participants may have about specific people or cultures.

3. Demonstrate how "single stories" influence bias and stereotypes in order to complicate and grow out of these viewpoints.

Time:

1 hour

Group Size:

Entire Group

Materials:

"Danger of a Single Story" TEDGlobal 2009 Talk (Links) and debrief questions (Downloads).

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

Cultural Self-Awareness:

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

Openness:

- To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
- To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

Empathy

- To interpret intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview.
- To demonstrate ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.

Curiosity:

- To ask complex questions about other cultures.
- To seek out and articulate answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.

Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks:

- To demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs & practices.

Other Skills:

Friendship; Mentorship & Leadership; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Debriefing Questions:

- What is a "story"?
- Choose one quote from this speech and share a reflection as to why this quote resonated with you?
- What stories did you grow up reading, hearing or listening to as a child?
- What is your favorite book?
- Why is this book your favorite book and why?
- How are stories told in books/novels versus news?
- Who is in charge of storytelling or the stories you know?
- Do stories cause stereotypes? Pull examples from Adichie's work.
- What do you need to tell a story?
- What do you need to tell your story?
- How do you feel when you tell your story?
- What does it mean to have a single story about a culture, country, event or person? How does this change or align with your perspectives?
- How does this impact your daily life (personal, work, private, public)?

Also depending on the learning outcomes you can add:

- What do you know about Africa?
- What have you heard about Africa?
- How does the news or other kinds of social media talk about Africa?
- Is there a single story of a country or people that you have? Do your examples in the aforementioned questions represent a single narrative?
- What are some "single stories" you hear about yourself?
- What are some "single stories" you say about or project on to others?
- What can we do to shatter the Single Stories about ....?

Related Tools:

Tools to use in conjunction with this lesson:

- [Alien Among Us, An](#)
- [By the Numbers](#)
- [Just Rescue](#)
- [LPPT](#)
- [Meet the Trainer](#)
- [Visible and Invisible Values](#)
- [Who Do You Think I Am?](#)