



The Amoeba

SPECIFIC ISSUE/S: Any kind of issue

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES: To develop understanding of roles involved in creating change and analysing whether they are filled in relation to a change objective

LENGTH: 15 - 30 minutes

GROUP SIZE: Between 10 and 25 people.

GROUP CHARACTERISTICS: This works best with a group or sub-group focusing on an issue they all care about.

FACILITATOR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED: Facilitator needs to understand how the model works; basic facilitation skills are sufficient

RESOURCES NEEDED: The Amoeba handout

INSTRUCTIONS: Explain the diagram first. This model suggests is that in society there are always factors pulling in different directions at any given time. Sometimes these factors are pulling completely opposite each other. So in order to have an effect on society whatever direction the group might be pulling in there has to be an effective combination of the three kinds of players: *the key change agent, the translator and the early adopters.*

The key change agent is the 'outrageous and unreasonable' person; *the translator* is the educator who couches the ideas in ways that people can understand; *the early adopters* are the first ones to normalise the new stance. There will always be relatively few key change agents (often only one or two) and more translators—with the largest group of people being the early adopters. This explains the wedge shape. Also, people may hold different roles for different issues.

Tasks

1. Identify a social justice issue that is immediate and/or important to the participants: for example, mining, oil exploration, constitutional change, gay marriage, etc. Make enough space in the room and invite participants to place themselves into a wedge shape according to the role they see themselves in.
2. Ask the three role holders in the group identify themselves.

Ask participants in each position to share why they see themselves in that role. Then identify the positions of participants who do not see themselves in any of these roles. Where do they see themselves in relation to this issue? Ask them to share their understanding of their role with the rest of the group.

3. Discuss these questions as a group.

- Are the outrageous ones 'further out' than everyone else?
- Are the translators effectively explaining the outrageous ideas so that rest can understand them?
- Are the early adopters picking up the ideas and doing something with them?
- Who are the counterparts are who are pulling in opposition to you?
- How effective are they?



- Do you have gaps?
- Are your players all working as well as they can?
- Are there any gaps or inefficiencies on the other side that you can take advantage of?

Participants don't have to agree but must be working effectively with each other.

Check if they are they playing their roles effectively.

FACILITATION TIPS: Ensure that discussions are focussed on the importance of the different roles and whether they are being filled adequately, not on judging others who are less active on the chosen issue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: INODEP (Ecumenical Institute for the Development of Peoples) adapted by AWEA