

# Lifting the Blanket

**Type of Activity:** Exploring our own identity and culture

**Length:** 45 mins – 1 ½ hrs

**Purpose/Objectives:** A space for participants to explore their own cultural identity/ethnicity and how this can contribute to their work for social change

**Group:** This tool can be used with groups of varying size. This tool works particularly well with young people. The tool is based on grouping into caucuses based on ethnicity. Therefore, you will need to be thoughtful about this prior to using the tool and ensure that you have caucuses that are inclusive of all participants, otherwise the tool could reinforce an experience of marginalisation.

**Facilitator knowledge and skills needed:** Standard facilitation skills.

**Resources needed:** Paper and paints/crayons/pens for each participant and a big thick blanket

## **Instructions:**

Start off by asking everyone to individually create a picture/painting of their ideal community. What would that look like? Give participants a set time-frame so that they know how much time they have to complete this task.

Once everyone has completed their picture, place them on the floor in the middle of the room. Then cover them with the blanket. Now divide the group into caucuses based on their ethnicity. Give them time to think about what they can draw on from their culture that would help them lift the blanket and come up with a creative way to share this with the other groups. When the groups are ready (or within timeframe that is specified) come together as a full group to share what each caucus came up with.

When all the groups have shared, work with the full group to reflect on the exercise, asking questions such as 'how was that?', 'what happened?', 'what did you notice?', 'what feelings came up?' etc. Start with reflections about how the experience was for the group on a personal level and build up to generalising about learnings cultural/ethnic differences. For example, pakeha/white groups often find this exercise challenge. What is that about?

**Acknowledgements:** This tool was created by Catherine Delahunty and Kay Robin for Kotare Trust

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