

## Simon says and group clap

Purpose: a fun way to introduce types of group organising and questions of empowerment.

Time: 20 minutes.

Preparation: An open space for the group to stand in is an advantage.

Directions: invite the group to stand in a circle and ask if they're familiar with the children's game "Simon says". If someone does know it, invite them to describe and demonstrate it. If no one comes forward, demonstrate it yourself: you are Simon and when you say "Simon says do this ..." the group has to copy every action and sound you make. If you vary those words at all, eg "Do this .." or "Simon says do that ...", whoever copies the action has to sit out the rest of the game. Check that everyone knows the rules, then run the game.

The game finishes when only one person remains. Give a moment for everyone to laugh and talk about the experience. Do not debrief it yet. When you feel the energy has reduced a little, invite everyone back into the circle and introduce the next game.

Ask everyone to think of a rhythm or drumbeat in their head. Close their eyes if it helps, but concentrate on their beat. Then invite them to tap or clap their beat. They can keep their eyes closed if they want. Ask them to keep clapping their beat but listen also to the other beats. There is likely to be a chaos of claps and taps. Stay silent and let the sounds shape themselves. Be patient and trust the group to adopt its own common rhythm – it often happens. Let this run for a bit then ask the group to stop and invite them to sit to debrief the experience.

Ask open questions like:

- What did you notice about the two games?
- How did you feel in each game?
- Which game did you like best? Why?
- What parallels might you draw from these games about group organisation, leadership, empowerment?

Facilitator's Notes: this tool benefits most from not having its aims spelled out too much at the start. It may be sufficient just to say we're going to play a couple of games and compare the experiences. Usually the group clap is experienced as an almost magical coming together of the sounds into one silently agreed rhythm. The debrief often raises issues like command-and-control and flat power structures. It's a great way of introducing the concepts of "power over" and "power with".