

Activity: HEADS UP Analysis (Advanced)



TIME ESTIMATE
45 minutes



MATERIALS

Devices for participants to conduct research on, paper to write their own HEADS UP analysis if preferred

PURPOSE

To understand common problems with campaigns and educational initiatives that do not recognize the complexities of global issues, such as those inherent in the current food system

DESCRIPTION

Using the [HEADS UP educational tool](#) developed by Vanessa de Oliveira (Andreotti), this activity is intended for participants to analyze if food systems initiatives in their communities inadvertently reproduce problematic patterns of thinking and relationships.

STEPS

- 1 Read [HEADS UP](#) as a backgrounder for this activity.¹
- 2 Ask participants to work individually and select a food system initiative in their community (for example: a Community Supported Agriculture program, urban farm, food bank, etc.).
- 3 Using the HEADS UP questions, ask participants to analyze if the initiative inadvertently reproduces problematic patterns of thinking and relationships.
- 4 Regroup and ask participants to share how the community initiative perpetuates and/or resists the patterns found in the HEADS UP checklist.

¹ de Oliveira, V. (2012). Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices. In *Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices* (1st ed., Vol. 6).

NOTES:

MODULE 1: FOOD JUSTICE PRIMER

Facilitator Notes

1. The goal of the HEADS UP tool is to understand and learn from repeated patterns of mistakes. The tool emphasizes the need for more complex social analyses of problems and solutions in order to avoid doing more harm than good. HEADS UP can also be used to recognize how “we are implicated or complicit in the problems we are trying to address (how we are all both a part of the problem and the solution)” (de Oliveira, 2012).
2. “The questions in the second column aim to identify the reproduction of the patterns in the checklist, the questions in the third column aim to identify awareness of and challenges to those patterns. It is important to acknowledge that some initiatives may do both at the same time (in different ways) and that in any initiative it will be very difficult to move completely beyond those patterns due to our historical conditioning, especially when it comes to mass or institutional forms of communication” (de Oliveira, 2012).

H EGEMONY (justifying superiority and supporting domination)	a) Does this initiative promote the idea that one group of people could design and implement solutions for everyone?	b) Does this initiative invite people to think about its own limitations and insufficiencies?
E THNOCENTRISM (projecting one view as universal)	a) Does this initiative imply that anyone who disagrees with what is proposed is immoral or ignorant?	b) Does this initiative acknowledge that there are other logical ways of looking at the same issue?
A HISTORICISM (forgetting historical legacies and complicities)	a) Does this initiative introduce a problem in the present without reference to why it is like that and how ‘we’ are connected to that?	b) Does this initiative offer a complex historical analysis of the issue?
D EPOLITICIZATION (disregarding power inequalities and ideological roots of analyses and proposals)	a) Does this initiative present the problem/solution as disconnected from power and ideology?	b) Does this initiative acknowledge its own ideological location and offer a robust analysis of power relations?
S ALVATIONISM (framing help as the burden of the fittest)	a) Does this initiative present people ‘in need’ as helpless victims of local violence or misfortunes and helpers or adopters as the chosen ‘global’ people capable of leading humanity towards its destiny of order, progress and harmony?	b) Does this initiative acknowledge that the desire to be better than/superior to others and the imposition of aspirations for singular ideas of progress and development have historically been part of the problem?
U n-complicated solutions (offering easy and simple solutions that do not require systemic change)	a) Does this initiative offer simplistic analyses and answers that do not invite people to engage with complexity or think more deeply?	b) Does this initiative offer a complex analysis of the problem acknowledging the possible adverse effects of proposed solutions?
P aternalism (seeking affirmation of authority/superiority through the provision of help and the infantilization of recipients)	a) Does this initiative portray people in need as people who lack education, resources, civilization and who would and should be very grateful for your help?	b) Does this initiative portray people in need as people who are entitled to disagree with their saviours and to legitimately want to implement different solutions to what their helpers have in mind?

(Source: de Oliveira, 2012)