

**Branch Out**  
12 months 6 steps 1 global movement

# Step Four: Say what?

*An activity about intercultural communication, exploring differences in languages and how it may affect our interactions.*

## Branch Out

Branch Out is the International Junior Branch project on the Content Area of the year of 2014 for CISV: Diversity. The project is composed by six steps that will be launched throughout the year, exploring different themes within the topic area of Diversity. Branch Out encourages participants to develop their perception towards their own identity and towards different communities.

In each step Branch Out will provide you with one ready-to-run educational activity and resources related to it.

## Step Four: Say What?

*Say What?* is the fourth Step of Branch Out - the International Junior Branch Project on Diversity. It encourages participants to understand how language affects our culture and our identity and how it affects our personal interactions in multicultural environments. The Branch Out team would like to deeply thank all the JBers who have sent their contributions to us, telling us some of their favourite proverbs, which are used in this activity.

As usual there is a further reading section with resources that can be used to go deeper into this topic.

### **Why should we discuss language and intercultural communication?**

The way we communicate ourselves is deeply related to factors such as our culture, our identity and our history. We cannot ignore that language is also a tool to express all that. It plays a really important role in communities and in communication, specially when it comes to culturally diverse environments. That's why Branch Out encourages CISVers to discuss, worldwide, language and intercultural communication.

### **Run Branch Out to promote the International Day of Peace!**

September 21st is the International Day of Peace. And you can use Branch Out to promote it in your chapter! The activity provides exclusive debriefing questions that can be used for that. *Say What?* was planned by the Branch Out Working Group of the International Junior Branch in collaboration with the Peace One day Working Group.

#### **Attitudes:**

- Willingness to appreciate how language affects our interactions.
- Willingness to discover how language and culture are connected.
- Willingness to promote intercultural dialogue, through peace education.

#### **Skills:**

- Ability to evaluate a connection between identity and language.
- Ability to critically analyze how you use your language in multicultural settings.
- Ability to understand how language can influence conflicts and conflict resolution.

#### **Knowledge:**

- Understanding how language influences prejudices.
- Understanding how language can shape a group's identity.
- Understanding how global interaction is related to peace education.

## The activity

- **Goal:** To stimulate participants to explore the roles of language within culture and how it affects interactions in intercultural environments. Also, to promote the International Day of Peace.
- **Time:** 65 - 75 minutes
- **Number of participants:** Unlimited
- **Preparation needed:**

-Select proverbs from the attachments and, if you prefer or if your participants are not English speakers, translate them from English to your own language.

### 1. Do (20 minutes)

Divide the participants into groups of 5 participants. First, ask participants to discuss in their groups what is a proverb. Read out loud the definition: *proverb is 'a short, well-known pithy saying, stating a general truth or piece of advice' (Oxford Dictionary)*. Give each of the groups the same proverb and ask the groups to answer the following questions:

1. What do you think the proverb means?
2. From what language do you think it was translated?
3. Why did you pick that language?

After answering the questions, give each group the proverb in its original form, together with the explanation. Compare the results between the groups and ask the groups to explain how they came to their answers and ask whether they agreed with the proverb or not.

Repeat the process 3-5 times with different proverbs.

Now, you can discuss the following questions with the participants. You can chose to either do it in small groups or in the big group.

### 2. Reflect (10-15 minutes)

1. Did you find any part of the activity difficult?
2. Were there any differences in how you interpreted the proverbs both within and outside of the groups? If so, why?
3. Do you feel like you could relate to the meaning of the proverbs? Does a similar proverb exist in your language?

### 3. Generalize (15-20 minutes)

1. What challenges do we face when trying to express ourselves in foreign languages?
2. Do you think our languages affect the way we see the world?
3. How can culture influence language and vice versa?
4. How is language used by groups/movements in order to build an identity? \*\*

*(\*\* Tip for facilitator: Examples of this can include slang, dialects, accents, etc.)*

### 4. Apply (20 minutes)

1. In what way do you think language can help us cooperate? In what way can it divide us?
2. Optional apply question: How can language be used to exercise power? For example: Does your language have signs of gender oppression? How is language used in colonialism?

Optionally, give each group following poem or read it out loud:

If I forget my native speech,  
And the songs that my people sing  
What use are my eyes and ears?  
What use is my mouth?

If I forget the smell of the earth  
And do not serve it well  
What use are my hands?  
Why am I living in the world?

How can I believe the foolish idea  
That my language is weak and poor  
If my mother's last words  
Were in Evenki?

*'My Language', Alitet Nemtushkin*

## 5. Questions specifically relating to International Day of Peace:

1. Language shapes our identity, and there is evidence that the way we communicate influences our interactions with other people. How can understanding these language differences and cultural relations help create or enhance bonds between people from different backgrounds? How can it work towards the idea of peace?

2. “Affirming that respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding are among the best guarantees of international peace and security (...) Considering that the process of globalisation, facilitated by the rapid development of new information and communication technologies, though representing a challenge for cultural diversity, creates the conditions for renewed dialogue among cultures and civilisations, (...)” [Taken from the preamble of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity]

- How can International Day of Peace help CISV reflect and look upon cultural differences to find common ground and understanding to develop a non-violent society?

- Why is it important to raise awareness of the International Day of Peace?

3. What are the possible flaws of having one International Day of Peace? Why is it important, or not important, to have a day to celebrate promote peace?

4. Do you think CISV should do more to support the day of global ceasefire and non-violence? Why or why not.

5. Think of the proverb: ‘The pen is mightier than the sword’. Do you think language and communication can be more effective than direct violence? Do initiatives like one day of peace make a large enough impact?

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## Tips for facilitators

Some participants may feel lost when trying to understand the proverbs given, because they might make no sense after being translated to English and then to your own language. Don't worry! That can be addressed in the debriefing so everyone gets the point of the activity.

Also, this is an opportunity for you to make previous research about your own language, so you can add more content to the activity - for example, you can go through the history of your language, through variations such as accents and slangs that are spoken in different regions or countries that use the same language as yours, etc.

If you plan to run *Say What?* to promote the International Day of Peace and run the exclusive apply questions, don't forget to explain what it is to the participants so everyone is on the same page.

## Adapt the activity to your needs

Feel free to make changes in the activity and to adapt it to the needs and specificities of your group, for example, using other songs that are related to cultural resistance movements from your country or region.

## Take pictures and share them with us

Branch Out is a global project. Let us know whenever you apply Branch Out in your chapter. Take pictures and share them with us through **branchout@ijb.cisv.org**! For this activity, we would also like to know which songs you chose to use!

Pictures will be posted in our facebook page, **facebook.com/branchout2014** and our tumblr, **branchout2014.tumblr.com**

## Introducing Branch Out

After the activity is over, remember to present Branch Out to the participants, so they can understand the educational purpose of the project, as well as to create interest on the next steps.

## Feedback

Get feedback from your participants and share your impressions with the Branch Out team! Send an e-mail to **branchout@ijb.cisv.org**

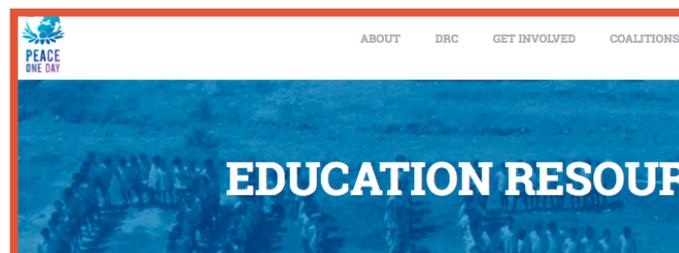
## Further Reading



→ UNESCO's own page on language diversity and endangered languages <http://goo.gl/C2ikpB>



→ An article relating to the education and use of language <http://goo.gl/WeQUQ7>



→ Peace One Day educational resources <http://goo.gl/eD85oi>

# Attachments

## Proverbs:

### • German Proverbs:

#### **Den Wald vor lauter Bäumen nicht sehen.**

To not see the forest because due to too many trees.

“I enjoy this saying because it describes the situation of not being able to analyze the full spectrum of possibilities due to focussing on details too much. When working in a group or alone, concentrating too much on individual problems may keep us from attaining a larger goal. The saying encourages me to take a step back every now and then to reexamine and reassess any task at hand.” (Anjo, Germany)

#### **Es ist noch kein Meister vom Himmel gefallen.**

Never has a master craftsman fallen from the sky.

“This German proverb says that there is no way around hard work when you want to achieve something or gain a skill. The saying is from the time when an apprentice learned a craft – such as baking or woodworking – from a master craftsman over several years. In connection with this, I believe the proverb contains the aspect of having to dive into hands-on work in order to learn, rather than waiting and procrastinating.” (Anjo, Germany)

### • Italian proverbs:

#### **Il sonno della ragione genera mostri**

The sleep of the reason generates monsters.

“It explains how ignorance it’s deleterious, since it gives birth to people that, not knowing, get convinced of their own prejudices and of their wrong and stupid beliefs. So a vicious circle is started and sadly usually it goes on and on until someone proves it totally mistaken. It is always better to be cautious when someone tells you something that may be deleterious for people or things and to check before starting judging. Sometimes you just don’t check because you’re lazy and you listen to that opinion for your own convenience: that is the sleep, and the person you become is the monster.” (Francesca, Italy)

#### **Diffida di chi sa di sapere.**

Don’t trust who knows to know.

“Socrates teaches: “I know I DON’T know”, life is about being humble and always ready to learn something new. Those who think to know everything, most of the time, are just pretending and showing off. So never trust who thinks to know better than the rest of the world!” (Giulia, Italy)

### • Indonesian proverbs:

#### **Kacang Lupa Kulitnya.**

A nut who forgets its shell.

“It illustrates a person who forgets where he/she comes from (e.g. hometown, family, heritage, etc.)” (Bayu, Indonesia)

#### **Kalah jadi abu, menang jadi arang.**

Loser becomes ashes, winner becomes coal.

“Explanation: This proverb is often used to illustrate a lose/lose situation, where both winner and loser gain nothing from the conflict.” (Bayu, Indonesia)

#### **Lain ladang lain belalang, lain lubuk lain ikannya.**

Different fields have different insect, different ponds have different fish.

“Different people have different personality, Different background means different thinking, Different culture means different custom.” (Bayu, Indonesia)

### **Setajam-tajam pisau, masih lebih tajam lidah.**

No matter how sharp a knife is, a tongue is even sharper.

“Be careful of what you say as it can hurt more (feelings) than a knife.” (Bayu, Indonesia)

### **Beri aku 1.000 orang tua, niscaya akan kucabut semeru dari akarnya, Beri aku 10 pemuda niscaya akan kuguncangkan dunia.**

Give me a thousand adults, I will undoubtedly extract \*Semeru from its roots. Give me 10 youths, I will undoubtedly shake the world

\*Semeru is the highest mountain in Java island

“That youth is the most valuable asset. Adults can make a big impact in the world. However, youths can do even greater things with less resources. Said by Indonesia’s first president (Ir. Soekarno)” (Bayu, Indonesia)

#### **• English Proverb:**

##### **That’s not quite my cup of tea**

“I love it as it is the epitome of britishness. It references one of our nations favourite drinks whilst upholding the british sense of politeness. It’s a great way to say, “I don’t like what you like, I’m different” without causing offence (unless said in a too sarcastic tone).” (Freya, Great Britain)

#### **• Peruvian proverb:**

##### **¡Quién no tiene de Inga tiene de Mandinga!**

He who does not have of Inga, has of Mandinga!

“Inga is a last name with Incan origins and Mandinga is an African last name. It means that no matter who you are, we all have the same roots from one or another.” (Rodrigo del Río, Peru)

Good Luck guys!

#### **• Greek proverb:**

##### **“Ἀγγελική φωνή από γαϊδάρου στόμα.”**

“Angel’s voice from a donkey’s mouth”

“It means good things may be hidden where we don’t expect to find them. [...] Most of the time when i really want something to happen i think of an occasion that this thing is most likely to happen and most of the time this thing i want takes place in a completely different and unexpected situation. Therefore i consider this proverb my favorite :) (Sophie, Greece)

#### **• Brazilian proverb:**

##### **Quem não tem cão caça com gato.**

Whoever hasn’t got a dog hunts with a cat.

“Before explaining why I chose this proverb I would just like to let everyone know that it has actually changed from what it sounded like originally. It used to be “Quem não tem cão caça como gato” (Whoever doesn’t have a dog hunts like a cat). However, for some time, people started saying it differently and it ended up being said as it is today. That being said, I can explain why I like this proverb so much. It’s a pretty simple proverb to understand: make the best out of what you have. (Yaay, very CISVish). However, knowing that it sounds different from the original one makes me happy. Not because of the fact that it changed but because, even though it changed, it maintained its original meaning. This gives me hope that whoever uses this proverb (lots of people, at least in brasil) values the importance of making the best out of what they have at all times.” (Tadeu, Brazil)

• **Hungarian Proverbs:**

**Ajándék lónak ne nézd a fogát.**

Do not look at the tooth of a gift horse.

“Doesn’t matter what the gift is, it’s a gift, don’t look how value it is. Hungarians still use this proverb, that’s why I like it so much!” (Krisztian, Hungary)

**Egyszer volt Budán kutyavásár.**

There was a dog-market in Buda only once.

“An opportunity was a one-time occasion only. My mom really likes proverbs, so, she likes to say this one a lot!” (Krisztian, Hungary)

**Szöget ütött a fejébe.**

It hit a nail into his head.

“Something set him thinking. I think this one, is just really weird, but hungarians use this one as well!” (Krisztian, Hungary)

• **Spanish proverb:**

**Donde fueres haz lo que vieres.**

Wherever you go do what you see”

“I love this proverb because it is one of the keys to social integration. Appreciating and imitating local traditions and local’s ways of doing things lets you learn and enjoy new cultures, be accepted wherever you go and show respect and admiration.” (Maximo Plo, Spain)

• **Polish proverb:**

**Co dwie głowy, to nie jedna.**

Two heads are better than one.

“Mostly I like this proverb because it describes my working style. The meaning is that it’s easier to make/create something with other people than on your own. Often the context it’s used also underline that there’s no harm to ask for support/help if you don’t know the solution or tools you should use with your work.” (Paulina, Poland)

**Głodnemu chleb na myśli.**

The hungry man has bread on mind.

(literally, in Eng: the tongue ever turns to the aching tooth).

“There are a lot of proverbs in Polish, but most of them I either don’t like or consider outdated or passing the values I don’t share. With this one, I like the subconscious part. And I think it’s very true. When we want something very much, even when we try hard to hide it, one can notice it from the slips of a tongue or our non-verbal behaviour. When we want something really badly, it’s hard to focus on anything else.” (Paulina, Poland)

• **Swedish proverb:**

**Det gick åt skogen.**

That went to the forest.

“I like this proverb, its feels typically swedish and it means something went (completely) wrong or failed. It can also be used as an understatement, which makes it practical.” (Martin Ingelström, Sweden)

**Nu har du satt din sista potatis!**

Now you’ve planted your last potato!

“This proverb is very interesting. It has some historical connection as the potato saved the swedish population from famine. It is a threat, or atleast supposed to be, but in modern society it is also comical.” (Aron Berglund, Sweden)

• **Norwegian proverb:**

**Det er ingen skam å snu**

There is no shame in turning around

“This proverb was originally a part of The Norwegian Tourist Board’s rules for intelligent behaviour during hiking in the mountains and then referred to the fact that if the conditions in the mountains changes, or are worse than you first thought, the intelligent thing to do is to turn around because it’s egoistic towards the people you love to put your own life in danger just because of pride. It has become a common proverb in Norway in relation to the fact that you’re allowed to change your mind if you make a decision that later turns out to be a bad one and this is why it’s my favourite - because it tells you that you’re allowed to make mistakes, to try and fail.” (Ellie, Norway)

**Den som tier samtykker.**

Whoever who is quiet agrees.

“It’s my favorite because the meaning is that you have to say something if you disagree. You have use your voice when something is being discussed or is happening, that is the only way you can change it, or at least let people know that you disagree.” (Bing, Norway)

• **Portuguese proverb:**

**Água mole em pedra dura tanto bate até que fura.**

Soft water on hard rocks hits so hard that it ends by making a hole.

“For me it’s one of my favorite because it means that persistence can get you everywhere. And that you should never stop trying.” (Pipa, Portugal)

**De grão em grão enche a galinha o papo**

Grain by grain the hen fills her stomach

“I like it very much because for me it means that one step at the time, you can get anywhere.” (Pipa, Portugal)