



SOMOS/We Are, Do's and Don'ts

Do's

- **Select a person who will lead this initiative** in your organization and work as a group to make it happen.
- **After learning about SOMOS and its goals**, choose a topic area or areas around which to focus your program.
- **Choose activities that connect to your topic area** and can be easily implemented in your locale taking into account you space, cost, staff power, and time.
- **Identify a target audience.** Your program may target any group (children, teens, adults, an entire community, etc.), just make sure you have a clear idea of who it is for so you can shape activities accordingly.
- **Keep a detailed account of logistics** (program plans, expenses attendees). Communicate with Alianza along the way, especially when needing support.
- **Carefully frame each activity around your topic area.** Communicate this frame to participants before, during, and at the end of the program.
- **Structure activities to create and maintain community.** SOMOS is a plural initiative with collective learning at its core.
- **Take time to create a safe space for participants.** This is especially important when working with a new group or an existing group engaging in new activities.
- **Prepare for the possibility** that activities and topics discussed may be emotionally difficult for participants. Be ready to respond if people have raw reactions while engaging in the program.
- **Implement some form of follow up:** a short questionnaire, brief meeting later on, or thank you cards can help participants feel more connected and remember the experience.

Don'ts

- **Don't give one person the full burden** of carrying out this work. Working collectively we can achieve more.
- **Don't skip picking a focus.** This is one of the most important parts as all activities you do will in some way revolve around this choice.
- **Don't engage in an activity simply because it's easy or interesting.** Make sure it is a good match for your org. and that you can see the project through.
- **Don't underestimate the role certain identities** (like age, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, etc.) can have in people's engagement. Be mindful of who you are trying to reach from the beginning.
- **Don't keep us in the dark about your amazing program** and don't hesitate to ask for help when you need it.
- **Don't assume participants will make connections** between activities and topics on their own. Make sure the meaning of each thing is directly communicated.
- **Don't underestimate the power of working in community.** For many 2016 participants this was their favorite part of the program.
- **Don't expect a safe space** to emerge simply because people know each other or share identities. Safety is intentionally created and maintained.
- **Don't ignore feelings** (positive and negative) that may come up along the way. Plan in advance to react with sensitivity when people are vulnerable.
- **Don't underestimate the importance of closure.** Simple follow up can help keep participants engaged and excited for new programs.