

# AccessEd and Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Leaders in Sustainable Development Programme

## Workshop: **Mastering Networking**

*Overarching workshop theme:*

This session will focus on developing your networking skills and tips for building your own personal network. You will practice networking conversations with others, as well practicing using storytelling tools for successful networking and communication. This session gives practical advice for tackling what can often appear to be a daunting skill to master.

These sub-themes will be discussed during the training session:

- Why building networks is important, and functions of your own personal network
- Basic steps for you to take to build your network anywhere in the world
- Typical skills of highly successful networkers and practice developing these
- Where to look to practically build your professional and personal network
- How to create your own personal network map and use it

## Session pre-work

As pre-work, we ask Scholars to do two short activities:

- 1) Think about someone that you have seen network *really well*. Bring an example of who they are, what they do, and how you have seen them in action (you don't have to give a full name)!
- 2) Complete the quiz on the next page to start thinking about practical networking scenarios. You can check the answers before the workshop!

## Quiz

Complete this quick quiz on networking. Use the final pages to check your answers!

**1. If you're having a difficult time getting a conversation started or if you're uncomfortable with networking, you should:**

- A. *wait for someone to approach you to begin a conversation.*
- B. *admit that sometimes these functions are awkward for you and ask the person for tips on how they go about getting to know someone.*
- C. *try meeting people around a central point e.g. a stand, a food table etc.*

**2. The best conversationalists are people who can:**

- A. *ask other people interesting questions.*
- B. *talk comfortably on a wide range of topics.*
- C. *always pick up the conversation when others run out of things to say.*

**3. The best way to show respect for what someone else is saying is to:**

- A. *compliment them on what they have said*
- B. *ask others to join your conversation to hear what they are saying*
- C. *be a good listener, provide responsive gestures and ask good follow-up questions.*

**4. When preparing for a networking function, you should:**

- A. *keep up to date on current events, world affairs, emerging business trends and state-of-the-art management or leadership concepts.*
- B. *ask the host in advance for a list of the guests and their backgrounds.*
- C. *bring a small note pad and pen to write down contact information or schedule meetings.*

**...continued**

**5. After meeting someone, if you feel there is no potential for them to help you in your job or research, you should:**

- A. *politely excuse yourself and continue to meet other people.*
- B. *not be too quick to judge.*
- C. *continue to talk to them but try to get others to join in your conversation so that you can meet new people.*

**6. After you have established a common interest and believe you would like to spend more time talking to this individual, you should:**

- A. *suggest they excuse themselves from the function and go to a restaurant or other room where you can talk confidentially about your career or possible job opportunities.*
- B. *set an appointment to meet with them at a later date.*
- C. *ask for their business card or details and permission to call in a few days perhaps to find a time when you could meet.*

**7. If you are networking and someone latches on to you and follows you everywhere, you should:**

- A. *politely involve them in all of your conversations.*
- B. *tell them to go away*
- C. *excuse yourself from them, or politely suggest that it would be good for both parties to speak to others too*

1. B&C – If you are uncomfortable with networking, admitting that to the person you are talking to is almost always a great icebreaker. People will go out of their way to help to you. They will carry the conversation and frequently introduce you to others to make you feel welcome. You can also using focal points in the room or at the event to meet others.
2. A (and B&C)! – Surprisingly, some of the best conversationalists do the least amount of talking. While B and C are also characteristics of good conversationalists, being able to draw others into the conversation is an extraordinary skill.
3. C (&B)– Being inattentive is the most common characteristic exhibited by people at networking functions. Always display good eye contact with verbal and body-language response. Ask good follow-up questions. On top of this, you might then invite others to join the conversation
4. A & C– If you want to carry on good conversations, staying contemporary on a variety of subjects is important. Read, read, read. Read on a wide variety of topics, including current events, business trends, social issues, sports and the arts. By reading about many topics, you will always be able to engage people in great conversations. Coming prepared ( C ) with pen and paper is also a must!
5. B – This is the most frequently missed question. Most people view networking as “What can I get from this person?” which is the wrong way to view networking. Rather, you should view networking as “How can I benefit or help this person?” If you try to judge the contact quickly from a personal perspective, you have made a terrible mistake. The goal of networking should be to meet interesting people, help them whenever possible, learn from them, perhaps make a contact that is mutually beneficial or maybe just simply make a new friend. Never set your expectations too high.
6. C – Don’t be too aggressive in trying to make that contact. A networking function is more of a social event than pure business. Meet lots of people by spending a few minutes with each. Collect lots of business cards, and then a few days after the event make contacts with people where it would be mutually beneficial to build a business relationship.
7. A – It is easy to get stuck with someone who follows you around everywhere you go. At some point, find a reason to excuse yourself or perhaps introduce them to someone and then excuse yourself from their conversation. Don’t let another person dominate your time at a networking function. Explaining the benefits of this to both people may help.