WHAT IS A ROLE PLAY?
An interactive exercise that allows participants to experience a situation from another’s point of view, apply or develop skills to handle a conflict or a problem, and analyze the experience with the help of observers.

A ROLE PLAY ACTIVITY MAY BE ORGANIZED
» as a combination of virtual and face-to-face interactions.
» at any stage of a project.
» with decision-makers and practitioners.

USE IT TO
» encourage different or new behavior.
» encourage exploration and discovery.
» develop appreciation for another’s point of view.
» strengthen consensus among multiple stakeholders.
» develop skills to handle a conflict or make difficult decisions.

HOW TO USE IT
» Provide guidance for those participating in the role play. Participants need a set time limit and clear objectives.
» Do not underestimate the importance of the facilitator in a role play.
» Use the following checklist to prepare and conduct a role play.
› Identify an overall objective for the role play.
› Define the problem and establish a real-life scenario that is relevant to participants.
› Determine which roles are needed for the scenario and establish the characteristics of each role.
› Cast the roles, either by soliciting volunteers or suggesting individuals to play particular roles.
› Provide participants with a synopsis of the role they are to play.
› Advise remaining participants what they should look for and note as observers.
› Facilitate the discussion and analysis.

To be effective, role plays should be unscripted and allow spontaneous action and conversations among the participants. In the discussion and analysis phase
› ask the role players to comment first on the enactment to set the tone of the discussion.
› ask observers to
  › discuss what took place during the role play.
  › offer their own related experience and knowledge, not just their opinions.
  › discuss how the role play situation or problem relates to their work.
  › suggest how the situation could have been addressed differently or more quickly.