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INTRODUCTION

The modern world of globalization offers a vast field for bringing cultures together and making the previous distances disappear. Nowadays, people with different cultural backgrounds share the same neighborhood. The question is whether people representing different cultures live next to each other hating the others and the diversity or whether they appreciate the value of intercultural society; whether the interaction between the two presupposes an inevitable clash or it is rather a process leading to harmony; whether different cultures can coexist based on mutual acceptance or respect; whether there are some processes to go through and whether there are certain difficulties to cope with.

As one of the founders of the contemporary disciplines on the study of culture – Edward Tylor states: “...culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Haas, 1944). The statement claims that everything directly or indirectly related to the mankind, anything created or maintained is subjected to cultural influence. Does this mean that to be able to understand a person, to effectively communicate and to build proper relationships, one needs to master the cultural specifics of each and every individual? What is the relation of the individual to the nation? Is the culture necessarily brought down to nations and ethnicities or is this a concept which extends beyond demographic dimensions?

The problems addressed in the research aim to answer the following questions:

i. What is intercultural learning as a process and what it takes to become an “interculturally competent person”;

ii. What effective methodology can be applied for developing intercultural competence.

The thesis work tends to serve the needs of the modern multinational society in terms of elaborating on what makes up an “interculturally competent” individual; what it takes to understand a person, to avoid or to tackle intrapersonal, interpersonal and intergroup clashes of cultural coloring. It furtherly dwells upon how those competencies should be developed in a classroom and a non-classroom atmosphere.

Computational work in intercultural learning has focused on a definite set of questions, which define the structure of the work, among them:

- How the concept “culture” is defined in the frame of linguistic paradigm and what is its present perception;
- What makes up a culture and what are its dimensions
What it takes to get involved in intercultural communication; what are the competences a person should possess for effective communication;

What are the possible encounters and misunderstandings as well as the intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts that might arise in the intercultural atmosphere or upon mingling with it.

Speaking of learning in intercultural communication, the paper proposes an alternative viewpoint on developing the intercultural competences and intercultural sensitivity – non-formal education. For a better perception of the non-formal education setting, we dwell upon the following questions:

- What is formal education and does it differ from non-formal and the informal one;
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of non-formal education;
- How adequate is the non-formal education structure for developing the intercultural competence and sensitivity;
- What are the criteria for identifying the proper non-formal tool for intercultural learning.

The last chapter of the work introduces non-formal educational tools such as energizers, role plays, simulation games, group works, individual exercises that can be applied for developing an interculturally healthy and competent audience.

The aim put forward by us determined the methodology to be used for research purposes: analysis, synthesis, contrastive study, descriptive and depictive method, contextual analysis and experiential data collection. The chain the work follows is based on the principle of “general-specific-practical continuum”: The study was mainly carried out in two phases. The first phase was to find out what are the tendencies for intercultural learning in the world, what is perceived by saying diversity at present, and how it is viewed in terms of learning and comprehension. The second phase, which derived primarily from the discovered need for new approaches to intercultural learning, was carried out through theoretical research on the main concepts and strategy frameworks. Finally, the paper was concluded with the classification of non-formal education tools and the introduction of specific methods for stimulating intercultural learning. Apart from introducing different concepts and theories, it goes on proposing definite practical tools on intercultural learning. The icebreakers, energizers, role plays, and simulation games aim to give the non-formal education practitioner a vast diversity of tools that can be adopted according to the specific aim, atmosphere and audience characteristics.

The research was carried out in accordance with the current needs of the modern society, especially that in Armenia. The particular attention on the non-formal methodology block is justified by the fact that non-formal education gains more and more worldwide prioritization as an effective tool-kit which manages to
best combine the usefulness with entertaining process. Already today and even more tomorrow, it is no
longer sufficient to think only in terms of formal education. It is therefore necessary to widen our under-
standing of education, making life-long education a reality. People continuously seek for alternative means
of education; systems that would prove to be effective and goal-oriented and that would best satisfy human
curiosity.

The most important theoretical contribution of the present studies is that formal and non-formal edu-
cation are outlined not as bipolars; rather, a dynamic approach to these poles overlaps the context between
them adding up to the informal education and bridges them as units of the same system that are called to
complement each other for a more effective education process.

The practical value of the work consists in the fact that the two interrelated areas that are taken under
observation – the concept of interculturality and intercultural society and the development of intercultural
competence through non-formal education, are underobserved and underapplied in Armenia. Being a vast-
ly homogeneous monoethnic country, Armenia lack intercultural communication skills which makes it
much harder to interact with the international visitors, to adopt tolerance and respect towards diversity and
to be able to best get assimilated into a new cultural environment when shifting to a new country for a
long- or short-term stay. Secondly, despite the educational reforms and innovations that are continuously
being advocated in Armenia and despite the fact of her joining several reforms of the European Commis-
sion including the “White Paper on Youth”, the non-formal education is not only underapplied but also
underestimated and not recognized. That’s why the work draws parallels between formal and non-formal
education trying to differentiate the ideology and implementation peculiarities that lie under each of them.

The research material can be applied as a learning reference or an instruction manual for intercultural learn-
ing, communication ethics as well as in promoting the recognition and application of non-formal education
methodology as an effective process for binary involvement.
CHAPTER 1: INTERCULTURALITY

1.1. Modern Understanding of the Concept of Culture

The term “culture” derives from the Latin word cultura meaning to cultivate (Harper, 2001). However, the modern definition of culture encompasses far more than the simple meaning of cultivating; the research in the field reveals that there are over 160 definitions for the single word of “culture”. No wonder why Gerth and Mills (Mills, 1954) claimed that “culture” is one of the spongiest terms in the world and that is perhaps the reason why it has got so many interpretations. No matter how different those definitions might be, they all come together within the axis of the broader notion identifying the latter as a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize a community or a set of people; primitively speaking, culture is what people say and think; what they do and what is done to them.

The recurrent anthropological understanding of culture is pretty much based on the reflections of Edward Tylor on the matter: “Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Haas, 1944). Basically what he implied was that culture is everything directly or indirectly associated with the humankind. Nevertheless, we fail to realize from the definition whether the culture should be associated with human behavior or whether that is something quite different. For a long time many anthropologists were quite content to define culture as behavior, peculiar to the human species, acquired by learning, and transmitted from one individual, group, or generation to another by mechanisms of social inheritance. But eventually some began to object to this and to make the point that culture is not itself behavior, but is an abstraction from behavior. What they say is that symboling itself is a part of human life, and whatever has to do with human life has always tended to be reflected upon symbolic means; a spoken word, a stone axe, a fetish, avoiding one's mother-in-law, loathing milk, saying a prayer, sprinkling holy water, a pottery bowl, casting a vote, and any other capabilities and habits [and things] acquired by man as a member of [human] society" (Tylor E., 1920). They are what they are - things and acts dependent upon symboling. Difference in behavior and culture lies mainly in the question how those symbols are reflected: When things and events dependent upon symboling are considered and interpreted in terms of their relationship to human organisms, i.e., in a somatic context, they may properly be called human behavior, and the science - psychology. When things and events dependent upon symboling are considered and interpreted in an extrasomatic context, i.e., in terms of their relationships to one another rather than to human organisms, we may call them culture, and the science - culturology. For instance, in the case of the avoidance of a mother-in-law, we would consider it in terms of its relationship to other symbolates such as customs of marriage-monogamy, place of residence of a couple after marriage, division of labor between the sexes, mode of subsistence, domestic architecture, degree of cultural development, etc. Or, if
we are concerned with voting, we would consider it in terms of political organization (tribal, state), kind of government (democratic, monarchial, fascist); age, sex, or property qualifications, political parties, and so on. In this case our symbolates become culture - a subject matter of culturology. Hence, we might draw a view that culture exists only within a context, i.e. reflected only in relations of symbols /here we should note that symbol should not necessarily be materialized/.

Keeping in mind the conclusion reached in the previous paragraph, let’s make a step towards critically analyzing the most general views on culture.

a. “Culture consists of ideas”. This comes from the general belief that ideas serve as petrol for the human vehicle in moving forward in life”. It indirectly implies that culture is purely mental with no reference to material reality or observable behavior. No one can put into question “idea” formulating culture; yet, not everything that is done by humans has got ideological basis; otherwise, the world would be as controllable as a weapon. Moreover, we should by no means overlook attitudes, acts, and objects.

b. “There is no such thing as material culture”. This belief is held by those who advocate culture as purely mental concept. The radicals of this trend even state that “material culture” is fallacious. Yet, as we have already identified, material objects are result of human labor, and anything that has to do with humankind, has to do with the culture held by him.

c. “It is people, not culture, which does things”. “Culture does not work, move, change, but it is worked, moved, and changed”; this particular belief is largely shared among the modern anthropologists starting from Boas to Hallowell. Of course we can by no means argue that culture can exist without humans. What we oppose is that if a person speaks Chinese, or avoids his mother-in-law, loathes milk, or writes symphonies, it is because he has been born into the extrasomonic tradition that we call culture which contains these elements. Yet the question, “Why does one people use charms while the other one uses vaccines” can by no means be explained by saying that this is a mere coincidence of human act. This is where the culture as a factor strongly affected by national history and demography comes to explaining the essence.

d. “It takes two or more to make a culture”. There is a conception that whether a phenomenon is an element of culture or not depends upon whether it is expressed by one, two, or "several" individuals. What this basically says is that one person cannot simply account for a culture. The objection to this theory is as follows: first of all, if we say that the number of individuals holding the shared behavior is an important factor for determining what is culture and what is not, then chimpanzees and other human-like species can simply build up a culture. Also, which is not less important, if expression by one person is enough, then what is the quota?

The rapid developments and the contrasting views on the concept of culture “induced” American Anthropologist F. Boas to go beyond the general identification of culture and its determinants and try to develop
what is known to be one of the most consistent views on the essence of culture: i.e. the so-called cultural relativism which. What he argued was that culture is a rather complex phenomena coming purely from the human essence and acquired in the process of human development. More importantly, he started talking about the cultural interaction: what does it mean to “bear cultural influence”, “to learn from culture”, etc. Boas’ students carried on with his views even after the WW2. What they were primarily amazed with was the abundance of the cultures across the globe and the ways people affiliate themselves with those (Boas F., 1907). This led them to focus on the history of cultural traits: how they spread from one society to another, and how their meanings changed over time. What they were saying was basically that culture is a “context” for interpreting people’s behavior; geography and history provide us with the means to understand the differences between cultural trends. This gave rise to the division of the so-called Boasian school to two branches: one of the schools holding the belief in the cultural universality; and the other one believing in the variability of it. One of Boas’ students – anthropologist Ruth Benedict (1887-1948) was the one to merge the two views together. She argued that There are things which are general to the universe (valuing life, security, etc.), and that the degree to which those traits are integrated make the cultures modifiable. Just as each spoken language draws very selectively from an extensive, but finite, set of sounds any human mouth (free from defect) can make, she concluded that in each society people, over time and through both conscious and unconscious processes, selected from an extensive but finite set of cultural traits which then combine to form a unique and distinctive pattern.” (Ruth, 1934)

On the other hand Boas argued that culture is rather dynamic; it moves from one group to another, and that specific cultural forms need to be analyzed in a larger context which ultimately has grown to the global context. And this is what brings us to the need to analyze the culture on a larger context in relation to other ones, and as a means of personal and group identification. Culture is definitely far more that the values and the world view within a group; it is more a social context in which human beings interact to achieve goals they have set and to live the life they deserve to have.

Yet still, when trying to summarize the different trends in identifying what culture actually is, we come across discrepancies: To some, culture is learned behavior. To others, it is not behavior at all, but an abstraction from behavior-whatever that is. Stone axes and pottery bowls are culture to some anthropologists, but no material object can be culture to others. Culture exists only in the mind, according to some; it consists of observable things and events in the external world to others.

1.2. Culture in Practice

On a more practical level, culture can be brought down to “software” which people use in their daily life; basic assumptions, norms, and beliefs that people hold. One of the most famous theories on culture and its
perception is the so-called “cultural iceberg”. What it implies is that there are some components of culture which are rather evident to us; whereas the other components are very hard to discover. The idea behind this model is that culture can be depicted in the form of an iceberg: only a very small portion of iceberg can be seen above the water line. This top of the iceberg is supported by the much larger part of the iceberg, underneath the water line and therefore invisible. Nonetheless, this lower part of the iceberg is the powerful foundation.

The same is in the case of culture: some of its components are more visible – art, music, architecture, literature, language, etc. Yet, the more powerful components of culture are much in depth and therefore, less visible: the social norms, assumptions on time, gender roles, conception of past and future, patterns of group decision making, arrangement of physical space, etc. The iceberg model implies that the visible parts of culture are just expressions of its invisible parts. It also points out, how difficult it is at times to understand people with different cultural backgrounds – because we may spot the visible parts of “their iceberg”, but we cannot immediately see what the foundations that these parts rest upon are. That’s why it is often difficult to track particularly indiscernible things in a culture and understand the logic behind a particular behavior.
1.3. Dimensions of Culture

The researches in 1970s in the field of culture and behavior were mainly focused on identifying key dimensions across which the cultures vary. One of the most successful attempts was made by G. Hofstede when requested by IBM to identify the reasons why the business institutions and their management vary across the globe. Hofstede’s work identified four main dimensions of culture; according to him, all the other factors could be brought down to either of those four. Those dimensions were:

**Power Distance**: this dimension identifies the extent to which the society accepts the fact that the power in the society is distributed unequally among individuals. (Ting-Toomey, 2005) This includes the standard procedure for the decision making process and the participation of the individual in the process.

**Uncertainty Avoidance**: this dimension identifies the degree to which the society feels threatened by ambiguous or uncertain situations as well as the risk component in every undertaking; how much room is given for improvising or making process-based changes.

**Individualism vs. Collectivism**: this dimension indicates the prioritization of the individual or and its needs over the community and vice versa. Individualistic cultures, for example, emphasize “the importance of individual identity over group identity, individual rights over group rights, and individual needs over group needs” while collectivistic cultures emphasize “the importance of the ‘we’ identity over the ‘I’ identity, group rights over individual rights, and in-group-oriented needs over individual wants and desires”.

**Masculinity vs. Femininity**: this dimension indicates the degree to which the gender determines the roles men and women have in the society; what is considered to be a masculine intake and what is considered to be a feminine one, what should men do and behave and what the women should not, etc.
Fig. 2: The position of 50 countries and 3 regions on the power distance and uncertainty avoidance dimensions.
Time Orientation: this last dimension indicates the extent to which the society bases its decisions on tradition and events in the past, or on short-term gains, or on what is perceived to be desirable in the future; how much they talk about the past and how much they think of the consequences in future.

We should give credits to Hofstede for no previous research and classification has been so consistent. However, there are things that were left behind or overlooked in the model: first of all, the model takes culture as something static, whereas, as we know, culture, like anything related to humankind, is a dynamic process changing and developing over time; neither does the model consider the changes over the evolution. Finally, Hofstede makes no comments regarding the sub-cultures and sub-groups emerging over time. Nonetheless, this brings an example on how many factors contribute to the individual’s thought and behavior; the way he/she interacts, thinks about his/her own self, the others, and the surrounding world.

The next model on the dimensions of culture is more practical and was developed by Edward T. and Mildred Reed Hall. The dimensions are primarily based on time, space, and communication patterns. (Hal, 1990)

The dimensions are as follows:

Fast and Slow Messages: refers to the speed to which a particular message can be decoded and acted on. It also refers to the speed of establishing social relations; e.g. friends, the depth of relationship, etc.

High and Low Context: are about the information that surrounds an event. If in the actually transmitted message at a given time only little information is given, and most of the information is already present in the persons who communicate, the situation is one of high context. For example, communication between a couple that has lived together for several years tends to be very high context: only little information needs to be exchanged at any given time in order for them to understand each other. The message may be very short, but is decoded with the help of the information about each other that both have acquired in the years of living together. Typical high context cultures are, according to Hall & Hall (1990), the Japanese, Arab, and Mediterranean cultures with extensive information networks and involvement in many close personal relationships. Consequently, not a lot of background information is needed in daily life, nor is it expected. One keeps oneself informed about everything having to do with the persons important to oneself. Typical low context cultures are the USA, German, Swiss and Scandinavian cultures. Personal relationships tend to be split up more according to the different areas of one’s involvement, and there is a higher need for background information in normal transactions. Misunderstandings can arise from not taking into account the different communication styles in terms of high and low context. A person with a low-context style, for example, may be perceived by a high-context person as talking too much, being over-precise, and providing unnecessary information. Inversely, a person with a high-context style may be perceived by a low-context person as not truthful (since information is “hidden”), and not co-operative. In order to make
decisions, low-context persons want a fairly large amount of background information, whereas high-context persons would base decisions on less background information at a given time, since they have constantly kept themselves up with the process of what is going on.

Territoriality: it is about the sense people have developed of the space and the material things around them, and is also an indication of power. It relates to the organization of physical space, e.g. in an office; is the president’s office on the top floor of the building, or somewhere in the middle?

Personal Space: it is the distance to other people one needs to feel comfortable. The Halls describe personal space as a “bubble” each person carries around at all times. It changes its size according to the situation and the people one interacts with (people you are close friends with are allowed closer than others). The “bubble” indicates what one feels is an appropriate distance to another person. Somebody standing further away is considered distanced, somebody trying to get closer than what is perceived as the appropriate distance might seem offending, intimidating, or simply rude. If the normal conversational distance of one culture is rather close so that it overlaps with what is considered an intimate distance in a different culture, a problem in communication might just arise from the different interpretations of what the chosen physical distance to one another means.

Monochronic vs. Polychronic Time: it relates to the structuring of one’s time. Monochronic timing means to do one thing at a time, working with schedules where one thing follows the other, where different tasks have their time assigned to them. Time for monochronic cultures is very hands-on, it can almost be touched and is talked about as a resource: spending, wasting, and saving time. Time is linear; it extends as one line from the past through the present into the future. Time is used as a tool to structure the day, and to decide levels of importance, e.g. not “having time” to meet somebody. Polychronic timing means the opposite: many tasks are done at the same time; there is high involvement with people, which implies more emphasis on relating to others than on holding to a schedule. Polychronic time is not so much perceived as a resource, and could rather be compared to a point than to a line.

What makes Hall’s theory vulnerable is the fact that he proposes the dimensions as independent from one another in the first place, but develops them into a model of culture that eventually is only one-dimensional. It orders cultures on a continuum between monochronic, low-context cultures on the one hand, and polychronic, high context cultures on the other hand. All other categories are related to this continuum. The question is if this very simple way of categorizing cultures is a reflection of reality. The usefulness in Hall & Hall’s approach is clearly in its very practical consequences. The dimensions – very much along the same lines as the Hofstede model – give a framework in which to recognize and interpret cultural differences. And finally, it brings us to the reality that language is not the only medium of communication,
and the misunderstanding in intercultural context is very seldom based on language barrier. It is pretty much dependent on what we call “non-verbal communication”.

This brings us by and large to the reasonable point upon which we can make the shift of the paper: cultural influence and the learning process in between. Consequently, the next thing to be brought into the stage of discussion is the concept of interculturality and learning through intercultural communication. There is no room for doubt that the modern world of globalization there is the urgent push to grasp information from every possible source. The increased communication between the cultures and continents makes this process more monitorable than ever before.

1.4. Communication in Intercultural Context

Intercultural communication is generally defined as “…the symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation.”(Ting-Toomey, 2005) What we can see from the definition is the reaffirmation of what we have concluded in the previous section on bringing culture down to symbols and symbolates. It is worth marking that by saying symbol we do not necessarily mean linguistic or material symbols only. Another correction to be made is that the intercultural communication is possible not only among individuals belonging to different cultures, but also between groups of those. And in the result, like in case of any type of communication, we come down to the learning process. Interculturality and diversity makes the learning process far more different and adventurous. It creates an atmosphere where it becomes possible to assess the personal culture in relation to the others and to learn from the others. This is what the scholars tend to call “intercultural learning”, i.e. the process of becoming more aware of and better understanding one's own culture and other cultures around the world.(Rose, 2008) Yet, to better be able to interpret the concept, let’s analyze each component separately.

Learning is defined in the Oxford Advanced Learner’s of Current English dictionary as “gaining knowledge of or skill in, by study, practice or being taught”.(Wehmeier, 2000) Learning as a process takes place in three different levels, rather with the involvement of all three of the following:

- **Cognitive Learning**: this is basically the acquirement of knowledge; e.g. 3 times three is 9, the capital of Armenia is Yerevan, etc.
- **Emotional Learning**: this component of learning is a bit more difficult to put into frames; it is generally how you learnt to express or hide your feelings, how those feelings have changed over time, people you feel for and the ones you do not, etc.
- Behavioral Learning: the word ‘behavior’ itself suggests the implication: learning through doing – hammering a nail, writing with a pen, welcoming manners, etc.

Learning can happen as a result of a planned process as well as spontaneously. In fact, if we try to look back, we can see an enumerate number of occasions when we did not have the background idea of learning, yet we have learnt in the result.

As ratified by the “Cultural Iceberg” model, one needs to get a closer look at what makes up a culture in order to be able to understand one’s own culture and try to interpret that of the other groups and nations. The iceberg model focuses our attention on the hidden aspects of culture. It is a reminder that in intercultural encounters, similarities we might find at first sight turn out to be based on completely different assumptions about reality. Among young people, cultural differences may sometimes not be so obvious to perceive: across borders young people like jeans, listen to pop music and need to access their e-mails. Learning interculturally then means to become firstly aware of the lower part of one’s own iceberg, and to be able to talk about it with others in order to understand each other better and find common grounds.

Communication in general is process of sending and receiving messages that enables humans to share knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Although we usually identify communication with speech, communication is composed of two dimensions - verbal and nonverbal.

Verbal communication is the process interaction through exchanging information or the process itself by verbal means, mostly language. It is beyond any argument how deeply the language is influenced by the culture. Language itself is defined by a culture. We cannot be competent in the language if we do not also understand the culture that has shaped and informed it. We cannot learn a second language if we do not have an awareness of that culture, and how that culture relates to our own first language/first culture. Even when two people think they can speak each other's language, the chance of error is high. Usages and contextual inferences may be completely different between cultures. It is not only therefore essential to have cultural awareness, but also intercultural awareness.

However, only part of the human interaction is carried out by verbal means. There is another medium – the nonverbal one which is much stronger than the former one. This is what makes it vivid how important it is for communication studies to analyze the different implications of nonverbal communication and its cultural coloring. Nonverbal communication (NVC) has been defined as communication without words. NVC can be communicated through gesture and touch (Haptic communication), by body language or posture, by facial expression and eye contact. NVC can be communicated through object communication such as clothing, hairstyles or even architecture. Speech contains nonverbal elements known as paralanguage, including voice quality, emotion, and speaking style, as well as prosodic features such as
rhythm, intonation, and stress. Dance is also regarded as a nonverbal communication. However, NVC exists not only in oral situation but in written texts as well, e.g. handwriting style, spatial arrangement of words, or the use of emoticons.

No matter how one can try, one cannot keep away from communicating. Activity or inactivity, words or silence all have message value: they influence others and these others, in turn, cannot keep away from responding to these communications and are thus themselves communicating. Mehrabian and Wiener suggested that only 7% of message is sent through words, with remaining 93% sent nonverbal expressions (depending on author, verbal part goes up to 35%).

Nonverbal communication can add nuance by providing punctuation for a verbal exchange, or it can be the main event, fully comprehensible and so evocative that words would only distract. As background punctuation, it can parallel and reinforce the words or it can qualify or even contradict the verbal message. Unlike verbal communication, which is largely intentional, nonverbal communication may often be unintentional.

Commonly, nonverbal communication is learned shortly after birth and practiced and refined throughout a person’s lifetime. Children first learn nonverbal expressions by watching and imitating, much as they learn verbal skills.

Humans use nonverbal communication because:

- Words have limitations: There are numerous areas where nonverbal communication is more effective than verbal (when explain the shape, directions, personalities are expressed nonverbally)
- Nonverbal signal are powerful: Nonverbal cues primary express inner feelings (verbal messages deal basically with outside world).
- Nonverbal message are likely to be more genuine: because nonverbal behaviors cannot be controlled as easily as spoken words.
- Nonverbal signals can express feelings inappropriate to state: Social etiquette limits what can be said, but nonverbal cues can communicate thoughts.
- A separate communication channel is necessary to help send complex messages: A speaker can add enormously to the complexity of the verbal message through simple nonverbal signals.

The first scientific study of nonverbal communication was Charles Darwin’s book “The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals” (1872). He argued that all mammals show emotion reliably in their faces.

Elements such as physique, height, weight, hair, skin color, gender, odors, and clothing send nonverbal messages during interaction. Environmental factors such as furniture, architectural style, interior decorat-
Clothes and Attributes - Although most people are only superficially aware of the wear of others, clothing does communicate. It identifies sex, age, socioeconomic class, status, role, group membership, personality or mood, physical climate, and time in history.

Much evidence supports the view that one that is well dressed is likely to be much better accepted by not known people than if not well dressed thus increasing interpersonal effectiveness. Clothing also affects self-confidence. People share the view that their estimate of a person was affected by the clothes they wear and how well-dressed they are; although the perception of being “well-dressed” may be quite different.

Lastly, it is not only the clothes that communicate; so do the personal artifacts such as jewelry, makeup, etc. For example, it is generally perceived that people who wear glasses tend to be more intelligent.

Physical Attractiveness - Body type communicates a variety of meanings, particularly as it relates to physical attractiveness. According to the widely shared stereotypes, three general types can be identified:

Ectomorphs are tall, thin, and fragile looking and are thought of as being tense, anxious, reticent, and self-conscious. Mesomorphs are bony, muscular, and athletic and are thought to being dominant, energetic, and talkative. Endomorphs are described as soft, round, and fat and are thought of as complacent, warm, and sociable.

Proxemics - Proxemics is a form of nonverbal communication in which messages are conveyed from one person to another by the changing space that separates them during a conversation or an interaction. The concern for territory comes from our nature. Animals are territorial. Some mark their space with urine to stake a claim for privacy. Instead, people use furniture, walls, and fences to accomplish the same purpose.

Anthropologist Edward T. Hall found four key zones regarding proxemics:

Intimate: (0 to 45 cm) at this close range, vision is distorted and any vocalization is a whisper, moan, or grunt. Our main ways of judging the intervening space are through body heat, smell, and touch.

Casual-personal: (45 – 120 cm) here we lose the sense of body heat and all but the most powerful odors. Eyesight begins to focus, and vocalization comes into play. Although only ritualized touch is typical, the other person is still at arm’s length, available to be grasped, held, or shoved away. Where a person stands within this range shows the closeness of the relationship.

Social-consultative: (120 – 365 cm). This is a zone of impersonal transaction. One has to rely solely on what one can see and hear. By the middle of the range, the eye can focus on an entire face.
Public: Addressing groups of people. One can no longer pick up nuances of meaning from the face or tone of voice. The eye can take in the whole body at a glance. It is used for lectures, speeches with audiences.

The interpersonal distance differs from one culture to another. Normal behavior for a person with one cultural background may result in proxemic invasion when the person interacts with a person with a different cultural background. For example the casual personal distance may be:

North America: 18 inches (46 cm)
Western Europe: 14 to 16 inches (36-40 cm)
Japan: 36 inches (90 cm)
Middle East: 8 to 12 inches (20-30 cm)

The proxemic distance may vary not only in cultures, but also depending on gender, number of people involved, goal of the communication, as well as the psychological characteristics. Extraverts, for example, may have smaller distance while introverts may prefer to keep their distance.

The last thing to remember is that the proxemics is a generalization and is not aimed to take into consideration the factor of situationality. Therefore, this should not be taken as a standard and regard all the Arabs, for instance, as people having no personal space.

Kinesics - Kinesics is the study of nonlinguistic bodily movements, such as gestures, facial expressions, movement of feet, legs, shoulder, stance, winking, head nodding, etc. These kind of movements are the most difficult to control. It is estimated that there are over 200,000 physical signs capable of stimulating meaning in another person. For example, there are 23 distinct eyebrow movements, each capable of stimulating a different meaning.

Body Posture - People communicate by the way they walk, stand, and sit. We tend to be more relaxed with friends or when addressing those of lower status. Body movements and postures have no exact meaning, but they can greatly support or reject the spoken word. Posture is understood through the direction of lean, body orientation, arm position, and body openness.

Gestures - Gestures may be articulated with the hands, arms, or body, and also include movements of head, face, and eyes. Gestures operate to clarify, contradict, or replace verbal messages. Gestures also serve as an appreciation, rejection, or as a means of expressing one’s attitude towards an action being carried out by another person. For example, if a student is talking and the teacher nods regularly, it will cause the student to continue the speech. Gestures seem endless across cultures. Often, body movements that are clearly understandable in one culture make no sense in another. Yet often enough, frequently used kinesics movements in one culture may be highly offensive in another.
Gestures could be categorized into five types: emblems, illustrators, affect displays, regulators, and adaptors.

- **Emblems** are gestures with direct verbal translations, such as a goodbye wave;
- **Illustrators** are gestures that depict what is said verbally, such as turning an imaginary steering wheel while talking about driving;
- **Affect displays** are gestures that convey emotions, like a smile;
- **Regulators** are gestures that control interaction;
- **Adaptors** are gestures that facilitate the release of bodily tension, such as quickly moving one's leg.

Gestures can also be categorized as either speech-independent or speech-related. Speech-independent gestures are dependent upon culturally accepted interpretation and have a direct verbal translation. A wave hello or a peace sign are examples of speech-independent gestures. Speech related gestures are used in parallel with verbal speech; this form of nonverbal communication is used to emphasize the message that is being communicated. Speech related gestures are intended to provide supplemental information to a verbal message such as pointing to an object of discussion.

**Facial Expressions** - Facial appearance – including wrinkles, muscle tone, skin coloration, and eye color offers cues that reveal about age, sex, race, ethnic origin, and status. A less permanent second set of facial clues like length of hair, hairstyle, cleanliness, facial hair relate to the individual's idea of beauty. The third group of facial cues includes momentary expressions that signal that cause changes in the forehead, eyebrows, eyelids, cheeks, nose, lips, and chin (raising the eyebrows, wrinkling the brow, curling the lip, etc.). Together with words, the human face is the primary source of information for determining an individual's internal feelings.

Facial expressions may be a) intentional and b) unintentional. Facial expressions denoting fear, for example, are unintentional. However, people often try to hide feelings behind the masks. Each of us is able to fake a happy or a sad face, a smile or a frown.

**Eyes** - The eyes are the most dominant and reliable features of face. They can be evasive, convey hate, love, fear, guilt, confidence, etc. That’s the reason why the eyes are often referred to as “mirrors of the soul” and that’s true not for a single culture. Except for extremely shy individuals, most people look for social acceptance by studying the eyes of others. Eyes also indicate a positive or a negative relationship. People tend to look longer and more often at those whom they trust, respect, and care about than those whom they doubt or dislike.
Paralanguage - Paralanguage is part of the nonverbal communication that conveys information on attitudes. Paralanguage may be expressed consciously or unconsciously. It includes vocalizations such as hissing, shushing, and whistling, as well as the quality of voice or speed in talking. The differences in the vocalization express different emotions. Active feelings like rage, for example, are expressed vocally by high pitch and fast pace. The more passive feelings, such as despair, are expressed by low pitch, retarded pace, and resonant sound.

The conducted researches prove that the listener’s perception of the attitude of a speaker were influenced 7% by the verbal message and 38 percent by the vocal tones used at the moment. That is why, it is generally accepted that most often how we say something is more important than what we say. Same words or phrases can have many different meanings, depending on how they are said. For example, analyze the phrase “Thank you.” If uttered sincerely, it generally means an expression of gratitude; if intoned sarcastically, it can express an entirely opposite intention.

Odor/ Pheromones - The recent researches show that odors can influence behavior. This happens because odors and emotions are processed in similar brain structures. Moreover, odor-evoked memories may seem clearer and more intense than other memories because they appear to be more emotional than memories supported by visual, audio or other cues.

Pheromones are substances one organism produces for the purpose of chemo-communication with another representative of the same species. Even human pheromones affect the sexual attractiveness of men to women and vice versa. Androstenone is the pheromone which occurs in men's urine and sweat. It has been found to have an attractant effect on women and an aversive effect on other men. Equivalent female substances are called copulins: vaginal pheromones attractive to men.

The odors can affect our perception of the surrounding as well as our mood. However, we should always remember that the sympathy to an odor is a strictly subjective thing: an odor that feels extremely adorable to a person might smell disgusting for another one.

Touch/Heptics - Touching is a nearly universal nonverbal aspect of social exchange between people. The human skin has hundreds of thousands of submicroscopic nerve endings, serving as tactual receptors and detecting pressure, temperature, texture, pain, stroking, tickling. In most human relationships, touching can give encouragement, express tenderness, and show emotional support. Parents transmit feelings to an infant physically, not verbally. However, emotional responses to touching depend on how, when and where people are touched; moreover, there are many cultural differences in touching behavior.
In Western culture, men and women touch people in a different way: men tend to limit themselves to ritual touching like shaking hands or clapping others on the shoulder or upper back. Instead, women touch more warmly, gently and initiate more hugging and touching that expresses support, affection, comfort. Certain parts of our body - hands, arms and shoulders - may be touched by acquaintances and even strangers (under the right circumstances) without causing a negative response. In contrast, your head, neck, body, legs, and feet are typically taboo for touching except by people with whom you are in intimate relations. Even nonsexual touching - are extremely powerful; for example, being touched by a clerk in a supermarket increase the probability of trying a food sample or buying a product.

**Color/Light** - Color and light have direct influence on our behavior and responsiveness. The effect of colors can go as far as affecting our appetite or drawing first-sight conclusions of people. There are certain associations with certain colors which are widely used in all fields of human activities depending on what effect we want to produce.

To sum up, we should say that the verbal communication is accented by a non-verbal one which is much stronger than the former one. If there is disagreement between the verbal and nonverbal message, the nonverbal will win since they are believed to be more reliable. Therefore, it is of primary importance to pay attention to nonverbal communication and consider the fact that its interpretation may vary depending on various aspects, such as the interlocutors, situation, culture, age, gender, sex, etc. Adding to this, the differences in each of the components of non-verbal communication in different cultures, we realize how important it is to enable the practitioner master those differences to be able to remove the barriers to communication and achieve perceivable interaction with an individual or a group of people representing different cultures.

### 1.5. Stages of Intercultural Learning

One of the first models on intercultural learning stages was suggested by Milton J. Bennett who viewed intercultural learning as a process of evolving the intercultural sensitivity. Bennett predicted the close link between the personal development and intercultural sensitivity and claimed that the development of cultural sensitivity should be an inseparable part of intercultural learning to reach effective communication process; his developmental model deals with the continuum of increasing sophistication in dealing with cultural difference, starting with ethnocentrism and decreasing to the recognition and acceptance of difference. He calls this stage as ethnorelativism. The main underlying concept of Bennett’s model is what he calls “differentiation” (Bennet, Towards ethnorelativism: a developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, 1993), and how one develops the ability to recognize and live with difference. Differentiation can be interpreted in two ways: firstly, it refers to reality when people look at one and the same thing differently; secondly, it refers to the fact that cultures differ from one another in the way they maintain patterns of differ-
Interculturality; in other words, it refers to how people interpret the world around them. Therefore, intercultural sensitivity aims at developing the capacity in every individual to perceive the fact that people see things differently and respect the different worldviews.

As defined by Bennett, the intercultural awareness can be raised in the transmission from Ethnocentrism to Ethnorelativism. Ethnocentrism is the stage when the person assumes his worldview being the only possible and the only right one. The most characteristic thing for ethnocentrism is denial: this is the stage when the person simply denies the existence of other worldviews. Denial leads either to isolation when the person cuts himself off the surrounding not to encounter the reality of difference; or to separation when the person intentionally puts the difference far away. However, we should note that separation is a stage up from isolation since in this case the person at least recognizes the difference (but of course, he does not accept it).

The second stage identified by Bennett is defense: this is the process when the individual perceives difference as a threat since it offers an alternative to his form of reality. The attitude that is most probably to be adopted is denigration when the different worldview is perceived negatively and is strongly criticized. The other implication of defense is superiority, i.e. when the person considers his worldview as being superior and pays practically no attention on the other coexisting worldviews. Bennett also considers the opposite reaction – the so-called “reversal”, when the person perceives the other culture as superior and undervalues his own one.

The last stage of ethnocentrism identified by Bennett is minimization, i.e. when the other culture is clearly recognized, yet an attempt is made to minimize or overlook its meaning.
The key idea for ethnorelativism is the assumption that cultures can only be understood relative to one another and that particular behavior can be understood within a cultural context only. The first stage for ethnorelativism is *acceptance*; this is the stage when the person comes to accept the verbal and non-verbal difference behavior variations within cultures and to realize that those differences deserve respect. This ultimately leads to the recognition of values and the variations within those values that strongly predetermine the worldview and behavioral conduct.

The following stage towards cultural sensitivity is *adaptation*; this is the reverse process for acceptance, i.e. when the person gives up his own values and norms to accept those of the other /dominant/ culture. This might ultimately lead to the loss of identity. Central to adaptation is *empathy* – the attempt to think of a par-
particular thing or situation through the prism of the other culture only with no reference to his own one. Empathy might later enlarge to pluralism, i.e. looking at things through multiple cultural frames.

The final stage as identified by Bennett is integration, when an attempt is made to integrate different frames into one. This might ultimately lead to the development of a person with no cultural identity, i.e. as someone being an integrated outsider. The first stage to integration is the contextual analysis of the situation through multiple cultural backgrounds. One thing to be made clear is that this final stage is identified by Bennett as an “arrival point” not a final one. What Bennett’s model tries to prove is that intercultural learning is a process that is described by continuous advancement (with the possibility to move back and forth in the process), and that it is possible to measure the person’s intercultural awareness according to his degree of intercultural sensitivity.

Summing up, we should say that Bennett’s model proves how complex the process of intercultural learning is: starting with cultural identity and the realization of the identity to the recognition of the other worldviews and ultimately to their integration for better understanding the differences emerging on day-to-day basis. Finally, one of the key messages brought forth by Bennett is that although intercultural learning is analyzed on the individual level, it ultimately suggests the capacity to leave peacefully in a diverse environment.

1.6. Intercultural Competence

Nowadays, one of the main issues of the modern society is how to deal with difference; how to build trust and respect between the representatives of an oriental culture with that of western; how to have a Christian live next to a Muslim. How can we valorize those cultures and learn in the process?

As stated in the preceded section, the modern globalized world of communication urges the need for people with skills necessary for effective communication with people of different backgrounds and cultural belongings. Globalized world, in its turn, enlarges the opportunities for intercultural exchange and contact. Hereby, we have touched upon two key terms which should be differentiated to avoid future misunderstanding: globalization and internationalization. As Marginson (2000) defines: “…the term “internationalization” describes the growth of relations between nations and between national cultures (in that sense internationalization has a long history). Rather, the term “globalization” is reserved here for the growing role of world systems. These world systems are situated outside and beyond the nation state, even while bearing the marks of dominant national cultures, particular American culture” (Marginson, 2000).

Regardless of the actual communication being of global or international character, intercultural communication principles remain the key guiding the process of exchanging meaningful and unambiguous information across cultural boundaries, in a way that preserves mutual respect and minimizes antagonism. These
principles may have equal relevance when a tourist seeks help or when a politician advocates world peace. Intercultural principles concentrate on openness to the other, active respect for difference, mutual comprehension, active tolerance, validating the cultures present, providing equality of opportunities, fighting discrimination. Communication between different cultural identities can appear paradoxical in the sense that it requires recognition of the other both as similar and as different. In this context, according to Ouellet (1991), intercultural learning can be designed to promote and to develop:

- a better comprehension of cultures in modern societies;
- a larger capacity of communication between people from different cultures;
- a more flexible attitude to the context of cultural diversity in society;
- a better capacity of participation in social interaction, and the recognition of the common heritage of humanity.

As stated by different scholars /Brislin, Yoshida, Pedersen, Tong-Toomey/, the goal of intercultural learning is to prepare people for more effective interpersonal relations when they interact with individuals from different cultures other than their own; in other words, it is about facilitating effective communication. As we will later on touch upon the idea, most of the scholars identify the need for the intercultural communication and learning being organized in the way to ensure the process itself is enjoyable and interactive.

Advancing with the main competences identified as important for intercultural communication, especially that in an educational environment, we should bring them down as follows:

- observing, identifying and recognizing;
- comparing and contrasting;
- negotiating meaning;
- dealing with or tolerating ambiguity;
- effectively interpreting messages;
- limiting the possibility of misinterpretation;
- defending one's own point of view while acknowledging the legitimacy of others;
- accepting difference.

Interculturally competent are the students who possess the above identified capacities that can be classified under knowledge (cognition), attitudes (emotions) and skills (behavior) and who are able to:

- look at their own culture from the point of view of their own culture (i.e. have a good understanding and awareness of their own culture);
- be aware of how their culture is seen from outside, by other countries or cultures;
- understand or see the target culture from its own perspective (i.e. understand and be aware of what other people think of their own culture);
- be aware of how they see the target culture.

In other words, intercultural learning is a bilateral process; you observe the target culture and get to understand your own one in between. The better perception of one’s own culture will undoubtedly contribute to the better understanding the other cultures, recognizing and accepting the difference, and living in diversity with tolerance and open for new information with every step one makes with a representative of another culture.

Above all, despite the fact that there is not an educational discipline as intercultural learning, there are keys that aim at guiding the process of acquisition of proper skills, among them:

**Confidence and Respect:** Building up confidence is a cornerstone of intercultural learning; it is a prerequisite that we feel comfortable to share different viewpoints, perceptions and feelings, to arrive at acceptance and understanding. It requires a lot of patience and sensitivity in order to create such a learning atmosphere which enables us to listen to each other as equals, to empower each individual’s self-confidence. This means that we need to give space to everybody’s expression; to value all experiences, talents and contributions; our various needs and expectations. When the big part of what we might share is about values, norms and strong basic assumptions, we will need a lot of confidence in the ones we share with. Mutual trust goes hand in hand with mutual respect, honesty in our sharing.

**Experiencing Identity:** We, as human beings, have our own cultural identity, which means, our own background and experience; and the learning process is achieved through overcoming the obstacles and the barriers stemming for the culture. We have all a personal reality which has shaped us, and we will continue to live there, enriched with new knowledge and experience. That means, in intercultural learning processes, we have to deal constantly with where we come from, what we have lived and encountered. Trying to understand ourselves, our own identity, is a prerequisite to encounter others.

**Constructed Realities:** Nothing is absolute. There are many ways to read and discern reality. Even the representatives of one and the same culture interpret the situations and the circumstances differently; this is true in all its senses: we have seen it both in the verbal and non-verbal communications as well as in basic assumptions such as that of time and space. Consequently, the learning process should be accompanied by some efforts: to respect personal freedom and decision, to accept other views equally and seek the reconciliation of different viewpoints, and to be conscious of our personal responsibility.
In Dialogue with the Other: Intercultural learning places “the other” at the heart of understanding. It starts through dialogue. Oftentimes it is challenging to perceive your own self and the other as being different yet complementing each other. In this understanding, the other becomes indispensable for a new discovery of the self. The process towards such an intercultural sensitivity implies – understood as a process towards the other – to touch and change our very self. Intercultural learning opens up the chance to identify with the perspective of the other, the respectful experience of attempting to “walk in each others’ shoes” without pretending to live what the other lives. It can enable us to experience and learn real solidarity, believing in the strength of co-operation. Intercultural learning in this context is as well a way to discover our own capacity for action. And this again proves the theory of mutuality that we have touched upon in the previous section when speaking of the mutuality of the discovery and learning process in intercultural communication.

Questions and Change: Therefore, we need to accept that there is not always an answer, but remain in constant search, accepting and welcoming change. Reflecting on it, we will need the capacity to question ourselves. Intercultural learning places the other at the center of relations. It encourages a continuous questioning of presuppositions, of things we normally take for granted and encourages a constant opening to the unknown and the not understood. In a process of interaction and mutual discovery every human being can fulfill himself or herself – personally, socially and globally. In the intercultural context, the shame is to avoiding asking questions rather than vividly showing that something is new and unknown to the interlocutor; the important thing here is the openness of the latter for new information and perception of the other culture with all its diverse system.

Comprehensive Involvement: Intercultural learning is an experience which involves all senses and levels of learning, knowledge, emotions, behavior in an intensive way. The comprehension of the complexity of this process and all its implications demand a lot from us. Language as element of culture is a central aspect in intercultural communication, and at the same time limited, often a source of misunderstanding. It must thereby not be used as a means of dominance – especially considering different language skills – but can be one tool of communication. All other signs – like body language – have to be equally respected. Since we are fully involved in this kind of learning, we should allow ourselves to be completely part of the processes happening.

Potential for Conflict: If we see the variety of perceptions different cultures have of time, space, social and personal relations, etc. it will be very probable to suppose the raise of conflicts or uneasy situations in intercultural communication. Hence, we need to develop conflict management skills, while considering the complexity when dealing with the notion of culture. The key factor here is the belief that diversity is help-
ful and enriching, and it creates ground for new information and joyful learning. Not every conflict has necessarily a solution, but it certainly needs to be expressed.

Under the Surface: Intercultural learning aims at very deep processes and changes of attitudes and behaviors. It means to deal a good part with the invisible forces and elements of our culture, of our inner self (see: Iceberg Model presented in Chapter 2), many things beneath the “water surface” are unconscious and cannot be expressed clearly. This discovery implies tensions with which we have to deal. It is obviously not easy to accompany people in this process. The most important thing is that we need the courage to go further, to challenge ourselves and others.

A Complex Matter in a Complex World: Trying to summarize the issues pointed out above, it becomes clear that we need very careful and comprehensive approaches allowing a maximum of discernment. Even culture goes beyond national borders and knows many forms and overlapping. Moreover, the cultures themselves are not homogenous; they are comprised of cultures held by community groups or even individuals. Many perspectives have to be met, tensions have to be considered. It is a challenge to any educational approach not to simplify the variety of reasons and implications present, the different values emphasized, the different realities and histories lived. Intercultural learning approaches need to respect these diverse experiences, interpretations and knowledge and adopt diverse methodologies accordingly.

1.7. Intercultural Encounters

It is very typical of human individuals to feel more comfortable in setting up conversations with the representatives of the same culture, at the same time feeling at ease in case of difference. The most typical example of this would be the international students from CIS countries limiting their relation within Russian speaking students only; this can clearly be observed in any European or US student community. The latter are called Erasmus Communities (Otton, 2002). At the same time, domestic students tend to stay in their established circle of friends. A survey among German students found that more than 60% of them had no or hardly any contact with foreign students at their campus.

There is a universal belief that the intercultural contacts and encounters contribute to the development of intercultural competence and awareness. However, it can bring forth the contrary effect; research on the so-called “contact hypothesis” (Allport, 1954)(Amir, 1969) has shown that they can even reinforce stereotypes and prejudices if the experiences of critical incidents in intercultural contexts are not evaluated on cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels. Thus, contact is not enough if the social experience of otherness is not transformed into a personally relevant learning experience (Paige, 1993). To conclude: Intercultural learning needs reflection of individual and collective social experiences with people from other cultures rather than the mere contact as such (Brewer, 1996)(Gaertner, 1996).
1.7.1. Cultural Shock

The present world is marked with the abundance of means increasing human mobility in terms of livelihood and in search for new opportunities anywhere in the globe. The shift of environment and social structure is something which not always turns out to bring a smooth transition. When a person meets something/someone different in his/her own environment, he/she needs time to get used to it; when the same person finds himself/herself in a different environment, he/she needs not only time but also moral and mental capacity to find his/her place in the society and to reach harmony with the surrounding and within.

The term “culture shock” was introduced for the first time in 1958 to describe the anxiety produced when a person moves to a completely new environment (Mason). However, later on, a much broader definition was attached to the term as by Nagler: “a reactive phenomenon occurring as a result of culture change and including both cognitive and affective components combining to produce extraordinary stress on the individual migrant. The locus of this stress is variously identified. It is alternately regarded as the source and result of alienation from the new culture” (Juffer, 1985). This can happen with anyone who is to live abroad for a considerably longer period regardless the culture, purpose and profession: whether it is a student or a teacher, a mother or a teenager, a diplomat or a scientist.

Culture shock includes the physical and emotional discomfort you suffer when coming to live in another country or a place different from what you know. The way you lived before may not work in the new place. So much is different, from the language to banking, from telephone etiquette to flirting, from how you behave with a professor or a fellow student to how you schedule your day. All the components of the culture, whether above or below the iceberg surface line, might cause culture shock. Apart from culture, the difference in the overall surrounding might cause anxiety, such as the climate, the social values, the food, the way people get dressed, and most importantly, the language. No matter how perfectly one might master the foreign language, one will still feel at easy trying to communicate in the daily language.

Culture shock is generally accompanied with the following symptoms:

- Sadness, loneliness, melancholy;
- Preoccupation with health;
- Aches, pains, and allergies;
- Insomnia or a desire to sleep too much;
- Changes in temperament, including depression or feeling vulnerable, powerless, or lethargic;
- Anger, irritability, resentment, or unwillingness to interact with others;
- Identifying with the old culture or idealizing the old country;
- Loss of identity;
– Trying too hard to absorb everything in the new culture or country, or to abandon your own ways;
– Inability to solve simple problems;
– Lack of confidence or feelings of inadequacy or insecurity;
– Developing stereotypes about the new culture;
– Developing obsessions such as over-cleanliness;
– Longing for family or homesickness;
– Feeling lost, overlooked, exploited, abused, or misunderstood.

Nevertheless, cultural shock is not something which occurs immediately upon landing the country: it might take some time to realize the changes within yourself and to understand what exactly troubles you. On the other hand, the acquaintance with the new culture is generally followed by a nice feeling of having something new, exciting; something that opens up a vast field for investigation, and you might simply lose the track of how it starts irritating you and causing interpersonal and intrapersonal problems. Culture shock generally follows the following trace:

The “honeymoon” stage - when you first arrive in a new culture, differences are intriguing and you may feel excited, stimulated and curious. At this stage you are still protected by the close memory of your home culture.

The “distress” stage - a little later, differences create an impact and you may feel confused, isolated or inadequate as cultural differences intrude and familiar supports (e.g. family or friends) are not immediately available.

‘Re-integration” stage - next you may reject the differences you encounter. You may feel angry or frustrated, or hostile to the new culture. At this stage you may be conscious mainly of how much you dislike it compared to home.

“Autonomy” stage - differences and similarities are accepted. You may feel relaxed, confident, more like an old hand as you become more familiar with situations and feel well able to cope with new situations based on your growing experience.

“Independence” stage- differences and similarities are valued and important. You may feel full of potential and able to trust yourself in all kinds of situations. Most situations become enjoyable and you are able to make choices according to your preferences and values.
The following diagram illustrates the stages of culture shock as relevant to the length of stay:

![Diagram illustrating stages of culture shock](image)

When having a quick glance at the stages of culture shock marked above, we can clearly see that the most characteristic words that cross cut the section are change and difference and the most peculiar adjectives are avoidance, anger, mockery, followed by acceptance, assimilation, etc. What this basically infers is that change cannot take place immediately let alone the appreciation and acceptance of difference. This point brings us back to the necessity of intercultural learning: learning in the result of which the person becomes more aware and more open, open for difference and ready to devour that difference. The latter, as we have touched upon, can be achieved by means of education and direct contact.

This diagram illustrates culture shock, the associative skills and the transition that can be observed for adaptation and acceptance:
In the next chapter we will touch upon the types of education, and the adaptation of proper policies and experiences to achieve better results in intercultural communication and learning. More emphasis will be put on the non-formal learning as a relatively new model of developing intercultural competence and fostering tolerance and understanding.

Notes:

*To get a better idea on how diverse the perception of culture has been, below presented are some definitions of culture proposed in different periods by different scholars*

- "The total, generally organized way of life, including values, norms, institutions, and artifacts, that is passed on from generation to generation by learning alone" -- Dictionary of Modern Sociology
- "The patterned behavior resulting from social interaction" -- Francis Merill
- "All the behavior and related products which men, as members of human society, acquire by means of symbolic interaction..."
- "Culture stems from the development and transmission of human belief in symbols" "The language system is a series of symbols used to transmit cultural beliefs among members of a society" "Messages about cultural expectations can be found in the media, government, religious institutions, educational systems, and the like." -- Boudon et. al 1989
- "That part of the total repertoire of human action (and its products), which is socially as opposed to genetically transmitted. -- Dictionary of Sociology, D. Mitchell (ed.)
- "A commonly shared system of symbols, the meaning of which are understood on both sides with an approximation to agreement." T. Parsons.
- "Culture is a well-organized unity divided into two fundamental aspects -- a body of artifacts and a system of customs -- Malinowski.
- "Humans cannot eat, breathe, defecate, mate, reproduce, sit move about, sleep or lie down without following or expressing some aspect of their society's culture. Our cultures grow, expand, and evolve. It's their nature." -- Marvin Harris
The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong.” – Geertz, Balinese Cockfight (222)

Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning.” -- Geertz, Interpretation of Cultures (5).

"cultural practices are meaningful actions that occur routinely in everyday life, are widely shared by members of the group, and carry with them normative expectations about how things should be done" (Goodnow, Miller and Kissell, 1995)

"A collective name for all behavior patterns socially acquired and socially transmitted by means of symbols, hence a name for all the distinctive achievements of human groups." -- Dictionary of Sociology and Related Sciences

"Culture is or civilization... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man (sic.) as a member of society." -- Edward Tylor

"Culture embraces all the manifestations of social habits of a community, the reactions of the individual as affected by the habits of the group in which he lives, and the product of human activities as determined by these habits." -- Franz Boas

"An educated man is not always a cultured man, although a cultured man is usually educated ... and that the cultured man is not merely the knowledgeable man, but the man who uses his knowledge humanely" (Ashley Montagu).

“The sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. Culture is transmitted, through language, material objects, ritual, institutions (including schools), and art, from one generation to the next." -- Dictionary of Cultural Literacy

Culture is not a thing, it’s a process. Culture is a contested terrain in which a number of different groups struggle to assert meaning

Culture is a product of power struggles between different social groups, based on age, gender, and ethnicity as well as economic divisions.

Culture is a set of norms, values, and assumptions that are available to acting individuals, and it is thus inseparable from action and process.

Culture is a way of perceiving, believing, evaluating, and behaving. It is shared, and adaptation, and constantly changing. A person’s cultural identity is based on traits and values that are learned as part of our ethnic origin, religion, gender, age, socioeconomic level, primary language, geographical region, place of residence, and disabilities. (Gollnick and Chinn, 1994).

Another very interesting phenomenon that is added by many scholars to the table of stages of culture shock is the so-called reverse culture shock. Reverse Culture Shock is a term used to describe the feelings (of surprise, disorientation, confusion, etc.) experienced when people return to their home country and find they do not fit in as they used to. This is time when you have to define yourself as someone being between a foreigner and a native. In fact, some people claim it is even harder to get adjusted back into the home environment than the adjustment to the new one. This may be due to a change in perspective, a decrease in excitement, an appreciation for and of different customs, or because during the travels the home country was idealized.

You may not realize how much you have changed. In adjusting to life in a new culture, your perceptions, habits, and maybe even values have changed, perhaps without your awareness, to fit in with the cultural context of your host country. At the same time, you’ve carried around in your head a wonderful mental picture of your home environment. All of a sudden, when you return home, reality just doesn’t measure up to that picture.

Reverse cultural shock may be accompanied with the following symptoms (some of them are identical to the ones for cultural shock):
- Restlessness, rootlessness
- Reverse homesickness (missing people and places from abroad)
- Boredom, insecurity, uncertainty, confusion, frustration
- Need for excessive sleep
- Change in goals or priorities
- Feelings of alienation or withdrawal
- Negativity towards the behavior of people back at home.

The following tips might help you overcome reverse culture shock or even avoid them:

- Communicate: be open with family and friends about the possibility that you may miss your host community/country. This will help them understand why you aren’t immediately jumping into your “old lifestyle”.
- Remind yourself of the pros & cons. Every environment has positive and negative factors to it. Before your return home, make a list of things that you are looking forward to and also things that you did not miss. By reading over this list you can regain an accurate picture of your home country so that you don’t idealize it and then feel let down.
- Think about your changes. It is always nice to reflect on the ways a new experience has impacted us. Your time abroad has probably changed you in some ways. Others (friends and family) may feel that you are “different” while you feel frustrated that they are the same. Be positive about your growth and your changes and be accepting of others that have not had the same experience.
- Familiar Patterns. There may be patterns that were part of your life that you don’t find as comfortable anymore. There may be patterns from your time abroad that you wish to incorporate. Finding the space in your life and balance between these two could take some time. Be patient with your own readjustment to your home country and allow yourself time to adjust into what will now be your new pattern.

Below are some tips for international students to avoid culture shock when leaving for studies abroad. The recommendations are based purely on personal experience and may be found irrelevant in particular occasions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remember! Culture shock is not something inevitable, and you should not infer every problem to be a manifestation of it.</th>
<th>Make local friends and acquaintances: do not limit your conversations within the community holding the same language as yours.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remember your strengths! Remind yourself of your talents and abilities.</td>
<td>Share your concerns and what troubles you with people who might be going through the same differences as you are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep an open mind: different is not necessarily better or worse. Try not to be judgmental; maintain tolerance for otherness.</td>
<td>Maintain confidence in yourself. Follow your ambitions and continue your plans for the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep your sense of humor. If you can laugh, you will be better able to fight off embarrassment, fear, shame, despair, and some of the other reactions people sometimes feel when experiencing culture shock.</td>
<td>Be curious. Ask questions – this will get you using the local language and learning colloquial phrases while learning important cultural cues and norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think positive and be grateful for whatever you have.</td>
<td>Don’t try too hard to be like everyone else: you need to be flexible, but not to change your core self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try out new things and sensations</td>
<td>Keep a Diary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you encounter a problematic situation ask someone you trust to help you understand it from a local perspective.</td>
<td>Limit your contact with home community and get enough rest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a hobby (also a good way to meet people).</td>
<td>Be patient. Adaptation is a process, and it takes time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 2: EDUCATIONAL SETTING FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

2.1. Formal Education

Human beings never stop learning. In fact, they learn from every single step they make, every single activity they get engaged in, every single conversation. The formal education system (schools, universities, vocational training) aims at providing young people basic knowledge to be used for their social integration into society, and of course, the greatest part of academic learning is achieved in the schooling system. This is what makes us believe that formal education is where we should start with our analysis in terms of applying policies relevant for intercultural learning.

The most comprehensive definition of formal education was provided by Coombs: “the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded educational system running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training”(Combs, 1973)(p. 11).

As we have already stated in the previous chapters of the work, intercultural competence development requires complex steps that need to be adopted in the social and educational context. Being the main body for educational services for the youth, the school/university takes the responsibility of developing a classroom atmosphere that fosters intercultural communication and the desire to learn from diversity.

Not only the social environment but also classroom interaction and academic work assignments tend to stay monocultural, monodisciplinary, and monolingual if teachers fail to make use of diversity as a resource in the classroom. On the surface, most academics value intercultural cooperation of their students. However, the degree of teachers’ tolerance to otherness and different styles can dwindle quickly when teaching and learning demand more time, energy, and patience. Moreover, the acceptance of other approaches and different cultural views in the classroom can decline when this endangers the achievement of what is supposed to be the “standard” of academic excellence. Of course, it is not desirable to sacrifice a good academic education in a certain academic field to a vague interculturalism as a self-evident learning goal. But it is also clear that rigid standards of educational contents and procedures cannot foster the cognitive and affirmation alternation of perspectives, which are important for the vitality of all academic disciplines. If international and intercultural implications in teaching are subordinate to some kind of academic universal-
ism and institutional functionalism, it will not encourage faculty members to value cultural differences in class. It is most likely that a parochial learning environment creates a no-risk climate among teachers and students rather than openness, curiosity, and trust. Hence, diversity as a challenge and a chance for mutual learning and personal growth needs personal motivation and institutional support.

The universities in the United States and Europe have made drastic steps in trying to adopt policies to best fit the multicultural societies they are holding. One of those policies has been the so-called campus diversity plans. Diversity plans are institution-wide strategies that aim to take into account the social chances and the needs of minorities to improve equality of chances and access as well as an inclusive climate without open or hidden discrimination. Diversity plans relate to educational decisions about the importance of positive teaching and learning outcomes (among others) that can flow from a diverse faculty and student body. And, importantly, they contribute to the benefit of all students from all backgrounds. The fact that diversity plans are supposed to be beneficial to all students and reach out far beyond formal minority rights and affirmative action makes this approach interesting for consideration.

Over time, the research traces movement from concerns for the access, retention, and success of underrepresented students in higher education to broader concerns about the effects of increasing demographic, cultural, and social changes on the educational context as a whole; campus services; intergroup relations; pedagogy; the curriculum; and institutional purpose (Smith, 1997). Debra Humphreys described several dimensions that campus diversity encompasses: Curriculum and courses addressing diversity issues, teaching in diverse classes, campus climate and intergroup relations, institutional transformation, and access and recruitment of minorities and foreigners (Humphreys). Further on, Humphreys goes on identifying the two main directions of change to be achieved at the universities: the first one in the university curriculum and instructing methods, and the second one in the campus atmosphere /the latter including access to library, computer and digital services, etc./.

Like all social behavior, teaching and learning is shaped through acculturation and different cultural backgrounds (Teekens, 2001). Most people expect learning and a teaching environment that they are used to from their own educational experience as a student. Teaching in intercultural educational environments should be sensitive to different cultural styles of learning and teaching. This sensitivity is essential, regardless of the subject, whether it is a “universal” scientific phenomenon or not. Hofstede points out four situations in which intercultural problems typically may occur:
social position of teacher and student,
- relevance of curriculum,
- profiles of cognitive abilities,
- extended patterns of student-teacher and student-student interaction (Hofstede G., 1986).

Reflection on the implicit cultural patterns of the entire didactic interaction includes the selection of course content and material, design of classroom setting and teaching material, communication with students, and the role of teachers. These are the pillars that should be dealt in a culturally sensitive and capable environment.

Formal programs in intercultural education seek to achieve the following goals in the following areas:

- **administration**, e.g., organizing the school system on a non-segregated basis, proper teacher selection, etc.;
- **curriculum**, e.g., through choice and presentation of subject matter, courses in social studies, use of art, drama, song, and visual aids stressing inter-cultural themes and the democratic ideal;
- **promoting intergroup contact and communication**, e.g., providing opportunities for contact and exchange among members of the various ethnic, racial and religious groups in a variety of school-sponsored activities. (Hager, 2010)

Speaking of a diversity-sensitive curriculum, we should state that the latter shall be focused to lead to the following:

- A diversified curriculum can help bridge differences, both on campus and in society. Learning about the diversity and global cultural traditions brings groups of students together rather than dividing them.
- Diversifying and expanding the knowledge base of the college curriculum does not prevent students from studying traditional texts and core contents of their major discipline.
- Diversity courses challenge students to think in more complex ways about identity and history, and avoid cultural stereotyping.

What we should of course realize is the fact that all those components cannot be achieved automatically nor be implemented mechanically. They require a long training and adaptation process. Many different approaches to intercultural training have been published. Most authors seem to agree with Brislin and Yoshida, who have identified four major goals of intercultural training:
- Assisting people in overcoming obstacles that interfere with their sense of well-being,
- Developing positive and respectful relationships with others in the host culture,
- Assisting people with accomplishing tasks associated with their work,
- Helping people effectively deal with the inevitable stress that accompanies the cross-cultural experience. (Yoshida, 1994)

In other words, intercultural training seeks to expand people’s knowledge about their own and other cultures, influence their attitudes concerning foreign culture, and develop their skills to interact effectively with people of other cultural backgrounds. This general description of the training objectives has to be faced in the context of higher education.

Having said this, it would be better to concentrate a little bit more on non-formal learning since the primary goal of the thesis work is to demonstrate how non-formal learning techniques can be applied for intercultural learning and for increasing intercultural awareness.

### 2.2. Non-Formal Education

Most of the people around the globe have gone through some form of schooling in their lives. This formal school education is commonly based on a “vertical” relationship between the pupil/student and the teacher: the holder of the knowledge (the teacher) and the receiver (the learner). The teacher mostly delivers knowledge to the student in the form of courses and curricula. At the end of the learning pathway a written document or an oral examination certifies the knowledge acquired by the learner according to official criteria. These certificates and diplomas are often necessary as keys to open doors into the labor market and society. Academic diplomas mostly refer to theoretical knowledge.

Nevertheless, the move towards a knowledge-based society requires new criteria for education in the years to come. More than ever before, it is essential for everyone to learn and build competencies, lifelong and lifewide. Already today and even more tomorrow, it is no longer sufficient to think only in terms of formal education. It is therefore necessary to widen our understanding of education, making life-long learning a reality. People continuously seek for alternative means of education; systems that would prove to be effective and goal-oriented and that would best satisfy human curiosity. One of those settings is non-formal education.
Non-formal education or sometimes referred as *open education* (Cirigliano, 1981) was first defined by Kleis in 1973 as any intentional and systematic educational enterprise (usually outside of traditional schooling) in which content is adapted to the unique needs of the students (or unique situations) in order to maximize learning and minimize other elements which often occupy formal school teachers (UNESCO, 2006). Diez Hochleitner gives a broader meaning to the term of non-formal education as embracing all learning processes throughout life which offer access to knowledge and basic or advanced skills, whether or not such a process is institutionalized, or leading to certificates or degrees. However, the most comprehensive definition was offered by UNESCO which makes reference both to the audience, to the environment, and educational objectives. It goes as follows: “…any organized and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impact adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the ‘ladder’ system, and may have differing durations, and may or may not confer certification of the learning achieved.” (UNESCO, 2006).

Here we might encounter confusion in terms: the recurrent non-formal setting to be considered as education or learning. For our future reference, we will be using the term “non-formal education” justified by the ideology that learning is generally referred to an acquisition process in a particular field whereas what we deal here is an educational methodology. Non-formal education can be summarized as “learning by doing”. The learning methodology lies in the interaction between the learners and the concrete situations they are experiencing. There are usually no teachers or lecturers providing the knowledge, but the learners and facilitators construct the knowledge and skills together, in a horizontal relationship. The educator or facilitator may be more or less active in the setting up of learning experiences for the benefit of the learner. The learners are at the center of their own learning process and the trainers/facilitators support them in it.
### 2.3. Non-formal vs. Formal Education Structure

The diagram below outlines the main differences between formal and non-formal education settings (Croft & Crolla, 2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig. 6</th>
<th><strong>Formal Education</strong></th>
<th><strong>Non-Formal Education</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning methods</td>
<td>The dominance of the vertical relationship between the possessor of the knowledge and the receiver.</td>
<td>Interactive relationship between the learners and the environment surrounding them. “Learning by doing”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Mostly defined by educational institutions or government.</td>
<td>Chosen by the learner. No definition except concrete experience acquisition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Fact oriented</td>
<td>Process oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>External/hierarchical</td>
<td>Internal/democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>Usually provided at the end of the course as a document certifying the successful completion of the subject.</td>
<td>No mandatory certification; however, a certifying document may be provided that can later be presented to a formal educational institution or attached to the CV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Provided with layers: primary, secondary, higher education, etc.</td>
<td>Lifelong learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Points</td>
<td>Almost always free and systematized /for more information refer to the “Millennium Development Goals” of the UN, Goal 2/.</td>
<td>Accessible to all with no age limitations and boundaries; inclusive and entertaining.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak Points</td>
<td>Not adapted to meet personal needs and interests, at least in primary or secondary education; monotonous to people, especially that of young age; not interactive enough.</td>
<td>Absence of formal recognition; difficult to assess – it is generally achieved by means of internal evaluations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another confusion that often rises when talking on non-formal education is the difference between non-formal and informal education. Informal education is to be spontaneous, as it happens in everyday life; in informal education what happens is an individual experience enriching personal development that takes place throughout all the life undertakings, relations, as well as through other factors influencing human life. Nevertheless, there is no curricular responsibility, nor an institutionalized body standing behind it. There are no learning standards, no evaluation. Contrary to this, non-formal education provides all those elements.

Non-formal education, as well as the formal one, prepares young people for the challenges and responsibilities that they will undertake in the adult life. However, there is a growing concern whether the conventional classroom approach is successful in doing so especially in terms of intercultural learning which itself presupposes mobility and dynamics. People have to be much more mobile socially and geographically than they used to. This requires flexibility and corresponding social skills: the traditional skills provided by formal education are not sufficient for the purpose.

Non-formal education is an organized process that gives young people the possibility to develop their values, skills and competencies others than the ones developed in the framework of formal education (Jeunesse, 2005). The fields where non-formal education can be applied vary from team development to organizational development, from project management to intercultural awareness. What is special about non-formal education is that individuals, participants are the actors actively involved in the education/learning process; there is a high level of participation by the learners themselves. It is easier to get more enthusiastic about the activities in which you have your own contribution and the share of responsibility. The methods that are being used aim at giving the people the tools to further develop their skills and attitudes. The key thing to remember is that “non-formal” does not imply unstructured; the process of non-formal education is shared and designed in such a way that it creates an environment in which the learner is the architect of the skills development; in other words, it is based on the intrinsic motivation of the learner (Mitter, 2002).

As stated in the above presented table, the most challenging question regarding the application of non-formal education is its certification and evaluation difficulties, and consequently, the recognition of the achievements reached. Certification is important not only for the employability of the participants, but also for the encouragement of the young people to realize that besides the personal benefits they gain, the skills they acquire are recognized and can be presented to the job market.
2.4. Practical Value of Non-formal Education and General Structural Classification

The table below summarizes the key strongpoints of non-formal education and introduces the essential values and methodological features that should guide the educational process in the diverse world of globalization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Features</th>
<th>Methodological Features</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Key Competences for the Non-Formal Education Practitioner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- takes place outside the structures of the formal education system and differs from this in the way it is organized and the type of recognition this learning confers; - intentional and voluntary; - aims above all to convey and practice the values and skills of democratic life. - Depends on the needs of the participants and illustrates their interests – bottom-up approach.</td>
<td>- Balanced co-existence and interaction between cognitive, affective and practical dimensions of learning; - participatory and learner-centered; - close to real life concerns, experimental and oriented to learning by doing, using intercultural exchanges and encounters as learning devices.</td>
<td>Values Linked to Personal Development - creativity; - openness. Values Linked to Social Development - communication capacity; - responsibility; - participation. Ethical Values - tolerance; - intercultural learning and understanding.</td>
<td>- Using participatory approach; - Using diversity as a positive learning tool; - Knowledge about young people’s life and activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Referred to the *European Portfolio of Youth Leaders and Youth Workers.* (Tylor M., 2007)
Efforts have been made to identify the main types of non-formal education as of G. Carron (Carron & Carr-Hill, 1991) according to the following criteria:

- The educational need;
- Service receivers;
- The agent organizing the activity;
- The relationship with formal educational system.

According to the above identified criteria they go forth identifying four main types of non-formal education which are as follows:

- **Paranormal Education** - the main objective of these programs is to offer a second chance to those who, for various reasons, could not benefit from the regular school system at the ordained moment. The area includes various types of evening classes, official literacy programs, distance education programs, etc. Some of these programs are only a condensed form of full-time day schooling, while others are more flexible and more innovative in design and implementation. Another form of paranormal education can be considered the *private tutoring*.

- **Popular Education** - this type of non-formal education is directed towards the marginal groups of the population and includes (alternative) adult literacy projects, co-operative training, and political mobilization and community development activities. In most cases, these activities are run by voluntary organizations.

- **Personal Development** – learning practices organized by cultural institutions (museums, libraries, cultural centers), by clubs, circles, associations promoting leisure time activities such as astronomy, observation of the natural environment, playing music and/or listening to it, etc., by sports centers, by language institutions or even by centers of physical and mental health.

- **Professional Training** – the various non-formal programs of professional and vocational training organized by firms, trade unions, private agencies and also formal schools constitute the fourth important segment of the diversified educational field.

What the authors fail to take into consideration is the overlap of the activities that can be organized by those institutions; in fact, they have taken into consideration only the atmosphere where the non-formal education takes place. Contrary to this, we will hold to the truth that the axis for organizing the non-formal educational activity greatly differs depending on other criteria such as the group structure, the topic/field to be covered, etc. /more thorough reference in the methodology selection section/.
Notes:

Taking into consideration the fact that the certification of non-formal education is not the primary target objective of the thesis, we will not concentrate much on that; however, to prove that non-formal education functions and that it is recognized in developed countries, below we are presenting a successful example of a certification of non-formal education experience applied in the European Union. The certificate – YouthPass, was developed within the framework of the European Commission’s *Youth in Action Programme*, and it is awarded to the young people who have taken part in any of the Actions (1-5) of the programme.

The below presented table illustrates what YouthPass is and how it differs from Educational Certificate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youthpass IS</th>
<th>Youthpass IS NOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a confirmation of participation by the organisers of a specific activity</td>
<td>something which gives any rights to the holder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a description of the activity (at the moment this includes participation in Exchanges, Voluntary Service, or Training Course – other Actions will be introduced later)</td>
<td>a formal accreditation of competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an individualised description of - activities undertaken - learning outcomes</td>
<td>a replacement for any formal qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a certificate for people participating in Youth in Action Programme activities</td>
<td>available to demonstrate learning outcomes from activities undertaken in the YOUTH programme (which came to an end in 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a tool which puts the Key competences for Lifelong Learning into practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>firmly based on principles of non-formal education and learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supported by the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a way of improving visibility of learning in the Youth in Action Programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an explanation of Youth in Action Programme activities which can be understood by people outside the youth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Apart from the general information on the Training/Service provider and the participants details, the YouthPass contains supplementary information on the skills developed and knowledge acquired; it includes the following competence fields that can be assessed via concrete actions:

- **Digital Competence** – confident and critical use of IT including computer and internet;

- **Interpersonal, Intercultural, and social Competence** – the ability to communicate in an appropriate way with friends, family and colleagues; to be able to deal with people from all kinds of different backgrounds; to be able to deal with conflicts in a constructive way; knowledge of what is going on in your village, city, country, Europe and the world; knowledge of concepts/ideas on democracy/citizenship/civil rights; your participation in civil life;

- **Cultural Expression** - to appreciate the importance of creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions; everything connected with media, music, performing arts, literature and visual arts;

- **Entrepreneurship** - the ability to turn ideas into action; to be creative and innovative; to dare to take risks; project management;
Communication in mother tongue—the ability to express thoughts, feelings and facts in words (oral/written); to be able to interact linguistically in an appropriate way;

Communication in foreign languages—the ability to express yourself and understand a foreign language, according to your needs; a positive attitude towards cultural differences and diversity; curiosity about languages and intercultural communication;

Mathematical and basic science competence—the ability and willingness to use mathematical models to deal with problems and challenges in everyday life; the ability and willingness to use knowledge to explain the natural world, to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions;

Learning to learn—how to organize your own learning to be able to deal with obstacles; being responsible for your own learning; evaluate/assess the outcomes of your learning;

The other step towards the recognition of non-formal education in Europe was the adoption of the so-called White Paper on Non-Formal Education. It recognizes the role of non-formal education for the development of young people and the making of youth policy. In the frame of lifelong learning, it places special emphasis on youth. It is also an expression of the Commission’s aim to promote new forms of European governance, which are more open, participatory, accountable, effective and coherent. The key objectives of learning are promoting personal fulfillment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability. The Communication on lifelong learning places emphasis on learning from pre-school to post-retirement, stresses that lifelong learning should encompass the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning and defines lifelong learning as “all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective”. (Coyote 6, p 15)

Followed by the White Paper, a number of EU countries adopted different mechanisms for monitoring and certifying the skills & knowledge gained through non-formal or informal educational processes, among them:

- France: validation of experience based knowledge (opening up of the national educational and training system to include the competences acquired outside formal establishments.)

- Finland: a leisure activities notebook that provides information on participation and learning in non-formal learning settings, listing projects, responsibilities assumed, courses followed.

- Germany: Kompetenznachweis International (focuses on experiences in the international youth work sector).

- Austria: Österreichischer Freiwilligenpass (provides information on the competences and knowledge acquired and the functions taken on as part of a volunteer activity).
- Luxembourg: certificate acknowledging the competences acquired in the non-formal learning sector

Useful links:


Resolution on the Recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field decided by the EU Council of Ministers - http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/c11/c11096.htm or http://tinyurl.com/m7ske

Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people - http://tinyurl.com/z52r7


CHAPTER 3: NON–FORMAL EDUCATIONAL TOOLS FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

3.1. Methodology Selection

Every situation, every audience is different. To be able to work effectively with a group, one needs not only a resolute feeling of what is going to be achieved as a result of the activity but also the need of the group and every single individual in it. Below presented are the guiding questions that will help to adopt the most relevant and effective methodology to reach the target one has set forth.

Aims and Objectives
- What actually do we want to reach with this particular method, in this particular moment of the program?
- Did we define our objectives clearly and is this method suitable?
- Is this method in line with reaching the overall aims of our activity?
- Does this method fit with the principles of our defined methodology?
- Is this method appropriate in the present dynamic of this particular intercultural learning situation?
- Are all requirements to use this method (e.g., group or learning atmosphere, relations, knowledge, information, experiences...) given by previous processes?
- What are the concrete subject / theme we are talking about?
- Which different aspects (and conflicts) can come up using this method, and how far can we preview (deal with) them?
- Is the method able to meet the complexity and linkages of different aspects? How can the method contribute to open new perspectives and perceptions?

Target Group
- For and with whom do we develop and use this method?
- What is the precondition of the group and the individuals in the group?
- Which consequences could the method have for their interactions, mutual perceptions and relations?
- Does the method meet the expectations of the group (individuals)?
- How can we arouse their interest?
- What will they need (individually and as group) and contribute in this particular moment of the learning situation?
- Is the method contributing to release their potential?
- Does the method allow enough individual expression?
- How can the method work out the similarities and diversities of the group?
- Does the group have any particular requirements needing our attention (age, gender, language skills, (dis)abilities...) and how can the method take them up in a positive way?
- Has the group or some individuals within it shown specific resistance or sensitivities towards the subject (e.g. minorities, gender, religion...), or extreme differences (of experience, age...) which could impact on the dynamic?
- Where does the group at in terms of intercultural learning process?
- Is the method suitable for the group size?

Environment, Space and Time
- What is the (cultural, social, political, personal....) environment in which we use this method?
- Which impact does the method have on this environment, and the environment on the method?
- Which elements (experiences) do the individual group members bring in this regard?
- Which environment (elements, patterns) is dominating in the group and why?
- Is the group atmosphere and level of communication suitable for the method?
- Does the context of this particular intercultural learning experience especially promote or hinder certain elements?
- How is the common (and individual) perception of space; is the “common territory” of the group large enough for using the method?
- Does the method contribute to a positive environment (to stretch everybody’s comfort zones)?
- Which space does the method have in the activity (consider what comes before and after)?
- Did we allocate enough time to the method and its proper evaluation?
- Does it fit within the timing of our program?
- How does the method deal with the (different) time perception of participants?

Resources, Framework
- How does the method match with the resources we have at our disposal (time, room, persons, materials, media...)?
- Is the method using them efficiently?
- What organizational aspects do we need to take into account? Do we need to simplify?
- How can we share the responsibilities to run the method?
- To what extent do we have the relevant skills to deal with the upcoming situation?
- In which (institutional, organizational...) frame will the method be used?
- Which impacts do we have to consider or foresee (e.g. organizational culture or preferences, institutional aims...)?
- Which outside actors might interfere with which interests (e.g. institutional partners, other people in the building...)?

**Previous Evaluation, Experience**
- Did we use this (or a similar) method before?
- What did we notice or learn from the experience?
- Are there any other experiences where we learnt about the use of methods?
- Are the method and its impact to be evaluated, and how can the achievement of our objectives be measured?
- How can we secure its results for what comes next? (report...)?

**Transfer; Participant Experience**
- To what extent is our method based on (or related to) the experience of every participant and on the learning experiences made so far?
- Is the method useful for the reality of the participants or in which regard might it need adaptation?
- Is the method oriented towards transfer/integration into the daily life of the participants?
- How will we provide a space for participants to integrate what they have learned into their own realities?
- Can a discussion or dynamic after the method help the transfer?
- Which elements might facilitate a good follow-up by participants?
- How can elements be taken up later in the process?

### 3.2. Ice-Breakers

The activities that aim at “breaking ice” between the participants, i.e. help them to get integrated into the working atmosphere and to get to know the other members, are called ice-breakers. These exercises are generally actively used during the first days of the acquaintance, and they should always be accompanied with active contact and information gathering.
Stuck in the Back

Purpose: To demonstrate the different prejudices and stereotypes existing towards various cultures and to identify the main reasons for the latter.

Resources: Sheets of A4 paper, paper scotch, pens/markers/pencils

Group size: any

Time: 20-30 minutes

Process:

a. In the beginning give to the participants the possibility to stop playing at any stage, if they don't feel comfortable with the activity. The group trust and friendly atmosphere is very important. Make sure you set a rule to respect the participants' feelings.

b. The participants write on piece of paper their cultural identity/nationality. This paper is stuck on the back of the person and all the other participants write stereotypes they have for this culture. Every participant writes on the backs of all the other participants. The facilitator can give examples to streamline the ideas – could focus on food, drinks, music, or monuments, etc.

c. Than every participant comments the things written about his/her culture. The facilitator ask questions like: The aim is not only the participants to exchange information about their culture, but also to see that one person do not represent 100 % the existing stereotypes for his own culture.

Discovering while Moving

Purpose: To contribute to the participants’ getting to know each other and discovering information about them.

Resources: game sheets with question boxes, pens, a quiet music to be on play

Group size: any size above 15

Time: up to 30 minutes

Process:

a. Tell the participants that on the other side of this page they will find lots of different questions written, and their task is to go around the room and get answers from minimum of 3 different people to the same question. When putting an answer, they are to write the name of a person who gave it.

b. To accomplish the activity, they have time till the music plays /not more than two tracks/.

c. The one who finishes first should cry out, and the rest of the group helps the facilitators with checking whether all the answers are true.

Please note: the questions can differ from culture-specific to very general ones, like: I have got three pets; I speak three languages, etc.
3.3. Energizers

The name itself suggests the application of the tool – to raise energy among the participants. They can be used to:

- set a mood or create an atmosphere,
- wake people up before or during an activity,
- introduce a topic in a light-hearted way.

The level to which the participants will enjoy the activity depends not only how the tool is presented but also on the very character of the participant or the overall mood in the group. Below we present energizers that, we think, are best applicable for the context of intercultural communication and learning.

60 seconds – how much is it?

**Purpose:** We all know time is relative – but what does this really mean? Participants live through their own minute of time and compare the results. Take care not to laugh at the people with spectacular results.

**Resources:** a watch for the facilitator, a chair for participants /or they can use the floor/. The clocks in the room should be covered blind.

**Group size:** any

**Time:** 1-2 minutes

**Process:**

a. The facilitator asks the participants to hide any watches they might have.

b. Then everybody has to practice sitting down on their chairs silently and with their eyes closed.

c. Then the facilitator asks everyone to stand up and close their eyes. On the command “GO!”, each person is to count up to 60 seconds and sit down when they have finished. It is important to stress that this exercise can only work if everyone is quiet during the whole of it. Once people have sat down they can open their eyes, but not before.

**Reflection:** The exercise allows for opening up the discussion about time perception in different cultures and even among homogeneous groups.

*Source: Swatch, Timex, etc.*

**The Onion of Diversity**

**Purpose:** To show the similarities that can be found among the cultures and to demonstrate how much in common they share. Can be followed by discussions about: Which similarities/differences amazed us? Where do they stem from? How far can our differences be complementary?
Resources: Big free space

Group size: Even number of participants of up to 20. For a bigger number of participants, two or more groups can be created.

Time: up to 30 minutes

Process: a. Participants are asked to form an inner and an outer circle (standing for the onion layers); people face each other in couples.
b. Each couple has to find (very fast) one thing (habit, aspect, background, attitude...) they have in common and find one form of expression for it (you can leave the form of expression free or indicate every time a different one: “Sing a song”, “make a short mime”, “create a poem in two lines”, “express it with noises”, “express it with a symbol”...).
c. Once this is done, the outer onionskin moves to the right and each new couple has to find a similarity and express it. You can as well give indications for the type of similarity (favorite food, what I disliked in school, family, music, habit, attitude, political statement...), going every time a bit “deeper” in our onions.
d. The couples can change several times, till the circle is finished (depending on group size).

Reflection: The game can be followed by reflection over questions like which similarities/differences amazed us? Where do they stem from? How far can our differences be complementary?

Source: Claudia Schachinger

3.4. Individual Exercises

Individual exercises are the ones that are exercised individually /however in the overall group atmosphere/. These exercises encourage a self-critical, questioning and curious attitude, a dialogue between heart and brain; learning by discovering ourselves.

My Own Mirror

Purpose: Self-awareness raising tool; an observation of one’s own self and their behavior and reaction related to a certain subject under consideration. A way to look at yourself with the eyes of the person next to you.

Resources: a pen and a notebook for each participant

Group size: any

Time: can be arranged during one session only or stretched for the whole day for a more comprehensive review
Process:
a. At the beginning of the unit, the idea of self-observation is introduced to the participants. They are invited to “observe themselves” during the day with great attention, their behavior, reaction to others (what we hear, see and smell...), body language, preferences and feelings, etc.
b. They keep a confidential “research diary” and note down any kinds of observation they consider important, as well as the circumstances, the situation, people involved, probable reasons, etc.
c. Participants receive a set of main guiding questions, depending on the focus of the observations. The observation could be for example used to talk about stereotypes /How do I perceive and react to others, to which aspects, in which way...?/ or elements of culture /What disturbs and attracts me about others? Which reactions or behaviors do I like / dislike? How do I react to things different to me? Which distance do I keep? In which way does this have an impact on my interactions?
d. The framework of the observation (beginning and end) should be very clear, maybe with some simple rules (respecting each other, confidence of diaries...). It is important that the exercise continues throughout the whole time, as well as in breaks, free time... As a starting point to get into the mood, participants can be invited to “step out of their bodies” and see themselves in a mirror (short exercise). Then, the "normal" program can be continued. The exercise can be facilitated if after every program point a short break invites people to note things in their diaries.
e. At the end of the unit, participants need to get out of the exercise and “step back into their bodies”. Then, a personal time is needed to go through the day and the diary, to re-read it, to reflect upon reasons... /this can have the form of an interview with yourself/
f. As a last step, a sharing can be initiated, in the form of an interview between two persons or in very small groups. If the group is very open and has a confident atmosphere, participants can be invited later on to discuss informally with others where they felt certain reactions, in order to exchange their perceptions and develop together new strategies for dealing with them.

Reflection:
Personal: How was it to observe myself? What was difficult? What did I discover? How do I interpret it? Why did I react like this? What does this say about me? Are there similarities, patterns of behavior I have? Where do certain things come from? Can I link any of my conclusions with any of the theories about culture? Would I react differently if I would be more (or less) conscious about doing the exercise? Are their parallels to my daily life and encounters with other people? For the sharing: It is important to stress that people just tell each other what they want to tell, and take the exercise as departure points for further reflections and questions to themselves.
**Facing Identity**

**Purpose:** To get to understand that how we see ourselves is not necessarily the way others perceive us.

**Resources:** A big sheet of paper and a pen for each participant; color markers

**Group size:** any

**Time:** up to 20 minutes personal, 20 minutes exchange

**Process:**

a. Every participant receives paper and pen and draws the profile of his/her face on the paper (alone or with the help of somebody else).

b. Participants reflect personally about various aspects of their identity /elements to be put inside of the drawn face/ and how others might see them /elements to be put outside of the drawn face/. The participants should be given sufficient time for this, trying to think through different elements constituting identity (family, nationality, education, gender, religion, roles, group belongings...). They should be encouraged to think about both personal aspects and attitudes they both like and dislike.

c. In a second step, participants reflect on the relation between what they see and others might see and the relation between different aspects.

d. Participants are asked to join together in small groups /maximum five/ and exchange their reflections very personally, but just as far as they want to go: How do we see ourselves? How do others see us? What influences me? What were my reference points? How do perceptions and attitudes change over time and why? Which dynamics can I perceive in terms of changes and how are they linked? How do I deal with elements of myself I dislike and where do they come from? Which linkage can I perceive between different aspects?

**Reflection:** Following subjects can be *Stereotypes and Prejudices* or *Elements of Culture*, etc.

*Source: adapted from “EYC Course on Intercultural Learning June 1998”*

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**Equiano**

**Purpose:** To help the participants reveal the prejudices they have inside yet of which they might not be aware of.

**Resources:** The cards with extracts from the book.

**Group size:** any

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Process:**

a. Do not explain the purpose of the activity to participants. Tell them that you are going to read a series of extracts from a book which describe a person’s experience. It is their task, individually, to visual-
ize this person, to build up a mental profile of him or her. Tell them that you will read and show them the extracts, one at a time.

b. Between each extract there will be a pause to give them time to think about the text and the profile of the person. Ask them to make a few notes each time and so gradually develop this profile. Tell them that it is not very likely they will know the person’s name – the person isn’t really famous. Explain that because the English in the text is not so modern, more straightforward terms have been added to the text, in green between brackets. Square brackets indicate words omitted because they would make the task too easy. Ask them not to talk during the exercise - if they fail to understand the meaning of the text they should raise a hand and you can clarify the meaning for them.

c. Read the first extract and give or show a copy to participants.

“I feared I should be put to death (killed), the [...] people looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner;”

d. Now repeat this procedure for each extract, making sure everyone understands the text and has time to make a few profile notes each time.

“Worse we to be eaten by these [...] men with horrible looks, [...] faces, and loose hair?”

“I was amazed at their…..eating with unwashed hands…..”

“I was amazed at their…..touching the dead.”

“….we were totally unacquainted with (we knew nothing about) swearing (bad language), and all those terms of abuse…which they use.”

“I could not help remarking (noticing) the particular slenderness (thinness) of their women…..and I thought they were not so modest (pure) as [our] women.”

e. At this stage, ask the group for feedback. Invite one or two people to share their profile with the group and then ask who agrees and who disagrees. Quickly establish the general groupings of opinion.

f. After ask the questions, like: How did you visualize this person?; Did you think of him/her as from this century?; Did you regard the writer as European or non-European?

g. Once you feel you have a fairly comprehensive picture of how the group saw the writer, let them know the identity of the writer and the source of the material.

“The Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African.” Written in 1789.

h. Give the participants copies of the text including the omitted words at this stage.

“I feared I should be put to death, the white people looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner:”

“were we to be eaten by these white men with horrible looks, red faces, and loose hair?”

“I could not help remarking the particular slenderness of their women…..and I thought they were not as modest as the African women.”
Reflection: Follow-up with questions that would guide the participants to understand their own perceptions, and how they came up with the writer’s profile:
- Were you surprised or shocked when told the identity of the writer?
- Did you identify with the writer or those being described?
- Are you surprised at (Western) Europeans being perceived/seen in this way?
- Does this teach us anything about prejudice – our own prejudice?
- Where do these views come from?
- Can you apply anything you have learnt from this to the present day?

3.5. Discussions and Arguments

Where do I stand?

Purpose: Reflecting and understanding one’s own position on ambiguous issues and comparing them with those of other participants

Resources: Enough room so that the participants can get divided into groups of 8-10;
- Flip chart papers with the 10-15 statements – each on a different sheet
- “Yes” and “No” fixed in the corners of the room.

Group size: 8-10 people per group.

Time: 30 minutes

Process:
a. Prepare 10-15 statements that touch the various aspects of culture and dilemmas related to the topic. The statements should be clear not to raise discussions of how to perceive them; not completely obvious to the participants /not like Music is part of the country’s culture/. A good way to come up with relevant statements is to underline the cross-cutting topics raised during the course and identify the possible two poles on the matter. Try to find a good balance of making the statement not too obvious to be (dis)agreed on /so it should not be too extreme/, and saying something so relative that everybody can agree to it /so avoid words that make things relative and diffuse, e.g. “rather”, “maybe”, etc./.
b. Introduce the exercise to the participants. A statement is going to be presented to them. They are asked to decide whether they agree or disagree with the statement and go to the appropriate side of the room /if you agree, you go to the side with the “Yes” sign, if you disagree, you go to the side with the “No” sign/. Everybody has to take a stand, you cannot remain in the middle. Once everybody has taken a side,
participants are asked to explain to each other why they (dis)agree. Everybody is free to change sides during the discussion, if you have been convinced by an argument you heard.

c. Start the exercise by showing the first statement. Give people time to read and understand the statement. Ask people to take their side, and, once everybody has decided, invite them to explain their decision.

d. It is not the purpose of the exercise at this stage to reach a consensus. Decide for yourself when you feel it is a good time to finish the discussion and move on to the next statement.

e. Move through all the statements following this routine. When you have finished, you might want to ask participants about how they felt and give room to resolve any outstanding issues. If any statement is so controversial that people cannot even settle with noticing that they have different opinions, take note of the issue and try to address it in the remainder of your programme.

**Statement Samples:**

- We are all determined by our culture
- Culture is determined by your economic and social position
- It is easy to change your culture
- You can only have one culture
- Culture should be shared by at least 50 persons
- We should accept all expressions of people’s culture
- Human rights stand above culture
- Women’s rights stand above culture

**Reflection:** It is good / yet not necessary / to follow-up with questions like *Why was it so difficult to find common ground on some questions? Which questions were more ambiguous and which ones were relatively easy to draw a viewpoint on? What are the topics you would like to go more thorough into?*

**Abigail**

**Purpose:** Touching upon the topics of social roles and prejudices surrounding them.

**Resources:** Each participant should be provided with a copy of the following story:

*Abigail loves Tom who lives on the other side of the river. A flood has destroyed all bridges across the river, and has left only one boat afloat. Abigail asks Sinbad, the owner of the boat, to bring her to the other side. Sinbad agrees, but insists that Abigail has to sleep with him in return. Abigail does not know what to do and runs to her mother and asks her what she should do. Her mother tells Abigail that she does not want to interfere with Abigail’s own business. In her desperation Abigail sleeps with Sinbad who, afterwards, brings her across the river. Abigail runs to Tom to happily embrace him and tell him everything*
that has happened. Tom pushes her away bluntly and Abigail runs away. Not far from Tom’s house, Abigail meets John, Tom’s best friend. She tells everything that has happened to him as well. John hits Tom for what he has done to Abigail and walks away with her.

Enough space for groups of participants of 4-5 to work separately and come together for the plenary.

Group size: a minimum of 5 participants per group.

Time: Total time of 90 minutes:
- Introduction – 5 min.
- Individual reading – 10 min
- Small group work – 30-45 min
- Evaluation in plenary – 30 min.

Process:

a. Introduce the exercise to the participants as being one about finding out about different values. Ask everybody to read the story by him/herself and to rank the each character /Abigale, Tom, Sinbad, Abigale’s mother, and John/ according to their behaviour: Who acted worst? Who second worst? Etc. After most of the people have done their ranking, ask them to get together in small groups (3 to 6), to discuss about how they perceive the behaviour of the characters. The task of the small groups is to come up with a common list – a list that everybody in the small group can agree on. Ask them to avoid using mathematical methods in order to establish the list, but rather to build that list on the basis of a shared understanding of what is good and what is bad.

b. Evaluate the exercise in plenary by first bringing together the results and by discussing the similarities and differences between them. Slowly move on to ask on which grounds people made their ranking. How could they decide what was good and what was bad behaviour?

Reflection: One focus of the evaluation is the relevance values have for us to determine what we think is good and what is bad. After having established that insight, the next step is to look at how easy or difficult it is to negotiate about values when having to establish a common list. You can ask people how they managed to come up with a common list – which arguments worked to convince them, and why, and where there was a border of being able to understand and/or follow the other.

First Impression

Purpose: To see how people differ in their initial impressions of others; to explore how our past experiences color our impressions of others; to become more aware of how our impressions affect our behavior towards others; to start the discussion about prejudice and stereotypes.

Resources: Papers, pencils, pictures of strangers with different ethnic background.
CHAPTER 3: NON-FORMAL EDUCATIONAL TOOLS FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

Group size: 8-30

Time: 1 hour

Process:

a. Select pictures from magazines of people who have interesting/different/minority/look or background. Selection should be done with regard to the group, the background of the participants and topic of the training.

b. Cut out the pictures and stick each on a top of separate A4 paper. Pass each A4 paper sheet around and ask each participant to look at the picture and write down the first impression of the person on the picture at the bottom of the page.

c. Then turn the bottom of the paper up, to hide what they have written and pass the sheet to the next person. Repeat until each participant has had all the pictures.

d. After that unfold the sheets and ask some participants to read out all the impressions collected under each picture.

e. Open up a discussion, focusing on: What surprises were there? Why are the impressions so different? Is it linked to our background, experience, place we live in …, what else? What feelings did participants have doing it, hearing the results? Discussion on stereotypes and prejudice do not let participants to criticize each other’s impressions. Try to focus on the reasons for the impressions. After the discussion a more theoretical input on stereotypes and prejudice can follow.

Defining Culture

Purpose: To demonstrate the difficulty in identifying the cultural boundaries and to create an understanding of what culture is and what it is not.

Resources: definition cut into pieces for each group, envelopes, flipcharts and pens.

Group size: working groups of 5-6 people.

Time: 45 minutes

Process:

a. Split participants into groups and give each group an envelope with the words. Ask them to agree on a definition of culture using the words they are given. They have 20 minutes to agree.

b. The participants present their definitions written on a flip-chart.

Words:

/culture different is common stable and the from values attitudes other regulations rules rituals religion norms opinions generation or traditions habits and in a group social nation ethnic or race shared unchangeable group opposite things these are the
ones in groups or nations culture passed is genes from thus on generation to history through and learning socialization and is the of nature/.

Reflection: What is culture? /sum up the important aspects of their definitions/; What did you include? What did you leave out?; Why?; Where does culture come from?; Can cultures change?

Your Potential Neighbor

Purpose: to show the power of prejudices and to start discussing implicit values and preferences in a group and come to a common conclusion.

Resources: Available rooms as to the number of participating groups

Group size: up to 7 people per group

Time: 45 minutes for the group work and another 30 minutes for the plenary discussion.

Process:

a. Prepare a drawing of a house on the paperboard. The facilitator tells the story of family Miller: "In this house live Mr. and Mrs. Miller with their 20 year old son David. The family lives quite happily together in this house. One day a bad accident happens and father and mother Miller lose their lives. David inherits the house of his family and lives a single and satisfied life, until one day David loses his job. David is no longer able to afford the live in the big house by himself. With his last money he decides to split the house into 6 apartments and puts them up "for rent" in the newspaper."

b. Now, imagine you are David and that you have to choose five tenants from the list of people applying to your ad, in order to be able to keep the house.

c. Task for the participants:

1. Choose 5 tenants from the list - individually (approx. 20 min.)

2. In group of 5 to 6 persons choose 5 tenants that the whole group agrees on (approx. 20 min.)

d. Debriefing:

– Has the group found 5 common tenants? Yes /No? Why (not)?

– How did the group work together to find those common tenants? What was difficult, what was easy?

– Discuss the reasons why you decided for these persons.

Attention! The debriefing is the most important part of the exercise. Take care of the possible emotions in the group!

Potential Neighbors
1. A single mother with a 3 year old child whose father is Tunisian. He visits his son occasionally and sometimes bring along a few friends.

2. A Yugoslavian migrant workers family with 5 children between 1 and 12. Father works in steel industry; mother would take the position of the concierge.

3. A family with a 17 year old daughter attending 11th grade at a secondary school. Father is an accountant in a bank, mother is a teacher.

4. A single 70 year old lady living on minimal retirement payment.

5. A group of 7 Polish refugees, all working in the kitchen of a large restaurant.

6. Five young people living an alternative lifestyle rejecting materialistic consumption ideology.

7. Three Palestinian students who are politically engaged.

8. A gypsy family of 5 persons. Father works occasionally and is unemployed in between times. They are a part of a larger family which has strong ties and likes to hold festivities.

9. An American couple without children. Husband is working at the International Atomic Energy authority; wife is taking care of the household and 3 poodles.

10. Two artists, approx. 40 years old who live rather a bohemian and unconventional lifestyle and have many artist friends.

11. A girl studying piano and singing who has to practice regularly in the afternoons.

12. A black American with his Austrian girlfriend. He is trying to get work permit as an engineer.

13. A religious Muslim family living strictly according to the Koran, the mother leaving the house only veiled.

14. A gay man who’s single, but invites a lot of man during the week in his apartment.

15. A young man, he’s wheelchair user and lives with his 76 years old mother.

16. A girl, who is blind, she lives alone with her dog.

3.6. Simulation Games

The introduction to the definition of the simulation game was introduced by Shubik (1975): “…games used to replicate and teach behavioral models and processes that employ the use of a human in a particular role, actual or simulated”. It is a chance to discover things or facts /even about your own self/ you probably never heard or thought of before. Also simulation games provide opportunities to practice new behaviors and attitudes in a non-threatening, non-judgmental setting. Simulations are a very powerful means of working with young people especially in an intercultural perspective to confront and address prejudices and stereotypes of other cultures. Most importantly, a simulated reality is a safer arena for many people to confront cultural differ-
ences. Particularly when addressing some cultural issues of potential controversy, simulation games provide a safe place to explore dangerous questions such as religious beliefs, gender roles and gender equality in a more specific form.

For a simulation game to be effective, one needs to make sure the following are taken into consideration:

a. It should be accompanied by a maximum amount of emotional involvement;
b. It should take place within an environment of safety;
c. It should be accompanied by adequate processing time and a clear summary providing a cognitive map for understanding the experience.

In other words, it should comprise an “integrative learning” – a learning process that allows to learn from differences and encounters in an open learning atmosphere.

The “Derdians”

The Purpose: To demonstrate cultural encounters and difficulties related to different working and communication standards dominating in the cultures. It teaches how to effectively get involved in multinational/multicultural working atmospheres.

Resources: Cardboard, glue, scissors, ruler, pencil, game instructions for each group /Derdians and engineers/, two separate working rooms.

Group size: a minimum of 12 people divided into 2 groups as being Derdians and engineers.

Time: 2 hours including the debriefing phase

Process:

a. Depending on the size of your group, have 4-8 people play a team of engineers, who will teach the Derdians how to build the bridge. They receive the instructions for the engineers and are brought to a separate room. The rest of the group will be Derdians. They receive the Derdian instructions. If you have too many people, you can also make a team of observers, who just watch and take notes. These observers should not be introduced to the Derdian culture beforehand, so keep them with the engineers in the beginning.

b. After the game the two groups of participants take a piece of flipchart and note their comments to the following three points:

1.) Facts  
2.) Feelings 
3.) Interpretations

c. The following points should be discussed in plenary:
- We have a tendency to think that others think the way we do.
- We often interpret things right away, without being aware of the differences in cultural behavior.
- How were the roles distributed/What role did I take? What does that reveal of my identity? Did I feel comfortable with my role?
- Is that image I have the same that was perceived by the others?
- What influence did my cultural background have on the role I took on?

Instructions for the Derdians

The Situation:
You live in a country called Derdia. The village you live in is separated from the next city where there is a market by a deep valley. To reach the market you have to walk for two days. If you had a bridge across the valley, you could get there in 5 hours. The government of Derdia made a deal with a foreign firm to come to your village and teach you how to build a bridge. Your people will then be Derdia’s first engineers. After having built that first bridge with the foreign experts you will be able to build bridges all over Derdia to facilitate other people’s lives. The bridge will be built out of paper, using pencils, rulers, scissors and glue. You know the materials and tools, but you don’t know the construction techniques.

Social behavior:
The Derdians are used to touch each other. Their communication doesn’t work without touching. Not being in contact while talking is considered very rude. You don’t have to be in direct contact, though. If you join a group, you just hang on to one member and are instantly included in the conversation. It is also very important to greet each other when you meet, even when you just pass someone.

Greetings:
The traditional greeting is a kiss on the shoulder. The person who starts the greeting kisses the other on the right shoulder. The other then kisses on the left shoulder. Every other form of kissing is insulting! Shaking hands is one of the biggest insults possible in Derdia. If a Derdian ever is insulted by not being greeted or touched while being talked to, he/she starts shouting loudly about it. Yes/No: Derdians don’t use the word no. They always say yes, although if they mean ‘no’, they accompany the ‘yes’ with an emphatic nodding of the head /you should practice this well/.

Work behavior:
While working, the Derdians also touch a lot. The tools are gender-specific: scissors are male, pencil and ruler are female. Glue is neutral. Men never ever touch a pencil or a ruler. The same goes for women and scissors.
Foreigners:
Derdians like company. Therefore they also like foreigners. But they are also very proud of themselves and their culture. They know that they’ll never be able to build the bridge on their own. On the other hand they don’t consider the foreigner’s culture and education as superior. Building bridges is just a thing they don’t know. They expect the foreigners to adapt to their culture. But because their own behavior is natural to them, they can’t explain it to the experts /this point is VERY important/. A Derdian man will never get in contact with another man unless he is introduced by a woman. It does not matter whether the women is Derdian or not.

Instructions for the engineers

The situation
You are a group of international engineers working for a multinational construction company. Your company has just signed a very important contract with the government of Derdia in which it committed itself to teach Derdians how to build a bridge. According to the contract signed, it is very important that you respect the deadline agreed, otherwise the contract will be cancelled and you will be unemployed. The Derdian government has a great interest in this project, which is funded by the European Union. Derdia is a very mountainous country, with many canyons and deep valleys, but no bridges. Therefore it always takes maydays for Derdians to go from the villages to the market in the main city. It is estimated that with the bridge the Derdians could make the trip in only 5 hours. Since there are many canyons and rivers in Derdia, you can’t just put a bridge there and take off again. You’ll have to instruct the Derdians how to build a bridge themselves.

Playing the simulation
First you should take time to carefully read these instructions and decide together about the way you are going to build the bridge. After a specified time, two members of your team will be allowed to go and make contact for 3 minutes with the Derdian village where the bridge will be built (e.g. to check the natural and material conditions, make contact with the Derdians, etc.). You will then have 10 minutes to analyze their report and complete the preparations. After this the whole team of engineers goes to Derdia to teach the Derdians how to build the bridge.

The bridge
The bridge will be symbolized by a paper bridge. The bridge will link two chairs or tables over a distance of approximately 80 cm. It has to be stable. At the end of the building process it should support the weight of the scissors and glue used in its construction. The pieces of the bridge cannot just be cut out and assembled in Derdia because otherwise the Derdians would not learn how to do it themselves. They have to
learn all the stages of the construction. Each piece needs to be drawn with pencil and ruler and then cut out with the scissors.

**Materials**

The bridge will be made with paper/cardboard. You can use for the planning and building: paper, glue, scissors, ruler, pencils.

**Time**

For planning and preparation before going to Derdia: 40 minutes

To teach the Derdians to build: 25 minutes

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### Albatross

**Purpose:** The activity aims at bringing the participants into a situation in which they are confronted with things, behavior, experiences etc., new to them. It serves to bring out the fact that many things are interpreted wrongly at first sight, and points out once more the complexity of culture.

**Resources:** dishes or bowls for hand washing;
- liquid to drink;
- food to eat;
- sheet or cloth for Albatrossian man and woman;
- chairs;
- candles;

**Group size:** 12-15

**Time:** Depending on the number of participants, it can extend to up to 90 minutes

**Process:**

**Setting:** a circle of chairs is put in a room. Only the workshop leaders are in the room.

- a. The male workshop leader is sitting on a chair, while the female leader kneels barefoot on the floor next to him.

- b. The participants enter the room /the only information they are given beforehand is that they are now visiting a new culture as guests/.

There are three ways of communicating /which are not known to the participants at the beginning of the game/.

- “Sssssssss!!!” = negative signal, (for incorrect behavior)
- „Mhmmhmhhmmm!!!” = positive signal (for correct behavior)
- Clicking one’s tongue = an order to do something
The activity could be defined as follows /there are however no limits to being creative!/

**Taking position:** The female leader signals to the participants that the female participants should kneel on the floor just like her; the male participants should sit down on the chairs; the female participants should take off their shoes.

**Welcoming:** The male leader welcomes the other men by standing up and signaling to one man at a time to also stand up. Then the two men rub their knees together (right knee to right knee). The female leader welcomes the other women, by making them stand up one at a time and rubbing their legs with her hands from hip to toes.

**Drinking water:** The female leader walks around and offers water by holding the glass to the mouths of the men to let them drink, with the women she passes the glass to them and they drink themselves.

**Eating bread:** The female leader walks around and hands out the bread, by feeding the men and passing the bread into the hands of the women to eat.

**Choosing a woman:** Afterwards both male and female leader walk around and look at the feet of the individual women /they are signaled to stand up one at a time to have their feet inspected/. They choose the woman with the biggest feet and signal her to take her place (kneeling) on the other side of the chair the male leader sits on.

**Hand on head:** The leader places his hands on the heads of the two women kneeling beside him and tilts their heads gently towards the floor. He motions to the other men to do the same to the women on their sides.

c. Now the activity is over and the leaders ask the participants to resume their seats /now back in the language we are used to/ and evaluate the game by asking questions like “What did you observe?”; “Did you notice anything in particular?”; “What happened?”; “How did the men feel?”; “How did the women experience their roles?”;

d. Now the meanings of the actions are explained. In the Albatross culture, the ground is considered holy. In the social hierarchy the women rank above men, therefore only women are allowed to touch the holy ground barefoot. The women are considered holy, too. The men must not touch what comes from the ground; therefore the men are fed by the women, whereas the women may touch the food and the water. The woman was chosen by the size of her foot, and the honor to kneel beside the leader was given to her as the woman with the largest feet because she has the biggest area of contact with the holy ground. The bending of the heads was a sign of gratitude - in this way the men can come closer to the holy ground (by touching the women!).

**Reflection:** Follow-up questions: “Why did most of you immediately assume that the women were being discriminated against?” /this is often the case – women feel obliged to work in the course of the game/; “Do you believe that in a foreign country/culture you would feel like you felt in this game?”; “How can we
try to find out what the underlying reasons for behavior are if we are not sure of interpreting the behavior correctly?”

Source: Vorbereitungscamp 2003, Handbooks für Betreuer Innen, AFS Steiermark 2003

**The Island of Monomulti**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the game is to raise awareness of diversity consequences and to start the discussion about how to deal with differences and to experience a multi-cultural situation.

**Resources:** Card boxes, scissors, rulers, glue, pencils, role cards.

**Group size:** 20-30

**Time:** overall 90 – 120 minutes

**Process:**

a. The group is divided in 3 groups. Each group gets their role card and they have 20 minutes to prepare their culture as described on the role card. On all role cards is said that they should practice it very profound.

b. After this preparation the whole group comes together. Then, the trainer will instruct them. Participants will have 30 minutes to build a shelter. Each culture has one observer who gets questions.

c. After the construction phase the evaluation follows: first in the 3 culture groups then in plenary.

**Situation**

*An enormous storm in this area has caused that your ship went down to the bottom of the ocean. You managed to reach this desert island. It seems also other ships wrecked because you have already noticed that groups from other ships managed to get here.*

The island is very mountainous and there seems to be only one spot where it’s possible to live which means that you have to live together with the other groups that reached the island. Because of the location of the island it’s not expected that help will arrive before the end of next month. So you have to survive for at least five weeks.

Food doesn’t seem to be a problem. There are lots of fruits growing and all kind of animals to hunt.

The first concern is to build a shelter where all people can sleep and hide in case of heavy rain and storm and which can protect you against wild animals. It’s important to do this as fast as possible because this area is known for sudden changing weather conditions. You’ll have to do it together with the other groups because there’s not enough space and material to build more than one shelter.

The material for building the shelter: cardboard, scissors, glue, rulers and pencils. The shelter must be stable and should at least be 100 cm high and 150 cm wide. It should have a roof and of course a door.

You have 25 minutes to build the shelter.
Questions for the Observer

Please note that each culture/group should have one observer.

- How do they ‘practice’ their culture?
- Are there any differences, how people practice their role in this culture?
- Are they successful in working with the other cultures?
- What main problems do they meet in dealing with the other cultures?

Observers give feedback (max. 2-3 min.) about their personal notes to their cultural group during evaluation in the small groups.

Evaluation

**Within Culture groups – 15-30 minutes**

- How did you feel during the simulation?
- What do you think about the construction-process?
- Were there moments where you felt insecure or not respected?
- What do you think are the characteristics of the other cultures?
- 3-4 minutes feedback from observers

**Plenary – 25-30 minutes**

- Can you see a link between this simulation and reality?
- What can we learn from this simulation? – put results on flip chart

Culture Descriptions

**Smilia**

In Smilia ‘politeness’ and ‘friendship and harmony’ are the most important values. You don’t like conflicts; you consider arguments as impolite behavior. That’s why you don’t know the word ‘no’. Even when you don’t agree you say ‘yes’. You always smile at people, also when you don’t like their attitude.

When you are working together and somebody asks you to do something you don’t want to do, you say ‘yes’ but you always find a way not to do it.

Smilia is a very religious country. In daily life this means that you pray often. Every five minutes you stop whatever you do to come together to worship your gods. You do that by sitting together and whistling.

The Smilians greet each other by rubbing each other’s legs. While speaking to each other your feet or legs are always in touch with the other ones feet or legs. You don’t touch each other up from the waist; it’s for example not allowed to touch shoulders, heads, hands or arms.

You have very strict rules towards tools and materials. Cardboard and scissors are male and cannot be used by women. Rulers and pencils are female and cannot be used by men. Glue can be used by both sexes.

Smilia is famous for its paintings and interior decorations.
Because your behavior is natural to you, you cannot explain it to strangers.
Now you have 15 minutes to prepare yourself in your own group. **Practice the behavior!** Also make sure there is one thing that shows in your appearance that you are from the same country. (e.g. the way you dress, the way you do your hair etc.) It’s very important to practice well because you will need it in the follow-up

**Turtelina**

In Turtelina ‘friendship’ and ‘taking care of each other’ are important values. Turtelinians show their feelings all the time and personal feelings are always the central issue in communication. Your face and your gestures show how you feel. You always touch each other. When you talk to someone you hold his or her ear. You stand close to the other. A distance more than 30 cm is considered as rude. When you greet somebody you put his or her hand on your heart. Any reference to sex is taboo and considered offending.

Time is very important in Turtelina. You are never in a hurry. You like to take your time. When you work together you first want to be sure that the atmosphere is good. So you ask the others all the time how they feel and you inform them about your feelings.

Interrupting people when they are speaking is considered impolite. You wait till they have finished their story. When people interrupt you, you feel rejected and you react very emotionally.

Turtelina is well known for their round shaped colorful buildings. Houses are always built in round shapes because this reflects friendship and harmony.

Because your behavior is natural to you, you cannot explain it to strangers.
Now you have 15 minutes to prepare yourself in your own group. **Practice the behavior!** Also make sure that there is one thing that shows in your appearance that you are from the same country. (e.g. the way you dress, the way you do your hair etc.) It’s very important to practice well because you will need it in the follow-up

**Coldonia**

In your culture ‘intelligence’ and ‘hard working’ are the central issues. Other cultures consider you as ‘cold’. But you see yourself as a very successful and wealthy country, mainly because of your very effective way of working.

You don’t discuss feelings, you like intellectual debates on logical arguments. Showing your feelings is considered childish. Self-control is seen as an important quality.

Religion totally disappeared in your country and is considered as ‘stupid’ and ‘a waste of time’.

You greet other people by looking in their eyes. Freedom of space is very important in Coldonia. That’s why you never touch people while greeting or communicating and you don’t like to be touched. Touching
other people is only used as an invitation for sexual intercourse, which in Coldonia has little moral implications and is mostly done as a relaxing and physical exercise.

Your body language reflects your culture. You only use small gestures, your back is straight and you stay always calm.

It’s very normal in Coldonia to interrupt another person whenever you feel the need to do that.

An important characteristic of Coldonians is that they are very willing and see it as their task to teach and train other cultures in order to help them to become as efficient and as successful as you are. Whenever you have the opportunity to teach other cultures you do it.

Coldonia is famous for building big oil-platforms and huge bridges.

Because your behavior is natural to you, you cannot explain it to strangers.

Now you have 15 minutes to prepare yourself in your own group. **Practice the behavior!** Also make sure that there is one thing that shows in your appearance that you are from the same country. (e.g. the way you dress, the way you do your hair etc.) It’s very important to practice well because you will need it in the follow-up.

### 3.7. Role Plays

Role plays are powerful means for examining conflict situations because it makes the participants the real agents of the given circumstance and gives them the chance to realize how they would act had they been given the right to intervene. The most important role to follow in case of the role plays is that it should by no means offend any of the participants. Another fact that should be followed is the relevance of the scenario to the overall topic to be covered in the session/course.

Those participants, who have not been assigned a specific role in the scenario, should be involved as observers, who, are to actively contribute to the follow-up discussions according to the analysis of the situation and behavior they have been witnessing.

The role playing is a very good method of reviewing experience, and when used it in intercultural learning sessions its objectives should be: to analyze prejudices, to promote tolerance in the group and towards different cultures, to analyze minority/majority relations, limits of tolerance etc.

**Respecting the Minorities**

**Purpose:** To have the participants put themselves in the shoes of the minorities and feel the bitter taste of discrimination /gender, ethnic, sexual orientation, etc./.
Resources: Copies of the roles for each player in the scenario.

Group size: 5 /the rest can get involved as observers/.

Time: 10 minutes for getting to know the situation; 20 minutes for solving the issue within the group; 20 minutes for the plenary discussion.

Situation:
A young homosexual couple that has just settled in a rather conservative community has decided to adopt a child and bring him up. The couple is marked with a decent and quite life pace, and rarely gets in contact with the local citizens. The state law does not prohibit the homosexual marriages, yet the law has been adopted only with the purpose of joining the European Union: the local citizens have ambivalent feelings about homosexuals. Abuse and discrimination are often applied as a means to demonstrate the hatred towards the minority representatives.

Roles:
a. A homosexual couple that lives in a conservative society and wants to adopt a child and bring him up.
b. A local priest that enjoys respect and esteem of the local community.
c. A conservative young man who often uses physical force against homosexuals.
d. A representative from the family sharing the apartment next to the one inhabited by the homosexual couple.

Reflection: Did you succeed to come to a decision that would satisfy each representative? How did you reach the decision? Were there any critical points in the process? Did you have personal bias to the issue depicted in the scenario? What are the results of the observations?

Hotel Glocal
Purpose: Raise awareness about cultural identity in order to have a fruitful intercultural dialogue.

Resources: a table

Group size:

Time:

Process:
a. Participants should divide into pairs. One person of the pair will be receptionist, other one is guest. Every guest will get a problem card where his problem is written and his task is to explain his problem to his receptionist during 1 minute.

The problem can be really general, e.g. the elevator is broken and the guest needs help to take his luggage up to the third floor.
b. Then it can be specified e.g. the neighbor uses scented sticks because she is Buddhist and the smoke is too strong.

c. The receptionist and the guest only can use their mother tongue and body language. They cannot use any common spoken languages! They cannot speak with each other before their meeting.

d. Every pair has 1 minute to speak and the receptionist should solve the problem. If he doesn’t succeed during one minute, afterwards he can guess and the other participants will be asked as well. At last the guest can say what the problem was.

e. Firstly all pairs will play and try to find solutions. After the exercise, debriefing will happen. Debriefing can be on cultural identities, similarities and differences between cultures, intercultural dialogue, and communication.

Reflection: Participants can dwell upon what constitutes communication, what are the problems with intercultural communication, what skills are required for productive intercultural communication, especially that without verbal language, etc.

Three Cultures

Purpose: To explore cultural differences and emotions/behaviors when meeting differences; to find constructive ways of dealing with/preventing conflicts aroused from differences;

Resources: A4 papers, pens, color papers for the hats /three different colors/; at least three free rooms.

Group size: 15-30 participants

Time: 180 minutes

Process:

Situation: On the occasion of new courses in youth policies in the world, delegations from all countries came to participate in the World Student Conference with name: «Students' Movement and Building Democracy». After you came to the airport, organizers of the conference are waiting for you and direct you into the Main Hall to meet other two delegations with whom you are supposed to cooperate closely during the conference. During that meeting, your task will be to choose 5 persons in total who will represent your 3 delegations in the Main board of the conference. So out of the three groups, only 5 people can be chosen to represent you.

Then, the groups go to the separate rooms and wait for the instructions from the facilitator. Before that, they are to read carefully those characteristics and to get into the roles. They should represent all characteristics of their culture not by talking of them but through behavior, way of touching/or not touching people, way of talking etc. They should try to make costumes, give themselves names and practice being in your culture.
They should also decide on the strategy of choosing those 5 representatives and how many representatives from the group you want (it can be none or it can be all 5 persons).

**Simulation 1**: All three delegations are gathered in big room.

Welcome...etc. Please, start the meeting. You should choose 5 representatives for main board.

Simulation can last about 15 min (depends of process, can be little bit shorter or longer). It should be stopped before they agree.

Stop the simulation.

OK, now you’ll have to fill in the questionnaires within your small group.

**Filling the questionnaires (15 min)**

1. What do you think about your own culture?
2. What do you think about Blue/Red/Green culture?
3. What do you think Blue culture thinks about your culture?
4. What do you think Red culture thinks about your culture?
5. What do you think Blue culture thinks about them?
6. What do you think Red culture thinks about them?

Back in the big room.

Now, we’ll read questionnaires (15 min). Just listen, we will not discuss anything in this moment.

Now, when you heard two other cultures maybe something has changed. Go in your small group and discuss new strategy (if there is one), concerning agreement and behavior. You’ll have 5 min for that. Then we’ll meet here and have another meeting.

**Second meeting – simulation.** Lasting about 10 minutes.

De-role.

Sharing and discussion (whole group): 30 - 60 min

everybody should say (circle): How did you feel during the exercise? Your main impressions, main insight?

Discussion, comments, giving handouts.

**Green Culture**

**Values, beliefs, attitudes**

The majority in your community is deeply religious. All decisions are made by consensus, preceded by serious discussion.

**Nonverbal characteristic of your communication style**

When you talk to strangers, you do not make direct eye contact because you think it can upset them. When you talk to somebody, you like to keep a slight distance between you (1 m).
Verbal characteristic of your communication style
When you discuss something with someone, you avoid direct confrontation. Silence in conversation reflects a positive and constructive discourse.

Norms and customs of business behavior
Men are more intelligent and analytical than women and you behave accordingly. In business situations, it is characteristic for men and women to sit in two separate groups.

Greeting and style of addressing people
You address others with “Brothers or Sisters”. Your greeting is “Respect” and “Peace among people”. Your greeting style is soft bow.

Blue Culture
Values, beliefs, attitudes
You believe that main events in life area matter of destiny or fortune. You never doubt your own instinct: reasoning can be false sometimes, but feelings never make mistakes. Final decisions are most binding when made by people of highest authority.

Nonverbal characteristic of your communication style
You are very flexible about time, because for you “lost time” does not exist. When you talk to somebody, you make direct eye contact and stand very close to the person. While you talk to somebody, you often touch them, or hold their hand or shoulder.

Verbal characteristic of your communication style
You very often show your gratitude and very openly express your feelings. It is normal to interrupt someone when they are talking and it is normal for others to interrupt you in the middle of the speaking.

Norms and customs of business behavior
Women are wiser than men, and behave accordingly. You avoid conflicts, direct confrontation and unnecessary disagreements.

Greeting and style of addressing people
When you greet someone, you give him a warm hug. Your greeting words are: “Hello dear”.

You address other people only by name and you repeat the name of the person many times in conversation.

Red Culture
Values, beliefs, attitudes
You believe that every man is the master of his own destiny and happiness. Good argument is valued above sentiment or emotions. It is very important to make all decisions in democratic atmosphere.

Nonverbal characteristic of your communication style
You are very strict with your time and you don’t like it being wasted. You are open in expressing feelings like anger, dissatisfaction and joy. While talking to someone, you like to have some distance (2 m).

**Verbal characteristic of your communication style**
You express your ideas and thoughts about something directly and without hesitation. You ask many questions: good question is more important than any facts. It is not common to say thank you: people only do what they are happy with anyway.

**Norms and customs of business behavior**
You welcome conflicts are see them as useful opportunity to come to better decisions and solutions.
Man and woman are equal in your society.

**Greeting and style of addressing people**
Your typical greeting is strong handshake. You address others with “Good afternoon”.
You address other by surname and it is obligatory to say title (professor, doctor, colleague, student etc.).

### 3.8. Problem Solving

The problem solving exercises generally aim at presenting the difficulties connected with trust, listening, cooperation, and coming to a conclusion shared by all the members of the group, especially that of an intercultural character.

**The Egg exercise**

**Purpose:** To demonstrate the cooperation cycle among a multicultural group.

**Resources:** A raw egg attached to the ceiling with a string; scissors, scotch tapes, and a pile of sheets of paper.

**Group:** Groups of 5-6 people in each.

**Time:** 10 minutes to explain the rules of the game; 30 minutes for the game itself; 15 minutes for the follow-up discussion.

**Process:**

a. Prepare the rooms where small groups of participants (4-5) are going to work. For each small group, bind a string around a raw egg and hang the egg from the ceiling, at approximately 1.75 – 2m from the ground. Do not wrap the egg, if it falls to the ground it should still be able to break… For each small group, put ready for use a pile of old paper, scissors, glue.

b. Split the large group into small groups of about 4-5 participants each. Introduce the exercise to the group: Exactly 30 minutes after the start of the exercise the facilitator will pass by the room and cut the
string holding the egg. As a team, it is their task to build a construction that would prevent the egg from breaking.

Rules:
- Neither the egg itself nor the string holding it may be touched by the participants or by the material they use
- They can only use the material you have prepared for them, /chairs and tables that may be around cannot be put into use!/  
c. Watch the groups (you may need one facilitator per 2 small groups) and ensure that they observe the rules.

d. After 30 minutes exactly, stop the groups. Make a tour then cut each string and see if the teams have succeeded in preventing the egg from breaking.

Additional suggestion: To add up more on the intercultural environment, you might want to add up a simulation with different cultural groups adopting different working styles.

Reflection: What was the most difficult thing in working together? Were there moments when you felt fed up and simply wanted to walk away from the game? Did you feel excluded? Did you notice different communication and working styles within the group?

3.9. Research

The most important requirement for the kind of activity is that the research should be made by the participants themselves right in between the process of learning. The research should be based on the topics covered /necessarily covering topics related to intercultural communication/.

Cultural Laboratory

Purpose: To involve the participants in the process of observation and drawing conclusions according to the analysis conducted based on the previously discussed topics.

Resources: Notebooks and pens per participant

Group size: a minimum of 6 people; the involvement of more participants allows for more topics to be covered.

Time: The whole duration of the session or the whole day depending on the content and the structure.

Procedure:

a. The facilitator introduces the method by explaining that everyone in the room is a cultural scientist or anthropologist – and their task: to study the cultural behavior of everybody.

b. Discuss which elements the participants want to consider. Followed is a list of suggested topics:
space – what ways have we found to share this building? Do we have any personal space?
- time – how do we divide work time and free time? (is a coffee break a real break or a “coffee work”? What does punctuality mean to each person?
- relationships – how do we approach each other? What types of friendships have formed and why? /do we interest ourselves in the subject of sexual relationships?/
- subcultures- what types of groups have formed within the larger group? Are there excluded minorities?
- shared meanings and assumptions – what types of jokes do we all find funny? What brings us together here?
- approaches to problem-solving – how do we find solutions to the challenges we face in living together?
- community and individualism – “all for one and one for all”, or “me, me, me”? 
- communication and information – what are the different forms of how we communicate with each other? How is information transferred? Who searches for it? Who waits for it to come to them?
- men and women – what are the differences and similarities? What is allowed for women and what for men?

c. Divide the participants into groups of 4 – 6 people, each group to have different topics to research.
d. The groups decide how they want to work, for example, using observation or questionnaires AND how they wish to present the results of their work. A time limit should be set for the presentations.
e. Depending on the time available, allow 50% for research, 25% for presentation of the results and 25% for evaluation.

Reflection: The reflection may follow with the following questions: How was it to be a “cultural scientist”? What challenges did you encounter in your research group? What did we learn? How did we split personality from culture? How valid is it to talk of a culture if we only know each other for a few days?

Sources: Claudia Schachinger and Lucida Popovska, Intercultural Learning and Conflict Management Training Course, European Youth Centre, May 1999

3.10. Evaluation

The very term itself suggests that those types of techniques are used to collect information about the results of an action and set this against predetermined criteria in order to judge the value of the results. The evaluation allows the teacher/facilitator to maintain, to change or to suspend, justifiably, a defined plan. In this way it is possible to keep quality control and decide what can be kept or discarded for similar activities in future. The contribution and the feedback collected from every participant should be taken into detailed
consideration if the teacher is really concerned with improving the quality of the work he/she is conducting. The below presented evaluation technique is of non-formal character and allow for more creativity and flexibility in terms of expressing attitude and leaving anonymous feedback.

**The Communication Tree**

**Resources:**
- 1 large sheet of paper. Draw a tree with branches without leaves – as many as there are activities for evaluation, and write into them the elements you wish to evaluate.
- Minimum of 5 pens (it depends on the size of the group, but use the same number of each color): 1 yellow, 1 green, 1 blue, 1 red and 1 brown. If possible respect the colors.
- 1 sheet of paper with a Scale of Leaves between 1 (minimum) – 5 (maximum) of different colors: 1 – yellow; 2 – green; 3 – blue; 4 – red; 5 – brown.

**Group size:** any

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Process:** The facilitator puts the two large sheets of paper /one with the drawing of the tree and the other with the scale/ and the pens in a place that permits participants to complete the tree relatively anonymously. Then he/she goes on explaining the purpose of the activity then he/she goes on with explaining the aim of the activity and invited the participants to leave their feedback by means drawing one leaf on each branch of the tree, according to the scale, which illustrates their degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with all the activities. Check that all participants complete the task. If there is a wish to express personally, the participant can clear out his/her personal point/attitude in the presence of the group.
CONCLUSION

The study has shown that culture is neither a homogeneous unit nor a static, clear-cut phenomenon; it is a complex system of shared values, behavioral conduct, worldview and treatment that guide the human interaction wherever he/she is involved. It is a system characterized by its dimensions and components which come together as a whole shaping the human individuality and its unity with the community; hence, culture is directly communication-relevant. What we have meant by saying communication-relevant is that the whole communication process, starting with initiating a conversation with a particular person on a particular topic to its effective flow and the final conclusion is determined by the condition of how culturally competent the interlocutors are.

The modern world has erased the boundaries between the states and therefore, for any specialist, for any full member of the present-day society, it is far not enough to limit oneself by the genetic cultural competence that is delivered by nature to be able to interact with the “species” of one’s own culture. One should be able to be as sensitive when talking to a Muslim /if we are allowed to generalize it to this largest scale/ as one would be when talking to a Buddhist; and how can a person possibly do so if he/she does not know that the single movement of the thumb denotes completely different concepts in those cultures, let alone the perception of time of positioning; One should never be offended when being avoided to look in the eye and vice versa – to be as direct as holding the hand of someone one has known for less than an hour; One should never predict that the low-context information that would be easily interpretable by his culture would be as easily digested by a person holding another culture; and finally one should never think that to ask “How much do you earn” is as non-provocative as it would be in his culture.

The study helps to identify why in cultures like Armenian it is more common to see isolation and defense towards something that seems, new, different and why people with monoethnic communities have got the perception of superiority towards other cultures. It has shown that the cultural or intercultural adaptation is a long lasting process, and the degree to which the person would shift from the denial of the foreign culture into accepting it depends on how tolerant and interculturally sensitive the person is. This is all that makes up the subject-matter of intercultural learning.

Furtherly, the thesis brought into comparison the different educational settings and drew parallels between the effectiveness of each of them as being structured, half-structured and non-structured. It managed to
show that the horizontal relationship between the instructor and the pupil is more effective compared to the vertical relationship when dealing with intercultural learning and capacity development. The diversity of the tools and methodologies offered in the work show that non-formal learning, being more dynamic and more adjustable to the specifics and the needs of the particular classroom, offers instructor/trainer/teacher more varieties for being able to reach the learning objective to the most possible extent.

The work furtherly showed that being inclusive and entertaining in character, the non-formal learning methodologies are more acceptable in the diverse audience. A person would feel more reluctant to identify himself and his opinion when directly asked the question than when it is done through a simulation game; the education and learning process would be more inclusive when the student himself is part of the process through a simulation game on an unknown culture than when having to read and prepare a report on it; the instructor would more easily break the ease of communication between the newly formed group through an icebreaker on the names and the ability to remember those names than when going through the register and identifying each one’s full name separately.

And finally, the study showed that the non-formal learning process is not genuine and perfect in character either; it more difficult to assess in terms of evaluation and in terms of holding the learner accountable for the knowledge he has to acquire.

The non-formal learning tools presented in the work are designed primarily for developing the intercultural competence and sensitivity; however, they can be adjusted to other learning needs. The latter can be done in accordance with the peculiarities of the audience, the preference of the participants and the instructor and on the resources available at hand.

The proposed continuation of the work might be the investigation of intercultural learning on an educational policy level to bring it into the school curricula to be applied directly or in-between the other school subjects. The question that should be raised is whether intercultural learning should be investigated mandatorily at school or the outdoor and non-structured activities are enough to meet the basic needs.

The second question that remains unaddressed as relevant for the Armenian reality is the following: what hinders the spread recognition of both of the non-formal learning as a methodology skit and of the achievements one can mark in a non-formal structure in Armenia; what are the steps needed for advocating non-formal learning and its recognition on a state level; why the YouthPass and the like still under the shadow as certificates for competence and knowledge.
REFERENCES


