

MINGLE:

Generating social and human capital for Third-Country Nationals

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Introduction

1. About “Mingle: Generating Social and Human Capital for Third-Country Nationals” project

“Mingle: Generating Social and Human Capital for Third-Country Nationals” is a Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund co-funded EU project which aims to facilitate active participation of TCNs in host societies primarily through: 1) building/accumulation of social (SC) and human capital (HC) 2) capacity building and mentoring skills for locals, mostly representatives of local authorities on intercultural and mentoring skills. The project’s interventions are expected to reach min. 500 locals and 500 Third-Country Nationals in 5 EU countries.

The general working plan of the project is the following:

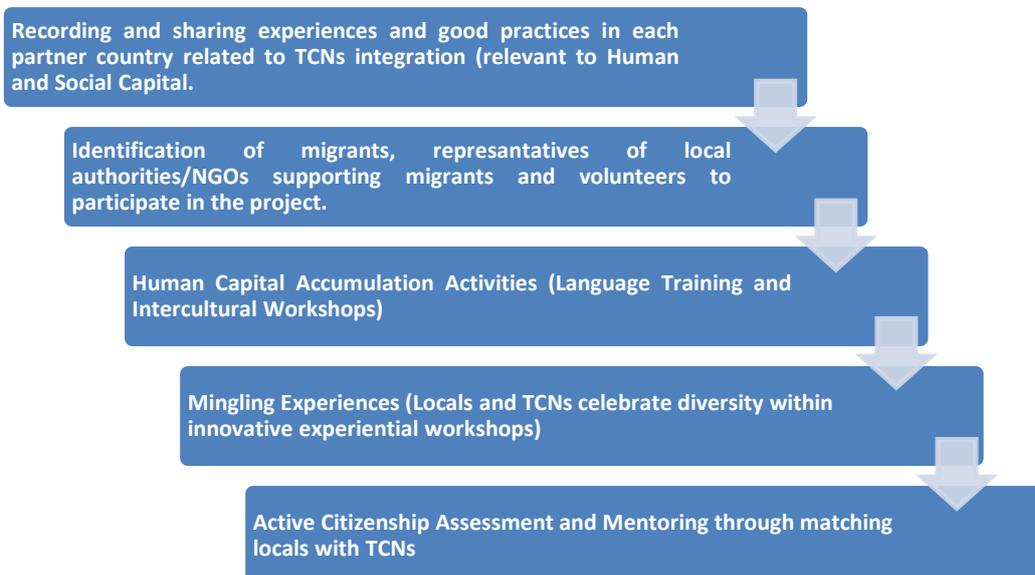


Figure 1: Project Work Plan

Specifically, reinforcement of **Human Capital** will be achieved through:

1. Training on horizontal skills, such as language, intercultural communication and social and civic skills.



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2. Visits to cultural sites and institutions, and participation in cultural activities, aiming to increase knowledge of the host culture and political trust.

Regarding **Social Capital**, the project will work on the development of social networks and relationships between TCNs and locals, through innovative interventions:

1. **Events (MINGLING experiences)** aiming at the discovery of the common humanity of TCNs and locals (representatives of local authorities and others), through sharing stories, objects, games etc. In these events TCNs will meet and bond with locals, thus accumulating SC in the form of networks and personal connections.
2. **Mentoring:** Locals will be matched with TCNs and mentoring sessions will be implemented, the content of which will be personalised, according to the needs of each mentee. Mentoring has more benefits than merely contributing to the resolution of TCNs' needs; it leads to a greater openness, a change of mentalities and increase of social trust (for both parties).

The main **outputs and deliverables** of the project include:

1. **Language, social & civic skills, intercultural competence workshops, manuals and training materials**
2. **MINGLING experiences** including a facilitator's guide for organizing and delivering the experiences
3. The EMKIT which comprises of an '**Online Interactive Active Citizenship Assessment Tool**', a tool to assess the migrant's situation in terms of social activity as well as skills and knowledge and a set of activities with guidelines for their implementation by mentors with their mentees in order to reinforce their HC and SC
4. **Mentoring sessions** including training materials for the mentor's workshop "Effective Multicultural Communication & Mentoring"



5. The **'How-to MINGLE' (HtM) platform** an online step by step guide available on an interactive web platform, with information on how to apply the project activities in different contexts. All the resources (training materials, best practices, facilitator's guide etc) will also be available for download from the platform

"Mingle" project has a strong European dimension as it involves 10 different partner organisations from 5 EU countries (Cyprus, Greece, Germany, Spain, Sweden) and it coordinated by the Nicosia Municipality Multifunctional Foundation (Cyprus). Apart from the experience and best practices across EU which will be shared within the partnership, the activities and in general the results of the project will reach simultaneously 5 different European countries, while the project is designed in a way permitting replicability and viability after the end of the funding.

2. About Mingling Experiences

a) The philosophy behind: the Human Commonalities concept

The idea for the MINGLING experiences builds on a project which has been identified as a best practice for integration, *Hwawar u Fjuri*. It created common spaces where Maltese nationals and TCNs could meet and get to know each other through the narration of stories on the use of herbs and flowers in their countries and cultures. Based on the book by D. Brown, "Human Universals", which lists the cultural elements that are common in all cultures, Mingling Experiences attempt to further substantiate and generalise this approach. The Mingling Experiences, this important and innovative activity of the project, involves events facilitated by experts, aiming at the discovery of shared cultural and social elements among TCNs and locals, including representatives of local authorities and volunteers. The participants share stories, show/exchange/touch objects, play games, and engage in other activities that are representative of their cultures aiming at discovering common socialising patterns, eating patterns, family roles/functions and so forth. Also, during the MINGLING experiences, a range of ice-breaking and getting-familiar activities are performed.



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These events will allow third country nationals to meet and bond with locals, to share feelings and experiences, thus contributing to the accumulation of social capital in the form of networks and personal connections. Moreover, the locals participating in the MINGLING events, are also expected to benefit, as they will acquire better stances and attitudes towards third country nationals, after discovering and focusing on the things they share: human commonalities.

b) Implementation

The Mingle Experiences participants will be allocated to each group based on age, gender (where needed), etc. In Total, 20 Mingling Experiences will be implemented in each of the 5 EU countries, with 10 participants each (5 locals and 5 TCNs – total 1000 participants). The number of participants per group is relatively low, because this will ensure that the sharing of stories and experiences, as well as the level of bonding and interpersonal connections targeted, will be reached. The duration of each Mingle Experience is 4 hours. It considered very important for evaluation to follow after the end of each session.

3. The Mingling Experiences Facilitator

a) What does a Mingling Experiences Facilitator do?

A Mingling Experiences Facilitator is responsible for the implementation of the Mingling Experiences events. The Facilitator acts as a creative cultural mediator who aims at engaging with both cultural groups -the 5 locals and 5 Third-Country Nationals- and, above all, make them come together, make them culturally mingle and identify the values, the stances and attitudes they may share towards the issues of identity, culture and diversity. The facilitator's ultimate goal is to encourage locals and Third-Country Nationals change these stances and attitudes, within a frame of common understanding and mutual respect.



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In the frame of “Mingle” project, facilitators will be trained by trainers who will have been trained throughout the “Train the trainers” event, to take place in Cyprus on 18 January 2019. Following the “Train the trainers” event, 1 workshop of 7 hours duration with 10 participants will be held in each country (5 workshops in total, 50 trained facilitators in total) in order to train the facilitators for the Mingling Experiences.

b) How does someone benefit from being a Mingling Experiences Facilitator?

The Mingling Experiences Facilitator firstly benefits from being trained in new, innovative, interactive intercultural competences acquisition methods. Following his/her training, the facilitator will be able to further implement the gained knowledge in his/her professional framework.

In parallel, the facilitator takes part in vivid, interactive, fun and inspiring event which. Throughout the cultural mediation he/she will provide to the Mingling Experiences participants –locals and Third-Country Nationals- the facilitator will benefit from a self-changing experience.

Additionally, individuals who are interested in getting actively and professionally involved in the humanitarian, adult education, intercultural communication training, soft skills training sector and/or other subjects relevant to the topics of the Mingling Experiences will gain a precious insight and they will have the opportunity to challenge their skills and knowledge.

c) Who can be Mingling Experiences Facilitator

The facilitators will be required to have previous experience in adult education, intercultural communication training, soft skills training and/or other subjects relevant to the topics of the Mingling Experiences. Though, individuals without intense previous experience are encouraged to participate and become Mingling Experience Facilitators.



d) How can someone become a Mingling Experiences Facilitator

In the framework of “Mingle” project, he/she has to go through the Mingling Experience Facilitators Training event. To participate to the event, he/she has to contact one of the 10 organisations of the “Mingle” project partnership, depending on the country of his/her residence.

4. About the Methodological Guide for the Mingling Experiences Facilitator

a) Aim

The present Methodological Guide for the Mingling Experiences Facilitators aims at providing an in-depth explanation of the concept “Human Commonalities” on which the Mingling Experiences are based and that will include practical, step-by-step instructions for the implementation of activities such as getting-familiar/bonding exercises, games, ice-breakers, storytelling etc. The guide will provide guidance to facilitators on how to draw conclusions from the activities performed emphasizing on the elements which are common and connect people (i.e. common cultural elements, common attitudes, common perspectives etc.).

In parallel, the Methodological Guide for the Mingling Experiences Facilitators will be available online –on the Mingle platform- aiming to contribute to the continuation of the delivery of MINGLING EXPERIENCES by the European Community after the completion of project.

b) Structure of the Methodological Guide for the Mingling Experiences Facilitators

The structure of the Methodological Guide for the Mingling Experiences Facilitators the present **Introduction** and the main body of **10 Human Commonalities and Activities**. Each chapter is named after a certain Human Commonality which has been identified by the international literature. In



every chapter, the specific Human Commonality relates to a main activity. The activities which are included in the following chapters have an experiential, interactive, vivid, team-building and in some cases creative character. They are chosen and put into the Guide's chapter based on their relevance to the adjacent Human Commonality but also their expected effectiveness and function.

The structure of each chapter of **Human Commonalities and Activities** unit is the following:

a) Brief: at this point, facilitators are provided with some key words and phrases which sum up the chapter and relate to the specifically examined Human Commonality (or Human Universal in other words). The aim of this short presentation is to facilitate the facilitator while studying the Methodological Guide for the Mingling Experiences Facilitators but also while searching for the suitable Human Commonality and Activity to present and elaborate with the participants.

b) What [NAME OF HUMAN COMMONALITY] is about?

Facilitators are provided with a theoretical presentation and analysis of the specific Human Commonality of the chapter. The descriptions are based on bibliographical research but they also contain examples from everyday life. Each Human Commonality is presented in an understandable, non academic language so as to ease the facilitators' efficacy, especially if they need to get back to the descriptions during the actual implementation of a Mingling Experience event.

c) Icebreaker: Each chapter includes a preparatory Icebreaker which is relevant to the chapter's content and aim. Under this sub-topic, the rules, the duration, the frame, the process and the objective(s) of the ice-breaker is presented. At the end of each Icebreaker, the facilitator concludes and makes the logical transition to the main part of the chapter, Human Commonality and Activity. Given the nature of Icebreakers, certain among the ones included in the Guide, can be implemented within other different chapters or in combination with other Icebreakers.



d) Activity:

1. **Aim:** The goal of the activity is briefly presented in a simple, non academic language.
2. **Practicalities:** in this field, facilitators can find out the material which possibly is needed for the implementation fo the activity.
3. **Description of the Activity:** the way, the frame, the rules, and the duration of the activity are presented here in detail, step by step.
4. **Plenary Reflection:** after the end of the action part of each activity, participants are asked to reflect on given questions or arguments asked or given by the the facilitator.



Human commonalities & activities

1. Facial expressions

a) Brief

- Universality and cultural background of facial expressions
- Matching facial expressions to short stories and labels of feelings
- Discovering common feelings through common facial expressions

b) What facial expressions human universal is about?

We all smile. We all cry. We all had this expression of surprise when we opened a Christmas present. But do all these facial expressions and facial expression in general mean the same thing in all cultures?

Actually, the discussion about the universality of human facial expressions is very long. Significant anthropologists, psychologists, ethnographers and various researchers from different disciplines have been arguing for or against it for a long time. One of them, maybe the most renowned and famous, Charles Darwin, back in 1872, was among the first ones to support that certain facial expressions can indeed be found in every human civilisation and culture. The debate concerns the most common human facial expressions like facial expression of anger, contempt, disgust, fear, happiness, surprise or even facial expressions which offer the individual a mask to hide or modify the expression of his/her feelings.¹

As a first reaction, we would all tend to think that these expressions cannot be different across different cultures. We may be right for most of them. But, for human science nothing is given. As a

¹ *The Blank Slate* by Steven Pinker, 2002, New York: Viking Press



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result, it was finally until the '70s that researchers came up with the modern theory that certain human expressions, either they are innate or culturally acquired, are indeed universal.

c) Icebreaker: My face, My world

Participants are gathered in a circle. The facilitator asks from them to perform, one by one, when it is the turn of each participant, a facial expression which he/she thinks represents himself/ herself in general. After the first round has ended, the facilitator asks from the participants to perform a second facial expression which represents their mood at that right moment. The facilitator is encouraged to start each round first so as to motivate the participants to actively participate.

Duration: 5 min

d) Activity: Photo Feelings²

i) **Aim**

The aim of this activity is for participants to realise the universality of basic facial expressions. Even if exceptions occur, participants will have the chance to search the different cultural background of the facial expression which constitutes the exception.

ii) **Practicalities**

Needed equipment:

- Projector linked to a PC/laptop
- Smart phone or digital camera with usb exit

² Inspired by the experiments conducted by Caroll E. Izard (1971) and Paul Ekman and his associates (Ekman et al. 1969; Ekman 1972, 1973).



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- 5x2 printed short stories (half of A4 size each), 10 handouts in total
- 5x2 printed bold words for feelings (half of A4 size each), 10 handouts in total

iii) **Description of the Activity (40 min)**

The facilitator divides the participants into 2 groups of 5. The 1st group (G1) consist of TCNs and the 2nd (G2) of locals. G1 gather in one side of the room and each member sits one next to the other with a small distance from each other. G2 does the same but with their back turned towards G1 so that they don't face them. The facilitator hands out 5 stories and 5 feelings to G1 and 5 stories and 5 feelings to G2. The 5 five stories must be of different mood.

Example of Story 1a: "Yesterday, at the supermarket, a very strong man bypassed me at the cashier queue and looked at me ironically when he saw my surprise."

Example of Story 2a: "Today I'm gonna go to my favourite kebab restaurant and order my favourite dish without thinking of anything else!"

Example of story 3a: "My boss did not approve my annual leave despite that I have been working a lot of extra hours during the past weeks"

Example of story 4a: "My sister gave birth last week. She brought to life to wonderful twins"

Example of story 5a: "Yesterday night I saw on TV pictures of whole cities in Syria being demolished"

Example of Story 1b: "Yesterday night I ordered a pizza which was smelling badly due to rotten vegetables which were put on"

Example of Story 2b: "Yesterday I read in the newspaper that a new racist party is about to be



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founded in my country”
Example of Story 3b: “A friend of mine who is living close to my house told me that last week burglars broke into his apartment while he was sleeping”
Example of Story 4b: “I put the key in the lock, I opened my apartment’s door and then I saw 10 of my friends shouting HAPPY BIRTHDAY!”
Example of Story 5b: “I was observing the stars trying to find the Ursa Minor. It was a quite cloudy evening and it was not that easy”.
Example of Feeling 1a: “Annoyance”.
Example of Feeling 2: “Joy”
Example of Feeling 3a: “Anger”
Example of Feeling 4a: “Happiness”
Example of Feeling 5a: “Sadness”
Example of Feeling 1b: “Disgust”
Example of Feeling 2b: “Contempt”
Example of Feeling 3b: “Fear”
Example of Feeling 4b: “Surprise”



Example of Feeling 5b: "Curiosity"

G2 members have to read all the stories "a" and feelings "a". The facilitator gives to each member of G1 one story "a". Then the facilitator asks from G1 members to perform a facial expression that represents their feeling after having read the story and takes a photo of each of G1 members. Then G2 members turn their chairs so that they face G1 and put all the stories and the feelings "a" on the floor in a way that all G2 members can see them. The facilitator transmits the photos on the PC/laptop and projects them. G2 (locals) are firstly asked which stories they think match each photo and explain the choices they have made. Then G2 is asked to match each photo with a feeling and explain the choices they have made. G1 who remain silent throughout the procedure, now are asked to say if they agree with the matching or not and why. The activity is repeated with reversed roles and using stories and feelings "b". At the end of the activity the facilitator summarises the reactions and the debate which occurred during the activity.

iv) Reflection in the Plenary

Participants get closer and the 2 groups mix. The facilitator asks from the participants to describe their impressions from the activity. He/she specifically asks from them to confirm or reject the universality of the facial expressions performed and examined throughout the activity. At the end of the discussion the facilitator asks from the participants to perform –this time in a more relaxed way– a facial expression which represents their mood at that right moment.



2. Personal Names

a) Brief

- Sharing the story of where a personal name comes from
- Pair of local and TCN session
- Exchange of cultural background information
- Creating imaginary names and origins.

b) What “Personal Name” Human Universal is about?

Would you ever imagine yourself with another name? That’s not impossible. But would you ever imagine yourself deprived from your name? That would not be possible.

As Donald Brown says³ : “ The UP [Universal People] have a concept of the person in the psychological sense. They distinguish self from others [...]. The UP recognize individuals by their faces, and in this sense they most certainly have an implicit concept of the individual [...]. They recognize individuals in other ways too.”. Another significant way through which we recognize the individual and its identity is of course his/her personal name. Personal names is listed by various researchers as a human universal⁴. Personal names are not a western cultural given. Even in cultures and civilisations where names were being created after physical phenomena or nature in general (take the old Native American names for instance), the characteristics of the phenomena were “lent” to the individual- they were “individualised” in a way. It is not surprising that the United

³ Brown, Donald E. (1991). Human Universals. New York City: McGraw-Hill Education

⁴ The Blank Slate by Steven Pinker, 2002, New York: Viking Press, Brown, D.E. 1991. Human universals. New York: McGraw-Hill Education, Brown, D.E., 2000. Human universals and their implications, N. Roughley (Ed.) Being humans: Anthropological universality and particularity in transdisciplinary perspectives. New York: Walter de Gruyter



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Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child declares that a child has the right to a name from birth⁵. Almost every name means something- even the simplest and shortest Agglosaxon, German and Scandinavian ones. What's for sure is that none in the world would happily accept to change his/her name by force. We all consider our name as part – a big part- of our identity. Either your name is "The Sitting Bull", "Plato", "Ludovic", "Vladimir", "Mamadou" or "Eric", no matter how many millions personal names we can find across the globe, we all share a common innate need: the need for having a personal name.

c) Icebreaker: My name in a gesture

The facilitator gathers the participants in a circle. One by one tells his/her names and right after makes a gesture which he/she considers representative of his/her name and his/herself in general. The facilitator is encouraged to be the first to say his/her name and make the corresponding gesture so as to motivate the participants too.

Duration: 5 min

d) Activity: The story of my name

i) **Aim**

The aim is to locate the intellectual routes of personal names and show that human being, across cultures and time, always needed to "come from somewhere", to be a part of the past which is extended in the present and future. Ultimately the goal is to make participants feel that the need for a personal name is closely attached to the need for personal identity.

⁵ UNCRC, Article 8, as adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989/ entry into force 2 September 1990.



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ii) **Practicalities**

Equipment needed for this activity:

- 15 flip chart size white papers
- Markers/crayons

iii) **Description of the Activity (40 min)**

The facilitator splits the participants into 5 pairs which consist of 1 local and 1 TCN. Each participant gets a paper and one or more markers and crayons. Participants are asked to describe the story of their name to their pair partner and the reverse. Pairs are given 10 min to discuss. Each participant must make a drawing which represents the story of the name of his pair partner. If there are participants who do not know where their name comes from or the story behind, they can describe how and why they were given their name or who had it before them. After, all participants present the story of the name of their pair partner while presenting their drawing to the plenary. After all the stories have been told, participants return to their pairs and are asked by the facilitator to imagine a 3rd imaginary person's name which combines the characteristics of the 2 names of the pair partners and create a short story about him/her. The pair can imagine the nationality, the profession, the physical characteristics, the family situation and the family story of the imaginary person. Then, participants have to make a representative drawing of this person and his/her name and present it to the plenary.

iv) **Reflection in pairs**

After the end of the presentations, the facilitator asks again from participants to return to their pairs and discuss their impressions from the name info exchange procedure. The facilitator visits the different couples and has short summing-up discussions with each one of them.



3. Etiquette and Hospitality

a) Brief

- Presenting different etiquette and hospitality contexts and customs
- Empathetic, intercultural, interactive insight into different traditions
- Role play

b) What “Etiquete and Hospitality Human Universal” is about?

According to Cambridge Dictionary (online)⁶, etiquette is the “set of rules or customs that control accepted behaviour in particular social groups or social situations.” and it derives from the Greek word “*ethimo*” which means “custom”. On the other hand “hospitality” derives from the Latin “*hospes*”⁷ meaning “host”, “guest”, or “stranger”. All cultures do have formed both their own etiquette but also hospitality customs. In Ancient Greece for instance, the customary law for hospitality called “*Xenia*”⁸, closely connected to the mighty god Xenios Zeus (“Zeus protector of guests”-one of the various “personalities” of the leader of Olympian gods), was a sacred rule. Monotheist religions also paid respect to hospitality. Jesus Christ, for example, declares: “you will enter the kingdom of heaven because [...] I was a stranger and you offered me hospitality”⁹. On the other hand, “hospitality is considered among these noble traits in the Islamic ethical system which Islam has been to implant in the Muslim individual due to its great effect in deepening the

⁶ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/etiquette>

⁷ C. Lewis, Elementary Latin Dictionary (Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), p. 371.

⁸ Carr, K.E. Xenia – guests and hosts in ancient Greece. Quatr.us Study Guides, July 12, 2017. Web. December 19, 2018.

⁹ Matthew, KE’ 34, (Greek)



meanings of brotherhood [...] ¹⁰. In Japan, if you are hosted by someone, you have to take off your shoes while in most western countries this could be considered a great insult. That is why Donald Brown mentions that "etiquette and hospitality are among UP [Universal People] ideals. They have customary greetings and customs of visiting kin or other who dwell elsewhere." ¹¹

c) Icebreaker: Hospitality starts with a "hello"!

The facilitator asks from the participants to gather in a circle and he/she asks them to guess how many people there are in the world and how many different languages are spoken. (There are appr. 2800 languages and appr. 6 billion people). If an equal number of people spoke each language, that would be appr. 2 million people per language. You might relate this to local city/town size. Then, the facilitator asks from the participants to say hello in their own language, or in a dialect, or in a another language they may speak. "Hello" is always a starting point for hosting someone and the facilitators stresses the variety of tonalities, ways, styles and feelings created by the word "hello" in different languages.

d) Activity: Paying an intercultural visit

i) **Aim**

The aim of this activity is for participants to be engaged with exchanging facts and cultural references regarding different etiquette and hospitality contexts. Moreover, through the role play implemented

¹⁰ Hiussein Mohammad Rababah and Yusuf Mohammad Rababah, Rules and Ethics of Hospitality in Islam, Journal of Culture, Society and Development, ISSN 2422-8400, An International Peer-reviewed Journal Vol.20, 2016

¹¹ Brown, Donald E. (1991). Human Universals. New York City: McGraw-Hill Education



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in the 2nd phase of the activity, participants are expected to gain a deep empathetic and intercultural experience.

ii) **Practicalities**

Equipment needed for this activity:

- Flip chart
- Markers
- Plastic cups, plates and forks, plastic bottles with water and other relevant objects

iii) **Description of the Activity (1h 10 min)**

The facilitator separates the participants in groups based on the nationalities of attending TCNs. If TCNs come from one ethnic group, then 2 groups are formed (G1 with locals and G2 with TCNs). If TCNs come from different ethnic groups, then 4 groups are formed (G1 and G2 with locals, G3 and G4 with TCNs).

Phase 1: presentations (25 min)

Each group is asked to discuss and write down the etiquette and hospitality rules and customs which apply on a specific occasion, for example “how do Cypriots treat their guests on the occasion of a wedding?” or “how do Syrians treat their guests on the occasion of a great religious celebration?”. After, the groups mission a presenter who will present in front of the plenary and in detail the list of etiquette and hospitality rules and customs discussed.

Phase 2: Role play (35 min)

At this stage, participants go back to their groups and elaborate the presentations of the other groups. They create a very short scenario based on the provided information and they perform it. One member of each group reads the scenario while the other theatrically perform it. The actors can



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use the provided equipment or being asked to bring objects from their home which represent the etiquette and hospitality rules and customs.

iv) Plenary reflection

The facilitator declares the end of the role play and initiates a de-roling round while which participants say their real names and share their first impressions of the activity. The facilitator guides a discussion on the similarities and differences between different cultures and sums up



4. Shelter

a) Brief

- Understanding the relation between type of shelter/housing and the cultural/socioeconomic context
- Empathetic and intercultural insight into different housing traditions and conditions
- Brainstorming, quiz

b) What “Shelter Universal” is about?

Shelter has always and everywhere been a human commonality. Humans were always trying to protect themselves, their clan, their family, their family moments, their property from bad weather conditions or natural disasters, from wild animals or other hostile humans. From the Altamira Cave, in Cantabria, Spain, where human artistic creativity found a perfect shelter to flourish to contemporary lofts in central Paris and from the igloos of the Inuits and Beduin tents to Dubai giants and the villas of Hollywood, humans have been adapting their shelter needs to different conditions and factors such as the climate conditions, the availability and the type of constructing materials they could find and use etc.

Donald Brown, in his book “Human Universals” reached the conclusion that “ the UP [Universal People] always have some form of shelter from the elements. But he was not the only one to have thought of that. A lot earlier, in the mid 20’s, a significant American anthropologist, Clark Wissler, in his book “Man and Culture”, under the influential chapter “The Universal Pattern” , he drew his famous “cultural scheme”. One of the categories of this “scheme” was the “Material traits” under which we can find shelter, among other material traits such as food habits, transportation and travel, dress, utensils, tools, weapons, occupations and industries.



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c) Icebreaker: My house, my world!

The facilitator asks from the participants to gather in circle. The facilitator gives the participants 1-2 minutes to think of a different culture to their own, imagine a typical type of house/shelter of the specific culture and an activity which takes place in this shelter/house. Example: I am a Native American, I am in my tent made of bull skins and right now I am cooking a deer which me and my fellow hunters caught in the woods. Then each participant, one after the other, steps forward and presents his imaginary scene.

d) Activity: Where children sleep

i) **Aim**

The aim of this brainstorming and quiz-based activity is to familiarise the participants with different housing traditions and conditions in different parts of the world but also across different socioeconomic contexts. Through this process, participants are expected to identify universal needs which are related to housing and shelter in general. A parallel goal of this activity is to confront the folklor and stereotypes regarding certain housing conditions so as to show that housing in the developed West is not a priori "better" or "safer" than housing in the rest of the world.

ii) **Practicalities**

Equipment needed for the implementation of this activity:

- Projector and pc
- Printed photos taken from Mollison's book
- Flipchart and markers



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iii) **Description of the Activity (40 minutes)**

The present activity is based on James Mollison's large-format photograph book, "Where Children Sleep", which presents real pictures of children's bedrooms around the world—from the US, Mexico, Brazil, England, Italy, Israel and the West Bank, Kenya, Senegal, Lesotho, Nepal, China and India—alongside portraits of the children themselves. Photographed over two years with the support of Save the Children (Italy), *Where Children Sleep* is both an educational book that engages children themselves in the lives of other children around the world but also a serious photo-essay for an adult audience. Various videos have also been produced based on Mollison's book and one of them is also part of the activity.

1st PHASE (5 minutes):

The facilitator explains the concept of Mollison's book. Then he shows one among the available videos (example <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGBKP8XcHrQ>). The facilitator pays attention so that the video does not contain room and children's pictures which he/she will use in the 2nd phase of the activity.

2nd PHASE (25 minutes):

The facilitator splits the group in 5 pairs of 1 local and 1 TCN. Each pair is given 2 room pictures (ideally 1 from the West and 1 from a non western country) and 10 children portraits. The pair has to guess where the child room could come from, imagine the rest of the house/shelter, guess the size of the family, guess the weather conditions of the place, the general socioeconomic context etc. The pair has then to match each room photo to a specific child portrait. After all pairs have elaborated their task, the facilitator asks from them to present their guessing and compare the 2 room images. At the end of the presentations, the facilitator presents the correct matching and reads the respective passage from Mollison's book.



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iv) **Plenary Reflection**

At the end of the activity, the facilitator encourages all the participants to reflect on what, finally, is a sufficient shelter and identify the universal standards of a sufficient standard of housing and shelter.

5. Social Structure

a) Brief

- Identifying the universal human need for social structure
- Understanding the different levels of social structure, exploring different perceptions, canceling stereotypes
- Role play

b) What “Social Structure Universal” is about?

“Some groups among the UP [Universal People] achieve some of their order by division into socially significant categories or subgroups on the basis of kinship, sex, and age. Since the UP have kinship, sex, and age statuses, it follows, of course, that they have statuses and roles and hence a **social structure**. But they have statuses beyond those of sex, age, kinship categories. And while these are largely ascribed statuses, they have achieved statuses too. These are rules of succession to some of their statuses¹².”, supports Brown in one of the most inclusive and accurate paragraphs of his “Human Universals” book.

Thousands of researchers, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, theologians, poets, artists have struggled through centuries on one of mankind’s most crucial questions: what makes people create and believe in a social structure? Aristotle said, for instance, that “the human being is a

¹² Brown, Donald E. (1991). Human Universals. New York City: McGraw-Hill Education



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political being¹³ meaning that it naturally tends to form societies based on social structures. From the slavery-based Ancient Greek and Roman society to feudalism and from then on to capitalism and alternative social experiments of the 20th century, people were either trying to establish or to change the social structure they lived in. Regarding social structure, the notion of human universalities meets one its more characteristic examples.

c) Icebreaker: Steps

The facilitator asks from the participants to stand on a line, in the middle of the room. Each local stands between 2 TCNS and reverse. The facilitator reads some statements and participants whose culture complies with the statement make a step forward. The others make a step back. Then they all return to their starting position. The facilitator takes notes of the changing positions.

Statements:

- In my culture, children are not considered able to express a serious opinion.
- In my culture, women shall be discreet.
- In my culture, elderly people are to be respected.
- In my culture, elderly people are to be taken care by their children.
- In my culture, gay people do not have the same rights as non gay people.
- In my culture, a university professor is considered of a higher position.
- In my culture, you can never doubt a policeman.
- In my culture, someone who can make a living for his family is considered respected
- In my a culture a working woman is considered highly respected etc.

¹³ Aristotle, Politics, A, 1253a 1-5 και A, 1252b - 1253a 33



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After the end of the statements, the facilitator reminds the positioning and asks from participants to comment on their moving forward or back and give explanations. He/she highlights the differences and the similarities¹⁴

d) Activity: Albatross

i) **Aim**

The aim of this activity¹⁵ is to help participants realise that their impression of a specific social structure may not be right. The activity aims at encouraging the participants see beyond stereotypic impressions we have for social structures that we are not familiar with. The ultimate goal of the activity is to explore the inner need of all human being for belonging to a structured society.

ii) **Practicalities**

Technical requirements

- Dishes or bowls for: 1) hand washing 2) liquid to drink 3) food to eat (ex. Crisps).
- A circle of chairs, enough for the male participant and with the Albatross male chair somewhat apart. There should be enough room between chairs so that each female can sit on the floor next to a male.

¹⁴ The icebreaker is an adaptation of “Horatio Alger” exercise by Ellen Bettman from an activity by Martin Cano, Valerie Tulier and Ruth Katz of “A World of Difference.”

¹⁵ Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, Albatross (<http://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/race/Albatross-Mukhopadhyay-Website-2014.pdf>)



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iii) Description of the Activity (40 minutes)

The activity involves participants observing a fairly elaborate greeting “ritual” of the “Albatross” culture which, unknown to them, is a hypothetical culture. Two pre-selected individuals play the roles of the Albatross man and woman.

Participants are invited into the Albatross culture to observe and, for some, to participate in the greeting ritual. They are often asked to look for recurring “cultural themes”, particularly about gender and gender relations, that are reflected in specific aspects of the greeting ritual. Numerous aspects of the ritual indicate a male-dominated culture. The Albatross female and the female “guests,” unlike males, go barefoot, sit on the floor, and aren’t given the opportunity to wash their hands before eating the ritual food offerings. Males are served first by the Albatross female while the Albatross male sits on his chair, directing her [speaking, of course, in unintelligible Albatross “tongue”]. He periodically tilts her head towards the ground in what appears to be a “bow”. At the end of the ritual, the Albatross couple selects a female guest to join them, she is seated on the floor by the male, and he “bows” her head towards the floor.

After the greeting has been performed, “guests”—i.e. participants—are asked to describe what they have just seen, to identify recurring themes and the portions of the ritual which illustrate these themes. Predictably, participants are convinced they are observing a male dominated society and provide descriptions replete with inferences and culturally-specific interpretations of behaviors which support these presumed cultural themes. Finally, having reached consensus, the facilitator suggests that perhaps the entire group is wrong, that the Albatross may attach different meanings to these behaviors. The facilitator, or the Albatross couple, then proceeds to explain the meaning of the ritual in the Albatross social structure.

DETAILED SCENARIO:

Stage 1: Seating of Albatross couples and guests.



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- Albatrossian couple enters the room, the Albatrossian sits on the male chair, the Albatross woman kneels on the floor to his right. They “speak” to each other in their language, which consists of hisses, indicating disapproval; hums, indicating approval, and clicking sounds for transmission of other messages.
- Group enters room. “Participant-observers” are selected, males sit on remaining chairs, females [only] are asked to remove their shoes and are seated on the floor by each male. The facilitator helps seat participants.

Stage 2: Greeting Ritual

- After each part, the Albatross woman returns to her seat by the male, they “speak” briefly, there is a short pause, and then the Albatross male carefully and gently tilts her head towards the earth, in a kind of “bow”.
- Gender-specific greetings. First, the Albatross male gets up and greets each male in turn. In the generic greeting the Albatross male holds each guest by the shoulder or waist and rubs his right leg against the leg of the guest, sometimes turning in a circle. Then the guest reseats himself in his chair. After all males are greeted, the Albatross woman greets each female guest individually. She asks the guest to stand, she then kneels, runs both hands down the lower legs and feet gently, ceremoniously. The participant then returns to a seated position on the floor.
- Washing the Hands. The Albatross woman circulates a bowl of water to males, beginning with the Albatross male. Each male dips his right hand into the bowl and then shakes off the water. Only males participate. Then the Albatross woman returns to kneel by the Albatross male.
- Serving the Food. On a clicking cue from the Albatross male, the female rises, obtains the food, and offers it to each male, beginning with the Albatross male. Then, each female guest is given food. She does not eat herself.



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- Serving the Drinks. Once again, the Albatross female gets the drinks, and serves them first to the males, beginning with the Albatross male, and then to the females. She does not drink herself.
- Selection of Ms. Big Feet. The Albatross couple examines the feet of each female and, unknown to guests, selects the female with the biggest feet. She is led to the male Albatross chair and is told to kneel at his side, like the Albatross woman. He “bows” her head and then that of the female “guest”.
- Gender-specific greetings. The same initial greeting is repeated, first for males, then for females.

Stage 3: Discussion of the Ritual

Albatross couple leaves with Ms. Big Feet. The Albatross couple instruct the selected female guest to leave the room with them. This is the most important phase. The participants are asked to first describe the ritual and give their interpretations of what they observed—both general cultural themes and specific parts of the ritual. Generally, there is overwhelming consensus that this is a male-dominated culture and women are subservient. Participants easily, in creative ways, supply specific examples of behaviors from the ritual in support of their interpretation. Should someone suggest an alternative interpretation, ask other participants if they agree with these new opinions. Having obtained consensus on the meaning of the Albatrossian greeting ritual especially for gender relations the facilitator proceeds to explain the real meaning of the Albatross rituals. He/she begins by stating that Albatross culture is not male-dominated but is a culture in which women have superior power and prestige to men. The reason is that Albatross view women as similar to the Earth because, like the Earth, they are essential to the survival and continuance of Albatross culture. Like the Earth, they reproduce from their bodies come human beings just like food comes from the earth. Hence, they are “close” to the Earth and like the Earth, are “pure” and “sacred”. Only they [and not males] are pure enough to sit or walk directly on the ground or to take food without first purifying themselves. Their superior status, because of their closeness to the Earth, is reflected in the



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women's greeting ritual, in their cultural standards of beauty [large feet, more contact with the ground], and in the symbolic "bowing" of their heads by males, in recognition of their closeness to the earth. The facilitator then asks participants to reinterpret, in light of this understanding of Albatross beliefs, the specific behaviors they observed in the ritual.

iv) Plenary Reflection

Discussion follows of the various "lessons" about social structure, its surficial picture and its inner meaning, to be learned from the activity, including how our deeply internalized cultural knowledge provides a cultural lens through which we observe "reality". The discussion together with the explanations provided by the facilitator are of a 40 minutes duration



6. Non-verbal communication

a) Brief

- Realising the commonality of non-verbal communication
- Employing common logic and empathy to bypass communication borders
- Role play

b) What “Non-verbal communication Universal” is about?

What if a prehistoric 10.000 years old human had the opportunity to watch some Charlie Chaplin’s most famous gags in one of his non-speaking movies? It is pretty sure that if we’d let apart the industrial context and some (then) modern machines and elements, the prehistoric person would understand most of what Chaplin would try to say with his furious gestures, body moves and positioning.

Donald Brown confirms in a way this assumption: “Language is not the only means of symbolic communication employed by the Universal People. They employ gestures too, especially with their hand and arms. Some of their nonverbal communication is somewhat one-sided, in that the message is received consciously but may be sent more or less spontaneously. For example, the squeals of children, cries of fright, and the like all send messages that UP watch closely or listen to carefully, even though the sender did not consciously intend them to communicate. The UP do not merely listen and watch what is on the surface, they interpret external behaviour to grasp interior intention”.

c) Icebreaker: Tell what is not said.

The facilitator shows a picture of a theatre play. For example:



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He/she invites the participants to guess what is happening. After a round of discussion, he/she asks from the participants to vote for the 2 most possible scenarios. Then he/she splits them in 2 groups. The groups have to elaborate an imaginary dialogue between the actors of the image and then perform it while standing exactly as the actors in the image do. Before they perform they rehearse in different rooms if possible.

d) Activity: Repa and Ambler

i) Aim of the activity

The activity aims at helping the participants realize the fact that despite the differences between the different nonverbal communication cultures, in every culture, in every society, a very significant part of communication comprises non verbal elements. Also the activity aims at showing that misunderstandings can occur when we neglect nonverbal communication and we invest all our effort exclusively in verbal elements.

ii) Practicalities

- 10 Printed Repa and Ambler cards

iii) Description of the activity (30 minutes)

The facilitator explains to the participants that they will have the opportunity to experience a different culture for a short time and that they will become members of the Repa and Ambler culture. First, they will have to get to know to each of the other culture's members. Participants are



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split in 2 random groups which will become the Repa and Ambler cultures. The facilitator gives to each group the following cards:

YOU ARE REPA

- You are very friendly. You enjoy speak to foreigners
- You do not chat a lot. You continue with the following foreigner
- You like shaking hands. You like the feeling of getting to know the foreigner. If a foreigner does not shake hands, you grab his/her hand.
- You put your face very close to the foreigner's.
- You are not formal. You consider kind to shout and speak loud and tense.
- You don't like being ignored and you get angry if a foreigner does it. You express your anger by standing on one leg and jumping.
- Women and men, you behave in the same way. Men like a lot to speak to foreign girls. Girls like to speak to foreign men.

YOU ARE AMBLER

- You like to speak to other Amblers
- You never start a conversation with a foreigner. You speak only if the foreigner starts chatting. When you speak, you cross your arms on your chest.
- You are very kind and you repeat "Mr/Miss". You consider touching the other or being touched very rude.
- Among Amblers, men are considered the vulnerable sex and women protect them.



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- Ambler men avoid eye contact and mainly with foreign women. If someone speaks to you, you get shy.
- You often feel shy. You express shyness by tapping your head with your hand.
- Ambler men can speak with foreign men only foreign men start a discussion. Ambler men chat while staring at the floor.

After the 2 groups read carefully the cards the facilitator announces: "Now you are in a 3rd country. Nor Repa, neither Ambler country. You have come here as tourists and you are now having a common party at the hotel lobby. It is time to get to know each other while you all keep the characteristics of your culture.". Then the facilitator gives 5-7 minutes to participants to interact and then asks from the 2 groups to sit one opposite to the other. Then the facilitator asks questions regarding the 2 cultures and asks from each one to describe the other (Examples: How did you feel when....? How would you describe the attitude of the other group? What could happen if your meeting was still on? What did you assume about the other group? Do you feel offended by what the other group tells on you? Is there something you would like to explain to the other group to make them understand your reactions?). A second round of interaction between the 2 groups follows and now participants have to take into consideration what they have learned from the discussion. A 2nd round of discussion follows. The facilitator encourages the participants to point out the different feelings they have after the 2nd round.

iv) **Plenary reflection**

A free, open discussion follows on the impact of nonverbal communication can have between different cultures. The focus is given on the common existence of this dimension of non verbal communication in every culture.



7. Music

a) Brief

- Exploring the connection of music to common feelings, experiences, situations that all people around the world experience
- Getting to know different musical cultures
- Exchanging experiences and music tastes

b) What “Music Universal” is about?

Who invented music? When, where, how the first notes were heard? There is no absolute truth to reply to this questions with. This is the reason mythologies of different cultures took over the explanation of the musical phenomenon. God Odin’s son, Bragi, according to the Scandinavian mythology, was the first harp player of the world. Pan, this strange divine figure of Greek mythology, was the creator of the “Syrinx”, the first multiple flutes instrument. Not to neglect the miraculous talent of Orpheus. It is evident that, across the globe, from the beginning of the human presence in this world, music was a milestone for societies, for social co-existence, for life itself.

Once again, Donald Brown sums up the universality of music: “The UP know how to dance and have music. At least some of their dance (and at least some of their religious activities) is accompanied by music. They include melody, rhythm, repetition, redundancy, and variation in their music, which is always seen as an art, a creation. Their music includes vocals, and the vocals includes words- i.e., a conjunction of music and poetry. The UP have children’s music.”

c) Icebreaker: The rain

The facilitator gathers the participants in a circle. He/she begins with 1 minute of absolute silence. He/she starts rubbing his hand with each other. Then he/she snaps 2 fingers and eventually the other 2. After, he/she taps his hands on the knees and then starts hitting the ground with his/her legs.



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Then he/she follows the reversed way. All the participants have to follow him/her in a scaling way. The result is the sound of a rain which becomes a storm and then goes down.

d) Activity: It's a music world

i) **Aim**

The aim of this activity is to reveal the similar routes of music around the world, the connection to feelings, to common situations that all people experience.

ii) **Practicalities**

Equipment:

- 5 smart phones
- 1 pc
- 1 projector
- Flip chart

iii) **Description (40 minutes)**

1st phase: Video and discussion

Participants watch the video "One Love, Playing For Change, from Song Around The World series" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xjPODksl08>).

After the end of the video, the facilitator asks from the participants to identify what were the basic elements which they feel brought so many artists from so many different cultures and languages together. The facilitator writes them down on a flip chart.

2nd phase: Describing my partner's traditional music



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The facilitator asks from the group to split into intercultural pairs (1 local, 1 TCN). The facilitator makes sure that every pair has a smart phone or in any case that every pair has access to internet (youtube). Each part of the pair must present to the other the traditional music of his country or a traditional music of another country he/she likes. Each part must present the type of music he/she has chosen answering to the following questions:

- Where this type of music comes from?
- Which are the most usual themes/subjects of it?
- Are there any specific occasions this music is played at?
- Is this music played in groups/bands or individually?
- Is it old or recent?
- What are the main instruments?
- What are his/her feelings when he/she listens to that music?
- Is there any specific experience that you relate this music/tune to?

After the couple sessions, all participants put on youtube (projector) the tune their partner presented to them and present it to the plenary along with the answers of their partner.

iv) **Plenary reflection**

The facilitator sums up the similarities between the different answers to the afore-mentioned questions and encourages participants to comment and reflect on them.



8. Dreams

a) Brief

- Exploring the commonality of one of the most interesting and subversive functions of the human brain
- Sharing emotions, experiences, inner thoughts
- Travelling in time and transferring memories to present

b) What “Dreams Universality” is about?

It took humanity thousands of years of existence and more than 20 centuries of experience and research to reach the point to accept that the human mind has an unconscious part, alongside a conscious one. Freud was not the first to see or try to interpret dreams but he was the first to see the scientific aspect of all that. In the old times, when psychology was not still discovered, interpreting dreams was a mystic activity which only the gifted by divine powers could exercise. People were mostly afraid of dreams and they were considering them as omens. As for the modern time, we all still dream. Sleeping in a 5 stars hotel or almost sleeping in a class during a boring chemistry lecture. And we all wake up trying to understand what we just “saw”. We are often unable to understand important details even if we feel that the dream ended just a second before we opened our eyes. And all this mystery comes again and again to remind us that the world is not only made of logic. It is primarily made of dreams. Good and bad ones.



c) Icebreaker: Time Machine¹⁶

The group works together in pairs. Each pair finds a place where they can talk in peace and quiet. The facilitator explains to the pairs that they have been in time travel, and the year is now 2001. The other player starts and tells the other who he is today (year 2001), what he is doing, where he works, goes to school, etc. A great emphasis is put on talking in the present tense, like this is happening today; I am 13 years old, I go to elementary school and have a crush on the cutest boy/girl in the class... The facilitator then tells when it is the other players turn (approx. 2-3 min). When both players have told about their lives before, the facilitator tells that there is something happening with the time machine and that they have now arrived to the present day, and should continue to tell about their lives as it is today. When this is over the time machine takes off again, now to the year of 2031! Ten years have passed and both players tell about what they are doing, and always talk in present time. If the facilitator wants, he can influence this discussion by encouraging the participants to dream, release all restraint and allow themselves to do things that they think they cannot do today. Afterwards, it can be useful to sit down and talk through the experience from this practice.

d) Activity: Tell me about your dream

i) **Aim**

The aim of this activity is to underline the universality of feelings that dreams create but also of the commonality which characterises the categorisation of dreams into good, bad, funny, crazy etc. The ultimate goal is for participants to feel that beyond planning and logic, the human spirit always searches for a different world.

¹⁶ http://eurocircle.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/timingtoolkit_en.pdf



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ii) **Practicalities**

Flip chart

iii) **Description (30 minutes)**

The group splits in mixed pairs (1 local, 1 TCN). The facilitator asks from the pairs to elaborate a dream that one of the members has seen. While in pairs, one of the parts narrates a dream he/she has seen to the other who takes notes. After, the pairs go in the plenary. The part who narrated the dream becomes the interviewer and the person who heard the dream has to narrate it as if he/she had seen it. The rest of the group close their eyes while the dream is being narrated. They open them once the narration is over and only when the facilitator asks them to do so. After the end of each narration, the facilitator keeps 1 minute of silence and then asks from the group to open their eyes. At the end of the narrations, the facilitators asks from the narrators to express their feelings about the dream they “borrowed” from their partners and to categorise the dream. The participants may answer to the following questions:

- Do you feel that you could ever see this dream?
- Do you think that your partner’s culture can be located in the dream?
- How would you categorise the dream?

The facilitator writes the answers on a flip chart and at the end he/she compares them and invites the participants to discuss them.

iv) **Plenary reflection**

After the end of the activity, the facilitator asks from the participants to express their feelings about the activity without commenting on each other’s dream.



9. Proverbs

a) Brief

- Common needs for expressing universal views around the globe
- Variations of proverbs depending the cultural context

b) What “ Proverbs Universality” is about?

“The most beautiful fig may contain a worm” (Zulu)

“Measure a thousand times and cut once” (Turkey)

“It takes a whole village to raise a child” (Africa)

“ If you go to a donkey’s house, don’t talk about ears” (Jamaica)

“Still waters run deep” (Latin tradition)¹⁷

What is that makes proverbs so impressive? What is that makes every culture creating its own and pass them over to the next generations? And what is the reason for which so different cultures are found to have the same proverbs or proverbs with similar meaning?

Take for instance the popular proverb about the cat and the mice. An English, a Greek and a Swedish would be surprised to know that the proverb exists in all of their cultures. But in slightly different versions which make the commonality even more interesting and funny: in England, they say that “when the cut is away, the mice play”, while in Greece the mice are quite more vivid and “when the cut is absent, the mice dance”. In Sweden the mice go beyond limits: “when the cat is away, the mice dance on the table”!

The question is at the same time simple and difficult: the human experience, the human knowledge, the human senses, the human itself, at the end of the day, does not differ at all. People adapt in the

¹⁷ Around the World in 52 Proverbs (<https://thecultureur.com/around-the-world-in-52-proverbs/>)



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environment where they were born or moved to but their core needs, their nature meets not race: it's all about one race, the human race.

c) Icebreaker: the proverb pantomime

The facilitator asks for a volunteer. The facilitator assigns the volunteer to do the pantomime of a proverb which are common in different languages and cultures (like the one with the cat and the mice above). The other participants try to guess. The icebreaker can be repeated 2-3 times with other common proverbs.

d) Activity: World Proverbs

i) **Aim:**

To give the space and the opportunity to participants to discover common proverbs (thus, common ways of expressing universal human truths and views) in different languages and cultures. In parallel, the aim is to locate different versions, thus the variety of ways to express these universal views around the world.

ii) **Practicalities:**

- 5 flip-chart size piece of papers
- 5 markers

iii) **Description (40 minutes):**

The facilitator splits the group of 10 participants in 5 groups of 2, 1 local and 1 TCN. Participants are asked to locate a common proverb in both their cultures and languages, regardless the different version it may appear in. The participants discuss every detail of the proverb they have agreed on. If there are nuances, they also write them down. If the proverb or the version or the nuance of the proverb is due to specific cultural circumstances or characteristics, the participants are expected to



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present and explain them. Participants are given 20 minutes to elaborate their proverb and afterwards each pair has to present it to the plenary.

iv) **Plenary reflection:**

The facilitator asks from the participants to share their feelings about the commonality of proverbs. He/she initiates a debate on the reason several proverbs exist in different cultural contexts and countries. He/she does not try to lead the participants to any specific conclusion and he/she encourages the dialogue between participants.



10. Time and age concept

a) Brief:

- Understanding the different perception of age between different cultures and the responsibilities/experiences related to different ages.
- Discover the use and the perception of daily routines across different cultures and countries.
- Explore different ways of living

b) What “Time and age Concept Universality” is about?

We all remember the first day at school. Or the day we graduated from it. At least in the Western world, people cannot forget their birthday. Some football fans remember all the dates their team scored against an important opponent team.

But not all cultures adopt the same perception of time. In some Middle Eastern and African countries, birthday is related to an important religious celebration and the age can only be approximately estimated. Western people perceive time in a linear way and something which happened 50 years ago can be located with a year, a month and a day. However, ancient cultures or isolated agricultural communities in other continents perceive the time as a circle¹⁸. Still, the Gregorian calendar which is used by the Western countries is based on the ciclicity of time.

Regarding counting time, two things are for sure: all humans know or feel what time is, in a way or another, and there is no “natural” way of counting time because time apart from the brown leaves which fall of a tree in autumn in Santiago de Chile, the thick snow in the winter of the Russian stepas, the bears which weak up in Asia in spring and the hot summer sun in Greece.

¹⁸ Ciclicity of time



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c) Icebreaker:

The facilitator gathers the participants in a circle. He asks from everyone to close their eyes. He explains to the participants that he/she will make question to which the participants must react with an exclamation (example: “hmmmm”, “ahaaa”, “ooohh”) one after the other. Then one by one, he/she makes the following questions:

- How was primary school?
- How was college?
- How was high school?
- How did you feel when you became 18?
- How did your first time driving feel?
- How did it feel when you left the home for the first time?

When all the round have finished, the facilitator asks from the participants to open their eyes and take 1 minute to think of their reactions on their own.

d) Activity: It's all about time

i) **Aim:**

The aim is to familiarise participants with different experiences of each other which may include a different perception of time. Also, the aim is to familiarise participants with different ways of living, different living conditions and life standards in different countries of the worlds. Above all, the aim is to show that despite the different perceptions of time and experiences, the need for a routine and age rituals is quite the same in all cultures.



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ii. Practicalities:

- 5 flip-chart size pieces of paper
- 5 markers
- 5 handouts (A4) with questions

iii. Description (40 minutes):

The facilitator splits the group of 10 participants into groups of 2 (1 local and 1 TCN). He/she provides each pair with a handout (A4 paper) with the following questions:

- At which age did you go to school?
- How did you use to go to school?
- How much time did it take you to get to school?
- How long was a school day?
- For how many years did you go to school?
- How many classmates did you have?

The facilitator can add more questions to the above.

The pairs discuss and each participant presents his/her experience to the other (20 minutes). They right down the similarities and the differences and after all the pairs have finished the elaboration of their presentations, each pair presents its findings in the plenary (20 minutes).



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iv. Plenary reflection:

The facilitator initiates a debate about the impact that cultural context has on the concept of time and age. He/she encourages participants to explain the similarities and differences.



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