

"CULTURAL VILLAGES"

A SIMULATION EXERCISE ON
COMMUNICATION



About the tool

This is a simulation exercise that helps the participants plug into the topic of communication by getting into the role of the inhabitants of 3 different villages that have to gather and come up with the common decision regarding their life in the future.

The activity helps to address the barriers to effective communication, intercultural communication, conflict management, as well as to introduce the participants to the structure (aspects) and kinds of communication.

Aims of the tool

- to bring reflection about intercultural competences and communicative competences;
- to open discussion about the structure and kinds of communication: perceptual, interactive and communicative; verbal, non-verbal and visual communication;
- to open discussion about the structure (aspects) and kinds of communication: perceptual, communicative and interactive; verbal, non-verbal and visual communication;
- to demonstrate, how perception influences communication process;
- to sharpen the soft-skills, emotional intelligence; develop empathy, active listening, communication and negotiation skills;

Duration:

2 hours for the action, 1.5 hour for the debriefing and discussion about the types of communication.

Number of participants: from 15 to 36 people (5 – 12 people in each village) + one or several facilitators.

Description of the tool

Simulation Phase

Stage 1

Divide the participants into 3 teams (3 cultural villages). Tell the participants that they are going to become someone else for the next 2 hours, they are the inhabitants of the 3 villages that have never communicated before and due to some special events going on in their region, they will soon have to meet each other to see if they want to continue communication or not, as this is crucial for the region's development, as well as theirs, as villages.

Each group gets their instructions (attached file) and go away from the meeting point together.

Stage 2

After the group gets to know the legend and the instructions, they need to get into the role, to prepare and to practice the way their village communicate. This stage might take from 20 to 40 minutes.

Stage 3

Each village sends their "spies" to the other two villages to observe their behavior and to get an impression of what the others are like. The observers can spend from 5 to 15 minutes in the village they were sent. After that, they go back to their village to describe the other village's inhabitants and the way they communicate. Facilitator may help by asking the questions to foster reflection about the other villages. This stage takes about 20 minutes.

Stage 4

The group practices their communication strategy to make it as effective as possible. Soon they will meet the other 2 villages at the meeting point. They have about 30 minutes to discuss everything, prepare and practice.

Stage 5

All the inhabitants of the 3 villages meet to see, if they can communicate with each other and how they feel towards each other. Let them speak or do whatever they want, but let them know that there is not much time before the final decision must be taken, so they only have 15 minutes to communicate.

After 15 minutes give them 5 minutes to speak and make decisions within their groups.

Stage 6

Listen to all the representatives and their decision regarding the road construction and their communication process. Finish the meeting with the round of applause. No matter what the result is, the activity brings a lot of things to discuss, so let the participants mix their places and de-role, after that you might start the debriefing process.

Debriefing phase

Debriefing questions:

- How did you feel in your roles?
- How was your communication build?
- What did you take into consideration about the other villages while creating a strategy for the meeting? How reliable was the information from the spy that you've got?
- Was your communication strategy effective or not? Why?
- How is this similar to the real life? What conclusions can we make?

Besides that, the facilitator can provide some further information on the structure and kinds of communication as the feedback on the game. This can be done along with the participants in the way of discussion.

The structure of communication between people consists of interactive, communicative and perceptual aspects. Each of these parties has its own characteristics. For example, the interactive side is characterized by the exchange of actions, that is, the organization of interaction between communicating people. Perceptual is in the process of perception, knowledge of each other through communication, as well as in the establishment of mutual understanding. The communicative side of communication is the direct exchange of information between several individuals. In this case, "information" can be considered as ideas, moods, interests, attitudes, feelings and so on.

Note that the communicative side of communication may include specific barriers. Such barriers are psychological or social. A communicative barrier can arise due to a lack of understanding of the situation. The reasons for this are very diverse. These can be professional, social and political differences. They generate a different interpretation of concepts that are used in the communicative process, as well as a different outlook, a world outlook and attitude.

7- 38- 55 rule

The rule states that 7 percent of meaning is communicated through spoken word, 38 percent through tone of voice, and 55 percent through body language. It was developed by psychology professor Albert Mehrabian at the University of California, Los Angeles, who laid out the concept in his 1971 book "Silent Messages" (1971).

1. VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal communication seems like the most obvious of the different types of communication. It utilizes the spoken word, either face-to-face or remotely. Verbal communication is essential to most interactions, but there are other nonverbal cues that help provide additional context to the words themselves. Pairing nonverbal communication with the spoken word provides a more nuanced message.

2. NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Nonverbal communication provides some insight into a speaker's word choice. Sarcasm, complacency, deception or genuineness occur within nonverbal communication. These things are often communicated through facial expressions, hand gestures, posture and even appearance, all of which can convey something about the speaker.

3. VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Visual types of communication include signs, maps or drawings as well as color or graphic design. These typically reinforce verbal communication, and they help to make a point. Visual aids can help a speaker remember important topics, give the audience something to look at, and generally help convey the message being presented.

By utilizing all three types of communication, a speaker ensures he or she has the necessary tools to avoid miscommunication and misconceptions.

More debriefing questions for the discussion:

- What are the effective communication strategies to you?
- Are your strategies effective? Why or why not?
- How to build more effective ones?

Then, facilitator might bring the topic of emotional intelligence, its role in the communication process and how to develop it.

Materials

- Colored ribbons to put on participants' hands according to the culture color (optional, but helpful during the activity);
- Flipchart with the 3 villages drawn for the final meeting (optional);
- Handouts: the legend for all the groups + the culture description for each group.

CULTURAL VILLAGES

Step 1

Once upon a time, delegations of 3 villages that hadn't really communicated before, came to participate in a common meeting regarding the road construction that is proposed to be done by the government through their villages. The final decision depends on your 3 villages. So, you need to get on the same page and find common ground. You are gathering to understand whether you are able to communicate and make common decisions, because if the road is constructed, you will need to communicate more often in the future.

Your task is to read your characteristics carefully and to get into the roles. You should represent all characteristics of your culture not by talking of them but through behavior, way of touching/or not touching people, way of talking etc.

Step 2

The 2 observers from your village will go to the other villages to see how they communicate and then they will share their opinion with your village.

Be aware of your emotions when you meet others and the way they treat you and each other.

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:

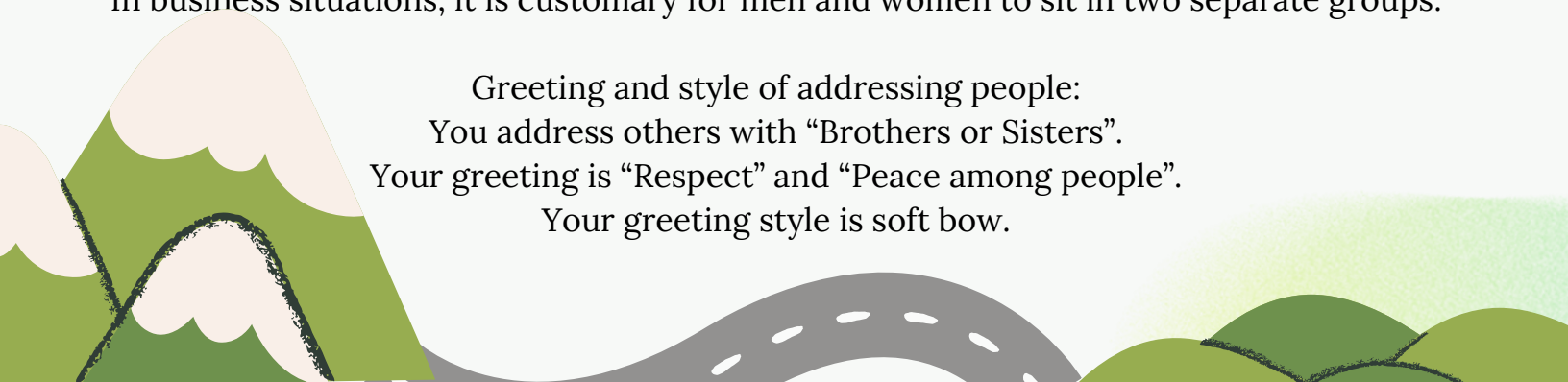
When you discuss something with someone, you avoid direct confrontation.
Silence in conversation reflects a positive and constructive discourse.

Norms and customs of business behavior:

Men are more intelligent and analytical than women, and you behave accordingly.
In business situations, it is customary 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.



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BLUE CULTURE

Values, beliefs, attitudes:

You believe that main events in life are a matter of destiny or fortune.

You never doubt your own instinct: reasoning can be false sometimes, but feelings never make mistakes.

Final decision 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 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.

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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: a 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 and see them as useful opportunities 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 a strong handshake.

You address others with "Good afternoon".

You address others by surname and it is obligatory to say title (professor, doctor, colleague, student etc.).

