

Different steps of intercultural learning

Ethnocentrism (self centred)

Starting step, our reference is given by our culture. We see the world with our own glasses.
All what is different can be considered negatively.



Discovering the differences

Being exposed to difference, being confronted with different ways of thinking or living, is the first step to overcome ethnocentrism.



Understanding the difference (empathy)

To feel the differences, on a volunteer base, trying to go in the shoes of persons that are different, in order to understand why there is different habits, ways of life and thinking.



Respecting the difference

By understanding the differences of other groups, we know better other groups and pre-judgements dont come so easily. During this step, our prejudices can be destroyed, because they are no more valid.

At this stage, we may even accept something that we don't agree with.



Appreciation / Selective integration

By knowing better other ways of living, we can consciently appreciate certain habits and ways of living not only from our own culture but also from other cultures. We can include some new values, attitudes, behaviours... in our own cultural identity.



Enrichment

(of our own cultural identity, values, norms and behaviours)

This model was based on: Béatrice Burgherr, adapted from Margaret Pusch, A Cross Cultural Training Approach, Illinois, 1979.

The intercultural learning is a process in which we are integrating cultural diversity. This process can be transfered to any kind of differences /cultures, as long as it is conscient process.

By discovering others, we re-discover ourselves. We put in question our own differences, values, this is the mirror effect of intercultural learning.

Where to act?

Non formal and formal education can mainly act on the first part, till the acceptance phase. After this is a personal process! Most important is that this process should be based in a process of inner-reflection and individual freedom.