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DEMOCRACY & DIVERSITY
A PROJECT OF INTERFAITH ALLIANCE

INSTRUCTIONS: *The Derdians and Engineers: Intercultural Exercise:*

Adapted from: Intercultural Learning T-kit edited by **Silvio Martinelli, Mark Taylor**
http://www.programkontoret.se/Global/program/euroguidance/intercultural_learning.pdf

Goal of the exercises: breaking stereotypes of different cultures, reflecting on differences in cultural behavior

Methods: role playing, discussion

Time: 40-120 minutes depending on depth of discussion

Materials: Description for Derdians and Engineers, 10 sheets of heavy weight 8x10 paper, Tape, Scissors, String, Pencils, Ruler 2 chairs.

Break into 2 mixed gender groups (or if single gender the two groups by subgroup 1 and 2). One group of 10 people act as a team of engineers to teach Derdians how to build a bridge.

Each group receives instructions specific to their group: one for engineers one for Derdians. Do not share instructions with other group.

Each group prepares in a separate room/area.

If you have more than 20 students you can have observers, but they shouldn't know the instructions until after the simulation. Observers should take notes on what they see and report on this at the end of the simulation.

Reflection after a game:

The two groups (3 if you have an observer group) take a piece of flipchart and note their comments to the following three points:

- **Facts:** Note only facts not perceptions.
- **Feelings:** What emotions did you observe
- **Interpretation:** Using what you saw describe the situation.

Discuss the tendency to think that others (should or do) think the way we do; that we often interpret things that are different as being right or wrong, without considerations of the differences in cultural behavior.

INSTRUCTION FOR DERDIANS:

The situation:

You live in the country of Dardia. Your town is separated from the next town by a deep valley. To reach the market you have to walk 3 days. If you had a bridge across valley you could get there in two hours.

Your government has contracted with foreigners to come and teach you how to built a bridge.

The bridge will be made of paper, tape and string using scissors, rulers and pencils. You know the material but you don't know anything about construction.

Social behavior

The Dardians are used to being very close to each other. Communication doesn't work without being very close to the person you are conversing with. Not being very close while talking is considered very rude. If you join a group conversation you should huddle together. It is also very important that you greet every one when you meet. Conversation must begin with an introduction: example "I am Jay of Dardia." If the person doesn't respond in kind it is considered rude. (See below)

Greetings:

The Dardians greeting is to touch right elbows with the person they are greeting. Shaking hands is a great Faux Pas.

Dardian are insulted by not being greeted (touching right elbows) or if a person stands too far away in a conversation. When insulted Dardians shout loudly.

YES/NO

Dardians don't use word "NO". They always say YES although if they mean "NO" they shake their head up and down emphatically while frowning and saying "YES".

Work behavior: Tools are gender (or if single gender group divide by 1 and 2) specific:

Scissors and Rulers can be touched only by men (1)

Tape and string only by woman. (2)

Pencils and Paper are neutral. (1&2)

Foreigners:

Dardians like company. But they are very proud of their culture. They expect that foreigners will adapt to their culture. Their behavior is very natural for them that's why they cannot explain it to the others.

INSTRUCTION FOR ENGINEERS

You are group of engineers in international company. Your firm has just signed a very important contract with the government of Derdia to teach Derdians how to build a bridge. You have to make this in a short time (you've got only 30 minutes to teach Derdians how to build a bridge) otherwise the contract will be cancelled and you will lose your job.

Derdia is very mountainous country and it takes many days for Derdians to go to the nearest town. With a bridge Derdians could make a trip in 2 hours.

But remember you cannot build the bridge you have to TEACH Derdian how to build it.

Playing the simulation:

1. Read the instructions carefully and decide together about the way you are going to build the bridge.
2. Two members of your team will be allowed to go and make a contact for 3 minutes with the Derdians.
3. You have 10 minutes to analyze their report.
4. Then your group goes to Derdians to teach them how to build the bridge.

The bridge construction:

Bridge should link two chairs over a distance 80 cm/31.5 inches. It has to be stable. The pieces of the bridge must be cut out and assembled in Derdia so that the Derdians learn all stages of the construction.

Each piece has to be drawn with pencil and ruler and cut out with scissors.

Discussion of communication challenges. What did you learn about each culture? What assumptions did you make? What assumptions proved incorrect?

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