

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Who is the guide aimed at?	3
3. What is the purpose of the guide?	4
4. Culture and intercultural competencies	6
5. Developing intercultural competences	8
5.1 Self-awareness	8
5.2 Challenging stereotypes	12
5.3 Communication	16
5.4 Flexibility	20
5.5 Building relationships with other organisations	24
5.6 Team management	28
5.7 Change management	33
5.8 Customer focus	37
6. Useful resources, organisations and links	42
Appendix 1: Template for self reflection	46
Appendix 2: Template for action plan	47
Appendix 3: The ILCC project	48
Appendix 4: Models of adult learning and developing intercultural competencies	50

1. Introduction

Globalisation and increased geographical mobility have resulted in a more diverse European population. People have migrated to Europe, away from Europe and within European countries. People, societies and organisations have been, and continue to be, required to change and adapt in order to respond to this increasing diversity.

In response to such changes and increasing diversity, this guide has been produced for practitioners working in Vocational Education and Training (VET). It aims to support you to develop **your intercultural competencies** to enable you to work effectively in increasingly multicultural and international VET environments. Intercultural competencies are collections of attitudes, knowledge and skills that affect how well we work and interact with other people from different countries and diverse cultures.

We use the phrase **people from different countries and diverse cultures** to refer to a wide range of people including migrants, people from minority ethnic groups, and people from minority linguistic, cultural and religious groups. In some instances the guide refers specifically to migrants, as their needs may be distinct from people from other groups.

The guide is the result of a Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation funded project entitled 'Intercultural Learning: Cultural Competencies' (ILCC). Seven organisations from five European Union (EU) countries were involved in the project. The aim of the ILCC project has been to improve the labour market integration of people from different countries and diverse cultures, by supporting the development of intercultural competencies of VET practitioners in Europe. Many of the core components of VET in the EU countries are similar but there are also some differences. A common guide has been developed jointly by the project partners, and this version is an adaptation of the common guide, specifically for the UK audience; other partners have produced slightly different versions, to better meet the needs of practitioners in other countries. Further detail on the ILCC project is provided in appendix 3.

Section 4 provides a brief introduction to the concepts of culture and intercultural competencies. It also introduces the eight broad intercultural competencies that the guide is based upon.

Section 5 is divided into eight sub-sections describing in more detail each of the eight broad intercultural competencies:

- self-awareness
- challenging stereotypes
- communication
- flexibility
- building relationships with other organisations
- team management
- change management
- customer focus

¹ For further information, visit: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc82_en.htm.

These sections are designed for practical use. They have been written for individual learning, but some – such as ‘change management’ or ‘customer focus’ – may benefit from a team/organisational approach. You can read through the stand alone sections, and carry out the activities, to develop intercultural competences at your own pace. It is not necessary to read through the whole guide; by reading the summaries (at the start of each section), you can identify those competencies that you need to develop, and dip in and out of the relevant sections as needed.

Section 6 sets out useful resources, organisations and web links for those readers who want to find out more.

Appendices 1 and 2 provide templates to help you to develop intercultural competences. These can be photocopied and can be used when working through sections 5.1-5.8. **Appendix 3** provides further detail on the ILCC project. Finally, **appendix 4** sets out models of adult learning and developing intercultural competences.

2. Who is the guide aimed at?

This guide may be used by a variety of practitioners, but it is primarily designed to inform and support VET practitioners. The ILCC project included activity to identify key VET practitioner roles across the five partner countries, and to analyse practitioner skill requirements in terms of intercultural competences. As a result, the guide is aimed at three main groups of practitioners:

- those working in a **teacher role** – this refers to teachers, tutors or trainers who prepare, implement and deliver teaching and learning activities to help people to develop vocational skills. They may work in VET centres or in general education and training settings such as colleges;

- those working in an **advisor role** – this refers to people providing advice to support job search, access to the labour market and career development – such as Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) practitioners, career guidance workers or career counsellors; practitioners might be based in specific IAG centres, or services may be embedded in VET centres, general education and training settings or community services; and

- those working in a **recruiter role** - this refers to practitioners who recruit or select workers for specific jobs on behalf of employers or directly for their own organisation; it includes people working in recruitment and employment agencies, and managers and human resources (HR) staff in workplaces.

The guide is aimed at practitioners working in mainstream settings - that is settings that do not offer a discrete service to people from different countries or diverse cultures. However, it may be useful to you if you are a practitioner in discrete settings, particularly if you are a new member of staff.

Activities and responsibilities within each of the three main roles will vary. For example, if you are an advisor you may or may not engage in guidance work; if you are a teacher you may also have managerial responsibilities. Levels of intercultural competence required will vary depending on your role and level of responsibility. However, as a professional you should have an understanding of intercultural competencies, and be able to demonstrate them in practice within the workplace context.

Within this guide we use the phrase **client** as a broad term to refer to individuals that you work with. This includes learners, students, trainees, customers, service users, etc.

3. What is the purpose of the guide?

This guide has been created as a learning resource to be used by VET practitioners to help you to develop intercultural competencies in order to work more effectively with people from different countries or diverse cultures. We define intercultural competencies as collections of attitudes, knowledge and skills that affect how well we work and interact with people whose cultural backgrounds are different from our own.

As a VET practitioner you are likely to have qualifications in your role and/or the vocational subject you are engaged with, but may not have received any training to enable you to work in an intercultural context. Indeed, ILCC project partners have not identified any national, regional or local legislation that specifies the need for specific training in intercultural competencies for teachers, advisors or recruiters. This appears contradictory to other initiatives: in several countries, anti-discrimination legislation is in place, but there are no specific or mandatory requirements for training for those who frequently work with people from different countries or diverse cultures. Some of the eight competencies that are set out in this guide, such as 'communication' or 'flexibility', form the basis of workplace training, but are usually not explored from an intercultural viewpoint. Furthermore, other competencies like 'self-awareness' and 'challenging stereotypes' do not tend to be included at all.

The development of intercultural competencies, and improved intercultural effectiveness, benefits the VET sector, as it can result in:

- improved success rates and productivity through the provision of customised VET services to meet individual needs;
- better relationships with clients;
- improvements to staff morale;
- improved staff management;
- activity to meet legal and professional requirements relating to equality and diversity;
- the identification of and action against discriminatory practices;
- increased social, economic and cultural integration of people from different countries and diverse cultures;
- the identification and utilisation of skills, knowledge, experience and talent;
- the development of a creative and innovative working environment .

Using this guide you can:

- explore the concepts of culture and intercultural competencies;
- develop an understanding of intercultural competencies and their relevance to your role;

- develop your intercultural competencies by identifying your own current strengths and weaknesses and areas for improvement; and
- access information about other resources that can support intercultural competence development.

2 Adapted from CILT The National Centre for Languages (2008) *National Occupational Standards for Intercultural Working London: CILT*

Section 5 is divided into eight sub-sections describing in more detail each of the eight broad intercultural competencies. Each section follows the same format. They include information on the competence, and questions to support you to reflect upon your practice. The learning journey for each competence is presented as a sequence of stages - each building on the last:

- **Stage 1** – I do not understand the importance of the competence or think I may benefit from developing it.
- **Stage 2** – I understand my own conventions are not universal. Other people may not share them. I am curious about other cultures. I am starting to see the relevance of the intercultural competence.
- **Stage 3** – I am developing a better understanding of conventions of people from different countries and diverse cultures. I am becoming more reflective and aware of my own practices in relation to the intercultural competence.
- **Stage 4** – I am developing my working practices and behaviour in order to work more effectively with people from different countries and diverse cultures.
- **Stage 5** – I adapt my working behaviours and practices to work more effectively with people from different countries and diverse cultures as a matter of course. I have realised the benefits of this.

Within each of the eight sub-sections, a case study has been provided to help you to identify the relevance of the intercultural competence in specific situations, reflect on a specific situation and identify possible similarities with your own practice.

The guide can be used by:

- an individual - to support your own learning and professional development;
- a coach - to conduct individual or group coaching sessions; or
- a trainer - to conduct training sessions.

If you are a coach or trainer and want to use this resource in group settings, you will need to familiarise yourself with the guide and adapt it for group work.

3 These sequences are commonly used in a range of learning materials, and on this occasion have been adapted from Medact (undated) *Breaking Down the Barriers Module 6: Intercultural Communication Presentation* at www.training.medact.org/_assets/powerpoint_documents/Module%206%20Presentation.ppt

4. Culture and intercultural competencies

This section provides a brief introduction to the concepts of culture and intercultural competencies. More detail on how intercultural competencies are developed can be found in appendix 4.

What is culture?

In order to develop intercultural competencies, it is necessary to have an understanding of the concept of culture, and an awareness that there are multiple, varied cultures. UNESCO defines culture 'as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group ... it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs'. Our individual culture is influenced by our backgrounds, including family background, religious background and native country.

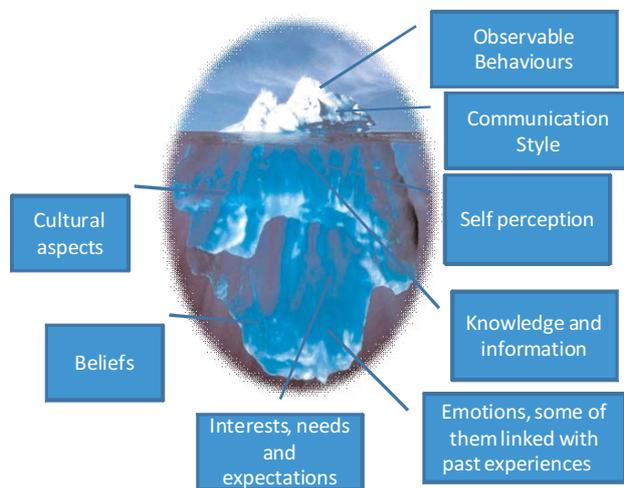
The iceberg model of culture is frequently used to illustrate the different manifestations of culture, and

how easily these can be observed (see figure 1). It illustrates the complexity of culture and how the observable element of culture and resulting behaviour is very small, like the visible part of the iceberg, compared to the non-observable elements of culture. To understand someone's behaviour requires that both the observable and non-observable elements of a person's culture are considered. These include cultural norms and values; beliefs; interests, needs and expectations; emotions; knowledge and information; and one's self perception. Taking this view of culture helps us to avoid making assumptions and enables us to develop empathy – putting ourselves in other person's position and being able to understand their point of view - which is key for successful intercultural working.

⁴ UNESCO, 2002, in *Network Intercultural Learning in Europe (NILE) (2008) Implementing Intercultural Learning Activities: A methodological guide at http://www.ceji.org/newsletter/docs/NILE_Methodolguide_final.pdf p.8*

⁵ Adapted from Enfield Council, Institute for Sustainable Technologies, Prenai Public Library and TUV SUD Akademie GmbH (1987) *Intercultural Toolkit for Adult Educators Poland: The Publishing House of the Institute for Sustainable Technologies - National Research Institute*

Figure 1: The iceberg model



What is an intercultural competence?

A competence is a collection of attitudes, knowledge and skills that are causally linked with behaviour. If the given context includes working with people from different countries and diverse cultures, the competence may be considered an 'intercultural competence'. The word 'intercultural' relates to the interaction of at least two people from different countries or cultures. The INCA project describes intercultural competence as 'enabling you to interact both effectively and in a way that is acceptable to others when you are working in a group whose members have different cultural backgrounds'. When there is no need to emphasise the intercultural context, many competencies

are general competencies. For example, 'communication' is a competence that most organisations expect of their staff and this may or may not include competence in intercultural communication. It is within an intercultural context that these competencies become intercultural competencies. Emphasising the intercultural aspect of competence is necessary to highlight the additional sensitivities and skills required to work effectively in a multicultural and diverse setting.

⁶ *Intercultural Competence Assessment (INCA) project at <http://www.incaproject.org/>*

Being interculturally competent involves considering your own values and beliefs and understanding how these have been formed. This is helpful for understanding that our values and beliefs are not universal. It is also helpful for learning to distinguish between the values and beliefs you hold which you may see as negotiable – for example, religious beliefs or personal dress – and those you find non-negotiable – for example, human rights. Within the process of developing intercultural competencies, you will need to accept that your colleagues' and clients' values may differ from yours and to learn to respect these differing values. However, you may encounter values that stand in opposition to your non-negotiable values; for example if human rights are being violated you may have to challenge this. You should be guided by your organisation's policies relating to anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunities, and legal duties such as those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

It should not be assumed that all differing or conflicting values, beliefs and conventions, or misunderstandings, are the result of (real or assumed) differences between ethnicities, nationalities or cultures. While this should always be considered, differences and misunderstandings also occur for many reasons not relating to cultural differences.

The intercultural competencies framework used in this guide

This guide is based on a framework of eight broad intercultural competencies (see figure 2 on page 11) that have specific performance indicators. These are set out in section 5 of this guide.

This framework has been developed based on the existing resources: CILT's National Occupational Standards for Intercultural Working (UK), the NILE methodological guide, the INCA framework and resources developed by the ILCC project partners (see appendix 3). In particular, the standards developed by CILT have been modified for a VET practitioner audience for use in this guide.

The approach to developing a 'competence', which is the central aim of this guide, is based on the following principles:

1. The development of a competence is an ongoing learning process.
2. The learning process consists of personal or group work enabling one to learn about and reflect on one's attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviours related to the competence.
3. The competencies are not entirely distinct: they merge and overlap with one another. For this reason, while you can dip in and out of the sections of this guide that are most relevant to you, it may be helpful to consider the eight competencies as a whole. For example, you cannot improve your communication skills if you are not sufficiently self-aware and do not have some understanding of how stereotypes and prejudices influence your communication.

Figure 2: The eight intercultural competencies framework



5. Developing intercultural competences

5.1 Self-awareness

Summary

This section is about identifying and becoming more aware of the values, beliefs and cultural conventions that you hold. It should help you to become more conscious of how they influence your behaviour and interaction with clients from different countries or diverse cultures, and your perceptions of clients' behaviours and actions. It discusses how values are not necessarily universal; that is, held by everyone. It aims to help you manage the effect of your values, beliefs and conventions on your perceptions, decision making and actions in a VET professional context.

Introduction

Self-awareness is the ability to recognise and reflect upon one's own values, beliefs and cultural conventions - including prejudices or stereotypes - and understand that they are not universal or superior. Values, or principles, are the behaviours and standards you see as important. Cultural conventions are the ways in which things are done in your culture, which are seen as 'normal'.

Self-awareness is the basis of any intercultural competence and plays an important role in the development of all intercultural competencies. Self-awareness enables you to reflect upon how your values, beliefs and cultural conventions affect your perceptions and expectations of others, and how they influence your conduct in a workplace and your interaction with other people. For example, you demonstrate self-awareness as a VET practitioner if you take into account that your attitudes or behaviour may be the reason for misunderstandings with your clients, and do not automatically assume clients' attitudes or behaviour are the cause, or judge clients' behaviour as inappropriate.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence – self-awareness

You are interculturally competent if you:

- recognise your own values, beliefs and cultural conventions and how they affect your perceptions and expectations in work situations;
- actively seek to understand how your values, beliefs, cultural conventions and ways of communication appear to other people.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider how self-awareness currently plays a role for you in your work with people from different countries and diverse cultures. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- In my interaction with clients from different countries or diverse cultures, do I consider how I present my values, beliefs and cultural conventions (and therefore the impression I give them of myself)? Do I consider how these may be different from my clients' values, beliefs and cultural conventions and therefore be unfamiliar to them?
- Do clients give me explicit feedback – or do I perceive it from their reactions towards me – about whether my use of language or the values I hold have an impact on my work with them?
- Am I able to acknowledge misunderstandings between others and me as possible effects of a lack of self-awareness on my part?
- Can I recall a situation where my personal values and beliefs seemed to be an obstacle in achieving a

goal in my work with someone from a different background?

- If clients express values I do not share at all, or if clients make use of language in a way I find disturbing, how do I react to them?
- Am I capable of accepting that I may have different values, beliefs and cultural conventions from my clients, and finding ways to work together to explore how possible difficulties may be overcome?

The learning journey of developing self-awareness may be thought of as a sequence of stages - each building on the last:

- **Stage 1** - I am normal. Everyone does, or should, hold the same values, beliefs or cultural conventions as me. Why is the other person acting rudely and why doesn't s/he seem to understand my point of view?
- **Stage 2** - I understand my own conventions are not universal. The other person may not share them. I won't take offence even if some attitudes s/he expresses or demonstrates through her/his actions are impolite in my culture. I am curious about other cultures.
- **Stage 3** - I can discern some of the major differences regarding values, beliefs and behaviour between the other person and me. I see how they affect our interaction and mutual understanding.
- **Stage 4** - I realise I need to check that I have understood exactly which values are crucial to the other person and how they influence her/his behaviour. I also need to check again that my own, differing values, do not have a negative impact on my way of perceiving the other person and of interacting with her/him.
- **Stage 5** - I am aware of how my values, beliefs and cultural conventions influence my interaction with people from other backgrounds. I am able to show respect for differing values and behaviour, and to successfully adapt my way of interaction. I am able to draw others' attention to existing differences and find ways to address any difficulties arising from such differences. I am able to challenge values that are non-negotiable, e.g. discrimination and violations to human rights, and, if necessary, report these to the appropriate authorities.

Case study

For a year Sarah has worked at an organisation in Germany which advises migrant women on issues relating to their professional and private lives. Her clients come from a broad range of countries. Many of them are highly qualified and seeking employment. Reflecting on the questions above, Sarah feels that she has been largely successful in her work with clients. She has supported most clients to enter the labour market. She feels competent in imparting the necessary information to her clients and in giving emotional support. She feels that she demonstrates sufficient understanding regarding difficulties that her clients encounter, and that there is a mutual understanding between clients and herself.

However, lately Sarah has been working with a new client, Mrs C. from Brazil, who arrives at least 20 minutes late for all her appointments with Sarah. In some cases, she does not show up at all. Sarah feels deeply offended by the client's behaviour. Punctuality is necessary for Sarah in order to keep up the appointments with all her other clients and complete her work.

Sarah addressed the issue with Mrs C. and explained to her that she needed to be punctual for their future meetings. Mrs C. appeared to show some insight, even though she did not apologise explicitly to Sarah. The client explained that on one occasion she had missed the bus, that on another her daughter had been ill, and that taking her child to kindergarten sometimes took longer than expected. Sarah can accept some of the reasons but still feels offended by simple excuses. Sarah has been asking herself: why doesn't her client take an earlier bus? Why doesn't she call if she knows she is going to be late or cannot keep the appointment? Does she not respect the job Sarah is doing?...

Look back at the five stages of developing self-awareness.

- At which stage do you think Sarah is?
- If you were Sarah, how would you react to your client and what would you do?
- How do you think the situation will develop?

Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

Step 2: further information on self-awareness

Certain traits open up possibilities for greater self-awareness, such as being open-minded, and having a tendency to focus on positive aspects of others' behaviour and actions rather than negative ones (deficits). Some traits inhibit self-awareness, such as intolerance, and focusing on negative aspects of others.

Also, perceptions of others may be deeply rooted in prejudices and stereotypes which may be part of unconscious or automatic thinking (see 5.2). It is not always easy to identify deeply rooted, unconscious and automatic beliefs, and it is a continuous process.

Being aware of your own values, beliefs and conventions allows you to better understand others' values, beliefs and conventions. IF you are a self-aware person you will be better able to avoid taking offence in interactions, reacting emotionally and taking things personally. You will be better able to analyse actions according to the client's own values, beliefs and conventions.

Although self-awareness has a lot to do with self-reflection, i.e. thinking about and analysing one's own attitudes and actions, this does not mean that developing it should be a task to embark on alone. You may find it useful to engage in this learning process with others, such as colleagues and experts. Try to make use of activities designed to support your development, such as professional supervision or coaching, informal exchange with colleagues in your team, and further vocational education (e.g. workshops on how to translate self-awareness into action with your clients).

Case study continuing

...After talking to a colleague about Mrs. C., Sarah realised that there are different ways of looking at the situation. Whereas Sarah took personal offence that Mrs C. arrived for appointments 20 minutes after the agreed time, these 20 minutes may not have been seen by Mrs C. as 'late'. Sarah's colleague told her about her own experiences with some clients from South American and African countries and the talks she had with them on punctuality. As it turned out, almost all of them believed that being punctual was very important. But the time span that determined whether you were on time or not in their cultures differed noticeably from what one would call punctuality in Germany.

Taking this into account, Sarah could understand better why Mrs C. did not apologise for 'being late'. And taking into account that her client was not late at all from her own perspective, Sarah did not take such deep personal offence from 'weak excuses' anymore. She had reached a much better basis for the continuation of her work with Mrs C.

Although Sarah understood Mrs C.'s 'lateness', she realised that if she is to support Mrs C. to enter the labour market, she would need to talk to her about the cultural conventions surrounding timekeeping in Germany, and how important these are in the workplace.

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this section, think again and discuss with your colleagues which values are most important to you. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

- Consider a time when you have felt offended or frustrated by a client's behaviour or attitudes.
- Now try to leave aside the emotional effect the situation had on you for a moment: assume that the offence was not intended. Try to analyse exactly what it was that made you feel offended or frustrated in this situation. What was the value, or principle or standard of behaviour, that was important to you that you felt had been violated or ignored?

Now take your reflection a step further.

- Can you see why the value in question is so important to you? Is it a value acknowledged by many others e.g. by family members, colleagues, large groups of society? Or is it something more personal?
- Where does the value 'come from'? When and how did you come to feel its importance? Do you believe that the value is – or should be - universal; that is, everyone should hold it?

Now try to take on the perspective of the other person involved.

- Which reasons may the other person have had to act in the way s/he did? If the other person were to describe what happened, what would s/he possibly describe?
- Is it possible that s/he does not hold the same value as you? Is the value common in all cultures or for all people?

To round up your reflection, consider the following questions:

- How do I react to people who don't follow the same conventions as me? How do they respond to my reaction?
- Does my reaction cause difficulties in the interaction?
- How could I react differently?
- How could I make sure that an aspect of a client's behaviour – which I personally do not approve of – does not lead to unprofessional actions on my part?

Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your self-awareness. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 2, to help you develop your self-awareness. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

The following hints and tips may help you to develop your self-awareness action plan:

- Ask your friends and colleagues – including those from different cultural backgrounds – what they perceive as the values, beliefs or conventions most important to you. It may be helpful to talk about specific examples such as dress, timekeeping, interaction with people in positions of authority, attitudes towards family, or attitudes towards gender relations. Let them explain from which actions or behaviour on your part they deduce this. Have you learned anything new about yourself - are there any surprises? How do you think your values, beliefs or conventions differ from those of your friends and colleagues?
- Carefully check if a client and you share the same values, using their feedback rather than your assumptions.
- Practice discussing differences with regard to values, beliefs and cultural conventions with others in a respectful way. For example, 'are all cultures time conscious?' or 'is being time conscious always necessary?'

- Practice suggesting how to deal with difficulties arising from differences in a constructive way in a VET professional situation (e.g. advice session, a workshop, or job interview).

5.2 Challenging stereotypes

Summary

This section describes what stereotypes are and discusses how they can result in discriminatory actions. It aims to enable you to identify the stereotypes you may hold, or that may be embedded in your organisation, and consider how they may affect practice. It is designed to help you become more skilled in recognising and consciously challenging your own stereotypical thinking.

Note: If you are using this section in a group training or coaching session, you will need to give careful thought as to how to adapt it. People may hold stereotypical beliefs that they could recognise and consider individually, but they may not feel comfortable to do so in a group setting. You may wish to include activities that enable people to reflect on stereotypes privately, but do not require them to share them with the group. You may wish to include activities where people can share reflections anonymously.

Introduction

Stereotypes are ideas that groups of people hold about others who are different from them. A stereotype can be embedded in a single word or phrase, an image, a belief or a combination of words, images and beliefs. Many stereotypes are easily recognised by others, as they have usually developed over time and become embedded in culture. This section draws on and introduces concepts from existing research and theories.

Stereotypes comprise value judgements about certain social or cultural groups. Stereotypes ignore the uniqueness of individuals by grouping individuals together and assuming they are all the same. Stereotypes are not the same as broad knowledge about customs and practices of people from different countries and diverse cultures, which can be used to enhance your practice while still regarding people as individuals.

Through stereotyping, social groups are ascribed certain characteristics that individuals within the group are associated with. Different groups come to exist: 'ingroups' are positioned as normal and superior; 'outgroups' comprise all the other groups, and they are seen as lesser than or inferior to the 'ingroup'. As individuals we are likely to belong to or be associated with many different groups; however, we are unlikely to agree that all characteristics associated with these groups apply to us.

Theorists have also developed concepts of 'automatic' stereotyping or 'explicit' stereotyping.

- Automatic, or subconscious, stereotyping occurs without one noticing. If someone has developed their self-awareness, this is often followed by a thought process whereby one challenges the stereotyping and alters the words, images or beliefs they associate with the group. In this way automatic stereotyping can be broken down over time, as this thought process challenges and replaces stereotypical thinking;
- Explicit, or conscious, stereotyping occurs when a person deliberately embraces stereotypes about another group, and does so consciously.

A third set of concepts used to categorise stereotypes is 'general types' and 'sub-types'.

- A general type is a large group (e.g. teenagers) to which broad stereotypes are applied; these stereotypes are recognisable to many people and may be widely accepted.
- A sub-type is one of the several smaller groups that comprise the general group. Stereotypes associated with sub-types are more specific, and not necessarily recognised by the majority of people.

⁷ The ingroup-outgroup terms were initially developed in the framework of social identity theory by the social psychologist Henry Tajfel.

Prejudice is to pre-judge or to form an opinion (usually negative) about someone or something by using a stereotype, before all the facts are known. Prejudices are unjust and unreasonable opinion or feelings. They are formed without getting to know an individual in their own right, or drawing on direct interaction or experience with an individual.

Many stereotypes are embedded in culture, and therefore do affect the way many people think and feel. It is important to recognise where stereotypes affect our thinking, and to find ways to challenge them. Stereotypes differ from one culture to another.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - challenging stereotypes

You are interculturally competent if you:

- base your opinions of people on your own interaction with them rather than on common perception, stereotypes, their accent or their appearance;
- challenge and adapt your own assumptions about the behaviour of people from different countries or diverse cultures;
- challenge any stereotypes, prejudice or racism expressed by other people about yourself or others;
- base your decisions to recruit, advise, teach, employ or promote people on their potential to undertake the learning programme or do the job rather than on accent or appearance, stereotypes or prejudice, out-of-date information or commonly held but incorrect perceptions of their skills and work ethics.

? Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider how stereotyping impacts on your work practices with people from different countries and different cultures. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- Can I identify a stereotype about people from my own country or culture that I don't think applies to me?
- Can I identify a stereotype about my clients from different countries or diverse cultures that I do not think applies to them?
- How comfortable do I feel in considering and challenging stereotypes that I hold? Do I think it is important to do this? Why?

The learning journey of challenging stereotypes may be thought of as a sequence of stages - each building on the last:

- **Stage 1** - Certain social or cultural groups comprise people who all act in a similar way. I can guess how somebody will behave by knowing which social or cultural group they come from. These ways of acting are different from those of my own social or cultural group, and my group is the standard or norm.
- **Stage 2** - I realise that I can automatically make assumptions about some groups of people and that these assumptions aren't necessarily true or useful.
- **Stage 3** - I am becoming more aware of how I stereotype people. I am working to consciously challenge my stereotypical thinking, by basing my opinions of people on my interactions with them.
- **Stage 4** - I continually and actively challenge my own stereotypical thinking and do not allow stereotypical thoughts to influence my work practices. I get to know my clients as individuals. I am becoming more

aware of how other people employ stereotypical thinking and how it is embedded in my organisation's culture or practices.

• **Stage 5** – I challenge others' stereotypical thinking. I try to identify how stereotypes may be embedded within my organisation's culture and practices, and then work to challenge this.

Case study

Nadia is a teacher in a vocational training centre in Slovenia. In the last 4 years the number of students from the Roma community has increased, and Nadia now has five Roma students in her classroom.

Nadia believes Roma students only attend the classes because their families get grants from the state if they register their sons and daughters in training. In Nadia's experience, usually after a couple of weeks their attendance becomes irregular and eventually they leave the course before it finishes. In Nadia's opinion, Roma students don't pay enough attention, and their behavior in the classroom is poor. Nadia also knows from her family and her community that Roma people are generally antisocial. Nadia often tells her colleagues that "they are all the same".

Every year a group of students from Nadia's class is selected for a work placement. This is a great development opportunity for the students. The principal of the college has asked Nadia to make sure she includes Roma students in her selection. Nadia was unhappy about this as she believes a Roma student will perform badly and leave before the placement ends. She thinks a Roma student would take the place of a different student who would make more of the opportunity. Any bad behavior could also cause problems for Nadia in the future with the companies that host the work placements.

After Nadia told her students about the possibilities of the work placement, one of her Roma students, Lola, asked to be considered. Nadia thought back to Lola's time on the course. She remembered clearly times when Lola had been absent. This had confirmed her beliefs about Roma students, and affirmed her view that a Roma student would not make the most of the opportunity. Nadia told her that the group was now full...

Look back at the five stages of challenging stereotypes.

- At which stage do you think Nadia is?
- If you were Lola, how would you react and what would you do?
- How do you think the situation will develop?

Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

Step 2: Further information on challenging stereotypes

Stereotypes are not only ideas, concepts or opinions. They influence how we interact with and treat people; they have actual consequences and can result in discriminatory practices.

Stereotypes influence our expectations about others and impact on the way we interact with them. As a result, stereotypes influence the expectations others have about themselves. For example, if teachers have high expectations about certain students, this influences their interaction with those students, and as a consequence the students may achieve higher levels of performance. This effect, known as 'self-fulfilling prophecy' has been studied in the field of education, but it is also relevant in performance at work.

We challenge our own stereotypical thinking by:

- being alert to our own views and practices and considering if and how stereotypes have influenced them;
- avoiding generalising when judging others' acts - so forming our opinions of others as individuals, rather

than as part of a group;

- trying to get a better understanding of others' personalities, behaviours and skills on individual bases;
- being aware that stereotypes usually transcend beliefs and have influence in the way we treat others, and seeking to identify discriminatory practice.

⁸Self fulfilling prophecy' is a concept used to describe how beliefs and expectations we hold of others can have real consequences. It is also known as the 'Pygmalion effect'. People who hold high expectations about themselves often act accordingly and achieve more than those with lower expectations of themselves.

⁹ In the case of education, the Pygmalion effect is also called Rosenthal effect. The psychologists Rosenthal and Jacobson studied this effect and reported on it in Rosenthal, R. and Jacobson, L. (1968) *Pygmalion in the Classroom* Norwalk/Carmarthen: Crown House Publishing Company.

Challenging other people's stereotypical thinking

When developing awareness of our own stereotypical thinking we often become more aware of stereotypes that other people (such as colleagues) hold, and of stereotypes embedded into organisational culture. However, challenging this is not an easy thing to do. It can be useful to gather evidence that contradicts stereotypical assumptions, and present this to colleagues informally, or in team meetings. Consider the stereotypes that you are more comfortable to challenge and think about how you would approach this; then implement this approach when challenging other stereotypes. For example, if you are confident in challenging age or gender stereotypes, you may find it useful to follow the same approach when challenging stereotypes based on race, ethnicity or other cultural differences. Adopting a non-confrontational manner can help. It also helps to work on the basis that all colleagues, including yourself, need to challenge stereotypical thinking and that this is a collective learning exercise. You may find it effective to make suggestions of changes that would accommodate the real needs of groups of clients rather than ones based on stereotypes. Highlighting the benefits for the organisation as well as clients is also important.

Case study continuing

...Lola was upset because she thought that Nadia was behaving in a discriminatory way. Lola is interested in the subject Nadia is teaching, and the opportunity for a work placement. She felt marginalised, and complained to the principal.

The principal spoke to Nadia about Lola's case. Nadia explained her reasons for excluding Lola from the work placement. The principal discussed the increasing proportions of Roma students in the centre and demonstrated the success Roma students have had on another courses. He recommended Nadia have a conversation with Lola, to try to get to know her and to find out about her interest in the class and the placement.

Nadia arranged to meet Lola after class. Having spoken to Lola, Nadia changed her opinion about her. She realised she was a hard working and enthusiastic student. She found out that Lola was a member of a Roma students association involved in different activities to support an increase in the proportions of Roma students who completed their studies. Lola's ambition was to become the first female Roma manager in a big company in Slovenia. After meeting Lola, Nadia looked at her course records. She realised that while Lola had missed some sessions, this was in line with the average number of sessions students had missed. She realised it had stuck in her mind simply because it confirmed her beliefs about Roma students.

Nadia realised that she had been unfair to exclude Lola from the work placement. She put in a late application and secured a place for Lola at a local company. A few weeks later Nadia received an email from the human resources manager of the company praising Lola for the commitment, skills and good attitude she had exhibited.

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this section, think again and discuss with your colleagues how stereotypes influence your work and your organisation's culture and practices. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

- Can I identify any stereotypes I hold about particular groups of clients? Where do I think these stereotypes come from?
- How might these stereotypes affect my expectations of and interaction with these clients? Might they have resulted in any discriminatory practice?
- Can I identify current culture or practices in my working environment in which stereotypes have some influence? If so, how can I challenge this?

Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you may hold stereotypes and accepting that they may impact on your work with people from different countries and diverse cultures is the first step to challenging stereotypes and becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your skills in challenging stereotypes. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 2.

The following hints and tips may help you to develop your action plan.

- Make an honest list of stereotypical views that you sometimes hold, and think of examples from your experience that challenge these stereotypes.
- Talk to friends and colleague about whether they have noticed any stereotypes you appear to hold.
- Challenge any deep rooted stereotypes by doing specific research.
- Build time into your interactions with clients early on to get to know them as individuals.
- Have high expectations of your clients, and you can get great results in return.

5.3 Communication

Summary

This section begins by describing what communication is, and the different ways in which we communicate including direct communication (such as speaking or writing) and indirect communication (such as body language, eye contact, and dress). It aims to help you consider how effective your communication is with clients from different countries or diverse cultures, what your clients' communication requirements may be, and how you might adapt your practice to meet their requirements. It discusses how some aspects of communication, such as spoken language, body language and gestures, vary amongst cultures.

Introduction

Communication is the ability to share and exchange information with people clearly and effectively. We communicate directly with people through activities such as speaking and listening, and writing and reading. We communicate more indirectly with people through our personal presentation (e.g. dress, hairstyle or jewellery), manner, body language, gestures, tone of voice and working practices.

Our ability to adapt our communication style and choose the best method for the situation reflects the level of competence that we have. We demonstrate communication competence by being sensitive to and taking into account others' requirements.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - communication

You are interculturally competent if you:

- communicate in ways that can be understood by the people from the countries or cultures you are working with;
- recognise how your use of language, body language, gestures and tone of voice may appear to people from different countries or diverse cultures and how theirs may affect your perceptions of them;
- reflect on the impact of your behaviour and use of language when working with people from different countries or diverse cultures and adapt them to improve results in the future;
- implement communication strategies that are right for the situation and that take account of the diversity of language and aspects of culture of the people involved;
- identify any language skills needed and where support can be sourced most effectively.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to reflect on your current practice in communicating with people from different countries and diverse cultures. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- Do clients understand me most of the time?
- Do I understand clients most of the time?
- What communication and understanding difficulties do I experience?
- What can I do to overcome the difficulties?

The learning journey of developing intercultural communication style may be thought of as a sequence of stages each building on the last:

- **Stage 1** - I do not need to consider or adjust my communication skills to meet the needs of my clients from different countries or diverse cultures. All of my clients have some skills in communicating in my language, so there should be no problem.
- **Stage 2** – I am beginning to understand that I may need to adjust my spoken and written language, to ensure that those clients who speak my language as a second language can fully understand me.
- **Stage 3** – I recognise that speaking and writing are not the only forms of communication, and that I need to consider my body language, gestures, eye contact, personal dress, tone of voice, etc.
- **Stage 4** - I am becoming aware of the different ways in which I can communicate to ensure there is mutual understanding. I am gaining knowledge of my clients' preferred languages and communication customs. I realise I need to check that I have understood what the other person is trying to express and that s/he has really understood me.
- **Stage 5** - I can communicate in a range of ways. I adapt my communication style to meet clients' needs and to make it easier for the other person to understand me. I check clients' understanding and reflect critically on interactions. I can engage with and work effectively with interpreters when necessary.

Case study

Alma is an education and employment advisor in the UK. Until recently, most of her clients were originally from the UK, and spoke English. She had never considered her own skills in communicating effectively with people from different countries and diverse cultures. However, recently Alma has been seeing increasing numbers of people who are new to the UK. Many of her new clients are from Somalia and Poland. On reflection using the above questions, Alma did not identify any major problems with understanding between herself and her clients. She did identify communication and understanding difficulties in use of language, as many of her new clients do not have English as their first language, but did not perceive this to be a big problem....

Look back at the five stage model of developing intercultural communication skills.

- At which stage do you think Alma is?
- What are your reasons for thinking this?

Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

Step 2: further information on communication

Speaking and listening

People who are not native speakers within a country often comment that they find it easier to speak and understand the foreign language when spoken by a foreigner than by a native speaker. The Europe at Work guide explains that 'this is because the native speaker doesn't make the allowances for speed of speech, dialect, accent and use of idiom that a foreign speaker does'. Being aware of this can help us to improve our own communication skills. Furthermore, it is important to understand that if migrants feel inadequate communicating in the host country's language, this can be a source of anxiety and can have negative impact on their confidence. It is also essential to be aware of unequal power relations that can arise within practitioner/client relationships, and how this can impact on communication.

Body language

Whilst the spoken word is often perceived as the main means of conveying a message, body language is as important in ensuring that the words are understood. By body language we mean posture, distance, eye contact, nods, smiling, the volume at which we speak, as well as other conventions that are used to show politeness. Whilst in some cultures smiling may be perceived as being friendly, it can also convey a lack of seriousness. Similarly maintaining eye contact can be perceived as a sign of respect or disrespect and in many cultures this will be determined by the person's position in society. For migrants, being new to a country or culture may present a challenge for individuals in determining their position in relation to you as a practitioner. As a sign of respect of their seniority and position, clients may avoid eye contact. Having an understanding of such differences in cultural attitudes to body language aids effective communication.

Setting

It is necessary to be aware of how our work settings can be used to convey messages to people. For example the location of the building in which our service is based, the type of space in which we work or the working times we operate are indicators of our organisational culture and can encourage or discourage clients from engaging.

Working with others

If you are an intercultural competent practitioner you will have an awareness of, and ability to engage and work effectively with, other people who can support you in communicating with people from different countries or diverse cultures. This can include working with interpreters or engaging bilingual staff. Using information in other languages can also be helpful

¹⁰ Europe at Work (2007) The European Intercultural Workplace Dublin: European Intercultural Workplace Project partnership p.9

Hints and tips

The following hints and tips may help you enhance your communication skills.

- Learn conventions for introductions and greetings from other cultures.

- Learn some phrases in other languages.
- Use gesture and images.
- Avoid idioms.
- Explain acronyms.
- Vary speed of talk.
- Check clients' understanding carefully using their feedback rather than your assumptions.
- Try to pronounce clients' names correctly.

Case study continuing

...Alma received information from the local college about a course in employability skills which is offered with language support. She had identified this course as appropriate for her clients who are new to the UK, and referred five clients to the course.

Some weeks later, Alma's manager asked her to provide information about the destination of her clients. On contacting the college she found out that none of her clients were on the course. Alma called some of her clients to ask if they had tried to access the course. The first client said 'I waited for you to call me to tell me that it is OK for me to go but you never called me'. Another client said that she thought Alma would send her the information about the course as she doesn't know where the college is. Other clients made similar comments...

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this section, think again and discuss with your colleagues what your norms and behaviours are in communication - including speech, personal presentation or body language. You may wish to consider your practices in relation to:

- making eye contact;
- personal space;
- nods;
- your reaction to apparent rudeness or insincerity;
- smiling;
- fluency and pace of speech;
- how you dress;
- gestures used while speaking.

Can you think of examples of clients who have different behaviours? How do you react to people who don't follow the same conventions as you? Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

Case study continuing

...Alma realised that her message to clients about the course was not understood and as a consequence they had not accessed the course. They also felt let down by Alma as they had expected her to secure the place on the course and to contact them. On reflection, Alma realised that clients responded with 'yes' to everything she said and she did not check whether they fully understood.

She realised that she should have given clients written information about the course so that they can discuss the information with their friends/family. She has also thought that translating the course information into Polish and Somali would have been helpful for the majority of the clients. She realised she needs to be thorough and explicit in checking that clients have fully understood her, rather than making assumptions that they have.

Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in intercultural communication. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 2, to help you develop your communication skills. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

You may want to use some of these hints and tips in your action plan.

- Check that clients understand you by asking them to repeat back to you what they are going to do next.
- Provide information in writing. If information is not in the client's language make it simple and clear.
- Learn some key words and phrases in the client's language, e.g. appointment, course, address, and 'do you understand?' Using internet translating tools to learn new words/phrases can be useful and you can check the meaning with clients.
- Find out if your organisation has a budget and/or contracts for interpreting and translating, and identify local translating and interpreting services.
- Identify the most important information that you use on a regular basis, and have this translated into languages that are common amongst your clients.
- When using interpreters consider the following:
 - It is natural to be nervous when using interpreters for the first time. Remember that interpreters should be trained and/or experienced. Ask them what the best practice is and how to conduct an interview or discussion via an interpreter.
 - Using untrained, informal interpreters (often friends and family members of clients) is not considered best practice but happens frequently for a number of reasons such as lack of resources, clients' preferences or convenience. Use common sense in deciding if you can use an informal interpreter in some situations.
 - An integral part of the interpreter's role is cultural mediation; they can explain to you any cultural norms that can help you in independent communication with clients in the future.

5.4 Flexibility

Summary

Working with people from different countries or diverse cultures can mean you encounter opinions and values, and clients' needs and circumstances, which are unfamiliar to you. This section discusses the importance of being open to new opinions and values, and of adapting your behaviour and work strategies to meet clients' needs.

Introduction

Flexibility relates to the ability to be open to and adapt to new circumstances and contexts. Being open to and accepting new opinions and values is important when working with clients whose opinions and values differ from your own. Flexibility requires that we are open-minded when encountering new values.

Flexibility also requires we adapt behaviour to the immediate context, to suit the specific situation and people involved. This is closely related to the ability to communicate well with people from different countries and diverse cultures, which is discussed in more detail in section 5.3. If you never change your way of working, and are unaware that it can be inappropriate or even offensive in different contexts, you are likely to be ineffective.

Finally, flexibility relates to the ability to change a work strategy if needed. Having a fixed strategy and not adapting it to new contexts and clients' objectives means it will not be fit for purpose.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - flexibility

You demonstrate intercultural competence if you:

- make enough time and effort and respond flexibly and positively so that your working practice engages and includes people from different countries or diverse cultures;
- work in ways that balance other people's expectations of you with the need to achieve organisational objectives;
- when recruiting people, use selection procedures that recognise education, training, skills, experience and qualifications gained in other countries and do not require more experience/skills than are needed to participate in the learning programme and/or to carry out the job;
- when delivering training, manage the learning/training group in a way that meets group objectives while showing flexibility towards individual members' cultural needs;
- when providing advice, work with your clients in ways that recognise education, training, skills, experience and qualifications gained in other countries.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

The learning journey of developing flexibility may be thought of as a sequence of stages each building on the last:

- **Stage 1** - I know the best way to do things. Other people need to accept my way of working. This is what I offer; I cannot offer anything else.
- **Stage 2** - I recognise that my way of working is not the only way of working. I recognise that people may have opinions, values or needs that are different from my own.
- **Stage 3** - I am trying to identify clients' opinions and values. I am actively trying to be open minded, and to accept others' values and opinions as equally valid to my own.
- **Stage 4** - I am working towards better understanding my clients' needs and circumstances and adapting my behaviours and work strategies to meet these.
- **Stage 5** - I am open to and can implement new ways of working. I am receptive to clients' opinions, values and objectives and am able to adapt my behaviour and work strategies accordingly.

Case study

Luis works for an employment agency in Madrid that recruits people for temporary office work, including administrative work.

Emmanuel, a 32 year old Nigerian, brought his CV to the agency's office and told the receptionist that he is interested in finding administrative work. The receptionist explained that one of the advisors would get in touch with Emmanuel. The receptionist passed his CV to Luis. On reading the CV, Luis established that Emmanuel had no Spanish qualifications or administrative experience in Spain. A few days later Emmanuel called at the office to enquire about vacancies. The receptionist recognised him and asked Luis to see him.

Luis told Emmanuel that he is not suitable for the vacancies because he had no Spanish administrative qualifications or experience. Emmanuel explained that he has qualifications and experience from Nigeria. Luis told him that this was not sufficient for work in Spain...

Look back at the five stages of developing flexibility.

- What stage do you think Luis is at?
- What would you do if you were in Luis's position?

Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

Step 2: further information on flexibility

You may often need to plan your work activities in advance of fully understanding clients' needs. For example, if you are a trainer you may need to plan your training programme before meeting your clients; if you are an advisor you may design the methodology you plan to follow before you contact clients. However, flexibility requires that your plans are adaptable enough so they can be modified. Success will often depend on the effort that you make to understand your clients' needs and to adapt your planning to their needs.

Get to know your clients

Before behaviours and strategies can be adapted to a certain context, it is important to understand that context. This means it is important to know:

- your clients' cultural backgrounds and their current needs;
- how cultural differences may affect your interaction with your clients (for example, in some cultures, posing a direct question to a teacher is not considered appropriate);
- clients' expectations about your work with them.

Focus on clients' needs and objectives

For you to be flexible, it is important to take into account clients' needs and objectives, and plan/adapt your working practices accordingly. This is often referred to as a client/person centred approach. A central principle of this is to ask clients about their objectives and to adapt the initial plan to their requirements and circumstances.

Being flexible and able to focus on clients' needs requires you to have good communication skills, including active listening skills. Active listening will enable you to understand what clients are saying to you and to explore what they mean. To be an active listener it is important to:

- be relaxed when interacting with others using open body language. Concentrate on the words and behaviours of the other party;
- avoid the natural trend of giving a quick answer, before listening to the whole message and before having all the information;
- encourage the client to continue talking. This can be done using expressions like 'I see...', 'I understand...';
- avoid negative body language such as shaking your head in disagreement;
- repeat what the other has said in your own words, to make sure that you have really understood the message.

Saying 'possibly yes' instead of directly 'no'

One way of finding out how flexible you are is to count how many times you say 'no' during a normal day. People who resist change are inflexible. Phrases that usually 'kill' flexibility are:

- No, it is impossible

- No, we cannot change it, we have always done it this way

- That idea won't work
- It is too risky.

Starting an answer with a positive expression usually shows flexibility:

- Your opinion is very interesting...have you considered also these aspects of the issue...?
- I do agree with you in most of what you're saying, but I need to contrast this with our past experience...
- Thank you for sharing your ideas. I have planned or done this in the way I did because I had a different opinion. I appreciate your input...

You can express your own opinion in a positive way, even when you disagree with the other person's opinions.

Case study continuing

...Emmanuel was upset about Luis's response and felt that it was not fair. He called at the agency the next day and asked to see Luis again. When he met with Luis he told him that he was upset that his qualifications had not been recognised. He stated that he was prepared to work for free in order for someone to assess his skills as an administrator. He began to describe the work that he had done in the past, including setting up meetings, taking notes, dealing with the post, and using various computer programmes. Luis listened carefully, and started to understand Emmanuel's past experiences and skills. Luis realised that Emmanuel's skills matched those that local companies require. Although he was persuaded that he had misjudged Emmanuel's skills, he felt that the companies who use the employment agency may have the same reservations about Luis's qualifications and experience. He tried to think creatively about how he could address this in a positive way. He suggested to Emmanuel that he works for the agency for one week and, depending on his performance, Luis would be able to recommend him for positions and offer references.

Luis supervised Emmanuel's placement and was therefore able to vouch for the quality of his work with companies looking for temporary staff. He also did some informal research into the Nigerian community locally. He found out that many Nigerian migrants are highly skilled but engaged in menial work because employers are reluctant to consider their qualifications. Luis did an internet search about verifications of qualifications from other countries and found out about NARIC, the National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union. He established contact with NARIC and is working on developing the employment agency's strategies and ways of working to ensure that local migrants can fill labour market gaps, and that their skills and experience are not wasted.

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this section, think again and discuss with your colleagues what your norms and values are with regard to flexibility. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections. You may wish to consider your practices in relation to:

- the knowledge you have of your clients;
- how you adapt your methods and goals to your clients' needs and expectations;
- active listening;
- showing more flexibility using positive and open language.

Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in flexibility. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 2, to help you develop your flexibility skills. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

The following hints and tips may help you develop your action plan.

- Set up objectives in partnership with clients.
- Adapt your own objectives to clients' expectations.
- Practice active listening.
- When discussing with another colleague or client, try to start your answer with 'possibly yes' instead of 'no'.

5.5 Building relationships with other organisations

Summary

This section focuses on the importance of building relationships with other organisations when working with people from different countries or diverse cultures. It describes the benefits of this, including helping you to develop knowledge and skills to work with clients more effectively, and ensuring clients receive holistic support to meet a range of needs. It provides advice on how to go about developing new relationships or partnerships to support you when working in an intercultural context.

Introduction

Building relationships and working in partnership with other organisations is also known as networking. As a VET practitioner you will already work to some extent with other organisations. In an intercultural context this should include organisations and agencies that work with specific minority ethnic groups, or have a particular focus on cultural, religious or linguistic requirements. A range of people and organisations can be part of your professional network including religious organisations, refugee and other migrant support organisations, minority ethnic community groups, health, housing, social care or welfare organisations, and of course learning providers, advice organisations, recruitment organisations and employers. Who you work with will depend on the nature of your service, your organisation's existing networks and partners, and your clients' needs.

Building relationships with other organisations can enable you, as a VET practitioner, to:

- develop your intercultural understanding and skills and enhance your work with clients. For example, working with other organisations, and learning from them, can help you to develop provision or approaches that are more inclusive of certain groups; better understand clients' needs, working practices, attitudes to work, means of communication, etc.; and deal with misunderstandings with clients;
- ensure your clients have a more holistic support system, taking account of a variety of cultural requirements. Steps towards employment can be addressed more effectively through partnership working than by working alone. Clients' needs may be complex and no one organisation can meet all of these needs. Without cooperation with other services, providers and practitioners, you will only be able to have a limited impact upon the lives of people you support.

Networking also enables you to take a wider view of the individual client. It is common in many Western countries for practitioners to perceive the client as an isolated individual. However, in many cultures,

family members, friends and the wider community will be heavily involved in the client's journey. If you can understand how clients' families and other social networks impact on their journeys, you can then build this into your working practices.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence – building relationships with other organisations

You are interculturally competent if you:

- build relationships with, and signpost to, organisations that can support people from different countries or diverse cultures;
- understand the importance of recognising the role of other agencies for the provision of integrated support and maintaining professional/organisational boundaries;
- build relationships with people who can provide you with resources, information and support in carrying out your role in an interculturally competent way;
- get the support you need to resolve issues caused by intercultural tension or misunderstanding.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider your current practice in building relationships with other organisations. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- Do I place importance on building relationships with other organisations including those specifically aimed at supporting culturally diverse members of the community?
- What, if any, organisations and agencies do I currently work with that can support me in providing services to clients from different countries and diverse cultures?
- How do I benefit from working with them - what resources, information and support do I receive?
- How do they benefit from working with me?

Building relationships with other organisations may be thought of as a sequence of stages each building on the last:

- **Stage 1** - I have always worked with the same partners, and this works well. I do not have time to network much, and there no need for me to do so.
- **Stage 2** - I understand that my clients have a range of needs and that my service cannot meet them all. I recognise that I may be more effective in my job if I work in partnership with more organisations. I am realising that other organisations might be able to help me meet clients' holistic needs.
- **Stage 3** - I am working to identify organisations working with specific cultural groups, and organisations working with people from different countries and diverse cultures, in the local area.
- **Stage 4** - I have started to work alongside a range of organisations that meet the needs of clients from different countries and diverse cultures. I can see the benefits of working in this way - for my organisation, for other organisations, and for clients.
- **Stage 5** - I have established working partnerships with a range of other organisations, in order to better meet clients' needs. These partnerships are embedded into my practice and I can develop new partnerships as necessary.

Case study

Samuel recently started work as a career advisor at a mainstream learning and employment support centre in England. The reception staff made an appointment for him to see a client from Zimbabwe. So he could better understand his client, Samuel did some Internet research into the political situation in Zimbabwe, the education and training system, the language and the culture. Samuel felt confident that he had

taken the initiative to find out more about his client's country of origin.

When the client, Prosperine, attended the appointment, she told Samuel that she was looking for care training. Samuel discussed with her the requirements for taking up care training and explained that it was possible to get funding from the government for this training. He gave her the information about a relevant course at the local vocational college and advised her to contact them urgently as the enrolment on the course had already started...

Look back at the five stages of building relationships with other organisations.

- At which stage do you think Samuel is?
- What are your reasons for thinking he is at this stage?
- How do you think the case study will develop?

Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

Step 2: further information on building relationships with other organisations

Different levels of relationships

Building partnerships with other organisations may need to happen at different levels - specifically with front line staff, to enhance direct support to clients, and also at a strategic level, to embed partnership working within organisational culture, practice and policy. Local or national organisations may be involved. Partnership working can be informal (where contact and support, information and advice are taken up as and when needed) or formal (with agreed arrangements for regular contact and ways of working together).

Developing relationships

Developing productive working relationships takes time, energy and commitment. Identifying potential organisations to work with can be challenging. You may not come across a wide range of other organisations in your day to day work. Consideration needs to be given to developing your knowledge of local and national organisations as well as organisations that have transnational reach. Use existing contacts to ask about organisations that can support you in working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This can have snowballing effect. Internet searches can complement this or be an alternative starting point.

Factors to consider in building relationships

Building relationships can pose challenges because of unfamiliarity with other organisations' cultures, working practices, communication practices and organisational and service specific language. To create effective partnerships it is important to understand the different roles and responsibilities of different organisations and their limitations. It is important to look for opportunities to share ideas, knowledge and resources that complement each other's work in order to maximise the benefit for clients without increasing workloads.

It is also important to remember not to share clients' personal details amongst organisations unless the client understands and has agreed to this.

Ongoing development

Like other intercultural competencies, building relationships with other organisations requires ongoing development. You can achieve this by setting up your own formal and informal networks, attending local forums or joining online forums and communication networks.

You can learn which organisations are most important to support you in your work and limit involvement

with organisations that are not as relevant.

Partnerships evolve and change due to many factors. Your resources and the focus of your role may change over time. Other organisations may cease to provide particular services. Clients, and their needs and requirements, also change over time. Continue to review your partnership working arrangements to ensure they are appropriate to you, your organisation, and your clients.

Case study continuing

...The following week Prosperine came back to see Samuel. Prosperine told Samuel that she had visited the vocational college, but the college receptionist has told her that because she is an asylum seeker she is not eligible to join the course. She asked Samuel to help her and explained that it is very important for her to join the course and find care work. She became tearful and explained that this felt like her only chance to be reunited with her children who are still in Zimbabwe. Samuel felt under pressure to help Prosperine to bring her children over. He told her that he would help her with this but he was very worried as he did not know what to do...

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this section, think again and discuss with your colleagues the extent to which you do, and should, work with other organisations. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections. Consider the following questions.

- Has networking and partnership working enhanced my work with clients in the past?
- Do I engage people from the client's wider life in the process - such as family members or members of their community?
- Am I aware of other organisations and agencies I could or should be working with?
- How can I identify which other relevant organisations exist? What research do I need to do, and how?
- Do I work in partnership formally or informally? Would it be beneficial to pursue more formal arrangements?

Case study continuing

...Samuel spoke to his manager who said that he should explain to Prosperine that they cannot offer any other help as family reunion matters, and that asylum seeker eligibility is not part of their role. Samuel explained that he felt that this will further upset Prosperine and agreed with his manager to first contact the local Red Cross to find out if they can help Prosperine.

The Red Cross explained that there is a local service that supports asylum seekers and gave Samuel details. They also explained that the Red Cross can offer information and advice on family reunion matters. Samuel contacted the local asylum support service who provided him with information about asylum seekers' eligibility to access training. He was able to view this information online and found out that Prosperine was eligible for the course. He printed this information and gave it to Prosperine. He wrote a letter to the college explaining what had happened to Prosperine. He included information about her eligibility to study on the course and the contact details for the local asylum support service. He highlighted the need for college frontline staff to be more sensitive to people approaching them for support and to check their entitlements to avoid their exclusion.

Samuel explained to Prosperine that he was unable to offer help with getting her children to join her and advised her to contact the Red Cross. Prosperine explained that she was already receiving support from the Red Cross. Samuel recognised that making contact with the Red Cross and subsequently with the

local asylum support service enabled him to advocate for his client, and allowed Prosperine to access the course.

Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in building relationships with other organisations. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 2, to help you develop your networking skills and practice. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

Use these hints and tips to help you develop your action plan.

- Research local services that may work with or be able to work with your clients.
- Ask your clients about other organisations and people that they are in contact with and what they do.
- Identify which groups of people from different countries and diverse cultures have large populations in your local area.
- Source training from other organisations to better enable you to work with these groups.
- Tell your colleagues about your experiences and what you have found out, to ensure a team wide approach to networking. Other colleagues may also have ideas to help you deal with the situation and can learn from you.
- Work with your manager to decide what actions are needed and to develop and agree an action plan. Gaining support from your manager is important.
- You can gain support from your managers and colleagues more easily if you are able to make a 'business case'. Think about how you can demonstrate that partnership working can:
 - help you/your team and the organisation to meet your own business aims and objectives, and
 - support you/your colleagues to meet your professional requirements, for example for anti-discriminatory practice.

5.6 Team management

Summary

This section discusses the general responsibilities of team managers including goal setting, task allocation, and providing feedback, and places these responsibilities in an intercultural context. It highlights the importance of adapting management style to best meet the needs of colleagues or clients from different countries or diverse cultures. It refers to the importance of working to ensure that team members respect one another's cultures, and of supporting colleagues to develop their own intercultural competencies.

It is primarily aimed at practitioners with team management responsibilities. However, it may also be useful for you if you work with groups of clients (as opposed to working with clients solely on a one to one basis).

Introduction

Team or group management refers to the ability to conduct a group of persons in a certain direction to reach specific goals, with high levels of commitment and motivation. From this point of view, a good team manager needs to be able to set team goals, motivate team members and conduct the team towards achieving goals. Team management models have changed significantly over the last thirty years, and leadership is now embedded in the management role.

Good team or group management skills are essential if you have team management responsibilities, or

you work with groups of clients (as opposed to working with clients solely on a one to one basis). If your group of colleagues or clients includes people from different countries or diverse cultures this becomes an intercultural competence.

Expectations and understanding of leadership and management vary across cultures. The image of a 'leader' that someone from one culture holds may be very different from the image that someone from a different culture holds. Your personal leadership style may clash with team members' expectations and needs, depending on their cultural ideas of what a leader is. Therefore, when working in an intercultural context, it is important to tailor your leadership or management style to individual team members. Similarly, if you are an effective manager or leader you will be able to communicate well with all members of your team. Therefore, it is important to adapt your communication style to meet the diverse needs of individual team or group members (see 5.3).

Finally, as an interculturally competent team or group manager you have a role in ensuring team members acknowledge and respect the values, beliefs and cultural conventions of one another. You also have a role in modelling good practice and supporting colleagues to develop their own intercultural competencies.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - intercultural team management

You demonstrate intercultural competence if you:

- apply equality of opportunity to all workers and communicate this in ways they can all engage with;
- expect team members to acknowledge and respect each other's values, beliefs and cultural conventions and to value the contributions of all team members;
- support the team by exploring common ground to achieve an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and purpose;
- develop a working culture that balances the cultural needs and expectations of all team members;
- make sure all team members are inducted into the working culture and have the skills and encouragement to continually assess their interaction with their colleagues from different countries or diverse cultures;
- use the skills, experiences and contributions of all team members to the benefit of the team when planning and carrying out work.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider your current practice in this competence. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- What do I do to ensure I set common goals and motivate the team to work towards them?
- What is my natural leadership and management style?
- Do team members have a common set of rules that we must follow to ensure that each team member respects each other's values, beliefs or cultural conventions? Have there been times when individuals have shown disrespect? What have I done in those cases?
- Do I apply equality of opportunities in my daily job? Do cultural stereotypes influence my decisions?
- Do I work to support my colleagues or clients to develop their own intercultural competencies?

The learning journey of developing intercultural team management skills may be thought of as a sequence of stages each building on the last:

- **Stage 1** - It is not necessary to adapt to new team or group members from different countries or diverse cultures. It is their responsibility to adapt to the standard ways of working.
- **Stage 2** - I recognise that there is cultural diversity amongst my team or group. I realise that if I am to be

an effective manager or leader I need to consider how this impacts on the team culture and on interaction.

- **Stage 3** - I am working to bring together a diverse group to work towards shared goals. I am working to better understand individual team or group members' requirements in terms of management.
- **Stage 4** - I consciously work to adapt my management style to best meet colleagues' or clients' needs. I actively work to unite a diverse group, and to ensure there is mutual respect amongst group members.
- **Stage 5** - Not only have I adapted my management style and united a diverse group, I am working to support team or group members to develop their own intercultural competencies.

Case Study

After working as a tutor for many years, Antonio got a new job as a team leader at a VET training centre in Madrid, managing a team of five tutors delivering vocational courses. Shortly after starting work at the training centre, Antonio realised team members did not talk to each other unless they specifically needed to address an urgent work issue. They did not share resources or ideas with one another. Team meetings were strained. Furthermore, the tutors were meant to be working together to make sure students received a coordinated service. However, Antonio received complaints from students that when they asked their tutors about other vocational courses on offer, their tutors were not providing accurate information.

Antonio invited the team members to speak to him individually. Aila and Mirza, two Muslim members of the team, met with Antonio and explained that they needed to use a prayer room throughout the day. The current arrangement to use the staff room was not working as other tutors were not happy when the room was occupied for prayer. If other tutors were already in the room, Aila and Mirza did not think it was right to ask them to leave so that they can pray. Mirza had also asked for his timetable to be changed so that he could leave earlier on Fridays which has resulted in changes in other tutors' timetables. Mirza and Aila felt that one tutor, Filipa, had been hostile towards them since this and that other tutors feel under pressure to take sides. On meeting with Filipa and the other tutors, Antonio discovered another problem within the team. These tutors were upset that when their Muslim students were having difficulties with the courses they often approached Aila and Mirza for support as opposed to their course tutors. Antonio recognised that the friction between team members was affecting tutors' job satisfaction and the quality of the service they were delivering to clients...

Look back at the five stages of developing intercultural team management skills.

- At which stage do you think Antonio is?
 - What would you do in this case?
- Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

Step 2: further information on intercultural team management

Setting goals and planning

Setting goals is a basic management duty. It also helps to create a cohesive team as it builds on similarities between team members as opposed to emphasising differences. In order to unite team members, it can be helpful to invite team members to team meetings in which goals and strategies can be discussed and agreed in partnership.

Conducting a team towards its goals

Once goals have been set, you need to plan how the team is going to achieve the set goals. This will often involve assigning different tasks and activities to different individuals and agreeing a communication strategy.

You should assign activities to the different team members on an equality of opportunity basis: according

to the qualifications or experience needed and their roles. Decisions based on cultural reasons, or other reasons relating to personal characteristics, are discriminatory. Sometimes this discriminatory practice is hidden under cultural assumptions (stereotypes) that a certain type of person would be inappropriate for a specific task or activity.

In order to further unite a team, you may find it helpful to assign tasks and activities to team members who do not usually work together, so that they can have the opportunity to get to know each other better.

Following task allocation, you need to support and guide team members to achieve their goals. This is usually achieved via four main management activities :

- telling and directing (one way communication, where you instruct the team member)
- coaching (two way communication, where you support the team member to 'by into' the task)
- participating (where you share decision making with the team member)
- delegating (where you pass responsibility to team member, and monitor this from a distance).

As a manager you may ask yourself, how do I decide which of these four management activities I should adopt with each team member? Intercultural factors may well impact on this decision. Giving advice and giving support are person oriented activities; people coming from person oriented cultures are likely to accept your efforts in these activities. But people from task oriented cultures may interpret these activities as an invasion of their way of working. There are no magic recipes: you need to find your own way of managing your team according to the needs of team members. The only way to do this is to focus on the individual needs of the team members.

'Feedback please!'

Feedback is one of the simplest and most powerful instruments that you have as a team manager. Feedback consists of giving information on someone's performance. The objective of feedback is to allow a team member to understand how s/he is performing, and to improve that performance by reflecting on actual behaviour.

¹¹ Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K. H. (1969) Management of Organizational Behavior – Utilizing Human Resources New Jersey/Prentice Hall

Feedback should always be constructive; it is not an opportunity to reprimand and lay blame on individuals. It is good practice to start by giving positive feedback. It is also advisable to focus your feedback on the other person's behaviour and actions, not their personal characteristics. Close the discussion with an action plan: what can be done to address any problems or to improve performance. Explore resources that may be needed to aid improvement (e.g. more training, coaching, time).

Feedback needs to be delivered sensitively. This does not mean that you should ignore problems but rather that you raise them with due regard for the other person's feelings. A team member's cultural background and expectations will also affect the feedback process as 'feedback' is not a universal concept. It is important that team members understand what feedback is about. In some cultures, achievements are attributed to the team, not the individual; people coming from those cultures may not understand individual rewards or individual positive feedback. In other cultures, errors in work are very serious issues (and can even result in social punishment) and people may not accept that they have made a mistake easily. In such cases, a defensive reaction is predictable and therefore any negative feedback needs to be well handled.

Case study continuing

...Antonio arranged a team meeting to address the issues. He explained that the friction between the team was affecting the quality of the service, and that he expected team members to show respect to one another. He asked the team for ideas about how to address the problems. Aila suggested that one of the meeting rooms, which was rarely used, could be converted to a prayer and quiet reflection room. This would not disrupt the use of the staff room. Antonio agreed this was a good idea. He also asked that all tutors notify him of any requirements before the next term's timetables are set, to avoid disruptions once timetables are in place.

Filipa explained that she and other tutors were unhappy when Muslim students who were having difficulties approached Aila and Mirza, as they did not let the course tutors know about this or include them in the process. After some group discussion, it was agreed that in the future, when students approached Aila and Mirza with problems, they would support the student to discuss these issues directly with the course tutor.

Antonio also recognised that the team members needed to be better informed about each others' courses, in order to share accurate information with students. He asked two of the tutors who did not usually work together to take on this task. Gathering this information increased communication between the tutors, and sharing it with all team members ensured that they were better informed about each others' courses.

As a result of the group discussions and team work, relationships between team members were improving. Antonio spoke to some of the students who had reported problems to him in the past and they confirmed that they were receiving a better service.

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this section, think again and discuss with your colleagues your norms and values regarding intercultural team management. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections. You may wish to consider your practices in relation to:

- How do I work to set common goals amongst my team?
- How do I assign tasks and activities amongst team members? Do I do so in a fair way?
- Do I pay attention to the diverse cultural backgrounds of my colleagues or clients, and their resulting diverse management needs? Do I adapt my management style to meet these needs?
- Can I identify any areas for improvement amongst my colleagues in terms of intercultural competencies? What can I do to support my colleagues to develop these skills?

Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in intercultural team management. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 2, to help you develop your team management skills. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

The following hints and tips may help you to enhance your intercultural team management skills.

- Involve the team in setting goals.
- Clarify a set of internal rules that promote respect for each other's cultures, values, beliefs and social rules.

- A good manager is a different manager with each member of the team. Therefore it is important to adapt your personal leadership and management style to team members' needs.
- Feedback can be two way. Actively seek feedback on your leadership and management style from team members.

5.7 Change management

Summary

Increasing diversity can result in the need for you to make changes to your working practices and policies. This section encourages you to assess and identify whether any change is needed in your own working practices, or those of your organisation. It then discusses the importance of planning and implementing change, and guiding and supporting colleagues or clients through the change.

This section will be especially useful if you are in a management role, as you will have more responsibility for implementing and managing change. However, it will also be useful for you even if you do not have management responsibilities, as you may need to manage change in your own working practices, or you may have a role in contributing to organisational change.

Introduction

We can define change management as the ability to create change when needed, and to manage the process from the initial stages of identifying the need for change through to the end of the process, when the changes have been fully implemented.

Globalisation and increased geographical mobility have resulted in increased diversity. Staff teams and groups of clients are likely to be diverse in many ways, including in terms of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. But we cannot assume that increased diversity in the composition of staff or clients in our organisation has had a direct impact on the organisation's policies, practices and culture. Indeed, policies, practices and cultures that have not changed in response to increasing diversity may have become discriminatory.

Change management begins with stepping back and looking objectively at your organisation's (or your own) ways of working to identify if they need to be changed in order to improve performance, respond to diversity and guard against discrimination. The next stage is planning the change; however, good planning is not enough to implement change effectively. For example, to design a diversity policy is not enough: people continue acting according to well known rules and routines. It is crucial to implement change effectively and to convert new ways of working into familiar routines

Change management has five main elements:

1. identify a need for change
2. design and plan changes
3. deal with the reactions to change (both positive and negative)
4. support and guide people during the change process
5. consolidate change.

Performance indicators of intercultural competence - change management

You demonstrate intercultural competence if you:

- identify and remove barriers that may stop people from different countries or diverse cultures working or

learning effectively;

- induct, train and support people from different countries or diverse cultures to help them adapt and maximise their learning, productivity, effectiveness and understanding;
- manage the expectations and perceptions of existing staff and clients and arrange for any necessary training or ongoing support to achieve the effective recruitment and inclusion of employees and clients from diverse cultural backgrounds;
- deal with things that go wrong that are caused by different cultural expectations, miscommunication, misunderstanding or racial tension and minimise their impact on ongoing service delivery, getting support when you need it.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider your current practice in this competence. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- Do I review my working practices to find out what should be changed in order to respond to increasing diversity?
- In my organisation, do I identify and try to change habits, working routines or rules that are not effective, or furthermore amount to discriminatory practices?
- How do I support people through the change process?

The learning journey of change management may be thought of as a sequence of stages each building on the last:

- **Stage 1** - I don't like change and I prefer to preserve the given status quo. I do not see any need for change.
- **Stage 2** - Perhaps I don't like change because I like doing things the way I always have. But I understand the need to consider new ways of working to respond to increasing diversity among my clients or colleagues.
- **Stage 3** - I have identified policies, practices or internal rules that may be discriminatory. I have planned how to change these, and started to implement this change.
- **Stage 4** - I am managing the change process. I am supporting colleagues through the change process, especially those who are fearful or resistant.
- **Stage 5** - The change is fully implemented and has enhanced intercultural working.

Case study

Salim is an engineer in a manufacturing company, based in Brussels. 30% of the workers of the company come from different countries, and the majority are from Pakistan and Turkey. The company has designed a new internal diversity policy and has run a campaign on valuing diversity.

In the last six months Salim has applied for three different management positions, but was not selected. The positions have been given to three European engineers.

Salim was upset about not being promoted to the new positions and arranged a meeting with his manager, Alain. He told Alain that he thought that the main reason he was not successful was that he is Pakistani, and the top managers prefer to have European workers in management positions. Alain replied that this was not the case, and that a new internal diversity policy had been successfully implemented three months ago. Salim then asked how many new managers are from non-European countries. Alain did not know the exact answer but he promised he would explore the issue...

Look back at the five stages of developing change management skills.

- In which stage do you think Alain is?
 - What would you do in this case if you were Alain?
 - What might be the reasons for Salim not being successful?
- Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

i Step 2: further information on change management

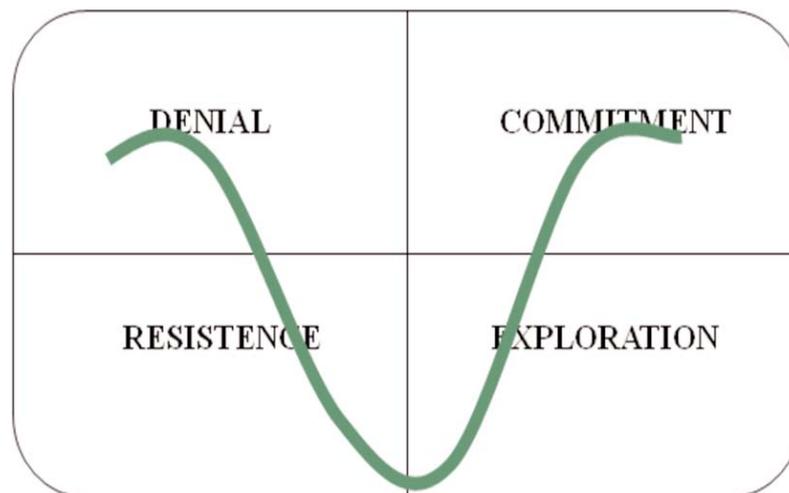
To implement a change process is much more difficult than planning it, and it requires a suitable strategy. There are two key areas that you need to address to manage change effectively:

- the organisational dimension, i.e. implementing systems and processes, and
- the personal dimension, i.e. supporting people during the change process.

The four stages of change model may help you when supporting people during the change process. It suggests people go through four main phases when faced with change: denial, resistance, exploration, commitment (see figure 3 on page 49).

¹² This model was proposed in Scott, C. and Jaffe, D. (1988) 'Survive and Thrive in Times of Change' in Training and Development Journal April, pp. 25-7.

Figure 3: The four stages of change



Denial

The first reaction may be the denial of a need for change, denying even the existence of reasons for change. Withdrawal, apathy and focussing on the past, are possible behaviours in this phase. To help people move forward, it is important for you to present people with facts, be clear and unequivocal: change will happen. It is also important for you to explain what will happen and why, and the benefits of change.

Resistance

After denial, resistance may follow. It is important that you pay close attention to people in this phase, and offer support. Anxiety, insecurity, a sense of failure, anger and passive or aggressive behaviours are com-

mon reactions in this phase. Often the emotion underlying this is fear. Fear is a primary reaction to risk or threat, be it real or perceived. Usually people do not fear change itself, but the possible consequences of that change.

As primary reaction, fear is an automatic response, and difficult to manage. Saying 'do not be afraid' is not helpful because fear is not voluntary. People are afraid and cannot decide not to be afraid. But they can decide to do something despite the fear it causes.

Exploration

The third stage is the exploration phase, where individuals begin to accept and think in more detail about the change. They may present new ideas, but also potentially a lack of energy or coherence, and feelings of confusion.

To support people through this phase, you should focus on key priorities, set small goals, and encourage your team or clients to get results.

Commitment

Finally, it is possible to reach the stage of commitment. This is where people have accepted the need for change and implemented new working methods.

Of course, some people respond well to change. You should ensure you take their needs into account and harness their enthusiasm to support change.

Tolerate the error

Doing things in new and different ways does mean it is likely some mistakes will be made. If you are able to tolerating the error you are accepting of mistakes and use them as learning opportunities. An organisational culture that tolerates error will tend to reveal itself through some of the following:

- the systematic use of positive and constructive feedback in all directions;
- an emphasis on learning;
- encouragement of critical thinking and critical reflection;
- encouragement of new ideas and innovation;
- investment in training; and
- presenting problems and 'failures' as an opportunity for improvement, and therefore as a challenge.

Case study continuing

...After his conversation with Salim, Alain met with the human resources manager, Lisa. Lisa had been responsible for implementing the diversity policy.

Alain and Lisa identified that the selection and recruitment department was the department with overall responsibility for promotions. The professionals in that department were highly qualified and were committed to implementing the new diversity policy. But some staff in that department were also suspicious of the validity of qualifications of workers from non-European countries. As the technical side of the work was very important, if there were candidates from non-European countries and candidates from Europe, they selected the 'less risky' European candidates.

Lisa carried out a review of recruitment practices against the diversity policy. She held meetings with the selection and recruitment department, and also senior managers. Senior managers were confident about

assessing the skills and qualifications of their staff, including engineers, regardless of where they had achieved the qualifications. They knew their engineers, and could guarantee that their skills and qualifications were valid from a technical point of view.

Lisa suggested that application and interview panels for promotions should always include both recruiters and senior managers. This would ensure senior managers were able to assess technical skills. This was agreed by the director and implemented.

Six months later, another management position became available. Salim applied and, because the new procedures ensured his skills were assessed fairly, he got the job. Alain and Lisa realised that changes in policies are not enough to bring about real changes.

Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this section, think again and discuss with your colleagues what your norms and values are about change management. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections. You may wish to ask yourself:

- How do I provide information to my team and clients about the change I want to implement?
- How do I deal with resistance to change?
- How do I react to new ideas and new ways of working?
- How do I promote a culture that tolerates error and uses it to learn from?

Step 4: Action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in identifying the need for and implementing change. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 2, to help you develop your change management skills. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

The following hints and tips may help you to enhance your change management skills.

- Plan change carefully and thoroughly and carry out research to support you in this.
- Take into account the possible barriers and resistance to change.
- Work with your team and clients throughout the change process and all its phases, using support, advice and feedback.
- Promote an organisational culture in which mistakes and errors are accepted, as a basis for learning.

5.8 Customer focus

Summary

This section explores the importance of valuing clients as customers, and providing a service that meets their needs. It focuses on two aspects of customer focus:

- designing and providing a service to meet clients needs; and
- assessing customer satisfaction during and after service delivery to investigate how well the service met clients' needs.

While the rest of this guide has used the term 'client' to describe learners, trainees, service users, etc. in this section we sometimes use the term 'customer' as it denotes a particular relationship relevant to this section.

Introduction

According to the ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation), a service is a type of product. Service is the result of an activity or interaction between a service provider and a customer. It is a type of economic activity that is intangible (i.e. it is not stored and does not result in ownership). A service is consumed at the point of sale. Services are one of the two key components of economics, the other being goods. Examples of services include the transfer of goods, such as the postal service delivering mail, and the use of expertise or experience, such as a doctor carrying out a diagnosis, a teacher teaching a class.

In situations where the customer is from a different country or culture, as a service provider you should take this into account when providing your service. Although all clients should receive the same quality of service, it is not effective to provide an identical type of service for everyone, which takes no account of individuals' backgrounds, values, beliefs and cultural conventions. To better understand a customer's background and values, at the start of the service delivery you should speak to customers about their circumstances, and their needs and expectations of the service.

Your ability to plan and deliver services effectively to people from different countries and diverse cultures will be dependent on other intercultural competencies explored in this guide, especially:

- communication (section 5.3) – making sure you communicate in ways that suit customers from different countries and diverse cultures;
- flexibility (section 5.4) – being able to adapt your service to meet the varying needs of customers;
- building relationships with other organisations (section 5.5) – being able to better understand your customers and signpost them towards other organisation to ensure holistic support;
- change management – being able to identify the need for change arising from diversity, and to implement this successfully.

Improving your customer focus will increase the quality of the service provided; this means that your organisation will get better results.

¹³ ISO (undated) Quality Management Systems - Fundamentals and vocabulary at http://www.iso.org/iso/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=42180

Performance indicators of intercultural competence – customer focus

You demonstrate intercultural competence if you:

- respect and understand clients' values, beliefs and cultural conventions and value them as customers;
- identify any language skills needed and where language support provision can be sourced most effectively;
- continually assess your interaction with clients from different countries or diverse cultures and make sure you have the skills to do so;
- respond flexibly and positively and solve problems so that the service meets the needs of clients from different countries and diverse cultures;
- maintain the same high standard of service for each client;
- check that clients are satisfied with the service and resolve differences between their needs and the service offered so that it attracts and does not discriminate against the people you are providing services for;
- deal with things that go wrong that are caused by different cultural expectations, miscommunication, misunderstanding or racial tension and minimise their impact on ongoing service delivery, getting support when you need it.

Step 1: reflect on your current practice

Before reading on, take some time to consider your current practice in providing services to people from different countries and diverse cultures. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections. As a VET practitioner ask yourself:

- To what extent do I see myself as providing a service?
- To what extent do I think of my clients, learners, service users, etc. as 'customers'?
- How do I tailor my service to meet diverse customer needs?
- How do I maintain a high standard of service for all of my customers, regardless of their cultural backgrounds?

The learning journey of developing customer focus skills may be thought of as a sequence of stages each building on the last:

- **Stage 1** - The service we offer is suitable for all people regardless of their backgrounds, values, beliefs and cultural conventions. If they choose not to take up the service, or leave part way through, that is not my problem.
- **Stage 2** - I have the impression that values, beliefs and cultural conventions influence people's experience of my service. But I don't know why people think my service is not right for them.
- **Stage 3** - I have done some research and I am starting to understand why some people think my service is not right for them.
- **Stage 4** - I have adjusted my service delivery to better meet the needs of diverse groups of customers. I have started to seek feedback from customers.
- **Stage 5** - I think of my clients as customers. I am continually aware of the need to consider customers' background, values, beliefs and cultural conventions, and tailor my service accordingly. I have ongoing systems for seeking customer feedback, and acting on this.

Case study

Aitor works as a training coordinator at a vocational training school in the Basque Country, Spain. The school works with clients to develop their skills in working with machinery, to meet local industry needs.

Until recently, the majority of trainees were from the Basque Country. However, it became apparent that more workers were needed to meet local industry needs. Aitor realised that migrant people were a potential labour source. He contacted the Red Cross who were working with migrants in order to recruit migrant clients who were seeking training for work. At first, Aitor and the teachers did not change the way of delivering the training to new migrant clients. However, after starting the training programme, gradually migrant clients started to drop out. The programme ended with 50% of the original migrant clients completing the training. As a result there were not enough trained workers to meet employers' needs...

Look back at the five stages.

- At which stage do you think Aitor is?
- If you were Aitor, what would you do?
- What might be the reasons for the high dropout rate amongst migrant clients?
- How do you think the situation will develop?

Use appendix 1 to record your reflections.

Step 2: Further information on customer focus

While planning and delivering a service to meet diverse customer needs is important, it is also important for you to reflect on the service delivery during and afterwards by measuring customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction relates to how much the customer perceives that you, as a provider, have met their needs. The measurement of customer satisfaction involves 5 steps:

- 1. Determine customer satisfaction criteria.** These will be different for each organisation and type of service.
- 2. Select the methods for gathering customer satisfaction data.** There are different direct and indirect measures of customer satisfaction. Indirect measures can include trends in complaints, client dropout rates or rates of referrals from other organisations. Direct measures include data from surveys or interviews.
- 3. Collect customer satisfaction data, using methods decided in step 2.** You may find it useful to do this both during the service delivery (such as by carrying out telephone interviews with a sample of current customers).
- 4. Analyse and report on customer satisfaction data.** This involves analysing and interpreting the data. If you work with distinct groups, such as migrant people and native people, you may find it useful to see if the results are different for each group.
- 5. Review customer satisfaction.** You should compare the customer satisfaction data with other relevant business results. For example, if the organisation's customer satisfaction measures show a positive trend, it should typically also be reflected in increased demand or increased repeat custom.

Case study continuing

...The vocational training school contacted all the migrants who had left the training programme and asked why they had left. Many clients gave the same answer: 'when I started the training programme I was told that I was going to get a job, but once I saw the kind of job the training would lead to, I decided it was not the right job for me'.

As a result Aitor and his colleagues reviewed the process of recruiting clients and starting the training programme. They realised that migrant clients may not be as familiar with the local industry, and the type of jobs the training would lead to, as local clients would be. When the school organised the second training programme, they hired a bus and took the potential migrant clients to a factory. In the factory, the migrants were able to see what kind of job they were likely to get after finishing the training and they had the chance to ask questions of factory employees. After the factory visit, Aitor met with the migrant group and explained that now they had some knowledge of the job that the training programme would lead to, those who were interested in this work should enrol on the training programme, and those who were not should leave their place to someone who is interested.

Following this, the proportion of clients leaving the training programmes reduced drastically. The school, with this approach, focussed on delivering a service that addressed clients' needs and interests - by providing information about the job, salary, working conditions, etc. - which it previously had not...

? Step 3: Reflect again on your current practice

In light of what you have read so far in this section, think again and discuss with your colleagues what else could be done to improve your customer focus competence. Use appendix 1 to record your reflections. Consider the following:

- From my interactions with clients, have I received any formal feedback on customer satisfaction? Have satisfaction levels seemed different for different groups?
- Have I introduced any activities for gaining customer satisfaction feedback? If so, are these sufficient? If I have not introduced any activities, how can I go about beginning this process?

Case study continuing

...The school now has plans to include these 'fact finding trips' before the start of all training programmes. They also plan to organise for potential clients to visit the school before enrolling on training programmes, so they can review the facilities, equipment and training on offer.

In addition, Aitor developed a website to address issues of multiculturalism and diversity (see figure 4 below). This was set up to improve customer satisfaction. It has specific information for migrants, for other schools and for the companies that will hire clients from the school in the future ¹⁴.

Figure 4: IMH website



¹⁴ This case study is based on real life activities at IMH, one of the partners on the ILCC project. Visit the following address to view the multicultural website: <http://www.inmigramek.com/>

! Step 4: action planning and taking action

Being aware that you need to improve your skills or practice is one of the most important steps in becoming 'interculturally competent'. Consider what you can now do to develop your competence in intercultural customer focus. What can you do differently and how? Create an action plan, using appendix 2, to help you develop your service design and delivery. Consider whether you need any specific information, experience, resources and/or support.

You may want to use some of these hints and tips in your action plan.

- When working with clients from different countries, find out how different jobs are regarded in other countries and compare this to your locality.
- Provide information about your service and local industry needs. Consider different ways of doing this such as written information in different languages, visual information and/or visits to workplaces.
- Create a 'suggestion box' for clients to suggest how to improve services.

6. Useful resources, organisations and links

English Language resources – websites and organisations

Association for Multicultural Counselling and Development
www.amcdaca.org/amcd/whatisamcd.cfm

Center for Creative
Leadership www.ccl.org

Change Management Learning Center
www.change-management.com

CILT (the (UK) National Centre for Languages)
www.cilt.org.uk

Comnet (Competencies for Networking)
www.networks-in-education.eu/index.php

European Diversity: Research and Consulting
www.european-diversity.com/

European Federation for Intercultural Learning
www.efil.afs.org/

European Intercultural Workplace: Enhancing intercultural dialogue www.immi.se/eiw/index.html (available in a range of languages)

For Diversity. Against Discrimination; European Commission Justice
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fdad/cms/stopdiscrimination/about.html?langid=en

Health for Asylum seekers and Refugees Portal (HARP)
www.harpweb.org.uk/

Intercultural Competence Assessment (INCA) project
<http://www.incaproject.org/> (also available in German and Czech languages)

Intercultural Competence for Professional Mobility
<http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/lcopromo/results/>

Intercultural Competence Training for Trainers and Advisers in the field of Professional Orientation: Leonardo da Vinci funded project 2006 – 2008
www.arzinai.it/intcomp/

International Association of Cross Cultural Competence
www.wu.ac.at/iaccm

International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) Quality Management Systems – Requirements
http://www.iso.org/iso/catalogue_detail?csnumber=46486 (available in a range of languages)

INTERtool project Virtual Intercultural Team Tool
www.intertool.ro/index.php

Journal of Intercultural Communication
www.immi.se/intercultural/

Kwintessential
www.kwintessential.co.uk (available in a range of languages)

Sussex Interpreting Service
<http://www.sussexinterpreting.org.uk/guidelines.asp>

Uniting Europe Through Culture (UNEC) project
www.unece.eu.com

weReurope project
www.wereurope.eu

English Language resources – books and other resources

Aguilar, L. (2006) Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts: Communicating respectfully in a diverse world Texas: The Walk The Talk Company

Aldridge, F., Gray, R., McLoughlin, A., Sterland, L., Waddington, S., and Webb, M. (2005) Skills Audits for Asylum Seekers and Refugees: A practitioners' manual Leicester: NIACE

CILT The National Centre for Languages (2008) National Occupational Standards for Intercultural Working London: CILT

Davis, N. and Cho, M. O. (2005) 'Intercultural competence for future leaders of educational technology and its evaluation' in Interactive Educational Multimedia No. 10, pp.1-22
www.raco.cat/index.php/iem/article/viewFile/204569/273103

Deal, J. And Prince, D. (2007) Developing Cultural Adaptability: How to work across differences Center for Creative Leadership

Elashmawi, F. (2001) Competing Globally: Mastering multicultural management and negotiations Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann

Enfield Council, Institute for Sustainable Technologies, Prenai Public Library and TUV SUD Akademie GmbH (1987) Intercultural Toolkit for Adult Educators Poland: The Publishing House of the Institute for Sustainable Technologies - National Research Institute

Friedman, V. and Antal, A. (2005) 'Negotiating Reality: A theory of action approach to intercultural competence' in Management Learning Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 69-86 Sage Publications

Gurvis, J. And Calarco, A. (2007) Adaptability: Responding effectively to change Center for Creative Leadership

Gray, R., Sterland, L., and Aldridge, F. (2007) *Advising for Adaptation: A guide to personal adviser-mediated IAG, careers and skills adaptation support for migrants and refugees* Leicester: NIACE

Hallen, P. (2006) *Service Orientation: Winning strategies and best practices* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Halverson, C. and Tirmizi, S. (2008) *Effective Multicultural Teams: Theory and practice* New York: Springer

Khoshafian, S. (2006) *Service Oriented Enterprise* Boca Raton/London: Auerbach

Kim, Y. Y. (2000) *Becoming Intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and Cross-cultural adaptation* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications

Kotter, J. (1996) *Leading Change* Boston: Harvard Business School Press

Luecke, R. (2003) *Managing Change and Transition* Boston: Harvard Business School Press

Nelson, T. (2009) *Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination* New York/East Sussex: Taylor and Francis

Network Intercultural Learning in Europe (NILE) (2008) *Implementing Intercultural Learning Activities: A methodological guide*

http://www.ceji.org/newsletter/docs/NILE_Methodolguide_final.pdf

NIACE (2010) *Advising Third-country Nationals* Leicester: NIACE

http://www.interculturexpress.at/sites/IMPACT_02_Advising.pdf

Papadopoulos, I., Tilki, M. and Taylor, G. (1998) *Trans-cultural Care: A guide for health professionals* Wiltshire: Quay Books

Phelan, M. and Parkman, S. (1995) 'How To Do It: Work with an Interpreter' in *British Medical Journal* 311:555-557

<http://www.bmj.com/content/311/7004/555.full>

Temple, B. And Moran, R. (eds) (2006) *Doing Research with Refugees: Issues and Guidelines* Bristol: The Policy Press

Wang, M. And Sun, Z. (2009) *Handbook of Research on Complex Dynamic Process Management: Techniques for Adaptability in Turbulent Environments* Hershey, Pennsylvania: IGI Global

German language resources – websites and organisations

Kulturforum Bertelsmann Stiftung

<http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/cps/rde/xchg/SID-CFA72E8C-1846CE84/bst/hs.xsl/11657.htm>

Ungleich Besser: Das Umfassende Informationsportal

www.ungleich-besser.de/

German language resources - books and other resources

- Gaitanides, S. (1995) Interkulturelle Öffnung der sozialen Dienste in Hinz-Rommel, Wolfgang/ Barwig, Klaus (Hg.), Interkulturelle Öffnung sozialer Dienste, Lambertus Freiburg 1995, S. 65-83
- Gaitanides, S. (1997) Verstehen, Verständigung, Vertrautheit. Chancen und Schwierigkeiten der Kommunikation im Berufsalltag mit MigrantInnen unter dem Aspekt von sprachlicher/ kultureller Vertrautheit, sozialmagazin, 1/1997, S. 52-56
- Gaitanides, S. (2006) Interkulturelle Öffnung der sozialen Dienste in Otto, Hans-Uwe/ Schödter, Mark (Hg.) Soziale Arbeit in der Migrationsgesellschaft, Sonderheft 8 der "neuen praxis" 2006, S. 222-233
- Gaitanides, S. (2008) Interkulturelle Teamentwicklung - Beobachtungen in der Praxis in Auernheimer (Hg.) Interkulturelle Kompetenz und pädagogische Professionalität (2. aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage), Wiesbaden, S. 153-172
- Handschuck, S. And Klawe, W. (2004) Interkulturelle Verständigung in der sozialen Arbeit. Ein Erfahrungs-, Lern- und Übungsprogramm zum Erwerb interkultureller Kompetenz., Juventa Verlag
- Köppel, P. and Sandner, D. (2008) Synergy by Diversity. Real Life Examples of Cultural Diversity in Corporations Bertelsmann Stiftung, 1 Auflage
- Lüthi, E. and Oberpriller, H. (2009) Teamentwicklung mit Diversity Management: Methoden-Übungen und Tools Haupt Verlag
- PROINNO Gruppe: Management internationaler Projekte – Arbeitsbuch Hrsg. Kooperationsstelle Hamburg und Krewer Consult GmbH, Saarbrücken. (also available in English and French languages)
- Stiftung, B. and Cariplo, F (2008) Interkulturelle Kompetenz – Schlüsselkompetenz des 21. Jahrhunderts Thesenpapier der Bertelsmann Stiftung auf Basis der Interkulturellen-Kompetenz-Modelle von Dr. Darla K. Deardorff
- Stuber, M. (2009) Diversity - Das Potenzial-Prinzip Personalwirtschaft Buch. 2. Auflage
- Weißbach, B. And Kipp, A. (2004) Managing Diversity. Konzepte – Fälle – Tools. Ein Trainings-Handbuch, IUK Institut GmbH und Gender Akademie NRW e.V.. Dortmund

Slovenian language resources

- Brataniæ, M. (1990) Mikropedagogija Interakcijsko-komunikacijski aspekt odgoja, Školska knjiga, Zagreb
- Šeèerov. N., Mihaliè, Z. (2001) Uèiteljeva priprava na pouk ZRSŠ, Ljubljana
- Vreèar, N. (2009) Medkulturne kompetence v izobraž evanju odraslih Andragoški center Republike slovenije, Ljubljana
- Zalokar Divjak, Z. (1998) Vzgoja JE Ni vzgoja, Educy, Ljubljana

Appendix 1: Template for self reflection

Name:	
Date:	
Intercultural competence:	
Step 1 reflect on current practice	Note your responses to the questions here:
Look at the five stages model – what stage are you currently at?	
Comments on case study and answer to case study questions	Note your comments on the case study and responses to the questions here:
Step 3 reflect again on current practice	Note your responses to the questions here:
Any other notes or reflections from this section	
Performance indicators	Note the indicators of the competence that you perform reasonably well here:

Appendix 2: Template for action plan

Name:			
Date:			
Intercultural competence:			
In the grid below, write down the aspects of the competence, or the performance indicators, that you have identified you need to develop. Create a plan for how you are going to develop these: record the steps you will need to go through to develop these. Make a note of the support or resources you might need. Use the final column to record reflections as you develop.			
Aspect / performance indicator	Actions regarding how I am going to develop this	Support or resources I might need	Notes and self reflection

Aspect / performance indicator	Actions regarding how I am going to develop this	Support or resources I might need	Notes and self reflection

Appendix 3: The ILCC project

The project partners

The guide has been created as part of a Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation funded project involving seven organisations from five European Union (EU) countries:

1. AEDIPE (National Association of HR and Development Managers), Spain (leading partner) (<http://www.aedipe.es>)
2. beramí (an NGO specialising in the integration of migrant workers with a special focus on women), Germany (www.berami.de)
3. DVV International (the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association), Germany (www.dvv-international.org)
4. The Institute of Business Education of the Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia, Slovenia (www.cpu.si)
5. IMH (Machine Tools Institute; VET Centre), Basque Country, Spain (www.imh.es)
6. Europartners 2000 (specialising in training and education), Bulgaria (www.europartners2000.org)
7. NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education), England and Wales (www.niace.org.uk)

The project phases

The ILCC project has comprised four main phases:

- 1) The undertaking of a gaps and needs analysis. Partners were required to focus on their own country and on a specific industrial sector and to:
 - explore the experiences of groups of people from different countries and diverse cultures within the broader migration context;
 - illustrate the typical migrant journey to the labour market;
 - identify and analyse the key VET practitioner roles and their skill requirements;
 - identify the current situation regarding intercultural learning and existing best practice; and
 - identify existing models of intercultural learning that can be adapted for the VET sector.
- 2) The development of a draft guide for VET practitioners to support you to develop intercultural competencies. This has been developed using a range of existing resources, findings from the gaps and needs analysis described above, and partners' experience and knowledge.
- 3) The testing of the draft guide with VET practitioners and intercultural competencies experts. This has been influential in the development of the final guide.
- 4) The dissemination of the final guide.

Findings from the gaps and needs analysis

The following conclusions have been drawn from the partners' analyses of the experiences of people from different countries or diverse cultures attempting to access VET and the labour market in their own countries:

1. The background situations of people from different countries and diverse cultures vary considerably. For example, migrants' situations are very different from the situations of people from settled ethnic minority communities. Different groups of people from different countries and diverse cultures are subject to varying legal restrictions in accessing learning and employment.

2. The qualification levels of migrant people in the countries analysed vary from very low to high qualification levels, but there are some common findings:
 - a. Qualifications from other countries often go unrecognised
 - b. Migrant workers usually accept jobs below their qualification levels.
 - c. Migrant workers usually get low paid jobs with poorer working conditions in comparison with other workers.
 - d. The unemployment rate is often higher in the migrant population than in the local population.

3. The barriers that people from different countries and diverse cultures may face when entering the labour market are very complex and diverse, but there are two main types:
 - a. Structural barriers, regarding the labour and training market organisation, and restrictive European and national legislation. One of the main problems is the formal and practical recognition of qualifications, skills and experience. This is not a new challenge, but one that still needs addressing.
 - b. Subjective barriers, regarding the prejudices and stereotypes of people that interact with people from different countries and diverse cultures during their training and integration into the labour market.

4. If one of the key barriers to integration is associated with the attitudes of practitioners who interact with people from different countries and diverse cultures, and their resulting skills, knowledge and behaviour, then it is important to identify these key practitioners, in order to address this. The gap and needs analysis has resulted in the identification of three main practitioner roles (see section 2).

5. The VET practitioners identified usually do not usually receive any specific training that enables them to support integration and guard more effectively against discrimination. As a result of this analysis, ILCC project partners have designed a framework of intercultural competencies for these practitioners (see section 3), and have applied it to the three main roles identified.

6. When companies or organisations put specific and positive policies into place to combat stereotyping or prejudices, immediate results are obtained in terms of equal opportunities and genuine integration.

Appendix 4: Models of adult learning and developing intercultural competencies

This appendix describes the models of adult learning and developing intercultural competencies that have been influential in this guide. The Network Intercultural Learning in Europe (NILE) describes how important ongoing activity and reflection are for the development of intercultural competencies: ‘intercultural learning denotes a concept of how people with different backgrounds and from different cultures, can be challenged, develop more flexible attitudes, build bridges in spite of differences and live together peacefully. This dynamic social process refers to an individual active process of non-stop exchange and acquiring knowledge, attitudes, or behaviour, evolving from the interaction of different cultures’. The models set out in this appendix illustrate this process of interaction, experience and reflection in learning and development.

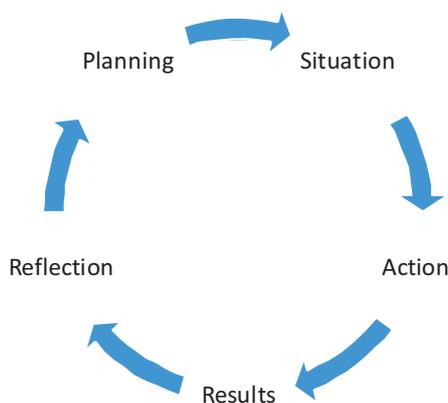
The adult learning cycle model

The adult learning cycle model is based on the theory of experiential learning . The process of learning (including developing intercultural competencies), as demonstrated in figure 5 below, is cyclical, highlighting the need for ongoing experience, reflection and development. All individuals have different starting points in the learning process, but your ability to reflect on skills, knowledge and overall level of competence is the key to progression.

¹⁵ Network Intercultural Learning in Europe (NILE) (2008) Implementing Intercultural Learning Activities: A methodological guide http://www.ceji.org/newsletter/docs/NILE_Methodolguide_final.pdf p. 11-12

¹⁶ Kolb developed a theory of experiential learning that gives a model for developing competences. See Kolb D. (1984) Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Figure 5: The adult learning cycle



The model is based on the premise that when facing a given situation, you will act in a certain way. These actions will have an impact on the results of the situation; that is how successful or unsuccessful the action has been. This can be used as a learning experience only if you then reflect on the actions: what has worked well and what has not? How can the result be improved in the future? This reflection enables you to plan how to do something differently in future situations: the only way to achieve different results is to employ different actions.

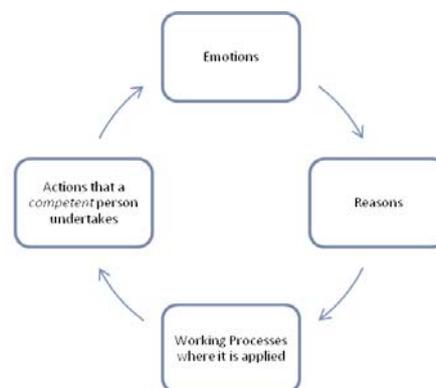
Knowledge and information also form a key part of the learning process and will have a big impact on your understanding and behaviour. Often behaviours result from ignorance. Therefore, access to information, and learning about good practice from others, enhance the reflection and planning stages.

The ERPA model (Emotions, Reasons, Processes, Actions)

The Iceberg model (see on page 6 in section 4) and various intercultural learning models have been used by the ILCC project partners to create a new model, Emotions, Reasons, Processes, Actions (ERPA), that is specific to the eight intercultural competencies framework, and the target group (VET practitioners). See figure 6 below for the ERPA model.

¹⁷ Such as Papadopoulos, I., Tilki, M. and Taylor, G. (1998) *Transcultural Care: A guide for Health Care Professionals* Wilts: Quay Books. Taken from IENE Project: <http://www.ieneproject.eu/download/Outputs/intercultural%20model.pdf>

Figure 6: The ERPA model



In this model, four different elements interact with one another to influence the development of intercultural competencies.

- **Emotions:** emotions (stereotypes, beliefs, self-perceptions, motivations, and also fears and insecurities) influence the development of a competence. That is why within the guide there are some questions to you about beliefs and emotions.
- **Reasons:** emotions are an important element of a learning process, but reasons, concepts, knowledge and information are also important. Therefore this guide also includes information to aid the development of your intercultural competencies.
- **Processes:** in practice, the competencies are applied in specific working processes – for example, during an interview, during a training session or during an advice session. That is why you are asked to assess your current practice within the guide.
- **Actions:** learning happens when your new behaviours are put in place. Therefore, this guide has included a focus on action planning.

The four stages of learning model

The four stages of learning model, illustrated in figure 7 on page 52, sets out the learning process for developing intercultural competencies from the initial stage of 'unconscious incompetence' to desired end stage of 'unconscious competence'.

1. **Unconscious incompetence:** if you are in this stage you are unaware of your lack of competence in a specific skill. This can be caused by a lack of knowledge, a lack of opportunities to practice the competence, or beliefs that the competence is not important. You may inaccurately believe that you are competent. Lack of motivation and emotions such as a fear may prevent you from moving on from this stage.
2. **Conscious incompetence:** if you are in this stage you are aware that you need to improve your skills. This is a basic step towards effective learning, as effective learning is voluntary and undertaken on

a conscious basis. If you are in this stage you will need support and guidance (ideas, knowledge, techniques and opportunities to practice new skills) to develop your competence.

3. Conscious competence: if you are in this stage you are developing your skills in a conscious way. You will pay attention to the fine details of situations, tasks and your behaviour and will actively reflect on your practice.

4. Unconscious competence: if you are in this stage you do not need to concentrate or make conscious efforts to perform a particular skill as you are proficient in this. This may be because the skill is a 'natural' ability that you have not consciously developed, or because it has become 'natural' after the learning process (through stages 1, 2 and 3).

¹⁸ The origins of this model are not entirely clear. It is frequently attributed to Noel Burch, US Gordon Training International, who is thought to have developed it in the 1970s. It has also been attributed to Abraham Maslow.

Figure 7 : The four stages of learning model

