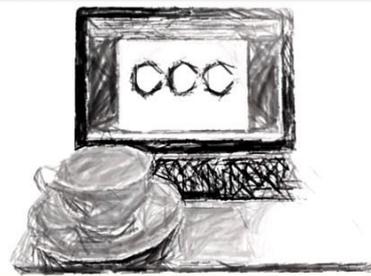




SIETAREUROPA

Discover Learn Share



Please save the date for our upcoming CCC Breaks, all dates are online [here](#).

CCC-Break 1: 25.06.2018. Burning Question: What are useful tools/attitudes for a facilitator/trainer to deal with different hierarchic levels inside an intercultural training group?

After a few technical adjustments, the first CCC-Break started with 11 participants, facilitated by Barbara Covarrubias Venegas. Anna Royon-Weigelt was the contributor and described a few situations where she was confronted with strong hierarchies in groups and where she found it challenging to address them at the proper level; how do you work with and in a group where leadership culture is rather autocratic and the readiness to question and reflect issues like hierarchy, power and leadership roles rather low? Anna was concerned about finding the right depth and finding out how to bring transparency into a topic that impacts communication and work of the group without leaving the group alone with too many open questions, uncertainty and additional fears at the end of the training event. Experiencing these situations both in formal hierarchies as well as informal ones (e.g. implicit seniority rule in groups) she was interested in the experience and strategies of other trainers and facilitators in similar situations.

Participants shared similar experiences with clients in different settings (companies, universities...). Clarifying the contract from the very beginning and asking in depth was addressed as a fundamental step. But sometimes issues are first unspoken, even within the group, and they appear only later (hidden agendas, for example, when a team is unsatisfied with their boss). Then facilitators must find resources in themselves to react to the situation in an appropriate way. Even in countries that have a low power distance like Sweden, the topic of hierarchy may be a taboo and therefore be linked rather with moral values than with functional considerations. Depending on the culture, managers will be expected to show their status and for example occupy the space and sound a certain way, or on the contrary consider that they don't need to show their position if they really are "in power".

Some tools may help: When people don't know each other, asking people to put only their first name on their name cards helps avoid having people focused on status issues. Another possibility is to introduce work in sub-groups, to modify the dynamic and make it easier to speak up. When setting the frame at the very beginning of the process, the trainer/facilitator may also draw a flipchart and address issues like potential fears, requirements for safe communication, the comfort/learning/panic zone model, etc. thus allowing people to work with these issues instead of fighting or denying them. It may also be helpful to speak to a too dominant hierarch in a one-to-one setting during a break and invite her/him to try another role/perspective in a diplomatic way.

SIETAR Europa Cross Cultural Coffee Breaks

Summary

Another valuable resource in such situations is the ability of a facilitator to address and reflect her/his own fears, values, goals, ego issues within the process and find out how she/he will best serve the work of the group.

Still, cultural differences continue to play a mighty role in the way hierarchy and power are seen, how people talk or don't talk about it, how team work is defined (an actual survey is being conducted on how people describe Team Work in 40 countries). A generational dimension seems to be challenging too, when younger people tend to deny the impact of cultures because "we are all international nowadays". A very rich source of cultural information is football - looking at team behavior may say a lot about team culture, how people deal with rules, etc. (eg. Japan never got one single red card in 18 World Football Cups).

Thanks for this summary of our CCC Break discussion to:

	<p>Contributor: Anna Royon-Weigelt, arw@respea.com, or connect: XING/LinkedIn</p>
	<p>SEU Moderator: Barbara Covarrubias Venegas, bcovarrubiasvenegas@gmail.com, or connect via: XING/LinkedIn/Twitter</p>

SIETAR Europa Cross Cultural Coffee Breaks

Summary



Thanks for the intriguing discussions to our participants:

