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« decentering with images »

PREPARED BY: élan interculturel

TAGS (3 categorizations)

Is this activity focusing on one of the 3 steps of the method or tackling a transversal challenge facilitators may face?	Step of the method	YES	Decentering X	Discovery of the frames of references of the other	Negotiation
	Challenge treated	NO			

Small Description

Please explain in a short paragraph (using grammatically correct full sentences) what your activity is about, why did you create it?

This activity is an introduction of the first phase of the approach of Cohen-Emerique, called "decentering". The activity starts with a simulation of culture shock through a set of rather provoking images. We then invite participants to become aware of their own reactions and own values instead of starting pondering on the people on the images that triggered the shock experience.

Quick info

TIME FRAME 30-60min	**GROUP SIZE** 2-10	**FACILITIATION LVL** Beginner	**COMFORT ZONE** Safe	**MATERIALS** Pen and paper or a computer/mobile device.

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30-60 min	3-18	Intermediate	challenging	Images Bluetech (to hang on wall) Flipchart papers Markers

Preparations needed

- This activity works better if the group already developed some trust and participants feel free to express their doubts, reveal their prejudices etc.
- Select the images you would like to use taking into account the context of your training (in terms of geography, cultures represented, theme of the training). Try to have a geographically equilibrated selection, also presenting images from your own cultural context.
- Even if this is not the focus of the activity, you should know the contexts of the images you are presenting.
- You should think in advance about the values and norms that could come up concerning the specific images.

Instructions Step By Step

Please give step by step instructions of your activity, including debriefing. Be direct, address the reader as a facilitator directly: eg. ask your participants to stand in a circle…

Step 1.

Before starting the activity, we recommend warning the group about the sensitivity of the activity. We will work with images depicting people who are not with us, representing different cultures. We can honor the protagonists of the images. This does not imply that we cannot talk about how we feel, what we think with respect to these images. In fact, the activity only works if we suspend our desire to be perfectly interculturally and politically correct. It is ok if we are surprised. In fact, we should be surprised. To allow us to do that, we should allow us to make mistakes, speak openly, not judge each other. For the same reason, what we do should be confidential, should not go out of the room. (Except of course what the facilitators say.)

Step 2.

Invite participants to visit the "exhibition" you have created and have a look at each image. Ask them to choose the image that triggers the most intense emotional reaction for them (it does not matter whether positive or negative). At this point they should not talk about the images, nor should they analyse them, just chose one. The first choice is often the best choice. Several people will probably choose the same image, this is ok. In the following step you'll create small groups around the images. Groups of 3-4 people work best, try to ask participants not to be more than 4 with the same image.

Step 3.

As a 2nd step invite the small groups to explore together three questions (they don't need to agree).
What is the visible element in the image that explains their choice (let them point to it if there is confusion..)

a) How does the image make them feel?
b) What is the part of the picture responsible for these emotions? (Participants should be able to point at this with their fingers: it must be visible, objective, not an interpretation)
c) What are their own values that are touched by the image? What are the values that explain the emotional reaction?

Step 4.

After 15 minutes you can invite a couple of groups to give their answers. Make sure to help participants stick to the questions: if they are asked about visible element, they should do so. If you ask about emotions, they should talk about emotions etc. As they give their answers, you can write them on an iceberg drawing: at the top the "visible element". Around it, the emotions. Underneath the values and norms connected to it. Don't hesitate to help them be more precise in naming emotions or values, this is not always easy.
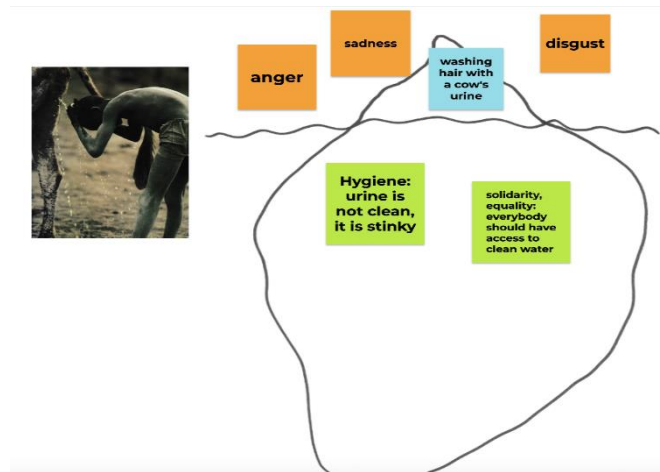
Step 5.

To debrief the activity you can ask participants to share how they felt, what was easy for them, what was difficult. You can also ask them whether there is a change in the way they see the image now that they have gone through decentering.

You can also discuss what they think such an activity could be used for. For us, this activity is an introduction to the concept of "culture shock", more precisely to understanding the mechanisms of a culture shock experience, and discover how we can work through it.

Hints for the facilitator

Participants may not know about the concept of "value". Tell them to imagine values as compasses, which indicate for a given society what is considered good and worthy. Norms are the socially accepted representations and behaviours. To get acquainted with the concept and method of decentering please have a look at our materials in the "framework of competences".

Ressources (Who invented this activity or who inspired it)

If you invented it, please write the name of your colleague and institution as you'd like it to be referenced. If you used ideas /activities of others please put full reference as concretely as you can

Activity developed by Vera Varhegyi (élan interculturel, Paris) based on Margalit Cohen-Emerique's practice of decentering (Cohen-Emerique, Margalit 2015. ***Pour une approche interculturelle en travail social. Théories et pratiques***. Rennes : Presses de l'EHESP)
The iceberg was first used as a metaphor of culture in 1977 by Edward T. Hall in his book: ***Beyond Culture*** (Anchor Books)