

Connecting Banks and Communities Through Cultural Agility

Workshop Facilitation & Discussion Guide

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Thinking about Culture – BARNGA Exercise

At this point in the program, we want to introduce the concept of culture and encourage the participants to think hard about their own cultures and about the culture that exists in their workplace.

According to Geert Hofstede, the noted cultural anthropologist, **“Culture consists of the unwritten rules of the social game. It is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one group or category of people from others.”** Hofstede notes that culture should be distinguished from human nature on one side and from an individual’s personality on the other. But culture is always a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly shared with people who live within the same social environment, which is where it was learned.

To start thinking about culture, we ask participants to play a game with us. The name of the game is BARNGA and it was created by Dr. Sivasailam "Thiagi" Thiagarajan.

BARNGA is a well-known simulation game on cultural clashes. Participants experience the shock of realizing that despite their good intentions and the many similarities among them, people interpret things differently from one another in profound ways, especially people from differing cultures. Players learn that they must understand and reconcile these differences if they want to function effectively in a cross-cultural group. This game can be used in many organization settings in order to provide Training & Education on cultural differences.

You can purchase a copy of the facilitation guide to BARNGA online at:
<http://www.nicholasbrealey.com/boston/barnga.html>

Otherwise, for a brief overview of the game and its rules, you can download a .pdf that describes the game and how it is played here:
http://www.acphd.org/media/271383/barnga_instructions.pdf

BARNGA

BARNGA is a simulation game about cultural differences. It is an experiential exercise. Players will play a new card game called “Five Tricks” and then answer the following questions:

1. What feelings did you experience while playing this game?
2. What did you observe about others’ behavior or your own behavior during this game?
3. What diversity issues can you identify through this simulation?
4. In what ways does this game reflect what is happening at between banks and culturally diverse communities?

Understanding Cultural Differences

1. The BARNGA exercise makes us aware that the common assumption that “everyone is playing by the same rules” is often untrue. In fact, genders, races and cultures often play by very different rules.
2. The study of cross-cultural differences is relatively new. Largely it began with the 1980 publication of a book by Geert Hofstede entitled “Culture’s Consequences.” Hofstede is a Dutch social psychologist who conducted a pioneering study of cultural differences across modern nations while working for IBM.
3. Hofstede discovered 6, fundamentally different, cross-cultural value differences that divide national cultures from each other. This discovery was made by utilizing factor analysis techniques on samples drawn from an extensive multinational database. These value differences have consequences for how people in different cultures behave, and how they will potentially behave in a work related context.
4. To learn more about Geert Hofstede’s 6 dimensions of national cultures you can:
 - Visit his website online at: <http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>
 - Compare countries according to Hofstede’s 6 dimensions of national culture model: <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>
 - Read his book: Cultures and Organizations – Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival, Geert Hofstede and Hert Jan Hofstede, McGraw-Hill, 2010. Available at: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/0071664181/?tag=mh0b->

[20&hvadid=3486102408&hvqmt=p&hvbmt=bp&hvdev=c&ref=](http://www.amazon.com/Riding-Waves-Culture-Understanding-Diversity/dp/0071773088/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1431634248&sr=1-1&keywords=riding+the+waves+of+culture)
[pd_sl_8i4hdc52ek_p](http://www.amazon.com/Riding-Waves-Culture-Understanding-Diversity/dp/0071773088/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1431634248&sr=1-1&keywords=riding+the+waves+of+culture)

5. Later scholars took many of the academic concepts behind Hofstede's work and translated them into a more lay and business-friendly format. One excellent book that has won numerous international business awards is "Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business" by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner (3rd edition 2012).

You can:

- Buy the book at: http://www.amazon.com/Riding-Waves-Culture-Understanding-Diversity/dp/0071773088/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1431634248&sr=1-1&keywords=riding+the+waves+of+culture
- Listen to Fons Trompenaars discuss some of his ideas for working effectively across cultures here: <http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+and+fons+trompenaars&FORM=VIRE2#view=detail&mid=44AE3F036DF928204ABA44AE3F036DF928204ABA>
- Gain a quick understanding of Trompenaars' Seven Dimensions of Culture Model by visiting this website: <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/seven-dimensions.htm>

6. Other outstanding books on cross-cultural differences include:

- The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently And Why, Richard E. Nisbett, Free Press, 2003
- Cultural Intelligence: People Skills for Global Business, David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson, Berrett Koehler publishers, 2003
- Working GlobeSmart – 12 People Skills for Doing Business across Borders, Ernest Gundling. Davies-Black Publishing, 2003.

Read or download a free, summary of Gundling’s book in an article by the same name at:

<http://www.aperianglobal.com/pdf/12%20People%20Skills%20for%20Doing%20Business%20-%20Pre-Print%20Version.pdf>

Listen to author/consultant Ernest Gundling discuss the attributes of the culturally agile global leader at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjJx67-55Rk>

Aperian Global website: <http://corp.aperianglobal.com/> (featuring the innovative online GlobeSmart tool). You can also access individual and team-based cultural assessment tools at:

http://corp.aperianglobal.com/tools_assessments

7. Finally, for fascinating, ongoing global research on cross-cultural differences, visit the World Values Survey at:

<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp> . Be sure to click on the Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map at:

<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp> (Analysis of World Value Survey data made by political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel asserts that there are two major dimensions of cross-cultural variation in the world. These dimensions can be characterized as: a) Traditional values versus Secular-rational values and b) Survival values versus Self-Expression values.)

