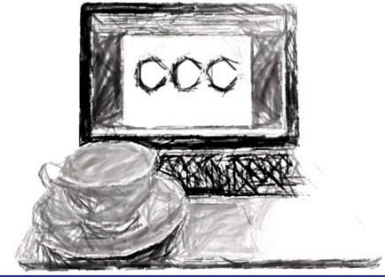




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CCC-Break 3: 13.03.2019. Burning Question: Can we, and if yes, how can we use cultural dimensions in a meaningful way?



While there are clear advantages of using cultural dimensions, they come with a number of challenges. Most important ones are: they don't cover the whole, complex, social and sociological reality, only extract some aspects on human interactions and patterns of thinking and behaviour in quite arbitrary way. When we as trainers deal with a group of people that have quite limited knowledge of cultural issues and low cultural awareness, they may have difficulties with understanding that scales are only a theoretical concept and may uncritically applied them to complex interactions. Another challenge is that people who learnt about those scales can treat them as a predictor of others' behaviour and can become more prone to labelling other people and putting them in the boxes: Americans are like that, Chinese are like that, Russians are like that. The question is also about their scientific reliability and validity. Can they be applied to whole population or rather to some groups, what exactly do they measure? To deal with these challenges and to avoid stereotyping it is important for the trainers to put dimensions in the right perspective and show them as tool for better understanding, not as a model which covers all aspects of human relations. It could be done by, for example, using the pyramid of culture (we connect on human level, collective level, individual level) not only group vs. group, using PCS model (personality, culture, situation), giving assignments first i.e. list the cultural issues faced in projects and then explaining them through power distance, individualism-collectivism, gender etc., show models behind the real situations to illustrate that we might think differently about same situations. It is also crucial to differentiate between groups and individuals - let participants discover their personal preferences on the cultural map. The key is to adjust methodology and didactics to target group and goal and use models relevant for the certain group and target.

Dimensions that are commonly used by intercultural professionals who participated in the CCC Break are: G. Hofstede's (including onion-model), Hall's (high-low context, monochronic-polychronic time, Trompenaars's (intensity versus speed), E. Meyer's. Another useful model is one created by Bernd Muller-Jacquier and described in a book "Linguistic awareness of cultures" (2000).

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Summary

Thanks for this summary of our CCC Break discussion to:

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Summary

Thanks for the intriguing discussions to our participants:

