Intercultural Communication and Self Awareness Workshops
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Why these Workshops?

When people encounter new surroundings, they often experience culture shock. Culture shock usually occurs when one’s own values and judgments come into conflict with different ways of living and viewing the world. Some symptoms of culture shock that we have seen in the GVI house are extreme nationalism, home sickness, sadness, anger, frustration, lack of investment or hyper concern of details and schedules.

Living in a communal house with several cultures in a foreign country intensifies feelings of culture shock. Some methods for understanding and confronting emotional stress within a tense situation are exercising communication strategies with people of different cultures and gaining more self-awareness. Together, these techniques allow an individual to examine the way they see the world and work towards understanding new and different points of view.

This manual contains eight workshops: four focused on intercultural communication and four focused on self-awareness. Many of these trainings were practiced in the GVI Quepos house from August-December 2014 and are the result of research and graduate lectures. It is recommended to interchange these workshops every week so two week volunteers can enjoy the benefits of both communication based workshops and self-awareness based workshops to more fully develop intercultural communication strategies.

To get started, review the definitions below, and happy training!

Culture\(^1\): The beliefs, customs, arts, etc., of a particular society, group, place, or time.

Culture Shock\(^2\): The feeling of disorientation experienced by someone when they are suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes.

Intercultural Communication\(^3\): Communication and understanding among people from diverse cultures. Intercultural Communication broadens and deepens our understanding of the world we live in by challenging our taken-for-granted beliefs and views and by providing alternative ways to live fully and respectfully as human beings.

Self-Awareness\(^4\): Conscious knowledge of one’s own character, feelings, motives, and desires.

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# Intercultural Communication and Self Awareness Workshops Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Title</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power Tree</strong></td>
<td><strong>45 mins</strong></td>
<td>This workshop introduces volunteers to their own privilege and power in relation to the students and community members we work with. It consists of giving every person a role and a task, by starting at the same point, who will reach the “power tree” tree first. But, before the race can begin each person’s position changes based on the role they are playing. Once all the directions have been given and the group is spread out, the race begins. After the race, a discussion is held to help the volunteers interpret what they saw and felt during the activity. Please note: there are 10 identities included. Please make more within the directions guidelines depending on the number of volunteers participating.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language Verbs</strong></td>
<td><strong>5-15 mins</strong></td>
<td>This workshop helps volunteers feel what a non-native speaker of English feels when they are trying to speak English. It will help them gain appreciation for active listening and understand their feeling of frustration when they cannot communicate, especially if they do not speak Spanish.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Iceberg</strong></td>
<td><strong>30 mins</strong></td>
<td>This workshop introduces a theoretical model for understanding culture and walks the volunteers through understanding Costa Rican culture at a deeper level using the iceberg and information provided as framework and guide. The information is taken from staff experience and TWA World Info (given during graduate level class and original information cannot be redistributed).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnographic Interviewing</strong></td>
<td><strong>20 mins</strong></td>
<td>This workshop introduces an interviewing technique to practice active listening and learn more about a person’s history. It is conducted in pairs where each person practices being the interviewer and interviewee. It is combined with a section of a Ted Talk to add interest and context to the interviewing practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Five Lenses</strong></td>
<td>20 mins</td>
<td>This workshop is focused on self-awareness and understanding one’s own biases when seeing the world. It involves all participants visualizing a common scene and reflecting on what they can see using five different lenses. Then, project situations are presented and volunteers are asked to describe what they see using the different lenses. This can lead to a richer discussion of when the best times to use distinct lenses are and what lenses do we as individuals feel most comfortable using.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I am aware of...</strong></td>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td>This workshop is very simple and can be done anywhere. It can take 5 minutes and up to 15 minutes. It involves every participant becoming aware of their surroundings and actions by acknowledging their awareness out loud to a partner.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker Understander Method</strong></td>
<td>20 mins</td>
<td>This is a conversational method from psychology that is designed to help one person (the speaker) speak their feelings and find their own solutions while the understander quietly listens and encourages without guiding or offering fix-it solutions. There is an attached guide for the understander. This should be done with all staff members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listen to Silence</strong></td>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>This workshop can be done in silence or quiet. It is adapted from a Ted Talk by Julian Treasure on Listening. It consists of a group sitting quietly for 5 minutes and just listening. It is recommended to play the section of the accompanying Ted Talk if time permits.</td>
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**If you only have five minutes....**

If you are in hurry, some of these workshops can be given in 5 minutes. Do not let time crunches be an excuse for not facilitating an intercultural training. Please consider the following workshops that can be delivered start to finish in 5 minutes

- Language Verbs
- Situations from Iceberg
- I am aware of...
- Listen to Silence
- Short Ethnographic Interviews (2 mins each)
Power Tree Workshop

Notes to Facilitator: This workshop is aimed at introducing volunteers and staff to the power and privilege they hold in relation to the communities they are supporting on a global scale. This workshop can help volunteers understand how they will initially be viewed and what their impact might be. Please make sure each participant has an identity and that the identities represent as much of the volunteer and local population as possible. It is recommended to practice this workshop as a staff team before facilitating it for the volunteers. There must always be one facilitator who does not participate in the activity to guide the activity and reflection. The ten identities created are at the end of the workshop instructions.

Step 1: Introduction to Power Tree: 5 mins

1. Distribute Identities: Have each team member choose a person from the local community—must be at least a female teacher, a male director, a female student, a male student in the various communities and a GVI volunteer from the UK.
2. Line up
3. Explain rules: Take a step forward or backward as directed if the statement applies to you. When the facilitator says go, run to the “tree” as fast as you can. Whoever reaches the tree first is the winner.

Step 2: Power Tree Activity: 15 mins

Power Tree Activity Directions

1. Steps back
   - Female
   - Low income
   - 24 or under
   - 46 and above
   - Nicaraguan or non-Costa Rican or European Decent
   - If you have no higher education
   - If you have never left Costa Rica
   - If you have a physical disability (eyesight, hearing, loss of limb)
   - If you have a learning disability
   - If you have children
2. Steps forward
   - Male
   - Middle Income
   - Wealthy
   - 25-45
   - Costa Rican Decent
   - European Decent (White)
   - Representative of an NGO
   - If you have some higher education-1 step forward
   - If you have 5 + years of higher education-2 steps forward
   - Traveled outside your home country

Step 3: Reflection on Power Tree Activity: 30 mins (Facilitator to take notes)
1. Everyone sits in a learning circle with each person getting 2 minutes to speak (everyone can share or pass). Here are the questions to discuss:
   - What was your role?
   - How did it feel?
   - What did you notice about how power?

2. Second Round in Learning Circle (everyone shares or passes)
   - How can we best support the communities and bring voice given our own privilege?
   - How do we channel power so it is more equitable?

**Power Tree Identities**

1. You are a female teacher in Damas. You are 28 years old. You graduated from high school, but have no higher education. You were born in Damas and have never been out of Costa Rica. Your husband works on the Palm Plantation and you have a house because of that company. You cannot afford to buy your own home. You love your students and your two children and hope that they will have more opportunities than you.

2. You are a female English teacher in El Cocal. You are 25 years old. You graduated from high school and went to college to study education. You know that your work is hard, but you appreciate being paid more to work at El Cocal and hope you are making a difference for your students. You have visited the United States a few times and speak fluent English. You are happy at El Cocal, but also know that you
may be moved schools suddenly up to one day before classes and potentially have to pay more to travel and receive a lower wage.

3. You are a male director in Damas. You are 33 years old. You graduated high school and went to college. You have travelled around Central America and really care about your community and want to support your teachers and students by giving them autonomy. You own your own home and are about to have a baby. You do worry about the extra costs a baby will bring, but you and your wife are overjoyed.

4. You are a male director in Cocal. You are 50 years old. You live far away from the school and have a long commute every day. You have some higher education, but the best way you know how to lead is to direct and constantly have the control. You feel threatened by anyone who tries to take the control away from you. You do not speak English and at this point do not want to learn. You feel the best way to improve your school is to physically make it look nicer.

5. You are a female student from Cocal. You were born in Costa Rica, but your family emigrated from Nicaragua. You do not have any legal rights as a Costa Rican citizen because your family entered the country illegally. You are 17 years old in sixth grade. You are hoping to graduate, but now you are pregnant and paying attention in school seems less important. Your family supports you and says that your baby is a gift from God, even though the father is no longer around. You live with your extended family in a house made of tin with a dirt floor.

6. You are a female student in Damas. You are 12 years old and have a learning disability. You should be in sixth grade, but because you learn slower and do not come to school very often you are in fourth grade. Your father works for Palma Tica and your mom stays at home and keeps house. Sometimes she sells meals for local community members. You do not like school because you are teased and copying is boring, but you do love to draw and paint when you get the chance.

7. You are a male student from Cocal. You are 8 years old in third grade. You have grown-up around English speaking volunteers and love to learn new phrases and play with them. You house is made of tin and concrete. You love to play and draw and want to go to high school one day and travel to other countries.

8. You are a male student from Damas. You are 7 years old in second grade. You are smart and pay attention in school. Playing with the other kids is sometimes hard because you have a physical disability that makes it difficult to walk and run. Your family owns their own home because your Dad is an executive for Palma Tica.

9. You are an 18 year old, male volunteer from the United Kingdom. Your family was able to pay for this volunteer experience as a gap year between high school and college. You have travelled around much of Europe and are very eager to help these communities. You love children and want to be a primary school teacher. You have never been to Central America before.

10. You are a 27 year old volunteer from Belgium. English is not your first language, but you speak it fluently, along with 4 other languages. You graduated from college and have a stable job. You saved your wages to be able to volunteer in Costa Rica for one month. You did not get an opportunity to travel in university, so you are excited to explore Costa Rica and Central America for the first time.
Language Verbs Workshop

Notes to Facilitator: This workshop can be done in 5 minutes or up to 30 minutes for a longer discussion. It is best used as part of Monday trainings for new volunteers as it opens up their minds to the language barrier they are about to step into.

Step 1: Divide the group into pairs. There can be no group larger than two people.

Step 2: The facilitator presents the instructions: 1 min
- Each time a verb is used, it has to be repeated with similar verbs two more times.
  - EX: I woke, got up, opened my eyes this morning. I played, interacted, joined with kids at Damas.
- Each partner has one minute to speak.

Step 3: In partners, one person listens and the other person talks about their day for 1 minute. Then, they switch roles with no discussion in between turns. The facilitator times this: 2 mins

Step 4: Facilitator leads reflection in a learning circle: 3-10 mins
- Take two minutes to share first feelings about activity (everyone can share or pass)
- Discuss what was frustrating about the activity
- Discuss what was useful about the activity
- Was either role easier or harder?

Step 5: Continue to this step if it is a longer workshop: 10 mins
- What are some strategies you can use to be understood by non-native speakers?
  - Make a list of strategies and post in house.
Notes to Facilitator: This theoretical model is very useful for discovering the deeper layers of culture in the host and home societies of volunteers. This workshop can be repeated using the societies of the volunteers as examples to place their culture in relation to Costa Rica’s Culture. This could be a shorter or longer workshop depending on how much information and discussion you wish to present. This workshop is best after volunteers have been experiencing the culture for at least two weeks and therefore have more to share that they have experienced. For more resources and images of the cultural iceberg, please visit Language and Culture Worldwide (LCW): http://languageandculture.com/cultural-iceberg
Step 1: Explain Iceberg: 5 mins
- There are observable and hidden parts of an iceberg and the same is true of culture.
- Observable aspects of culture are characteristics of a group that we can “see” with our eyes, be it their food, dances, music, arts, or greeting rituals.
- Hidden aspects of culture include assumptions, attitudes and core values held by the majority members of the group.

Step 2: Use Costa Rica as an example and create an iceberg for Costa Rica in small groups: 5 mins

Step 3: In the large group discuss icebergs and create a collaborative iceberg for Costa Rica (Include extra information below that the group may have missed): 5 mins
- Customs/Forms
  - Pura Vida
  - Relaxed
  - Nature Loving
  - Eat lots of Rice and Beans
  - Gallo Pinto
  - Casados
  - Speak Spanish
  - North American Influence
  - Football
  - Tico Time
  - Teeth brushing after every meal
- Assumptions
  - Gringos are wealthy
  - People with darker skin are foreign/immigrants
  - Everyone has running water and electricity-Palma Tico gives houses to workers
  - Community Networks are important and useful in day to day and professional life
  - Men can be more powerful than women
- Attitudes
  - Racism towards dark skinned immigrants
  - Machismo
  - Bartering and fixing prices in taxis, markets and business (gavilan)
  - Education is important to move up in society
  - Free time is appreciated and used well
  - Conservative and Resistant to Change
  - Not good to say No definitively
- Values
  - Education
  - Living Life to the Fullest
  - Fierce national pride
  - Respect people who are calm and collected
  - Family ties
  - Conflict and Risk-Avoiding
  - Respect for people
  - Personal Hygiene
Step 4: Give groups situations they will encounter and deal with the situation based on the iceberg. Five example situations are listed below, but feel free to add your own based on your experience: 15 mins

- You suggest a lesson plan to a teacher who says that sound interesting, but when you prepare the plan and ask about it again, the teacher ignores you and continues on with class as normal. What is your next move?
- Children as laughing about how a darker skinned girl in their class is stupid. How do you respond?
- A child is showing you their Costa Rican jersey and talking about their favorite football star. You say that the (insert your home country) is the best and could beat Costa Rica any day. The child gets very angry. What happened?
- A new Tico friend tells you they will meet you on the beach “ahorita”. How much time do you have?
- You are running late, do not have your usual morning shower and quickly grab a piece of fruit on the way to the bus for project. What kind of reaction might you expect on project? How can you avoid this situation?
Ethnographic Interviewing

Notes to Facilitator: This interview method is somewhat conversational, but emphasizes listening and deepening a discussion without inserting personal bias or commentary. It typically begins with two simple questions, “Where were you born? What was it like?” This will lead to a rich conversation about an individual’s background, interests, life work and beliefs. Please practice this technique with a co-facilitator before presenting the workshop. Make sure you have enough time for each pair to practice being the interviewer and interviewee for at least 5 minutes each.

Step 1: Put volunteers into pairs.

Step 2: Start with Ted talk by Julian Treasure on Listening. Play or read the highlighted section 2:58-3:31:
  
  “We’re becoming impatient. We don’t want oratory anymore, we want sound bites. And the art of conversation is being replaced -- dangerously, I think -- by personal broadcasting. I don’t know how much listening there is in this conversation, which is sadly very common, especially in the U.K. We’re becoming desensitized. Our media have to scream at us with these kinds of headlines in order to get our attention. And that means it’s harder for us to pay attention to the quiet, the subtle, the understated.”

  http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better/transcript?language=en#t-118505

Step 2: Give an example of an ethnographic interview where you interview a co-facilitator or volunteer: 5 mins

Step 3: Have students practice ethnographic interviewing in pairs: 5 mins each=10 mins

Step 4: Reflect with the volunteers on the exercise: 5-10 mins
  
  What role was more natural for you?
  Did you feel more comfortable sharing?
  Were you able to have a different type of conversation?
  Were you able to actively listen and not make comments while being the interviewer?
Five Lenses Workshop

Notes to Facilitator: This workshop is highly reflective in nature. Everyone will feel more comfortable with some lenses and uncomfortable with others. The five lenses are geological, biological, cultural, familial and personal. It is recommended to do this exercise outside while looking at the common scene (the beach is a great place!). Also, as you go through the exercise, you should give an example of yourself going through each lens so there is no confusion while the volunteers do this silently. Make sure you and everyone makes “lenses” with their hands. This physically movement helps the activity come to life.

Step 1: Using the scene you have chosen (the beach is given as an example), go through all five lenses yourself while the volunteers follow along in silence: 5 mins

- Geological: With a geological lens I see the rocks and fossils and waves crashing. I am focusing on the structure and form on the minerals around me.
- Biological: With a biological lens I can see the animals on the beach and in the water. I can also see the diverse vegetation around me.
- Cultural: With a cultural lens I see the people on the beach and how they interact with each other. I see the food they eat, the sports they play and the clothes they wear.
- Familial: With a familial lens I see the beach in relation to my family’s history. I see my Mom and her sisters learning how to swim in the ocean. I see my Aunt knitting on the beach as a young woman.
- Personal: With a personal lens I see the beach in relation to my own experiences and interests. I see myself making sand castles with my cousins. I see myself swimming in the waves.

Step 2: Discuss the benefits and difficulties of each lens: 5 mins

- Which lens was easiest for you to use?
- Which lens was the most difficult?
- What lens do you prefer to use?
- What are you missing when you use your preferred lens?

Step 3: Present three project situations-discuss what you can and cannot see with each lens: 10 mins

- Taking the Panga to El Cocal
- Playing football on the concrete court in Damas
- Working on an arts workshop in a classroom
I Am Aware Of... Workshop

Notes to Facilitator: This activity should be done twice: once to accustom students to the exercise, and once to use the exercise in context. This activity can be done anywhere and participants can be in any position (sitting, standing, moving around). A quiet place is recommended.

Step 1: The first time around students will watch the facilitator model the activity: 1 minute
- It starts with a simple statement, “I am aware of...”
- The facilitator will take 1 minute to identify any feelings, imaginations, thoughts or sensations that they are aware of while communicating the workshop to the volunteers.
- EX: I am aware of standing. I am aware of people staring at me. I am aware of feeling nervous. I am aware of feeling hungry, etc.

Step 2: The volunteers will take 1 minute each to identify any feelings, imaginations, thoughts or sensations that they are aware of in partners: 2 minutes

Step 3: The second round the facilitator will have students close their eyes and imagine themselves participating on the project: 2 minutes
- Volunteers will complete the exercise again in their new imagined surroundings.

Step 4: The facilitator should ask students to share what they are aware of the second time to see if any similar themes emerge to help frame the program: 5 mins
Speaker-Understander Workshop

Notes to Facilitator: This is a very serious method of communication. When both speaker and understander do it well, the speaker can uncover hidden emotions and new self-realizations. This must be presented by two facilitators who have practiced the method and feel comfortable presenting in front of a group. The Understander’s guide is at the end of the instructions.

Step 1: Assign participants roles of what to watch for during example led by co-facilitators: 1 min
- Voice of speaker
- Body language of speaker
- What the speaker is saying
- Voice of understander
- Body language of understander
- What the understander is saying

Step 2: Co-facilitators give an example of a speaker-understander conversation: 10 mins

Step 3: Volunteers report back what they noticed about each of the themes they watched for: 5 mins

Step 4: If volunteers feel comfortable and time permits, practice the speaker-understander method in pairs for 10 minutes each while the facilitators observe: 20 minutes

Step 5: Discuss which role was more difficult and more comfortable: 10 minutes
- Which role was more difficult?
- Which role felt the most comfortable?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- Was it difficult to dive off the deep end and share deep emotions?
Speaker-Understander Method
The Understander’s Quick Reference Guide

Phase 1

*Attending:* I am actively and supportively listening to you.
*Reflecting:* If I understand you correctly, you think...

Phase 2

*Focusing:* What is the most important aspect? What do you want to concentrate on?
*Thematising:* Do you think there is a connection between A and B?

Phase 3

*Challenging:* How does that fit with what you said about X?
*Speculating:* I am wondering...

Phase 4

*Goal Setting:* So what might be the take away here?
*Planning Action:* So how might you go about this?
*Appreciating:* I really appreciate your...

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5 Edited from model presented by Dr. Peter Shaw, Professor of Pedagogical Magic, Monterey Institute of International Studies, 2014.

Listen to Silence

Notes to Facilitator: This workshop is adapted from several listening exercises presented by Julian Treasure in a Ted Talk about listening. Any of his suggestions can be used as a short workshop to make volunteers and staff better listeners. The full talk can be found here: http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better/transcript?language=en#t-118505
He talks about this specific exercise at 4:05 minutes.

Step 1: Play a short section of the Ted Talk or explain why listening is so important to our lives and our work: 2 minutes
  • We spend roughly 60 percent of our communication time listening, but we retain just 25 percent of what we hear.
  • Too much habit of personal broadcasting
  • Too much noise around us all the time

Step 2: For three minutes, the whole group sits in complete silence or quiet: 3 mins
  • This exercise serves to reset your ears and to recalibrate so that you can hear the quiet again
  • Breath and focus on listening to the silence
  • Yawning is encouraged because it is our body’s way of resetting our nervous system.