

### **Track 3: Intercultural Dialogue in a Changing World**

#### **Intercultural Solutions for Challenging Times: A Fresh Cut on Developing Intercultural Competence of Global Leaders: WORKSHOP**

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In the multicultural work environment, functioning effectively demands a high degree of intercultural competence. In the past, intercultural training has emerged as a popular means to increase this competence among managers. In recent years however, traditional forms of intercultural training have been heavily criticized for intensifying national stereotypes and failing to provide applicable interaction competence.

This workshop seeks to compare more traditional designs of intercultural training with newer non-established forms to explore the future path of effective training and development. Traditionally culture was mostly understood as the coherent, unifying aspects of countries or ethnic groups. The concept of intercultural competence has been conceived as something rather static, comparable to a bridge between two islands. Traditional forms of intercultural training hence concentrated on sensitizing participants for differences in thought and action patterns between countries. Recent advances in cultural theory cast doubts on these established paradigms. Societies differentiate into a greater number of smaller collectives with their own, sometimes conflicting habits, rituals and codes superimposed upon and interpenetrating each other. Cultural cohesion is hence no longer considered to be the result of coherence but rather a consequence of becoming familiar with internal differences. The implications of these new paradigms in culture theory have not yet been fully reflected in intercultural training designs. This workshop will therefore contrast several intercultural competence frameworks that emerged from the national culture paradigms (Matveev & Nelson, 2004) as well as from the more recent cohesion-based paradigm (Rathje, 2007).

This workshop is designed for scholars and practitioners interested in an ongoing intercultural dialogue on intercultural competence development. The facilitators will guide participants through a series of exercises that creatively illustrate the theoretical concepts introduced above. On the more traditional level, participants will revisit such frameworks as the national culture and value orientations, communication context, and the intercultural competence dimensions. In addition participants will explore newer concepts like "multicollectivity," "additive identity," and "culture production" with the help of individual exercises involving visualization techniques and large group methods (e.g. world café).

The role of workshop participants is hence two-fold: 1) they will take part as "trainees" undergoing a series of training exercises, and 2) they will be invited to engage as experts in the following discussion about future training development. The participants will be able to refresh their understanding of the intercultural competence construct along the traditional culture knowledge vs. interactive culture creation through immediate intercultural communication. Advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches will be discussed and implications for the future development of effective training design will be developed.

#### References

Matveev, A. V., & Nelson, P. E. 2004. Cross-cultural communication competence and multicultural team performance: Perceptions of American and Russian managers. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 4(2): 253-270.

Rathje, S. 2007. Intercultural competence: The status and future of a controversial concept. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 7(4): 254-266.

**Friday 23 April 3:30 – 5:00**