

# IOA

INTERNATIONAL

OPERATION

AGENT

in training

[ WORKBOOK FOR THE LEARNING COURSE ]

# MODULE 1

## INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

learning tasks

## 1. CRITICAL INCIDENT ANALYSIS

Bring to mind an amusing, irritating, confusing situation/incident which was based on cultural differences. Describe – write down or discuss with a colleague – the incident:

- WHO were present?
- WHAT happened?
- WHEN did the situation take place?
- WHERE did it take place?
- HOW did it take place, what led to the situation?
- WHY did it happen?
- How did you FEEL?

### Analyse:

What was “critical” about the situation? What was “cultural” about the situation (please use IOA-material as your help)? What different kinds of interpretations and assumptions took place? What kinds of different values can be identified?

What was the solution like? How did it succeed?

What kinds of alternative solutions could be conducted in a similar situation? What kinds of benefits/problems could these solutions lead to?

- What do you think about the incident now?
- What did you learn?

## 2. OBSERVING CULTURE

Picture: Take a look at this picture.

### Phase 1.

What do you see in this picture? Think by yourself and/or discuss with your colleague/friend. Write down your answers. Don't move on with the learning task before doing the list!

### Phase 2.

Look at the list of your answers. Place them in the following categories:

- Description (only observed facts)
- Interpretation (what you think of what you see)
- Evaluation (what you feel about what you see)

### Phase 3.

Look at the picture again: what did you **not** see/notice/record before?

- How did your own culture show in your responses?



**!** In intercultural situations we tend to jump to interpretations instead of trying to be objective. This is part of human nature. However, we could try to see/meet/hear people more the way they are, instead of how we are.

### 3. INTERVIEW

Interview some other culture's representative – e.g. a neighbour, colleague, student – about his/her experiences in your culture. You can ask e.g. the following questions:

- What has been surprising for you in the new culture?
- What kinds of things do you like in this country?
- What has felt very different for you? What has been difficult to adjust to?
- What has helped you to adjust?
- How have you changed while staying in your country?
- What do you think: what is important for “an outsider” to know about this culture in order to understand it better?

After the interview:

- ➔ What surprised you?
- ➔ What kinds of cultural issues can you identify behind the interview responses?

### 4. DEVELOPING OWN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION/COMPETENCE

Think of the following intercultural situations and write down what would be your

- feelings
- interpretation
- behavior

in the given situation.

1. Meeting with a potential international project partner is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. The partner arrives at 10.50.
2. You are running a meeting abroad when, suddenly, the head of the host organization comes in the meeting room to give a presentation about the host organization.
3. In an international meeting all other attendants are
  - so talkative that you have a problem presenting your own view.
  - very quiet and don't say a thing unless they are asked.
4. After an international project dinner some partners take it for granted that the hosting partner pays everyone's dinner. At the same time some other partners are willing to split the bill into equal amounts and pay without a receipt – no matter what their own dinner costs. And the rest of the partners wish to have an invoice for each dinner according to real price, pay his/her share and receive a receipt. You as a coordinator should solve the situation.
5. One partner of your project consortium repeatedly fails to meet the deadlines for different tasks.
6. Your international project consortium has an important decision to make. The coordinator asks all partners' opinion – and then decides according to his/her own opinion.
  - ➔ Offer ideas for best practices in these situations!
  - ➔ Present other situations (e.g. related to international student exchange) which might require intercultural sensitivity and competence!



# MODULE 2

## BUILDING [INTERNATIONAL] NETWORKS AND RELATIONS

learning tasks

When you meet someone for the first time it is always important that the other will get a good impression of you. You have to realize that within a minute the other already formed a picture of you. Hopefully a positive one.

Write down what you can say in the first 45 seconds when you meet someone new.

- What do you want people to know about you?
- What is the trigger to get attention from the other?
- What is your unique selling point?

To get a clear picture of your relations we advise you to make a database. Fill in the data of your most important partners. In the final column you can fill in what you have discussed with your (potential) partner, the possible actions for the nearby future and the importance of the partner for your organisation.

Name of organisation or stakeholder	Type of organisation or stakeholder (education, finance, municipality, etc.)	Name of the contact person	Function	Address	Telephone	E-mail	Website	Dates of contact	Status of contact



## MODULE 3

### INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IN VET AND WORK LIFE



learning tasks



## TASK 1

The Bruges Communiqué mentions the following 11 strategic objectives:

Go to: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf)

1. Making I-VET an attractive learning option
2. Fostering the excellence, quality and relevance of both I-VET and C-VET
3. Enabling flexible access to training and qualifications
4. Developing a strategic approach to the internationalization of I-VET and C-VET and promoting international mobility
5. Fostering innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as the use of ICT (in both I-VET and C-VET)
6. Realizing inclusive I-VET and C-VET
7. Greater involvement of VET stakeholders and greater visibility for the achievements of European cooperation in VET
8. Coordinated governance of European and national instruments in the areas of transparency, recognition, quality assurance and mobility
9. Intensifying cooperation between VET policy and other relevant policy areas
10. Improving the quality and comparability of data for EU policymaking in VET
11. Making good use of EU support

Examine the 11 strategic objectives. Choose one of these objectives and show in which way your school can contribute to accomplish these objectives. Justify your choice. Is your choice a reason to set up an international project?

## TASK 2

Raising the quality level of vocational education is an important catchphrase in several EU common frameworks. Since 2001, the Lisbon strategy has been stressing the role of lifelong learning as the leading principle in education. One of the goals is raising the competence of training providers and practical training supervisors.

Name some enterprises in your town (region) that does on-the-job training?

Find out how it is done (how long does it take to train the worker, what qualification does the trainee get, is training certified, etc.) Which enterprise that you know would be the best for you?

## TASK 3

During its 15 years of existence, the Leonardo da Vinci Programme has supported more than 600 000 training placements for young people. Learn the possibilities for the students of your school (institution) to go abroad on Mobility projects. How many students have been on the workplacements during last 3 years?

## TASK 4

The future European labor market will be confronted with an ageing population. As a result, adults will increasingly be called upon to update and broaden their skills and competences through continuing VET. Find out what the Bruges Communiqué say about it.

Is there any project concerning implementation of employment of elderly people in your country? What is it about? Is your school involved in such a project?

## TASK 5

One of the main international trends in VET is the creation of a legal framework. Find out the situation of the Qualification framework in your country? Is the Qualification framework linked to EQF?

# MODULE 4

## PROJECT COMPETENCE



learning tasks

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Writing an international project plan is one of the core activities of an IOA. Many international activities are organised by projects. A project plan helps you to develop a new international activity in a structured way in cooperating with international partners.

To practice writing a project plan we ask you to make an international project plan with support from your mentor, colleagues or the participants of the training course Internationalisation.

The format helps you to make the project plan. The project plan can be based on a real situation or on your own idea.

A project can be funded by a European or national programme. In advance it is important to realise that these programmes have their own regulations and limited budgets.

General data	
Education unit	
Date of setting	
Project owner	
Project leader	
Co-operating partner(s)	

Project data	
Project name / title	
Subject / Theme / Field of activity	
Summary of the project plan	
To which issues the project is addressed to? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linked to the policy of the organisation?</li> <li>• National priorities?</li> <li>• European priorities?</li> </ul>	
Why is this project necessary?	
Aims and objectives of the project?	

Work package no	
Title	
Start and end of the WP	
Package leader	
Work package aims	
Description of the activities	

Foreseen risks	
Describe the risks you expect during the project? What is the impact on the results? What kind of actions do undertake to minimize the risks?	

Expected results no.	
Description of the result	
Target group	
Availability	
Others	

Dissemination	
Describe how you will disseminate the results to the target group	

Budget	
Funding by an European national programme? If so, what is the maximum available amount of money? Is there own funding available?	

# MODULE 5

## COACHING AND GUIDING STUDENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES



learning tasks

### TASK 1

Create an introduction system in a learning environment etc.  
Give your students the following task:

#### Introduction

In this part you have to introduce yourselves. You have to write a small biography so we'll get to know each other better.

### TASK 2

Find good web links for the target country, and give them to your students. Then create a forum based working area for your students and give them the following task:

### TASK 3

Give your students the following questions to answer about behaviour in different situations in the target country:

1. Find out how to behave when you are shopping in the target country. Should you weigh fruit yourself or not, in the supermarket or grocery store, can you pay with your bank card/debit card or credit card...
2. Are there ATMs or cash machines everywhere and can you withdraw money with your bank card/debit card or credit card...
3. Are there trams, trains, subway? Should you use buses or do you walk?
4. How should you behave at school, how should you speak to/address your teachers?
5. How does work-life in the target country differ from your own country? How do you communicate with/address your colleagues?
6. Smoking is a really nasty and deadly habit. We strongly suggest that you try to stop smoking. Unfortunately some of us do smoke anyway. The local rules concerning smoking differ very much. Try to find answers to the following questions:
  - Are you allowed to smoke in public places?
  - Is it ok to smoke in bars and restaurants?
  - What kind of restrictions does your host-school have?
  - How do the people feel about smoking?

You can search the internet for answers. It could also be a very good idea to contact fellow students from the target country or contact the receiving coordinator/teacher either in a learning environment or by email and discuss these questions with him/her.



## MODULE 6

### IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONALISATION



learning tasks

### TASK 1

Before starting to write a policy for internationalisation it is important to make a SWOT-analysis. Fill in the table what are the (S)trengths, (W)eaknesses, (O)pportunities and (T)hreats to implement internationalisation in your organisation. Strengths and weaknesses are in your own organisation. Opportunities and threats are from outside your organisation

Internal	External
<b>Strength</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>

### TASK 2

Find out two examples of internationalisation activities being done in your school.

### TASK 3

Examine the table with examples of key issues when promoting international activities in VET (pgs. 106-107) and analyse where your institution is at the moment: starting, average or well-experienced

“The following Key issues are success- factors when promoting international activities in VET”	Possible activities for a starting school	Possible activities for an average school	Possible activities for a well-experienced school
European policy	1. Follow a training by experts of NA	1. Attend general meetings with NA	1. Attend European meetings
	2. Read information package of NA and info from other partners	2. Follow the developments of European policies	2. Contribute to discussions and make improvement suggestions
	3. Information on European programmes for internationalisation can be discussed	3. Follow and read the European measures and programmes	3. Discuss European development as EQF, ECVET and the influence on colleges
Partner database	4. Attend general presentations and face to face meetings	4. Develop and collect fact sheets	4. Maintain and update fact sheets
	5. Build up a network of partners and collect basic data	5. Working method of partner data base should work effectively and can be improved by mutual visits	5. The maintaining of the database is part of secretarial work Share also information on deeper level of each others organisation ( beyond the basic data) Exchange description for applications ready and up to date
	6. Collect new information on new partners	6. Test and develop	6. Arrange updating
	7. Start with a few partners; ask your network partners for help	7. Choose strategic partners for your international activities	7. Focus on trustworthy partners

Mobility students	8. Follow a training on European programme / projects to get the finance Pay visits to host organisation; start slowly, small numbers Organise fortnight meetings with international coordinators	8. Organise exchange of students in bigger numbers Make follow up visits Arrange monthly meetings with international coordinators	8. Widen group of host organisations Establish frequent follow contacts via email / phone Arrange monthly meetings with international coordinators
	9. Share partners in the network and share know how in managing projects	9. Increase amount of mobilities	9. Find new partners and improve the quality of mobility: tools, materials
	10. Stage of comparing and benchmarking	10. Stage of common procedures and sharing	10. Stage of improving common procedures and projects
	11. The easiest way to start international activities is to apply for funding and learn to know your NA	11. Next step is to go from student mobility to teacher mobility; develop procedures	11. Then increase the mobility numbers and look for additional funding; establish procedures
Staff development	12. Showing the way to others, incorporate new members in the network Organise expertise training on internationalization Arrange a training courses in an international environment	12. Describe clear competences for staff Organise joint training, VET pro's study visit and general regional trainings	12. Organise individual VET pro's on VET schools / companies of the network and peer to peer training
	13. Organise VET pro activities, let people travel	13. Establish institutionalised improvement and exchange of material	13. Make staff development a part of HRM programme
	14. Staff development is relevant for international affairs employees and directors	14. Involve teachers in staff development	14. Make a broad based common strategies for staff development in international affairs
	15. Start small, practical, for instance coordinators international affairs	15. Organise VET pro visits	15. Arrange meetings of the board of the VET schools of the network Organise a network of financial employees and workshops for employees in different fields
	16. It is the coordinator who introduces internationalisation in the college	16. The coordinator learns in the national network from advanced colleagues	16. The network organises staff development together with partners of the network
Cooperation in innovation	17. Organise face to face meetings for awareness	17. Organise face to face working groups on specific topics	17. Organise working groups face to face and virtual
	18. Give information on innovation projects / good practices	18. Test if good practices from others are applicable	18. Be critical, select the "right partners and promoter" for a project
	19. Stage of awareness	19. Stage of sharing innovations and active engagement	19. Stage of innovation hubs and generators
	20. The starting network can inform each other on innovative activities	20. Joint activities can be taken within the network	20. The network can seek to improve the network activities by joint efforts to develop innovation
Dissemination of projects	21. Organise meetings to exchange	21. Organise meetings and establish magazines etc	21. Produce magazines, website etc
	22. Stage of putting results into use	22. Stage of focus on avoiding overlapping, more joint projects	22. Stage of value added from projects, efficiency and effectiveness
	23. The network is the natural habitat for dissemination	23. The dissemination is made a natural issue	23. Dissemination in the network seeks to evolve in valorisation in the network
Preferred partnership	24. Not relevant in this stage	24. Check common interests and aims	24. Benefit of preferred partnership or specific projects like T01
	25. Share letters of intent for mobility	25. Share mutual trust and build a partnership	25. Personal friendship appear, build on trust
	26. Stage of defining joint needs	26. Stage of focussing on joint goals	26. Stage of quality improvement, role setting
Country based policies	27. Stage of need of knowledge	27. Stage of: what's local necessary / what's exchangeable	27. Stage of transfer and lobbying
	28. Knowledge via experts in meetings	28. Knowledge via expert and coordinator to network	28. Coordinators collect information and share it in network and peer to peer groups
	29. Stage of awareness of frames set and ongoing trends	29. Stage of coherent action	29. Stage of active input



## TASK 4

Fill in the table: Indicators for Internationalisation of Institutions of Higher Education (pg. 110)

### Indicators for internationalisation of institutions of higher education 14

#### 1. Strategy and management

- Does the educational institution have a strategy for internationalisation?
- Do the faculties/departments have plans of action for internationalisation?

#### 2. Organisation and finances

- Does the educational institution have earmarked funds for internationalisation?
- How many employees with internationalisation as their primary area of work does the institution have?

#### 3. Institutional agreements regarding internationalisation and institutional anchoring

- How many agreements does the educational institution have?
- How many agreements resulted in activities in the past year?

#### 4. Outbound and inbound student mobility

- Does the educational institution have a strategy for increasing the number of outbound students?
- What share of the total student population went abroad in the past study year, per destination country and per academic field?
- Does the institution have a strategy for recruiting international students?
- What share of the total student population were inbound students in the past academic year, per destination country and per academic field?

#### 5. Information and profiling

- Does the institution have a plan for international profiling?
- Is the information available in English (including a web site in English)?

#### 6. Study programmes and cooperation on education programmes and degrees

#### 7. Employees and teachers

#### 8. Administration and infrastructure



## A BOARD GAME FOR PREPARING STUDENTS FOR A WORK PLACEMENT PERIOD

The Italian team has prepared a teachers' guide for a board game preparing students for International Work Placement for the Project „Pools-m“.

It is copy left and you can find it [http://www.languages.dk/methods/index.htm#Manuals\\_and\\_guides](http://www.languages.dk/methods/index.htm#Manuals_and_guides) (Ready to use materials)

1. Start
2. Work placement abroad – why? Make a list of 5 reasons for an IWP
3. Working abroad – which are the alternatives? Make a list of 5 ways for an IWP
4. You would miss your mummy's plates. Think about it before leaving. Miss your turn.
5. Costs – make a list of 5 costs to consider when planning an IWP
6. Your parents gave you 1500 euro. Throw the dice again.
7. Costs – fund raising – how can you do that? Make a list of 5 ways to do fund raising for your IWP
8. Your CV. Do you know how to write it? Is there a model? How can you find help or information?
9. Finding a WP abroad. Who can help? Make a list of 5 organizations / programmes that might help you.
10. You're lucky. Your college helps you find a work placement abroad. Throw the dice again.
11. How do you choose the country? Can you make a list of 5 elements that could influence your choice?
12. Where can you find information concerning the country you chose? How about information related to working rules, permits to stay, etc. ?
13. You cannot decide where do you want to go. You need more time and you miss turn.
14. Foreign language. If you don't speak the language of the country you chose or if you have basic knowledge only, what do you think you should do before leaving?
15. Visa/permit to work. What do you know about this?
16. Which are the documents you need to take with you? Can you make a list?
17. For travelling inside EU borders you do not need a visa. Throw the dice again.
18. Rules when contacting a work place abroad. What do you need to send them?
19. Further to your letter of motivation, the company said “no”. Maybe writing that you were expecting a part-time job, 10 hours per week, with a quite interesting salary was not a good idea. Re-organize your priorities and miss a turn.
20. Do you need to sign any contract before starting your IWP?
21. Insurances. What do you know about this?
22. You completely forgot to renew your health card. Miss a turn.
23. Accommodation. Which are the alternatives?
24. Accommodation – what should you do? Who can help? Where can you find information?
25. Your accommodation has been arranged for you by the college. The problem is solved and your IWP looks much closer now; you can throw the dice.
26. Luggage. Can you make a list of indispensable things?
27. Luggage. How heavy can your suitcase be?
28. Check in is already closed when you get to the airport. You have to miss a turn.
29. A friend waits for you at the airport. You can stay at his/her place for a few days and he/she will help you find a room. You're lucky. Throw the dice again.
30. The roommates do not – ever – clean the kitchen. What is your reaction?
31. The roommates: there is no hope, you are absolutely incompatible and you need to find another apartment (on your expenses). Miss a turn and organise your moving out (and in).
32. Your first interview with the company has been a real success. Congratulations! Throw the dice again!
33. It is your first day of work and you are LATE!! Your tutor told you to go home and come back the next day. You need to miss a turn.
34. Language problems. You cannot understand what your colleagues, your tutor are telling you. What should you do?
35. Your expectations are far from reality: you thought you would work in the HR dept. and you're in administration. What do you do now?
36. You got off at the wrong stop. You need to wait for the next bus. You miss your turn.
37. Good! You printed the map in order to get to work! Throw the dice again.
38. You're homesick... What do you do?
39. Someone stole your documents: passport, ID card, everything is gone! Even your credit card! And now?
40. Take one card with 5 Italian phrases on it. You will miss the turns until you learn them all.
41. You're almost at the end of your IWP experience. You need to ask the host company for some documents. Do you know which ones?
42. WORK PLACEMENT



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