



Intercultural
Development
Inventory®

Intercultural Development Plan

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Your Intercultural Development Plan (IDP)

Completing the Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI®) and reviewing your own IDI Individual Profile Report provides key insights into how you make sense of cultural differences and commonalities. The next step is to systematically increase your intercultural competence—from where you are to where you want to be—by designing and implementing your own Intercultural Development Plan® (IDP®). This IDP is *specifically customized to your own IDI profile results* and is an effective way for you to increase your skills in navigating cultural differences. After completing your IDP, you may consider taking the IDI again to determine your progress in increasing your intercultural competence. Should you select this option, a second customized IDP would then be produced based on your most recent IDI profile results, thus providing further intercultural development. By completing your Individual Development Plan, you can:

- Gain insights concerning intercultural *challenges* you are facing and identify intercultural competence development goals that are important for you,
- Gain increased *understanding* of how your Developmental Orientation impacts how you perceive and respond to cultural differences and commonalities, and
- Identify and *engage* in targeted, developmental efforts that increase your intercultural competence in bridging across diverse communities.

Why Have an Intercultural Development Plan?

Have you ever heard someone say, “*experience other cultures—you will be better able to communicate with people who are different from you?*” Many of us may also believe that traveling and living in another country automatically results in our developing greater intercultural competence.

Unfortunately, these are two common myths regarding the development of intercultural competence. Intercultural competence does not simply happen because of being in another culture. For example, assume you are from the United States and you go to Japan and live for six months—or even six years!

Does this mean that you have increased your ability to shift cultural perspective and adapt behavior more effectively and appropriately because of your “Japanese experience?” Not necessarily. You may have lived in and experienced Japan largely from your own, monocultural perspective. You may, for instance, have lived in an area of Japan where people from your own culture predominate and your relationships may have remained largely with people from your own cultural group. Further, your behavior may have changed little even though you were working and living in a foreign country. Under these circumstances, you would likely gain little intercultural competence development.

Making a Commitment

As you review the information in this IDP guide, you will be asked to identify and make a commitment to engage in a set of activities and reflect on what you have learned from those activities. Each activity has a suggested time commitment listed so that, as you design your IDP, you will know the total amount of time you are committing to your own development.

The more activities you select and the more time you work on your IDP, the greater your ability to bridge cultural differences will be. Engaging in the activities in your IDP can help you achieve a gain of one full orientation (or more) along the Intercultural Development Continuum. When possible, you should work on your Intercultural Development Plan at least once, if not twice, a week.

Key Intercultural Learning Opportunities

The specific list of activities in this IDP are targeted to your own Developmental Orientation and are reflective of a wide-range of different learning methods, including:

Training Programs	Are there web-based or in-person training programs you can attend that present information on cultural difference across diverse groups?
Workplace Activities	Are there workplace committees and groups in which you can participate to build your intercultural skills? This can include participating in your organization's diversity and inclusion efforts, joining various affiliation/affinity/employee resource groups, and taking on work-related responsibilities that involve cultural bridging.
Theatre, Film, & Arts	Are you able to attend cross-cultural movies, plays, and other artistic exhibits? Such events often hold post-event discussions that allow you to explore the concepts presented with others who share your interest.
Educational Classes	Are there classes at your community college or university that focus on cross-cultural communication and cross-cultural relations? Other useful courses include ethnic and gender studies classes.
Personal Interactions	Could you work on projects that involve interactions with people from different cultures?
Books & Articles	Are there books or articles you would like to read that specifically describe and explain patterns of cultural difference and similarity?

Intercultural Journal	Could you keep an intercultural journal in which you reflect on cultural differences and commonalities you observe in your daily interactions with people from other cultural groups? You might consider focusing your intercultural journal on situations you have observed or been a part of in which you and/or others needed to understand cultural differences and then respond appropriately.
Travel	Are there cross-cultural travel opportunities on the horizon where you can systematically observe and engage cultural diversity?
Intercultural Coaching	Is there an opportunity to work with a qualified intercultural coach?
Site Visits	Are there specific cultural site visits that can increase your knowledge about diverse cultural experiences?

Tips for increasing the benefits of your IDP:

- If possible, working through your IDP with another person (who is also working on their own IDP) can increase intercultural growth and development for both of you.
- If possible, working with an IDI Qualified Administrator in a coaching capacity can increase insights and learning.
- Completing your activities on a weekly basis deepens intercultural understanding.

“Developing intercultural competence is a core capability in the 21st century that involves cultural self-awareness and culture-other understanding along with the ability to adapt one’s mindset and behavior to bridge across differences.”

Mitchell R. Hammer, Ph.D., 2017

Minimization

Your IDI profile results indicate your Developmental Orientation is within **Minimization**, an orientation that highlights cultural commonality and universal values and principles that may also mask deeper recognition and understanding of cultural differences.

This can often take one of two forms: (1) highlighting commonalities that mask equal recognition of cultural differences due to less cultural self-awareness, more commonly experienced among dominant group members within a cultural community, or (2) highlighting commonalities that mask recognition of cultural differences that functions as a strategy for navigating values and practices largely determined by the dominant culture group, more commonly experienced among non-dominant group members within a larger society.

This “Minimization as a strategy” may have survival value for non-dominant culture members and can be expressed as “go along to get along.”

Your Developmental Opportunity

Minimization recognizes the common humanity of all people and values tolerance of differences but likely overestimates how adaptive to difference one’s behavior may be.

Your developmental task is to consciously balance your focus on commonality with a deeper understanding of differences that do not easily “fit” into commonality frameworks familiar to you.

Tips for selecting developmental activities in your IDP:

- Select activities that pique your curiosity
- Select activities that are enjoyable
- Select activities that are less familiar
- Select activities that are challenging

Designing Your Intercultural Development Plan

Surprisingly, people often have not thought much about the experiences they have had—or not had—around cultural differences and commonalities. Some of us may have had quite varied and extensive living and working experiences in different countries and diverse communities yet have not reflected much on those experiences. Others of us may think we have had little “cross-cultural” experience when in fact cultural influences may have significantly influenced how we live our lives and the goals we set for our work teams and ourselves.

The suggested activities in *1.0.*, *2.0.*, and *3.0.* are *foundational* to deeper intercultural competence development. These foundational activities are designed to increase your cultural self- and other-awareness across all Developmental Orientations along the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC).

The activities suggested in *4.0.* are *targeted to your own primary Developmental Orientation*, as identified by the IDI. As you engage in these activities, you will be able to choose how much time you want to spend on each one.

1.0. What has been your experience with cultural communities? Answer each of the five questions below.

- 1.1. *How diverse is your community (e.g., nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender)? In what ways is diversity recognized by leaders in your community (e.g., festivals, holidays celebrated)? This information can often be found on your local city/community websites. (30-60 minutes)*



- 1.2. *How diverse is your workplace (e.g., nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender)? In what ways is diversity recognized by leaders in your organization (e.g., new hire orientation, organization-sponsored diversity events)? This information can often be found on your organization's website. (30-60 minutes)*

- 1.3. *When and how did you first become aware of cultural groups that were different from your own? (10 minutes)*

- 1.4. *What has been challenging and what has been rewarding in interacting with people from different cultures? (20 minutes)*



- 1.5. *In thinking about your answers to the questions from 1.1. to 1.4., what insights or conclusions come to mind about your overall experience with people who are culturally different from yourself? (20 minutes)*



2.0. Please identify 1-2 goals you have for more effectively navigating cultural differences and commonalities. How will you know you are making progress in meeting these goals? [20 minutes]

2.1. Write out each goal and progress indicator in the following format:

- “I would like to accomplish [xxx].” “I will know I have made progress on this goal when [xxx].” **Here are two examples of different goal/progress indicator statements:**
 - *Goal #1:* **I would like to** more deeply understand how my own cultural community has influenced some of my core beliefs and values.
 - *Progress Indicator #1:* **I will know I have made progress on this goal when** I can better explain my own views and values in cultural terms to people from my own cultural community and to people from diverse groups.
 - *Goal #2:* **I would like to** increase my leadership in my organization around diversity and inclusion efforts.
 - *Progress Indicator #2:* **I will know I have made progress on this goal when** I volunteer and become a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, when I ensure each of our monthly work meetings includes an agenda item related to our team’s progress in meeting diversity and inclusion goals, and when I engage in conversations about cultural differences with people from my own cultural group and other cultural communities.

Goal #1: *I would like to*

Progress Indicators: *I will know I have made progress on this goal when*

1.

2.

3.

Goal #2: *I would like to*

Progress Indicators: *I will know I have made progress on this goal when*

1.

2.

3.

3.0. Identify challenging situations or barriers you face.

3.1. What are 1-2 situations or barriers you face that could interfere with your completion of the IDP, and what could you do to reduce these obstacles? (15 minutes)

<p>Situation/Barrier #1:</p> <p>Actions to Reduce Barrier #1:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3. <p>Situation/Barrier #2:</p> <p>Actions to Reduce Barrier #2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.
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4.0. The following activities will help you deepen your understanding of cultural differences and how these differences impact your and others' actions. Review each activity and select those that are most relevant to you now.

4.1. *How would you describe your cultural background? Listed below are 15 dimensions of diversity. In Column 1, put a check mark by the three diversity dimensions that have most influenced your views of cultural commonalities and differences? Then respond to the questions in Column 2. (30 minutes)*

<p>Column 1: Diversity Dimensions (check top three)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Gender identity <input type="checkbox"/> Nationality <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Family background <input type="checkbox"/> Abilities/disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Educational background <input type="checkbox"/> Home/geographic "roots" <input type="checkbox"/> Language <input type="checkbox"/> Socio-economic status <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Work experiences <input type="checkbox"/> Other diversity dimensions: 	<p>Column 2: Reflection Questions</p> <p><i>How have your top three diversity dimensions influenced your perspective toward cultural commonalities and differences?</i></p> <p><i>How have your top three diversity dimensions influenced your workplace values and practices?</i></p> <p><i>What resources can you find to help you more deeply answer these questions?</i></p>
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- 4.2. *Learning more about patterns of cultural differences across nationality, gender identity, ethnicity, and other cultural communities can help you gain greater insights into your own culturally learned values and behaviors as well values and behavior patterns of other cultural groups. List your findings below. (30 minutes or more)*

1. *Conduct an internet search for various resources that focus on cultural patterns of difference.*
2. *Other resources you may wish to include in your IDP include books that present information on “cultural general” patterns of cultural difference as well as books about specific cultural communities.*
3. *Also, consider intercultural training programs and courses that may be offered at your local college and on the internet.*
4. *Consider learning about intercultural conflict style differences (direct/indirect; emotional expressiveness/restrained), created by Dr. Mitchell Hammer, at: www.icsinventory.com.*

4.3. Increasing cultural self-awareness involves deepening your understanding of how your own cultural values and practices are influenced by the groups to which you belong. Answer the questions below. (20 minutes or more)

What three qualities do you think are important for a person to be considered a “good team member”?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What would you look for in a new team member’s responses and behaviors that might indicate whether they possess these three qualities?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why are these qualities and behaviors important?

How did you learn to value these qualities and behaviors?

What resources can you find to help you more deeply answer these questions?

4.4. *Increasing cultural other-awareness involves deepening your understanding of culturally diverse values and practices of groups who are culturally different from your own. Answer the questions below. (20 minutes or more)*

Identify a cultural group with which you are familiar and whose cultural values and practices are different from your own.

What three qualities do you think are important for a person to be considered a good team member in this other cultural community?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What would people from this other cultural community likely look for in a new team member's responses and behaviors that might indicate whether they possess these three qualities?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why are these qualities and behaviors important in this other cultural community?

How did people from this other cultural community learn to value these qualities and behaviors?

What resources can you find to help you more deeply answer these questions?

- 4.5. *The purpose of this activity is to help you clarify differences between organizational culture and other cultural communities (e.g., nationality, gender, ethnicity). Answer the questions below. (20 minutes or more)*

It is not uncommon for many of us to better understand the cultural values and practices of our organization compared to values and practices of diverse cultural groups. Challenge yourself to look deeply into how you may be using organizational culture as a framework for engaging differences in ways that can divert deeper attention to and understanding of other culture group differences. Summarize your thoughts here.

Consider how the values and leadership practices (i.e., how things are done here) in your organization or school may be consistent with your own cultural group—or the practices of the dominant culture. Summarize your thoughts here.

How inclusive are your organizational values and practices to other, culturally diverse ways of doing things in your organization or school?

What resources can you find to help you more deeply answer these questions?

- 4.6. *Ask one or more close friends or colleagues from another cultural group if they would be willing to have an in-depth conversation with you about what they see as similarities and differences between the two of you. Discuss how these similarities and differences may—or may not—stem from your different cultural experiences. When determining who to engage in these conversations with, consider some of the relationships you have that provide opportunities to explore differences. Consider engaging some of your classmates, colleagues, friends, family, mentors, or others. Remember, the responsibility of building your awareness and understanding is yours, not others'. You may encounter some individuals that are uncomfortable, unable, or unwilling to engage some of these topics. It is important you accept others' decision of not wanting to engage in honor of their choice. Summarize your insights below. (1 hour for each conversation)*

What insights have you gained from your discussion?

What cultural differences were identified by your friend or colleague? Did this surprise you? Why or why not?

What resources can you find to help you more deeply answer these questions?

4.7. *If you are a member of a non-dominant cultural group, are you minimizing your own cultural experiences? Answer the questions below. (30 minutes or more)*

Identify up to three situations where you likely use the “go along to get along” strategy of Minimization.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are the benefits you gain when you use this Minimization strategy?

What are the limitations of this Minimization strategy—when you focus on commonalities to the detriment of bringing your differences (views, experience, values, behavior) to the organizational table?

Is the environment sufficiently safe for you to begin to bring differences forward in ways you may not have done in the past? If not, what other situations are you involved in that provide a personal and professional “zone of safety” for you to focus more on strategies of difference? For example, if the workplace is not a sufficiently safe place to bring differences forward more than you have in the past, might there be community, social, or recreational situations where this can be done more easily?

What resources can you find to help you more deeply answer these questions?

- 4.8. *Identify a specific difference you have observed between your own cultural practices and the practices of another cultural group with which you are familiar (for example, one difference might be how people participate in group discussions). (30 minutes or more)*

Briefly describe this difference:

Give 3 likely explanations for the meaning of this difference from your own cultural point of view:

-
-
-

Give 3 likely explanations for the meaning of this difference from the other group's point of view:

-
-
-

What insights have you gained?

What resources can you find to help you more deeply answer these questions?

4.9. Summary reflection questions. (30 minutes)

Now that you have completed your selected activities, could this new information have changed a situation you experienced in the past? How would this situation have changed?

How can this new information change your perceptions, interpretations, judgments, reactions and/or behaviors in the future?

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”

Marcel Proust