Working in Multicultural Teams

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Team Heterogeneity

- Impact of socialization
- Creativity
- Team development
- Interaction styles
- Faultlines
Team Skills (1)

- Communicative competence and listening skills
- Coping with different levels of language skills
- Developing empathy
- Conflict management & resolution skills (coping with different conflict styles)
- Decision making
Team Skills (2)

- Acceptance of diversity (different styles of reasoning, different values and beliefs) and appreciation of differences
- Different way of handling emotions
- Intercultural competence (e.g. understanding of different concepts of time and space, coping with equality vs. hierarchy) and cultural sensitivity
- Develop a non-judgemental, exploratory attitude
Observations (1)

“I find that it is relatively important that international teams also communicate a little bit outside the office. One gets to know the people better.”
Observations (2)

“Being able to find out that there is a conflict is already difficult. If you are working with Arabs, for example, they won’t show you that there is a conflict.”
“Sometimes the Danes can be quite offensive. But I never know exactly: is it an offense because they want to be offensive, or because they don’t speak the language so well.”
Observations (4)

- “... because the ways of thinking are very different. And I think, that this is the reason for most misunderstandings and conflicts.”

- “if you don’t know the other person and if you don’t know how she thinks, you easily say: what an idiot, what’s she doing, how stupid of her!”
Observations (5)

“\[I\] guess Western Europeans and Americans always have more informal power, more power. Because they can express themselves better. Their cultural, intercultural training is simply better, people skills. I would really use the term “informal elites” here. … this is related to language skills, but also how they approach an issue and problems.”
Aims and Objectives (1)

- Understanding the phases of team development
- Cultural preferences of leadership roles
- Different perceptions of time
- Personal preferences of working styles
- Finding out the team’s strengths and weaknesses
Aims and Objectives (2)

- Dealing with conflict
- Understanding the cultural context of team members
- Communication issues
- Behavioural issues
- Selection of team members
Modes of Learning

- Analytical activities
- Reflexivity
- Putting oneself in another person’s shoes
- Learning from experience
Programme

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