



Gender and interculturality

Target group(s):	All participating groups in educational work
Objective:	<p>Sensitise participants for the connection between gender and intercultural aspects</p> <p>Put gender and intercultural competence in relationship to one another</p>
Method:	Work in working groups
Task:	<p>Work out a definition of intercultural competence (based on the work sheet).</p> <p>How do you link gender and intercultural competence in this definition?</p>
Evaluation:	<p>Presentation of the working group results</p> <p>Compare the definitions, add missing aspects</p>
Time:	<p>90 minutes</p> <p>(45 minutes in working groups, 45 minutes in plenary session)</p>
Materials:	Flipchart paper, pens, work sheet
Note:	
Working tool(s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ibanna Zacharaki: <i>Interkulturelle Kompetenz in der Beratung</i> (Intercultural competence in counselling)2. Manuela Westphal: <i>Interkulturelle Gender-Kompetenz</i> (Intercultural gender competence)

**Worksheet: Intercultural competence in counselling**

Counselling	Aims at coping with demands on a personal and expert level, strengthening self-responsibility and thus the ability to implement the tools and expert proposals autonomously
Target group:	Female migrants and male migrants differ according to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Origin• Income• Social links• Age• Gender• Cultural identification• Residence permit status• Integration status• Future prospects
Situation	Meeting between counsellor and person in search of advice (male / female) with different cultural backgrounds
Stumbling blocks	Possible stumbling blocks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other cultural backgrounds and languages can lead to tension• Insecurity on both sides• Is the communication understandable?• Can the methods be used?• Who experiences reality how?• Missing background information about the situation of the people with different cultural prerequisites: family structures, gender roles, religious and health ideas, ideas about political and social systems
Cultural dimensions	Cultural dimensions according to Hofstede are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power distance: large – small• Collectivism - individualism• Masculinity - femininity• Uncertainty avoidance: strong – weak• Time dimensions• Space dimensions
Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to communicate with relatives of different cultural groups• Empathy• Change of perspective (ability to take up the other person's perspective)• Ability to endure inconsistency• Reflection of the dominance of one's own culture (of one's own country)
Counselling and intervention	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Formal preparationb) Contentual preparationc) Chains of communicationd) Evaluation

**Working tool 1****Ibanna Zacharaki: Interkulturelle Kompetenz in der Beratung, (pp. 178-180)**

Taken from : V.Fischer, M.Springer, I.Zacharaki (Eds.), Interkulturelle Kompetenz, Wochenschauverlag, ISBN 3-89974179-X

Power distance (large-small)

This dimension describes the degree of unequal power distribution within a society and its acceptance by the members of this society.

The distribution of power is handled very differently within different societies. Whereas an unequal distribution of power is accepted as naturally inevitable in some societies, others emphasise equal opportunities and equality of the individual in society. Countries with high power distance have communicative and decisive top-down processes. Customarily one does not disagree, for example with parents, seniors or teachers. In countries with low power distance one proceeds according to the principle of equality which means for example that parents, children, colleagues, and pupils are all equals and meet on the same level.

Self-initiative is permitted and desired here.

Collectivism- Individualism

In societies with individualistically oriented cultures the individual person is enmeshed in a loose network of social relationships. This cultural dimension emphasises the self-responsibility of the individual with the aim of self-realisation. The children learn to think in the "first person" here.

On the other hand, in societies with collective-oriented cultures, close group links with a high degree of expectation and the commitment of mutual help exist within the group. The collective interest of the group dominates the personal interest of the individual. The group dominates the private life and opinion making; individual children learn to think in the "we" form and that the community is paramount. In this system direct arguments are avoided, confrontations and conflicts are disrespectful. The loyalty of the group as well as a pronounced harmonious relationship are paramount values.

"Individualism is highly appreciated in Europe, in America it is paramount; however in Africa individualism is a synonym for misfortune, a curse, a tragedy" (Kapuscinski 1999, , p. 93, f., cited in: Schlippe and others 2004, p.98).

Masculinity - Femininity

Cultural orientation systems with a masculine character emphasise the male gender role. Particularly masculine values such as independence, self-assertion and rivalry are relevant. The roles of the genders overlap in societies in which values with a feminine character are also valid. Feminine values are similarly valued and the members' behaviour is more relationship- and cooperation-oriented.



Uncertainty avoidance (strong – weak)

Different societies have different ways of dealing with uncertain, conflicting and unknown situations. Cultural orientation patterns that are primarily aimed at uncertainty avoidance go hand in hand with the need for clear rules and structured situations. In contrast, cultural orientation patterns that imply weak uncertainty avoidance are coupled with high risk propensity, openness and curiosity towards otherness.

Time-Dimensions

Comparative culture research differentiates between cultures with fast, and cultures with slow rhythms of life. In addition, a differentiation is carried out according to monochromatic and polychromatic timing. In Germany, a monochromatic comprehension of time prevails. This implies that procedures are executed in rotation and fragmented into time segments. Time is regarded as linear and thus moves forward successively. Time is allotted, measured and decreased in production, in the course of rationalisation processes. This demands highly structured, methodical work; stress is placed on punctuality. Working hours and private hours are strictly separated from one another; private life must be respected.

In contrast, polychromatic comprehension of time is encountered in Mediterranean, Latin American, Middle Eastern or African countries. People here do a number of things simultaneously. Human relationships are more important than appointments. Members of these cultures deal with schedules in a very flexible manner.

Space-Dimension

Space concepts are often also shaped by culture. In some cultures, close physical distance while talking to each other is not unusual, others find it unpleasant. Touch is also a normal way of making contact in some cultures, but not in others. In Western societies where a separation of private life and public space prevails, "home" becomes a haven of privacy and shelter. In contrast, this form of privacy does not exist in other societies (for example Muslims). Against the background of Muslim space concepts (Mihciyazgan 1995, p.47), unannounced visitors are not a disturbance.

Male and female advisors must incorporate cultural contexts into the counselling. They must examine the respective cultural systems, and remain particularly critical of their own cultural concepts. *"Constricting living conditions" for a German, can be just right and comfortable for a family in a different culture. Seen from there, the isolation experienced by a nuclear family in a West European flat might be greeted with misgiving.* (Schlippe and others 2004, p.98).



Working tool 2

by Prof. Dr. Manuela Westphal

Intercultural gender competence

Heterogeneity of the immigrant groups, transnationality and intersectionality are challenges that are gaining significance in migration and integration work. As a result, the objective is to organise integration work not only gender-equal and democratic, but also focus on further alternative categories, which can appear objectively as well as subjectively for example in discrimination due to language origins. For this reason gender mainstreaming also includes the so-called cultural mainstreaming – or in brief: *gender cultural mainstreaming*.

Gender cultural mainstreaming as a structural process can only be established with the cooperation of the specialists in the organisations and institutions. Therefore, the staff needs intercultural gender competence qualifications. However, in addition to the mainly overemphasised cultural dimension, interculturality also includes the social and psychological dimension (cf. Pavkovic 1999). The fields comprised in this competence and what recommendations can be given for work in the different fields of integration are disclosed in the following.

Intercultural gender competence of specialists includes acknowledging the diversity of men and women. This means not only taking the differences and variables between genders into account, but also appreciating them within the gender groups. In addition, in an intercultural context gender varies even further, and carries different - but also common - images and ideas. This diversity between and within the gender groups and the cultural contexts must be taken very seriously, and must be considered in the implementation to avoid stereotypicalifications and intensification of the differences (dramatisation) (cf. above).

When discussing gender or other differences, one ought to keep in mind that stereotypes are neither assigned (men are like this, women are like that), nor discharged into a seeming neutrality (women aren't really very different from men). Therefore, it remains ambivalent and increasingly difficult whenever there is talk about "feminine views" or "feminine methods". However, this also applies to the cover-up or neutralisation of differences. Therefore, intercultural gender competence has the **ability to recognise seemingly neutral subject matter**. For the qualification of the specialists this means that this ability is encouraged by means of appropriate methods and reflections and perhaps – this is where the precise instructions come into play¹ – furnish them with tools such as (simplified) checklists, 3-Rmethod etc. If the alleged neutrality is not recognised as such, stereotypes will continue – and gender cultural mainstreaming will be thwarted.

Within the scope of intercultural gender competence, making new ways of life for the immigrants in the integration process must be recognised and encouraged. They must be empowered to participate and form society in an active, informed, critical and responsible manner (**empowerment**). **Subject orientation** serves as a foundation of empowerment. This means that the immigrants with their respectively specific achievements, strengths, self-concepts and interests are at the centre of the contemplations and focus of one's own field

¹ 34 instructions and tools including checklists play an important part in gender training because they convey security in the GM-process.



Exercises > Gender in Profession / Expert Fields > Interculturality

of work. The female and male immigrants ought to be able to reflect on their own - often unconscious – assumptions concerning other status and gender groups and perceive variability as well as ambiguousness not as a threat, but as enrichment for themselves, for the understanding of the host society and for the integration process. It is advisable to **tie in to the potentials of the immigrants**. The relationship of women to technology provides an example: whereas in Germany the stereotype assumption that girls or women reveal (or ought to reveal) very little interest in scientific or mathematical subjects is very widespread, for example engineering studies, immigrants enter the country without this one-sided "typification".

This implies that girls unbiased by these beliefs are able to select precisely these careers and participate. Furthermore, it is significant that potential either unconscious or suppressed by stereotypes and responsibilities must be encouraged. It is advisable for example that male immigrants become aware of their responsibility for parenting and child care, joint housekeeping and integration.

A further core issue in subject orientation (and additionally in intercultural gender competence) lies in the **methods competence** of the experts. This is not only based on a large repertoire of different methods but also on method security as well as the ability to use or adapt methods according to the situation and context. Methods that in addition to the self-qualification of the immigrants also aim at dismantling the stereotypes have proven particularly suitable. According to the new Immigration Act, integration is defined as an equal participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life. However, reality in the German immigration society is characterised by numerous problems and conflicts that emerge in various forms of social inequality and unequal treatment. In many cases, discrimination is based on the following criteria: lifestyle, skin colour, ethnic-national origins and religious affiliation. The classification and stereotyping of immigrants does not stop at the institutions and staff members in integrational fields of work. One can clearly speak of ethnocentric organisational culture and working methods. An example could be the previous alignment of advisory services for "German middle-class families" that does not reach the immigrants. We believe that in this context it is vital that both the immigrants and the specialised staff be familiarised with the issue of xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism. A further dismantling of stereotypes and racism in integrational fields of work and organisations could be encouraged by letting the specialists work together in intercultural teams, i.e. they would have to be more open to specialists with a migration background.

All in all we realise that the acquisition of intercultural gender competence is never completed: images and ideas and the differentiation lines repeatedly develop, expand and change. Support on the part of the institutions is necessary to keep this process in flux: premises, time, personnel and money must be provided if a qualitative improvement of the fields of work within the scope of intercultural gender competence is aspired.



Summary :

- Gender cultural mainstreaming as a structural process can only be carried out with the cooperation of the staff. This requires intercultural gender competence:
 - Acknowledgement of the diversity of men and women
 - Ability to recognise seemingly neutral matters
 - Consideration of different dimensions of interculturality and gender (social, cultural and psychological dimensions)
 - Taking the individual immigrant into account (subject orientation)
 - Empowerment
 - Method diversity and security
 - Knowledge of context and effectiveness of ethnical, gender and cultural difference
 - Recognise and resolve ethnocentric and institutional discrimination
 - Development of competence concerning "empathetic dialogue"
- Formation of intercultural employee teams
- Provision of premises, personnel, time and money for the gender cultural mainstreaming process and the encouragement of intercultural gender competence

Source:

by Prof.Dr.Manuela Westphal: *Gender Mainstreaming der sozialen Orientierungskurse in der Landesstelle Unna Massen für Aussiedler, Zuwanderer und ausländische Flüchtlinge, Abschlussbericht*, Universität Osnabrück, 7.4.2005, page 95 ff.