

# Intercultural Learning for Sustainable Living

## Intercultural learning Toolkit

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## **Toolkit**

### **Introduction**

Intercultural learning is a lifelong learning process that may take place in any formal, nonformal, or informal setting; it is a process that may happen internally through self-directed learning or within a group. To activate intercultural learning for sustainable development, we shall consider the process from a non-anthropocentric and a non-ethnocentric point of view, where individuals with various cultural backgrounds learn inclusively from each other in a context that considers other beings such as plants, animals, and the environment surrounding them. This toolkit contains experiential learning tools that combine intercultural learning with global learning from a none ethnocentric and non-anthropocentric point of view; these tools are for hosts who aim to unleash the full potential of intercultural exchanges as a tool to employ our diverse and intercultural pieces of knowledge for sustainable living.

### **“Animal Culture”**

#### **General description of the tool:**

Through theater and its based techniques, the participants experience the meaning of “Non-Human Animal Cultures” out of speciesism. The host gives a task through role-playing that allows participants to decide on a time frame and region where specific environmental crises occur. Afterward, the participants symbolically invite a particular species of animals. After the host explains the main elements of non-humans animal culture, the participants embody the characteristics of the non-human animals they invited to observe how the invited animals interact over time and how their culture of communication, selecting a partner, migrating, and feeding develops over time and in response to the environmental problems; through experiential learning, the participants will reflect on the concepts of animal culture, and they will evaluate their intercultural sensitivity from a non-anthropocentric lens.

#### **Aim:**

This tool aims to create an experience where we enhance our intercultural sensitivity out of anthropocentrism. This is by exploring the concept of non-human animal cultures through stimulation and role-playing; for some participants, the learning experience reaches its peak after the role-playing through group reflection and self-directed learning tools.

#### **Hosts and participants:**

This experiential learning space can be hosted by people familiar with the concepts and values of non-human animal cultures, intercultural sensitivity, antispeciesism, sustainable development, and anthropocentrism.

We recommend the number of 12 participants per session. This learning space can host any participant from any background; it is designed for adult learners, yet with little modification on the theoretical part and more investment in the role-playing elements, this experience can be suitable for children from any age group; no previous knowledge of the topic is required. The

tool stimulates empathy as an essential driver of intercultural sensitivity out of anthropocentric limitations.

### **Duration:**

With the attendance of twelve participants, this experience will last approximately two hours; we recommend a short break of 15 minutes between the two hours.

### **Instructions for implementation:**

#### **First round:**

Divide the participants into three subgroups; we recommend that each group has four participants. In groups, the participants will choose a particular region and a specific time frame which can be divided into three periods of life; for example, nine years or fifteen years; they will select environmental problems that occur in this region and this time frame. Each group will have five minutes to share a summary of their outcomes with the broader group.

#### **Second round:**

The host will present the concept of animal culture and the main elements. We recommend sharing a summary of animal culture from at least two different studies; we suggest reviewing animal culture from the lens of [the Japanese primatologists](#) and from the [culture of animals in antiquity](#). In conclusion, the host presents the main elements of animal culture as follows:

- feeding behaviors
- vocalizations (Most species cannot learn to imitate sounds. Some can learn how to use innate vocalizations in new ways)
- predator avoidance
- mate selection,, and
- migratory routes

each subgroup selects one speice of animals that live in the region or geographical location they previously selected. Afterward, the host informs the participants to go back to their subgroups and prepare three scenes during three periods of time where their selected animals act the five elements of their culture in response to the environmental problems the group previously chose; the host needs to clarify **that there are no wrong or right acts as the aim of this exercise is to stimulate our empathy toward animals through the power of imagination and role-playing.**

#### **Third Round:**

Each group presents its three scenes; after each role-play, the host facilitates a short discussion with a broader group tackling these questions: 1. What behaviors appeared, how did they change, and why? 2. How have these behaviors created and manifested the culture of these animals? And one question only to the group who presents 3. To which extent do our scenes present the culture of animals, and to which extent to was influenced by our perspective as humans?

#### **Fourth Round: Reflection and evaluation as part of the experiential learning process:**

In this section, we start with reflection; the host shall motivate the participants to reflect on their feelings while trying to embody the animals; which part was the hardest and why? Which part was the most pleasant and why? After going through this experience, how do they perceive animals? Is there any change in their perspective, and why? At the first stage of the reflection, we recommend that the host ask the participants to answer these questions individually to have a deep self-reflection as part of the self-directed learning process; afterward to open the space for group sharing and group reflection for those who would like to share;

In the evaluation part, we ask questions that tackle the bias of ethnocentrism; to which extent did our scenes genuinely present the culture of animals? Based on the flow of the conversation, we may proceed with the following questions: Why do we have challenges genuinely feeling animals and emphasize them as equals from their lens and not ours? Why is it essential to emphasize animals? How does the lack of empathy towards animals contribute to speciesism? How can we enhance our intercultural sensitivity toward animals? What can we do better to end speciesism?

## **“Beyond Chairs “**

### **General description:**

This tool can be used as a simulation exercise to enhance cultural awareness out of ethnocentrism. This experiential learning tool enhances the understanding of values within the spectrum of individualism and collectivism, concluding that winning or losing is a matter of perspective and can vary based on our intercultural sensitivity and cultural understanding. This tool is developed based on the “music chairs” activity and the cultural theories of individualism and collectivism. It creates an experience for self-directed learning to enhance intercultural awareness and sensitivity.

### **Host and Participants:**

This experiential learning tool can be hosted by people who are familiar with concepts of cultural differences in a spectrum of individualism and collectivism; we recommend that this tool is to be used by people who are familiar with the values and concepts of intercultural sensitivity to facilitate a discussion that is oriented toward ethnorelativism and out of ethnocentrism. The participants can be from any background; it is designed for both adult learners and children, yet the original version of this tool is intended for adult learners; the theoretical part of the tool can be adapted based on the age group of the participants; the hosts of this tool need to acknowledge that cultures and cultural identities are fluid; therefore, the theoretical parts of this learning tool shall not compose of any generalization based on geographical distributions. It is recommended to have 10 to 12 participants by session.

**Period:** with the attendance of 12 participants, the implementation of this tool shall take approximately from one hour to one hour and a half based on the time invested in the reflection and evaluation as part of the experiential learning cycle.

### **Instructions for implementation:**

#### **First Round**

Divide the participants into groups “one and two.” Ask group number one to stay with host number one in room number one; meanwhile, the members of group number two go with the host number two to the room or space number two.

In-room/space number one: the rules of the known game “music chairs” are applied and explained from the lens of collectivism as follows:

- after the music stops, all people have to be seated.
- If no one has been left behind without a chair, all group members will be honored.
- In each round, you take one chair out.
- In each round, all the people shall be seated; they can share chairs with others in their groups, and the group can find its strategy

In-room/space number two:

- After the music stops, each person shall have a chair to set on;
- those without chairs lose and get out of the game.
- In each round, you take one chair out.
- In each round, someone who did not manage to get a chair will lose.
- There is only one person as a winner at the end.

## **Second Round**

After the end of the two games in the two rooms, the groups shall switch places, and they play again; now, group number one plays in room number two and visa-versa. Therefore, the participants will explore the concept of this game from two dimensions, collectivism, and individualism, with both collective and individualistic rules to play the game.

After the participants play in the two rooms, you conduct a reflection and evaluation. We suggest making a presentation on the cultural theories of individualism and collectivism; afterward, you may distribute surveys for self-directed learning where the participants analyze and evaluate their cultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity; at last, you may have the final round, which consists of reflection and evaluation; You may also keep the theoretical presentation and the survey at the end of the session and after reflection and evaluation.

## **Third round/ Evaluation and Reflection:**

After presenting the theory and distributing the surveys, you may conduct a reflection session for in-group discussion followed by evaluation as part of the experiential learning cycle. We suggest the following questions for reflection and evaluation, which you may build on and develop further based on the orientation of the discussion and the participants’ views. Yet, it is important to give sufficient time for reflection and not skip it directly to evaluation.

Therefore, kindly notice the difference in the formats of the questions dedicated for reflection and how they vary from the questions directed to evaluation. Reflection in the experiential learning cycle is dedicated to understanding and analyzing the feelings throughout the process; while evaluation is a step further where the participants connect the emotions they experienced during the tool with the outside world and real-life scenarios; through evaluation, the participants highlight the positive things they experienced and the challenges they encountered during the activity while connecting them to similar challenges they face in real life; this is to

find our concert solutions and steps that they can take to overcome similar challenges that they encounter in real life.

Suggested questions for reflection:

- which room did you enjoy more, and why?
- How was the concept of winning manifested in room/place one? How was it in room/space number two, and why?
- How did you feel while playing according to the collectivistic rules “everyone loses or wins together”? How did you feel while playing according to the individualistic rules and why?
- Did you encounter any challenging feelings? And if yes, what is it, and where do you think it comes from?

Suggested questions for evaluation:

- Have you encountered similar situations in real life as those in room/space one or two before? What are they?
- Have you experienced differences in real-life similar to the ones you experienced in room/space one and two? What are they?
- How did you deal with these differences?
- What would you do better next time if you encounter these differences between individualistic and collectivistic approaches?

### **Behind the Vile of Ignorance**

#### **General description:**

This tool is developed by integrating the theory of justice by Rawls with an old traditional game “Hakem, Jallad” / “Ruler and Executer,” which is still played in different countries such as Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Iran.

One of the principles of Rawal’s theory on justice is called “the vile of ignorance,” which refers to the concept that when people divide duties and rights, they shall do it without knowing who they will be in the society; in other words, people shall imagine that they may be reborn in anyone’s else position; for example, they might be born as women, as queer, as fluid gender, non-binary or as men, etc. therefore, when they set the duties, rights, and rules in the society, they shall be aware that they can be anyone in it.

The traditional game of “Ruler and Executer” before we adapt it to the theory of justice goes as follows: 1. You write four roles on four pieces of paper; the roles are: - government (in the original game king). – Police – Minister and – Thief. 2. Each person picks a paper; they do not tell who they are and do not show the other people in the group their papers. 3. The government announces itself, and they call for the minister. 4. The minister needs to guess the remaining two people, who is the thief and who is the police? 5. If the minister gets it right, they can punish the thief with any punishment they want; if the minister gets the answer wrong, the government may punish the minister with a punishment of their selection.

The experiential learning tool “behind the veil of ignorance” is built and inspired by the theory of justice and the traditional game “Ruler and Executer” described above. We developed the

traditional game to become an experiential learning tool where the theory of justice can be brought by its practitioners in practice and through learning by feeling and doing.

### **Hosts and participants:**

One host can facilitate this learning tool, and it can be played in groups of participants from 4 to 16 people. The host shall be familiar with the theory of justice by Rawls, with particular emphasis on the principle of “the veil of ignorance.” All people from different age groups can participate in this learning experience. After the learning experience, the host may present the theory of justice and facilitate a discussion on it based on their group’s needs.

**Duration:** we recommend dedicating one hour and a half to a group of 16 participants.

### **Instructions for implementation:**

Round one: setting the rules, duties, and rights:

- Make four groups; four persons in each group
- Each group shall identify the duties and rights of four roles: government, thief, judge, and minister.
- Each group shall list the punishments that rulers can give to people who commit crimes, such as thieves.
- Each group presents its outcomes to the broader group.

Round two: playing according to the rules set during round one.

- Each role is written on a piece of paper (government; thief; minister; executor, these are the original titles which the participant may change during round one).
- Each participant chooses a paper; they do not show it to other participants.
- The government announces itself; they call for the minister.
- The minister identifies themselves.
- The minister has to guess who is the thief and who is the executor; the thief and executor may defend themselves by trying to convince the minister that the other person is the thief.
- If the minister guesses right, they can punish the thief (they shall choose the punishment from the list of sentences that the group created in round one). If the minister guesses wrong, then the government may punish the minister, of course, also from the list of punishments that the group created in the first round.
- The thief and minister can use their rights which the group decided during the first round.

Round three: Reflection, presentation, and evaluation:

Reflection: the host in this part asks the group two kinds of questions about their feelings about setting the rules, duties, and rights before the game starts and after. We suggest the following questions which can be developed throughout the process:

- How was the process of setting the punishments, rules, duties, and rights before you started playing?
- How did you choose the rules, punishments, duties, and rights? What were you thinking of when you proposed them? Did you have any criteria, and what was it?

- Why have you chosen these rules, punishments, duties, and rights and not something else?
- How did you feel during the game, and why? What was the easy part for you, and what was the hardest?
- After playing the game, did you wish to change, adapt, or delete any of the rules, punishments, duties, and rights you agreed on before and why?

Presentation: before moving from the reflection to evaluation, we recommend preparing and presenting a summarized presentation about the theory of justice, emphasizing the veil of ignorance principle.

Evaluation: the host in this part asks questions that connect this experience to other real-life situations. They also facilitate discussions where the participants in this experience can evaluate the steps they took in rounds one and two by asking them if they took any action and what they would change if they repeat the experience and why. We suggest the following questions which can be developed and adapted during the discussion:

- Looking back throughout the experience, are there any rules, duties, or rights you previously agreed on, and now you feel like you would change them? What are they, and why?
- Does this experience relate or resonate with other situations in real life? If yes, what are they, and how?
- Reflecting on these real-life situations, how would you act/react to influence them or change them?

In conclusion, the group will revisit the theory of justice and wrap up with recommendations based on their experience of what defines a just society and how social justice can be assured.

### **A walk-in Plants path**

#### **General description:**

Through role-playing, the participants will learn about different plants that migrated across continents and countries. The participants explore these plants' history and enhance their empathy towards plants as migratory actors while experiencing migration from a non-anthropocentric approach. This learning experience uses performing arts and stimulation exercises to review the concept of migration from new angles and unfamiliar perspectives.

#### **Hosts and Participants:**

One host can deliver this learning experience; we recommend the host read about the migration of plants; we propose creating this experience for 9 or 12 participants at the time. Yet, it is possible to adapt the tool based on the number of participants. This learning experience primarily addresses adult learners from any background, yet it can be modified to suit children from different age groups.

**Period:** this experience requires approximately one hour and a half with an attendance of 12 participants.



## Instructions for implementation:

First round:

- With the participants, create four groups.
- Send one of the following four photos for each group.
- Provide a list of questions on each photo. (At this stage, you do not provide the names of the plants or any keywords)
- Each group will have 10 minutes to imagine the name and locations where each plant came from and migrated to. (Inform the groups that they shall use their imagination at this stage as there are no wrong and right answers).

Delegate one photo for each group; the participants in subgroups will have ten minutes to answer the following questions:

What do you imagine the name of this plant is?

Where did initially it come from?

When and how did it migrate?

Why did it migrate?

In which locations is it now?



**2**



3



4



At the end of the ten minutes, each group has 5 minutes to share the outcomes of their discussion with the broader group.

#### Second round:

- Reveal the names of the plants of the participants and share with them a recommended reading to navigate again through the questions from the first round. The name of the plants and the following recommended readings are as follow:
  1. Maize: [European and American maize: Same same, but different](#)
  2. Sweet Potato: [Sweet potato migrated to Polynesia thousands of years before people did](#)
  3. Sage Plant: [Sage Plant History](#)
- The participants read about the plants back into their subgroups.
- Each group prepares a scene using role-playing to tell the migratory stories of these plants.
- After each performance, the host facilitates a discussion on the shared stories of migratory plants and how they impacted our world.

#### Third Round reflection and evaluation:

In the reflection part, the host asks the participants about the feelings they experienced throughout the process:

- Did you think of plant migration previously?
- Was it easy or hard to imagine the migratory stories of plants? And why?
- How did you feel exploring the migratory routes of plants?

The host asks questions that connect this learning experience to the real-life scenario in the evaluation part.

- Did you find any connections between these stories and issues connected to sustainable development in our life? What are they and how we may overcome them?