

## **A multicultural project – from misunderstandings to a common picture**

23<sup>rd</sup> IPMA world congress, 15-17 June 2009, Helsinki Finland  
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## **Summary**

- Introduction
- Cultural impact
- Cultures
- Languages
- What went wrong?
- Draw a common picture
- Wrap-up

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## Cultural impact

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Culture is...

...an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning  
...the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterises an institution, organisation or group

- Impact on personal and professional life
- Language
- Prejudices
- Cultural differences should be used in a positive way!
- Culture in a country vs. company culture

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## Project team

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- Over 15 nationalities
- Greetings
- Socialising
- Ways to work
  - Meeting discipline
  - Respecting agreements
  - Etc
- Openness



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## Language

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- English – official project language
- Language in the office – on site
- Language skills
- Ways to say things
- Importance of a common language



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## What went wrong?

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- False common picture – different expectations
- Misunderstandings -> mistrust
- Distance
- Different project tools - different priorities



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## Draw a common picture

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- One team – one goal
- New mindset
- Cultural tolerance
- New-built trust
- Best tools/practises from each culture



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## Conclusions

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- Culture must be handled in the start-up phase
- Prioritise face-to-face communication
- Show examples
- Know the basic cultural rules
- Make regular checks
- See the good sides



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## Working in a multicultural environment

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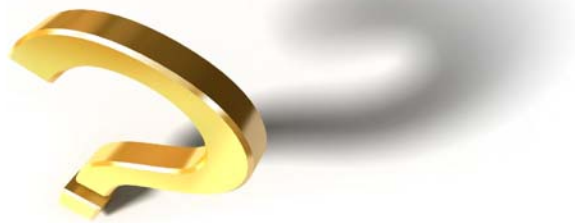
- Interesting
- Frustrating
- Personal development
- Open your mind
- Risk of addiction



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## Questions?

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