

Nimisha Ghorpade Interview on Cross Cultural Management

Alumna from oikos Pune

What are your thoughts on the process of adapting to a new multicultural environment (being in a team or in a country)?

I think that's a great idea. This way we are more sensitive to everyone on the team and also helps in smooth functioning. For example, I remember during the 2016 FL, the organizing team had considered the dates for Diwali which is a big festival celebrated in India. This helped everyone to be available and helped in better output of the work.

What were your personal attitudes that enabled you to conquer the culture shock?

I think I grew up going for a lot of camps and conferences and event which has helped me to break ice with other cultures. This has also made me sensitive to the other cultures and their way of life. I think having an open mind really helps in this process.

What has been the toughest cross cultural experience you have ever lived? How did you overcome it?

I think my toughest cross cultural experience easily is food! Being a vegetarian, I was exposed to certain cultures where food with meat or eggs was very innate and primary to them. So, I would think that it was bit of struggle for me.

Any (funny) anecdotes of critical incidents (cultural adaptation) that you would like to share with the oikos community?

This one is tough. There are many but I will settle for the one that I have seen the most. I think mix gender hostel rooms is something that people are not exposed to and that can lead to many funny incidents.

What were the main challenges to work in a team with Brazilian, German and Indian to create an even more international event ?

- i. The first would be language barrier.
- ii. Understanding of the task at hand. Sometimes between two people there could be difference of opinion on understanding what exactly the task at hand is.
- iii. Experiences in terms of sustainability. The word sustainability works very different for all these three communities. For example, just segregating household waste could be a big sustainable step for Indians whereas it's something that Germans already used to. Similarly, clean energy for Germans and Brazilians and Indians could be very different too.
- iv. Challenges every country faces could be different. Like being sustainable is a challenge that Indians are still overcoming every day whereas it's something innate to Germans.

I think the term "You have to be in other person's shoes to understand where they come from" plays a very important challenge when one talks of cross-cultural working.