Preparing an Intercultural Development Plan: Step 1—Review Your IDI Individual Profile Results

As a first step, review the results from your individual IDI profile. Take some time to answer the following questions. Some of these questions you may have already discussed with an IDI Qualified Administrator; if so, then you can move more quickly through these questions.

1.1 What are your overall Developmental Orientation and Perceived Orientation? Check your orientation in each column.

Developmental Orientation	Perceived Orientation
❒ Denial	❒ Denial
❒ Polarization (Defense/Reversal)	❒ Polarization (Defense/Reversal)
❒ Minimization	❒ Minimization
❒ Acceptance	❒ Acceptance
❒ Adaptation	❒ Adaptation

1.2 Is there an Orientation Gap between your Developmental Orientation and your Perceived Orientation indicated in your IDI profile? What does this mean in terms of your own sense of how capable you are in shifting cultural perspective and appropriately adapting behavior around cultural differences and commonalities?

1.3 Do you have any Trailing Orientations? If so, what are they? What impact do you feel these Trailing Orientations have in terms of "holding you back" from more effectively dealing with cultural differences and commonalities?

1.4 What is your Leading Orientation? As you design your Intercultural Development Plan, your Developmental Orientation and your Leading Orientation are the Orientations on which your development planning should focus.

Preparing an Intercultural Development Plan: Step 2—Your Intercultural Background & IDI Profile Results

Surprisingly, people often have not thought much about the experiences they have had—or not had—around cultural differences and commonalities. For some of us, we may have had quite varied and extensive living and working experiences in different countries yet have not reflected much on those experiences. For others of us, we may think we have had little "cross-cultural" experience when in fact we may have had significant cultural influences on how we live our lives and the goals we set for our work teams and ourselves.

2.1 Take a moment to reflect on your experiences with culturally diverse groups.

- When did you first become aware of cultural groups that were different from your own?
- What kinds of experiences have you had with people from different cultural communities?
- What has been challenging and what has been rewarding in interacting with people from different cultures?

2.2 Listed below are 12 primary dimensions of diversity. Put a check mark by the three diversity dimensions that have most influenced your views of cultural commonalities and differences?

Diversity Dimension	Check (✓) your Top Three Diversity Dimensions
Gender	_____
Nationality	_____
Race/Ethnicity	_____
Age	_____
Family background	_____
Abilities/disabilities	_____
Religion	_____
Educational background	_____
Home/geographic "roots"	_____
Sexual orientation	_____
Socio-economic status	_____
Work experience	_____

2.3 How have your top three diversity dimensions influenced (1) your perspective toward cultural similarities and differences, and (2) your work practices? If this is difficult, you may wish to return to this question later in the process.

2.4 In what ways might your experiences with people from your own nationality/ethnic group and with people from different countries and ethnicities have influenced:

- Your perceptions about what you find challenging in working with people from difference cultures?
- Your Developmental Orientation identified in your IDI individual profile?

Preparing an Intercultural Development Plan: Step 3—Analyze Developmental Goals & Progress Indicators

The third step is to identify key goals and progress indicators important to you. These goals should focus on what you would like to achieve when cultural differences and commonalities are present and need to be successfully navigated. The progress indicators are how you will know you are achieving your goals.

Review your responses to the contexting questions in your individual IDI profile in identifying your goals.

3.1 Identify 3-5 goals and their progress indicators that you are willing to commit to achieving in the immediate future. Make sure these goals are important to you and are directly related to increasing your ability to effectively navigate cross-cultural differences and commonalities.

Write out each goal and progress indicator in the following format:

I would like to . . . . I will know I have made progress on this goal when . . . .

Here are two examples of different goal/progress indicator statements:

Goal #1: **I would like to** more deeply understand how my own cultural community has influenced some of my core beliefs and values.
Progress Indicator #1: **I will know I have made progress on this goal when** I can better explain my own views and values in cultural terms to people from my own cultural community and to people from diverse groups.

Goal #2: **I would like to** increase my leadership in my organization around diversity and inclusion efforts.
Progress Indicator #2: **I will know I have made progress on this goal when** I volunteer and become a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, when I insure each of our monthly work meetings includes an agenda item related to our team's progress in meeting diversity and inclusion goals, and when I engage in conversations about cultural differences with people from my own cultural group and other cultural communities.

Preparing an Intercultural Development Plan: Step 4—Identify Intercultural Stress Points

The next step is to identify those work-related, personal, social or community challenges or situations you are facing or will be facing in which cultural differences and commonalities "make a difference". These challenges or situations should be related to your goals to be more interculturally successful that you identified in step 3.

One way to think about these situations is to think of them as *intercultural stress points* where you are challenged to be more effective around cultural differences. For example, some people find situations in the workplace that revolves around how to handle disagreements or conflicts when the other party is from a cultural community different from their own to be challenging. Another situation might involve how to more effectively interview diverse talent for your organization. A third situation may involve how to more effectively manage classroom learning when students are from multiple cultural backgrounds. As you think about these situations, you might find it useful to refer back to your responses to the contexting questions in your individual IDI profile.

4.1 Identify 3-5 intercultural stress points that you find challenging in effectively responding to cultural differences. These intercultural stress points should describe situations you face that you believe interfere with your effectively accomplishing the goals you identified earlier in Step 3 of this IDP.

4.2 How do these stress points act as barriers to you being as effective as you'd like to be? Consider factors over which you have some control and the removal of which would enhance your capability in navigating cultural differences and commonalities.

Preparing an Intercultural Development Plan: Step 5—Create Your Intercultural Development Plan

This section highlights questions, activities, and opportunities for intercultural development related to *your specific Developmental Orientation and Leading Orientation*. Not every suggestion may be useful to you. Review the various suggestions and select those you feel would be most beneficial to increasing your understanding of cultural differences and commonalities and helping you more effectively adapt to observed differences.

The first set of suggestions is related to your primary Developmental Orientation while the second set of suggestions focuses on your Leading Orientation. You should review these suggestions in the order presented, first working through suggestions related to your Developmental Orientation and then moving to activities related to your Leading Orientation.

The suggestions are organized into three main developmental categories:

? This symbol refers to a learning suggestion that involves reflection on past, current or future perceptions, values, and behaviors.

This symbol identifies a topic that is suited for writing your thoughts and observations in an intercultural journal.

This symbol refers to an activity in which you do something that is beneficial in building your intercultural competence.

When selecting some of the suggestions provided, *we encourage you to select those recommendations that you feel would be most helpful and applicable to you, your goals and the situations (intercultural stress points) you identified earlier in the developmental plan*. This will best support your intercultural competence development. Your IDI® development journey is now underway. Aldous Huxley, after he returned from his first overseas exploration, said:

> *So the journey is over and I am back again, richer by much experience and poorer by many exploded convictions, many perished certainties . . . I set out on my travels knowing or thinking I knew, how [people] should live, how be governed, how educated, what they should believe. I had my views on every activity of life. Now, on my return, I find myself without any of these pleasing certainties . . . When one is traveling, convictions are mislaid as easily as spectacles, but unlike spectacles, they are not easily replaced.*
>
> Quoted in J. Wurzel, 2004, Toward Multiculturalism, p. 7