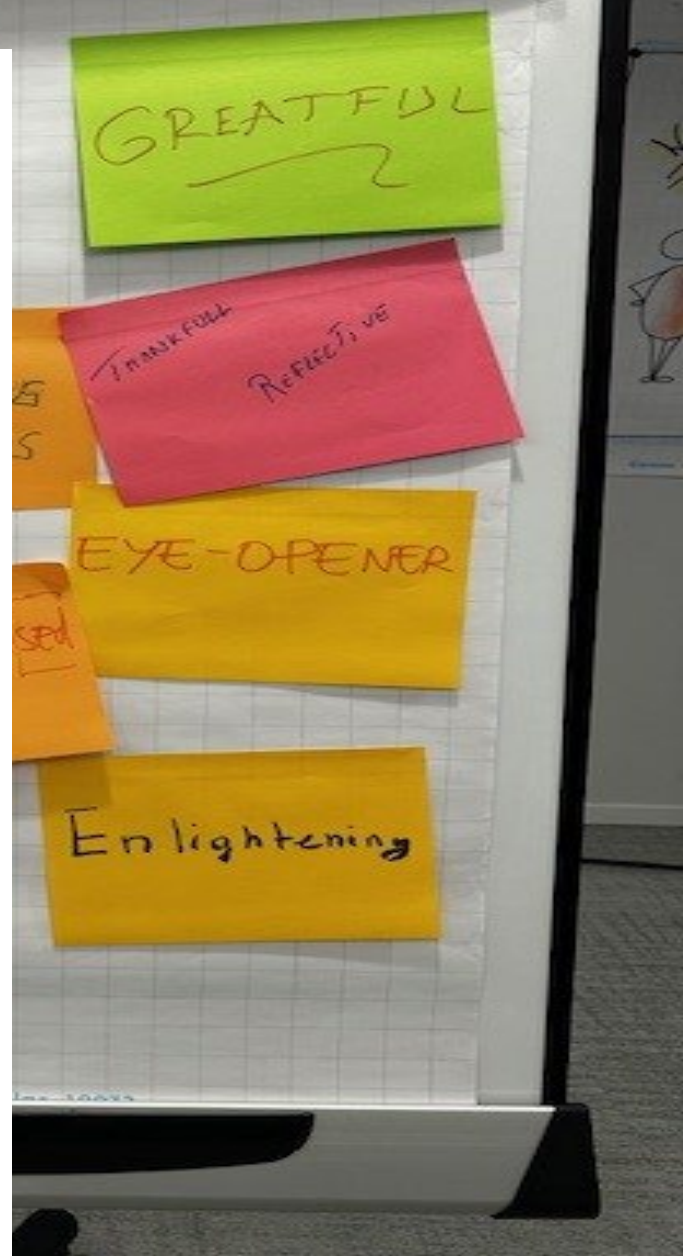


Intercultural Training



02.04 – 04.04.2025 in Brussels

A WAPES and SkillLab Collaboration

Authored by Nicole Clobes, seconded Consultant to the
WAPES Secretariat

Introduction and where it all started

“To make great ideas a reality, we must act, fail, adapt, and learn on a daily basis“ - Jocelyn K. Gleib

The concept for the Intercultural Training Seminar originated at an international conference attended by key personnel from Public Employment Services and SkillLab. Recognizing the critical importance of skill and knowledge acquisition for both clients and staff, Ludger and I conceptualized a training platform to enhance intercultural competencies. This led to the establishment of a formal collaboration between WAPES and SkillLab, encapsulated in a Letter of Intent between both organizations.

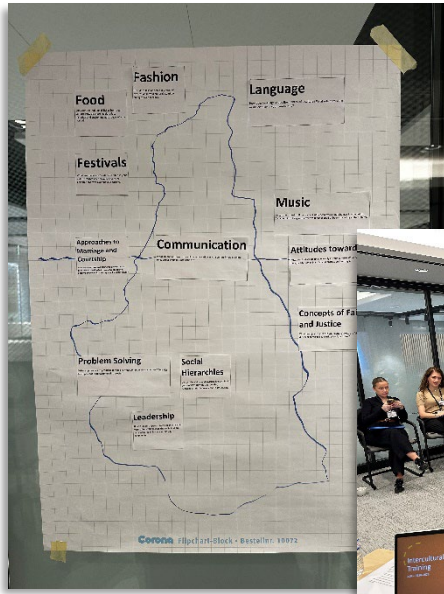


Genesis of the Seminar

Motivated by this enthusiasm, we initiated the Intercultural Training Workshop. The call for applications was met with a remarkable response from our members, reflecting widespread recognition of the value of such training. The seminar commenced with eleven participants representing ten countries across four WAPES regions from three continents.

Workshop Agenda and Execution

The workshop was hosted in Brussels, Belgium, mainly at WAPES premises from April 2 to April 4, 2025. The agenda was meticulously planned to cover a comprehensive range of topics pertinent to intercultural understanding and cooperation.



Day 1 began with a morning session focused on exploring the question 'What is Culture?', which involved discussions on cultural concepts, such as the Culture Iceberg, and interactive activities. In the afternoon, the seminar delved into cultural mapping theory through presentations and exercises. The day concluded with a wrap-up session and a guided walking tour of Brussels.



Day 2 featured seminars on intercultural communication and workshops on acculturation, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. These sessions were highly interactive, including role plays based on John Berry's concept of acculturation. Each group performed a scenario representing one of the four strategies: Integration, Marginalization, Assimilation, or Separation. This approach facilitated deeper insights into the complex nature of cultural interactions. Additionally, the participants explored important concepts such as Social Identity and In-group/Out-group bias through engaging activities



Day 3 served as the culmination of the seminar's learnings, starting with a debriefing session followed by a theoretical exploration of intercultural competence. Certificates were distributed to mark the completion of the training. The seminar concluded with final reflections that emphasized the importance of a balanced approach to effective lifelong learning in intercultural contexts, **integrating thinking, feeling, and doing.**

Impact and Conclusion

The seminar proved to be a resounding success, offering participants profound insights into the multifaceted aspects of culture within a multicultural setting itself from definitions to the development of intercultural competence. The interactive format of the sessions encouraged active participation and enriched discussions, significantly enhancing the learning experience. As we reflect on this seminar, it is clear that the foundational idea has not only been realized but has also set the stage for future initiatives to further this essential intercultural dialogue.



Ms Kerstin Holland, Estonia, Mr Mehmet Altun, Türkiye,

Ms Vimbai Margaret Chiza, Zimbabwe, Mr Haben Gebremedhin, Germany, Ms Chiraz El Azizi, Tunisia, Ms Marie-Thérèse Fombona, Belgium, Mr Ivan Barbalic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ms Nicole Clobes, Intercultural Trainer and WAPES Consultant, Germany, Ms Wendy Nicol, Belgium, Ms Anna Champness, United Kingdom, Mr Ludger Weller, Certified Trainer and SkillLab Partner, Netherlands, Ms Aygun Mehraliyeva, Azerbaijan, Minako Takasaki, Japan, Ms Amandine Moignard, Secretary at WAPES, France, Mr Tiago Fagundes, Intern at WAPES, Portugal.

Testimonials from our participants –

“ This seminar was made with so much care and passion for the subject of intercultural competence, and this really shone through every activity. Each day was engaging, interesting and exceeded expectations. The combination of theory with active participation made me retain this useful knowledge really effectively and this was bolstered by how well the group participated, sharing personal stories and laughing together. A really enjoyable experience and I would absolutely recommend future sessions”

“ The intercultural training seminar was an incredibly enriching experience for me. I was particularly impressed by the diverse composition of the participants, who came from different cultural backgrounds. This allowed for genuine intercultural exchange and fascinating insights into various ways of thinking and working. The balance between theoretical foundations and practical group exercises was excellent. Through the different constellations during the activities, everyone had the opportunity to get to know all participants and adopt different perspectives. I especially appreciated the practical orientation of the training. It was not only useful for my professional work in an international context but also sharpened my personal perspective on intercultural encounters. The content provided was immediately applicable and introduced me to new approaches and strategies for constructively utilizing cultural differences. I am very grateful for the opportunity to participate in this training and would highly recommend it to anyone working in an international environment or facing intercultural challenges regularly. Such a seminar not only fosters understanding and collaboration but also enhances personal growth “

