

Abstract

## Rich on intercultural competence but poor in sharing

- An analysis of an innovative project on cultural awareness in a public organisation

Iben Jensen, Aalborg University

A public research institution initiates to an innovative project about cultural awareness. The aim of the project is 1) to professionalize their international cooperation, while working in a global context (EU, Asia, Latin America and Africa), 2) Optimize the welcome procedures and integration of employees with international background. I have participated in the project as a facilitator and action-researcher.

The aim of this paper is to present my preliminary analysis of the innovation process, as I have experienced as both facilitator and researcher. Most of the analysis is based upon written material and interviews and only a smaller part is based upon my observation at the workplace. The analytical questions I have asked in the analysis are:

1. To which extent have the discourses regarding the concept of culture related to international cooperation changed during the innovation period? Have the discourses related to the international employees changed during the innovation period?
2. To which extent have practices, suggested by working groups counting employees from different departments, changed?
3. Where are the seeds for change? Where are the holes for stagnation or even going backward?

These questions will be discussed on the basis of an analysis of 1) an introduction day for all employees, 2) the discussions from working groups on the themes a) language, b) meetings, c) international cooperation and 3) questionnaires on all employees' self-evaluation of their intercultural competence.

The paper will furthermore discuss whether the project might have benefitted from taking in the aspect of power and hierarchy in an earlier state.