

*Making a Modern Project Manager*¹

Level up Your Intercultural Awareness (Part 2)²

Yasmina Khelifi

In the conversations on my podcast my guests often talked about intercultural training and how helpful it can be for collaborating with people.

Take intercultural training

Overcome Stereotypes

I've been working in an international environment for 20 years, but I only did my first intercultural training in 2019! I came to this idea quite late. Since then, I have taken part in several intercultural training courses and found them fascinating. Some of my colleagues asked me, 'Does intercultural training stereotype cultures? What do you really learn from that?'

Here is how [Erin Meyer](#) reacts to this argument in her book *The Culture Map*:

"If you go into every interaction assuming that culture doesn't matter, your default mechanism will be to view others through your own cultural lens and to judge or misjudge them accordingly." - Erin Meyer, New York Times bestselling author and Professor at INSEAD

What I particularly like in intercultural training is the possibility of understanding my own culture better, as well as that of others.

Get to know the dimensions of national cultures

National cultures use frameworks with dimensions. It can give you some hints for approaching work situations.

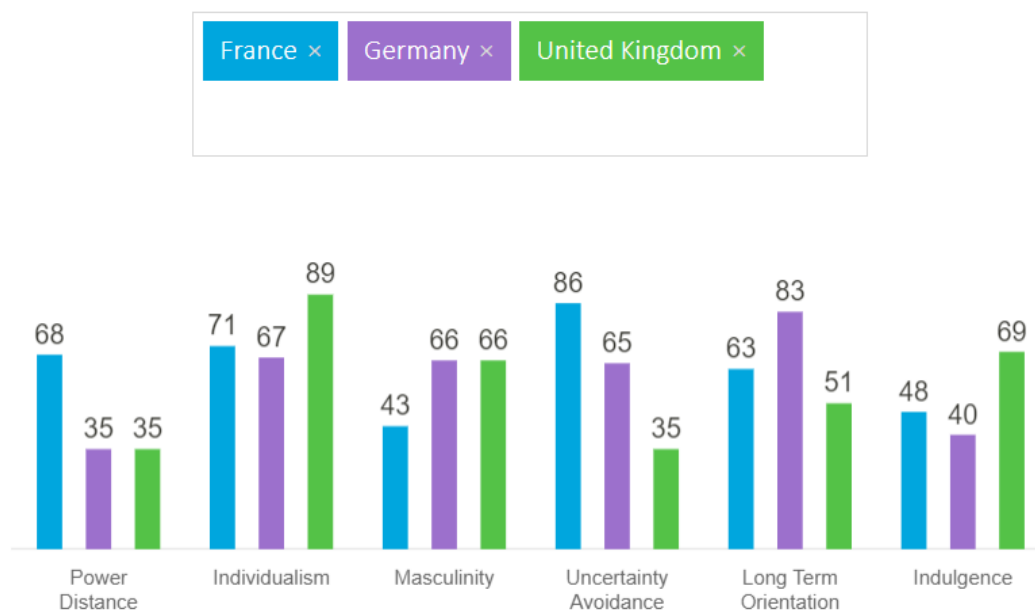
¹ Editor's note: This series of articles is by a project manager for other Gen X, Y and Z project professionals. The author Yasmina Khelifi is an actual project manager with a large multinational telecom in France while also an active PM professional, authoring articles, interviews and a popular LinkedIn blog as well as a podcast with a global audience. Also active in PMI France for many years, she has been an international correspondent for the PMWJ since 2021. We are delighted that she has agreed to author a series of articles based on her personal experiences over the last decade.

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Geert Hofstede defines a model with 6 dimensions described [here](#).

You can also 'compare' countries in the same graph [here](#).

I inputted France, Germany, and the UK, some countries that are close, and yet different.



Dr. Andy Molinsky goes further by not only focusing on differences between national cultures.

Global Dexterity by Dr. Andy Molinsky

In [this free one-hour webinar](#), [Dr. Andy Molinsky](#) explains global dexterity, an essential skill for adapting your behaviour without losing your authenticity.

Think twice before asking a question

We all have biases: for me, I tend to generalize. Others may tend to judge very quickly. Some others will criticize. Developing an open mind is easier said than done. It takes time and effort.

Start with the two things below.

Avoid taboo topics

Talking about money, politics, and religions might be offensive even if this is not the case in your culture. But why should the way you think about or perceive the world be universal?

What's the definition of respect in your country?

Restrain your curiosity

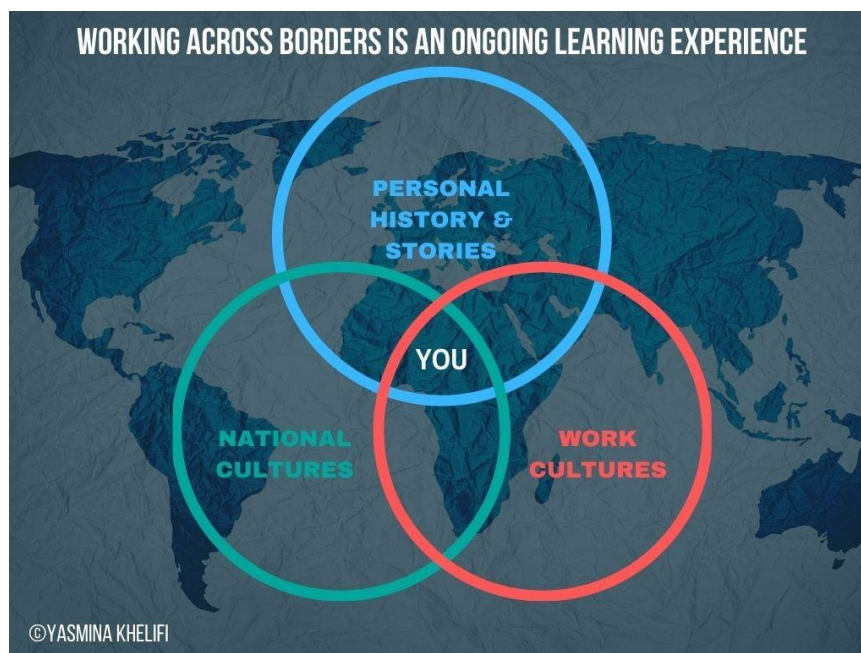
On a pretext of curiosity, you might be tempted to ask some questions that do not relate to work and don't bring any value to a work collaboration.

I was asked once: *Where are you from? France, I answered. Yes, but where are your parents from?*

Or another person asked me how long I had been living in France, whereas in fact I was born in France.

As we say in French, "Il faut tourner sept fois sa langue dans sa bouche avant de parler" ("you must turn your tongue in your mouth seven times before speaking" – in other words, think before you speak!).

As you've understood and experienced, working in a global environment is a journey of discovering your history, your corporate cultures and your national cultures.



Some readings

Alongside my discussions with my guests in my podcast and my training, here are some books that you may find helpful. You can also look for some webinars or podcast interviews by the experts listed below.

- [Global Dexterity](#) by Dr Andy Molinsky
- [Cultural Chemistry](#) by Patti McCarthy
- [The Culture Map](#) by Erin Meyer
- [The Global Cosmopolitan](#) by Linda Brimm
- Fons Trompenaars's books

How do you improve your intercultural awareness? Looking forward to reading your advice and tips.

You can [download](#) your call to action memo. You'll learn, you'll move forward, you'll thrive.

"Individuals with a global mindset are less likely to simplify the realities of today's business world. They acknowledge and address the complexity and ambiguity involved. Leading change in the current context calls for new solutions to global challenges." [Linda Brimm](#), INSEAD Emeritus Professor of Organisational Behaviour

As a friendly reminder, if you aren't part of my email list, sign up [here](#). The content is different: you'll read testimonies of worldwide leaders and volunteers. I'll also share articles and podcasts I've found insightful to help you grow as a leader.

May you and your family stay healthy and happy -

About the Author



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Yasmina Khelifi, PMP, PMI- ACP, PMI-PBA is an experienced project manager in the telecom industry. Along with her 20-year career at [Orange S.A.](#) (the large French multinational telecommunications corporation), she sharpened her global leadership skills, delivering projects with major manufacturers and SIM makers. Yasmina strives for building collaborative bridges between people to make international projects successful. She relies on three pillars: project management skills, the languages she speaks, and a passion for sharing knowledge.

She is a PMP certification holder since 2013, a PMI- ACP and PMI-PBA certification holder since 2020. She is an active volunteer member at PMI France and PMI UAE, and a member of PMI Germany Chapter. French-native, she can speak German, English, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and she is learning Arabic. Yasmina loves sharing her knowledge and experiences at work, in her volunteers' activities at PMI, and in [projectmanagement.com](#) as a regular blogger. She is also the host and co-founder of the podcast [Global Leaders Talk with Yasmina Khelifi](#) to help people in becoming better international leaders.

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