**CULTURAL AWARENESS REPORT**

**By SmartByte**

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# Calvin Kwan

**Scenario:** As an Indonesian new to the Dutch culture, I find myself in a group project meeting where decisions need to be made collaboratively. In the meeting, I notice that the other colleagues express their opinions directly and engage in open debates. The open debates lessen the possibility of miscommunication but it takes a lot of time since we have a lot to discuss.

Reasoning: This difference in communication styles and each person traits have their own share for these discussions. This leads to several misunderstanding due to language barrier. The accent also sometimes make it harder for other group member to understand the point of speech.

**Future Action:** Understanding this cultural difference and increase communication with each other so we can train our understanding to each other.

**Project Group Communication Improvement:** In our project group, recognizing and addressing cultural differences is crucial for effective communication and collaboration:

**Cultural Awareness Sessions:** Conduct cultural awareness sessions within the project group. Share insights about each of our, emphasizing communication styles, decision-making processes, and work expectations.

**Open Communication Channels:** Establish open communication channels where team members feel comfortable expressing their cultural expectations and concerns. Encourage a culture of openness and curiosity about each other's backgrounds.

**Adapted Decision-Making Processes:** When making group decisions, consider incorporating elements from both cultures. Allow time for open discussions but also create space for consensus-building and ensuring that everyone's perspective is considered.

**Regular Check-ins:** Schedule regular check-ins to discuss team dynamics and address any challenges related to cultural differences. This ensures that communication remains open, and adjustments can be made as needed.

# Hristo Ganchev

**Scenario:** As a Bulgarian student in our project group, I have noticed that everyone is sharing their opinion and discussing it formally with the other members. We decide on what approach we should use together and is separating tasks accordingly.

**Reasoning:** The Netherlands is a country with diverse nationalities. Having met people from around fifty nationalities, I have noticed that Bulgarians are much more stubborn than other cultures. We like to assert our opinion, and although we are willing to listen to others to show respect, we still keep to our points. I am personally willing to change my opinion based on others’, however, sometimes, this is not the case, and I stick to my opinion too much.

**Future Action:** I believe I should not stick to my opinion too much, and depending on the situation, I should make it a little more flexible than it is now. Me and my team members should aim for a solution that fits all of our opinions. I should also become better at justifying myself, since my opinion also holds value, even if it is not the best course of action.

One thing that I should keep in mind is the body gestures. At times, there might be a situation where I make a gesture that in my country, it is perfectly normal and innocent, but there are cultures where this gesture is very inappropriate and might offend the person who I am facing. I should also be understanding of the same scenario, since this case might be the case for me. Somebody might do a gesture my culture finds offensive.

**Project Group Communication Improvement:** In our project group, as I mention earlier, everyone shares their opinions, without being too assertive. This might either be because the other cultures are very understanding and open to other people’s opinions, or just because we are adults.

One thing that stood as a barrier when working was the accent some of us have. A few of our team members have an accent that at first, I personally found hard to understand. Now, I, including the other team members, got used to our each other’s way of communication, and find it easy to work with them.

## Ömer Faruk Koran

**Scenario:** Living in the Netherlands and being part of this diverse team, I'm getting a front-row seat to the multicultural vibe. Even though I've lived abroad before, every day in this dynamic team brings something new and unique.

**Reasoning:** Dealing with different cultures has taught me the importance of being open-minded, respectful, empathetic, and understanding. It's not just about knowing we're different; it's about loving and enjoying the diverse perspectives that make our teamwork interesting.

**Future Action:** Looking ahead, my goal is more than just understanding diversity on the surface. I want to actively add to a team where everyone feels heard, and our cultural mix is a natural part of our success.

**Reflection:** Reflecting on our team, it's clear that our strength lies in the seamless blend of our diverse backgrounds. Each cultural nuance adds a unique flavor to our work, creating a vibe that's truly our own.

Achieving this harmony has been a journey marked by progress. We've shown a commendable willingness to understand and listen to each other. This effort has played a significant role in making our collaborative environment more enriching and enjoyable.

**Closing Thoughts:** In this dance of cultural experiences, let's keep enjoying our differences. Here's to us—may our journey be filled with open hearts, lots of respect, and a celebration of the colorful mix that defines us.

# Himal Aryal

**Introduction:** I am Himal Aryal, proudly representing Nepal, the land of the Himalayas, in our project group at Fontys University of Applied Sciences. Currently, I am an international student pursuing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) with a specialization in software engineering. In our dynamic team, I've observed a commendable approach to formal discussions and collaborative decision-making, coupled with a unique blend of cultural diversity.

**Cultural Insight:** Nepali culture, rooted in the majestic Himalayas, places a high value on assertiveness while maintaining respect for others' opinions. Similar to my own experience, there's a natural inclination to express opinions with conviction. However, I've also recognized the need to balance this assertiveness with flexibility to ensure the integration of diverse viewpoints.

**Future Action:** With a commitment to fostering inclusive teamwork, my goal is to strike a harmonious balance between holding onto my perspectives and being adaptable. Actively contributing to solutions that reflect our diverse opinions is crucial for our collective success. Additionally, I aim to enhance my ability to articulate and justify my opinions to contribute more effectively to our decision-making process.

**Cultural Sensitivity:** Acknowledging the significance of cultural nuances, I am mindful of the potential impact of gestures that may differ between Nepali and Dutch cultures. Striving to maintain cultural sensitivity, I aim to be attentive to my gestures and understanding when encountering those that may unintentionally cause offense within our diverse team.

**Project Group Dynamics:** Our project group, situated in the Netherlands, thrives on a culture of open discussion and respect for diverse opinions. This atmosphere could be attributed to the understanding nature of various cultures, the maturity level within the team, or the enriching blend of experiences brought by students like myself from different corners of the world.

# Nikol Genova

**Scenario:** As a Bulgarian student studying in such a diverse country as the Netherlands, I’ve come to experience working with many different nationalities in my groups. My intake from each experience is that sometimes the difference in our languages and most importantly pronunciation can lead to misunderstandings between the members.

**Reasoning:** A very curious thing I probably would’ve never realized if I didn’t have the opportunity of working in such culturally rich groups is that we Bulgarians are very stubborn, hardheaded, and independent. It is very hard to prove us wrong sometimes. We are respectful enough to validate other opinions we just don’t always change our personal ones.

**Future Action:** Having observed all the aforementioned traits inherent to my culture I always try to see the others’ point of views and to understand them. In that way I not only contribute to the seamless teamwork of the group but also broaden my horizons when it comes to different cultures and how they live. My goal after working in such diverse groups is also to become flexible in my work and communication with others. Of course, although I do try, like with every human being, that is not always the case but we are very open-minded people and take into consideration that there for sure will be some discrepancies in our way of work considering our different upbringings. Each sprint we see the failures of the previous one (if any) when it comes to our teamwork and try to pinpoint the exact reason for it and eradicate it for the upcoming ones. After all we are all working towards the same goal no matter our culture.

**Project Group Communication Improvement:** We normally don’t have any problems collaborating with each other except that at the beginning some of our teammates had really pronounced accents which made it hard for the rest of us to understand them. However, after we spent some time together working as a group, we learned each other’s speak pattern and now we have little to no problems in that regard. If any problems of this sort arise occasionally, we just take a bit more time to get our point across and by the end we are all having fun with it.

# Jan Demant

**Scenario:** As an international student in the netherlands,its interesting to learn and interact with the different cultures.

The English accent has been the main problem in understanding other persons,but I got used to it over time.

**Reasoning:** Being here I have noticed that people are more stricter with respect to time than in my home countries (Venezuela, Aruba) and thus that when they say a time, its that time exactly, not an hour more or less.

**Future Action:** I will be more curious and inquisitive about other cultures to increase the likelihood of learning something new.

**Project Group Communication Improvement:** Although we have some problems of communication, they seem to happen mostly because of simple misunderstandings and bad communication rather than cultural differences.