**Cultural Awareness**

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In my project group, I discovered that despite all being from Indonesia, there were still notable cultural differences among us. While I anticipated some variations due to my background in Surabaya with Chinese heritage, the dynamics within the team went beyond my initial expectations. The group comprised individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds, including those from Java and others from different regions.

Assuming that my proficiency in Javanese would solely bridge potential communication gaps proved insufficient. I soon realized that cultural disparities extended beyond language, encompassing diverse communication styles, expectations, and approaches to problem-solving among my group members from various regions. Even within the Javanese-speaking members, differences in experiences and values were apparent.

These divergences in our interactions could be attributed to various cultural dimensions, emphasizing factors like individualism-collectivism, high-low context communication, and power distance. For instance, some members may come from cultures where direct and straightforward communication is the norm, while others may come from cultures where individuals may be more reserved or hesitant to express themselves directly. For example, some may find it natural to communicate openly and directly, while others may be more inclined towards indirect or nuanced communication styles.

To enhance future interactions across diverse cultures, I would adopt a proactive approach:

1. **Cultural Sensitivity:** I would educate myself about the diverse cultures represented in the group, focusing not only on language but also on values, norms, and communication styles.

2. **Effective Communication**: Improving cross-cultural communication involves being open, patient, and actively listening. Encouraging group members to freely express their ideas and concerns is crucial for mutual understanding.

3. **Adaptability**: Recognizing that cultural differences influence working styles, flexibility and adaptability are key. A willingness to compromise and find common ground respecting everyone's cultural preferences is vital.

4. **Conflict Resolution**: Developing conflict resolution skills sensitive to cultural differences involves addressing conflicts in a way that respects everyone's values and viewpoints.

5. **Team Building**: Organizing team-building activities fosters trust and camaraderie among team members, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, creating a more inclusive and collaborative group dynamic.

In our project group, we implemented the following strategies to improve communication and collaboration with respect to cultural differences:

1. **Meetings**: Spending ample time together ensured everyone was on the same page and understood their responsibilities, preventing misunderstandings and fostering unity.

2. **Communication Channels**: Utilizing multiple communication channels, including written documentation, ensured that information was clear and accessible to all members, irrespective of their language proficiency.

3. **Delegate Responsibilities**: Distributing responsibilities based on individual strengths and skills, rather than cultural backgrounds, allowed each member to contribute effectively to the project.

4. **Feedback Loop**: Establishing a feedback loop encouraged group members to provide constructive feedback on communication and collaboration processes, facilitating continuous improvement and prompt issue resolution.

By implementing these strategies, our project group created a more inclusive and harmonious working environment, where cultural differences became an asset rather than a challenge.