

## IDI – Intercultural Development Inventory

### What is the IDI?

The IDI is an empirical measure of „intercultural sensitivity“ as conceptualized by Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The DMIS has been used extensively in intercultural education and training since 1986 (M.J. Bennet, 1986, 1993). The IDI generates an individual or group profile of “worldview orientation to difference”, which indicates the capacity for exercising intercultural competence and which identifies the issues that are limiting or facilitating development of intercultural competence.

### When might you use the IDI?

You might want to consider using the IDI in the following situations:

- You have been asked to provide cross-cultural training for a family about to leave for overseas assignment and you would like to help them assess their intercultural sensitivity towards other cultures.
- Top management in your company wants you to develop a diversity program. You want to diagnose the current state of intercultural sensitivity in the company and design a program that will move people towards more competence in this area.
- Your organization has recently completed a major organizational change effort in which global management of cultural differences is a key ingredient for success. Now you have been asked to determine the impact of this change program.
- Your university has recently inaugurated a “global competence” component in its freshman course requirements. Your committee has to determine how to assess the impact of this new educational component among its students.
- As a human service provider, you recognize misunderstandings that have arisen between your staff and members from the multicultural communities you serve. To build positive relations, you want to begin intercultural communication training for all of your staff that includes a large component of self-awareness.
- As an interculturalist, you want to help individuals, groups, organizations, and communities in their efforts to build more positive and effective cross-cultural relations through the assessment of intercultural sensitivity.



## What is the Purpose of the IDI?

The IDI is designed to provide useful and valid information concerning the intercultural sensitivity of respondents and their potential for exercising intercultural competence in any cross-cultural situation. The IDI can help respondents to:

- UNDERSTAND the development stages of intercultural sensitivity through which people move towards greater intercultural effectiveness.
- *The IDI focuses attention on the stages of intercultural sensitivity which prior research suggests are central to effective interaction with people from different cultures.*
- INCREASE SELF-AWARENESS for each individual respondent concerning his/her intercultural sensitivity.
- *The IDI is designed to provide feedback to respondents about their own worldviews concerning cultural difference and to identify the issues that may be impeding them from developing more intercultural sensitivity.*
- INCREASE ORGANIZATION-LEVEL UNDERSTANDING of the developmental issues of selected groups of organizational members.
- *The IDI can provide an organization-wide profile by providing aggregate information concerning predominant orientations towards cultural differences for selected groups and sub-groups within an organization or institution.*
- EVALUATE the effectiveness of various training, counselling, and education interventions.
- *The IDI can be used to develop a "baseline" profile of individuals and/or groups prior to an intervention (e.g., training) and then be administered following completion of the designated intervention to determine the degree to which the intercultural sensitivity of the targeted respondent(s) improved.*
- IMPROVE the intercultural skills of respondents.
- *The profile produced by the IDI is useful as a guideline for creating individual or group developmental plans to increase intercultural competence. The profile is particularly useful for executive coaching around intercultural issues.*
- DECIDE whether to work or live in a culturally diverse setting.
- *Information from the IDI can be used to help individuals make decisions about their interest and readiness for involvement with people from different cultures.*
- PREPARE to enter a new culture, such as a multinational environment, a new country, or a domestic situation with cultural diversity.
- *The profile from the IDI can help develop a more targeted and customized action plan for preparatory training and education prior to entrance into a new cultural environment.*
- IDENTIFY TRAINING AND EDUCATION NEEDS of client populations.
- *The profile from the IDI provides a useful needs assessment that allows training and educational interventions to be targeted for*



*maximum effectiveness in developing intercultural sensitivity and competence.*

### **Why is Intercultural Sensitivity important?**

Research conducted on cross-cultural adaptation, intercultural effectiveness, job performance during international assignments, and other forms of intercultural contact (e.g., tourism, immigration, refugee resettlement), clearly identify intercultural sensitivity as a key capability for working and living effectively with people from different cultures (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). Indeed, intercultural sensitivity can be seen as the sine qua non for transcending ethnocentrism and establishing effective, positive relations across cultural boundaries both internationally and domestically (M.J. Bennett, 1993, J.M. and M.J. Bennett, in press).

The term “intercultural sensitivity” generally refers to “a sensitivity to the importance of cultural differences to the points of view of people in other cultures” (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992, p. 414). Bennett (1993) treats this quality as emergent in varying degrees from worldview structures that include complex constructions of cultural difference.

Intercultural sensitivity has been identified in a number of studies focusing on overseas effectiveness of international sojourners (e.g., Cleveland, Mangone, & Adams, 1960; Brislin, 1981; Landis & Baghat, 1996; Landis & Brislin, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, Kealey & Rubin, 1983), international business adaptation and job performance (e.g., Adler, 1991; Black, 1990; Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall, 1992; Black & Mendenhall, 1990), foreign student adjustment (e.g. Klineberg & Hull, 1979) and international transfer of technology and information (e.g., Hawes & Kealey, 1979, 1981; Kealey, 1996). Cushner & Brislin (1996) identify four criteria for assessing intercultural effectiveness: (1) you have positive feelings toward interactions with people from different cultures, (2) people from different cultures have positive feelings toward you, (3) the task/job responsibilities are fulfilled successfully, and (4) you are not plagued by (culture-contact) stress-related ailments. More recently, three core aspects of intercultural effectiveness have been identified: (1) personal/family adjustment and satisfaction, (2) intercultural interaction, and (3) professional effectiveness (Hammer, in press; Kealey, 1996; Black, Heslin & Curtis, 1996). While these criteria are useful in characterizing intercultural effectiveness, the task, as Bhawuk & Brislin (1992) suggest, is to identify predictors for intercultural effectiveness. They suggest:

To be effective in another culture, people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behaviour as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures. A reasonable term that summarizes these qualities of people is intercultural sensitivity, and we suggest that it may be predictor of effectiveness (p. 416).

Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) comprehensively captures these elements and offers a pow-



erful explanation of effectiveness, or competence, when interacting across cultural boundaries. The IDI now offers a valid and reliable assessment of intercultural sensitivity and a predictor of intercultural competence based on the DMIS model.

**For whom is the IDI appropriate?**

The Intercultural Development Inventory can be effectively administered to a wide variety of people. Use of the IDI is not limited to only U.S. Americans, since the original items that constitute the inventory were drawn from statements made by people from a variety of cultures. The IDI is thus an effective assessment tool across a wide range of culturally diverse groups, including different national cultures (e.g., Americans, Germans, Peruvians), different ethnic groups within a larger national context (e.g., European Americans, African Americans, Korean Japanese), and other cultural groupings such as those related to social status, gender, or age.

The primary requirement for using the current IDI is that the respondents' command of written English is sufficient to read and respond to the questionnaire. Drs. Hammer und Bennett are currently developing other language versions of the IDI which will be available in the near future. Because of the uniqueness and sensitivity of the Inventory, the IDI should not be translated into other languages without the express written permission and guidance from the authors.



Populations with whom the IDI can be used effectively include:

**People preparing for short-term and long-term international travel and/or living**

*Business people in international companies*

*Tourists*

*Missionaries*

*Non-governmental organization personnel*

*Students*

*Diplomats*

*Family members who accompany the above-mentioned people*

**People who work and/or live in culturally diverse organizations and communities**

*Local neighbourhood assistance organizations*

*Managers and employees in culturally diverse organizations*

*Marketing and public relations specialists*

*Interpreters and translators*

*Educators*

*English-as-a-second-language teachers*

**People who interface with people from other cultures**

*Physicians, nurses, and other health care personnel*

*Public relations personnel*

*Human resource managers and employees*

*Social workers*

*Lawyers, judges, and other legal professionals*

*Ministers, clergy, and other religious leaders*

*Trainers, counsellors, therapists, and consultants*

*University, high school, and elementary teachers, staff, and administrators*

*International student advising office personnel in colleges*

*Study abroad program administrators and advisors*

*Immigrant and refugee resettlement workers and managers*

*Military personnel*

*Police and other law enforcement professionals*

*Postal workers and other service delivery professionals*

Please contact our office in Vienna for additional information.