Mini Intercultural Training –
Understanding Germans!

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„Strength lies in differences, not in similarities“
(Stephen Covey)
Typical German
Cultural Iceberg

Appearance
Body language
Values
Beliefs
Experiences
History
Thoughts
Rules
Taboos
Hierarchy
Buildings
Attitude
Clothes
Language
Symbols
Education
Cultural Onion

Symbols

Heroes

Rituals

Values

Practices

Geert Hofstede
Cultural Onion

Symbols
Heroes
Rituals
Values

Practices

What do we see?

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Symbols

Heroes

Rituals

Values

What do we see?

Why do we behave in a certain way?

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Symbols
Heroes
Rituals
Values
Practices

Cultural standards

Geert Hofstede
Cultural onion

- Keeping deadlines, being on time
- Appreciating structures and rules
- Potential risks covered by insurance
- Keeping distance (at first)
- Focus on agendas and a clear outcome
- Honest statements, direct feedback
- Do it 100%, Quality management
- Waiting in front of red lights

- Punctuality
- (Self-) Discipline
- Security
- Privacy and Individualism
- Task orientation
- Straight forwardness
- Perfectionism
- (internalized) Control
Comparing cultural standards

Power distance
Comparing cultural standards
Comparing cultural standards

Individualism vs. collectivism
Comparing cultural standards

Time: punctuality and deadlines
Cultural Iceberg

Culture clash
Emotional phases while studying abroad

State of mind

Honeymoon

Misunderstandings

Crisis (culture shock)

Acceptance

Adjustment

Time
How to avoid being stuck in the crisis

• Show self-initiative
• Look for help if you have any problems
• Show self-responsibility for your academic performance
• Make friends and create your own network
• Open up and share your own culture

…and benefit from what Aachen has to offer you!
Some last words

“When you understand another culture or language, it does not mean that you have to lose your own culture.”

Edward T. Hall

We all smile in the same language!

😊