



INSPIRING REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS

Module 8





1506
UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI URBINO
CARLO BO



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

OBEC (2020-1-SE01-KA204-077803) is a KA2 Strategic Partnership co-funded by the Erasmus+ of the European Union. Led by Swideas in Sweden, the project gathers partners in Croatia (Regional Development Agency of Sisak-Moslavina County - SIMORA), Italy (LAI-MOMO Società Cooperativa Sociale & Università degli studi di Urbino Carlo Bo), Belgium (EURADA - Association Européenne Des Agences Développement).

OBEC is an innovative project that aims to explore the potentials of Blockchain technology to promote competency development and recognition of skills and qualifications by creating an innovative system to issue and validate learning credentials on a trial basis. Through this effort, the project's goal is to encourage the professional and academic integration of migrants, exchange students, and individuals with informal and non-formal learning backgrounds.

By contributing to the educational and economic integration of these targeted groups, OBEC envisions to benefit individuals with migrant background, students, teachers, education institutions, and employers. Focusing on the key issue of lack of uniformity and transparency in systems of validation of credentials, it is expected that this effort will result in positive effects in the working context, promoting employability, empowerment, and accessibility to the labour market.



OBEC IO2 A1 Course Module 2

– Soft Skills for Responsible Entrepreneurial Mindset –

Topic:

Soft Skills for Responsible Entrepreneurial Mindset

Description:

This module includes general knowledge about soft skills connected to cultural and social aspects that are likely to have a big impact on the ability to find jobs and communicate well with prospective employers and/or consumers. It also includes the concept and soft skills needed to foster a socially and environmentally responsible entrepreneurial mindset.

Target Audience:

- Immigrants going through the integration process
- Immigrants looking for jobs
- Exchange students looking for internship opportunities or first jobs
- Business owners or prospective entrepreneurs

Milestones:

- Introduction to Responsible Entrepreneurship
- Moving Across Cultures
- Learning Soft skills

Final Badge:

Competent Communicator

Duration:

7 hours

Milestone 1: Introduction to Responsible Entrepreneurship

Type of Exercise:	Presentation and Reflection
Time:	3 hours
Contents/Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Entrepreneurship • Eco-friendly Entrepreneurship • Why become a social and eco-friendly entrepreneur? • Reflection • Quiz
Learning Outcomes:	<p>Upon completion of the milestone, the participant shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what social and eco-friendly entrepreneurship is and the role it plays on our communities and planet. • Be able to describe the difference between traditional profit-oriented business models and responsible entrepreneurship • Understand the main contextual obstacles and incentives for being a social and eco-friendly entrepreneur
Assessment format:	Quiz
Material:	TBC

Content	Slide	Description	Annex	Duration	Facilitator's Notes	Sources
Get to know each other	4	Introduce your partner		25	<p>LET USD KNOW WHO YOU ARE FORM: https://forms.gle/wnZw1tU4J4ubuXWW6</p> <p>Pair participants in 2. Send each pair to a different room.</p> <p>Tell them to introduce themselves to each other for 5 min. When they come back, they will need to introduce the other person to the group!</p> <p>Estimated duration for 10 participants: 5min for being in pairs, 3min per pair to introduce the other person. Total of 25min (including explanation)</p>	
	6	Initial slide		5 min	Ask participants what they think social entrepreneurship is. Say they can either unmute themselves and say it or write on the chat.	

Social Entrepreneurship	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of different concepts and traditions • Contextual obstacles and incentives to being a social entrepreneur in Sweden 	<p>Link to the short video: What is Social Entrepreneurship?</p>	30 min	<p>In this slide, the presenter will present different definitions for Social Entrepreneurship. They will read through it before showing a short video that explains Social Entrepreneurship more.</p>	<p>- Certo, 2008 - Volkman, 2021</p>
	8		<p>In this slide, we present the differences between commercial and social entrepreneurship. The differences are covered from three different angles, mission, performance measurement, and resources mobilization. Commercial entrepreneurs' mission is mainly to create private gains while Social Entrepreneurs are more concerned with creating social value. - Commercial entrepreneurs usually measure performance in terms of financial performance (like return on assets, or sales growth) while Social Entrepreneurs on the other hand measure performance based on its social impact. In terms of resources mobilization, when considering financial resources, Commercial entrepreneurs focus on potential returns while social entrepreneurs focus on identifying funding sources that are primarily interested in creating social impact</p>	<p>So, who is the social entrepreneur?</p>	<p>A social entrepreneur is someone who has a mission. They adopt a mission to create and sustain social value. They know how to take action and recognize and spot new opportunities to achieve what they want. They are active educators who are always part of a process of innovation and learning. They are not limited by the resources they have in hand, and they Have a sense of accountability to those served and the outcomes created.</p>	<p>Certo, 2008</p> <p>Carragher, 2016</p>
	9		<p>What are the obstacles that a social entrepreneur face? The first challenge is to measure the performance. It's considered challenging to measure the performance of a social enterprise. Another thing is that due to the changing of social needs and government policies, the environment is dynamic which makes it harder for social enterprises to keep changing and adapting. As social entrepreneurship is still considered new, there is a lack in resources and institutions that support social enterprises. These challenges make it quite hard for social enterprises to scale up.</p>	<p>However, there are many rewards and incentives for being a social entrepreneur. People who have a social enterprise or switched to a social enterprise are always</p>	<p>Goyal, 2016</p> <p>Crisan, 2012</p>	
	10					
	11					

					<p>having a very good reputation which is a very important thing in the business world. Being a social entrepreneur also added a huge value to the company as you are reflecting positively on society. It encourages innovation as you always have to think out of the box to find solutions in a such new industry. The great news is that on the long term, being a social entrepreneur will reflect positively on the company's finances and will always bring the owner's satisfaction.</p>	
	12				<p>The first example we are going to talk about is Johnson & Johnson & Johnson when they invested in wellness programs for its employees. That way, Johnson & Johnson was able to save \$250 million on health care costs.</p> <p>Another good example of social entrepreneurship is Olam International which is a leading cashew producer. Olam has cut processing and shipping costs by 25% while providing direct employment to 17,000 people—95% of whom are women—and indirect employment opportunities in rural areas where jobs otherwise were not available. By switching to locally training workers and processing its nuts in Tanzania and the surrounding countries instead of shipping its nuts from Africa to Asia for processing.</p>	<p>Goyal, 2016</p> <p>Porter, 2019</p>
Eco-friendly Entrepreneurship	13	Initial slide		5 min	Ask participants what they think eco entrepreneurship is. Say they can either unmute themselves and say it or write on the chat.	
	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overview of different concepts and traditions 	<p>Link to video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRyah28yuM_c</p>	25 min	In this slide, the presenter can go through the different definitions of the eco-entrepreneurship that are stated in the slide	<p>Dodson, 2020</p> <p>Libecap, 2009</p>
	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contextual obstacles and incentives to being an eco-friendly entrepreneur in Sweden 			<p>So how can someone be an eco-entrepreneur? or how can a company switch to an eco-enterprise? First, the company should relook its goals. It must equalize the ecological and profit goals of the company. Second, the company should relook its business model by developing a business that leads to sustainable economic development. The company also should be more innovative and introduce more sustainable solutions to the production and consumption problems of products and services. This sends us to the next point of developing new opportunities which are connected to the new requirements of society. The last one will be to change consumer behaviour. That by offering products or services which leads to a change in the consumer's behaviour or reducing the negative effect on the environment.</p>	<p>Source</p>

	16			<p>The main obstacle would be the fact that the green infrastructure is at a very low level due to the newness of the field. This results in having very limited know-how materials and the absence of an appropriate regulatory regime. This makes it very challenging.</p>	
	17			<p>In terms of the incentives, it's quite similar to the incentive for the social entrepreneurship that we have just gone through together. (The presenter then can go through them again). However, many governments are being inspired by the idea of "internalizing" externalities such as pollution, which are costs that companies usually don't have to bear but that even in the absence of regulation or resource taxes create internal costs for the firms. Furthermore, being an eco-entrepreneur can signify a great opportunity to reduce internal costs associated with social harms or weaknesses such as waste of energy and raw materials, while addressing them doesn't necessarily mean bigger costs, which can be reverted by investments in new technologies for instance.</p>	<p>Porter, 2019</p>
	18			<p>Let's now take some examples about eco-entrepreneurship. The first example we are going to talk about is Wal-Mart. In 2009, they used technology to reduce their packaging and reroute their trucks to cut 100 million miles from their delivery routes. Innovation in disposing of plastic used in stores has saved millions in lower disposal costs to landfills. This way, they reflected on the environment by reducing the carbon emissions which reflects on them by saving \$200 million even as they shipped more products.</p> <p>The second example is Dow Chemical, which produces different chemical and agricultural products, succeeded to save \$4 million by reducing consumption of fresh water at its largest production site by one billion gallons -enough water to supply nearly 40,000 people in the U.S. for a year. This resulted in savings of \$4 million costs.</p> <p>The third example is Nespresso. They have invested in new procurement after realizing that most coffees are grown by small farmers in impoverished rural areas of Africa and Latin America, who are trapped in a cycle of low productivity, poor quality, and environmental degradation that limits production volume. To address these issues, it worked intensively with its growers, providing advice on farming practices, guaranteeing bank loans, and helping secure inputs such as plant stock, pesticides, and fertilizers. Nestlé established local facilities to measure the quality of the coffee at the point of purchase, which allowed it to pay a premium for better beans directly to the growers and thus improve their incentives. Greater yield per hectare and higher production quality increased growers' incomes, and the environmental impact of farms shrank. Meanwhile,</p>	<p>Porter, 2019</p>

					<p>Nestlé’s reliable supply of good coffee grew significantly. Shared value was created.</p> <p>Finally, a fourth example is iTunes or Kindle, that innovated their distribution model and reduced resource use of paper and plastic.</p> <p>Examples such as these thrive on the following factors to achieve the associated environmental and economic benefits: 1) re-thinking energy use and logistics; 2) improvement of resource utilization; 3) new procurement; 4) innovative distribution; 5) re-thinking the location and the low costs associated with producing in countries with lower labour costs, which often reflects in logistics costs and bigger emissions.</p>	
	19				<p>One of the very important concepts is the shared value. It basically summarizes both social entrepreneurship and eco-entrepreneurship. According to Porter and Kramer, the Shared Value concept is Policies and operating practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates. Shared value creation focuses on identifying and expanding the connection between societal and economic progress.</p> <p>“For a company, the starting point for creating this kind of shared value is to identify all the societal needs, benefits, and harms that are or could be embodied in the firm’s products. The opportunities are not static; they change constantly as technology evolves, economies develop, and societal priorities shift. An ongoing exploration of societal needs will lead companies to discover new opportunities for differentiation and repositioning in traditional markets, and to recognize the potential of new markets they previously overlooked.”</p>	Porter, 2019
Break	20			10 min		
Why being a social and eco-friendly entrepreneur?	21	<p>Being responsible for your community and for our planet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social benefits • The economic benefits 		10 min	<p>Okay, so why should one bother being a social or an eco-entrepreneur or to create a shared value?</p> <p>Open discussion to participants and ask them to write on the jamboard. Link: https://jamboard.google.com/d/1sv-zuZwbqODOKBFTHPjqAo76NdEYv8GJQzc6phnpnyo/edit?usp=sharing</p> <p>Give them 5 min to write. Go over the answers. Ask if anyone would like to share something about what they wrote.</p> <p>In fact! being responsible for your community and for our planet not only do creates social and environmental benefits, but also economic benefits for the enterprise itself.</p>	

	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The environmental benefits The contrast with profit-oriented businesses 		15 min	In terms of the social benefits, being a social and eco-entrepreneur is considered a universal cure for different societal and environmental problems that our planet faces every day. In addition to the fact that it helps organizations develop a competitive advantage and have a better chance of survival in a competitive market.	Andersson, 2015
	23				As Porter and Kramer said: "Reimagining value chains from the perspective of shared value will offer significant new ways to innovate and unlock new economic value that most businesses have missed". Being a social and eco-entrepreneur force your mind to be innovative and better at spotting new opportunities which reflect on the company's economy by the time.	Porter, 2019
	24				In terms of the environmental impact, considering the environment while setting your company's goals will definitely have a huge impact on the environment. According to Maria Rodriguez-Garcia, "Eco-innovation is a key element because it increases value for both producers and consumers while reducing negative impacts on the environment"	Rodríguez-García, 2019
Reflection	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can you or your business benefit from this? How can you implement these concepts? 		30 min	<p>Bring people into pairs to reflect on this together. 15min to reflect in pairs. Then ask pairs to share results. Duration: 15min to reflect, 3min/pair to share results. Total duration: 30min</p> <p>Our final quote for this section will be "Ethics and a focus towards the common good are key concepts that are vital in today's business world"</p> <p>There is now huge attention going toward the companies that focus on creating a shared value while also creating profit. This is the future, and this is what is required from every established business.</p> <p>Note: Encourage reflection and contrasting with profit-oriented businesses</p> <p>Okay, now it's time to reflect on what we have learned.</p>	Carraher, 2016
Quiz	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions to test knowledge 		15 min	<p>Explain to participants that we are now with the training and ask them to fill in the assessment and evaluation questions, explaining that they won't receive a certification without completing the questions.</p>	

Milestone 2: Moving across cultures

Type of Exercise:	Presentation and Exercise
Time:	Around 2 hours
Contents/Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main obstacles to full integration • Storytelling exercise • Basics of intercultural communication
Objectives:	<p>Upon completion of the milestone, the participant shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to examine their own experiences as migrants as well as that of others • Communicate their stories through storytelling • Understand the need for competent intercultural communication and mediation
Assessment format:	Quiz
Material:	TBC

Content	Slide	Description	Annex	Duration	Facilitator's Notes	Sources
The main obstacles to full integration	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and presentation of statistical data • The social and economic benefits of entrepreneurship • Presentation of stories of other migrants 		10 min	<p>Which do you believe are the main obstacles to full integration? Ask participants to use the jamboard https://jamboard.google.com/d/1sv-zuZwbqODOKBFtHPiqAo76NdEYv8GJQzc6phnpnyo/edit?usp=sharing Give them 5 min to write. Go over the answers. Ask if anyone would like to share something about what they wrote.</p>	
	30		<p>When moving to another country, several aspects can keep us from fully integrating into the host society. Some of the most common obstacles can be seen in the slide. Firstly, language learning can be a huge obstacle, especially depending on where you are and what languages you speak. Language is key to communicating properly, and even to understand labels on products at the supermarket. But more than that, sometimes even when you do understand the words, you might not fully understand how the people communicate, and how to avoid cultural misunderstandings. That is why cultural learning is also a big obstacle. As a newcomer, you might find hard to find housing, especially if you don't know which channels are most used and what the regulations are. You also might find it hard to understand how things work in your home country, for instance the health and education systems.</p>	10 min	OECD, 2019	

				<p>Then, sometimes you might have difficulties understanding the regulations of the country and how you can operate on them.</p> <p>And finally, we have the issues of education and labour market integration, which are highly connected to all previously mentioned obstacles. If you don't speak the language, it's hard to enrol in education or find a job. If you don't have the right education, or a recognized educational background, it might be hard to get the right job for you. And if you don't have a job, it can be hard for you to provide for yourself and your family, and to feel like you are truly a part of the country's society.</p> <p>We'll soon have some time to go through particular experiences.</p> <p>But the point here is: we all know that integration is not only about learning the language. So, what to do if even when you do know the words you don't feel like you belong?</p>	
31			20 min	<p>First of all, you're not alone in this. Many people go through the same feeling. And many immigrants around Europe have been thinking about alternatives to overcoming some of the obstacles mentioned before.</p> <p>If you can't have your education recognized, why not finding a way to put it to use? If you can't find a job, why not make a job for yourself?</p> <p>This is what many people have been doing: creating their own businesses. And you might think this is hard, but many have succeeded. Here you can see some data about it.</p> <p>In Sweden, 19.7% of the population is foreign-born. That's more than 2 million and 46 thousand people.</p> <p>Around 20% of the population are business owners. Among this 20%, around 10% are foreign-born.</p>	<p>SCB, 2020 Science Business, 2016 GEM, 2020 Ekonomifakta, 2020</p>
32				<p>You might be wondering what the benefits of are being an entrepreneur. Well, for you it might mean being able to put your ideas and dreams into practice, using all your skills and all your knowledge, in your own way.</p> <p>But there are also many other benefits for the society.</p> <p>So now it must come as no surprise that entrepreneurship is growing!</p>	
33				<p>But Sweden is actually a great place to start.</p> <p>In Sweden there are 2 start-ups per each 1000 employees. That's much more even than in the United States.</p> <p>So what are the stories of entrepreneurs in Sweden?</p>	<p>The Atlantic, 2017</p>
34				<p>- Karma app example: https://startupguide.com/elsa-bernadotte-karma-interview - Pyramid Spisbröd https://chef.se/emad-bayoumy-jag-har-kompat-varje-dag/ https://pyramidbageriet.se/om-bageriet/</p>	

				<p>This company has been awarded by the Swedish Gastronomic Academy among others. Pyramidbakery was founded by Emad Bayoumy, a baker from Egypt. The production is a genuine craft, and the round bread is baked over an open fire.</p> <p>- Panion: co-founded by a US immigrant</p> <p>https://techround.co.uk/interviews/interview-with-melanie-aronson-founder-ceo-of-loneliness-prevention-app-panion/</p>	
End of day 1	35		10 min	<p>Ask participants to keep on thinking about the topic, as we'll come back to it the next day with a activity.</p> <p>Ask participants to give us feedback on the form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScHVuEEaiXlzLz2JXXynF925LTKeHFNTClgTPXP3ZzD0F369Q/viewform</p> <p>+ Complete the Assessment form</p>	
Beginning day 2			5 min	<p>LET US KNOW WHO YOU ARE FORM: https://forms.gle/wnZw1tU4J4ubuXWW6</p> <p>If there are new participants: "Fast Virtual ball" the trainer explains that we are going to present ourselves by stating the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name - Nationality <p>So, when it is our turn, we share the information about ourselves and when we finish, we (pretend to) throw our ball to another participant saying "And I pass the ball to... *Name of the participant*".</p> <p>The trainer can be the one starting to present him/herself to break the ice. Encourage participants to do it as fast as possible!</p> <p>(If there aren't new participants but the trainer is new: the trainer can present herself and tell participants that she will get to know them on the way, for the sake of time)</p>	
Story telling intro	36-37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is storytelling ? • How can storytelling be beneficial 	10min	<p>Yesterday you worked on many things with the trainers and one of them was "The main obstacles to full integration".</p> <p>Today, we will continue working a little bit on the obstacles, through your perspectives and through STORYTELLING.</p> <p>First of all, please open this Jamboard, and let's have a short brainstorming: https://jamboard.google.com/d/1sv-</p>	National Geographic

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[zuZwbqOD0KBftHPiqAo76NdEYv8GJQzc6phnpnyo/viewer?f=4](https://www.jamboard.com/jamboard-viewer?f=4-zuZwbqOD0KBftHPiqAo76NdEYv8GJQzc6phnpnyo)

Can you open this jamboard I just shared on the chat?

We have 5 min brainstorm, then we comment + trainer adds explanation:

Storytelling is a skill, an art and a form of human expression.

Storytelling is universal to the human experience. Indeed, although it is likely impossible to prove, it has been suggested that storytelling developed not long after the development of language itself.

We do know that all cultures have told stories. Some of the earliest evidence of stories comes from the cave drawings.

Oral storytelling is telling a story through voice and gestures. Like storytelling itself, the tradition of oral storytelling is ancient and crosses cultures. The oral tradition can take many forms: epic poems, chants, rhymes, songs, and more. It can encompass myths, legends, fables, religion, prayers, proverbs, and instructions.

Today, of course, stories can be told orally, in printed or handwritten text, and via recorded sound and images. Regardless of the media, we are all consumers of story and always have been.

Why, then, are people drawn to stories?

One reason may be that it helps us feel in control, to feel that we understand what is going on. That is, it helps us to find order in things that have happened to us and make sense of the events of a random world. It helps us to build our own reality in our brains.

Stories can also let us see how others think and feel. In other words, they can allow us to empathize with the people around us. In fact, studies suggest that the more compelling the story, the more empathetic people become in real life.

Stories also allow us to share information in a memorable way, which might have helped our ancestors cooperate and survive. By telling a story rather than merely reciting dry facts, we remember the details more clearly.

Regardless of the reasons, stories are everywhere. Much of our lives are devoted to telling

				<p>stories about what we did, where we went, and who we spent time with. We have been telling stories for as long as history can see, and we will likely continue to do so for the rest of our lives.</p> <p>Storytelling can help you to explain and sell your business story, to share with others, to catch others attention! Did you know that our brains remember the most with stories?</p> <p>You can try to do this exercise, if you wish (we don't have time now, try by yourselves): Have a list of 20 words and give yourself 5 min to memorize them. Then, try write them again without looking! How many did you get?</p> <p>Now, get your 20 words again, but this time create a story with them. Ex: house, dog, grass: the dog got out of the house and lied on the grass. Write the words again, how many did you remember now?</p> <p>So, if you tell someone your story, they will remember better, they will understand you better and empathise with you. That will create sympathy for you and your business, which is great!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Any questions or doubts?</p>	
Storytelling Exercise	38-39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What obstacles have you faced? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Method: Facilitator explains the concept of storytelling and invites the group to participate on the activity, maybe in smaller groups. 	20 min	<p style="text-align: center;">Exercise: Connecting Stories</p> <p>One of the things we can use to build stories is to explain how we went through obstacles and how we overcame them. This is what we will do now to practice storytelling.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Introduce de activity. Pass to the second slide and explain the activity. Participants will have 10 min to build their stories.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Purpose</p> <p>This activity is a fun way to get people to share stories that you experienced at another country, or with someone who's from another culture, while helping people learn similarities or common interests.</p> <p>Reminder: we are trying to explain the stories related to the obstacles people faced on other countries and/or with ppl from other cultures.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Setup</p> <p>Have everyone divide into 2 groups (decide if in 2 groups or just 1, depending nº of pax. Better in 2! If it is only one, let's try to make it as long as possible!). Ensure each table/group has several post-it notes and pens or use a Word document sharing the screen with the rest of the group (digital format). The goal of the game is to connect mini-stories in an interesting way. Each person must share at least one item that connects to the other mini-stories. The longer the</p>	Guthrie, 2017

					<p>chain of items that can be created, the better. Write down a few words on a Word to keep track of each part of the story, or tell pax to do it in their breakout rooms.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Activity</p> <p>The first player begins by sharing an interesting memory or experience that they have. For example, one player can say: “One time, I accidentally locked myself out of the house. So then I spent the entire day at a coffee shop.”</p> <p>Any other person can tell a related story that has any similar themes or elements to the previous story. For example, the next person can say, “I am a total coffee addict. Every day I drink 3 cups of coffee and it sometimes prevents me from being able to sleep at night.”</p> <p>The next player, based upon the previous story shared, can say something related, such as: “I don’t sleep much at night because I play lots of computer games until early morning.”</p> <p>Any person can then add to the story, by saying something like, “I also love computer games.”</p> <p>To help the group remember each part of the story, write a few words on a post-it note for each part of the story chain. The more interesting or funny the story, the better.</p> <p>At the end of the game, the group with the longest connected chain of stories is the winner. You may ask the group to share the entire story with the whole group.</p> <p>Pass to the following slide to show inspiration of topics for the obstacles and take a screenshot and paste on the chat of the breakout rooms. (if you divide them in groups, you can give them a screenshot of this slide!)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">When the activity is over: Write on the chat: What did you learn from this activity and storytelling in general? What is your most remarkable take away?</p>	
Basics of intercultural communication	40-42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language • Body Language • Social Conventions • Intercultural 	Intercultural Communication	10 min	<p>First of all, please open this Jamboard, and let’s have a short brainstorming: https://jamboard.google.com/d/1sv-zuZwbqOD0KBfHPjgAo76NdEYv8GJQzc6phpnpyo/viewer?f=5 Can you open this jamboard I just shared on the chat?</p> <p>We have 5 min brainstorm, then we comment + trainer adds explanation.</p>	Ehliion, n.d.

communica
tion

Now that we've seen that integration is much more than just learning the language, we will see a bit more about communicating across cultures and how to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings.

"Knowing a foreign language is just part of the parcel—the other party's cultural background, values, and beliefs also need to be understood."

As our world becomes even more connected every day, this is a key thing to know not only as a foreigner, but also as a native of the host society, as an exchange student, etc.

And, for an entrepreneur this is an essential topic, as "In international business, the failure to understand cultural differences can bear serious consequences."

Communication involves a lot of aspects. It involves the language, which are the written or verbalized words; body language, which is the way we communicate without words; and even social conventions, which is what we expect people to do or to behave when meeting them. And sometimes failing to communicate well through one of these channels can kill a pitch and even create misunderstandings.

But what is intercultural communication? *(Read on slide)*

But more importantly, "intercultural communication skills also include a willingness to be adaptable and accept that other cultures may communicate and do things differently". So, being open and non-judgemental is crucial.

Next slide:

Explain what you need to take into account in an intercultural communication context:

- Who is saying it?
- Where is the communication taking place?
 - When is it taking place?
 - What meaning is conveyed?
 - Why is it said in that way?
- How is the message being interpreted?

Explain the factors involved in intercultural communication.

1. Physical: location, environment, distance, setting, infrastructure, noise, temperature, seating arrangement and technology.
2. Social: power, hierarchy, rules, norms, formality, history, relationship and gender.
3. Psychological: attitudes, feelings, emotion, perceptions, tones, pressure, stress, trauma, self-concept, views, feelings, bias, stereotypes, prejudice and prior experience.

					<p>4. Temporal: time and timing. 5. Physiological: health, well-being, illness, disability and hearing loss.</p> <p>Explain the most common causes of problems in intercultural communication. Problems arise as a result of a person:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. not recognizing the uniqueness of the individual, 2. not focusing on the message, 3. not understanding the belief systems and values upon which cultures are established, 4. making judgements from the perspective of one's own culture.
Intercultural communication exercise	42	Personal examples exercise	10min	<p>Once we have gone through the information, invite participants to do the following exercise: Think about a situation in which you were communicating with someone from another cultural background and had a misunderstanding or a conflict.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>I entered a house of a Swiss person with shoes, stepped on her carpet and she was looking at me with a very worried face and told me I was unpolite. I hugged a person from Sweden without knowing him that well and he became paralyzed and did not talk to me in 3 hours. I was 10 min late to a meeting with a German, I did not apologize because for me it is ok, but for him it was a disaster.</p> <p>Check the slide and think, for 5min:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did I take into account all the question marks of the slide? (up left) - Which factors played a key role while communicating with this person/group? (down) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which of the problems arouse? (up right) <p>Once participants are done, invite a couple of them to share with the group.</p>	
Break	43		10 min		

Milestone 3: Soft Skills

Type of Exercise:	Presentation and Reflection
Time:	Around 2 hours
Contents/Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding taboo language • Understanding stereotypes • Understanding nonverbal communication • How to communicate with institutions
Objectives:	<p>Upon completion of the milestone, the participant shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to identify reactions and respond to nonverbal signals across cultures • Be able to execute their knowledge of nonverbal signs and of intercultural communication tools to navigate society avoiding conflicts due to cultural and social aspects • Understand the effects of nonverbal communication, taboo language, and stereotypes for integration • Be able to use basic intercultural communication skills and information to adapt the way they communicate to further their professional and personal aspirations
Assessment format:	Quiz
Material:	TBC

Content	Slide	Description	Annex	Duration	Facilitator's Notes	Sources
Soft Skills for Entrepreneurs	44	Initial slide		5 min	Ask participants which soft skills they need to be successful entrepreneurs. Say they can either unmute themselves and say it or write on the chat.	
	45-46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of soft skills that are key for entrepreneurs to 		10	<p>Here you can see some of the main soft skills that are considered key for every entrepreneur. They embrace the art of speaking in public, networking, negotiating, writing, and actively listening.</p> <p>As you can see, all of those skills are related to the way you communicate, meaning, the way you present yourself and how others perceive you. And in business, perception is everything!</p>	Insider, 2021

		have to be successful			So, when you are an entrepreneur and an immigrant, what can you do to communicate in a way that is well-perceived by possible customers, funders, and partners? This is what we'll be talking about now!	
Understanding taboo language	47		Taboo Language	15 min	We will start with taboo language. This might seem obvious for you. Taboo language must be “swear words”, right? Well, yes, but not only this. Taboo language can also embrace topics that are generally avoided. Just like the swear words, these topics differ from culture to culture. This means that, sometimes when you are talking with someone from another country, you shouldn't talk about a given topic that, although might be very common for you, makes the other uncomfortable.	SEL Business Language, n.d.
	48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to taboo language 			<p>Here you can see some of the most common taboos in Sweden. <i>(Read each aloud)</i></p> <p>Ask the group: Were you aware of these taboos? Are any of them new to you? Have you encountered any issue due to them?</p>	K International, 2017 Circles of Excellence, 2016. Business Culture, n.d. Culture Atlas, n.d.
	49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise: taboo language in your country 		10 min	<p>After seeing the taboos from Sweden, we'd like to get to know some taboos from your home country! Please write them on the jamboard. https://jamboard.google.com/d/1sv-zuZwbqOD0KBFtHPjgAo76NdEYv8GJQzc6phpnpyo/edit?usp=sharing Give them 5 minutes to write. 5 minutes to discuss</p>	
Understanding stereotypes	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to stereotypes 	Stereotypes Video	15 min	<p>Now on to stereotypes. Stereotypes are generalized notions about a given group of people. But although stereotyping might seem a common practice to you, you should know that not everyone is happy with all generalizations from their group. That is why, when communicating, you should use the stereotypes to your advantage, to help you making quick decisions about how to interpret the other person or how to portray yourself for instance. But you should also be careful not to forget that, although this person might fit into some stereotypes, they are also their own selves.</p>	McLeod, 2015
	51				<p>Here you can see some of the most common stereotypes that are often associated with Swedes - and that can create tension if generally assumed. <i>(Read each aloud)</i></p>	Fiske, 2018 Jilani, 2019.

					Ask the group: Were you aware of these stereotypes? Are any of them new to you? Have you encountered any issue due to them?	Lembke, 2017.
	52	Exercise: stereotypes in your country		10 min	After seeing the stereotypes from Sweden, we'd like to get to know some stereotypes from your home country! Please write them on the jamboard. https://jamboard.google.com/d/1sv-zuZwbqOD0KBfthPjqAo76NdEYv8GJQzc6phnpnyo/edit?usp=sharing Give them 5 minutes to write. 5 minutes to discuss	
Understanding nonverbal communication	53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to nonverbal communication 	Nonverbal Communication	20 min	Finally, we come to nonverbal communication. This is composed by what we call nonverbal cues, which are all ways in which you present or express yourself without words. It includes for instance gestures, the distance you take from the person you're talking to, the tone of voice, the eye contact, how much physical contact you do, etc. This is extremely important for intercultural communicators and businesspeople because the way you are perceived reflects on the results you achieve. Nonverbal communication, just like taboo language, is culture-bound. This means that it changes among different cultures. So, for instance, you don't want to kill a negotiation by making too much or too little eye contact, or by making physical contact when you shouldn't.	Forbes, 2013
	54-55				Here you can see some of the most common do's and don'ts of nonverbal communication in Sweden. <i>(Read each aloud)</i> Ask the group: Have any of these cues been a problem to you in Sweden? Which ones have you learnt so far? Ask participants to either write on the chat or speak.	Culture Atlas, n.d.
Break	56			10 min		
How to communicate with institutions	57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to how institutions work in Sweden 	Communicating with institutions	30 min	Finally, we come to "communicating with institutions". As you might know, each country has their own structure and own systems. It is important to know that in Sweden, a big part of the communication with institutions is one digitally. "Sweden is a highly digital country, with plenty of online solutions. Many errands at the Swedish Tax Agency, for instance, can be done electronically. In 2021, a record 6.7 million Swedes submitted their tax returns online. How's that for saving the paper in paperwork?" "Swedes are widely rated as one of the best at English as a second language. Therefore it might take you longer to learn Swedish, and the Catch-22 is that fluency in the language is crucial to full integration. Knowing some Swedish will also help you in your contacts with the authorities, the Tax Agency for example."	Sweden.se, n.d.
	58				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important apps and platforms for 	For entrepreneurs in Sweden, it is important to know these main institutions and apps that can make your life easier. To start with,

	<p>immigrants/exchange students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role play exercise: communicating with institutions in your country • Method: facilitator and participants engage in demonstrating examples 			<p>SWEDISH TAX AGENCY (SKATTEVERKET) It is responsible for collecting the country's taxes and its population register. It handles your tax returns and also issues personal identity and coordination numbers, birth certificates and identity cards.</p> <p>SWEDISH SOCIAL INSURANCE AGENCY (FÖRSÄKRINGSKASSAN) It is responsible for Sweden's social security system. It handles applications for things such as parental benefits, sickness benefits and compensation for injuries in the workplace.</p> <p>SWEDISH PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AGENCY (ARBETSFÖRMEDLINGEN) It can help you find work and start a business in Sweden. It has the country's largest job bank, provides free support and advice and also arranges recruitment meetings and information seminars. Remember that every new position you advertise should be made available on their platform for 2 weeks!</p> <p>If you're a migrant, it's also important to know more about the SWEDISH MIGRATION AGENCY (MIGRATIONSVERKET) It considers applications from people who want to work or take up permanent residence in Sweden, come for a visit, seek protection from persecution or become Swedish citizens.</p> <p>Finally, it is recommended that all employees and entrepreneurs in Sweden should become a part of A-Kassa, which handles unemployment benefits if necessary. It costs around 130-190kr a month!</p>	
59				<p>For the apps now, "Digital banking tools and payment methods in Sweden include Swish, BankID, Kivra", and Klarna. It is important to note however that "most banks in Sweden require a Personal Number to open an account with them, so it is important to arrange this before proceeding with any of the steps mentioned. A Personal Number will open many doors in terms of downloading apps or even applying for a bonus card at the local supermarket."</p> <p>BankID is the most important app you should have in Sweden. It is an authentication app that makes it possible for you to access all institutional platforms in Sweden, access your bank, make payments, etc. To get it, it is necessary to contact your bank. "By using a 6 digit code that's connected to your bank account and personal identity number, you can easily log in to all kinds of official websites and apps where you need to identify yourself as a person residing in Sweden".</p>	<p>Globuzzer, n.d.</p>

				<p>Swish is the easy way to transfer money in Sweden. It requires BankID and allows transfers between bank accounts through the registered phone number for free. It is also possible with registration numbers for businesses.</p> <p>Kivra is a “digital mailbox in which you can safely receive official and important e-mails, such as from your electricity provider, the tax agency, and your insurance company”. There, you can find all important notifications and letters from the Swedish agencies to you and even market receipts. This is an easy way to keep in touch with important announcements. Kivra is a. It also requires BankID.</p> <p>Klarna is a hugely successful start-up Klarna that deals with payment solutions for online storefronts not only in Sweden but worldwide</p> <p>Facilitator asks the group: Is it much different from your country? Have you had any issues so far with these institutions and/or apps in Sweden?</p>	
Reflection		<p>Soft skills and your integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can you use these soft skills to improve your integration? 		<p>Divide participants into pairs and give 10 min to discuss the questions. Encourage reflection connected to milestones 1 & 2 On the main group, ask if anybody wants to share.</p>	
Reflection	60	<p>Soft skills and your carrier path or business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can you use these soft skills to improve the way you communicate with potential employers or consumers? 	15 min		

Quiz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions to test knowledge + FEEDBACK 		15 min	<p>Explain to participants that we are now with the training and ask them to fill in the assessment and evaluation questions, explaining that they won't receive a certification without completing the questions.</p> <p>https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScHVuEEaiXlzLz2JXXynF925LTKeHFNTClgTPXP3ZzD0F369Q/viewform</p>	
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is a complex concept that has taken on a wide variety of meanings and interpretations. According to Klyukanov (2005: 45), intercultural communication is a 'process that is inherently variable and subject to interpretation'. While individuals and groups bring their unique and special meanings to this term, in the most basic sense, intercultural communication means that some form of culture and some form of communication has interacted or intersected in a particular space, time and context.

However, it is at the point of intersection that a range of complex issues arise. It is important to note that this complexity results from the intricate link between culture and communication. At the point of intersection, questions are posed such as:

I What is being said?

I Why is it said?

I Who is saying it?

I Where is the communication taking place?

I When is it taking place?

I What meaning is conveyed?

I Why is it said in that way?

I How is the message being interpreted?

In answering these questions, it is essential to note that what a person says suddenly becomes immersed with who the person is and the focus shifts from the content (what is being communicated or said) to the cultural identity of the individual (who is saying this and how it is being said, negotiated and interpreted). In other words, the social customs of that culture become the area of focus than the actual information

in the communication. It is this interweaving of one's cultural identity with forms of communication that creates the complexity in the interpretation of the message that is delivered.

It is important to note that during an intercultural communication event, problems arise as a result of a person:

1. not recognizing the uniqueness of the individual,
2. not focusing on the message,
3. not understanding the belief systems and values upon which cultures are established, and
4. making judgements from the perspective of one's own culture.

In other words, people—individuals and groups—contribute to the problems through their interpretations, or rather their misinterpretations, of the intercultural communication event.

People are the key complex component in all communication within and across cultures because they communicate their cultures along with the message. People, therefore, are the human factor that affects intercultural Communication.

Communication does not take place in a vacuum. Communication at all levels, from individual, organizational, national to international, takes place in a particular context. Contexts play a very important role in interpersonal, intercultural and international communication. Context consists of five aspects—physical, social, psychological, temporal and physiological:

1. Physical: location, environment, distance, setting, infrastructure, noise, temperature, seating arrangement and technology.
2. Social: power, hierarchy, rules, norms, formality, history, relationship and gender.
3. Psychological: attitudes, feelings, emotion, perceptions, tones, pressure, stress, trauma, self-concept, views, feelings, bias, stereotypes, prejudice and prior experience.
4. Temporal: time and timing.
5. Physiological: health, well-being, illness, disability and hearing loss.

The study by Knapp and Hall (2006) suggests that physical contexts can greatly affect our communication behaviour. The learning environment—lighting, room temperature, arrangement of furniture, interior decoration, structural design, colour, sound effects, object mobility, distance and size of the classroom—can influence students' communication behaviour and learning outcomes. They noted that 'more intimate communication is associated with informal, unconstrained, private, familiar, close, and warm environment' (Ibid.: 107) and less relaxed and more superficial and stylized communication is associated with greater formality. Further, they pointed out that social environment often shapes one's behaviour. A violent and poverty-stricken social environment often 'encourages or fosters unconventional and deviant behaviour, or at least tolerates it' (Ibid.: 110).

Contextual factors affect our perception and the way we encode and decode a message. The same message may carry different meanings in different situations. What is appropriate in one situation may not be appropriate in another. For example, our communication styles differ greatly at home, at the workplace and at a national or an international conference. Talking to a friend in a bar is different from talking to a foreign dignitary on formal occasions. In many Western countries, political leaders are used to criticisms from the media and individual citizens. When such a communication pattern is transferred to other social contexts, individuals may experience serious culture-related problems. In Thailand, individuals showing any sign of disrespect towards the royal family may face years of imprisonment. Disrespect towards and insults of the royal family in Thailand are legally forbidden.

Contexts provide clues to interpreting and understanding the underlying causes of a particular event. It should be acknowledged that people living in a socio-cultural environment must comply with rules and norms of that society. These norms and rules frame the communicative behaviour of the group. Failing to comply with these cultural rules and norms can bring about punishment and sanctions. Take adultery, for instance, all cultures prohibit it; however, attitudes towards adultery differ from culture to culture. While it is a ground for divorce, it is not a crime in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand; however, it is given the death penalty in some Islamic countries. Therefore, intercultural communication requires a good knowledge of the specific context and contextually appropriate communication behaviour.

Another aspect of contextual influence—time and timing—also has an enormous impact on communication. An unnecessarily lengthy meeting may create a boring environment. Failing to meet an appointment may communicate a message of the person being unreliable, untrustworthy and unable to perform an assigned task. Lecturers who cannot finish lectures on time can annoy the students and get low rating in their feedback. Timing is critically important to get your message across. For example, if one has a great idea that one wants to communicate to the manager, it may lead to a frown one day and a smile on another. This is because people are more receptive at some times of the day compared to other times. It is necessary to assess the state of people's emotion, mood, time schedule and the time of the day. For instance, it is certainly not a good time to discuss an important idea with the manager at mid-day when it is lunch time for most people or at 5 or 6 o'clock in the afternoon when everybody else is rushing home and when the manager has already been exhausted and does not have enough patience.

The physiological context involves an individual's real or perceived physical and mental health, disorder, well-being, disability and stress. All cultures possess specific beliefs and views about illness and health, which have been passed down from generation to generation (Samovar, Porter and McDaniel, 2010). Individuals' cultural and ethnic backgrounds can shape their perceptions of their well-being, physiological conditions and illness in both the physical and spiritual realm.

Taboo Language

“*Taboo language* refers to words that are typically deemed immoral or inappropriate in everyday language should be avoided in polite conversation. In general, this comprises curse or swear words, profanities, or offensive speech” (SEL Business Language, n.d.). They also often refer to topics that make people uncomfortable or that should be avoided, such as religion, sexuality, etc. However, it is important to note that what constitutes a taboo change from country to country and among cultures. In fact, “Words become taboo because of the associations that people and society attach to them” (*ibid*). Thus, taboo language and topics are defined by the culture, and they may change overtime.

As such, even for migrants who have learnt the language well and know the swear words, sometimes they might encounter difficult situations created for mentioning something or communicating in a way that, although very common in their home countries, is not so in their host countries. For this reason, we are focusing here on the taboo topics that you as an immigrant might not know could lead to a misunderstanding and possibly to conflict.

Here are the common taboos related to communication in Sweden, which can be found at <https://businessculture.org/northern-europe/sweden/>

- Swedes avoid arguing, especially with visitors. If a discussion appears to be turning into an argument, do not be offended if a Swede abruptly changes the subject.
- Do not use a lot of superlatives when speaking. The Swedes are opposed to stretching the truth. The marks of rank or status are disliked.
- Do not get too personal. Topics like family, income and personal background should be avoided.
- Swedes are very proud of their society, so it is wise not to criticize their way of life, welfare system, economy, government, or culture.
- Racist or sexist jokes are not tolerated.

Stereotypes

A stereotype can be defined as “a fixed, over generalized belief about a particular group or class of people” (McLeod, 2015). When we stereotype someone, we are assuming that the person in question has the characteristics and abilities that are assumed to all members of the same group, whether that group is defined in terms of race, culture, ethnicity, gender, etc.

Stereotyping has an advantage, which is to be able to quickly respond to situations with the information we have about a specific group of people. This can be especially beneficial when we are abroad and communicating with a different culture. However, stereotyping also has a disadvantage, which is that “it makes us ignore differences between individuals; therefore we think things about people that might not be true (i.e. make generalizations)” (*ibid*).

Thus, one should be aware that using stereotypes is a major way to “simplify our social world; since they reduce the amount of processing (i.e. thinking) we have to do when we meet a new person” (*Ibid*). However, they also “lead to social categorization, which is one of the reasons for prejudiced attitudes (i.e. “them” and “us” mentality) which leads to in-groups and out-groups” (*Ibid*).

For the business world, stereotyping can be a way to quickly make decisions and to have a better idea of how the way you communicate and present yourself will affect your audience. This is especially useful when communicating between different cultures. For instance, if you know Swedes in general are on time, you will make your best to be at a meeting at the right time as well.

However, unfiltered generalizations can also lead to conflict and can upset people who do not appreciate to be confronted with a stereotype.

“It might seem hard to argue with the idea that we should focus on what individuals say and do and believe, instead of unthinkingly inferring those things from their group membership—but, in fact, we use group affiliation to evaluate individuals all the time” (Jilani, 2019).

Therefore, to avoid difficult situations, it is important to use these stereotypes to make quick decisions, but to also be open to get to know each individual as their own selves.

What about Swedes? What stereotypes should you look beyond? (Source: Lembke, 2017)

- Swedes avoid conflict: Some call it passive-aggressive, some call it conflict avoidance but this one, while it drives Swedes mad when mentioned, is pretty spot-on. It’s rare to hear a Swede shout or argue outside of a film, but that doesn’t mean they won’t get theirs back. You just won’t see it coming because it’s done stealthily.
- Taxes are really high: While taxes aren’t as high as some might think, they are still quite high – and Swedes don’t even hate admitting it. They’re proud of their marriage between socialism and capitalism, mainly because it works; the safety net is massive. And while Sweden is an incredibly prosperous and productive country, people do hit a wall sometimes – and they’re taken care of with little hassle.
- Everybody drives a Volvo: Fifty or sixty years ago this might have been somewhat true, but Swedes are car-lovers and that means you’ll see all sorts of models on the road – although choices do tend to lean towards the safe side. Volvo isn’t even Swedish-owned anymore, so it’s lost a bit of its charm among many people.
- Swedes are unemotional: Unemotional, or just very good at keeping their feelings under wraps? You don’t see massive displays of emotion, even at funerals. No wailing or rendering of garments – just a logical approach to anything that crosses their path, followed by a measured chat that soon sorts everything out.
- Everyone is a suicidal depressive: Somewhere the rumor started that Sweden had the highest suicide rate in the world, but thankfully that’s not true. They might be reserved but people aren’t more depressed in Sweden than they are anywhere else. And, since the safety net is so strong, if someone does become depressed or suicidal, they can get the help they need.

- Swedes are sexually liberated: Swedes are a practical people and this extends to sex. They see nothing wrong with having sex and are happy to openly say they really enjoy it. They switch partners with little guilt and see sex as a natural part of life. So yes, true.
- Swedes are reserved: Swedes are reserved until they have a drink or two, or when the country is doing well in a big sporting competition. Then they suddenly blossom into boisterous beings. Also, if they're wearing fancy dress, they shed their reserve, along with their regular clothes, and become the person they probably really are underneath all that reticence.

Nonverbal Communication

What is nonverbal communication?

“Non-verbal communication is defined as not involving words of speech, voluntary or involuntary non-verbal signals, such as smiling or blushing”, and it is essential to the “efficiency of the communication process” (Jabber and Mahmood (2020).

This kind of communication is composed by the “nonverbal cues”, which include “all the communication between people that do not have a direct verbal translation” (Patti Woods in Forbes, 2013). They are “body movements, body orientation, nuances of the voice, facial expressions, details of dress, and choice and movement of objects that communicate” (Ibid).

“Simply put, nonverbal cues include all the ways you present and express yourself, apart from the actual words you speak, and they are critically important at work and in business because perception is reality” (Darlene Price in Forbes, 2013).

Therefore, nonverbal communication can transmit much more than only specific content, and it is particularly important when verbal language represents a barrier for instance for people who are learning the language, as they can complement, substitute or accent verbal queues.

However, as they are largely culture-bound, they can also easily create misunderstanding for foreigners who are not aware of how people communicate in each culture. That is because nonverbal cues must be **interpreted** (Kostic and Chadee, 2014) by the person who is receiving the information and because communication involves **“learned, culturally patterned behaviour that must be understood in reference to the social context”** (Paradise, 1994). Thus, if you are from different cultural contexts, you may interpret them differently.

For this reason, nonverbal cues are important when someone is doing a business transaction or negotiation. Here’s what you should know about nonverbal communication and the business world (Forbes, 2013):

- “How others ‘sense’ or perceive you significantly impacts your success in the workplace. Otherwise brilliant people with great ideas and exceptional talent are often misjudged, mislabeled, and overlooked because of their ineffective nonverbal communication” (Darlene Price in Forbes, 2013).
- “Nonverbal cues can help businesspeople determine others’ motivations and analyze business interactions with much more richness, depth, and insight than can come from simply relying on spoken or printed words” (Patti Woods in Forbes, 2013).

- “Professionals who understand nonverbal cues can evaluate what their clients, customers and co-workers are really telling them in order to know how to better meet their needs.”
- “In power-differential relationships, such as with superiors and subordinates, successful interactions depend on both parties being able to use and read body language”

It is worth noting that, according to Smentek (2016), Knapp (1971, quoted in Prabhu, 2010), and Tertman (2018), nonverbal cues include:

- **Facial Expressions**
- **Body Movement**
- **Eye Contact**
- **Artifacts** (such as perfume, clothes, lipstick, hair pieces, eyeglasses and miscellaneous beauty aids).
- **Haptics**: physical contact or any form of interaction involving touch
- **Paralinguistic**: This includes the tone of voice and other aspects of the voice (e.g., sarcasm, longer speech latencies, slower speech, and more pauses, etc.)
- **Proxemics**: the personal space of each person
- **Psychological changes**: mostly involuntary reactions which are often associated with anxiety and discomfort, such as sweating, blushing, and teary eyes.

What about **Sweden**? What is typical and what is uncommon for nonverbal communication?

Source: Cultural Atlas (<https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/swedish-culture/swedish-culture-communication#swedish-culture-communication>)

- **Silence**: Moments of silence are rarely seen as awkward in Sweden. In turn, Swedes don't tend to rush to fill periods of silence in conversation. However, if the silence is particularly long, it may be seen as a sign that people have little interest in speaking with one another.
- **Personal Space**: Many Swedes value their personal space and do not appreciate it being invaded by others. For example, in elevators, a Swedish person will tend to stand as far apart from another person as they can. A little over an arm's length of space is common during conversations. Individual space is also maintained amongst family and friends.
- **Physical Contact**: Traditionally, Swedes seldom embraced in public or put their arm around another. However, this is changing, and people are becoming more casual. Displays of friendship are more common, with light touching during conversations – such as a hand on the arm or elbow – is not uncommon among friends and family.
- **Eye Contact**: Eye contact is an important element of conversation. Many Swedes feel that avoiding eye contact is a sign that someone is not interested in the conversation.
- **Gestures**: Swedes tend not to use excessive hand gestures when speaking.

More aspects include punctuality and casual dress code. Read more about the business culture [here](#).

Communicating with Institutions

Each country has their own structure and own systems. Some might rely more on physical communication (e.g., letters), others on in-person meetings, and others on digital methods. For entrepreneurs in Sweden, it is important to know these main institutions and some apps that can make your life easier.

Institutions

- Skatteverket: Swedish Tax Agency. Role: They are the ones sending you your income tax.
- Arbetsförmedlingen: Swedish Public Employment Service. It handles job advertisements. You should know that every new position you advertise should be made available on their platform for 2 weeks.
- A-Kassa: Unemployment insurance. It handles unemployment benefits if necessary. It costs around 130-190kr a month.

Apps

- BankID: the most important app you should have in Sweden. It is an authentication app that makes it possible for you to access all institutional platforms in Sweden, access your bank, make payments, etc.
- Swish: easy way to transfer money in Sweden. It requires BankID and allows transfers between bank accounts through the registered phone number. It is also possible with registration numbers for businesses.
- Kivra: the app where you can find all important notifications and letters from the Swedish agencies to you and even market receipts. This is an easy way to keep in touch with important announcements. It also requires BankID.

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