

Module 1: Conceptual Framework

Lesson 1.5



Gender and Culture



Learning Outcomes

- Illustrate the impact of diversity in local communities
- Apply culture and gender perspectives to operations, especially with respect to Human Terrain



Lesson Content

- Review of Diversity
- Review of Culture
- Review of Gender

Review of Diversity

What is diversity?

Diversity means “variety” - refers to things that are different from each other.

Respect for Diversity is a UN Core Value.





Learning Activity





Review of Culture

What is Culture?



Canadian First Nations celebrating their heritage during the First Nations University of Canada Powwow



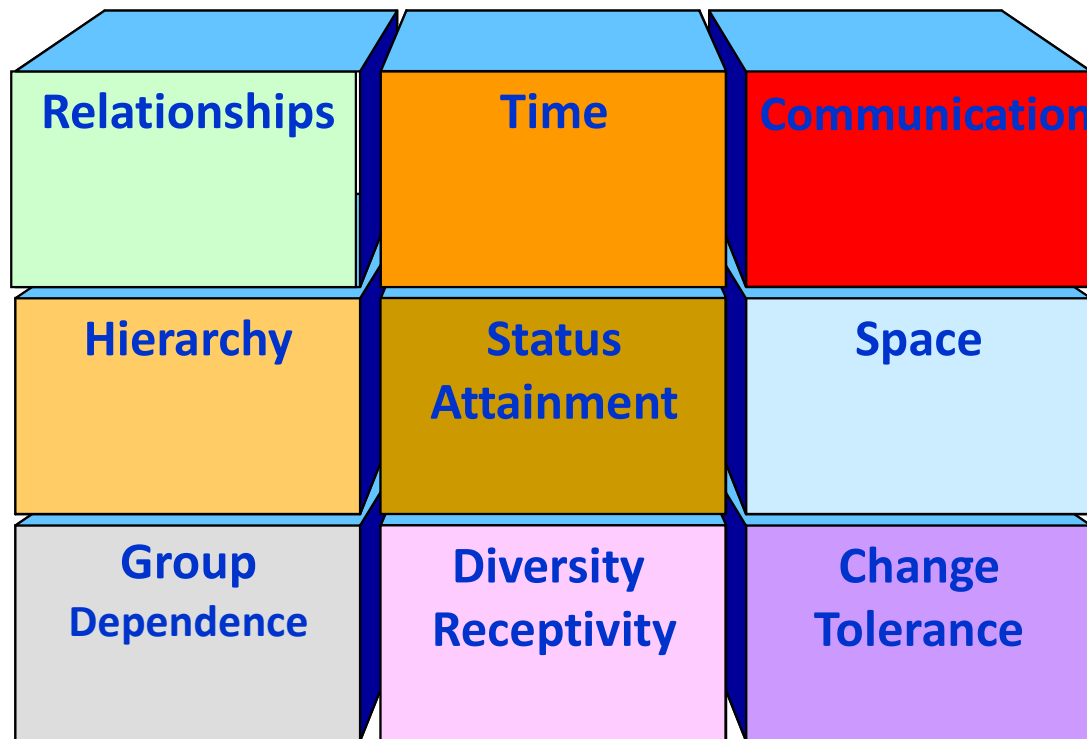
Cultural Awareness and the UN-EP

Culture is a collective belief, behaviour and practice; a community, developed over a long period of time.

Mission success depends on ability to understand local culture, maintain respectful relationships and communicate effectively with others.



The Dimensions of Culture



Windham Intercultural Model



Cultural Bias

- Derived by distance and interaction realities
- Social constructs and therefore subject to change
- In a constant state of flux and change
- Generally subconscious in nature



Understanding the Cultural Context of an AO

- UN-EP personnel must be particularly sensitive to the local culture in relation to own actions
- Recognize how our own culture creates biases which may lead to prejudices
- Lack of exposure to other cultures may result in misunderstandings and even conflicts



Overcoming Cultural Bias

- Set an intention of curiosity, and compassion
- Look at other perspectives, different from your own
- Know yourself before you can understand others
- Understand role of language and non-verbal cues



Learning Activity

Cultural Awareness - I Am, but I Am Not



Review of Gender

What is the difference between gender and sex?





The sex of a person is:

- Biologically defined;
- Determined by birth;
- Universal.



The gender of a person:

- Is socially constructed and therefore learned and can be changed;
- Differs and varies within and across cultures and over time;
- Results in different roles, responsibilities, opportunities, needs and constraints for women, men, girls and boys.



Gender refers to the *social attributes*, opportunities and relationships associated with being male and female. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are *socially constructed* and learned through socialization. *They are context/time-specific and changeable.*



Gender defines **power relations in society** and determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context.



Gender, Culture and Diversity

To examine cultural practices and their impact on gender. Here are some examples from around the world.

WOMEN	MEN
In northern India Women observe a one day fast for long life for their husbands (Karvachauth).	A Moran (Maasai young man) is expected to kill a lion to prove he is a real man. The boy child is encouraged "never to cry."
In many sub-Saharan culture's women make sure the men eat first and they are the ones to eat last.	According to the World Health Organization, approximately 30% of men are circumcised worldwide



Practices that contribute to Respect for Diversity

- Examine own biases and behaviours
- Work effectively with people from all backgrounds
- Treat all people with dignity and respect
- Treat men and women equally
- Show respect for diverse points of view
- Do not discriminate against any individual or group



Take Away

- Understanding the **local cultural context** and **different perspectives** is vital to successful peacekeeping operations.
- **Gender** is not only a woman's issue; gender is a **social construct** that shows structure and power relation.
- Having an in-depth **understanding of the different needs and priorities** of women and men, and girls and boys, in a particular AO should ultimately lead to better-informed decisions and more effective implementation of the mission mandate.



QUESTIONS?