

# The Derdians

This game is a simulation of two cultures. Find the key to foreign cultural behaviour, analyse the effects of meeting with a foreign culture. A team of engineers goes to another country in order to teach people there how to build a bridge.

## Resources needed:

Strong paper (cardboard), glue, scissors, ruler, pencil, game descriptions for Derdians and engineers. Two rooms.

## Group Size

Minimum: 12 people, who are divided into two groups. .

## Time

1 1/2 -2 hours, including debriefing.

## Step-by-step

1 Depending on the size of your group, have 4-8 people play a team of engineers, who will teach the Derdians how to build the bridge. They receive the instructions for the engineers and are brought to a separate room.

2 The rest of the group will be Derdians. They receive the Derdian instructions. If you have too many people, you can also make a team of observers, who just watch and take notes. These observers should not be introduced to the Derdian culture beforehand, so keep them with the engineers in the beginning.

## Reflection and evaluation

### Debriefing:

After the game the two groups of participants take a piece of flipchart and note their comments to the following three points:

1.) Facts      2.) Feelings    3.) Interpretations

The following points should be discussed in plenary: ~

- We have a tendency to think that others think the way we do.
- We often interpret things right away, without being aware of the differences in cultural behaviour.
  - How were the roles distributed/What role did I take? What does that reveal of my identity? Did I feel comfortable with my role?
  - Is that image I have the same that was perceived by the others?
  - What influence did my cultural background have on the role I took on?

### Cards:

See following pages.

## **Instructions for the Derdians:**

### **The Situation:**

You live in a country called Dardia. The village you live in is separated from the next city where there is a market by a deep valley. To reach the market you have to walk for two days. If you had a bridge across the valley you could get there in 5 hours.

The government of Dardia made a deal with a foreign firm to come to your you how to build a bridge. Your people will then be Dardia's first engineers. After having built that first bridge with the foreign experts to build bridges all over Dardia to facilitate other people's lives.

The bridge will be built out of paper, using pencils, rulers, scissors and glue. You know the materials and tools, but you don't know the construction techniques.

### **Social Behaviour:**

The Derdians are used to touch each other. Their communication doesn't work without touching. Not being in contact while talking is considered very rude. You don't have to be in direct contact, though. If you join a group, you just hang on to one member and are instantly included in the conversation.

It is also very important to greet each other when you meet, even when you just pass someone.

### **Greetings:**

The traditional greeting is a kiss on the shoulder. The person who starts the the greeting kisses the other on the right shoulder. The other then kisses on the left shoulder. Every other form of kissing is insulting! Shaking hands is one of the biggest insults possible in Dardia. If a Dardian ever is insulted by not being greeted or touched while being talked to, he/she starts shouting loudly about it.

### **Yes/No:**

Derdians don't use the word no. They always say yes, although if they mean no, they accompany the 'yes' with an emphatic nodding of the head (you should practice this well).

### **Work Behaviour:**

While working, the Derdians also touch a lot. The tools are gender-specific: scissors are male, pencil and ruler are female. Glue is neutral. Men never ever touch a pencil or a ruler. The same goes for women and scissors (I think it's got to do with tradition or religion).

### **Foreigners:**

Derdians like company. Therefore they also like foreigners. But they are also very proud of themselves and their culture. They know that they'll never be able to build the bridge on their own. On the other hand, they don't consider the foreigner's culture and education as superior. Building bridges is just a thing they don't know. They expect the foreigners to adapt to their culture. But because their own behaviour is natural to them, they can't explain it to the experts (this point is VERY important).

A Dardian man will never get in contact with another man unless he is introduced by a woman. It does not matter whether the woman is Dardian or not.

## **Instructions for the engineers:**

### **The situation:**

You are a group of international engineers working for a multinational construction company. Your company has just signed a very important contract with the government of Derdia in which it committed itself to teach Derdians how to build a bridge. According to the contract signed, it is very important that you respect the deadline agreed, otherwise the contract will be cancelled and you will be unemployed.

The Derdian government has a great interest in this project, which is funded by the European Union. Derdia is a very mountainous country, with many canyons and deep valleys, but no bridges. Therefore it always takes many days for Derdians to go from the villages to the market in the main city. It is estimated that with the bridge the Derdians could make the trip in only 5 hours.

Since there are many canyons and rivers in Derdia, you can't just put a bridge there and take off again. You'll have to instruct the Derdians how to build a bridge themselves.

### **Playing the simulation**

First you should take time to carefully read these instructions and decide together about the way you are going to build the bridge. After a specified time, two members of your team will be allowed to go and make contact for 3 minutes with the Derdian village where the bridge will be built (e.g. to check the natural and material conditions, make contact with the Derdians, etc.). You will then have ten minutes to analyse their report and complete the preparations.

After this the whole team of engineers goes to Derdia to teach the Derdians how to build a bridge.

### **The bridge:**

The bridge will be symbolized by a paper bridge. The bridge will link two chairs or tables over a distance of approximately 80 cm. It has to be stable. At the end of the building process it should support the weight of the scissors and glue used in its construction.

The pieces of the bridge cannot just be cut out and assembled in Derdia because otherwise the Derdians would not learn how to do it themselves. They have to learn all the stages of the construction.

Each piece needs to be drawn with pencil and ruler and then cut out with the scissors.

### **Materials:**

The bridge will be made with paper/cardboard.

You can use for the planning and building: paper, glue, scissors, ruler, pencils.

### **Time:**

For planning and preparation before going to Derdia: 40 minutes

To teach the Derdians to build: 25 minutes