

CULTURAL ICEBERG

When we talk about culture, we focus on “surface culture”. These are things that we can see, hear and touch, like music, food, language, art.

This represents only the tip of the cultural iceberg. The biggest part of culture is hidden below the surface. These are values and beliefs that underlie behaviors of people from that culture. The more immersed we become in a new culture, the more these aspects are revealed to us.

As you begin your program and start making new connections, do not judge the new culture only on what is immediately visible. Keep in mind what aspects of “deep culture” exist and how that comes into play. Actively participate in the new culture and take time to see what’s below the surface.

Source Beyond Culture (1976) by Edward T. Hall

SURFACE CULTURE

Food
Flag Festivals
Fashion Holidays Music
Performances Dances Games
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

Communication Styles and Rules:

facial expressions, gesture, eye contact, personal space, touching, body language, tone of voice, handling and displaying of emotion, conversational patterns in different social situations

Notions of:

courtesy and manners, friendship, leadership, cleanliness, modesty, beauty

Concepts of:

self, time, past and future, fairness and justice, roles related to age, sex, class, family, etc.

Attitudes toward:

elders, adolescents, dependents, rule, expectations, work, authority, cooperation vs. competition, relationships with animals, age, sin, death

DEEP CULTURE

Approaches to:

religion, courtship, marriage, raising children, decision-making, problem-solving