

# The LEGO Group



## Intercultural Competences Workshop



### Company Description

Toy manufacturing company

Employing Danes and a wide variety of international staff, LEGO is globally represented across retail stores, manufacturing, company offices, selling products and services to international markets

Source: A personal assessment from Senior Director Talent Acquisition, who has vast experience in working across 29 countries whilst in Switzerland and was the HR Lead for Coffee and Cheese and Grocery Category organizations for Europe. Various HR staff members have also made contributions.

### LEGO needs employees with intercultural competences

As a global company, we operate across countries, cultures, languages, ethnicity, gender, time zone etc.

We have many global teams where working together can be challenging unless employees have the awareness and understanding of working with other people from different and diverse backgrounds. Even if employees are not working in a global team, they could be required to interact with many different in their work environment. In Billund alone we have over 20 different nationalities. We also value that difference is a strength and together we are more able to solve challenges as we all bring diverse experiences, perspectives and views.

### Important intercultural competences

New Thinking is valued in LEGO as we build and grow the organization; bringing new thinking into the organization as this will ensure we are set for the future.

Active listening and attuning are two competencies which are valued. Active listening allows for employees to truly engage and get an understanding of what someone else is explaining. Often if we are closed to others' ideas and views we do not listen actively

Attuning is a skill that needs to be honed when working in a multicultural environment, what is acceptable to some may not be to others and being aware and attuned to all those around you, their differences allows for deeper appreciation and connectivity. Ultimately there will be a positive impact on areas like creative thinking and problem solving for the organization

The ability to be authentic and genuine and show interest in learning about others' culture, experiences, and beliefs creates an open-mindedness to others and understanding of difference and how to work with different people

In LEGO we have a strong set of values which embrace difference, engender a spirit of adventure, respect and high levels of integrity, if you can display these traits you will bring a positive energy to the diversity of our world

### Perspectives regarding graduates' limited intercultural competences

If a student has only lived and studied in one country, they are limited in their experiences and understanding of other peoples. Interaction, travel and experiences are what bring new perspectives. Of course students who have some level of interaction with other cultures during their studies are more likely to cope with a multicultural environment

### How universities can prepare graduates for internationalised work and social environments

Creating the opportunity to experience life at other universities, it could be an exchange program, learning a different language. Creating opportunities to meet and network with foreign students. Opportunities for internships at different external organizations

Create immersion programs for students - have them live like locals in a country to give a true experience.

### How LEGO supports employees' intercultural competences development

At the moment LEGO focuses on ensuring that our expatriate community are integrated into the new cultures where they are transferred. This program has been facilitated through a global provider. One of the areas that LEGO needs to bring additional focus to is the local employees as they play an important part in ensuring integration of international employees into the company.

### Absolutely refer to developing intercultural competences workshops in job applications to LEGO

Showing a company that you have gained a deeper experience and understanding of others reflects a maturity and awareness that companies would really appreciate

### Advice for students planning to work in Danish or international settings upon graduation

Ensure that there are opportunities to really experience the practicalities of intercultural development, ensure it is not just in theory.

### Intercultural Competences from a Personal Perspective

Personally being from South Africa we were exposed to a country filled with diversity and difference, speaking Zulu a traditional African language as a white South African was an amazing opportunity to be taught and to learn from people of colour who have had such different experiences to myself. It gave me the depth of understanding and appreciation of difference.

We have lived in three countries, some of the most challenging experiences being having to get to understand the language, culture, lifestyle of Switzerland and Denmark

In LEGO Education, I was privileged to design and run 2 deep immersion programs in China for 58 employees in LE mainly based in Denmark. It was the first time our employees had a true experience of what it was like to be Chinese. The program touched the hearts and minds of our employees who had never had this type of exposure. Many today still have contact with employees.