



Experience Sheet

WORKSHOP

for the SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Meeting in a Context of Interculturality

This document is the result of an exchange trip between two member organizations of the Train to Transform collective: Fedina, an Indian organization, and Cenca, a Peruvian organization. The exchange trip took place in August 2023 in Lima, Peru. It details the practices put in place before and during the exchange trip to help members of these two organizations better understand the cultural differences in which they operate, work, and take action.



Before the trip

During the preparatory meetings, concerns about cultural differences were repeatedly addressed. Participants were invited to systematically counterbalance these concerns by expressing a positive feeling that the exchange trip inspired in them: the excitement of new experiences, the desire to share things they care about... By the end of the roundtable, positive feelings outweighed concerns! Throughout the preparation for the exchange trip, participants were encouraged to share photos and videos of the places where they work, the people they support, and the tools they use for support. These exchanges, conducted via a WhatsApp group, gradually built new images of the economic, social, and cultural realities.



Photos shared on WhatsApp by Cenca (left) and Fedina (right)

Participants quickly realized that they had many preconceived notions about foreign cultural contexts. To prevent these stereotypes from hindering the understanding between the two organizations, everyone agreed to dedicate time to this topic in the meeting's schedule. Thus, the first half-day of the exchange trip was entirely devoted to the socio-cultural contexts of each country.

Starting the trip with a field visit

To facilitate exchanges, and especially to help Fedina understand Cenca's intervention context, members of the Habla Mujer team organized a tour of San Juan de Lurigancho, the district where Cenca works. To organize this visit, Cenca relied on a local association, IDE Cultura, which organizes guided tourist tours of San Juan de Lurigancho.



Guided tour of the San Juan de Lurigancho neighborhood with Fedina

The goal of these visits is to help residents change their perceptions of these challenging neighborhoods and to discover and begin to reclaim their cultural heritage by exploring pre-Inca remains (Huacas) or local citizen

initiatives. Despite the presence of these sites in the district, it remains very little visited by tourists due to its distance from Lima's tourist areas and its reputation.

Thanks to this day of visiting, Fedina's members gained insight into the social and cultural context in which Cenca operates. This activity also allowed Cenca's team to discover new actors and actresses who are working in the same area!

Bipin and Ganga, the representatives of Fedina, shared the surprises that these visits elicited :

- They were surprised by the low number of people in the streets, even in densely populated areas, compared to India.
- Additionally, they were struck by how vulnerable neighborhoods are distributed in Lima, where they are separated from wealthier areas, whereas in India, these neighborhoods are often close together or even intermingle.
- They were also surprised by the stark inequalities between neighborhoods and individuals.
- Finally, the practice of "Ollas Comunes" (community kitchens) also surprised them, as residents can cook and share meals together, while in India, the caste system makes it difficult or even impossible for people of different castes to share a meal.



Throughout the exchange trip

Throughout this week of exchange, participants were able to address cultural differences in many ways. They exchanged recipes from their regions or traditional music from their countries. Icebreakers were particularly effective in addressing interculturality during this exchange trip:

- During the first workshop, each organization presented key information about their country on a map, followed by three examples: what I like about my country, what I dislike about my country, and what is changing.
- Participants then created an acronym from the names of the organizations: CENCA had to think of key words to represent Fedina using the letters FEDINA (Formation, Empowerment, etc.), and vice versa

for Fedina. Each organization then used these acronyms to present its values and areas of intervention.

- Another icebreaker involved participants giving statements starting with "if I were a man/woman" (for example, "if I were born a man, I could have pursued higher education"). This icebreaker highlighted cultural differences by revealing gender stereotypes in India and Peru.



Icebreaker « Acronym »

Objectives:

The experience of the meeting between Cenca and Fedina shows that interculturality can hinder or complicate exchanges between partners, but it is possible to implement good practices to prevent cultural stereotypes from weighing on the encounter!

Link to the article : <https://atelier.fdh.org/en/take-action/our-experiences/support-and-alliance/article/meeting-in-a-context-of-interculturality?lang=en>

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