



IDENTIFYING FUTURE CAPABILITIES FOR COMMUNITY POLICING

KOBAN Cultural Fit Guide:

Science-based strategies for practical impact in community policing

INFORMATION TABLE

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Dissemination Level	PU
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About KOBAN

KOBAN is a Horizon Europe research and innovation project focused on strengthening community policing across Europe. The project brings together police authorities, public organisations, research institutions and technology partners to develop and test innovative approaches that enhance trust, engagement and cooperation between police and the communities they serve. Through its pilots and practical tools and guidance, KOBAN supports more inclusive, culturally aware and effective community policing practices.

Executive Summary

Purpose and Scope:

The KOBAN Cultural Fit Guide is designed to support police officers and community policing practitioners in navigating cultural influences during KOBAN pilots and beyond. It offers practical, science-driven strategies to enhance the effectiveness of community policing (CP) by fostering cultural awareness and adaptability.

Key Themes:

- **Cultural Awareness as a Core Competency:**
The guide emphasizes that understanding and respecting cultural differences is not optional but essential for successful community policing. Cultural awareness helps address challenges such as trust-building, communication barriers, and the impact of historical and social dynamics on police-community relations.
- **Frameworks for Understanding Culture:**
The document introduces established models (i.e., Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Meyer's Culture Map) to help practitioners analyze and compare cultural values and behaviors. Five main dimensions are highlighted: hierarchy, trust, communication style, time orientation, and honor. These dimensions are used to anticipate and address cultural challenges in policing contexts.
- **Scenario-Based Guidance for Pilots:**
Potential scenarios from KOBAN pilots in various European cities (e.g., Zaanstad, Utrecht, Brussels, Valencia, Savonlinna, Radom) illustrate how cultural differences could manifest in practice. Each scenario is analyzed to reveal underlying cultural dynamics and is followed by practical recommendations for police officers to adapt their approach, foster inclusion, and build trust.
- **Reflection and Adaptation:**
The guide provides a structured reflection tool to help teams identify cultural mismatches and adapt their strategies accordingly. It encourages ongoing dialogue, flexibility, and the use of adaptive strategies to bridge cultural gaps, especially when working with vulnerable or diverse populations.
- **Actionable Tips:**
Concrete tips are offered for cross-cultural collaboration and citizen engagement, such as:
 - Knowing one's own cultural biases
 - Asking questions and maintaining humility
 - Using accessible language and adjusting communication style
 - Creating safe, inclusive environments for dialogue
 - Managing expectations and ensuring data privacy
 - Using multiple feedback channels to accommodate different preferences



Conclusion:

The KOBAN Cultural Fit Guide is a comprehensive, evidence-based resource for enhancing the cultural competence of police officers and improving the outcomes of community policing initiatives. By integrating cultural awareness into daily practice, police can build stronger, more trusting relationships with the communities they serve, ultimately leading to safer and more cohesive societies.

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1. Introduction

Scientific studies and real-world experiences reveal that **cultural awareness is not just a “nice-to-have,” but a crucial element for successful community policing (CP)**. This report delivers a **Hands-On Guide to Navigating Cultural Influences in KOBAN pilots and beyond** and offers practical, science-driven guidance for police officers seeking to understand and harness the power of culture to improve outcomes in community policing. The report proceeds as follows:

1. **Introduction**, which outlines the impact of culture on community policing;
2. **Cultural Dimensions**, which defines critical cultural dimensions to consider;
3. **Scenarios**, which illustrate how culture can influence situations and how to adapt;
4. **Reflection Guide**, which supports you, the reader, in considering the cultural match and transferability of community policing methods;
5. **Tips**, that are handy to keep in mind in KOBAN pilots and beyond.
6. **Appendices**, which provide additional helpful information and resources.

1.1. Impact of Culture on Community Policing

Community policing (CP) is a collaborative effort between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve, with the goal of building trust, solving problems, and reducing crime. However, the effectiveness of these efforts is deeply entwined with the cultural dynamics within communities.

As cultural and linguistic diversity of communities increases, so does the need for culturally appropriate and effective police services (Rice, 2011). Across countries and cultures, police play different roles. Therefore, the various members of a diverse community may have different ideas about what police do, how police should be interacted with, and whether police can be trusted (Rice, 2011). Knowledge of these cultural differences is key to reaching all members of the community.

CP differently affects communities of colour and white communities (Giwa, 2018). Current CP practices do not adequately address racial disparities, or the historical and colonial attitudes that underpin them. In fact, modern policing perpetuates the continuing subjugation of racialized minority groups (Giwa, 2018). Cultural awareness is a critical tool for addressing this blind spot.

In addition, linguistic differences and, more generally, differences in communication styles are a key barrier faced by community police. This barrier is related to culture, and cultural awareness can help overcome it.

Understanding culture involves several key elements. First, it is **important to recognize your own cultural perspective**. When interacting with people from similar backgrounds, this may not seem necessary. But when working with those from different cultures, being aware of how your own views shape your behaviour, and how others might perceive it, is essential. For example, a police officer comes from a culture where making direct eye

contact is seen as a sign of honesty and respect. During community outreach in a neighbourhood with a large immigrant population, the officer notices that some residents avoid eye contact during conversations. If the officer interprets this as evasiveness or guilt, misunderstandings can occur. In reality, in some cultures, avoiding eye contact, especially with authority figures, is a sign of respect. By recognizing their own cultural perspective (valuing eye contact) and understanding the community's norms, the officer can adjust their expectations and approach. For instance, instead of pressing for eye contact, they focus on tone and body language to build trust and ensure effective communication.

Second, **all cultures have developed in response to specific circumstances**, such as historical developments, climate and economy, making their practices well-suited to their members. There is no single “best” way to do things; each culture works for the people within it. For example, in regions with harsh winters, cultures often emphasize planning and resource storage, which influences values like punctuality and long-term thinking. In contrast, communities in tropical climates may prioritize flexibility and social interaction, as survival depends less on strict schedules. Similarly, cultures with a history of trade often develop norms around negotiation and hospitality, while those shaped by scarcity may value frugality and conservation. As such, it is important for a police officer working with diverse populations to realise that people generally behave in a way that makes sense within their own cultural framework, even if it seems unfamiliar or unexpected. Recognizing this can prevent misunderstandings, foster respect, and lead to more effective communication and cooperation.

Third, **not everyone from the same culture is the same**. While we know this about our own group, we often assume people from other cultures behave uniformly. This is stereotyping, i.e., oversimplifying and generalizing traits of a group. In reality, there is often more variation between individuals within a culture than between entire countries. People differ based on personality, education, life experiences, and personal values, even when they share a cultural background. For example, a police officer working in a multicultural city might encounter two individuals from the same country during community outreach. One person may strongly adhere to traditional customs, such as deferring to elders before making decisions, while another, perhaps younger or more acculturated, may prefer to act independently and communicate directly. If the officer assumes both will respond the same way, they risk misunderstanding and damaging trust. Recognizing individual differences while being aware of cultural influences helps officers approach each situation with flexibility and respect.

Finally, **culture isn't a mystery**. It can be understood in a structured way and it should never serve as an excuse for failure. While police officers can prepare to some extent, complete readiness is impossible. A key part of working effectively with diverse communities is maintaining openness to different perspectives and engaging directly with individuals about their cultural background. Most people are willing to share their customs and values, and asking respectful questions can be an excellent way to build trust and establish meaningful connections.

As cultural diversity of communities increases, so does the need for culturally appropriate and effective police services.

2. Understanding culture: Research on cultural dimensions

Culture is a complex system of shared values, beliefs, behaviours, customs, and language that shapes the way people in a social group or society interact with one another and with authority figures. Culture is largely implicit and provides shared understanding and expectations that facilitate communication and collaboration. Conversely, cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings and stereotyping. Therefore, as cultural and linguistic diversity of communities increases, so does the need for culturally appropriate and effective police services.

Culture, at the national as well as group levels, can be understood in terms of different models or dimensions. Well-known models include **Hofstede's cultural dimensions** and **Meyer's culture map**. These models may help to understand cultures and make differences and similarities between cultures more concrete.

Hofstede's model ([The 6 dimensions model of national culture by Geert Hofstede](#)) outlines the differences in cultural values across societies through 6 value dimensions: Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation, and Indulgence vs. Restraint. Meyer's ([The Culture Map – Erin Meyer](#)) Culture Map framework identifies eight scales to analyze and understand cultural differences in international business and communication: Communicating, Evaluating, Persuading, Leading, Deciding, Trusting, Disagreeing, and Scheduling (see Appendix 2 for a full list of dimensions and definitions).

It is helpful to consider various cultural dimensions before starting your pilot work. If your work is already underway, it is never too late to consider culture. Five main dimensions, taken from Hofstede's and Meyer's work, are:

2.1. Hierarchy

This dimension relates to **power distance**—the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect unequal power distribution. In high power-distance cultures, hierarchy is clear, and authority is respected; decisions often come from the top. In low power-distance cultures, structures are flatter, and participation is encouraged.

Questions: Do some people have more authority and power than others, or does everyone have the same amount? Is there an implicit (or explicit) hierarchy that makes it harder for some people to speak up or act, or is the structure quite flat (equal) and open? What are the assumptions about who leads and who makes decisions?

2.2. Trust

Trust can be **relationship-based** or **task-based**. In relationship-based cultures, trust grows through personal connections and time spent together. In task-based cultures, trust is grounded in competence, roles, and reliability. Historical experiences or social vulnerabilities can also influence trust levels between groups.

Questions: Is trust built on spending time together and building a social relationship, or is it based on a person's role or position? Are there groups that have reason to be less trusting of other groups, perhaps due to historical treatment or a vulnerable situation?

2.3. Communication style

Cultures differ in **direct vs. indirect communication** and **context orientation**. Direct communicators value clarity and explicitness, while indirect communicators prioritize harmony and subtlety. High-context cultures assume shared understanding and provide background before the main point; low-context cultures get straight to the point. Norms around turn-taking and feedback also vary widely.

Questions: Do people communicate bluntly without mincing words, or are messages conveyed behind a layer of grace and manners? Both can be considered polite and kind in different cultures. Is negative feedback provided directly or gently? When explaining something, do you build the background context before presenting your main argument, or do you start with your main argument and then go back to explain how you got there? Is it standard for people to talk over each other, or for people to take turns? (Differences in this norm can leave some people never feeling like there was a polite moment to say something). These are just some of the ways communication styles vary across cultures.

2.4. Time

This dimension reflects **linear vs. flexible time orientation**. In linear-time cultures, punctuality and sequential planning are essential; tasks follow a strict order. In flexible-time cultures, schedules are adaptable, and multitasking or overlapping activities are common.

Questions: Is punctuality the norm or is a flexible approach the norm? How late is it acceptable to be? Are steps in a plan expected to happen neatly one after the other, or is overlapping and adjusting expected?

2.5. Honour

Honour relates to **collectivism vs. individualism** and cultural norms around reputation. In some cultures, honour is tied to personal achievement and ambition; in others, it is linked to family behaviour and social standing. In certain contexts, defending honour, even if aggressively, may be considered acceptable.

Questions: Is honour based on one's own ambitions and achievements, or on the behaviour of the family (especially female members)? Is aggression more acceptable if it is in defense of honour?

It is important to remember that **culture is not everything**. People have personalities and individual differences. People's behaviour also changes based on the situation, so consider the pilot/workshop environment and the people's current circumstances (including stress, uncertainty, and vulnerability).

3. Example scenarios for the pilots

It is easy to imagine how differences in the cultural aspects described above could lead to misunderstandings when people from different cultural backgrounds communicate or work together. That is why it is important to consider the cultural norms of others, as well as your own cultural assumptions.

In the following scenarios, we highlight potential cultural challenges identified through the dimensions of Meyer and Hofstede described above for the pilots of Zaanstad, Utrecht,

Brussel, Valencia, Savonlinna, and Radom. We explain why these cultural aspects matter in community policing contexts and provide practical considerations on how to address them when challenges arise. The discussion of cultural dimensions is not exhaustive, but rather intended to inspire pilot leaders and facilitators, providing guidance on how to recognize and navigate cultural differences effectively.

3.1. Zaanstad (Netherlands): Connecting with Refugees

Scenario (Trust & Hierarchy)

In the asylum seekers center in Zaanstad, a male Dutch police officer leads a community meeting with asylum seekers. The asylum seekers are mostly from Ukraine, but there are also people from countries further away, like Afghanistan and Syria. When asked for input, the group remains quiet. The officer assumes they are disengaged or uninterested.

However, from the group's perspective, they remain quiet out of respect for hierarchy, hesitating to speak up due to deference to authority and uncertainty about whether input is expected or appropriate.

People's thoughts could be:

- "We should wait for the officer to tell us what to do before speaking."
- "It's better to listen quietly and not appear disrespectful by interrupting."
- "Maybe they don't want our opinions; we should be careful what we say."
- "If we speak up too soon, it might seem rude or challenging to authority."
- "We are interested, but it's hard to know if our input will be welcomed here."

These answers reflect typical Ukrainian and Afghan communication norms characterized by respect for hierarchy, indirectness, and cautiousness in group settings with unfamiliar authority figures (Evason-b, 2019).

Explanation Scenario

When considering the cultural dimensions of Geert Hofstede, we can see in *Figure 1* that Ukraine and Afghanistan score relatively high on the power-distance dimension and relatively low on the individualism dimension compared to The Netherlands. This means that compared to The Netherlands, these countries are relatively more hierarchical and more collectivistic. Collectivism is closely linked with relationship-based orientation (Hofstede, 2011).

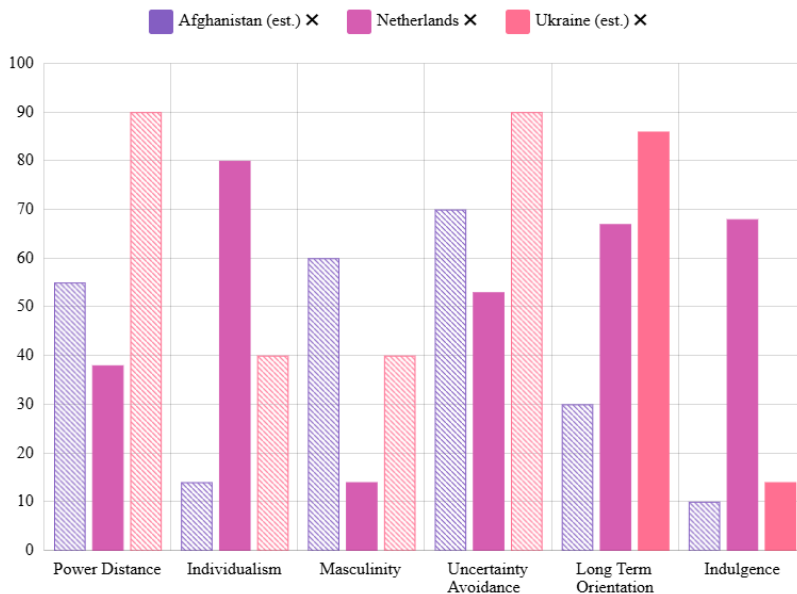


Figure 1. Geert Hofstede Country Comparison Tool for Netherlands, Afghanistan and Ukraine. The solid bars give the “official” country scores from studies considered to be valid; the striped bars are not scientifically validated but based on guesstimates.

Note: Generated from the Country Comparison Tool from Geert Hofstede,

<https://geerthofstede.com/country-comparison-bar-charts/>.

Ukraine and Afghanistan are more relationship oriented, meaning that their trust, and thus their collaboration, comes from knowing each other personally or via other people and building a relationship, more than from a person’s accomplishments, skills and delivering quality work (Meyer, 2016). Especially Afghanistan and Syria are strong relationship-based countries, where trust is rooted in families, tribes and community ties, which come before task-based activities. In Ukraine relationships are important to business, as people prefer working with someone they know and trust. When communicating with Ukrainians it is important to be patient and give them time to open up. Once they have gained a sense of familiarity they have reached a level of trust and are therefore more comfortable speaking up (Hrynovetska et al., 2022).

In Ukraine and Afghanistan, authorities, elders and religious leaders are generally respected, as in most rural parts of Afghanistan (Evason, 2019-c). Additionally, being a man automatically means gaining more respect than the women (Evason, 2019-a). Moreover, during business meeting, people from these cultures tend to wait for someone older to initiate a conversation before speaking. For them it is also more important to avoid sounding bossy when trying to get things done, especially at the start of new relationships, than for people from The Netherlands. They also tend to avoid correcting someone in a meeting in front of the others as this can cause shame and embarrassment (Evason, 2019-b).

In Ukrainian culture, there is hierarchy within the workplace and a general respect for the status and authority of superiors. During meetings, seniors are leading and the subordinates are supporting and listening, unless they get a task assigned. Due to this hierarchy, Ukrainians tend to avoid asking a question when not understanding something to prevent being perceived as incompetent. Therefore it is important to encourage people

to provide input and ask questions. Moreover, it is important to be sensitive in how one delivers information. When faced with perceived orders, Ukrainians can become resistant. Instead explain why something is important to be executed (Evason, 2019-b). In contrast, The Netherlands has a more egalitarian meeting style, where members are encouraged to voice their opinions and concerns (Meyer, 2016).

How to approach this scenario instead:

- ✓ **Identify participants with influence** such as elderly or high-status participants before the meeting starts. They can then help to facilitate third-party introductions with the other participants. Additionally, connecting with these elderly and superior participants can contribute to trust as they can be an example and ensure that others follow their lead during the meeting when they ask them to speak up.
- ✓ **Take time to know each other:** At the start of the meeting, take the time getting to know the participants, and the participants getting to know you.
- ✓ **Create an egalitarian meeting:** If you want to create a more egalitarian meeting where participants feel free to speak up, host the meeting at a comfortable location known to them, and consider leaving the uniform at home. A uniform can represent a hierarchy that you don't want to create.
- ✓ **Be patient:** It can take time for participants to get familiar to you, trust you, and to open up. Multiple sessions might be necessary depending on the rate.
- ✓ **Specify the type of information** you want to receive from the meeting and participants. This can direct the participants and prevent the meeting going out of focus. At the same time, realize that not all cultures value concrete and to-the-point language like the Dutch do, and the people in the group may take more words to say something.
- ✓ **Consider preparing visuals** when you present something so participants with limited language barrier can understand.

3.2. Utrecht (Netherlands): Digitally connecting with youngsters

Scenario (Time, Honour & Communication style)

The police in Utrecht Overvecht noticed that their disconnection with the local youth is growing, and their visibility declining. One of the reasons is that young people spend more time on social media, especially on TikTok and Snapchat. To strengthen their connection and to rebuild the trust, the police officers start their own TikTok account to reach the youth in their multicultural neighborhood. To do this right, the community police officers organizes a workshop together with other police officers and youth workers to make videos with the local youth. The police officers have a very busy schedule, but they promised they could squeeze in a few hours of video-making. However, the youngsters arrive at different times and want to first relax and get acquainted. When an officer asks who will be responsible for which task, the youngsters response with humour and indirect comments. One girl refuses to be recognizable on camera, afraid for the reactions of her family and friends.

The police officers become annoyed by the lack of punctuality and clear answers, while it's apparent that the young people value a relaxed atmosphere and group spirit. Ultimately, they manage to make a few short TikTok videos together, but the process is less structured than what was initially planned.

Explanation Scenario

Utrecht Overvecht is a diverse and multicultural neighborhood with a significant number of socioeconomically disadvantaged residents. Many inhabitants have a migration background, particularly from Morocco and Turkey. As shown in *Figure 2. The Erin Meyer Country Culture Map of The Netherlands, Morocco and Turkey*.

Note: Figure generated from The Country Map Tool from Erin Meyer, <https://erinmeyer.com/culturemap/>. Figure 2, these cultures are characterized, among other dimension, by flexible time and indirect communication. Compared to the linear time and direct communication of the Dutch culture, these young people tend to prefer giving feedback more indirectly and giving more context and detail to what they are saying. In the scenario this is reflected by the lack of seemingly clear answers. Additionally, due to the Dutch culture of linear time, the Dutch officers tend to prefer punctuality and following fixed structures of tasks and schedules. Conversely, people from cultures like Morocco and Turkey would see time and schedules as more flexible, which is why the youngsters arrived at different times and let themselves be guided by the group rhythm.

Due to the more collectivistic nature of the Moroccan and Turkish culture (see *Figure 3*) the young residents are generally aware of their social roles and status and place greater importance in family and friendship ties than Dutch people. Being seen on videos with the police can have social consequences, and can affect their reputation in the group, which is more important than their individual value and expression. That could be why the girl in the scenario requests to be unrecognizable in this scenario.

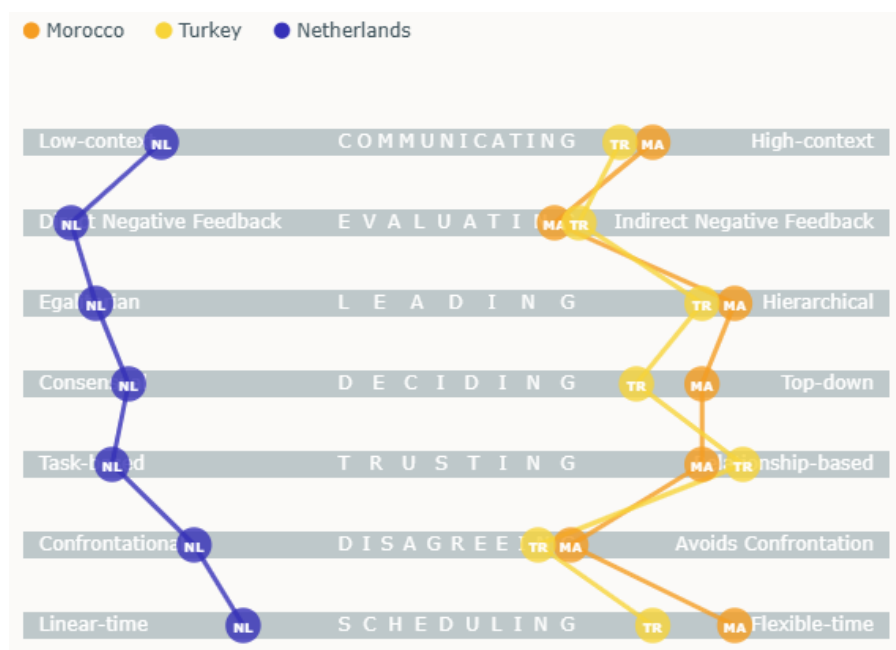


Figure 2. The Erin Meyer Country Culture Map of The Netherlands, Morocco and Turkey.
Note: Figure generated from The Country Map Tool from Erin Meyer,
<https://erinmeyer.com/culturemap/>.

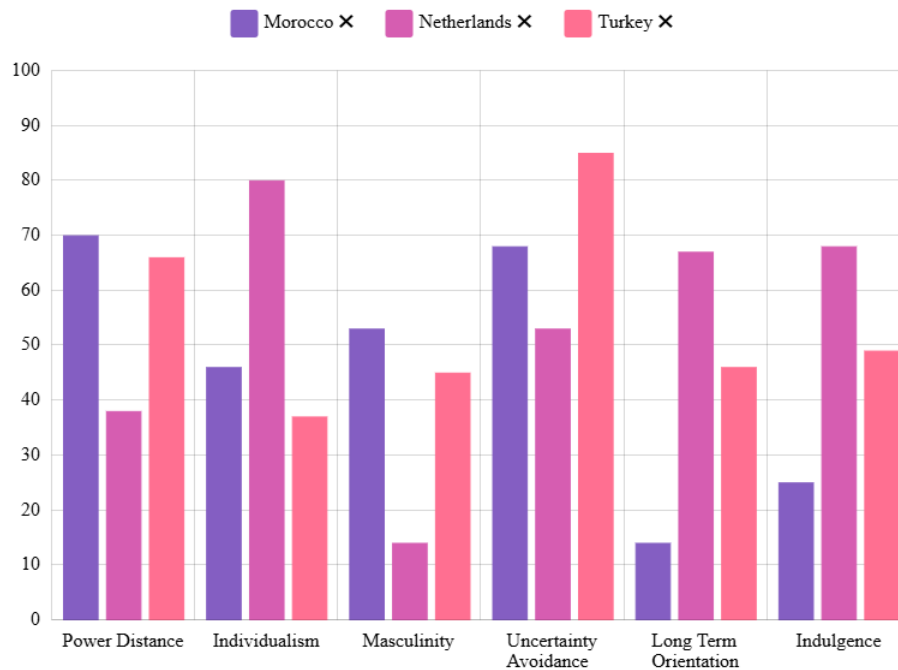


Figure 3. Geert Hofstede Country Comparison Tool for The Netherlands, Morocco and Turkey.
Note: Generated from the Country Comparison Tool from Geert Hofstede,
<https://geerthofstede.com/country-comparison-bar-charts/>.

How to approach this scenario instead

- ✓ **Create a relaxed and safe atmosphere:** When working together with any group, but especially young people, it's important to "create a relaxed atmosphere by giving sufficient time to people to settle down". Create an environment in which participants feel respected and safe to open up, have a dialogue, and stick to the conversation topic. You can do this by playing games to break the ice and by establishing basic communication guidelines at the beginning of the workshop (e.g. treat each other with respect, don't interrupt, listen to what others have to say, keep comments brief and to the point, etc.). Feeling safe is especially important for vulnerable people who have suffered discrimination and injustice by safety professionals such as the police (Steen et al., 2024).
- ✓ **Manage expectations:** Regarding the issues of being on time, answering questions more clearly, and the structure of the meeting it's imperative to manage expectations, so that participants have the same vision and understanding of the workshop and what is expected of them. This can be proactively managed beforehand by analyzing the participants "interests, needs and concerns" and how and what they can contribute during a workshop, making it easier for the organizing parties to structure and tailor the workshop and activities to the participants to be able to engage with them effectively. Managing expectations can prevent misunderstandings and frustration such as in this scenario. Additionally, it helps to understand the limitations of the participants, with regards to time and energy to be able to manage early and clearly what the project can and cannot do for them (Steen et al., 2024). It can also help to plan a walk-in time in the schedule and to accept that young people won't always be on time.
- ✓ **Adapt your communication:** Use clear and understandable language with for example visuals and make sure that your vocabulary and questions fit to what the participants know and have experience with. Otherwise, there is a chance they won't understand you, due to the difference in language and experience. Therefore, build your questions and discussion slowly, so that the participants can follow you more easily and can give more thoughtful responses. This means breaking up the main question or task you actually want to ask or conduct in several questions and steps, so that later you can reframe and repeat everything that participants have said (Steen et al., 2024). Additionally, show genuine interest in what and how the youngsters communicate, ask open questions, learn from what they tell you, take their concerns seriously, and however possible adapt the workshop to their needs.
- ✓ **Ensure data privacy:** Help participants to protect their privacy by organizing ongoing informed consent before the start of the workshop, during and after. Participants might change their minds over time and to ensure they keep feeling safe, it's important to keep (re-) seeking for their consent. Let them know they can change their minds any time and offer alternatives to participate differently. For them to be able to give consent they need to know how their data is conducted and managed when participating, so establish a data plan. With teenagers below 16 consent in The Netherlands is required from as well the parents as the youngsters (Steen et al., 2024).

3.3. Brussel (Belgium): Connecting with youngsters in action theater

Scenario (Hierarchy, Trust & Communication style)

During an action theater session in the auditorium of the police headquarters in Brussels, young people are invited for a creative brainstorm session about the scenes involving a police check. The group includes both Belgian and French participants. The Belgian facilitators encourage everyone to share their experiences and opinions openly. Belgian youngsters quickly start talking, exchanging views and anecdotes in a relaxed, egalitarian manner.

The French youths, however, remain reserved at first. They observe attentively, occasionally exchanging subtle jokes or hints with friends, but rarely speak up. When a participant expresses an opinion that the French disagree with, the French react with expressive body language, shaking their heads or looking visibly irritated. Yet their spoken comments remain vague or diplomatically phrased. Facilitators notice the mismatch between the French participants' body language and their words, and find it difficult to interpret their true feelings or criticism.

As the session progresses and the facilitators explicitly acknowledge the French participants' perspectives, the French youths become more vocal. They express their opinions more directly and confrontationally. The discussion becomes more animated, with the French youths challenging ideas and authority, while the Belgians seek more consensus and avoid open conflict.

Scenario Explanation:

In Brussels, 40% of the population are expats, with French nationals being the largest group among foreign residents (Vivian, 2015). In *Figure 5* the cultures of France and Belgium seem to have much in common, but looking at *Figure 4*, you can see some clear distinctions. French culture scores higher for hierarchy and top-down leading and deciding dimensions, high-context and confrontational communication, relationship-based trusting compared to Belgian culture.

The French culture is more hierarchical, top-down and relationship-based, meaning that people from that culture generally respect authority and will wait for explicit recognition of their value and experience before engaging. Trust for them grows through relationships, which additionally explains their reserve in the beginning (Scroope, 2017-a). High-context communication means that participants communicate much of the information implicitly and nonverbally, and rely more on a shared understanding. In this scenario, that is clear through the visible cues such as head shaking, and vague and diplomatically phrased comments, which makes understanding their point when coming from a low-context culture more difficult. While the French-cultured participants respect authority, their confrontational nature could lead them, once their opinion is welcomed, to openly challenging ideas and expressing disagreement either verbally or via body-language heads-on (Scroope, 2017-b; Scroope, 2017-c). This in comparison to Belgian participants and organizers, for who harmony is more prioritized and disagreement can be viewed as negative and personal.

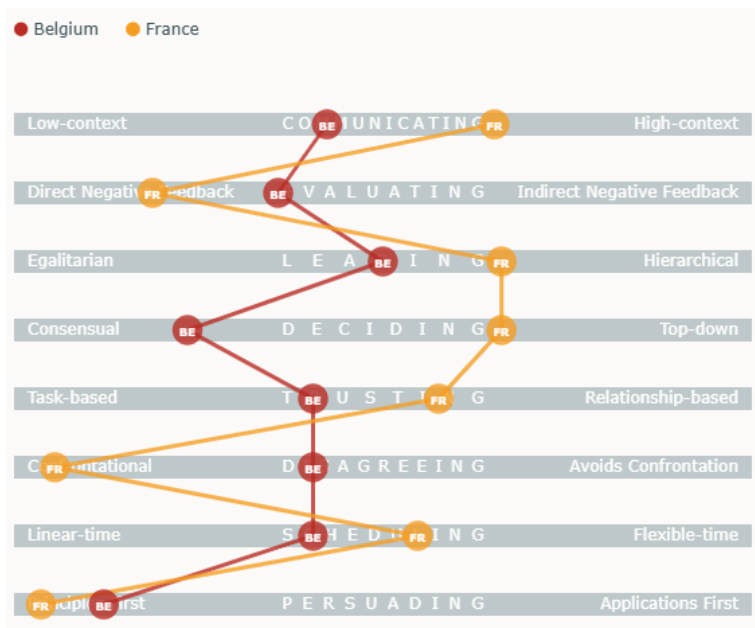


Figure 4. The Erin Meyer Country Culture Map of Belgium and France.
Note: Figure generated from The Country Map Tool from Erin Meyer,
<https://erinmeyer.com/culturemap/>.

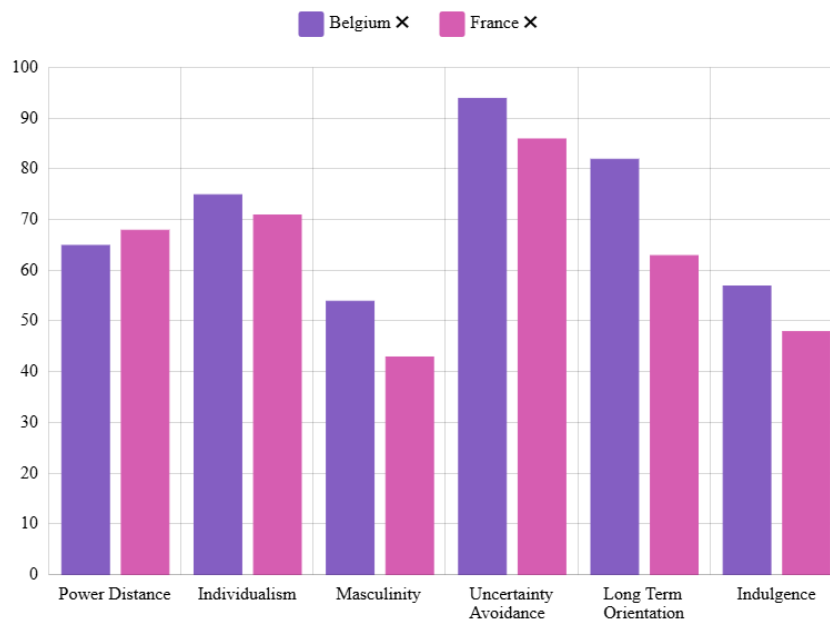


Figure 5. Geert Hofstede Country Comparison Tool for Belgium and France.
Note: Generated from the Country Comparison Tool from Geert Hofstede,
<https://geerthofstede.com/country-comparison-bar-charts/>.

How to approach this Scenario instead:

- ✓ **Empower participants and be aware of power imbalances.** When inviting participants to share their opinions and experiences, and involving them creatively in developing a new tool or intervention, such as in this case a theatre session, it is

important to ensure them that their input has influence in decision-making. Show participants you're taking them seriously by asking open questions, listening and learning, and modifying the project as you go. You can also create a more egalitarian session by inviting participants to a familiar and comfortable location. A police auditorium, such as in the example, can strengthen the perception of power imbalance, since the participants are in the 'territory' of police officers (Steen et al., 2024).

- ✓ **Be aware of who is included and excluded** in a conversation and who is listened to and who is not. Inclusion and exclusion can happen subtly when for example some participants use certain jargon that others don't understand, or due to different cultural understanding of when you are allowed to talk and when not. It can help to not only pay to subtle verbal cues, but also non-verbal cues. Establishing communication guidelines (e.g. treat each other with respect, don't interrupt, listen to what others have to say, keep comments brief and to the point, etc.) at the beginning of the session can additionally help to manage expectations of participants role and their interaction with each other. It can also contribute to a safe environment (see next point). When participants show signs of exclusion, the facilitator can friendly intervene (Steen et al., 2024).
- ✓ **Create a relaxed and safe atmosphere:** Before diving into the session, built trust and familiarity first. Give people sufficient time to settle down and get acquainted with another so they feel more comfortable participating and sharing later. You can for example do this by playing games to break the ice. Setting ground rules can also contribute to a safe environment, as it makes it clear what kind of dialogues and discussions is expected from the participants. Participants can then adjust accordingly (Steen et al., 2024).
- ✓ **Adapt your communication** and accept that different people from different (cultural) backgrounds have different preferences. Show genuine curiosity in what and how the youngsters communicate, ask open questions, learn from what they tell you, take their concerns seriously, and however possible adapt the workshop to their needs. Allow space for more nuanced and indirect feedback and don't take quietness as disengagement (Steen et al., 2024).
- ✓ **Use mixed feedback methods** so that participants have different options to express themselves in a way they are comfortable with. For example, allow for anonymous feedback and input via an online questionnaire during the session, and smaller group discussions compared to bigger groups (Steen et al., 2024).

3.4. Valencia (Spain): Early Detection of Conflicts among Young People

Scenario (Communication style & Honour)

During a workshop at a school in Valencia, the police demonstrate the new reporting app to a diverse group of students, including young people of Colombian and Moroccan descent. The police ask the students to give their honest opinion about the app and share any suggestions for improvement.

The Spanish students indicate what they like and dislike about the app, and do not hesitate to express criticism. The Colombian and Moroccan students, on the other hand, respond much more cautiously. Instead of directly saying what they don't like, they make vague comments ("It's okay, but maybe it could...") or give compliments without expressing any real criticism. If they want to say something negative, they do so through a joke, a roundabout way, or by changing the subject. Sometimes they even say that everything is fine, while their non-verbal behavior (hesitant looks, silence, evasive eye contact) suggests otherwise.

When the police ask for specific areas for improvement, the Colombian and Moroccan youths remain polite but avoid giving direct negative feedback. They do not want to engage in confrontation for fear of offending someone or disrupting the harmony in the group.

Explanation scenario:

Valencia is an intercultural city housing 18.5% foreign residents (Council of Europe, n.d.). Among them, most are from Morocco or Columbia, with their numbers still rising (Santana, 2025). These countries score high for indirect negative feedback style and for avoiding confrontation, according to the Cultural Map of Erin Meyers (See *Figure 6*). For participants with a Moroccan or Columbian background, criticizing anyone openly, is considered impolite. It could be seen as risking their personal or family honour and bringing unwanted attention. To avoid direct confrontation and conflict, people from these cultures tend to take a detour to tactfully express their opinion (Commisceo Global, n.d.-a; Evasion, 2018-a; Evasion, 2018-b). In contrast, Spain scores comparatively high for communicating negative feedback directly and having a confrontational disagreement style. This explains why the Spanish participants tend to openly share their opinion and are not afraid to give criticism (Evasion, 2018-c).

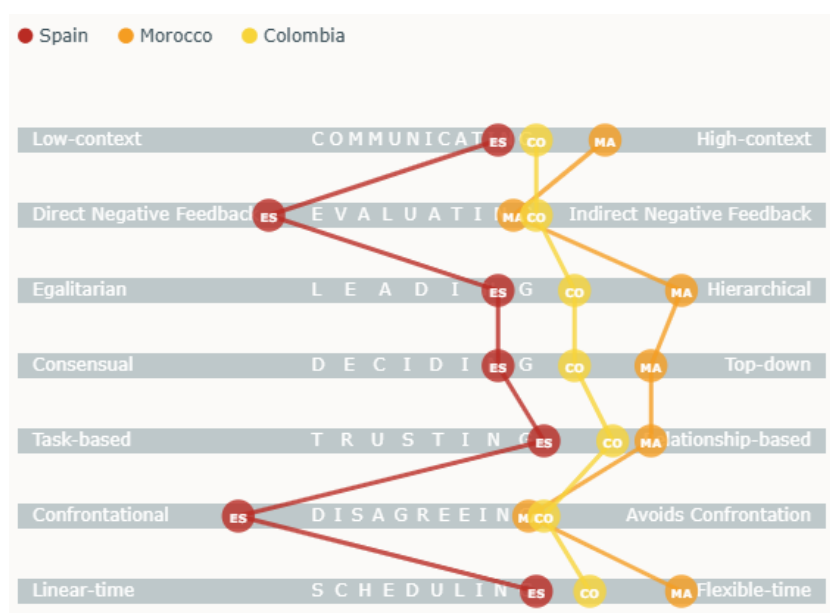


Figure 6. The Erin Meyer Country Culture Map of Spain, Morocco and Colombia.

Note: Figure generated from The Country Map Tool from Erin Meyer, <https://erinmeyer.com/culturemap/>.

How to approach this Scenario instead:

- ✓ **Create a relaxed and safe atmosphere:** Before diving into the session, build trust and familiarity first (Steen et al., 2024). This can be done in the following ways:
 - Give people sufficient time to settle down and get acquainted with another so they feel more comfortable participating and sharing later. You can for example do this by playing games to break the ice.
 - Setting ground rules can also contribute to a safe environment, as it makes it clear what type of dialogues and discussions is expected from the participants. Participants can then adjust accordingly.
 - Also avoid pressuring participants to speak up and putting them on the spot, as that can be considered as open criticism and can make them uncomfortable. Balance instead with more subtle forms of encouragement such as “You seem to have some thoughts about this, would you like to share more?”
- ✓ **Adapt your communication** and accept that different people from different (cultural) backgrounds have different preferences. Show genuine curiosity in what and how the youngsters communicate, ask open questions, learn from what they tell you, take their concerns seriously, and however possible adapt the workshop to their needs. Additionally normalize indirect forms of feedback and accept it as input (Steen et al., 2024).
- ✓ **Make use of multiple feedback channels** so that participants can share their opinion in different ways that are more comfortable to them. For example allow for anonymous feedback and smaller group discussions instead.
- ✓ **Watch for non-verbal cues.** Pay attention to silence, facial expressions, body language, and indirect comments, and try to think about what they mean from the perspective of the other.

3.5. Savonlinna (Finland): Reaching out to Parents to Encourage their Children to use a Police Tool

Scenario (Honour, Trust & Communication Style)

An anonymous reporting system for bullying is being introduced at a secondary school in Savonlinna. The school population is almost entirely Finnish. There is a strong group norm in the classroom: “just act normal,” don’t stand out, and preferably solve problems yourself. Expressing your opinion openly or speaking out against group members is considered inappropriate. There is little room for emotional expression; conflicts are often avoided or dealt with indirectly.

When a student becomes a victim of bullying, those around them notice, but no one intervenes or reports it. Students are afraid of being seen as a “snitch,” which can lead to social exclusion or damage to their reputation. Peer pressure is strong: those who speak

out risk their position in the group. At the same time, there is skepticism about the usefulness of reporting: “Will anything be done about it?”, “Will the school or police see me as a troublemaker?”, “Maybe it will only get worse if I say something.”

Even when police officers introduce the anonymous reporting system at school, students doubt whether anonymity is truly guaranteed and fear that false reports will undermine the system. The social norm of not bringing problems outside the group remains strong.

Scenario explanation

Unlike some of the other scenarios, the Finnish pilot does not have a clear intercultural aspect to it. Both police officers and school pupils have a similar, homogenous, cultural background. Therefore, the explanation and suggestions for this scenario have a more generic nature. It should be noted that, if transferring the intervention used in this pilot to other cultural settings, a reflection would be needed to ensure that the appropriate adjustments are made to match the intervention to the new setting (see also the section on Reflection Guidance).

Young Finnish people increasingly experience cyberbullying which is connected to school bullying. Due to the anonymous nature of cyberbullying and lack of face-to-face interaction there is no real consequence for the bully. As the cyberbullying takes many diverse and subtle forms, it makes it also harder to recognize. Thereby, young people are reluctant to report it even when they are the bystanders, which makes the bullying worse (Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, 2025).

While Finland scores relatively moderate for individualism as can be seen in **Error! Reference source not found.**, and in school settings there can be strong group norms. This is reflected in the scenario by not wanting to stand out and being called a snitch, which can be also emphasized by the Finnish culture of not calling attention to oneself (Commisceo Global, n.d.-b), Speaking out then means breaking out of the social norms and hurting your reputation or your honour. Additionally, as can be seen in *Figure 7*, trust is often task-based, and is therefore grounded in competence. Finland reports high trust in the police (Infoland, 2025; OECD, 2021). However in groups, trust is more relationship-based, meaning that it grows through personal connections and time spent together. This can add to the reason that students don't want to betray their friends and peers and show them loyalty. Before they trust the anonymous reporting system, they need to be sure that there won't be negative social consequences for them. It doesn't help that in Finnish culture people tend to avoid confrontation and therefore don't want to openly confront others (see *Figure 7*). Problems are therefore dealt quietly or not at all. This cultural trait of avoiding confrontation is in contrast with the high tendency to give direct feedback when evaluating (see *Figure 7*), but due to subcultures like school culture one of these traits can be more exacerbated. These cultural challenges can lead to a culture of silence in peer groups, which only worsens bullying, as there is no effective intervention. In order for Finnish high school students to open up, adults and institutions need to ensure and show them that the anonymous reporting website won't have any consequences for them and that matters will be dealt with discretely. It can also help to encourage changing this culture of silence by expressing the cultural Finnish values such as equality and fairness ([Finnish culture and social norms](#)).

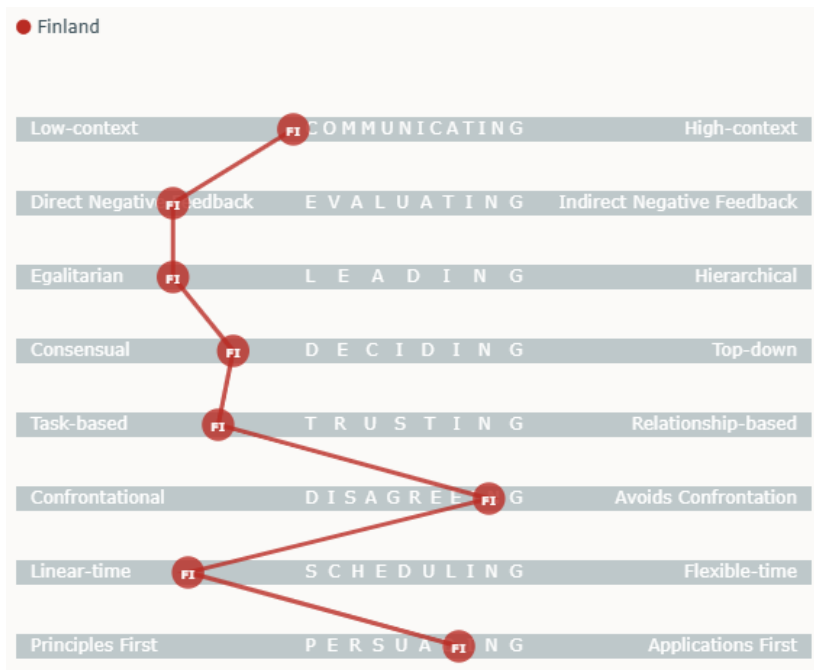


Figure 7. The Erin Meyer Country Culture Map of Finland.
 Note: Figure generated from The Country Map Tool from Erin Meyer,
<https://erinmeyer.com/culturemap/>

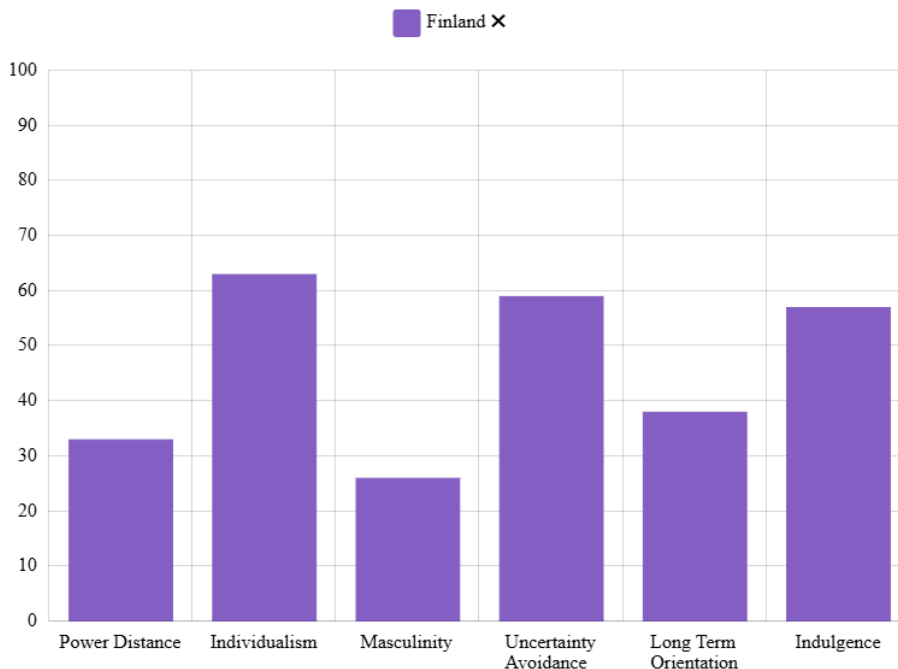


Figure 8. Geert Hofstede Country Comparison Tool for Finland.
 Note: Generated from the Country Comparison Tool from Geert Hofstede,
<https://geerthofstede.com/country-comparison-bar-charts/>

How to approach this scenario instead:

- ✓ **Create a relaxed and safe atmosphere:** Before introducing the anonymous reporting website in school, it's important to create a comfortable and familiar environment, where the youngsters get acquainted with the police officers. By giving people sufficient time to settle down, the high school students will feel more inclined to open up, share concerns and give feedback about the website. You can do this by playing a game to break the ice and by establishing basic communication guidelines at the beginning of the workshop (e.g. treat each other with respect, don't interrupt, listen to what others have to say, keep comments brief and to the point, etc.). Feeling safe is especially important for vulnerable people who experience with bullying (Steen et al., 2024). Additionally, it can help to leave the uniform at home. A uniform can represent a hierarchy that you don't want to create.
- ✓ **Adapt your communication:** Use clear and understandable language with for example visuals and make sure that your vocabulary and questions fit to what the participants know and have experience with.
- ✓ **Empower participants and be aware of power imbalances.** Express and show that the feedback and concerns of the youngsters have value and influence the further development of the anonymous reporting website. You can do this by asking open questions, listening and learning, and modifying the project as you go. This approach helps them feel heard, understood, and involved in the process, which can increase the chances of them actually using the website (Steen et al., 2024).
- ✓ **Make use of multiple feedback channels** during the information session so that participants can share their opinion in different ways that are more comfortable to them. For example allow for anonymous feedback through a questionnaire and smaller group discussions instead.

3.6. Radom (Poland): Training sessions on violence prevention for Parents

Scenario (Hierarchy, Honour, and Uncertainty Avoidant)

In the library of Gózd, the police are organizing an interactive session on violence and safety. Citizens from all age groups sit together at tables and listen to the police. The police start with a digital questionnaire about the new anonymous reporting knowledge website. One question is: "What do you do if you witness domestic violence?" An older participant says: "That's a family matter, you don't get involved." A younger person replies: "I would report it online, but I don't know if it would remain really anonymous."

The police emphasize the importance of quick, anonymous reporting and demonstrate how the website works. Yet doubts remain: "Who reads those reports? Will the police really come to help?" Some find the digital approach difficult ("we used to just talk to the local police officer"), while others appreciate the new possibilities.

Explanation Scenario:

Unlike some of the other scenarios, the Polish pilot does not have a clear intercultural aspect to it. Both police officers and citizens have a similar, homogenous, cultural background. Therefore, the explanation and suggestions for this scenario have a more generic nature. It should be noted that, if transferring the intervention used in this pilot to other cultural settings, a reflection would be needed to ensure that the appropriate adjustments are made to match the intervention to the new setting (see also the section on Reflection Guidance).

Polish culture is characterized by moderate power distance and hierarchy, uncertainty avoidance, and moderate collectivism (see *Figure 9* and *Figure 10*). Due the collectivist nature of Poland, people, and especially elderly, tend to be revolved around their families and close-knit connections. Therefore, if there are issues of violence it's more likely that issues of violence discussed within these social circles. The younger generation however is more digitally connected and have a faster pacing life outside of home, which makes them more likely to discuss violent cases outside of intimate circles (Evason, 2017-a). Additionally, due to the power distance, polish people can find it hard to speak out to the police in cases of violence, because socially they're quite far away (Evason, 2017-b). Plus, due to being uncertainty avoidant, there might be fear about the consequences of reporting violence, and uncertainty about the anonymity of the reporting.

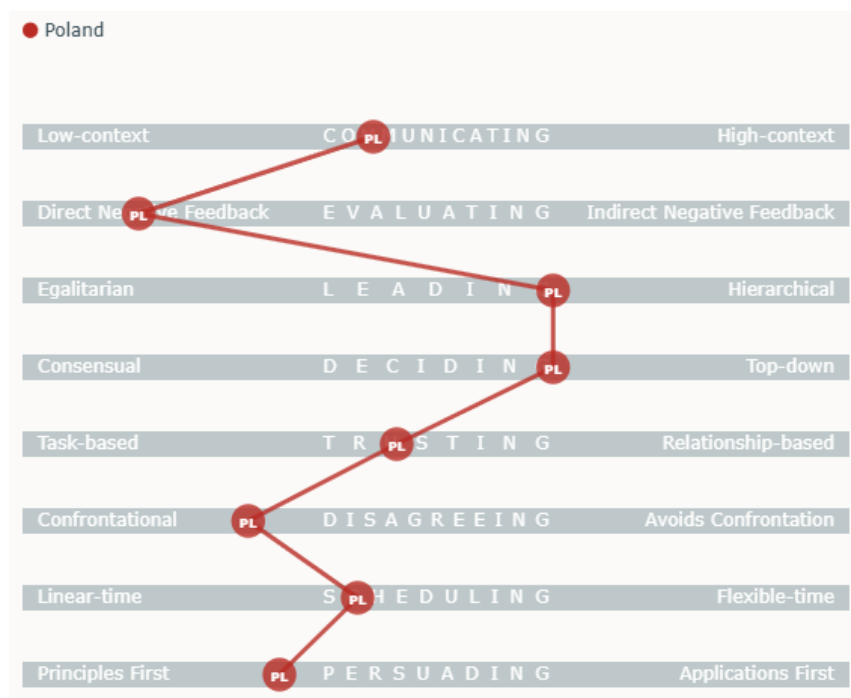


Figure 9. The Erin Meyer Country Culture Map of Poland.

Note: Figure generated from The Country Map Tool from Erin Meyer, <https://erinmeyer.com/culturemap/>.

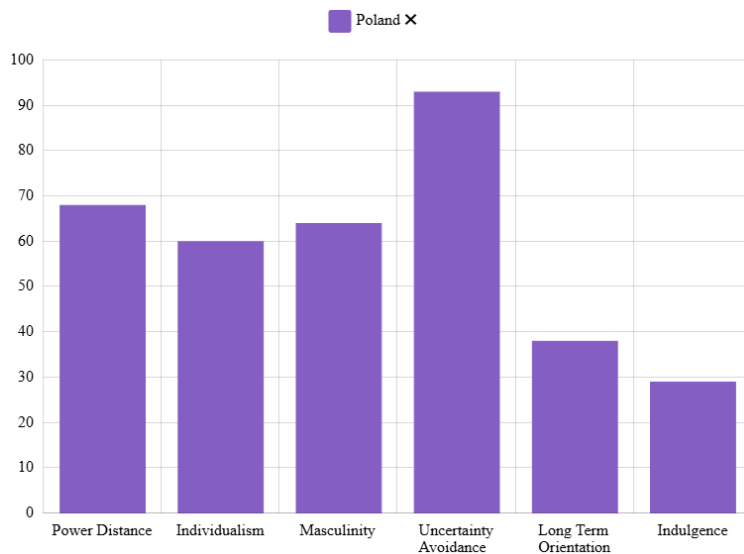


Figure 10. Geert Hofstede Country Comparison Tool for Poland.

Note: Generated from the Country Comparison Tool from Geert Hofstede, <https://geerthofstede.com/country-comparison-bar-charts/>.

How to approach this Scenario instead:

- ✓ **Empower participants and be aware of power imbalances.** When giving training about violence prevention, invite participants to share their opinions and experiences and show them that their input has an influence in decision-making. Show participants you're taking them seriously by asking open questions, listening and learning, and modifying the anonymous reporting tools as you go. Especially older are less digital literate, so give them the time to discuss their needs and concerns (Steen et al., 2024).
- ✓ **Create an egalitarian session:** Due to the high power culture, polish people might feel more distance to the police and other institutions. This can also prevent them from opening up. Therefore organize training sessions at known and neutral space, such as the library in this scenario, and consider coming in citizen clothes instead of police uniforms to visibly bridge the distance.
- ✓ **Ensure data privacy:** Come with a data privacy plan a, so you can reassure participants and take away any ambiguity when promoting the anonymous reporting tool to a high uncertainty avoidant group (Steen et al., 2024).
- ✓ **Create a relaxed and safe atmosphere:** When working together with any group, but especially in a collectivistic country, it's important to create a comfortable and familiar environment by giving sufficient time to people to settle down and getting to know each other. Create an environment in which participants feel respected and safe to open up, have a dialogue, and stick to the conversation topic. You can do this by playing games to break the ice and by establishing basic communication guidelines at the beginning of the workshop (e.g. treat each other with respect, don't

interrupt, listen to what others have to say, keep comments brief and to the point, etc.) (Steen et al., 2024).

- ✓ **Make use of multiple feedback channels** during the information session so that participants can share their opinion in different ways that are more comfortable to them. For example allow for anonymous feedback through a questionnaire and smaller group discussions instead.

4. Reflection guidance

This section contains reflection questions to help identify where culture might come into play, based on a match or mismatch between the cultures involved. Think not only of national and ethnic groups, but also of community subcultures and/or the different cultures of institutions and organisations (such as police cultures).

If you see a mismatch:

- Before pilot/capability start: **adapt it**. Think of ways to meet them in the ways they are comfortable with; are these possible within the capability?
- Already in action: **clarify it** (share how you are used to doing things, and ask how they would like to do things), **bridge it** (see if you can accommodate them, or if you can agree on a compromise).

In general, when developing an innovation across different cultural context, such as in European projects or diverse communities, the following main factors should be considered by the team¹:

1. Problem definition

- What is the **issue to resolve** with the innovation?
- Who is the **target group** of the innovation? Potential target groups could be individuals, teams, organizations, citizens, professionals, groups, etc. Each of them could have their own cultural background and language that needs to be taken into account.

¹ Taken from TNO's Culture Compass. TNO developed the Design-by-Culture Compass for EU and international projects, to support project leaders and researchers in applying innovations in other countries or cultures to their own context. As such, this method supports international projects in developing culture-sensitive innovations. The tool helps to enhance concept development, team collaboration, implementation, and adoption of our tools, methods, models, trainings and other innovations.

The Culture Compass provides an assessment of cultural readiness. The tool guides the user through several phases of the project: problem definition, composition of the research team, the implementation and adoption of the innovation. For each phase, reflection questions are addressed, for example about the country in which the technology will be used, the knowledge and diversity of the research team, or the consideration of cultural dimensions in the design. Addressing these questions will increase the cultural readiness level of the innovation.

2. Team composition

- Does the **team** have the relevant expertise/diversity?
- Are the involved police officers **motivated**, do they enjoy working across cultures? Research shows that people who enjoy working across cultures are better at it.
- How do the **team members interact** with the target group? Do they have an open or closed manner, passive or active, and do they communicate directly or indirectly?
- How does this **align** with respective cultures?

3. Implementation

- What are **cultural dimensions of the innovation** to consider, and how do they play a role in content, form, and dissemination of the innovation?
- Would the target group **adopt** the innovation, based on the most relevant cultural dimensions?
- **Why** would they adopt or not adopt the innovation, based on the most relevant cultural dimensions?
 - How are you dealing with **language** issues? You could have an allocated colleague on the team who speaks the required language, use a translator, or use automated translation services (through earplugs).

4. Adoption

- Would this innovation work for **other target groups**? If not, what is the unique characteristic of the target group? Is the innovation custom-made for a very specific group? Think for example about gender, ethnicity, language, or role.
- Would this work for **similar innovations**?
- Consider cultural aspects of **existing public, private, and legal institutions and processes** that are crucial for adoption.

Across all these questions, it is useful to reflect on whether cultural differences can be responsibly overcome using adaptive strategies like the ones described in the Scenarios section, that deals with tips for bridging the gap on a selection of cultural dimensions. If there are aspects that cannot be reconciled, you may have to choose another innovation method. This could be the case when there is a language barrier that cannot be overcome or if the method requires more from the target group than it is reasonable, responsible, or respectful to ask. This is especially important when working with vulnerable populations.

Certain cultural dimensions may also be more relevant **depending on the capability** you are targeting. For example, when seeking to enhance the Trust Building Capability, it is important to realise that cultures differ in the way they develop trust for one another. In some cultures trust in work relationships is mainly so-called cognitive trust, based on the practicality of the situation (e.g., Netherlands, Germany, UK), whereas in other cultures

this cognitive trust is mixed with affective trust, where trust is built slowly, through informal contact, knowing others who know the other, and seeing the other at a deeper level (e.g., Turkey, Italy, Spain). In addition, communication is important to address when working on the Trust Building Capability. So-called high-context cultures (e.g., France, Italy, Spain) socialise their members into having a sophisticated, nuanced, and layered way of communicating, reading and speaking between the lines, whereas low-context cultures (e.g., Netherlands, Germany, UK) value precise, simple, and clear messages, to be understood at face value. Communication between different types of cultures could threaten trust, if not managed well. See the table in Appendix 3 for more information on how the different capabilities are related to cultural dimensions.

5. Tips for working across cultures

Based on the previous section, we can identify concrete tips for police officers working within diverse communities.

5.1. General tips for cross-cultural collaboration

- Know yourself and your culture.
- Don't assume you understand. Ask and maintain modesty.
- Take a broad view of culture and all it can influence.
- Remember that not everything is culture (e.g., personality, situational factors).
- Remember cultural and linguistic differences affect interactions and outcomes.
- Promote curiosity.
- In meetings, set ground rules (e.g., assuming people have the best intentions, even if miscommunications happen or there is awkwardness/tension).

5.2. Practical Tips for citizen engagement

These tips are based on the TRANSCEND Toolbox, a practical guide to organising effective citizen engagement. It provides critical planning advice as well as workshop methods and materials. The link to the toolbox can be found in Appendix 1: Helpful Resources.

- Use suitable language (avoid difficult words, police terms, abbreviations, etc.) and give time to process/ask questions;
- Adjust to the attention span of the target group (children, elderly, people under stress, unfamiliarity, or cognitive load);
- Be mindful of your pace and tone when starting a conversation (e.g., by entering gradually and with an open mind instead of leading the conversation quickly due to time crunch)

- Give information about the physical environment in advance (e.g., is it accessible by public transportation, is it wheelchair accessible, will they need to provide ID to enter, is there security that could be intimidating)

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7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix 1: Helpful Resources

- [Country comparison tool](#)
- [Responsible Innovation: Moving Towards a Culturally Sensitive Approach](#)
- [TRANSCEND Toolbox \(final version\) - TRANSCEND](#)
- [The Culture Map – Erin Meyer](#)

7.2. Appendix 2: Additional Cultural Dimensions

Meyer's (2016) 8 cultural dimensions:

- **Communicating:** Cultures differ in how explicit or implicit their communication is:

Low-context = clear, direct messages; High-context = nuanced, relies on shared understanding.

- **Evaluating:** How feedback is given: Direct = blunt and straightforward; Indirect = diplomatic and softened.

- **Persuading:** Preferred reasoning style: Principles-first = start with theory/concepts; Applications-first = start with practical examples.
- **Leading:** Approach to hierarchy: Egalitarian = flat structure, equal voices; Hierarchical = clear authority and status.
- **Deciding:** Decision-making style: Consensual = group agreement; Top-down = leader-driven decisions.
- **Trusting:** Basis for building trust: Task-based = trust through competence and work; Relationship-based = trust through personal connection.
- **Disagreeing:** Comfort with open conflict: Confrontational = debate is healthy; Avoids confrontation = harmony prioritized.
- **Scheduling:** View of time and deadlines: Linear-time = punctual, structured; Flexible-time = adaptable, fluid approach.

Hofstede's (2001) 6 cultural dimensions:

- **Power Distance Index (PDI):** Measures acceptance of hierarchical power distribution and inequality in society.
- **Individualism vs. Collectivism (IDV):** Individualism = focus on personal goals/self-reliance; Collectivism = emphasis on group loyalty and cohesion.
- **Masculinity vs. Femininity (MAS):** Masculinity = competitive, achievement-oriented values; Femininity = caring, quality-of-life, nurturing values.
- **Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI):** Degree to which members of a culture tolerate ambiguity and unstructured situations.
- **Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation (LTO):** Long-term orientation = focus on future, persistence, thrift; Short-term orientation = focus on tradition, social obligations, immediate results.
- **Indulgence vs. Restraint (IVR):** Indulgent societies allow relatively free gratification of desires; Restrained societies suppress gratification and regulate it through social norms.

7.3. Appendix 3: Relevant Cultural Dimensions per CP Capability

CP Capability	Example of how culture relates. The following factors vary across cultures:
Trust building	Relevance: How trust should be built. - Cultures differ in the way they develop trust for one another. In some cultures trust in work relationships is mainly so-called cognitive trust, based on the practicality of the situation (e.g., Netherlands, Germany, UK), whereas in other cultures this cognitive trust is mixed with affective trust, where trust is built slowly, through informal contact,

	knowing others who know the other, and seeing the other at a deeper level (e.g., Turkey, Italy, Spain). - Another relevant cultural dimension here is communication; so-called high-context cultures (e.g., France, Italy, Spain) socialise their members into having a sophisticated, nuanced, and layered way of communicating, reading and speaking between the lines, whereas low-context cultures (e.g., Netherlands, Germany, UK) value precise, simple, and clear messages, to be understood at face value. Communication between different types of cultures could threaten trust, if not managed well.
Timely information exchange	Relevance: How time is conceptualised (flexible or linear) and how the future is seen (short-term versus long-term orientation). - Cultures differ in how they deal with time: punctuality, scheduling, deadlines, etc. So-called linear-time cultures (e.g., Germany, Sweden, UK) value punctuality, which means that being 10 minutes late requires an explanation. Also, linear-time cultures prefer sticking to a schedule, without interruptions. On the other hand, people from flexible-time cultures (e.g., Spain, Italy, France) approach time more fluidly; interruptions are accepted, and flexibility in schedules is valued over organization.
Accountability	Relevance: Who takes responsibility, how to take responsibility, how to repair trust, and how to communicate apologies. - Another dimension related to time refers to the time horizon that people in a society use; it expresses how societies either prioritise traditions or seek for the modern. Long-term oriented countries (e.g., Belgium, Germany, Estonia) tend to be pragmatic, modest, and thriftier. In short-term oriented countries (e.g., Ireland, Poland, Portugal), people tend to place more emphasis on principles, consistency, and truth, and are typically religious and nationalistic. - The cultural dimensions of deciding and of persuading and presenting can impact how well groups are able to listen to and understand each other's stories. For example, when community representatives (e.g., of a minority cultural group) are speaking to police about mistrust or the impact of a particular event, they may build the story in a manner (e.g., concept-first vs. application-first) that does not as easily convince the police representatives who are there to listen to their experiences and take into account their

	considerations. Furthermore, these two groups may have different expectations about how decisions about how to move forward will be made (i.e., top-down vs. consensually), based not only on cultural differences but also on organisational cultural differences.
Community cohesion	Relevance: What group identity means (individualism vs. collectivism) and how other groups are perceived and treated (in-groups and out-groups) - Cultures differ in individuals' connection with groups. In individualistic societies (e.g., UK, Hungary, the Netherlands), connections are typically limited to one's immediate family, highlighting personal identity over group identity. Conversely, collectivism (e.g., Portugal, Greece, Bulgaria) involves closely-knit relationships that bind extended families and others into cohesive groups (in-groups). These groups demonstrate loyalty and mutual support, especially during conflicts with other groups (out-groups).
Engagement and partnership	Relevance: How much hierarchy society has, how much authority the police have, and what this means for the dynamics of partnerships with police - Cultures differ in the level of hierarchy and authority they accept. More hierarchical cultures (e.g., France, Poland, Romania) have a clear and unquestioned hierarchy, for example in the workplace, with a strong boss. Status is an important value. Conversely, people in more egalitarian countries (e.g., Sweden, Ireland, Austria) challenge authority and strive for a more equitable distribution of power, with flatter organisations. As such, police engaging with citizens could be perceived as more challenging in more hierarchical countries, or when working with people for more hierarchical cultures, since the distance between police and citizens is perceived as larger. This can also be called "power distance". - Also, how people across cultures are socialised to persuade others of their views could be relevant for engagement and partnership. So-called applications-first cultures (e.g., UK, Netherlands, Denmark) tend to approach discussions in a practical, concrete way, steering away from theoretical discussions. On the other hand, principles-first cultures (e.g., Italy, France, Germany) build up their argument before moving to a conclusion.

	- Communication style can also affect engagement and partnership. Direct communication (e.g., “you should ...”) could be misunderstood as more authoritative than intended if the listener is from an indirect culture. This could affect CP-CSO partnerships and CP-citizen engagement.
Organisational transformation	Relevance: What intercultural skills are needed in a police agency based on composition of their personnel and of their community - Cultural skills are not only relevant in the direct communication between a police officer and a citizen. The way leadership is shaped and executed is as much influenced by culture as the one-on-one communication (see examples above). As such, intercultural skills are needed on all levels of the police organisation.

Based on Meyer (2016), Hofstede (2001), Maddux et al. (2011), Shafa et al., 2017