



Task: Intercultural Critical Incident – Intercultural Reflection and Analysis

An *Intercultural Critical Incident* is a situation that deviates from the norm or expected behaviour and leaves a lasting impression—often due to misunderstandings, dilemmas, or conflicts it causes. These moments can reveal differences in cultural expectations, values, or communication styles. The aim of this task is to help you reflect on such situations experienced during your stay abroad, enhance your intercultural sensitivity, develop empathy, and improve your communication skills in diverse settings.

Please write a report **during your time abroad** of approximately **two pages** following the structured steps below. Please **send your completed reflection as a Word document** via email by the **deadline set during the pre-departure training!**

1. Describe the Situation (Starting Point)

- Where and when did the incident occur?
- Who was involved? What were their roles and relationships?
- What happened? Describe the course of the interaction **without interpretation**.
- Focus on observable facts and behaviours—avoid assumptions or personal evaluations.

2. Reconstruct the Interaction

- How did the interaction develop?
- What were the dynamics of the communication or situation?
- Were there moments of tension, confusion, or surprise? Describe them.

3. Identify the Core Conflict or Dilemma

- What was the central issue or misunderstanding?
- Was it about communication style, different expectations, social norms, hierarchy, or cultural values?
- Summarise the main conflict in a few sentences.

4. Reflect on Your Own Role and Reactions

- How did you feel during and after the incident? What emotions were involved?
- What assumptions or expectations did you bring into the situation?
- What personal biases, values, or habits of communication became visible?
- How has this experience influenced your own intercultural awareness or identity?

5. Analyse the Perspectives of All Involved

- What were the goals, motivations, or expectations of each person involved?
- Consider the cultural backgrounds and norms influencing their behaviour.
- If relevant: Are there shared histories or past experiences that shaped the interaction?

6. Apply Theory: Link Your Analysis to Intercultural Concepts

- Support your analysis by referring to **relevant theories or concepts of intercultural communication or relations** (e.g. Hofstede's/Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner cultural dimensions, Hall's high-/low-context communication, other intercultural communication aspects, ethnocentrism vs. ethnorelativism, paternalism etc.).
- Explain how these concepts help to better understand the incident.
- Reflect on what this reveals about cultural differences and intercultural learning.

7. Explore Possible Solutions or Alternative Approaches

- In hindsight, how could the situation have been handled differently?
- What strategies could have helped resolve the conflict or prevent misunderstanding?
- What have you learned from this experience that might help you navigate similar situations in the future?

8. Discuss your CI with someone from your host country

9. Please send your critical incident as a Word document via email by the deadline set during the pre-departure training and bring a copy to the re-entry training.