

I.002 Report
WORLD MISSION INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES
PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY BOARD
March 22-24, 2017

Presenting Question: How might World Mission's Intercultural competencies assist PCUSA mission in the United States?

Members: Marsha Anson, Cecil Corbett, Rhashell Hunter, Lindsay Harren-Lewis, Tom Taylor, Raul Santiago-Rivera (Vice Chair), and Nancy Ramsay (Chair)

Recommendations:

Our recommendations are intended to equip congregations and mid-councils in developing intercultural competencies and capacities to resist multiple forms of oppression:

1. **Implement the pre-deployment cultural intelligence training that World Mission (WM) uses (or similar strategies such as PDA uses) as an essential component of training in a wide range of intercultural competencies because self-awareness regarding one's own privilege and marginalization is essential for effective change.**
2. **Follow the strategy of WM for deployed mission co-workers by assuring training in a wide range of cultural competencies relevant for effective religious leadership in the United States. (historical/contextual factors such as legacy of economic reliance on slavery, native American lands, and immigrant labor, as well as rules and roles related to forms of difference such as race, religion, gender, sexuality, and norms regarding economic stratification)**
3. **Develop resources to deepen understanding and skills for resisting: classism, sexism, and heterosexism**
4. **Promote awareness of resources currently available that deepen understanding and skills for resistance including those less frequently discussed such as interfaith competencies so essential in these times.
<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/resources/topics/interfaith/>**
5. **Identify or develop *intercultural* training approaches to assist persons in recognizing the ways differences treated oppressively are experienced simultaneously in ways that amplify and complicate the consequences of each aspect of oppression. (possibly through partners such as Auburn Seminary)**
6. **Invest in training (or identifying trained) facilitators in this intercultural approach who will provide a geographically accessible and affordable network for congregations and midcouncils.**
7. **Develop a process for connecting facilitators and congregations and mid-councils who seek assistance.**
8. **Recognize that the large majority of Presbyteries are not equipped to offer intercultural training and currently do not.**
9. **Learn from those Presbyteries and PCUSA programs that have developed effective training such as PDA, PW, and 1001 New Worshipping Communities.**
10. **Explore or create alliances via ecumenical and non-profit organizations for funding.**

Rationale (include team methodology and reasons for implementation):

Hunter Farrell encouraged our group to discuss our assignment with others in mission in the PCUSA. We did engage in multiple consultations.

Our team came to our recommendations after our consultation with staff including WM, YAV, 1001 trainers (who responded to a brief survey), mid-councils, Presbytery leaders who have worked with 1001 new worshipping communities, PDA, COTE, PW, current trainers in anti-racism who assist PCUSA, PMA mission directors in WM, CPJ, and REWC. We reviewed the new PCUSA anti-racism document and related study guide.

We realized quickly that the wisdom of WM to start with self-awareness or cultural intelligence was a critical addition to the current practices and anti-racism resources in place.

However, our primary discoveries were sobering:

1. We have a limited range of strong anti-oppression informational resources addressing: racism, sexual violence, and domestic violence.
We have no denominational anti-oppression resources on other very timely problems such as classism, sexism, and heterosexism. For example, as one of the wealthiest Christian denominations (see 2016 Pew report), we have no resources addressing classism.
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/11/how-income-varies-among-u-s-religious-groups/>
2. We have no network of trained anti-racism facilitators or any programmatic anti-racism training materials. We must invest in developing a network of trained facilitators who can provide theologically informed, interculturally sensitive anti-oppression training. PW presently provides the most effective coordinated effort in this regard. PCUSA trained facilitators need to be geographically available and funded since many presbyteries and congregations could not provide for training.
3. Anti-oppression work is challenging. It cannot rely on downloading a guide and gathering for one or two conversations. Excellent study guides such as the new *Facing Racism: A vision for the Intercultural Community* would help prepare a group to engage in anti-racism training. Similarly, our resources on interfaith training would be a good beginning for recognizing religious privilege.
4. We cannot expect Presbyteries to be the “delivery system” for training given the increasing number that have no employed staff and those that have only one person on staff. Further, funds for providing for training are not available. A few urban presbyteries have resources that allow them to contract with training organizations to provide anti-oppression training such as anti-racism programs.
5. The seminaries who did respond to our request to share their intercultural resources vary widely in their strategies for helping to equip seminarians for this work.
6. We believe that our denomination’s situation with regard to an inadequate range of resources and inadequate capacities for facilitating and funding training is a wider ecumenical problem. We were not successful in our efforts to be in conversation with a number of denominations whose earlier efforts were known to us.

We also developed a brief statement summarizing what we know to be entailed in intercultural competencies:

“Intercultural Competencies”

Intercultural competencies allow persons to be critically self-aware of our own and others' operative assumptions about multiple, intersecting factors that shape ways we engage our own or other cultures at macro and micro levels. With that critical awareness we are better able to be and to engage others in ways that are more sensitive and ethically aligned with our faith commitments and our ability to recognize the face of God in those whose appearance and or experience differs from our own.

Intercultural competency is a challenging and lifelong goal because it requires our ability to recognize norms we learned pre-critically from families, schools, media, churches, and so forth. These are norms we usually reproduce unreflectively. Many of these norms accompany asymmetries or inequalities of power insinuated in our culture. They function as privileges or entitlements which benefit some and concurrently marginalize others through oppressive practices such as racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism.

Most persons who benefit from privileges are unaware of them as entitlements and unaware that such unearned benefits create and correspond to oppressive consequences for others. The goal of cultural competency training lies especially in learning to recognize how these entitlements prevent the fullness of life for others and ourselves as well as learning how to interrupt and revise such cultural patterns on behalf of a more equitable way of life for all.

Our differences in identity such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity do not exist in discrete ways that are simply added together. We experience them simultaneously. However, apart from training in cultural competency, we are unlikely to realize how our intersecting identities often amplify either accrued privileges or marginalization.

Intercultural competency involves learning and practicing new behaviors that better reflect our intentions for our ministry. Practicing such competencies is an ongoing journey to live with the generosity of God's love and welcome and to promote justice for all God's people.

Logistics, if applicable:

- Next Steps:

Project Begins:	Project Ends:
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- Financial Implications:

Total Cost: \$ _____	
Amount within existing budget: \$ _____	Amount in addition to existing budget: \$ _____
Notes:	Notes:

Follow-up to be Done:

As a result of this work, do you have any suggested questions for future Ministerial Teams?