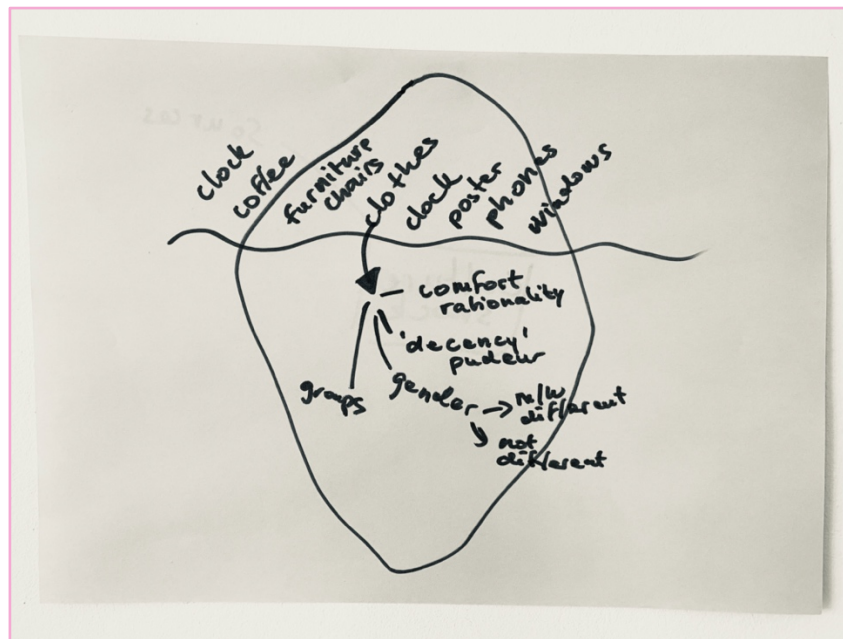






What are the visible signs of culture around us? This activity invites us to understand that culture is present everywhere around us - and even within us. Each person wears the signs of his or her cultures in the way he or she dresses, sits, talks, in line with underlying norms and values. Ultimately we realise we're in permanence surrounded by culture, and nothing around us is culturally neutral.



ACTIVITY STEP BY STEP

	45 minutes
	Adaptable for 6 – 20 participants
	Flipchart paper Markers Post-it of two colours, 2 pieces of each to each participant
	As a preparation draw the silhouette of an iceberg on a flipchart paper, stick it on the wall.



1. Invite participants to look around in the room where you are and identify visible manifestations of culture. Not any particular culture (French, Dutch, etc.) but culture in general. Invite participants to write down 3 such manifestations.

2. If you are more than 6, create several small groups and invite participants to share what they have identified and chose 3 that interests them the most. Collect these items on post-it papers and stick them on the iceberg illustration always verifying whether everyone agrees that that is indeed a manifestation of culture.

3. Explain why the iceberg is a good metaphor of culture: it has visible manifestations – that is the part above sea level – but the bigger part is under water, and this is what constitutes the real meaning of the elements above. In this below the sea-level part we find the values, norms, representations.

4. Invite participants to identify the bellow-sea-level component to a couple of manifestations. Complete if necessary, if they have not touched the probably important values.

5. If they are not from the dominant culture or have several cultural references you can invite them now to connect to the values different manifestations. For instance how are values of conviviality or politeness respected in their culture?



To debrief ask participants to share with you what they think were the learning points of the activity – “what have you learnt?”

Explore the following points:

- Everything in the room is “cultural” it is not likely that there are elements outside of culture. As such, everything is connected to values, representations. For instance, the furniture can reflect a desire for horizontality or to the contrary status asymmetries.
- Even people bear visible signs of culture: the way they sit or stand, the way we are dressed. Only our genetic material is not cultural, but even how we name on reflect on it is again cultural.

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IRIS PROJECT PARTNERS:

Élan interculturel (Paris) In Touch (Amsterdam) La Xixa Teatre (Barcelona) KÉPES Foundation (Budapest)

IRIS is a project (strategic partnership) within the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission. It is a Youth project, financed through the French National Agency. Its reference number is 2018-1-FR02-KA205-014096



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.