

## CASE:

### The Hotel manager's problems in the South Pacific (this case is based on a real situation)



A German hotel manager plans to build 12 bungalows for tourists on the beach of a small island in the South Pacific. Near the planned bungalows is a little village. The people living there – around 200 – are quite poor. They live in big families, each counting at least 60 members. All families are headed by a chief. This chief is considered the person who knows best, no matter what the issue is. This means that he makes the decisions. Each member of the family who has an income, has to give 60 % of the money he or she earns to the chief, who then decides how to spend the money for the benefit of the whole group. In addition, the member has to give at least 30 % of the money to his or her closest family – in most cases even more. As a result, very little money is left to the individual.

The German hotel manager has moved to this village to organize the building of the bungalows. However, he finds it extremely difficult. The whole project takes much more time than he imagined. Things do not work as he had planned. So sometimes, he gets irritated and shouts at the workers to speed up. This, however, only leads to the workers leaving everything and going back to the village. It then takes some time to convince them to come back to work. Another problem for him is that when he gives them the order to do something, for instance paint the walls of the bungalows, the result is often not as good as he had hoped. In addition, tools, such as brushes, are not taken care of (used brushes are left to dry out on the ground) and thus have to be thrown away. Things like these are very annoying since it is difficult to get new ones on that remote island. At one point, the manager asks his workers to work during the weekend, in exchange for money of course. However, the men do not seem to be interested. Moreover, in order to speed up the building process, he asks them to work on all the 12 bungalows at the same time, rather than having everyone working on the same bungalow. When suggesting this, they seem to agree, since they are nodding their heads. However, each time the German goes to the bungalows to check on the work, he finds the workers assembled in one bungalow. He gets irritated.

In conclusion, the relationship between the hotel manager and the workers worsens by the hour.

You happen to be on this island and the manager learns that you have studied intercultural communication and he asks for advice on what to do.

**Your task now is:**

**First**, to explain to the manager WHY these problems occur. You will have to do this by referring to theories of intercultural communication. As the manager has no knowledge about intercultural communication, you need to explain the relevant theories with your own words – and not by quoting them directly from the literature. This means, you use the name of the concept / theory, and then you explain it with your own words, as you would in a real life situation. Have in mind that in order to understand the intercultural problems, the manager needs to understand and have knowledge both of the other's culture AND his own, help him out please.

**Second**, to give the hotel manager ADVICE about what to do to solve the problems (based on the explanations you have given above).

**Account of words:** minimum ca 800 words.