

Culture Connections

Cultural Protocols



Presented by



Culture Connections

FNQ Volunteers Inc. is the lead agency for volunteering in Far North Queensland and a community partner with ITEC Employment through the Work Experience Activity Programme, an Australian Government Initiative. The work experience activity **Culture Connections** was developed to provide participants with the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge in community cultural development by increasing individuals understanding of other cultures, traditions, celebrations and events.

A number of cultural protocols and guidelines were created for diverse communities as part of the 6 month Culture Connections Work Experience Activity with ITEC Employment. Cultural protocols for the larger and emerging communities in the Cairns Region were selected for this activity. Cultural protocols for the Fijian, Korean, Japanese, Indonesian and Torres Strait Island communities were created. Information on preferred communication styles, non-verbal behaviors, community values, meeting etiquettes, gender and age issues were included in these protocols. ITEC participants involved in this project had the opportunity to find out and learn about the diverse cultures in Cairns and assisted by researching relevant information on the Internet. Volunteers from these diverse communities also supported this activity by providing a personal insight and knowledge which informed the compilation of these cultural protocols. It is anticipated that these cultural protocols will assist community organisations, workers and individuals to engage in a meaningful and respectful manner with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, considering the impact that culture may have on communication, increasing individual's cultural awareness and literacy.

Acknowledgements

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A special thank you to the following volunteers who assisted in formulating these cultural protocols

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Mitch Hewitt:	Japanese Community Protocols and Brochure Translation
Adek Murniaty Jurass:	Indonesian Community Protocols and Brochure Translation
Nisha Patel:	Indian Brochure Translation
James Dow:	Torres Strait Island Community Protocols and Brochure Translation
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Fijian Protocols Community Connection

Fijian Community Values

- Fijians are communally orientated and hierarchal in its social system
- Tasks are done on a communal basis, with everyone contributing to their community's development goals
- Respect for elders or seniority is observed and their views considered wise and practical
- Observing and understanding Fijian social rituals is vital in soliciting support and assistance
- Fijians will reciprocate if individuals and groups understand and observe their culture and protocols

Meeting Etiquette

- Fijians shake hands and say '*bula vinaka*' which means 'greetings and to your good health'.
- Normally, at a traditional social gathering, a kava ritual is performed by both the visiting guest/s and the host. The ceremony is to make the guest feel at home and to reassure the visitor that he or she will be assisted appropriately and vice versa.
- Fijians have a hierarchal social system which is strictly observed. Everybody sits on the floor in a formal setting. Sitting arrangement is in accordance to one's status, the Chief sits on the top end and others follow in rank on both sides of the aisle.
- After the ceremony, conversation and discussion takes place in an informal manner
- It is important to respect elders and acknowledge their views and wisdom
- Before leaving, thank the elders and members for looking after you well and their contributions in the discussions
- Reassure the community /group that a feedback for the project/survey/meeting will be forthcoming
- Respectable clothing should be observed.

Fijian Protocols Community Connection

Aspects of Fijian Culture that may affect behaviour and communication

- Time management is flexible; sticking to appointments/schedules could vary from one group/individual to another depending on the circumstances.
- Information communicated should not be too long as attention span is limited. Informal conversation is considered more effective in a cultural context. Formal communication is viable but not always the best way of doing business.
- Many Fijians do not express their opinions freely and openly in a formal meeting. However, views will be stated after the formal meeting on a one to one basis. It is essential that individuals be asked to give an opinion during a meeting, otherwise only one or two individuals will be talking.
- Be mindful of seniority status and be respectful of an elder's opinions. You will lose their respect and support should you openly disagree with their views.
- Do look people in the eye when communicating.
- In some Fijian communities, women are still considered as backbenchers and will not be required to state or express an opinion in an open formal forum. One should be mindful and sensitive to this situation and do not impress upon the notion of gender balance to solicit a woman's view-point. Her opinion could be sought on an informal basis.
- Do not be too direct as this could be interpreted as being rude, condescending and confrontational. Be very tactful, sensitive and diplomatic in your communication exchanges.

Japanese Protocols Community Connection

Japanese Community Values

- Japanese usually feel more comfortable communicating in a group rather than on an individual basis
- Morality in public is high
- Reciprocal relationships are important particularly amongst neighbours
- There is religious flexibility; however some rituals, ceremonies and events exist in some parts of Japan
- A hierarchal social system is evident particularly in workplaces and educational settings. An individual's social status such as age, education level and occupation will influence communication.

Meeting Etiquette

- Japanese prefer to greet or bow when meeting another person. Hugging, kissing and shaking hands in public even with family or close friends is not appropriate
- Normally Japanese people do not call each other by their first names, only family and close friends will do this
- Sometimes excessive eye contact can make someone feel embarrassed
- Japanese society is hierarchal and this is still strictly observed. This practiced hierarchy affects the setting of tables, positioning of seats and the order of entering a room
- Japan is still an andocentric and patriarchal society as guests are always expected to greet elder men first
- Guests are expected to bring a small gift to show appreciation for inviting them, however guests are not expected to assist in preparing meals or tea. The host wife assumes primary accountability for hospitality.
- Japanese meetings are preferred in restaurants, cafes or public places rather than in individual homes
- Punctuality is valued
- When given a business card, it is respectful to take it with both hands and treat it politely

Aspects of Japanese Culture that may affect behaviour and communication

- Expressing emotions in public is considered as childish
- Japanese are usually task orientated and focused. Organisation and preparation before a meeting is appreciated
- In formal circumstances time management is a priority
- Direct expressions and instructive attitudes could be interpreted as being insulting or domineering

Korean Protocols: Community Connection

Korean Community Values

- The teachings of Confucius influence the way Koreans treat each other
- These teachings of loyalty, honour, piety, respect for age, seniority and sincerity impact on how they perform their duties
- Koreans operate on the principle of harmony. It is important to maintain a peaceful, comfortable atmosphere at all times even it means telling a white lie.
- Since this is a culture where social harmony is crucial, being able to judge another person's state of mind is important to maintain the person's dignity, pride and self esteem.
- Family welfare is much more important than the needs of the individual

Meeting Etiquette

- Greetings follow strict rules of protocol
- Many Koreans shake hands with others after the bow, thereby blending both cultural styles
- The person who initiates the bow says, '*man-na-suh pan-gop-sumnida*', which means 'please to meet you'
- Wait to be introduced at a social gathering
- Appointments are required and should be made 3 to 4 weeks in advance
- You should arrive on time for meetings as this demonstrates respect for the person/s you are meeting
- Have all written materials available in both English and Korean
- Business cards are exchanged after the initial introduction in a highly ritualized manner
- The way you treat someone's business card is indicative of the way you will treat the person
- Women should dress conservatively
- When you leave a social gathering, say good-bye and bow to each person individually

Korean Protocols: Community Connection

Aspects of Korean Culture that may affect behaviour and communication

- South Koreans prefer to do business with people whom they have a personal connection. It is therefore crucial to be introduced by a third party.
- Relationships are developed through informal social gatherings that often involve a considerable amount of drinking and eating.
- Under no circumstances insult or criticize in front of others
- South Koreans are direct communicators. They are not averse to asking questions if they do not understand what has been said or need clarification.
- Respond to questions directly and concisely.
- Giving a gift expresses a great deal about relationships and is always reciprocated. Use both hands when offering a gift and do not open when receiving one.

Korean Cultural Protocols adapted from:

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/south-korea-country-profile.html>

Indonesian Protocols: Community Connection

Indonesian Community Values

- Traditional culture influences Indonesian lifestyle and communication
- Indonesians are friendly, enjoy spending time with friends and have very strong family relationships
- Family wellbeing is very important; an individual family members problem usually becomes the whole family's problem
- The father plays a powerful and influential role in traditional Indonesian families. The father is always afforded more respect and is viewed as the family leader making decisions for the entire family. Communication should always be directed to the father first.
- In traditional families males are always served food and drinks before females
- Due to religious beliefs boyfriends and girlfriends are prohibited from staying together until married
- Usually younger people will kiss the hands of older people when they are shaking their hands; this act demonstrates respect
- Friendships are very important in Indonesian culture and it is common for friends to hold hands and hug each other in public

Meeting Etiquette

- Sharing food and sitting together is an important part of Indonesian culture. Indonesians are comfortable using their hands to eat and there is no obligation to use a knife or fork when eating.
- Smiling, shaking hands and introducing yourself is considered polite in Indonesia.
- When meeting someone for the first time it is important to shake hands immediately saying the words '*apa kaba*' which means 'how are you.' Guests should always be shown or directed where to sit in a meeting situation.
- In a traditional meeting Indonesian people will sit together on a mat on the floor. Men and women will separate into different groups
- During a meeting the word '*silaturahmi*' is called. This is when people's ideas and opinions will be accepted and considered.
- It is important to talk in a polite manner
- Pointing to someone with your finger is a sign of disrespect
- Before leaving a meeting it is important to shake hands and say bye rather than just leaving
- Keeping in touch with an Indonesian leader will ensure a strong relationship continues.

Aspects of Indonesian Culture that may affect behaviour and communication

- In some areas Moslem ladies wear a 'jilbab' to cover their hair and body for religious reasons
- Conservative and polite dress should be always be considered when engaging with Indonesian people. The general rule is to keep the shoulders covered and to wear something long enough to cover the knees.

Meriam Protocols: Community Connection

Meriam Community Values

- Meriam people are a Torres Strait Islander group located in the Murray Islands
- Meriam people are communally orientated and have a hierarchal social system
- Tasks are done on a communal basis with everyone contributing to their community's development achievements and goals
- Respect for elders or seniority is observed and their views considered wise and practical
- Observing and understanding social rituals is vital in soliciting support and assistance
- Meriam people will reciprocate if individuals and groups understand and observe their culture protocols

Meeting Etiquette

- Meriam people shake hands and say '*nako ma nali*' which means 'how are you or are you in good health? The person responding says '*ka sikak ka nali*' which means good thanks
- New arrivals including wedding couples, infants and visitors are greeted with dancers performing a ritual dance or traditional songs to welcome their arrival. This signifies bonding and a peaceful relationship
- It is important to respect elders and acknowledge their views and wisdom
- There are conditions when being approached by someone in the community; it is insulting and disrespectful to not say '*wis wei*' which means 'hi'. If a newly arrived visitor does not say this greeting it may be difficult to establish effective and meaningful community relationships as peace is lost
- Before leaving an event or social gathering thank the elders and the members for looking after you well
- When leaving a meeting also thank the elders and the members for their contributions in the discussions.
- Reassure the community group that feedback will be forthcoming after a meeting
- Respectable clothing should be observed

Meriam Protocols: Community Connection

Aspects of Meriam Culture that may affect behaviour and communication

- Time management is flexible; sticking to appointment schedules could vary from one group or individuals to another depending on the circumstances and community activities/tasks and ceremonies.
- Many Meriam people do not express their opinions freely and openly in a formal meeting however, views will be stated after the formal meeting on a one on one basis. It is essential that individuals be asked to give an opinion during a meeting otherwise only one or two individuals will be talking
- Do look people in the eye when communicating
- Do not be too direct as this could be interpreted as being rude, condescending and confrontational. Be very tactful sensitive and diplomatic in your communication exchanges



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