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Towards a culturally competent humanitarian assistance

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CENTRE FOR HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP

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I wish to acknowledge the indigenous people from across Turtle Island where I now reside. I pay tribute to my African and Egyptian ancestors, and all indigenous knowledge that paved the way for humankind to thrive.

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The Centre for Humanitarian Leadership acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present.

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Cover image: A Kindness Circle formed to help address gender-based violence in Wakiso, Uganda. © Esther Ruth Mbabazi / Save The Children

CENTRE FOR HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP

Abstract

This article examines the opportunities and challenges of integrating cultural competency into humanitarian assistance. While it is imperative for humanitarian organisations and workers to fully understand and consider ethnocultural dynamics and diversity in the communities they serve and plan their work accordingly, cultural competency is still deprioritised and overlooked when planning and implementing a humanitarian assistance response. The article goes through the evolution of cultural competency concepts and how far humanitarian assistance responses throughout the years have succeeded in working effectively in multicultural contexts, exploring their commitments to cultural competency in the face of competing priorities, limited resources, centralised decision-making, tight schedules and the urgency to deliver services at once. The challenges of integrating cultural competency into humanitarian assistance are further elaborated, and key actionable recommendations are drawn to guide organisational practice.

Leadership relevance

This paper provides actionable recommendations for humanitarian leaders to integrate cultural competency into their organisational and individual practices. It offers insights into how far humanitarian assistance has gone in applying cultural competency best practices while giving examples of sporadic efforts made by multiple humanitarian organisations to integrate cultural competency into their global responses. This paper also looks into what we can learn from other sectors, such as the social service and health sectors, which are more advanced in integrating cultural competency into their service provision models.

Cultural competency: issues and trends

In a world with more than 89 million forcibly displaced people—including 21 million refugees—communities worldwide are becoming more ethnically and culturally diverse (UNHCR, 2023). It is not unusual for a group of people living in the same place or sharing the same refugee camp to speak multiple languages, belong to different religions, or perform different rituals associated with their respective ethnocultural backgrounds. While it is imperative for humanitarian organisations and workers to fully understand and consider these ethnocultural dynamics and diversity in the communities they serve and plan their work accordingly, cultural competency is still deprioritised and overlooked when planning and implementing a humanitarian assistance response.

Cultural competency is a broad concept with multiple interpretations drawn from different theoretical frameworks. It was introduced in the 1980s in the United States as an approach to improving healthcare for ethnic minorities and reducing ethnic health disparities. One of the earliest and most cited definitions is the one used by The U.S. National Association of Social Workers, where cultural competency is "a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals and enable the system, agency, or professionals to work effectively in multicultural situations" (Sue et al., 2009, p.9).

The concept of cultural competency is often used interchangeably with other terms, such as 'cultural sensitivity' and 'cultural responsiveness', which are employed to address conscious and unconscious bias and signify the importance of being aware of cultural factors when providing a service, especially in the face of growing multiculturism. These terms are challenged by the notion that it is not the lack of awareness of others' culture that drives inequities, but rather unequal power relations, unfair distribution of resources, marginalisation, unexamined privilege and institutional racism (Curtis et al., 2019). In contrast, cultural competency is a more comprehensive term that addresses both individual and systemic factors. The concept encompasses the tailoring of organisational policies, structures and service delivery systems to incorporate "culture, assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance toward the dynamics that result from cultural differences, expansion of cultural knowledge, and adaptation of interventions to meet culturally unique needs" (Sue et al., 2009, citing Whaley & Davis, 2007, p.4).

Despite consensus on the need to provide culturally competent services, critics have pointed out the challenge of putting cultural competency into concrete terms, including conceptual clarity and operational guidance. Another underlined gap is the overemphasis on cultural traits and differences, which reduces complex human behaviour and experience to cultural stereotypes (Lau & Rodgers, 2021). Further limitations include the presence of various interpretations of cultural competency—some of which are not theoretically grounded—and the lack of measurement and research design to gauge its impact on service provision (Sue et al., 2009).

These challenges are considered and addressed by experts in the field as they work on constantly developing and adapting cultural competency approaches and operational frameworks. For instance, Hall (2001) noted that advocates of cultural competency are aware of the significance of cultural mechanisms and the inadequacy of simply exporting a method from one cultural group to another (Sue et al., 2009). Cultural competency is not merely a static outcome or a set of skills to acquire or procedures to deliver; it is an ongoing process of placing the service recipient at the centre of the service delivery model, striving to maintain a critical awareness of one's own culture and biases, of valuing diversity and working effectively and empathetically with people from different cultural backgrounds (Lau & Rodgers, 2021) (Curtis et al., 2019).

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Cultural safety is another notion proposed in the 1990s by Dr Irihapeti Ramsden and Māori nurses in New Zealand. This concept focuses on acknowledging and addressing the inherent power imbalances between service providers and clients. Instead of focusing on learning about the culture of the 'other,' it focuses on being more reflective of power structures and how one's own biases, attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices might impact the quality of services provided. Cultural safety shifts the focus from the culture of the other to the culture of the self. Some proponents of cultural competency have redefined the term and integrated it with the more dynamic and empathetic notion of cultural safety that extends beyond acquiring knowledge of other cultures to addressing biases and stereotypes within one's own culture (Curtis et al., 2019). An example of this is how a humanitarian worker in Haiti described the way Americans viewed Haitians through the biased lens of their own culture:

> "America isn't the greatest country ever, you don't have the answer to save Haiti, your ideas probably won't work because you don't know the culture, you will fail, and this is the biggest—that Haitians are amazing, smart people that don't need a savior in khakis and Chacos—they need a catalyst and someone that believes in them. And that they are more normal than you think" (Remington, 2017).

Cultural competency in humanitarian assistance

Even though cultural competency has assumed a central position in the global social work and healthcare discourse, it is only considered sporadically in humanitarian assistance. Cultural competence approaches in humanitarian response—including refugee response—and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) are limited by a lack of clear definitions, operational guidance, time pressure, and a lack of understanding of the unique challenges faced by refugees and affected populations coming from different backgrounds (Lau & Rodgers, 2021).

Cultural competence approaches in humanitarian response ... are limited by a lack of clear definitions, operational guidance, time pressure, and a lack of understanding of the unique challenges faced by refugees.

Despite the emphasis on the universality of human rights on the global policy level and in international human rights frameworks, the international community has strongly advocated for regional human rights instruments that integrate unique and relevant cultural elements into their frameworks. Instruments such as the Universal Islamic Declaration on Human Rights, the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam and the African Charter of Human and People's Rights are a few examples of regional adjustments of human rights frameworks with cultural relevance. However, in some cases, contradictions exist between universal frameworks and cultural references, such as in the case of Saudi Arabia, which ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2000 with the reservation that it is not under the obligation to observe terms contradictory to the norms of the Islamic Sharia law (Tošovská, 2016).

The UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity was adopted in 2001, and defines culture as a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group. In this definition, culture encompasses art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and belief. Article 4 of the *Declaration* draws the link between human rights, fundamental freedoms, and cultural diversity yet also highlights that no one should invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon universal human rights (Tošovská, 2016). On the other hand, the 1951 *Refugee Convention* states in Article 4 that the contracting States "shall accord to refugees within their territories treatment at least as favourable as that accorded to their nationals with respect to freedom to practice their religion and freedom as regards to the religious education of their children". A similar reference is made in the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, where Principle 22 states that internally displaced persons, "whether or not they are living in camps, shall not be discriminated against as a result of their displacement in the enjoyment of the rights to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, opinion and expression" (Lensu, 2004).

The commitments generated through the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 indicated strong support for building close relationships between humanitarian organisations and local populations, which entails understanding the society's culture to better deliver aid (Curtis et al., 2019). The 2030 *Agenda for Sustainable Development* adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015 pledges to foster intercultural understanding, tolerance and mutual respect, and acknowledges the natural and cultural diversity of the world and that all cultures and civilisations can contribute to sustainable development (Tošovská, 2016). The international community has recently appealed to aid agencies to support aid localisation and strengthen locally led action. International development and humanitarian agencies such as the USAID pledged to significantly increase funding to local non-governmental organisations, which requires a fundamental change in their operating systems and organisational culture to meet the local realities, needs, and ways of working (Fine, 2022).

In the face of competing priorities, limited resources, centralised decision-making, tight schedules and the urgency to deliver services as soon as possible, the emphasis on cultural elements when delivering humanitarian assistance has been translated into organisational policy and programmatic considerations by only a handful of humanitarian organisations. An analysis of humanitarian job announcements by Remington (2017) revealed that only 37% of agencies required cultural competencies in their candidates. Some organisations like Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) use social anthropologists to support humanitarian workers in acquiring the basic information about the culture they are entering and hold cultural meetings for workers before starting their missions to prepare them to work in a culturally appropriate way and understand important cultural aspects such as dress code, gender dynamics and other cultural requirements (Tošovská, 2016). Research conducted in post-earthquake Haiti in 2010 revealed that some organisations provided cultural training and debriefing for their employees and volunteers before and during deployment. One social worker described her training experience thusly:

> "Most of our employees and volunteers go through training where they are given background information on the country and some basic cultural and religious norms since most of the country is heavily attached

to some religious belief. Once in Haiti, they are given times to debrief daily and then weekly as they process the changes that they are seeing, experiencing, or being exposed to" (Remington, 2017).

However, these organisational practices do not necessarily result in providing culturally competent services, as they focus mainly on the individual level, not the structural or systematic level. They also lack cultural safety components as they solely focus on the culture of the other without delving into the humanitarian workers' own culture, power dynamics and potential biases.

Government departments or organisations such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have developed a cultural competency training curriculum for disaster preparedness and crisis response, yet it focuses on the national context and does not cover international post-disaster contexts (Remington, 2017). Other humanitarian organisations such as Save the Children or Plan integrate cultural practices and rituals such as unity circles, drum calls, blessings for the day and the use of ethnic food during child protection or psychosocial interventions, but this is often done in a piecemeal fashion (Sue et al., 2009). One example of integrating cultural practices in Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) programs in Uganda involved conducting healing ceremonies lasting for days to reconcile former child soldiers with their communities and bring a sense of healing and forgiveness to their spirits. These ceremonies were held by a mediator or a witch doctor in the presence of community elders. In one form of these ceremonies, reconciliation involves two families drinking pounded extracts from trees while the master of ceremonies cuts off the head of an animal (usually a ram or goat) and smears the child's body or sprinkles their forehead with blood. The meat is then cooked for the participating families as a sign of reconciliation (Bainomugisha, 2010).

Some humanitarian organisations and movements, such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, have a code of conduct that commits to respecting the culture, structures and customs of the communities and countries they work in. However, how far these policy commitments are translated into programmatic and operating procedures is unclear (Lensu, 2004).

Despite these sporadic efforts, there is still ample room for prioritising cultural competency in humanitarian assistance and recognising ethnocultural diversity and practices among targeted communities. Rodon et al. (2012), in their article 'Managing culture conflicts for effective humanitarian aid', argue that a homogenous concept of culture is insufficient when describing a national culture since many countries are former colonies where the colonial power's culture was imported. Moreover, diverse ethnic groups exist in many societies where culture is a heterogeneous and dynamic concept. This heterogeneity can be seen in the five dimensions of culture described by Hofstede, which include power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, and long-term orientation (Johnson et al., 2016; Tošovská, 2016).

Diversity becomes even more layered in communities with an influx of refugees and asylum seekers who face specific vulnerabilities and challenges in accessing services that respond to their individual and cultural needs. Understanding this diversity is crucial in humanitarian response and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), which should be shaped by people's environmental perceptions, local and indigenous knowledge, religious views and traditions. Service provision should aim to reduce health and social disparities and improve access to services, including health and social services, employment and education for all groups (Johnson et al., 2016) (Lau & Rodgers, 2021).

The absence of cultural competency in humanitarian assistance can further deepen the vulnerability of the affected populations and contribute to the magnitude of the disaster as much as the hazard itself.

The absence of cultural competency in humanitarian assistance can further deepen the vulnerability of the affected populations and contribute to the magnitude of the disaster as much as the hazard itself. In most cases, hazards only become disasters if high-risk conditions are present, and this includes ignorance of or ignoring the cultural makeup of the vulnerable community. (Scott, 2007). The absence of cultural competency could also deepen the conflict that already exists in the field. As Mary Anderson (1999) pointed out in her book *Do No Harm*, humanitarian actors should not only understand the humanitarian effects of their help, but also the political impacts of their actions. Ignoring the cultural aspect may escalate disaster vulnerabilities and the associated problems of adaptation, coping, intervention, knowledge and power relations and could reduce the acceptance and cooperation of local communities towards responders (Krishna et al., 2021; Tošovská, 2016). To illustrate this, we can look to Yemen as an example, where Al-Muhamasheen—a minority group suffering from caste-based discrimination—has been left particularly vulnerable and has had little to no access to humanitarian aid during the prolonged conflict. This was mainly due to the lack of proper documentation, being pushed to the edges of cities and war frontlines, the diversion of aid by local sheikhs, and—most importantly—the failure to tailor humanitarian assistance services to meet their culturally specific needs (El Rajji, 2016).

Since humanitarian response and DRR bring together multiple actors from different cultural contexts, the risk of misunderstanding and conflict among them is high. These cultural differences could easily become cultural misunderstandings and barriers if humanitarian workers do not possess cross-cultural competencies to analyse and adapt to working in a culturally diverse environment, which could add further stress and pressure to an already tense and volatile environment. Even in situations where workers think they understand the overt culture—represented in language, dress code and other external factors—hidden cultural elements such as social structures or subtle body language can be a real source of tension that may eventually lead to breaking point (Remington, 2017).

It is common to see aid organisations perceiving recipient communities as backward or fatalistic compared to the 'expert-driven' culture of humanitarian organisations driven by scientific knowledge (Johnson et al., 2016). This otherness is further aggravated by the multitude of barriers that exist in humanitarian settings under the name of safety and security measures that separate the foreign aid workers from the locals and aid recipients and limit their interaction. Post-earthquake Haiti is a case in point. Aid workers spent their days confined to gated compounds or air-conditioned vehicles and had little exposure to the Haitian culture due to strict organisational regulations, curfew, refusal to allow Haitian friends to visit NGO bases and other security measures that were supposed to protect aid workers, but inadvertently further isolated them from their surroundings (Remington, 2017).

Understanding culture can also help humanitarian organisations better prepare for and respond to disasters. For example, the indigenous Moken community in Thailand believed that the abnormal behaviour of animals and birds signalled the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, which allowed them to evacuate to safe places beforehand. Cultural beliefs around fatalism and trust in God affect people's behaviour towards crises and preparedness, while some people's connection to the land might make them more resistant to relocation and evacuation. Gender norms that limit women's ability to swim or climb trees or dress codes that affect their mobility and swift movement in times of disaster are factors that need to be considered when planning and responding to crises. At the onset of a response, the focus is on taking action and delivering lifesaving services, and not changing beliefs. Humanitarian workers need to plan their actions with an understanding of the local culture, long-held beliefs, and common sense (Scott, 2007). They should also pay special attention to the variable ways people respond to stress and manifest Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms, ask for help and receive care in order to ensure that the humanitarian supply and logistics, information systems, and assistive technologies are adapted to assist culturally diverse communities during disasters and conflicts (Krishna et al., 2021).

Recommendations for strengthening cultural competency in humanitarian assistance

One of the common misconceptions about integrating cultural competency in humanitarian assistance is that at the onset of a response, there is little to no time to understand the culture of the affected population and plan the response accordingly—hence the tendency to replicate the same processes and operating procedures at the response onset without much adaptation. The second common misconception is that cultural competency is resource-intensive and requires larger budgets than what is usually available in humanitarian response. These two misconceptions are rooted in the fallacy that cultural competency is an add-on. It is not an extra procedure or deliverable that needs to be factored into a response strategy and budget, but a foundation that alters the way work is done at the organisational level. It occurs before launching a response and before the engagement of staff in ongoing self-awareness and cultural humility processes. Above all, it represents a sincere organisational commitment to understand, respect and elevate other cultures, even in situations of power imbalances or supremacy. It comes as no surprise to see plenty of small grassroots humanitarian organisations faring better at integrating cultural competency and having their finger on the local pulse than many well-funded international organisations, simply because the barriers between them and the local communities where they are embedded are much lower.

[Cultural competency] is not an extra procedure or deliverable that needs to be factored into a response strategy and budget, but a foundation that alters the way work is done at the organisational level.

Organisational commitment to cultural competency, especially at the senior level, is pivotal and cannot be overemphasised. This is because humanitarian organisations usually operate in unregulated environments, where humanitarian workers perform social work and healthcare duties that would otherwise be performed by licensed practitioners who must adhere to cultural competency standards as part of their social work or healthcare practice. Humanitarian organisations were prompted to adopt and integrate safeguarding and accountability measures into their key performance indicators after the alarming increase of exploitation and abuse incidents perpetrated by humanitarian workers and the consequent public backlash. They must also devote the same level of attention and dedication to cultural competency, to ensure that humanitarian assistance is tailored to the specific needs of different cultural groups in the affected communities and to

enable humanitarian workers to respect diversity and integrate cultural considerations into their work. Cultural competency should become a key competency for humanitarian organisations against which they are publicly rated, evaluated, and even selected for funding by public and private donors.

There are different cultural competency frameworks employed by practitioners in the social services and healthcare arenas that could be used as a basis for integrating cultural competency in the humanitarian sector. The most widely used framework is the one adopted by the American Psychological Association (APA), which includes three dimensions. This first is cultural awareness and beliefs, in which the service providers are sensitive to their own personal values, culture and biases and understand how that may impact how they perceive their clients and deliver the service. Cultural knowledge is the second dimension. It comprises the knowledge of one's own culture and worldview in addition to the client's and how both cultures perceive each other. The third dimension is cultural skills and the ability to intervene and provide services in a culturally sensitive and relevant manner (Sue et al., 2009). The definition of culture in this sense is broad, and includes dimensions such as race and ethnicity, gender, age, language, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disability, literacy level, spiritual and religious practices, individual values and experiences, and other relevant factors (Scott, 2007).

Another framework proposed by Remington (2017) targets humanitarian organisations and includes four dimensions with specific elements adapted for humanitarian responses. The first dimension is cultural knowledge, which includes context-specific knowledge of the host culture, such as language, history, and behaviours. The second dimension is personal attributes. This includes the internal attitudes and mindsets needed to put cultural competency into practice, as well as empathy, adaptability, and compassion. The third dimension is emotive skills, which include the ability to manage one's own and other's emotions to meet organisational expectations. Examples of emotive skills include emotional intelligence, emotional labour, suppression and acting. The fourth dimension is expertise, which includes the job-specific skills required to provide a service in a cross-cultural response or recovery job.

Cultural competency requires system-wide changes and must manifest at every organisational level (Scott, 2007). Humanitarian organisations should adopt policies and strategies prioritising diversity and cultural competence. Such practices include hiring bicultural and bilingual staff, fair and inclusive compensation packages for all with no discrimination between local and international staff, cultural competency training and cultural briefings by experts. Engaging with and building strong and authentic partnerships with local organisations and communities is another way of facilitating cultural competency and linking the resources that big humanitarian organisations have with local knowledge and access to information (Lau & Rodgers, 2021; Tošovská, 2016). Local partners should not only be engaged at the implementation level, as this is a form of tokenism, but should be considered strategic partners at the organisational level.

Engaging with and building strong and authentic partnerships with local organisations and communities is another way of facilitating cultural competency and linking the resources that big humanitarian organisations have with local knowledge and access to information.

Working directly with individuals versus working with groups is a determining factor in integrating cultural competency. At the onset of a crisis, relief workers—who, in many cases, are foreigners who know very little about the local context—are left with no choice but to work directly with affected individuals from different cultures. However, during pre-disaster and preparedness times, it is ideal to plan to work with local groups and through cultural intermediaries or communities of like culture (Scott, 2007). Examples of these groups include community-based organisations rooted at the community level and operating at the neighbourhood level.

Engaging members of the target population, such as refugees, as cultural brokers, enhances the links between humanitarian organisations and the community and increases community acceptance, trust, and access to services. These cultural brokers could be community leaders, religious figures, or family members. For instance, in the Philippines, village barangays (captains) significantly impacted the quality of aid received by their communities after Typhoon Haiyan by acting as cultural brokers and advocates for their communities. However, risk assessment and management procedures should be in place when engaging with cultural brokers to avoid clientelism or favouritism (Lau & Rodgers, 2021; Combinido & Ong, 2017).

If we take a look back at the cultural competency frameworks discussed earlier, we will notice that it primarily focuses on the service provider level—the frontline workers who engage directly with the affected community and deliver the needed services. Hiring humanitarian workers who possess self-awareness and respect for cultural diversity is essential. Service providers must be equipped to adhere to cultural safety practices by critically evaluating their own culture, race, ethnicity, gender, beliefs, biases and values and how

it influences their interactions with their clients. This would help them recognise power imbalances, avoid making assumptions, stereotypes, or generalisations about other cultures, and ask for guidance and support when recognising their limitations. On the other hand, the service provider needs to better understand the client's culture, home country, journey of displacement, cultural and religious beliefs, history and ethnic identities to serve them better. For example, knowledge of a current or historical ethnic conflict or tension within communities is crucial when identifying appropriate interpreters or grouping clients together in group interventions to avoid creating triggering negative situations (Lau & Rodgers, 2021).

Needs assessments are conducted by humanitarian organisations prior to or in conjunction with most humanitarian assistance responses, in order to collect data on the affected population—including their age, gender, socioeconomic conditions, and vulnerabilities such as disability or care arrangements for children. However, it is uncommon to come across needs assessments that consider other cultural aspects of the affected populations, especially for minority groups, such as local languages, religious beliefs, traditions and rituals. This is partly due to time and resource limitations but also because the significance of these cultural elements when planning a response is often downplayed. Involving cultural mediators and local partners in the needs assessment process is crucial as they can point out the key cultural elements that should be considered in order to understand the needs of different cultural groups properly and analyse and mitigate potential cultural conflicts (Tošovská, 2016). Including some of these cultural elements is also helpful in addressing cultural barriers to accessing services during the implementation phase. Flexible service delivery models, such as adjusting service times and modes of delivery to suit Ramadan schedules for Muslim recipients, is one example of service adaptation based on cultural needs. One of the most common barriers is language, which could be addressed by hiring interpreters and finding ways to integrate the client's language and culture into services (Lau & Rodgers, 2021).

Content development and delivery for humanitarian interventions and behavioural change programs is another area where cultural competency is key. Oftentimes, interventions employ Western-based knowledge that is only translated to the local language without robust cultural adaptation and without bringing local and indigenous knowledge to the forefront of knowledge creation. This reduces the creditability and efficacy of the intervention and its pertinence to real-life problems experienced by the affected population. For interventions to be culturally competent, they need to consider issues such as cultural patterns and traditional wisdom, immigration, minority status or racism in the development process. For instance, Martinez and Eddy (2005) not only conducted training sessions for immigrant Latino parents in Spanish but also addressed culturally relevant immigration and acculturation issues. Another intervention with Puerto Rican children used cuentos (Puerto Rican folktales) to convey a message or a moral to be emulated by others. Other documented interventions have incorporated language, spirituality, oral traditions, collective responsibility, racial socialisation, acculturation, attitudes and beliefs about disability, health care, and support networks (Sue et al., 2009).

[Cultural competency] requires stepping out of comfort zones—leaving those high-walled gated compounds—and taking measured risks to know the people and local communities for who they are and not just as names on beneficiary lists.

Because of the dynamic nature of culture, conflict and disasters, enhancing cultural competency in humanitarian assistance is an ongoing process and a lifelong commitment. It requires stepping out of comfort zones—leaving those high-walled gated compounds—and taking measured risks to know the people and local communities for who they are and not just as names on beneficiary lists. As one humanitarian worker in Haiti said:

> "I go out to the camps, just on my own, to look for people we have built relationships with now. These are not numbers. These are families. These are people that we have come to know. So I often go out just to see how they are, just to say hi, to see if there is a change in the camps" (Remington, 2017).

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