

IFF, intercultural bond between France and Morocco

Considering the intercultural aspect in the creation and management of IFF (railway training institute) and its training courses

About 150 joint sessions were provided at IFF between 2015 and 2016. Those sessions were mixed because of the trainees company's origins (ONCF and SNCF), and therefore also mixed because of the background culture of the students (French and Moroccan).

Beyond the educational programs themselves, the diversity is reflected daily in the management of the institute by a joint management board. This diversity was also found before the creation of IFF, at the beginning of the project when IFF's methods of governance were set. The goal is therefore to take the opportunity granted by the different points of view to serve the project and IFF's objectives, and eventually end up having great training courses from this diversity.

This challenge has been further complicated by the ambition of the ONCF and SNCF for IFF:

- ▶ The programs provided at IFF cover all useful skills to the development of rail and guided transport (by normal rail line or high-speed, passenger and freight, suburban and urban)
- ▶ The training programs aim to strive for excellence and to be innovative; some modules are delivered exclusively at IFF for ONCF and SNCF's trainees,
- ▶ IFF contributes to build up the international reputation of ONCF and SNCF by opening its programs to companies and organizations especially Africa's countries.

Obviously, there are positive elements in the creation of the IFF and implementation of joint training at the IFF. We can start first with the context of this close partnership that binds the two countries and the trusty relationships that historically exist between SNCF and ONCF.

We can then discuss more useful connections such as : the language, the similarity of technical standards and procedures, the culture of two great companies dedicated to public transport and finally the railway trade that brings us together.

However, many significant differences appear, coming from the different values depending on whether we are French or Moroccan. For example: the relationship to time, the relationship to the writing and the importance of oral expression, the individual's position and its consequences on the control and monitoring process, the role of religion ...

Regardless, we had to find solutions, sometimes by learning from mistakes. Starting with build on what brings us close : the technical approche. But we must be able to question ourselves, stay humble, learn to think like each other and agree to find alternatives such as bonds between cultures.

This open way of thinking allows IFF today to provide trainings for about 2 years, for which IFF has received approximately 70% of very positive opinion from the trainees.