

George Simons

Continuing the Momentum of Diversity

The good news: Diversity initiatives have largely been developed and refined in a U.S. context, and many of the achievements and best practices that have emerged are provocative resources for use in a global environment. Diversity and inclusion have contributed to the quality of life for countless people in U.S. organizations and in civil society. We hope that inclusion may grow and benefit others.



By George Simons

Now the bad news: Over the next 10 or 15 years, U.S.-based organizations will face two major obstacles in seeking to maximize their diversity and inclusion initiatives. First, they will face the challenge of seeing inclusion from the perspective of the problem sets existing in the non-U.S. cultures in which they operate. This will require serious research into the factual (economic and social) dynamics that demonstrate exclusion, as well as into the attitudes of people in situ. Assumption of U.S. categories and issues of targeted segments of the U.S. population can otherwise be specious.

Second, the implementation of U.S.-sponsored or U.S.-inspired diversity initiatives will be tainted for at least a generation by the deterioration of the U.S. reputation worldwide. From being largely respected for its values, the United States has become in the last half dozen years the most hated and feared nation worldwide. This perceptual shift creates great skepticism, if not cynicism, toward U.S. values and social policies. Human rights abuses, domestic social inequities and what

more and more people are beginning to recognize as hypocritical moralism in U.S. policies and practices will tempt them to reject U.S.-proposed social solutions out of hand.

Is there a silver lining to this dark side of our recent history? Only if we come to grips with this shadow side of our story and take a closer look at where inclusion needs to go in more than the legal and organizational framework in which it has grown up.

Pioneering diversity since 1966, Dr. George Simons consults and trains workplace diversity, gender competence for men, intercultural communication and global teamwork worldwide. He has authored numerous works.