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# CULTURE AT WORK: MYANMAR MEETS GLOBALISATION

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A Brief Report by Citta Consultancy



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The process of globalisation affects business and work organizations, economics, socio-cultural resources, and the natural environments of every country that enter the world market. It is not unique that Myanmar will experience this process as the country enters the global market. However, there is something noteworthy about Myanmar. Myanmar is not just joining the global economy, but is actually leaping into it. The country is in a sudden abrupt transition. What this means for multi-national corporations engaging in the new economy of Myanmar is that they are leaping along as well. It is an attractive landing to jump into, with the many resources, both natural and human, and potentials that the land promises. But if an efficient and profitable business requires risk management, how can an organization mitigate the uncertainties of a leap? A bridge built between the organization and Myanmar is one way to move through these uncertainties.

There are many bridges available in Myanmar - International business consulting firms, the government initiatives with the foreign investment laws and planned special economic zones, the involvement of various nations and their missionaries, and the local experts and advisors. In the midst of all these accommodations, one aspect of the leap needs to be paid close attention to. It is the cultural leap, which includes the working habits, motivations, and mindsets of the human resources that will produce and deliver the work of organizations. Myanmar has its own unique set of cultural characteristics when it comes to organizational systems and the human relations that function within them.

From the systems perspective, the concept of homeostasis suggests that a closed system evolves on its own to produce a unique set of adaptations to its environment. Myanmar, encapsulated in isolation from the world during the past several decades, has evolved its own work flows and economies. The people have developed their own work cultures that are quite different from the global work culture. How can a transnational corporation leap into this work culture of Myanmar?

Though many business consulting firms have done research and surveys, producing valuable reports, few if any at all has tackled the cultural bridging, especially at the human level. It is, after all, the human resources that will carry out the work which will meet the goals and projected outcomes of the ventures. The people of Myanmar, who will make up the human resources of the business ventures, are holding their own cultural perspectives on how they relate to work, supervisors, colleagues, organizational structures, personal motivation, money, and time. Much adjustments on a human and personal level will need to be made in the workplace of a transnational venture in Myanmar.

On the other hand, Myanmar is ripe with creativity. This is not just due to its new economy in the making that places it on the creative trajectory. The people of Myanmar already hold much creativity as they have, for the past several decades, developed products and economies with limited resources within a closed system. This strength of a culture needs to be cultivated so that it can shift its paradigm from a closed and isolated to an open and globalized system. This is especially so because the unique value of humanity is our capacity for thought, relationships, culture, emotions, and creativity. It is creativity that usually provides the impetus for problem resolution, transformation and growth. Creativity is the seed for innovation, and innovation leads in any industry. In this sense, the human resources in Myanmar are ready to be innovative leaders at work. They just need a little jumpstart to take that leap along with the changes that are happening in every sector of the country.

Citta Consultancy is set up with the above mentioned challenges in mind. Citta is a Pali word that means Heart/Mind. Our area of expertise is in shifting paradigms for the heart/mind of individuals and organizations by providing training and consultation to transform and grow the most valuable asset of an organization - the human capital. Su Su Maung is the principal consultant. Trained in psychology, human development, counseling, and culture and systems, she has extensive experience in behavioral change and wellness development for individuals and groups. Her experience as a psychotherapist and psychology instructor, her active board memberships in organizations, and her interests as a literary artist bring a unique interface of science, humanity and creativity into her consultation. To further discuss about culture at work, Su Su Maung can be contacted via email at [ssmaung@cittaconsultancy.com](mailto:ssmaung@cittaconsultancy.com).

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