

## Managing relationships in intercultural teams

### Researcher

[Dr Carolin Debray](#)

### Research focus

Individuals need to manage a number of relationships in the workplace, often without being able to choose who they collaborate and interact with. This research addresses the question how diverse team members manage these close workplace relationships long-term. I especially examined how team members built positive relationships around working on shared tasks.

### Methodology

Meetings of an intercultural team were observed and recorded for 9 months and team members were interviewed repeatedly. The recordings were then analysed qualitatively to trace the development of relationships in the team and to identify specific strategies used to build and manage those.

### Key findings

- Talking about everyday troubles was an important way of building positive relationships in the team, especially initially when team members got first acquainted, but also after disagreements and during conflicts occurring in the team.
- Team members used troubles talk to self-disclose important personal information relevant to their work.
- Troubles talk was used to make sense of the workplace and its culture, to build shared perspectives and ultimately also to take task-related decisions.

### To find out more:

Debray, C. (2018). [Troubles talk as a relational strategy in intercultural teamwork](#). PhD thesis, University of Warwick.