



# Globalization and Human Resource Development

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## INTRODUCTION

Globalization is fundamental, and yet most people probably see only the tip of the iceberg. Analysts agree that the full realization of globalization will make for a very different world and life experience. The globalization initiatives within the world economy take advantage of the core values, theories, and tools of the HRD profession while also creating challenges for the profession.

HRD professionals have been active partners in the globalization of their employing organizations—both profit and nonprofit entities. Fortunately, reports of HRD research and practice within multinational organizations, within nations, and between nations are on the increase. Information sharing on national HRD practices in multinational companies is essential to building workable models of global practices. The literature is beginning to report explicit models for HRD in response to the globalization of business. Kreml and Pace (2001) believe that not responding to globalization “creates a risk of failing to reach mission-critical goals of managing knowledge in multiple locations, supporting diverse cultures, and enhancing performance across geographic and national boundaries” (p. 16).

## INTERNATIONAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON HRD

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This section provides an overview of the international and cross-cultural perspective on HRD. The outcomes should be an increased understanding and appreciation of the magnitude of international business, the critical role of HRD professional work in this context, and the advances that have been made along with challenges that lie ahead for international HRD.

### The Importance of Understanding International Perspectives for HRD

To appreciate the extent of globalization and international connectedness of business operations in today's world, consider the following example: a simple and fairly inexpensive consumer product, an electronic toothbrush, is produced by an international division of labor at eleven production and supplier locations in ten countries and five different time zones (“The global toothbrush,” 2001). The toothbrush consists of thirty-eight components. The copper coils originate in the Chinese industrial city of Shenzhen and are “wound by armies of women with bandaged fingers” (p. 131). The parts for the energy cell are supplied by companies in Tokyo, Japan; Rambouillet, France; and Zuhai, China. The circuit board contains forty-nine transistors and resistors from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and are soldered and tested in Manila. These component parts are flown to Snoqualmie, Washington, matched with cases made from special steel in Sweden and

plastic housings from Kagenfurt, Austria, for final assembly, testing, and shipping to sixty-five countries around the world for resale. Working around the globe with a network of suppliers, contractors, and production sites, work proceeds in five time zones, twenty-four hours a day, and is scheduled so precisely that a couple of hours' delay at a single site can wreak havoc on the entire system.

Imagine the degree of coordination, communication, and global teamwork needed to accomplish this amazing collaboration, maintain quality and pace, and optimize the system on a continuous basis. Consider the ability, knowledge, and expertise at the individual, team, organization, and network levels that are required to initiate this performance at each site and at the system level—all the while correcting errors and mistakes, addressing fluctuations in process performance, optimizing the system, and achieving consistency and predictability day after day, month after month, year after year. How are the inevitable delays and mistakes in the system handled and corrected? How are the lessons and insights gained from this product captured and transferred to other product lines, sets of suppliers, and network configurations?

This small example demonstrates how globalization and increasing international collaborations have impacted business practices over the past twenty years and provides evidence for the assertion that globalization presents key challenges and opportunities for business organizations around the world (Noe, 2007). The continuing explosive rate of growth in international and global activities can be understood by looking at a few simple statistics related to international trade, foreign direct investment, and mergers and acquisitions.

According to the World Trade Organization, which comprises 151 nations, world trade grew by 8 percent in 2006 and totaled some US \$11 trillion. World exports to the United States grew by 11 percent, and China's trade expanded by 22 percent. Close to 80 percent of all trade was within the large economic regions of North America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Central and South America, and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Germany, the United States, and China are the three largest exporters and importers. Equally strong was the world trade in commercial services. In 2005, commercial services grew by about 9 percent, and their total value exceeded US \$2 trillion (World Trade Organization, 2007).

Foreign investments from multinational firms have emerged as a factor of even greater magnitude than direct trade. In 2001, over 850,000 foreign subsidiaries of some 65,000 parent firms achieved sales of some US \$18.5 trillion worldwide and, during the preceding decade, had doubled the number of employees in foreign affiliates to about 54 million (Harzing and Van Ruysseveldt, 2004). Multinational companies are taking advantage of economies of scale and scope, proximity to markets and suppliers, and differences in the natural, political, and human resource-related infrastructure in countries around the world in order to achieve and maintain competitive advantage. While multinational companies may adopt multidomestic, international, transnational, global or other

strategic orientations (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2000), all face the challenge to develop, implement, and optimize human resource systems that reap the benefits of a global orientation. Without effective people development and management, the strategic advantages inherent in international settings cannot be realized. With respect to an organization's ability to navigate the many cultural differences related to work in countries around the world, the implementation of its international strategy is only as good as its ability to develop and maintain its human talent base.

The role of HRD, however, is not restricted to the organizational level. In the case of mergers and acquisitions, strategic alliances, and supply chain management, the ability to work effectively in multiple national and cultural contexts is equally important. Increasingly, European and Asian firms are establishing production, sales, or distribution facilities in the United States. While the merger trend ebbs and flows, the overall volume is likely to continue to grow because it promises the potential for growth and diversification. Despite the popularity of mergers and acquisitions, their track record has been mixed, and many have not fulfilled expectations. Ineffective merging of human resource systems into a new common work culture is often cited as a source of merger and alliance failures.

Globalization is a multifaceted phenomenon. Its social, economic, political and cultural impacts have given rise not only to optimistic views of a world of prosperity, progress, and peace but also to concerns about the gap between rich and poor, exhaustion of limited resources, and sustainable development. There is little doubt, however, that globalization has a powerful influence on the work of individuals, groups, and organizations and thus is important for HRD. The implementation of effective international strategies hinges on an organization's ability to build and maintain effective people management systems that can respond to the opportunities and react to the challenges inherent in international business (Schuler, 1992). Some of the HRD challenges for international business operations include:

- Developing leaders effective in managing employees across different cultures
- Training and developing individuals for foreign assignments
- Addressing differences in work norms and values
- Negotiating different expectations regarding leadership, teamwork, communication styles, and obligation of the organization toward its employees
- Addressing differences in educational and training systems when planning for work performance
- Recruiting, promoting, rewarding, and motivating employees in different cultural spheres
- Negotiating differences in legal, social, economic, and cultural environments when setting up effective HRM and HRD systems

## Factors Affecting International HRD Work

While numerous factors influence HRD work in general and international work in particular, several of these factors deserve special attention when designing and managing international HRD interventions. These factors include differences in (1) socioeconomic conditions, (2) teaching and learning styles and attitudes toward the teaching profession, (3) culture, and (4) constructing the meaning of work.

### *Socioeconomic conditions*

Socioeconomic differences need to be taken into consideration anytime we conduct a preliminary needs assessment for designing an international HRD intervention and/or when we are preparing for working in a different country. There is a common misconception among U.S. managers, for example, that with the collapse of the Communist bloc in the early 1990s, there is no longer any need to pay attention to socioeconomic differences, because most of the world now has the same economic system, capitalism. Unfortunately, things are not that simple. Depending on the region of the world, socioeconomic systems are the same (capitalist) on the level of fundamental principles, but very different on the level of living conditions, business environment, and rules of economic exchange and behavior. The most important international HRD socioeconomic factors are the total level of economic development of the country (usually measured by such indicators as gross domestic product [GDP] and GDP per capita), labor legislation, access to medical services, educational opportunities, and social security and welfare systems.

Differences across these dimensions are striking, even when we compare developed countries of the world. For example, in most Western European countries, labor laws make it much more difficult than in the United States to lay off workers, employees are provided with much longer vacations, and the age limit for early retirement is lower. In Eastern Europe, the Russian government continues to subsidize the cost of public transportation and prices of some basic food staples and also guarantees free access to basic medical services for all.

In addition to comparing general economic conditions and governmental regulations, it is important for HRD professionals to know a country's ranking on the basic Human Development Index (HDI) and to understand the logic and measurements underlying this index. The first Human Development Report was introduced by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 1990, and since then HDI rankings have appeared annually. The index is a way of measuring the national human condition by combining indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment (including the adult literacy rate and enrollment in primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling), and income (Human Development Report, 2006).

### ***Teaching and learning styles***

Understanding differences in teaching and learning styles is crucial for the successful design and delivery of HRD programs abroad. The U.S. educational system is practice oriented and emphasizes not only delivery of knowledge but also development of skills and changes in attitudes (Marquardt, Berger, and Loan, 2004). In many other countries knowledge delivery is the main focus on all levels of education, and students are not accustomed to active learning and participation-based instructional methods. Furthermore, the U.S. educational system tends to be egalitarian, with the distance between teachers and students not as pronounced as in many other countries. The status of the teaching profession is also an important factor. In India and South Korea, teaching is among the most revered professions. In most Asian countries, teachers are regarded as the main source of knowledge. Debates in classroom and constructivist approaches to learning are not as prevalent.

### ***Cultural differences***

There are hundreds of articles on cross-cultural differences and their implication for international management and HRD work. Culture constitutes a group's successful attempt to adapt to the external environment and thus is a shared strategy for survival (Triandis, 1995), or "the software of the mind" (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2004). National or ethnic cultural values and beliefs play a central role in determining how people behave in the workplace and in the classroom. Therefore, it is essential for an international HRD professional to understand how national or ethnic cultures differ or are similar. In the organization behavior, management, and HRD literatures, the most popular culture-based frameworks are those developed by Hofstede and Hofstede (2004), Triandis (1995), and Trompenaars (1993). While hundreds of studies based on Hofstede's model have been conducted over the past forty years, not all of the dimensions of Hofstede's framework have withstood the test of time. Some dimensions are resilient and applicable to current conditions (Ardichvili and Kuchinke, 2002). Therefore, researchers and practitioners should take care to use only the following dimensions in their HRD work: power distance, individualism-collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance.

*Power distance* is the degree of inequality among the people that the population of a country considers to be normal. *Individualism-collectivism* is the degree to which people in a country define their identity as autonomous human beings or as primarily through their membership in groups, and to what degrees they act independently or as part of a collective. The third dimension is *uncertainty avoidance*. Hofstede indicated that in low uncertainty-avoidance cultures, people are more accepting of dissent and differing opinions, have a greater tolerance of deviation and a higher willingness to take risks, and prefer to have as few rules as possible. People in cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance have higher anxiety levels, believe that conflict and competition lead to aggression and should

be avoided, display a strong need for consensus, and prefer to rely on rules and regulations.

The above differences for HRD practice have numerous implications. For example, Hofstede suggested that British teachers, who have lower uncertainty avoidance scores than German teachers, are much more open to using constructivist approaches in the classroom and are more open to improvisation with their teaching plans. Likewise, Marquardt et al. (2004) argued that in high-power distance cultures, teachers or trainers are expected to know the answers to all questions, behave in a formal way, and are treated with great respect. In countries with lower power distance, on the other hand, the behavior of trainers is much more informal and casual, and it is acceptable for them to admit that they do not have all the answers. Finally, in collectivist cultures, students tend to support each other during the tests (sharing notes and answers, for example), while such practices would be perceived as unethical in more individualist cultures.

While national culture differences play an important role in shaping behavior, focusing on national culture alone paints an incomplete picture. In reality, there are multiple levels of culture, and the interaction of these levels shapes specific conditions for HRD work in any given organization. In designing an international HRD intervention, three levels of culture should be considered: national (or ethnic) culture, professional culture, and organizational culture. Hofstede himself, in addition to developing his model of national culture differences, has conducted a series of studies demonstrating that professional culture plays an equally important role in shaping employees' value differences (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2004). Likewise, Trompenaars (1993) demonstrated that on some of the dimensions of his cross-cultural model, accountants from different countries were more similar to each other than to their compatriots, who happened to be in different professions (for example, marketing or engineering).

Furthermore, strong organizational cultures, which have a significant influence on employees' values and norms, have a moderating effect and could amplify or reduce national culture differences. For example, consulting and research conducted with a multinational Fortune 100 corporation found clear signs of interaction between organizational and national cultures. Thus, the differences in knowledge-sharing behaviors among employees from individualistic and collectivist cultures were not as strong as we initially expected. Reflecting on the reasons for such a lack of difference, employees themselves suggested that the organizational culture of sharing and concern for the common good made the national culture differences less pronounced (Ardichvili et al., 2006).

### ***Constructing the meaning of work***

In addition to understanding culturally conditioned values and beliefs, understanding how individuals around the world construct the meaning of their work is of central importance for HRD professionals. The relationship between meaningful work and organizational productivity was first demonstrated by the

Hawthorne experiments in the 1920s (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939). This theme can be further traced through the emergence of the sociotechnical systems design in the early 1950s (Trist, 1960), Herzberg's (1966) early research on motivation to work, and the human potential movement of the 1980s (Kirschenbaum and Henderson, 1989).

Research on cross-cultural differences in work-related beliefs and values shows that many dimensions of work meaning are similar in different cultures and religions, but that there are also significant differences resulting from divergent economic and sociopolitical conditions (Niles, 1999). The Meaning of Working international research project has produced a comprehensive typology of work meaning-related beliefs within representative national samples of employees in Belgium, Germany, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Yugoslavia (Meaning of Working, 1987). This research and a series of follow-up studies (see, for example, Ardichvili, 2005; Cseh et al., 2004; England and Harpaz, 1990; Lundberg and Peterson, 1994) have demonstrated that work was of central importance in all surveyed countries. Consistently across all countries, the majority of people (from 65 to 90 percent of respondents in each country) said that they would continue working even if they did not have any need for work income (as a result of winning the lottery, for example).

Another important consideration in understanding work meaning is work's relative importance when it is compared to other factors such as family, leisure, religion, and community. Here there are both similarities and differences across various countries. Meaning-of-work research has found that work was ranked number one in importance in Yugoslavia and Japan, and the second most important factor (after family) in the rest of the surveyed countries. Several follow-up studies confirmed that work was ranked second to family in various Western and Eastern European countries, Israel, the United States, and Japan (England, 1991; Harpaz, 1999; Harding and Hikspoors, 1995; Kuchinke et al., forthcoming). Another important consideration is what people perceive as valued work outcomes: income, status and prestige, time absorption ("work keeps me busy"), interesting contacts established through work, opportunity to serve society, and personal interest and satisfaction. Studies have found significant differences based on these six dimensions in different countries and regions of the world. Overall, personal interest and satisfaction, and interesting contacts received the highest rankings in many countries of the world.

### **What International HRD Professionals Do**

Specific projects that an international HRD professional could be involved in commonly include (1) expatriate training and development, (2) individual executive and management coaching for cultural competence, (3) cultural awareness training for employees in home and host countries, (4) training and develop-



ment for virtual teamwork, (5) global OD for cross-border mergers and acquisitions, and (6) training and development projects through international development agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

When industry practitioners are asked, "What do international HRD practitioners do?" the first answer is generally "expatriate training." This is the most established area of international HRD work, with a long tradition of development and refinement of specific training methods and techniques. A significant percentage of U.S.-based multinationals offer some form of predeparture training to their executives and managers preparing for long-term assignments abroad. These programs often include the following three elements: (a) cultural awareness training, (b) culture-specific training, and (c) training aimed at equipping the expatriates with a new repertoire of skills for coping with challenges of the new cultural environment (sometimes referred to as cultural competence development).

At the cultural awareness stage, the goal is to increase participants' awareness of the significant difference in norms, beliefs, and behaviors and to help them critically examine their own cultural assumptions. The methods used at this stage include lectures, analyses of case studies, and discussions of movies and books about life in other cultures. At the culture-specific stage, expatriates are exposed to specific information about the culture(s) within which they will be working. This goal is achieved through lectures, discussions, individual reading of informational materials, and meetings with the host country nationals and/or expatriates who have worked in the host country in the past. Finally, at the skills development stage, expatriates go through a series of exercises to acquire new skills for effective functioning in different cultures. These include culture assimilators, role plays, discussions of critical incidents, and cultural immersion experiences.

A related new trend in international HRD work is cultural competence coaching. Cultural coaches have not only cross-cultural and international knowledge and experience but also skills in conducting executive coaching. Although such coaches could be hired by business organizations to provide services to their managers, often they are hired by individuals who want to improve their intercultural coping skills. Part of the work of an intercultural coach is similar to that of an intercultural trainer (for example, conducting one-on-one versions of cultural awareness and culture-specific training). At the same time, the main difference is that cultural competence coaching involves a longer-term developmental relationship. Coaches and clients meet regularly to discuss the client's learning and reflections, progress in developing and applying newly learned skills, puzzling cross-cultural encounters, and similar areas.

There are several potential problems with current expatriate and cultural competence training practices. First, a rather risky tendency is to provide only some cultural awareness training without following up with culture-specific training and cultural competence skill development. This can be dangerous, since the awareness training could result in an increased anxiety about the expatriate assignment. ("If things are so different over there, how will I be able to work and

be productive?”) Therefore, it is imperative to go to steps two and three, equipping the expatriate with specific knowledge about the host country's culture and with skills for coping with the cultural differences.

Another common mistake made in expatriate preparation is focusing all efforts on the predeparture training without providing follow-up during the stay in the host country or post-assignment repatriation and readjustment help. While some support activities fall outside traditionally defined boundaries of HRD and are usually conducted by expatriate relocation groups, there is a definite role for HRD at these stages, too. For example, during the international assignment, expatriates can be paired with experienced mentors (either current expatriates on assignments in the host country or former expatriates who currently work in the home country). These mentors should be trained in effective mentoring techniques. After the repatriation, cultural readjustment training should be provided soon after the expatriate's return to the home country (Harrison, 1997).

While most multinational companies provide some form of training and development to their expatriate managers and executives, the instances of providing cross-cultural training to larger groups of employees in home and host countries are rare. This is unfortunate, because in today's global environment, even those employees who do not travel or work abroad are more than likely to be exposed to other cultures. These encounters happen all the time through distance and virtual interaction with customers, suppliers, and business partners from other countries. Therefore, a number of more “enlightened” companies offer short cultural awareness and culture-specific training to larger groups of their employees, not just to expatriates alone.

Another growing area of international HRD work has emerged as a result of a rapid expansion of virtual teamwork. More and more work teams, especially in such areas as research and development and new product development, include experts located in different countries of the world and coming from diverse cultural backgrounds. Quite often these individuals never get a chance to meet face-to-face, conducting their work exclusively through distance communication media. Obviously, the virtual work environment and the lack of face to face communication have the potential to make cultural barriers even more challenging. In these new environments, international HRD professionals have at least two new roles. First, they can be brought in as OD experts to assist in the design and optimization of virtual teamwork. Second, they can provide cross-cultural training to all members of the distributed team. In both cases, HRD experts need to have a strong grasp of cross-cultural models and related training techniques, as well as an understanding of how cultural differences manifest themselves in virtual environments.

Cross-border mergers and acquisitions have become another growing trend. Not all of these mergers are successful, though, and some research suggests that one of the main reasons for these failures is the lack of cultural due diligence and cultural integration. This suggests that the role for international HRD experts in

global mergers should be significant. The work of a global HRD expert on a merger and acquisition project starts with cultural due diligence (an assessment of cultures of both sides of the merger and a determination of the degree of the match or divergence between the two cultures). Later, the projects should involve cultural awareness, culture-specific, and behavioral modification training similar to that described in the expatriate training section of this chapter. Ideally, however, the role of international HRD should not stop here. HRD should be involved in the design of new, integrated divisions and work teams, as well as in conducting teamwork training informed by both theories of team performance and cross-cultural understanding.

Finally, another large area where the skills of an international HRD expert can be applied is the field of international development projects. Every year, tens of thousands of HRD professionals work full-time or on temporary assignments for international governmental or nongovernmental organizations. Assignments range from training support of technology transfer projects to entrepreneurship and self-employment education, adult literacy, and lifelong learning projects in developing countries.

### **International HRD Challenges and New Directions**

The knowledge base of international HRD has increased substantially, but the current state of knowledge is insufficient to guide this complex phenomenon and is not adjusting rapidly enough to keep pace with the rate of globalization and the number of novel problems and opportunities faced by HRD professionals working in international settings. The first comprehensive review of international HRD (Hansen and Brooks, 1994) found fewer than one hundred empirical studies published between 1982 and 1992 that compared two or more countries. Equally rare at the time was comparative research in Human Resource Management (HRM) (Brewster, Tregaskis, Hegewisch, and Mayne, 1996) and in Organizational Behavior (OB) (Adler, 1983). However, international and comparative research has become one of the fastest growing areas of scholarly inquiry in HRD. Within the Academy of Human Resource Development, international membership and the number of international papers presented at the annual conferences in North America, Asia, and Europe have increased steadily. Numerous cross-cultural and international articles have appeared in all major HRD publications, and one journal—*Human Resource Development International*—focuses exclusively on the topic.

Marquardt (1999) argues that the globalization of business practices is inevitably leading to conditions under which most HRD practitioners, regardless of their specialization, need to understand and be able to influence cross-cultural and international HRD training, and organization development practices. The existence and continuous expansion of numerous multinational corporations creates a tremendous need for new approaches to training, organization

development, and career development. Global operations require radically different organization cultures and new strategies for developing managerial talents.

Many of the groundbreaking studies in HRD were conducted in the United States. This monopoly position makes it tempting to assume that findings from U.S. organizations are also relevant for other countries and easy to ignore culture as an important moderating variable in theories about people and organizations. This raises important questions about how culture, whether defined as a set of norms and values or as institutions and policies, modifies business practices around the world. Consider the important strategic question of whether a multinational organization, such as Motorola, should adopt a single system of policies and procedures to govern the training and development of its employees worldwide in order to gain consistency and promote "best practice," or whether localized models would yield better results.

The explicit and implicit norms set by the organization interact with the professional norms and expectations of employees and also with those of class and status, the geographic region, and country of origin and operation. This overlay of influences is particularly salient as the mobility of professional workers increases. Consider the case of a first-generation Korean immigrant applying for work in the United States or the case of a German expatriate engineer working in Vietnam. Here a high level of cross-cultural sophistication is required, and the scientific study of cultural influences should take into account the multiple influences on an individual at a given time. To add complexity, consider the situation of a cross-functional team with members from many different countries and cultures trying to forge a constructive, collaborative work environment. When these team members then conduct their work virtually, that is by e-mail or Internet meetings without the opportunity of face-to-face interaction, the potential for misunderstanding, loss of important information, and dissatisfaction increases even more.

Important advances have been made despite these difficulties. Adler (1997) classified international studies into three categories: unicultural, involving one culture or country; polycentric, involving comparisons between multiple countries or cultures; and synergistic, interested in certain phenomena in a multicultural organization or setting without special regard to the number of individual cultures represented in the organization. Unicultural research is now frequently reported in HRD journals. The range of cultures being introduced is expanding and now includes studies from many countries around the world, although our collective knowledge base on HRD around the world is far from complete. Polycentric studies are also becoming more frequent although not nearly at the rate of single-culture/country research. Many polycentric HRD studies report on samples from two or three different cultures, such as Walton and Guarisco's (2008) study of collaborations between research universities in Russia and the United Kingdom or the recent report of survey research in Germany, Poland, and Russia (Kuchinke, Ardichvili, Borchert, and Rozanski, forthcoming).

In considering the areas of practice addressed in international HRD research literature, four areas stand out. One is leadership styles and leadership development, an area of keen interest to multinational organizations needing to develop a pipeline of mid-level and senior leaders ready to step into international assignments as the strategic opportunity presents itself. A number of universal leadership attributes have been proposed, such as setting direction and motivation, that are then put into the context of different cultural situations and settings (Hamlin, Ellinger, and Beattie, 2006). Visionary leadership has been found to be valued equally by U.S. and German production employees, but the content of such behavior differed strongly (Kuchinke, 1999). Among U.S. employees, an attractive vision for the organization consisted of the overall success and growth of the organization. For German employees, such a vision was related to the technical and design features of the key products to be developed in the future.

The second area of practice covered in depth in existing research is expatriate preparation and adjustment. As the number of expatriate employees is growing and the cost of expatriate assignment failure continues to rise, adequate preparation before departure and support provision after arrival in the host country are highly important. Jacobs and Osman-Gani (2005) reported on the increase of cross-cultural training programs for international managers, and a large body of literature exists on the importance of formal and informal training for expatriates (for example, Lee and Choi, 2007). Of note in this research is the finding that expatriation is certainly no longer restricted to North American companies preparing employees to work overseas, but is found in equal measure in companies headquartered around the world, preparing their employees to work in subsidiaries in the United States.

A third area relates to literature on cultural diversity (Wentling, 2000). Here, the boundaries blur between international culture and multicultural environments within a single nation as developed and developing nations face the task of integrating individuals from different cultures and backgrounds into work organizations. While workforce diversity in the North American context has long included differences in cultural and ethnic backgrounds, formerly homogeneous countries around the world are confronting the need to integrate large numbers of individuals from other cultures. Consider the case of Germany, where 11 percent of the workforce is "foreign born," or the case of South Korea where increasing numbers of the workforce come from the Philippines, Japan, Vietnam, and other regions in Southeast Asia. The proximity of diversity and cross-cultural research is based on the fact that both address the effects of different orientations and value systems, whether these are determined by personality characteristics or countries of origin.

The fourth area addresses HRD from the perspective of a country or nation and considers the role of government in HRD. South Korea, China, Thailand, and Morocco are some of the governments with set public policy goals for workforce and human resource development. HRD is being considered from national, state, and regional perspectives (Byrd and Demps, 2006).

### Summary

While some areas of international HRD are well established, the list of challenges for practicing HRD in international environments remains long. At the same time, the global arena continues to change as cultures, organizations, and people evolve. HRD professionals should understand and appreciate the magnitude of international business and the critical role of HRD professionals working in this context.

### CONCLUSION

HRD has always prided itself on being sensitive to differences in people, groups, and cultures. This attribute has served the profession well in dealing with differences within organizations and has been a springboard for assisting host organizations and systems function effectively in the multinational arena.

Clearly, organizations need the help of HRD professionals and processes to function in an international and cross-cultural context. In order to be fully helpful, HRD professionals should expand and exert their expertise in the international and cross-cultural realm.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are the challenges to the increased costs of expatriation posed by protectionism and threats of terrorism?
2. How do technological advances affect international HRD work?
3. Can the theory of convergence on a single business culture (modeled after the North American business model) be sustained in a global market?
4. Can the ideal of cosmopolitanism and the “brotherhood of mankind” (formulated in the eighteenth-century age of Enlightenment) provide insight for today’s world of competition and global connectedness?
5. What is the role of HRD professionals in the expressed ideal of many multinational organizations to move toward equitable, sustainable, and responsible global citizenship?