**Global Business Plan Project**

**4. Accessing the Social-Cultural Environment**

**Learning Goals**

1. To assess social and cultural influences of global business activities
2. To identify potential adaptations

**Purpose**

A country’s business environment may be influenced by the importance of family, religious beliefs, and demographic trends. In this module, your goal is to gain cultural and social awareness about the country (or countries) you are considering for your global business opportunity.

**Resources**

Web links:

* Global Edge CyberSite: <http://globaledge.msu.edu/>
* Business Around the World Atlas: <https://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0078137217/student_view0/business_around_the_world.html>

**Conduct Research**

Based on the country (or countries) you are analyzing for your global business enterprise, research information related to the following areas:

1. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Identify demographic trends (such as birth rates, literacy rates) that might influence business activities in the country. (Lower birth rates result in an aging population with expanded demand for health care.)

1. CULTURAL ANALYSIS

Discuss language, customs, traditions, and beliefs of the country. (Religious beliefs may make the sale of certain products inappropriate in some countries.)

1. SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Analyze the influences of social institutions (family, church, labor organizations) on the business culture. (In some countries, a strong tie exists between family and business.)

1. INFORMAL TRADE BARRIERS

Describe informal trade barriers created by social and cultural factors. (Communication styles and negotiating tactics vary around the world resulting in the need to adapt to the host country’s culture.)

**Supplementary Activity**

Interview a person who has lived in, worked in, or traveled to a country you are researching. Obtain information related to eating habits, shopping, leisure activities, the role of family and religion, customs, traditions, and other aspects of the business environment.

**E-Commerce Application**

Locate web sites designed to meet varied cultural needs of Internet users in other countries. Identify specific adaptations related to format, language, colors, pricing, product offerings, and other features of the web sites.

**Prepare Summary**

In a separate Word document, prepare a summary report consisting of the following components:

1. An overview of demographic trends that could influence global business activities.
2. A description of cultural factors, social institutions, and informal trade barriers that could affect global business activities.
3. Recommend actions for existing companies or new enterprises that might be necessary when considering the social and cultural environment of the foreign market. Provide evidence to support your recommendations.

**View Sample Report**

The following project segments are EXAMPLES and SAMPLE MATERIALS. Please note:

1. These samples were selected from several student team projects at one school and are not intended to represent a particular level of quality, and DO NOT represent a complete project.
2. The accuracy of content, data, and clarity of writing are NOT guaranteed; and
3. These samples may NOT BE DUPLICATED.

Society is becoming faster-paced and more industrialized, creating a market opportunity in healthy fast food. Cultural tastes of Brazil range so widely that our sandwiches can be customized to various tastes. Brazilians prefer freshness and natural foods as opposed to fast food, which dominate Brazil’s franchise market, and is a growing concern in Brazil for healthy alternatives to their current way of life.

Socially and culturally, Bolivian people have a strong Catholic belief, with 95% of their people being Roman Catholics. People are very friendly and welcome new ideas, and new institutions. The adult literacy rate is 80% as of 1998; El Coche Libro will try to increase this number to 90% in the first 5 years of operation.

The social contributions of Costa Rica deliver positive indicators of a successful country. Astonishingly, 95% of Costa Rica’s population above the age of 15, can read and write showing the strength in the Costa Rican education system from pre-school through the university level. Spanish is the official language with few dialects, and 95% of the religious community is Roman Catholic. Costa Rica’s population reaches 3.5 million with concentrations around urban centers. Whirlpool will easily be able to find skilled and reliable hotel employees in Costa Rica.