

**A Handbook
for**

Living and Working In A Multicultural Society

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

BC has a long history of multiculturalism and the population of the Lower Mainland is becoming increasingly diverse. In 2005, BC welcomed more than 44,000 new immigrants and Vancouver is fast becoming one of the most multicultural cities in the world.

Living and working in a multicultural society can be interesting, inspiring and energizing. Multiculturalism provides many opportunities for learning and experiencing new things. However, it can also be challenging. Different cultures and different languages mean communication and the sharing of ideas is sometimes difficult. These difficulties sometimes cause people to judge, discriminate or avoid people of other cultures. Sometimes these differences cause people to be racist.

Canada and this idea of multiculturalism are very young. Successful multicultural living does not happen because the government has established a policy. Successful multiculturalism happens because people believe in it. They value the importance of respecting and accepting different cultures. They value diversity.

The ability to value different customs and beliefs of different cultures can stop racism and can increase respect and appreciation for other cultures and behaviours. The more each one of us values this diversity, the stronger our economy, our society and each one of us becomes.

This handbook offers information about the history of multiculturalism and the benefits and challenges it poses to new Canadians and native born Canadians alike. Information related to multiculturalism, culture, stereotyping and racism are provided. Strategies and tips for reducing stereotyping and racism and improving intercultural communication are introduced.

Hopefully these pages will inspire discussion, increase awareness, improve communication and reduce prejudice and racism.

Successful multicultural living does not happen because the government has established a policy. Successful multiculturalism happens because people believe in it.

WHAT IS MULTICULTURALISM?

Multiculturalism can be defined as the the practice of respecting the cultures, religions, races, attitudes and opinions within a society.

In 1971 Canada became the first country in the world to adopt a Multiculturalism Policy (see page 21). In 1988 the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed (see page 22).

The Policy and the Act state that the government of Canada respects and supports cultural and racial diversity. People are encouraged to keep and share their culture and their language. This means that all Canadians should be treated the same, no matter where they were born.

What does multiculturalism within Canadian society look like? The following pages provide an overview of multiculturalism and its growth and development in Canada and BC.

Discussion

Arnold Edinborough, a Canadian writer, wrote, “Canada has never been a melting-pot; more like a tossed salad.”

1. What do you think he meant by that?

CANADA'S MULTICULTURAL HISTORY

If you think about it, Canada has always been multicultural. Before European immigrants began to arrive, Canada was made up of many different "First Nations". Scientists believe First Nations people arrived in Canada from Asia about 30,000 years ago. Presently, there are about 600 First Nations governments in Canada. These nations have their own cultures and languages.

Around 1000 A.D. Europeans began to arrive. However, until the 1880s there were more First Nations people than any other people. Below is a list of when different immigrant groups first came to Canada. This list is not complete but gives you a good idea of how multiculturalism in Canada has grown.

1000	Scandinavians
1497	British Explorers
1534	French Explorers
1663	French
1783	More British
1840	Irish
1850	Serbians
1850	African - Americans
1858	Chinese
1877	Japanese
1880s	Hungarians
1899	South Asians
1897	Ukrainians
1900	Russians
1940s	Germans, Italians, Dutch
1960s	Koreans
1961	Italians
1968	Czechs
1970s	Chileans
1972	Ugandans
1979	Vietnamese
1980s	Afghanis
1982	Poles
1987	Hong Kongese
1990s	Somali's
1990s	Former Yugoslavians

By 2006 it has been predicted that Toronto will become the most multicultural city in the world. Vancouver is also on its way to becoming one of the most multicultural cities in the world.

Discussion

2. What year did the most people immigrate to Canada?
 - a) 1975
 - b) 1991
 - c) 1913
 - d) 2004
3. Why was that year so big for immigration?
4. When did your family immigrate to Canada?

RECENT IMMIGRATION FACTS

Multiculturalism continues to grow in Canada, BC and in the Lower Mainland. The facts below paint a picture of this growth.

- 244,600 new immigrants arrived in Canada in 2005
- 44,734 new immigrants came to BC in 2005
- Immigration accounts for a high percentage of
- population growth in BC - in 1955 our population was 1,323,000. In 2005 our population was 4,219,968.
- between 1901 and 2001 Canada welcomed a total of 13.4 million immigrants
- between 1991 and 2000, 2.2 million immigrants were admitted to Canada
- per capita Canada receives more immigrants than the U.S. and Australia
- until recently, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States, were the primary sources of immigrants to Canada; today, most immigrants are from Asian countries
- of the 2.2 million immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 2001:
 - 58% came from Asia, including the Middle East;
 - 20% from Europe;
 - 11% from the Caribbean, Central and South America;
 - 8% from Africa; and
 - 3% from the United States.
- 46% of the immigrants who arrived in the 1990s were aged 25 to 44, compared with 31% of the total population.
- more than 200 different ethnic origins were reported in the 2001 Census
- 39% of the total population reported Canadian as their ethnic origin, either alone or in combination with other origins
- reports indicate that immigration rates will increase.

Source: Statistics Canada

"We are all immigrants to this place..."

Margaret Atwood
Canadian Writer

Discussion

5. Why does immigration to Canada continue to grow?

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A CULTURALLY DIVERSE WORKPLACE?

Canada's success is owed much to the hard work and skill of immigrants. Since the beginning, newcomers have provided Canada with new ideas and skills that have strengthened our workplaces and our communities. Organizations with diverse workforces have identified the following significant benefits:

Reduction in skill shortages

Foreign trained staff have increased the pool of talent and experience available in BC and Canada. More and more new immigrants are filling Canada's need for skilled workers.

Access to overseas markets

As globalization becomes a part of more and more businesses, companies are using the language, international expertise and cultural knowledge of staff to identify business opportunities in other countries.

Access to different markets and new customers

Multicultural workforces may assist employers to expand their local markets to include different cultural groups. The community is more likely to identify with and use the services of businesses that reflect the diversity of the community.

Improved customer service

Language skills and cultural understanding are valuable assets to a business. Customer service improves when staff understands and can communicate with customers from a range of backgrounds.

Expertise and experience

New immigrants bring new ways of thinking, different solutions, new technologies and technical skills.

Responsive service delivery and enhanced staff skills

Business is more responsive when staff are exposed to new ideas and provided with different ways of working and making decisions.

A more dynamic and successful workplace

Dynamic and interesting workplaces retain workers. Cultural diversity within the workplace provides opportunities for learning and sharing. When staff are encouraged to learn from one another, the workplace is more inviting. Individual and collective knowledge, skills and abilities are enhanced and retention increases.

Since the beginning, newcomers have provided Canada with new ideas and skills that have strengthened our workplaces and our communities.

Discussion

6. What other benefits are there of a multicultural workforce?

WHAT IS CULTURE?

As stated earlier, multiculturalism stresses mutual respect and acceptance of cultural differences. In order to respect and accept other cultures, we must have an understanding of culture.

Culture is the beliefs, values, behaviours and material objects that shape an individual's identity and his or her way of life. No one can understand all there is to know about every culture. However, an understanding of culture provides a base for learning and for understanding and acceptance. This base will support the cultural information you will gather as you work with more individuals from an increasing number of cultures.

What types of things have an impact on culture and make one culture different than another?

Language	Religion	Politics
Food	Dress / fashion	Hobbies
Values	Art / Esthetic	Philosophy
History	Architecture	Dance
Geography	Industry	Parenting Styles
Gender Roles	Traditions	Sports
Superstitions	Customs	Behaviours
Manners	Work Ethic	Education
Accent	Technology	Appearance
Literature	Natural Resources	Music

Culture is the beliefs, values, behaviors and material objects that shape an individual's identity and his or her way of life.

Discussion

7. What are other qualities that make one culture different than another?

CULTURAL TRAITS

We know that different cultures have different beliefs, customs, foods and ways of thinking. Beyond language, these differences can sometimes make understanding each other difficult. In some places, many different cultures work side by side. To work well together it is important to know about other cultures.

"How can I possibly learn everything there is to know about all cultures?" The answer is we can't know everything, but the more you know, the better able you will be to relate. If you don't understand and value all members of the group, how can you work well with them?

To help us understand and communicate better with different cultures, we often depend on knowledge we have about a cultural group. Sometimes we call these cultural traits. A cultural trait is a belief, value, or behaviour shared by many people within a cultural group. We know it does not apply to everyone within the group. We might say --

"Generally speaking, many people from China are good at math."

We know that is true of many people from China and it is a result of an education system that strongly emphasizes the learning of math. Although many individuals from China are good at math we know that not everyone from China is good at math. It is not possible.

Understanding what beliefs, values or behaviors are shared by a cultural group may help us communicate. However, it is important to **remember that cultural traits are not true for every member of a cultural group.**

A cultural trait is a belief, value, or behaviour shared by many people within a cultural group.

Some examples of cultural traits:

1. Background Information -- Less is More

In North American culture, we often give a lot of background or extra information when we communicate. In some other cultures - like Japanese, Chinese and some Middle Eastern cultures - speakers give very little extra information. If you are from a different culture, you might assume you were already given the other information; you might be reluctant to ask questions or you might get frustrated with having to ask a lot of questions to get the needed information.

2. Personal Space

Some cultures need more "personal space" than other cultures. For example, Korean and British people like quite a bit of space between speakers -- about one metre or an arm's length. Some cultures, for example, French Canadians and people from some Latin American countries stand closer when they speak. This difference in personal space can make people feel very uncomfortable. Knowing this, you might move forward or back to make communication more comfortable and more successful.

3. Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is important in every society but a gesture in one culture might have quite another meaning in another culture. For many people from India, shaking the head from side to side is a visual way to communicate to the speaker that you understand what they are saying and in many cases that you agree with them. Of course, in North America, this is how disagreement or a definite "no" is non-verbally communicated. Such a difference in meaning could cause a great deal of confusion. Knowing this trait, you might consider double checking a "yes / no" response.

"We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colours. But they all fit nicely into the same box."

Unknown

Discussion

8. What are other cultural traits?

RACIAL STEREOTYPES

What is the difference between a cultural trait and a racial stereotype?

A cultural trait is a belief, value, or behaviour shared by many people within a cultural group. We know it does not apply to everyone within the group.

A racial stereotype is a concept or an idea about a racial or cultural group. Racial stereotypes imply that **all** individuals from a racial or cultural group are the same. Stereotypes are often used in a negative or prejudicial manner.

Here is an example of a racial stereotype.

"All people from China are good at math."

That is not true. It is not possible. But what is wrong with having a "positive" racial stereotype like the one above? Even "positive" stereotypes lead to judgment and assumptions. For example, if you are Chinese it is likely that you will be asked to solve the accounting problem at work or calculate the tip after a meal. If you can't or if these are difficult tasks for you, there will be surprise; people might even think there is something wrong with you - "You're Chinese, this shouldn't be difficult for you." Even though this stereotype is positive it has left no room for individual differences. It has, however, led to judgment or "prejudgment" - which is prejudice.

Also, it is important to note that stereotypes are often based on appearance. In the example above, the person may be ethnically Chinese but be second, third, fourth or fifth generation Canadian. As a Canadian, this person would likely have the same math skills and abilities as any other Canadian.

Here is an example of a negative racial stereotype.

"All people from Mars are lazy."

Probably, like everywhere, a few people from Mars are lazy but **not everyone** from Mars. However, if you are an employer and you truly believe this racial stereotype, you might not give jobs to people from Mars. This is prejudice. This is racial discrimination. This is racism.

A racial stereotype is a concept or an idea about a racial or cultural group.

Discussion

9. What racial stereotypes are you aware of?

In 2005, the Burnaby School District offered a workshop called "Valuing Diversity, A Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Workshop for New Immigrants". This workshop was delivered more than 50 times to more than 1000 new immigrants throughout the Lower Mainland. Based on written feedback, the part that most participants found most interesting was the discussion of stereotypes. It became clear to both participants and workshop facilitators how prevalent some stereotypes are; that is, many stereotypes were known to everyone no matter what country they originated from.

During the workshop the groups were asked to name some stereotypes. Below are examples of stereotypes that were shared over and over:

- All Germans are strict and organized.
- All Japanese are intelligent.
- All Brazilians play soccer.
- All Chinese are bad drivers.
- All Koreans are polite.
- All Americans are aggressive.
- All French are romantic.
- All Italians are passionate.
- All Russians drink too much vodka.
- All Columbians are drug dealers.
- All Blacks are violent.
- All Arabs are terrorists.
- All Canadians are nice.

It is very disconcerting that so many racial stereotypes are so well known, so "international". It became very clear how dangerously powerful these stereotypes had become and how closely linked stereotyping was to racism. To illustrate this point groups were asked to consider several scenarios. Here are two examples and the responses elicited:

It became very clear how dangerously powerful these stereotypes had become and how closely linked stereotyping was to racism.

Discussion

10. What is the connection between stereotyping and racism?

Scenario #1

A Columbian family moves into a home in your neighbourhood. They have children the same age as your children. Because you firmly believe the stereotype that all Columbians are involved in drug dealing, you tell your children not to play with the Columbian kids and not go near their house. As a parent, your job is to protect your children; you must warn your children about the Columbians.

Scenario #2

You are walking down the street and a black man is walking behind you. Because you believe all black people are violent, you feel nervous and you quicken your pace. It is beginning to get dark, you check for your cell phone.

A few minutes before an Asian man was walking behind you. You felt no fear.

As these scenarios were described, people would nod their heads, yes, these scenarios were not only possible but, for some, experienced. This clearly illustrated how easily a racial stereotype becomes racism.

For most participants, stereotyping was something they had done quite naturally and quite unconsciously. Most had not considered the prejudice or danger of stereotyping. In many groups, there would be participants who had come from Columbia or individuals who were black. For those groups, the message was even more clear.

Delivery of these workshops also confirmed that **everybody creates stereotypes**. The question then is, "Why do we stereotype?" It is commonly believed that stereotyping is an attempt at categorizing in order to simplify and understand that which is so complicated - people. And indeed, if all stereotypes were true, how simple would life be? All accountants would come from China, all planners would be German, all new ideas would come from Japan, all soccer players would be Brazilian...

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WHERE DO RACIAL STEREOTYPES ORIGINATE?

Stereotypes develop from a lack of knowledge. Take, for example, the stereotype that all Columbians are drug dealers. Columbia is a relatively small country and few Columbians have emigrated. Ironically, British Columbia has very few residents who originated from Columbia. So, where have people gotten their knowledge of the Columbians? Media and movies. Probably the American war on drugs of the 1980's and the movie Scarface have been the two biggest sources of information about Columbia and its people.

Stereotypes come from:

Media - the news, movies, TV programs, books

1. The media has taught us that "All Arabs are terrorists."
2. A couple of well known movies taught us the "All Columbians are drug dealers."

History

Events or customs of the past often continue to be used to create stereotypes or judgments of the present.

Our parents, our peers, our teachers

If someone you love, trust or respect tells you something, it is very likely that you will believe and accept what they say. The biases and judgments shared by parents, peers and teachers will very likely impact our judgments.

One experience with someone from a specific cultural group

For example, you try Korean food for the first time. You find it delicious. You might say "All Korean food is delicious." All Korean food might be delicious but you had only one meal!

Another example, you had a work mate from Serbia who was stubborn and hard to work with. You might say, "All Serbians are stubborn." Really? You have only worked with and met one person from Serbia. But because you have created this stereotype, this belief, you might not want to work with another Serbian.

This is called "pre-judging" or prejudice -- judging someone before you know them.

Stereotypes develop from a lack of knowledge.

WHAT IS RACISM?

Racism is thoughts, words, attitudes or actions that put people down because of their race, color or culture. Racism can be used by any group against any other race, color or culture.

Some examples of racism include "racial slurs", jokes, graffiti, threats or violence. Sometimes people ignore acts of racism because they do not know what to do.

There are other forms of racism that are not as easy to see. Choosing who to hire for a job or who to rent an apartment to based on race or culture are two other forms of racism that are difficult to see.

Discussion

11. Brainstorm some examples of racism.
12. What is the purpose of racism? Why are people racist?

REDUCING STEREOTYPES AND RACISM

The following are ways to reduce stereotyping and prejudice.

1. Learn more about different cultures.
2. Understand where stereotypes originate.
3. Understand the difference between a cultural trait and a stereotype.
4. Be aware of how you are using racial stereotypes to pre-judge people.
5. Do not ignore the stereotyping and prejudice of others. Point it out and name it.
6. Understand how easily racial stereotyping can become racial discrimination or racism.

Sometimes our friends, family, co-workers or fellow students say something racist or based on a racial stereotype. This can be very uncomfortable. Often we do not know what to do or what to say. Often we say nothing. Saying nothing sends the message that it is okay to speak and think that way about other people. Saying nothing can mean we agree with the person. If no one says or does anything, stereotypes and racism grow.

Here are some things you could say.

Anti-Racism Responses

1. That's not true.
2. Stop talking like that.
3. I can't believe you said that.
4. That's racist.
5. I totally disagree.
6. Always? Everybody?
7. That's a terrible thing to say.
8. Pardon? What did you say?

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."

William James
American Philosopher

LIVING AND WORKING IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

1. Learn about other cultures and value the cultures of the people you work with. Become a multicultural expert.

Increased cultural understanding will increase managers abilities to manage their staff. Increased cultural awareness will limit stereotyping and increase staff morale. Increased cultural awareness within a company will increase its ability to offer services to meet the needs of customers. Learn about different cultures from the people you work with, from books and from the Internet.

2. Understand the difference between a cultural trait and a stereotype

Use this understanding to reduce judgement, improve communication skills and build better workplace relationships.

3. Learn a few phrases in the languages of your workmates and customers

Being able to say "good morning" or "thank you" in someone else's language demonstrates interest and respect. (see page 18)

4. Avoid judging

Consider accepting other behaviours or ways of doing things as different, rather than as right or wrong. Another way may also work or even be more effective.

5. Find common ground or similarities between cultural groups

People are usually more similar than they first appear. Focusing on similarities rather than differences will increase cultural understanding and reduce judgement.

6. Seek further training

The intent of this manual is to provide information and tips towards creating a more effective and respectful work and living environment. However, it is only the beginning. Look for further training to better serve culturally diverse clients and to work more effectively with a culturally diverse workforce.

Cultural diversity can make the workplace more effective, interesting and dynamic but it can also be difficult. Applying some of the suggestions provided in this handbook will improve workplace communication and may result in improved staff morale and productivity.

COMMUNICATING WITH DIVERSE LANGUAGE GROUPS

As society becomes more multicultural, communication can become more difficult. The following is a list of tips that will improve communication.

1. Use plain English

Speak and write in short sentences using simple words. Avoid fillers such as "like", "ums and ahs", "you know". Enunciate clearly and speak a little more slowly, if necessary.

2. Use the written word as often as possible

Many people who are speaking English as a second language from have a wider reading vocabulary than listening vocabulary. Whenever possible support instructions and oral presentations with handouts or memos.

3. Avoid using idioms and abbreviations

Idioms are forms of expression often only understood by native speakers of a language. Some examples in English are:

- It's raining cats and dogs.
- You've got to bite the bullet.
- A good rule of thumb is....
- Sweet!
- ASAP

4. Check for understanding

Asking your listener questions like, "Does that make sense?" or "Is that clear?" or "Do you have any questions?" throughout the delivery of instructions or a presentation may provide opportunities for needed clarification. In some situations, it may be good idea to minimize miscommunications by having your listener retell what they have heard.

5. Encourage questions

Many non-native English speakers will hesitate to ask questions or to ask for clarification. Establishing that questions are good may improve communication and increase a person's sense of confidence and value.

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WHAT IS RACISM?

6. Ask when you don't understand

As a listener, ask for clarification if you are not sure you have understood. Often we make the mistake of assuming we understood. Asking for clarification is a good habit that may save time and money and ensure safety.

7. Choose your humour carefully

Humour does not always translate well across language and culture. If you are not sure that your humour will be appreciated, don't tell the joke. If you do share a joke or humorous story be sure to check that it has been understood as intended. If it hasn't been understood, be ready to explain.

8. Allow for silence

Pauses are often needed in order to allow listeners operating in a second language to digest what has been said and to prepare to respond. Many people, especially many North Americans, are uncomfortable with silence of any length. Learn to become a little more comfortable with a second or two of processing time.

9. Communicating in a different language

It is always a good idea to speak in the language that everyone in the group can understand. It is rude and exclusive to speak in a language if someone in the group cannot understand. For example, four people are having a conversation, all can speak English and three can speak Korean. If the Korean speakers began speaking Korean, the English speaker would be excluded. If another language must be used in the presence of non-speakers, explain the situation to the group to avoid being rude or making anyone feel uncomfortable.

10. Take the time to learn to correctly pronounce names

The most important word in any language is an individual's name. Taking the time to learn to say an unfamiliar name correctly makes people feel valued and respected.

Taking the time to learn to say an unfamiliar name correctly makes people feel valued and respected.

BC POPULATION BY MOTHER TONGUE 2001

English	2,825,780	Hebrew	810
Chinese	130,330	Amharic	750
Cantonese	127,160	Sinhalese	725
Punjabi	121,740	Sino-Tibetan langs	640
German	84,605	Shuswap	630
French	54,400	Kurdish	620
Mandarin	48,880	Indo-Iranian langs	615
Tagalog	35,940	Latvian (Lettish)	595
Spanish	28,235	Yiddish	565
Italian	28,165	Nishga	505
Korean	28,105	Malayalam	495
Dutch	26,745	Bantu languages	440
Vietnamese	23,220	Frisian	430
Persian (Farsi)	21,290	Flemish	420
Hindi	20,295	Gaelic languages	420
Japanese	17,900	Niger-Congo langs	410
Polish	17,320	Nootka	405
Russian	14,920	Athapaskan langs	395
Portuguese	14,155	Thompson	390
Ukrainian	13,605	Icelandic	380
Hungarian	10,775	Lithuanian	345
Croatian	8,520	Welsh	345
Greek	6,685	Tsimshian	340
Danish	6,565	Telugu	330
Arabic	6,235	Twi	320
Gujarati	6,200	Turkic langs	300
Malayo-Polynesian	5,885	Creoles	295
Czech	5,835	Ojibway	285
Romanian	5,170	African langs	275
Finnish	5,120	Aboriginal langs	250
Serbian	4,670	Maltese	235
Urdu	4,410	Pashto	235
Norwegian	3,850	Semitic langs	235
Serbo-Croatian	3,305	Swahili	235
Swedish	3,265	Tigringa	230
Slovak	2,820	Marathi	210
Malay-Bahasa	2,265	Konkani	155
Tamil	2,250	Haida	145
Slavic languages	1,810	Romance langs	145
Sindhi	1,775	Kutenai	125
Other langs	1,630	Macedonian	110
Germanic langs	1,625	South Slave	100
Hakka	1,625	Austro-Asiatic langs	90
Salish languages	1,555	Dene	70
Turkish	1,505	Asiatic langs	55
Khmer (Cambodian)	1,360	Byelorussian	55
Slovenian	1,335	Inuktitut (Eskimo)	50
Somali	1,315	Kannada	50
Carrier	1,235	Algonquian langs	35
Thai	1,235	Blackfoot	35
Estonian	1,190	Dakota/Sioux	25
Cree	1,180	Chipewyan	20
Bengali	1,165	Dogrib	20
Lao	1,125	Iroquoian langs	15
Bulgarian	910	Kutchin-Gwich'in	10
Gitksan	905	Malecite	10
Armenian	900	Micmac	10
Wakashan langs	865	Mohawk	10
Chilcotin	810	Tlingit	10

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001

"Language shapes the way we think, and determines what we can think about."

Benjamin Lee Whorf

The 2001 Canadian Census reported that more than 130 languages are spoken in Canada.

BASIC EXPRESSIONS IN OTHER LANGUAGES

Language	Hello	Thank you	Good Bye
Arabic	Marhaba	Shukran	Salaam
Farsi	Salaam	Tashakkur	Khoda hafaz
Cantonese	Neih how	M goi	Joi gin
Japanese	Konnichi wa	Arigato gozaimasu	Jaa nay
Korean	Annyong kashiphio	Komapsumnida	Annyong-hi
Mandarin	Ni hao	Xie xie	Zai jian
French	Salut / Bonjour	Merci	Au revoir
Punjabi	Sat siri akal	Dhannvaad	Rabb raakhaa
Spanish	Ola	Gracias	Adios
Serbian	Dobar dan	Hvala	Do videnya
German	Guten Tag	Danke	Auf Wiedersehen
Tagalog	Halo	Salamat	Paalom

"A different language is a different vision of life."

Federico Fellini, Italian movie director

BECOMING A MULTICULTURAL EXPERT

In English, we have the expression “birds of a feather, flock together”. Our “flock” is often people who share the same cultural background. To learn more about other cultures we sometimes have to push ourselves to fly out of our “flock”. The following are activities that will increase your multicultural knowledge.

1. Volunteer at a local social services organization.
2. Go to a different church, synagogue, mosque or temple to learn about different religions.
3. Enroll in a language class.
4. Shop at ethnic grocery stores.
5. Ask a person from another culture to teach you how to cook a traditional meal.
6. Go to a play, listen to music or go to a dance from a different culture
7. Read a book or watch a movie about another culture.
8. Invite someone of a different culture to join your family for a meal.
9. Organize a "diversity potluck" lunch or dinner.
10. Take your family to an ethnic restaurant.
11. Talk to your children about race and culture.
12. Read books with multicultural themes to your children.

To learn more about other cultures we sometimes have to push ourselves to fly out of our “flock”.

Discussion

13. What is your vision of multiculturalism?
14. What role do you have in the development of multiculturalism?

THE MULTICULTURALISM POLICY OF CANADA

3. (1) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to

- (a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;
- (b) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future;
- (c) promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation;
- (d) recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and enhance their development;
- (e) ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity;
- (f) encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character;
- (g) promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins;
- (h) foster the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures of Canadian society and promote the reflection and the evolving expressions of those cultures;
- (i) preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada; and
- (j) advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada.

http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/policy/act_e.cfm

CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM ACT

The Act was developed for the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada.

WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada provides that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination and that everyone has the freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association and guarantees those rights and freedoms equally to male and female persons;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada recognizes the importance of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada recognizes rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada and the Official Languages Act provide that English and French are the official languages of Canada and neither abrogates nor derogates from any rights or privileges acquired or enjoyed with respect to any other language;

AND WHEREAS the Citizenship Act provides that all Canadians, whether by birth or by choice, enjoy equal status, are entitled to the same rights, powers and privileges and are subject to the same obligations, duties and liabilities;

AND WHEREAS the Canadian Human Rights Act provides that every individual should have an equal opportunity with other individuals to make the life that the individual is able and wishes to have, consistent with the duties and obligations of that individual as a member of society, and, in order to secure that opportunity, establishes the Canadian Human Rights Commission to redress any proscribed discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin or colour;

AND WHEREAS Canada is a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which Convention recognizes that all human beings are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law against any discrimination and against any incitement to discrimination, and to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Covenant provides that persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion or to use their own language;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada;

http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/policy/act_e.cfm

Culture and Country Related Websites

Listing of links to culture specific websites

http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Cultures_and_Groups/Cultures/

Country Profiles: Links to information about several countries

<http://www.newint.org/concept3/profile.htm>

<http://www.nationmaster.com/countries>

Country Statistics

http://www.unicef.org/statistics/index_countrystats.html

The World Fact Book

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Websites

Multiculturalism and Immigration Branch of BC

<http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/mib/>

Canadian Heritage - Multiculturalism

http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/respect_e.cfm

Multiculturalism in Canada

http://www.mta.ca/faculty/arts/canadian_studies/english/about/multi/index.htm

Advantage Diversity, BC Communities Against Racism

http://www.amssa.org/advantage_diversity/res.html

Cultures Canada, From Diversity Strength - Celebrating Canada's Multicultural Diversity

<http://www.culturescanada.ca/>