

Ethno-cultural Diversity

Nurture your Ethnic and Cultural Diverse Garden

What does the growing ethnic and cultural diversity mean to the city of Calgary and Calgarians. Recently FCC has been an active participant in a number of events and committees, mandated to examine ethno-cultural diversity from a number of perspectives. It has been pointed out that Calgary is today where Toronto was fifteen years ago. "We need to increase immigrants' sense of belonging so that they truly believe this is their home." (Fariborz Birjandian)

Do you realize?

From City of Calgary, Community Strategies, Policy & Planning Fact Sheet: Immigration (2003)

- Calgary is the fastest growing major city in Canada. We have close to one million residents, of whom 22% are immigrants to Canada.
- 10,000 immigrants land in Calgary every year and perhaps one-half as many again relocate from other Canadian centres. The overall trend in the last decade indicates ethnic and cultural diversity will increase: 144,981 new immigrants arriving in Calgary 1982-2002.
- By 2011, according to Human Resources Development Canada, 100% of the labour market growth needs to be met by immigration.

A recent symposium, *Innovation in Immigration*, was an innovative and experimental gathering of diverse stakeholders that allowed for frank discussion of successes and challenges in dealing with long-term integration issues. A series of speakers provided the information and setting for the afternoon workshops to address a set of components that characterize a common inclusive understanding of integration; a framework for successful integration policies and practices; and indicators to measure success. Following the publication and distribution of the results of the symposium, the Steering Committee will initiate steps to ensure the continuation of inclusive solution-based dialogue. What is developed from the initiative here in Calgary will serve as a prototype blueprint for success and learning, nationally and internationally.

Integration as defined by the United Nations is "*gradual social process by which residents become active participants in the economic, social, civic, cultural and spiritual affairs of a new homeland. It is a dynamic process in which values are enriched through mutual acquaintance, accommodation and understanding. It is a process in which both the migrants and their compatriots find their own distinctive contributions.*"

How can Community Associations help their neighbourhoods "nurture" integration? It is summer in Calgary so let's consider a Garden. Create the environment to nurture and grow understanding, acceptance, belonging, and respect and community participation.

1. Prepare the Soil

The foundation of a thriving garden is the richness of its soil. Investigate the issues that are fundamental to understanding citizenship, "identity", "belonging" and "membership."

2. Spread the Seeds

What kind of garden do we envision? What are the seeds we wish to nurture? Explore the shared values of citizenship; respect, peace, environmental stewardship, and belonging.

3. Conditions for Growth

How do we provide a supportive environment for growth? How do we encourage the seeds of these shared values to germinate into positive behavior and action? Help develop skills to internalize values.

4. Harvest

Although the plants in our garden are diverse and varied in background, they grow side by side in harmony to create the beautiful and bountiful landscape we call home. What we plant today will become the harvest of tomorrow.

Taken from: A Year Around Activity Guide about Citizenship- - Planting the Seeds 2003



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