

Guidelines on Cultural Diversity and Disaster Management

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Preface

This Emergency Preparedness Canada discussion paper was developed to provide emergency planners and responders with assistance regarding multi-cultural issues in disaster management.

This paper provides draft guidelines, which may not necessarily be agreed upon by all agencies concerned with the topic. The guidelines are intended, however, to advance interagency dialogue applicable to a wide variation of needs and causative factors. The guidelines presume application in a developed country such as Canada. While some of the principles may be applied, the focus of this document is not the type of emergency planning or response involving thousands of people in times of drought, famine, or conflict as may be found in some developing countries, where demands overwhelm available, and even external, resources.

This paper is intended to form part of the Canadian contribution to the United Nations declared International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Canada is a country proud of its cultural heritage and diversity. Aside from Aboriginal people, Canada is a land of immigrants from every corner of the world. Immigrants bring different lifestyles and customs, as reflected in the way people dress, eat, practise religion and art, educate, and communicate.

It is not possible to separate all Canadians and residents of Canada into ethnic and non-ethnic groups. Theoretically, all non-Aboriginal people are of ethnic origin. However, for the purpose of this handbook, ethnic people are defined as those whose language and culture differ from the majority, resulting in communication barriers between the ethnic groups and the mass media. Ethnic, therefore, includes Aboriginal people who do not understand English or French.

Ethnic members of our society may be more vulnerable during times of disaster than other Canadians. Emergency preparedness information may not be understood by ethnic people due to language barriers, and cultural differences may distort the meaning of messages. Therefore, ethnic people may be unaware of the risks in their area and less able to cope in times of disaster. In the wake of a disaster, relief operations can be impaired if communication cannot be established between responders and victims. During recovery, ethnic people may face barriers in accessing resources, including food, shelter, financial aid and other assistance.

It is the responsibility of emergency planners and responders to identify and work to overcome these barriers. Emergency planners, such as Emergency Preparedness Canada and provincial government emergency offices, have the responsibility to develop the response procedures and promote preparedness through educational initiatives. Emergency responders are those who become involved at the time of emergency, such as fire fighters, police officers, medical responders, and volunteers; these groups are often involved at the preparedness level also.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

This discussion paper offers suggestions to:

- educate emergency planners and responders about multi-cultural issues in disaster management;
- encourage planners to address the issues in their disaster preparedness programs; and
- provide practical suggestions for overcoming cultural and communication barriers before and during an emergency.

While this paper can have broad applications for persons or groups involved in disaster preparedness and response, it contains draft guidelines, which may not necessarily be agreed upon by all agencies concerned with the topic.

1.2 OUTLINE

The information in this discussion paper is arranged for clarity and ease of use.

Cultural and communication issues are introduced and discussed in Sections 2 through 5. Suggestions to address the issues are then made. These sections are intended to motivate emergency planners to address the issues within their preparedness programs.

Section 2: Overcoming Barriers is subdivided into subsections which discuss cultural differences, communication barriers, and setting goals. These provide a comprehensive look at the existing barriers in multi-cultural communities, and more importantly, identify specific tools to address the problems.

Section 3: Reaching Out includes subsections which discuss ways of identifying and locating ethnic people, and delivering information. It addresses the challenges of transmitting crucial, and possibly life-saving information both before and during a disaster.

Section 4: Encouraging Participation recommends strategies to include the ethnic people in disaster planning and management. It discusses the advantages of combining input from people with a wide range of backgrounds and experience.

Section 5: Ensuring Long-Term Program Strength outlines methods for keeping the preparedness efforts current and in the forefront of community plans, so that they are useful when disasters strike.

Appendix A provides background information related to the topic of disasters. It describes the types of disasters to be considered in emergency plans, the various components of disaster management, and some aspects of human reaction to disasters. If the reader of this paper is new to the field of disaster management, it may be useful to browse this appendix before continuing with the rest of the paper.

Appendix B is a sample evaluation form to aid in reflection on past emergency situations, as discussed in Section 5. The form may be customized to respond to specific needs, as it is impossible to capture all aspects of the diverse communities in Canada who may use the guidelines offered in this paper. Although the topics are general, it should spark ideas and encourage disaster managers to evaluate and improve response methods.

Appendix C provides other possible sources of information on cultural diversity in Canada, through government or other organizations and resource centres.

Appendices A and C are subdivided, and each has its own table of contents on its cover page.

2.0 OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Multi-cultural issues may provide numerous challenges to all involved in disaster management. Language differences, along with inaccurate assumptions and stereotypes, may obstruct communication and understanding between emergency responders and victims. Breaking down these barriers is especially crucial in times of emergency, when lives may depend on effective communication.

Section 2.1 explores the issues of differing cultural norms and expectations, and the problems that arise between people of diverse cultural backgrounds. Section 2.2 focuses on verbal and non-verbal communication problems. The third section introduces a vital step in a successful emergency preparedness program: setting goals.

2.1 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Humans are continually exposed to information from the social and physical environment; the way in which we interpret or react to the information is a reflection of our culture. Cultural experience, developed throughout a lifetime, is a mechanism for interpreting our surroundings. Lacking the knowledge of cultural norms of an unfamiliar society, travellers or immigrants may misinterpret the communication and behaviour of others; this can lead to frustration, stress, and even conflict.

Culture can be perceived by others, as it frequently manifests itself as social behaviour. People of similar nationality or ethnic origin may not have the same cultural background. Differences may exist with respect to education, religion, economics, political beliefs, etc. Individuals have unique personalities and needs, and stereotypes to define ethnic groups can be misleading and harmful.

Awareness of the different cultures in our communities enables us to anticipate or avoid potential cultural conflicts in emergency situations. Cultural understanding also enhances communication and cooperation in emergency preparedness endeavours.

Suggestions for overcoming cultural differences

- Learn about cultural diversity in the community.
- Support existing programs. Multi-cultural organizations may stage activities to promote cultural understanding.

2.2 COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

A Canadian tourist is driving through Peru, when the following message is suddenly transmitted on all radio stations: “*Se ha declarado un estado de alerta en todo Yurimaguas. El Ucayali se ha salido de su cauce, se espera que las aguas lleguen hasta dos metros en las zonas bajas. Deje su casa inmediatamente, dirígase a la sierra.*” The message is a state of alert regarding a road flooded by the overflowing of the Ucayali River. The urgency of the radio broadcast would create considerable anxiety for the Canadian, being unable to understand all or part of the radio message.

Language is the most powerful form of communication and has been considered the most compelling and enduring expression of cultural identity. Learning a new language requires time and patience. Recent immigrants and visitors may have language difficulty, and some elderly people may never develop the language skills required to communicate in a new society.

Emergency preparedness and response information may require translation to be fully understood by ethnic people. Translations should convey the message clearly and be delivered in a manner respectful of cultural differences.

Non-verbal methods of expression may be equally important in cross-cultural communication. Movements and gestures, the way we approach or touch others, the way we look and smile, and the pitch, intensity or emphasis of our voices are all non-verbal methods of communication. Non-verbal expression is learned through culture; for example, in Canada, an audience will show approval of a performance by clapping. In order to understand non-verbal communication, it must be interpreted in its cultural context.

“She walked towards me with a baby in her arms and told me that her daughter was very ill; she never stopped smiling during all the time they spent in the hospital. That really annoyed me.” (Nurse)

During an emergency, language skills which are normally adequate may be impaired due to stress and pressure. People may use non-verbal expressions unfamiliar to the emergency responders, and they may misinterpret the responders’ attempts to assist them.

Symbols and signs are useful in emergency situations provided that the audience understands their meaning. For example, in Canada, a cross indicates medical services, cutlery refers to food, and a question mark signifies information. Ethnic people may not understand the symbols commonly used in Canada and therefore may not benefit from the messages or services.

Suggestions for overcoming communication barriers

- Identify members of ethnic groups to determine the number of different languages and dialects spoken among them. Obtain information on both written and verbal forms of expression.
- Communication in times of disaster may be facilitated by: translating the most important phrases which may be used in times of disaster; organizing for translators to be on the scene of the emergency; changing worded signs to symbols, using universal symbols where possible; and preparing a brochure on emergency signs and symbols to deliver to residences.
- During the emergency, speak more slowly than usual, and articulate each word. Although instructions must be given promptly, they should not be given too quickly for the recipient to understand. Avoid using interjections, jargon, technical words, and linking words together (evacuatethearea).
- Do not mix affirmative statements with negative statements. For example: “*bring candles, a blanket; do not bring the dog; bring warm clothing...*” Finally, repeat information several times, without altering the order or changing the emphasis of the message.
- Exercise patience. Persevere with the person until comprehension is made, or seek assistance from someone from the ethnic group. Avoid becoming frustrated.

2.3 SETTING GOALS

Emergency preparedness and response teams should outline the goals and expectations of all endeavours. A well-defined goal promotes efficient use of resources and time, and encourages cooperation by all participants. A goal provides vision and strength to people with different approaches and may help them persevere to overcome challenges in reaching the common goal.

Specific emergency program objectives are reflective of geographic location; for example, a region prone to hailstorms will take different protective measures than a city at risk of an earthquake. However, the main objective of all disaster preparedness activities is to protect life and minimize losses, and it is the responsibility of the emergency planners to find the best methods to achieve this objective.

Suggestions for defining goals

- Cooperate and work with the ethnic people to define the specific goals of disaster management efforts before further action is taken. Allow sufficient time and discussion so that all involved may express their views and expectations, especially if it is the first time that the individuals are working together.

- If ethnic people are not directly involved in planning, confirm that the intended work and goals will be acceptable and useful to them.

3.0 REACHING OUT

In order to communicate effectively:

- the ethnic people in the community must be located, and
- the information must be available in a form that is meaningful and useful to them.

3.1 LOCATING ETHNIC PEOPLE

A significant effort may be required to identify and locate all ethnic people who would benefit from emergency preparedness programs. People of the same ethnic origin tend to live or congregate in one community such as “China Town” or the “Polish Sector,” but it is imprudent to assume that all ethnic members will be reached through any one location.

Some people choose to live apart from the ethnic community. Or, in some cases, an ethnic community does not exist. Those who live apart from the ethnic community for whatever reason may not receive emergency preparedness information or assistance during response. Messages might not reach these people at home; evacuation instructions may not be understood; or there may be fear or distrust of the emergency respondent transmitting the information.

Suggestions for locating ethnic people

- Common gathering centres of ethnic and lingual groups may be an important place to gather information or promote emergency programs. It is important to note, however, that such groups may not reach all ethnic members.
- Seek methods to locate people who are members of an ethnic group, but live apart from the ethnic community.

3.2 DELIVERING INFORMATION

People who do not speak English or French fluently may not receive information through mainstream radio, television and newspapers.

“If I do not understand the language, why am I going to turn on the radio?” (Young Ethnic Woman)

Emergency planners must find alternative methods to reach out, to ensure that all community members are aware of emergency procedures. The communication network developed to spread preparedness information may also be useful during emergency response. An effective means of communication could be a lifeline to victims of a disaster.

“We have to be really creative to establish ways to communicate with them before an emergency, as these might be the only communication means to rely on later.”
(Firefighter)

Suggestions for Delivering Information

- Designate an Emergency Program Promoter. Communication and cooperation between ethnic groups and emergency planners can be encouraged through a promoter. A successful promoter should be open to understanding cultural differences and able to accommodate these in the planning. The promoter should approach the ethnic group with the intent to work together and be respectful of the group’s methods of discussion and decision-making.
- Natural leaders may be family doctors, teachers or religious leaders, and may be willing to assist in the promotion of emergency programs within their ethnic or lingual community. They may offer valuable opinions on the group’s needs, capabilities, and limitations, or provide suggestions on ways of reaching out.
- Emergency education through schools is effective, as children tend to be attentive to discussions on disasters. Children learn quickly and can transmit the information, often by translation, to their family members. School boards and parents organizations may be willing to assist in emergency preparedness programs and be able to provide volunteers and resources.
- Ethnic adults often enroll in educational courses to improve language skills or to receive job training. Emergency preparedness information could be delivered through these programs, and the students may volunteer as translators or serve as links to other members of their ethnic community.
- Ethnic and multi-cultural clubs and organizations are often instrumental in assisting new Canadians with adapting to a new political system and culture. They are usually staffed by people of ethnic origin who understand the obstacles faced by immigrants and can provide them with understanding, recognition and support. For these reasons, strong relationships develop, and the organization may become a focal point of peoples’ social lives. They may have links to several different ethnic groups or families in the community.

- The experience, structure, and network which already exist at multi-cultural organizations may be useful in relating emergency preparedness information. There is a high probability that in the case of an emergency, ethnic people will rely on the organizations for assistance, underlining the importance of their inclusion in emergency planning.
- Identify local multi-cultural organizations and work with them to develop emergency preparedness and response programs for their members.
- Produce an information package for the organizations which includes information such as evacuation procedures, a description of the local emergency plan, and a directory of contacts.
- Assist the organization staff or volunteers in defining their participation in emergency preparedness and response. The centres may be useful for emergency shelter, distributing food and supplies, or providing services such as translations or legal advice.
- Community based service clubs and organizations, such as the Lions Club, Rotary Club, Girl Guides of Canada or Scouts Canada, may have members of diverse cultural backgrounds. As part of their mandate is community service, they may be willing to assist in emergency planning or promotion of emergency programs.
- Foreign agencies, embassies, consulates, business or tourist representatives could provide aid and support to ethnic people in times of disaster. It is important to inform these groups of emergency procedures, as immigrants or travellers may look to them for assistance. Foreign agencies may also be willing to supply services and resources to assist in emergency preparedness promotion.
- Ethnic media have existing audiences and distribution systems which may be extremely useful for the communication of emergency preparedness information. The media is able to convey information in the appropriate language and cultural context.
- Establish contact with local media representatives and solicit their support and participation in promoting emergency preparedness.
- Media involvement in emergency preparedness and response may require advance planning. Distribution of pre-recorded general emergency measures in local languages should be made to radio or television stations. Staff would require proper orientation on their role and responsibilities in emergency situations.
- Even the most meticulous disaster preparation can not guarantee that communication efforts in times of emergency will be effective. Serious disasters may disable infrastructure such as telephone lines or television and radio transmission. There may remain a small number of people who do not receive critical information, and it may be unsafe for the responders to enter the area to reach them.

- Be prepared to convey information by alternate means, such as distribution of flyers by helicopter, or the use of a microphone on cars or bicycles. Request the assistance of immigrants who have experienced disasters or war for suggestions on other ways of reaching out during a major disaster.

4.0 ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

Emergency preparedness and response programs will be more successful if the participants take personal interest and responsibility. The participants know best their own needs and abilities, and their input to emergency planning can only strengthen the programs. The process of planning as a team will create a support system and relationships which may become extremely important during a crisis.

People tend to participate only when they see themselves as affected, and will become more actively involved as the threat grows. Emergency planners should encourage public involvement before the disaster strikes, and provide guidance and leadership during the emergency.

It is important to take advantage of existing communication networks and organizations to include ethnic members in emergency preparedness. Experience has shown that grass roots organizations usually have active roles during emergencies.

Suggestions for encouraging participation

- Organize neighbourhood meetings. Individuals who otherwise may be difficult to reach will likely feel comfortable attending a meeting in a familiar setting. An informal atmosphere encourages dialogue, and the planners may receive valuable feedback and new ideas. Emergency preparedness will become more of a personal issue for ethnic members if they have face to face contact with emergency planners.
- Identify contacts in ethnic neighbourhoods who can assist in arranging and publicizing meetings. If possible, have volunteer translators, and provide free child care. Prepare information to present to the group, but allow ample time for discussion, new ideas and feedback. Try to ensure that all participants are heard and that their suggestions are taken seriously. If appropriate, form committees, allocate tasks, and plan a follow-up meeting.
- Create Ethnic Advisory Committees. These would involve ethnic people in the creation and administration of emergency programs. Members offer ideas and feedback on how to develop effective strategies for reaching ethnic people, and they serve as a link to the ethnic communities.

- Identify ethnic people interested in participating in the advisory committees. Hold regular meetings and develop ways of achieving emergency preparedness goals that are meaningful to the ethnic communities.
- The greatest asset of an emergency response program can often be its team of volunteers, familiar with both the emergency office and ethnic groups. Volunteers can provide an important communication link in explaining and justifying emergency preparedness measures and response procedures to ethnic people.
- Develop or expand existing volunteer programs so that ethnic groups are represented and able to participate fully.
- Emergent groups are formed spontaneously during a crisis by people with a common concern or goal. They often represent a larger group of victims, and may serve an important intermediary role if given adequate information and resources. They may help to relieve the workload of the emergency responders.
- Recognize the benefits of emergent groups and identify their needs and abilities. Help them to help others where possible, and acknowledge their assistance after the disaster has passed.

5.0 ENSURING LONG-TERM PROGRAM STRENGTH

“Since few believe they will be caught in a major disaster, constant reminders are needed to make local disaster preparedness work.”¹

The success of emergency response efforts reflects the level of preparedness prior to the disaster. Since disasters often strike without warning, planners must strive to keep preparedness efforts strong on a continual basis. Communities are dynamic: as people come and go, ethnic groups grow or shrink, and new ones emerge. Needs change, and emergency planners must respond accordingly.

Suggestions for ensuring long-term program strength

- Response time is a critical factor in an emergency: knowing immediately who to contact can minimize response time. A directory of emergency contacts is a useful resource and should be made widely available.

¹International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. World Disasters Report 1996. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Collect information on contacts and prepare a directory in the language of the ethnic group. Distribute a copy to each household and business. Ensure that the information is correct, and renew the directory regularly to keep it current.
- Agreements should be formalized, which incorporate the needs and strategies identified by ethnic groups into emergency preparedness and response plans. Formal agreements and decisions tend to be less vulnerable to the passage of time than casual agreements. Formalizing a decision will help to ensure that all participants are clear on its meaning and implications.
- Emergency preparedness and response plans can be reinforced through videos, workshops, refresher courses, and talks or displays at community events. The emergency procedures can be effectively reinforced through simulation exercises such as evacuations.
- A systematic method of documenting contact and progress with ethnic groups will save time and duplication of effort. New arrivals can examine records to become familiar with past endeavours and accomplishments. Records are also useful in the evaluation of past performances and may assist in future decision-making.
- Develop a system to document progress and make it known and accessible to all participants. Appendix B is a list of suggested evaluation guidelines to be utilized after an emergency. The list may be customized to respond to the needs of individual communities or disasters.

Appendix A: Background

Types of Disasters	A2
Components of Disaster Management.....	A3
Human Response to Disasters	A4

The following three sub-sections provide basic information on disasters and disaster management. The information is general and universal. It is recommended that emergency planners conduct research on the previous experiences and preparedness efforts in their local area to learn about their successes, and possible areas of improvement. The background information may be used in educational and promotional activities, or to initiate group discussion.

1. Types of Disasters

The preparedness efforts of emergency planners reflect the types of disasters anticipated by a community. There are three main categories of disasters: natural hazards, disease, and human-induced². The most common in each category are described in the following table:

A. Natural Hazards:
Severe Winter Storms Hailstorms Hurricanes Tornadoes Heat waves or cold waves Landslides / Mudslides / Debris flows Volcanic Eruptions Earthquakes Tsunamis Drought Floods Storm surges Wildfires
B. Diseases and Epidemics
Human, Animal and Plant Diseases
C. Human-induced Disasters
Transportation Accidents Structural Collapse Utility Failure Dangerous Goods Accidents / Transport Dangerous Goods Accidents / Fixed Facility

²Pearce, L. British Columbia Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis. Vancouver: Disaster Preparedness Resource Centre, University of British Columbia, June 1993.

2. Components of Disaster Management

There are four components to disaster management: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. They are described as follows.

A. Mitigation

Mitigation of hazards is the means by which people strive in advance to reduce the effects of disasters. The goal of mitigation is to find ways to minimize injuries and death and property loss in the event of a disaster. Most effort focuses on reducing the physical effects of a disaster, and may involve strengthening buildings and structures, or changing land-use designations.

B. Preparedness

Preparing for a disaster is the process of planning for and warning people about hazards. Activities include emergency planning, ensuring adequate response, and providing adequate warning. These may take the form of educational initiatives, simulation exercises, research, and the creation of communication networks for the rapid transmission of information during a disaster.

C. Response

After a disaster strikes, emergency response actions are initiated. Response to an emergency begins with services to ensure the immediate safety of the population. These include:

- first-aid medical treatment of victims
- evacuation
- search and rescue operations
- extinguishing fires
- provision of emergency food and shelter

Secondary response activities include the restoration of essential services, and include:

- restoration of electricity, telecommunications, and water services
- coordination of personnel and volunteers
- management of donations of supplies and funds
- minimization of further loss or damage

D. Recovery

Disaster recovery occurs after peoples' immediate needs have been addressed. Recovery efforts include:

- medical and psychological assistance
- insurance and public-sector payouts
- reconstruction or repair of damaged private property
- reconstruction or repair of damaged public property and infrastructure
- removal and disposal of debris

Depending on the severity of the disaster, the recovery process could take days, months or years. The recovery process should take into consideration mitigation measures to reduce the impact of future disasters.

3. Human Reaction to Disasters

Emergency planners and responders will be more effective if they can anticipate the public reaction to the disaster. The following table outlines some common misconceptions about human reaction to disaster³.

Misconception	Believed Cause	Actual Experience
Abandonment of the disaster area	Fear, panic	People actually converge at the disaster site
Antisocial behaviour	Loss of social concern during a disaster	Victims assist one another
Confusion, disorientation, unpredictable behaviour	Incapacity to understand and control the situation	People tend to show more rationality under stress than normally
Hysteria	Uncontrollable and overwhelming emotion	Hysteria is an individual response and does not affect masses of people
Looting and price gouging	Selfishness and opportunity	Rarely occurs, and if it does, it is by the people who converge on the area, not the victims

³Fisher, Henry, W. Response to Disaster, Fact Versus Fiction & Its Perpetuation, The Sociology of Disaster. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994.

Appendix B: Post Disaster Information and Evaluation Guidelines

Post Disaster Information and Evaluation Guidelines

A. General Information

I. Site Characteristics

- location and area affected
- population
- description of buildings and infrastructure
- weather conditions at the time of disaster

II. Description of Disaster

- type
- cause
- date and time
- number of victims
- condition of victims
- property damage

III. Multi-Cultural Aspects

- ethnicity of area residents
- multi-cultural problems prior to disaster
- policies or programs in place to overcome problems prior to disaster
- problems either exacerbated or resolved due to disaster

IV. Strategies to Improve Inter-Cultural Relations

- status of policy development and implementation
- issues previously not considered which arose during disaster

B. Support Received

I. Types of Support

- internal or external
- financial, material or human resources
- volunteer medical support
- when the support was received
- when the support ended

II. Emergent Volunteers and Groups

- purpose for the formation of emergent groups
- organization, coordination and supervision of the volunteers
- assistance provided to the volunteers by responders

C. Communication
<p>I. Methods of Communication Used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • state of existing infrastructure • methods of reaching victims • use of symbols
<p>II. Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to warning messages • communication barriers
D. Management
<p>I. Administrative Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acceptability of existing procedures • identification of weaknesses • short-cuts used
<p>II. Coordination, Evaluation and Supervision Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confusion or order • efficient use of human resources and materials
<p>III. Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adequacy of existing policies • need to create new policies in response to disaster experience • input from all affected parties
<p>IV. Contractors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • type and number of contractors hired • appropriate use of finances • coordination and supervision of work
E. Adverse and Positive Impacts
I. Social
II. Political
III. Economic

Appendix C: Sources of Information

Government of Canada

Statistics Canada	C2
Citizenship and Immigration Canada.....	C6
Canadian Heritage.....	C7
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.....	C8

Non-governmental Resources

Public libraries.....	C9
Depository libraries	C10
University and College libraries	C10
Driver's License Authority	C10
Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Organizations.....	C10
Ethnic Media.....	C11
Internet Resources	C11
Gathering Centres	C12
Schools	C13
Consultants	C13

Advice	C13
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The following is a list of government departments and non-governmental organizations which can provide valuable information to assist research. The phone numbers of federal and provincial government departments can be found in the blue pages of telephone directories. In addition, Internet web sites offer instant access to documents and information.

Government Sources

Most of the following information is extracted from Info Source - Sources of Federal Government Information 1996 - 1997. Info Source is the federal government's step-by-step guide for finding out about the Government of Canada, its organization and information holdings. Info Source is a complete and convenient guide to make enquiries about the government. It is available at more than 7500 locations across Canada, including most public libraries, constituency offices of Members of Parliament and Canada Employment and Immigration offices. It is available as a book and as a computer database, in English and French.

To purchase a copy of Info Source, contact:
Canada Communications Group - Publishing
☎ (819) 956-4802
Fax: (819) 994-1498

For information on the Info Source database, call:
Information, Communications and Security Policy Division,
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat
☎ (613) 957-2408

Statistics Canada

Statistics Canada collects and provides statistical information on the characteristics and behaviour of Canadian households, businesses, institutions and governments for research, policy development, program administration, decision-making and general information purposes. This is done under the authority of the Statistics Act which prohibits the disclosure of identifiable information to anyone but the individual person, business or organization concerned.

Statistics Canada can provide customized data and cross-tabulation to suit specific needs. Also, special surveys can be designed and conducted. These services have a fee. The contact addresses and phone numbers of Statistics Canada's national and regional offices are provided at the end of this section.

Below is a selective list of the information presently available through programs administered by various divisions of Statistics Canada. Descriptions are given for these divisions and their respective programs (indicated in italics).

Census Operations Division

**Census and Demographic Statistics Branch
Social, Institutions and Labour Statistics Field**

This division is responsible for the planning, development and implementation of all production-related operations of the periodic decennial (every 10 years) and quinquennial (every 5 years) censuses of population, Canada's national inventory of key socio-economic phenomena. Administers the following program:

Census Operations: all types of demographic, ethno-cultural, language and other socio-economic data; aggregate data from the census micro database are available to the public (whereas personal information is not). Requests for public information should be directed to the Statistical Reference Centre, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, K1A 0T6. Program record number: STC COP 015

**Education, Culture and Tourism Division
Institutions and Social Statistics Branch
Social, Institutions and Labour Statistics Field**

Responsible for the Education Statistics, Culture Statistics, Travel and Tourism Programs, which include:

Cultural Activities: performances, demographic characteristics, employment, attendance at cultural events, reading habits, use of time. Program record number: STC ECT 195

Cultural Industries: number and type of product, language of product, country of financial control of firm, employment statistics. Program record number: STC ECT 190

Cultural Institutions: physical facilities, personnel, attendance, holdings, circulation. Program record number: STC ECT 185

Cultural Labour Force: demographic data: age, sex, marital status, place of birth, ethnic origin, language; occupation, finances, training. Program record number: STC ECT 192

**Demography Division
Census and Demographic Statistics Branch
Social, Institutions and Labour Statistics Field**

Responsible for population estimates, projections, census and survey related activities, research, and the following program:

Demography: demolinguistics characteristics: mother tongue, home language and knowledge language, emigration, immigration, interprovincial migration. Program record number: STC DEM 030

**Small Area and Administrative Data Division
Methodology Branch
Informatics and Methodology Field**

Develops small area social, economic and demographic statistics and indicators, using administrative files from other federal departments.

Administrative Data: individual and family social data, sub-provincial data, migration. Program record number: STC SAD 550

Small Area Data: annual socio-economic and demographic data for sub-provincial areas. Program record number: STC SAD 555

**Small Business and Special Surveys Division
Resources, Technology and Services Statistics Branch
Business and Trade Statistics Field**

Immigration Database: aggregate data on the economic performance and demographic characteristics of the immigration population over time. Program record number: STC SBS 524

Requests for information about Statistics Canada and its programs may be directed to:

Communications Division
Communications Planning and Public Relations
Statistics Canada
R.H. Coats Building
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa Ontario
K1A 0T6

 (613) 951-1121
Website: <http://www.statcan.ca/start.html>

The addresses of the regional references centres are as follows. Each centre is operated by advisory service personnel.

Atlantic Region

National Capital Region

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
North American Life Centre
1770 Market Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3M3
☎ (902) 426-5331

Ontario Region

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Arthur Meighen Building, 10th Floor
25 St. Clair Avenue East
Toronto, Ontario
M4T 1M4
☎ (416) 973-6586

Prairie Region

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
First Street Plaza, Room 401
138 - 4th Avenue South East
Calgary, Alberta
T2G 4Z6
☎ (403) 292-6717

Prairie Region

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Avord Tower, 9th Floor
2002 Victoria Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 0R7
☎ (306) 780-5405

Québec Region

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
200 René Lévesque Boulevard West
Guy Favreau Complex
4th Floor, East Tower
Montréal, Québec
H2Z 1X4
☎ (514) 283-5725

Statistical Reference Centre (NCR)
Statistics Canada
R.H. Coats Building Lobby
Holland Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0T6
☎ (613) 951-8116

Pacific Region

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Library Square Tower
#600 - 300 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6B 6C7
☎ (604) 666-3691

Prairie Region

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
MacDonald Building, Suite 300
344 Edmonton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 3L9
☎ (204) 983-4020

Prairie Region

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Park Square, 9th Floor
10001 Bellamy Hill
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3B6
☎ (403) 495-3027

Toll-Free numbers are available for the public who reside outside the local dialling area of any of the reference centres:

Atlantic (Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick):
1-800-565-7192

Québec: 1-800-361-2831

Ontario: 1-800-263-1136

Prairie (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories): 1-800-563-7828

Pacific Region (British Columbia and the Yukon Territory): 1-800-663-1551

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

The Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada's mission is to build a stronger Canada by deriving maximum benefit from the global movement of people; managing access to Canada; defining membership in Canadian society; and protecting refugees at home and abroad.

Below is a selective list of the information presently available through programs administered by various branches of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Finance and Administration Branch Departmental Support

Emergency Preparedness: publications, manuals, regional contingency plans, training courses.
Program record number: CIC FIN 050

Public Affairs Branch Departmental Support

Research and Analysis: weekly analysis of ethnic media and Internet, activity reports, press releases, status of ongoing projects. Program record number: CIC SPP 623

Strategic Policy Planning and Research Branch Departmental Support

Census: statistical surveys developed for collecting census data on CIC programs and activities for Statistics Canada. Program record number: CIC SPP 625

MANUALS

Community Relations Handbook

Emergency Planning Guidelines

Immigration Data

Workforce Adjustment Guide

For information about the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and its programs, contact:
Public Affairs Branch
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
365 Laurier Avenue West
19th floor, Journal Tower South
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1L1

Fax: (613) 941-7080
Website: <http://cicnet.ingenia.com>

Canadian Heritage

The Department of Canadian Heritage is responsible for promoting the development of a strong Canadian identity and common values among all Canadians and recognition of our natural and historical heritage, linguistic and multicultural identity, and achievements in sport, the arts and culture.

Multiculturalism Directorate Citizens' Participation and Multicultural Branch

supports the following programs:

Community Support and Participation (CSP): a program to promote the integration and meaningful participation in Canadian life of members of ethnocultural communities. The program supports non-profit community-based organizations in their efforts to identify and address community concerns.

Heritage Cultures and Languages (HCL): promote the development and expression of heritage cultures and languages as an integral part of Canada's artistic, cultural and academic life.

Multiculturalism: public education, Canadian ethnic studies and research, intercultural communications, multicultural centres, organizational development, communications, advertising and public relations activities. Program record number: CH MUL 050

Requests for further information about the Department of Canadian Heritage and its programs can be directed to the Departmental Library, which has been designated a public reading room under the Access to Information Act:

Jules Léger Building
2nd Floor, 15 Eddy Street
Hull, Québec
K1A 0M5

Regional offices:
Alberta Region, Calgary: ☎ (403) 292-4444

Atlantic Region, Halifax: ☎ (902) 426-8951
Ontario Region, North York: ☎ (416)954-0396
Pacific and Yukon Region, Vancouver: ☎ (604) 666-2060
Prairie and Northwest Territories Region, Winnipeg: ☎ (204) 983-2630
Québec Region, Montréal: ☎ (514) 283-5797

Website: <http://www.pch.gc.ca>

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs is primarily concerned with pursuing initiatives to assist Aboriginal communities to overcome obstacles to their development and to help them marshal the human and physical resources necessary to build and sustain viable communities.

The department comprises two programs, the Indian and Inuit Affairs Program and the Northern Affairs Program, along with ten regional organizations.

Some information holdings of the Indian and Inuit Affairs Program which may be useful include the following:

Communications: public (including media), communications planning, evaluation, strategy development and programming; public, media and government requests for information. Program record number: INA PSD 381

Community Services and Facilities: community health and safety needs, fire prevention services, road development. Program record number: INA PSD 031

Cultural Contributions: study tours and workshops, languages, newspapers, sociological studies. Program record number: INA CSS 044

Indian Registration and Band Membership: records relating to the determination of entitlement to registration and band membership, all types of band information. Program record number: INA LTS 121

Statistics and Reference Documents: statistical information, unpublished research documents and papers, policy statements, procedures and guidelines. Program record number: INA LTS 109

The Northern Affairs Program administers the following programs:

Cultures and Customs: the cultures and customs of Inuit people are outlined.

Socio-economic Data: socio-demographic studies, native affairs, industry sector information, general economic development. Program record number: INA NAP 271

MANUALS

Classification of Indian Bands by Geographic Zones
Communications Standards and Procedures Manual
Fire Management Manual - Yukon Territory
Local Government Program Development Manual (British Columbia)
On Reserve Services Handbook

Requests for further information about the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and its programs can be directed to the Departmental Library, which has been designated a public reading room under the Access to Information Act:

Departmental Library
Room 1400
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière
10 Wellington Street
Hull, Québec
K1A 0H4

☎ (819) 997-0811
Website: <http://www.inac.gc.ca>

Non-governmental Sources

Public libraries

Local public libraries are often a good place to begin research. They often contain copies of useful government documents, as well as city directories, almanacs and reference material. The reference book The Canadian Almanac and Dictionary contains a list of affiliations or subsidiaries of ethnic and multi-cultural organizations across Canada, including full addresses and contact persons.

Another useful resource is a reference book, entitled Sources, published biannually. It is available at libraries or directly through the publisher at:

Sources

4 Phipps St., Suite 109
Toronto, Ontario
M4Y 1J5

☎ (416) 964-7799

Fax: (416) 964-8763

Hotline: (416) 964-2671

E-mail: sources@sources.com

Telnet: [telnet sources.com](telnet:sources.com)

World Wide Web: <http://www.sources.com>

Local directories will provide information on smaller groups and services, such as:

- airport greeting volunteers

- translation services
- immigrant legal services
- cultural arts centres
- religious organizations

As well, the reference librarian is an excellent resource to assist research.

Depository libraries

Depository libraries receive all or most government publications. These libraries are often university libraries and are an excellent tool to access necessary government documents.

University and College libraries

University and college libraries may also contain information on local cultural groups and issues. As well, they may have research papers and detailed research, which may not be available elsewhere.

Driver's License Authority

Some driver's license issuers conduct driving tests in foreign languages and may provide information on the languages and number of licenses issued. However, this resource should be utilized with caution, as it would be limited to data on ethnic people who drive.

Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Organizations

Searches in public libraries and the Internet can help identify or locate ethnic and multi-cultural organizations in the community.

Ethnic Media

Ethnic media, including newspapers, magazines, journals, television stations, radio stations, may be the formal organizations most "in touch" with the ethnic community. Contacting people through their own language and cultural setting may be the most effective way to solicit feedback. The media groups may provide information on the location and number of people subscribed to the media source (i.e. newspaper).

Use of the media to inform people of meetings and events is likely to encourage the ethnic people to become involved, especially those who do not receive information from mainstream media sources. The meetings and events will likely be more successful.

Matthews Media Directories is an example of a service which will provide, for a cost, information on daily and weekly newspapers, radio, television, cable systems, business and consumer magazines and ethnic media:

Matthews Media Directories
25 Adelaide St. E., Ste. 500
Toronto, Ontario
M5C 3A1

☎ (416) 362-5739
Fax: (in Toronto) (416) 955-0705
Fax: (outside Toronto) 1-800-363-9296

Internet Resources

Access to the Internet is useful for locating information on organizations which post information regarding their members and activities. If Internet access is not readily available at the workplace or at home, it can often be utilized at local libraries.

The previously listed information on specific government departments includes their specific website; however, all government departments can be reached through the following site:
<http://www.gc.ca>

The websites listed below provide links to specific, non-government organizations, relating to a variety of multi-cultural issues. Note that this is a selective list, and should not be interpreted to be all-inclusive or up-to-date: websites are subject to change; new sites may emerge.

CultureNet - "an electronic window on Canadian culture"
provides links to Canadian organizations, public notice boards, and databases of information
<http://www.culturenet.ucalgary.ca>

CCMA - Canadian Centre on Minority Affairs, Inc.
an independent, non-profit human resource and public policy organization with a focus on Caribbean-Canadians
<http://www.interlog.com/~ccma>

CCMDD - Canadian Centre for Multicultural Development and Documentation
a non-profit organization to promote and document the development of multiculturalism, and work with other groups with similar objectives

- *note: this web site was under development as of August, 1997*
<http://www2.uwindsor.ca/~temelin>

Resources for Diversity

links available from this site include a human languages page, online journals, and research organizations

<http://alabanza.com/kabacoff/Inter-Links/diversity.html>

Public Interest Research Groups (PIRG)

environmental and social justice issues, site includes links to PIRG groups across Canada and similar resources

<http://www.campuslife.utoronto.ca/groups/opirg>

Web-Spinners' Index to Canadian Equality-Seeking Groups on the Web

links to national, provincial and local equal rights advocacy groups

<http://fox.nstn.ca/~nstn1439/groups.html>

Information about Aboriginal groups and activities:

NativeWeb

home page with links to a large variety of websites on aboriginal issues and organizations.

<http://web.maxwell.syr.edu/nativeweb/index.html>

Index of Native American Resources on the Internet

<http://hanksville.phast.umass.edu/misc/NAresources.html>

Gathering Centres

Resourceful centres for information on ethnic people are:

- health centres
- human rights groups
- legal services
- umbrella charitable organizations (such as the United Way)
- career and employment centres
- abuse and crisis centres

Schools

Schools can provide information on the number of students who study English or French as a second language. Data from schools also gives an indication of geographic location of the ethnic families, though it only includes families with school-age children. Children who speak English or French fluently may have family members who do not.

Consultants

If the research task is substantial, and the financial resources available, formal research may be undertaken. Private consultants, or a number of university or college departments, may have the appropriate expertise and personnel to undertake a study. Depending on the research topic, consider contacting specialists in sociology, education, anthropology, psychology, etc.

Advice


The following advice was provided by researchers who have attempted to retrieve information in the past. The lessons from their experience may be of value to users of this report.

- Be aware of regulations regarding privacy rights and access to information.
- Be skeptical of information from sources with vested interests.
- Be skeptical of information from sources with no real contact with the ethnic groups. The information could be misleading and could reflect people's stereotypes. It is more reliable to contact people who are a part of the ethnic culture being researched.
- Exercise caution that all members of an ethnic group are included in an assessment. For example, information obtained from a school board administration will be limited to families with children in school.
- Try to use a variety of sources to obtain more complete information. However, avoid counting people twice, such as combining information from a drivers license issuer and an employment centre.
- Use personal experience and contacts to identify other sources of information.

The *Access to Information Act* gives Canadian citizens as well as people and corporations present in Canada the right to have access to federal government records that are not of a personal nature. The *Privacy Act* gives Canadian citizens and people present in Canada the right to have access to information that is held about them by the federal government and protects against unauthorized disclosure of personal information.

For more information about the *Access to Information Act* or the *Privacy Act*, contact:

Public Affairs Branch
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat
L'Esplanade Laurier, East Tower
140 O'Conner Street, 9th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0R5

 (613) 957-2400
Fax (613) 952-3658
E-mail: infosource@tbs-sct.gc.ca

To obtain a copy of a brochure on the *Access to Information Act* or the *Privacy Act*, contact:

Treasury Board Distribution Centre

☎ (613) 995-2855

Fax (613) 996-0518