

MULTICULTURALISM MYTHS & FACTS

Canada adopted multiculturalism as an official policy in 1971 – the first country in the world to do so. This policy guarantees all Canadians equality of opportunity and equality before the law regardless of their origins.

MYTH 1: Multiculturalism is only about giving special rights to minorities.

FACT 1: Multiculturalism is about different cultural groups working together to understand each others' points of view. It is not only for minorities, it means that everyone is treated equitably. When everyone is treated equitably, it helps the entire community.

MYTH 2: Multiculturalism allows people to follow the laws and rules of their own culture instead of Canadian laws.

FACT 2: Canadian laws apply to everyone in Canada. All newcomers are expected to fully abide by Canadian laws. Much like learning to brush your teeth with your other hand, learning Canadian laws can take time.

MYTH 3: Multiculturalism means different cultural groups will stick together, and not mix with other Canadians.

FACT 3: It can be difficult to adjust to a new culture and language at first, but a welcoming community makes this process easier. When people stick together, it can be due to language barriers, lack of opportunities, or discrimination. Breaking down these barriers will help to promote cultural harmony. Canada scores third out of 31 countries on the Migrant Integration Policy Index, which measures how well immigrants integrate into society.

MYTH 4: Multiculturalism is only relevant in big cities with very diverse populations.

FACT 4: Multiculturalism is relevant everywhere. Just as it is important to learn about your own culture, it is important to learn about other cultures.

MYTH 5: Multiculturalism is just song and dance events from other cultures.

FACT 5: Multiculturalism involves sharing and celebrating different cultures, as well as taking advantage of different perspectives, understanding, working together, respect, acceptance, and inclusion.

MYTH 6: Multiculturalism encourages immigrants to think of themselves as hyphenated nationalities – as their original nationality first, and Canadian second.

FACT 6: Multiculturalism encourages everyone to be proud of their cultural heritage, while at the same time celebrating what makes us Canadian.