

# **How to Engage Multicultural Audiences in Outdoor Environmental Programs?**

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# Outline

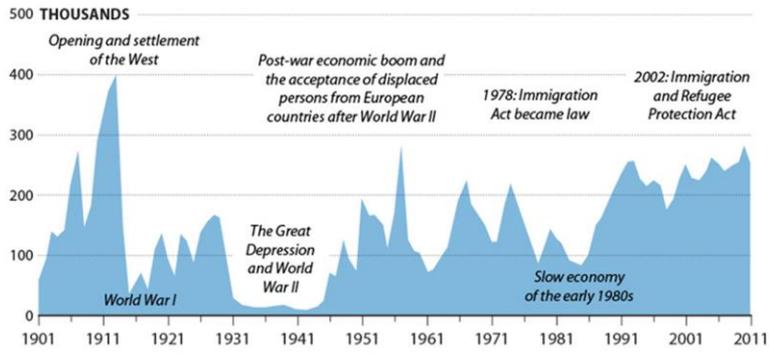
1. **Why**? Why do outreach for multicultural audience?
2. **Who**? Who are your multicultural audience?
3. **How**? How to engage and communicate?
4. **What**? What programs to offer?



# Annual Flow of Diverse Immigrants

## IMMIGRATION TO CANADA

The annual flow of immigrants has remained between 200,000 and 300,000 during the last decade



Top reasons for immigration are:

1. Better future for family
2. Improve quality of life
3. Economic opportunities
4. Join family and close friends

# Immigration Trends

## < WHERE IMMIGRANTS COME FROM >

A look at the place of birth of immigrants by period of immigration



Source: Statistics Canada

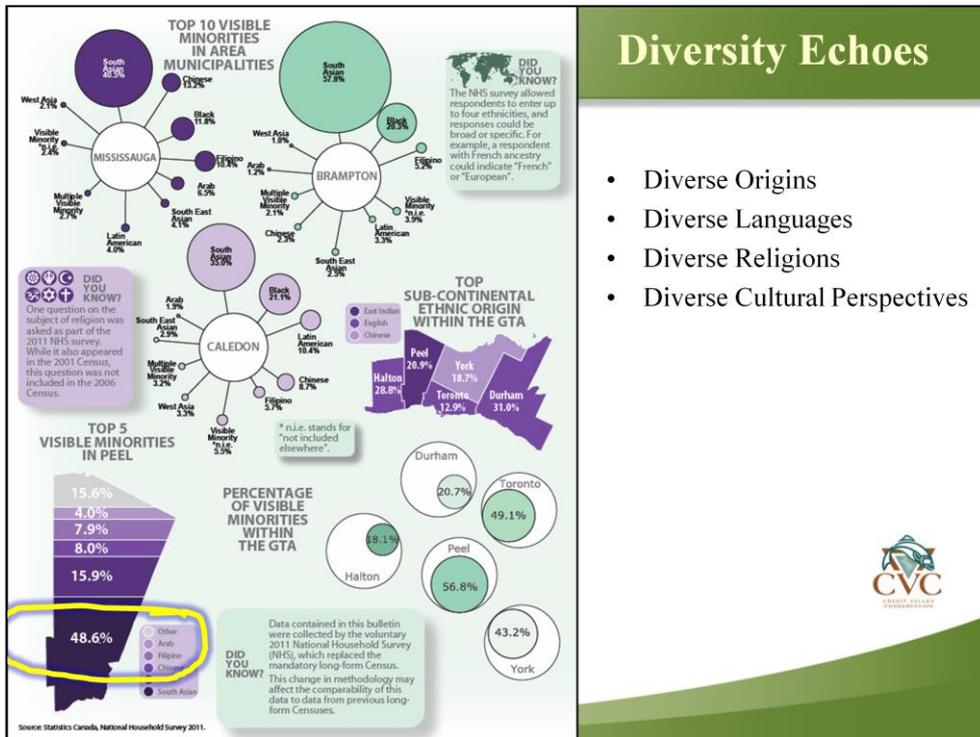
Credit: The Canadian Press

Recent immigrants are from Asia and Middle east and specifically from South Asia – India/Pakistan/Bangladesh/Sri Lanka

## Peel Region – A Multicultural Destination



Region of Peel is truly a multicultural destination.  
Immigrants make up 80% of the population growth.  
200 Ethnicities speaking 69 different languages.  
50% of the population is visible minorities and immigrants.



# Diversity Echoes

- Diverse Origins
- Diverse Languages
- Diverse Religions
- Diverse Cultural Perspectives

If we just look at the South Asian immigrants who make 48.6% of the population in the peel region they speak multiple languages, represent multiple religions and come from very diverse cultural backgrounds.

These scenarios make environmental outreach with challenging.

## Big Question – How to Engage?



1. For the last 50 years or so the face of our audience has been this (WHITE mostly homogenous) and now we have this wave of DIVERSE CULTURES to engage in environmental stewardship and outreach.
2. New face of demographic – in terms of population, age, culture, language and areas of concentrations. In Brampton, I have seen neighbourhoods of culturally homogenous groups.

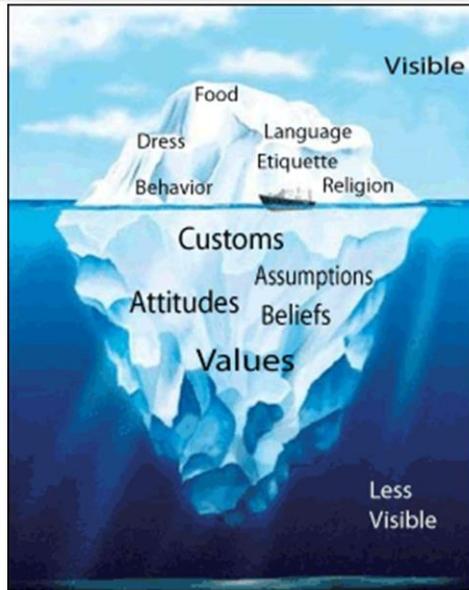
# Know Your Audience

Make Connections With Your Audience



1. Who they are, where are they coming from, what is important to them, how do they relate to environment, what do they eat, where do they go for recreation, what language they speak
2. Striking a cord with the people in your watershed. They have many pressing problems to deal with than ENVIRONMENT.
3. A large majority of south asians in the Peel region are originally from Punjab a northern state in India. They are intrinsically connected to land because agriculture is the main occupation of people there. It is called the bread basket of India. When they come to Canada they are involved mostly in service industry. They have the spark we need to find the right ignition.

# Know Different Perspectives



Iceberg Analogy for Understanding Culture



If we follow the iceberg analogy to understand the diverse cultural perspectives then most of us see the:

Visible Attributes of People – Food, Dress, Language, etiquette, Behavior and Religion

We Miss Upon Other Important Attributes that play an important role in people's personalities – Customs, Attitudes, Values, Beliefs and Assumptions.

## New Rules of Engagement

- Generating interest
- Back home angle
- Discourse Vs. Dictation
- Location Location Location
- Flexible and innovative programming
- Community relevant programs
- Engage community members/leaders in planning



1. Finding out what interests them and then develop your sales pitch. Once the director of a settlement agency that works with thousands of new immigrants asked me why should they be coming to your events and listen to you? What's in there for them? Evergreen had worked on this project in Surrey BC where they had witnessed lot of dumping (from computers to furniture, to compost) in a predominant south Asian neighbourhood. They worked with the city on this project and developed a brochure one side in Punjabi and other in English. However, instead of their traditional outreach messages for planting trees for a better environment they came up with the message that generated community's interest in their outreach initiative "keep your property clean b'coz it will increase its property value" "keep your neighbourhood clean because it will protect you from diseases"
2. People generally relate to current context when there is a back home angle. For instance, how we did recycling back home as compared to in Canada.
3. Gives an opportunity to hear community's perceptions and attitudes. Example of a healthy discussion during chat and chai
4. Where you do your events has a huge impact on getting the message out. Geography does matter a lot so choose your locations carefully.
5. Since we are dealing with non-traditional audiences it is highly unlikely atleast in the beginning that they will come to us if we will do our program at Terra Cotta Conservation Area. Because they do not know us, they do not know our work there is no relationship PERIOD. So we need to go to where these people are and get their attention in places where they meet, they hang out, they get their information from and other community locations.
6. We did 2 events last week in 2 different locations. Exact same program, similar audiences, different neighbourhoods, and very different results in terms of attendance.

## New Rules of Communication

- Communication and Messaging



### Caring for the Credit River



1. What's wrong with this slogan? Anything?
2. In one of my first few public events a gentleman came and asked me "Are you giving out credit, which credit card company is this?"
3. These new audiences don't know that the river that flows thru their neighbourhoods is Credit river or a tributary of it. On top of this ignorance the word CREDIT is a double meaning word creates confusion and questions.

## New Rules of Communication

- Translation and Multi-Lingual Messaging



- Interpretation vs. Translation

1. All of our flyers, brochures, factsheets, and other promotional materials are in English.
2. Although there is a significant large number of population in our watershed that speaks non-official languages.
3. In one of our sub-watershed Fletcher's Creek about 34% of the population commonly speak in languages other than English and French.
4. A significant proportion of the non-English speaking population comprises of seniors and housewives who do not have many opportunities to engage in English conversations. However, this is perhaps the group that takes care of the gardens, lawns and driveways and have a direct influence on the fertilizer and salt usage.
5. Need for multi-lingual messaging.
6. We have just started getting some of our information materials in other languages such as punjabi.
7. One word of caution for translation. Focus on the translation of the meaning of the message not the literal translation. We got a quote translated in 9 languages and the Arabic translator did the translation and left the word "credit" in English to avoid confusion.

## New Rules of Communication

- Keeping Language Simple

*Native Invasive species Invertebrates Predator*

- Avoid using TLAs

*“I work for CVC as their MC and we are here to talk  
about our program CYC”*



1. Many people from immigrant communities do not have understanding about watershed, invasive and native species, and other environmental terms.
2. Does anyone know what is a TLA? Three Letter Acronyms

## Other Factors and Cultural Nuances

- Environmental Responsibility
- Volunteerism
- Language
- Transportation
- Access to places and information
- Fear of Unknown
- Foreign Language Media



Different Perspectives on Environmental Responsibility and Care

Volunteerism - Tree Planting Pay Offs

Language barriers

Conservation Areas are not accessible by transit

Since there is no apparent connection with nature for new immigrants access to natural places and information about them is a big challenge.

Fear of unknown – being in natural open spaces alone is difficult for many people as they associate these with crime while growing up in different cultural/political environments.

Local environmental information and news is NOT usually captured in Foreign Language media. If we are having a community clean up day it will be reported in “Brampton Gaurdian” rather in South Asian Focus newspaper.

## Programs to Offer

### **Environment and Nature Week**



Week long environmental workshops.

In libraries, community centres.

In the evening

Free drop in programs

# Programs to Offer

## Experience Nature Program



# Programs to Offer

## Seniors Program



# Programs to Offer

## Maple Syrup Program



# Programs to Offer

## Snowshoeing Program



CVC  
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# Programs to Offer

## Health & Wellness Program



# Questions?



Question Mark butterfly