



# Welcoming Communities

*The fundamental role of Non-profits in Welcoming New Canadians as Volunteers*



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WelcomeBC

# The fundamental role of Non-profits in Welcoming New Canadians as Volunteers

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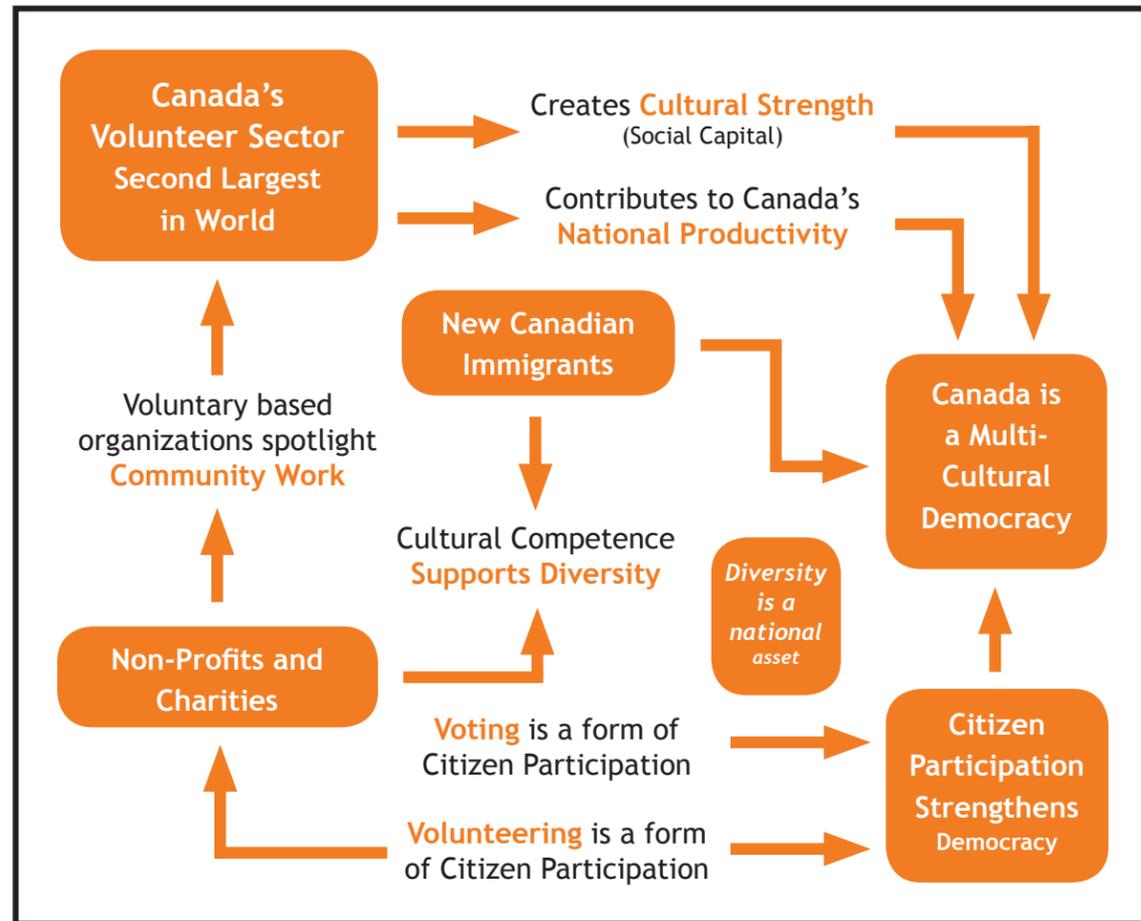


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# Why Non-profits Welcome and Include New Canadians?

## Essential Links

Volunteering, New Canadians and Canada's Multicultural Democracy



## What is a Welcoming and Inclusive Community?

WelcomeBC defines a welcoming and inclusive community as one that promotes the full participation of all residents in the social, cultural and economic life of the region without discrimination.

A Welcoming Community is;

- a) helpful to newcomers,
- b) open to new ideas and customs, and
- c) recognizes the contributions newcomers make.

# Canada - A Democracy

## Definition of a Democracy

Canada is 8th on a list of countries with full democracies characterized as having:

- free, fair and legitimate government elections
- high levels of voluntary participation by citizens
- protection of human rights
- respect for rights of others
- laws that apply to everyone
- freedom of religion and expression

**Democracy depends on Citizen Participation:** A successful democracy depends on citizen participation in a number of ways that must be peaceful, respectful of the law, and tolerant of the different views of others. Citizens have an obligation to become informed about public issues.

**Women Participate Fully in Democracies:** It is important that women participate fully both in politics and in civil society. This requires efforts by society organizations to educate women about their democratic rights and responsibilities, improve their political skills, represent their common interests, and involve them in political life.

**Voting is a form of Citizen Participation:** Voting in elections is an important civic duty. To vote wisely, each citizen should be informed of the views of the different parties and candidates, and then make his or her own decision on whom to support. Participation can also involve campaigning for a political party or candidate, standing as a candidate for political office, debating public issues, attending community meetings, petitioning the government, and even protesting.

**Volunteering with Non-profits is a form of Citizen Participation:** Another vital form of participation comes through active membership in independent, non-governmental organizations, or the Volunteer Sector. These organizations (non profits and charities) represent a variety of interests and beliefs: farmers, seniors, doctors, teachers, business owners, religious believers, women, youth, and human rights activists. Volunteering is an essential and irreplaceable element of a democratic society. Without the contribution of Volunteers, schools, hospitals, community organizations, sports programs and cultural activities would be unable to carry on as they do now.

**Participation is Voluntary:** In a democracy, participation in civic groups, non profits and charities is voluntary. No one is forced to join an organization against their will. Political parties are vital organizations in a democracy, and democracy is stronger when citizens become active members of political parties. However, no one should support a political party because he is pressured or threatened by others. In a democracy, citizens are free to choose which party to support.

*Volunteering with non-profits is an easy and effective way to learn about important issues and understand how you can make a difference.*

## Canada is a Multicultural Democracy



Canada was the first country in the world to adopt a Multiculturalism Policy. In 1971, this official policy affirmed the value and dignity of all citizens regardless of ethnic origin, language, or religion. Multiculturalism is fundamental to our belief that all citizens are equal. Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging.

Canadians are guaranteed equality before the law and equality of opportunity regardless of their origins. Equality and freedoms are guaranteed through Canadian citizenship, the Canadian Constitution, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

New Canadians share the basic values of democracy with all other Canadians and are free to choose whether they want to identify with a specific group or not. Their individual rights are fully protected and they need not fear group pressures.

Multiculturalism encourages ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding. Mutual respect helps develop common attitudes. New Canadians, like other Canadians, respect and use the political and legal process to address issues.

Diversity is a national asset. Through multiculturalism, Canada recognizes the potential of all Canadians, encouraging them to integrate into their society and take an active part in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs.

With Canadian citizenship comes equal rights and equal responsibilities. Participation in civic and community affairs and in the Volunteer Sector is a right that when evoked strengthens a democracy.

### New Canadians:

- Replace and grow population and decrease the average age of the population
- Provide skilled workers and replace retiring skilled workers needed for Healthcare and other industries
- Are new youth and young families that bring children to fill our schools
- Can take over existing business and buy and run farms and bring in new businesses
- Provide a balance when the education system does not produce enough graduates in key skilled areas
- Balances the effect of Canadian born skilled workers recruited by other countries
- Provide needed workers for agriculture, service industry, and retail sector
- Contribute to building a strong democracy and healthy communities through volunteering
- Citizens speaking many languages and understanding many cultures help Canada to participate globally

## The Top 10 countries of origin for immigrants to Canada

Prior to 1981	Between 2001 and 2006	2011
United Kingdom	China - 155,105	<p>Young, suburban and mostly Asian: Canada's immigrant population surges although Africans are arriving in growing numbers.</p> <p>National Household Survey, which Statistics Canada designed, shows that Canada is now home to 6.8 million foreign-born residents – or 20.6 per cent of the population, compared with 19.8 per cent in 2006, and the highest in the G8 group of rich countries.</p> <p>One in five people living in Canada is a visible minority. And in nine different municipalities, those visible minorities are actually the majority.</p>
Italy	India - 129,140	
U.S.	Philippines - 77,880	
Germany	Pakistan - 57,630	
Portugal	United States - 38,770	
Netherlands	South Korea - 35,450	
India	Romania - 28,080	
Poland	Iran - 27,600	
China	United Kingdom - 25,655	
Countries of the former Yugoslavia	Colombia - 25,310	

New languages are changing Canada's cultural landscape reflecting immigration patterns and the globalization of the world that we live in. Immigration patterns evolving over the past two or three decades are shifting away from the European immigration and toward Asia and Latin America.

### Language Diversity beyond English and French

6.4 million people speak more than 200 languages (20% of the population). The top languages used by newcomers include:

- Chinese dialects
- Punjabi
- Arabic
- Persian
- Spanish
- Tagalog (Philippine)

Canada is becoming more diverse with an increase in languages. Language diversity strengthens our country. Statistics revealed that 9 in 10 Canadians who spoke an immigrant language most often at home, lived in a city. The majority (80%) lived in the country's six largest cities. English and French remain dominant as current languages of work, education, and the provision of government services to the public. However, the number of people speaking more than one language at home is increasing.

### # of Canadians at home that speak:

- Only a language other than English or French - 6.5% or 2.1 million
- Only English - 58% or 19.2 million
- Only French - 18.2% or 6 million
- Two languages - 17.5% or 5.8 million (up 14.2% from 2006 to 2011)

# Canada's Non-profit Volunteer Sector

## The Volunteer Sector

The Volunteer Sector is comprised of charitable and non-profit organizations, and is one of the three main sectors in Canadian Society. The Volunteer Sector parallels the Public (Government) and the Private (For Profit Businesses) in its contribution to the economy, society and democracy. Every democracy has a Volunteer Sector and some have a government branch to support it. Non-Profits that make up the Volunteer Sector bridge service delivery between what governments provide and what is needed in communities. Thousands who volunteer, under the auspices of a non-profit, are groups of citizens engaging to fill gaps in government services.



## Canada's Volunteer Sector is the second largest in the world.

Canada's has about 165,000 nonprofits and charities spending more than \$100 Billion annually. Of those organizations, about 1% has annual revenues of \$10 million or more and account for 60% of all revenues. In contrast, 42% of organizations have annual revenues of less than \$30,000 and account for just 1% of all revenues. Less than 3% of organizations report having no revenue at all. Smaller provinces have a higher number of non profits relative to their populations. Half of non profits are run entirely by volunteers.

## Volunteer Sector contributes to Nation's Productivity

Gross Domestic Product or GDP serves as a measure of a nation's productivity. Non profits account for 7.1 % of the GDP (\$115 Billion) more than to Auto Manufacturers who contribute 2.1%. GDP is the monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced and it includes all private and public consumption, government outlays, investments and exports less imports that occur within a defined territory.



## Volunteering reflects values of a Democracy

Volunteering is connected to basic values of citizenship and participation in an open, free and democratic society. Volunteering is one of the key ways in which individuals can connect to the larger community. Volunteering is a means of empowering ordinary people. Volunteering helps gain some measure of power, influence and control over the forces that shape daily family and community life.

## Volunteer Sector spotlights Community Work

Community work improves social cohesion and socio-economic outcomes. This can be hugely beneficial for vulnerable groups, such as low-income families and new immigrants to name just two. The greater ones knowledge about specific subjects like health and political issues, the more informed they are as voters. Simply put Volunteering heightens our social and economic awareness.

## Social Capital is Cultural Strength

Social Capital is the cultural strength of a nation; important for healthy democracies and wellbeing of societies. Cultural strength is the shared beliefs and attitudes, the ties that bind us which can both come from and lead to beneficial collective action. Social Capital helps with the functioning of labor markets, contributes to lower levels of crime and contributes to improvement in government institutions. Social Capital is a result of cultural evolution and continues to be recreated through the contact with, and development of, new and different cultures.

## Volunteer Sector creates Social Capital

Volunteering strengthens and builds new relationships with friends and peer groups and provides a sense of belonging also known as bonding social capital. Volunteering creates linkages outside of one's immediate circles, broadening ones opportunities and horizons, also known as Bridging Social Capital. An example of Bridging Social Capital is a Volunteer developing or improving on skills that may be required for work in the future. This preparatory work helps ease the transition to the labour force. It also gives individuals the opportunity to try a job out before undertaking sometimes costly and time-consuming courses and certifications. And, Volunteering can build relationships between different levels of power, assisting in one's ability to access support from formal institutions also known as Linking Social Capital.

*"New Canadians are more than essential contributors to an economy that would otherwise suffer from near zero population growth; they are also an integral component of this country's vibrant cultural fabric."*

-Patti Tamara Lenard, Today, Broadbent Institute



Cultural Competence is defined as a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals to work effectively with diversity. Developing Cultural Competence is one of the ways an organization can work towards increased diversity and inclusiveness. Cultural Competence acknowledges and incorporates, at all levels, the importance of the following principles:

- Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity
- Fostering human resources that are reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities
- Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated
- Valuing cultural differences
- Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers
- Practicing self-awareness and self-reflection
- Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability



Cultural Competence is a developmental process that evolves over a period of time. Both individuals and organizations are at various levels of awareness, knowledge and skills along the cultural competence continuum. Explicit processes that facilitate and support common understanding, compliance and implementation are important to articulate and reinforce on an ongoing basis.

### Culturally Competent Professionals are Self-Reflective and Self-Aware

Self-reflection and self-awareness provide the basis for Cultural Competence. Self-reflection is the active and conscious process of inquiry into one's thoughts, feelings and actions, leading to increased self-awareness. This can happen through consideration of feedback from others, meditation, journal writing, dialogue and many creative endeavors. Self-awareness includes recognition of personality, strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes and how lived experience to date has influenced those things.

### Culturally Competent Non-profits value Diversity

A culturally competent Non-profit holds cultural diversity in high regard. It does so by continually assessing structures, policies and procedures as to their ability to be culturally inclusive, and engages culturally diverse people in all aspects of the organization. Cultural competence is never fully realized; it is a life long process similar to learning. However, Cultural Competence policies provide the direction towards creating a culturally competent organization.

### Non-profits Remove Systemic Barriers

Institutional policies procedures and practices that result in the systemic exclusion or promotion of particular groups of individuals are systemic barriers. Systemic discrimination regularly relates to an entrenched recurring practice rather than to an isolated act of discrimination, resulting in barriers to equality of opportunity for members of marginalized groups. Intent to discriminate may or may not be the case.

### Stages of Development for Cultural Competence

1. The Valuing of Cultural Diversity. This stage involves integrating respect for diversity into programs, policies and services and also recognizing that members of certain cultural groups may have cultural as well as individual needs.
2. Conducting a cultural self-assessment. Organizations develop an awareness of their own cultures and communities, assumptions, and biases and identify actions to reduce barriers.
3. Be conscious of the behaviors and dynamics when cultures interact. The dynamics of cultural differences are pro-actively managed, improving the interactions between different cultures.
4. Create institutionalized cultural knowledge. As cultural diversity is encountered, the understandings gained need to be integrated into service delivery and practices.
5. Adapt to different cultural contexts. Cultural knowledge is embedded throughout the organization and are adapted to fit the diversity of the community engaged.

## Board responsibilities in creating a Welcoming Non-profit

### Board Diversity and Make-up

First and foremost a diverse board makes good business sense. Establishing a diverse board requires demonstrating inclusiveness, both in actions and in words. For example, ask yourself if the Board of Directors reflects the cultural diversity of the community? Organizations benefit from having governance bodies that reflect the communities they serve.

Secondly, many funders will only fund those organizations that are inclusive.

### Advantages of a diverse board:

- Diverse perspectives in decision-making lead to better decisions;
- Legitimizing the mandate of the organization;
- Building social capital and cohesion among diverse populations;
- Becoming more responsive to the community and clients; and
- Supporting fundraising, marketing and reaching out to your markets more effectively.



*“Engaging community in the work of any organization requires a culture that believes talent, from whatever source, is critical to the success of the organization or cause. That means boards of directors and paid staff have to be intentional and deliberate in enabling and modeling the engagement of others in delivering on the mission of their organization”*

-Martha Parker, “Rethinking Volunteerism - Should it be a Priority?”, The Philanthropist, Volume 24 2 (2011): 131

### Conditions funders may have to ensure your organization and board are inclusive:

The organization has a voluntary and broadly based membership involved in the management and control of the organization and its programs;

- The organization has board members that are democratically chosen by, and from within, its volunteer base;
- Eligible programs provide a direct service to the community and are responsive to that community’s needs and issues;
- Programs that generally provide services exclusively to an organization’s membership are ineligible.

### Funders may ask questions like these to assess the democratic and inclusive practices of your board and organization?

- How does one become a member of your organization?
- Can anybody join or is membership in your organization restricted?
- How many current voting members of your organization do you have? Do you have non-voting members?
- Please describe the procedures followed to keep your organization’s membership list current?
- How often are meetings held for general organization members?
- How are the Board Directors chosen and for how long a term?
- Do you record Board of Director elections in the minutes?
- How do you advise the members of your organization of the date of the AGM?
- Do you take attendance at the AGM (sign-in sheet)?

### Check out these supporting Tools in the Welcoming and Inclusive ToolKit for Non-profits

- ✓ Questions to Ask when Building a Cultural Competent Non-profit
- ✓ Steps in Building a Cultural Competent Non-profit
- ✓ Assessing your Non-profit’s Welcoming and Inclusive state
- ✓ Building a Diverse Board and Non-profit
- ✓ Example of Non-profit Diversity Policy
- ✓ Guide to Communicating with people learning to speak English
- ✓ The Buddy System for New Canadian Volunteers



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This document was produced in partnership with:

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