

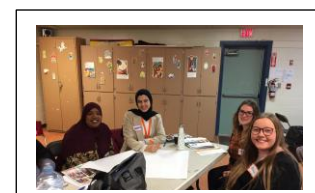
FORUM DATE:	FORUM TITLE:	REPORT PREPARED BY:
February 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	Cultural Bridging	RRLIP Staff

## PURPOSE OF FORUM

Each year, the Regina Region Local Immigration Partnership (RRLIP) hosts a community forum. The purpose of each forum is to provide project updates and bring together stakeholders and community to discuss barriers and challenges as they relate to newcomer settlement and integration, and to identify solutions. The forum topic was determined through a survey administered to newcomers and those who work with them and was centered around **cultural bridging**. RRLIP partnered with the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan (MCoS), as they contributed important insight and education on intercultural connections.

## FORUM GOALS

- Share about your own culture
- Learn about other cultures & dispel myths and misconception
- Provide feedback on how our community can improve in this area



## FORUM FORMAT (2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.)

- Welcome
- RRLIP Project Update; MCoS Overview
- Intercultural Relationship Building & Anti-Racism Presentation (MCoS)
- Guest Speakers (Brad Bellegarde – Indigenous Leader ; Zainabu Mwangangi – Immigrant)
- Table Talk Activity
- Large Group Activity

## WHO ATTENDED?

**41 participants** attended the community forum and they included:

- **Immigrant-serving agencies, other support agencies/organizations, and individual community members** interested in cultural bridging and sharing local solutions to the challenges presented.

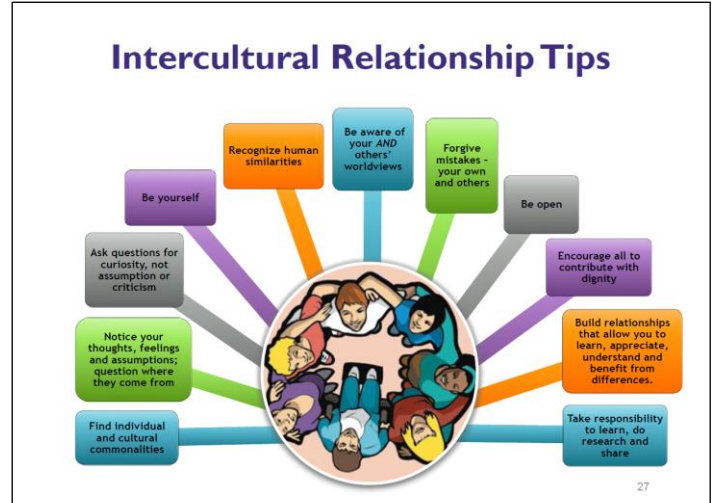
- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sask Health Authority</li> <li>• City of Regina</li> <li>• Regina Police Service</li> <li>• Al Ritchie Community Association</li> <li>• Islamic Association of Saskatchewan</li> <li>• Oeklynks Foundation Inc.</li> <li>• New Canadian Integration Society</li> <li>• Sask Arts Alliance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regina Fire and Protective Services</li> <li>• The Saskatchewan Organization for Heritage Languages Inc.</li> <li>• Sask Housing Authority</li> <li>• Knox Metropolitan Church</li> <li>• RRLIP Immigrant Advisory Table Members</li> <li>• Regina Open Door Society</li> <li>• Catholic Family Services</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Energy in Action for Regina Community Health</li> <li>• Canadian Heritage</li> <li>• Le Réseau en immigration francophone de la Saskatchewan</li> <li>• Canachina Financial Translating &amp; Consulting Co.</li> <li>• <b>And other organizations and individual community members...</b></li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|

## INTERCULTURAL RELATIONSHIP BUILDING & ANTI-RACISM PRESENTATION

MCoS addressed these topics in a presentation for the attendees:

- What is Intercultural Competence?
- Cultural Norms
- Perceptions and Biases
- Goals of Anti-Racism Education
- What is Race?
- Race as a Social Construct
- Forms of Racism
- Impacts of Racism
- Colonial Challenges
- TRC Calls to Action
- Intercultural Relationship Tips

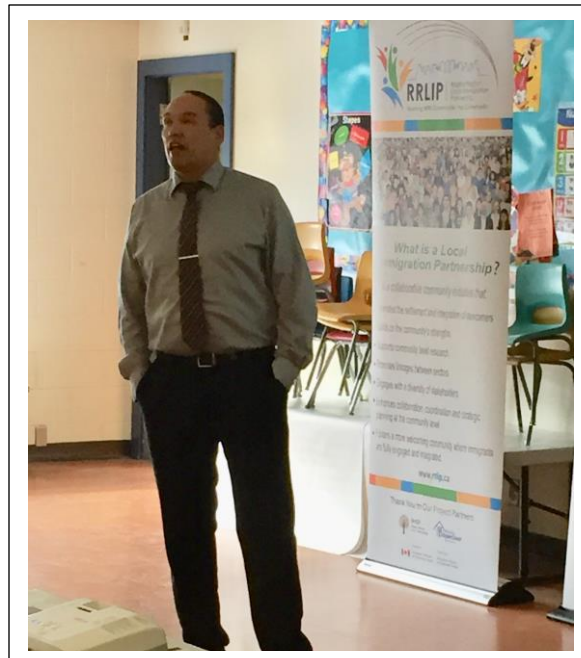
MCoS shared their willingness to present this information to any interested organization or group in Saskatchewan. Contact MCoS for more information [mcos@mcos.ca](mailto:mcos@mcos.ca)



## GUEST SPEAKERS

Indigenous leader, Brad Bellegarde, shared his insights about growing up as an "Indian kid" struggling to fit in to either the city life or life on the reserve. Brad drew a parallel between his life and that of a newcomer, with both lacking a sense of belonging. His presentation began with a spoken word performance that immediately provided insight into his life and what he's had to overcome.

Brad ended his presentation by emphasizing the need for bridging cultures and that one way to accomplish that is through dialogue between cultures (e.g. attending and taking part in a round dance – sharing food and culture with one another).





Zainabu Mwangangi shared her humorous insights as a Muslim woman living in Regina. She highlighted the myths and misconceptions she held as a newcomer, and also those held by Canadian-born residents. Zainabu talked about wearing a Hijab and what that means for her. She emphasized her desire for her, and her children, to be open and willing to accept questions, so others may learn about their culture and beliefs. Zainabu ended her presentation by expressing her desire to build bridges between cultures. She stressed this may be accomplished by providing more opportunities to learn from one another, thus breaking down the barriers between us. She also highlighted the need to engage newcomers themselves and not just service providers in events like these.

### TABLE TALK ACTIVITY

---

MCoS facilitated a *pair activity* meant to encourage thoughtful conversation about the differences and similarities between two people. Each pair also discussed their experiences with other cultures, shared challenges around intercultural relationships and ideas for bridging cultures. The pair discussions were lively and engaging.

### GROUP ACTIVITY

---

Participants were asked to work as a table group to capture ideas about: *"How can our community improve at bridging different cultures? What's your ideal?"*

#### Answers included:

- Dialogue
- Social interactions beyond social media
- Use kindness when we make mistakes – leading to self-awareness
- Talk about fears as a community and how to dismantle those fears
- Practicums for all fields of education
- Ideal – total integration, participation, accessibility without assimilation
- Blanket Exercise in daycares/schools
- Youth ambassadors
- Acknowledge barriers
- More cultural content on radio/television
- HR strategies that reflect the diverse community of Regina
- More involvement/engagement of Community Centres
- Better public transit to improve access for all
- More multicultural events
- Incentives to provide more opportunities to youth

- Tax incentive for cultural and language workers
- Ideal – everyone is equal in political and economic status; different cultures and religions existing in harmony
- Bring people together for conversation and food to share your own culture, your norms, etc.
- Don't exclude people of other cultures/ask questions to better understand
- Being politically correct sometimes leads to people being afraid to ask questions
- Include all people, not just stakeholders at events
- Have Canadians teach newcomers tips; will help to create relationships
- Ask questions; smile more often; listen to people
- Educate school staff about other cultures, religions, etc.
- Start by saying hello
- Make people think about what Canadian culture is rather than telling them how to act
- Do joint projects with different cultural groups – no one should be the dominant group
- Work together on a service project
- Have women from different cultural groups learn some crafts from each other's countries which could be sold in a common location; this is a good opportunity to share culture and make some money
- Understand the Truth in Truth and Reconciliation
- Provide opportunities for more intercultural interactions
- More resources are needed to support cultural education and language retention and sharing
- Make an effort to understand the home situation of Indigenous children
- Create platforms for interaction, with and across cultural groups
- Awareness education



## EVENT EVALUATION

---

Participants were asked to complete a brief evaluation of the event.

### 1. Did you receive a satisfactory update from the RRLIP?

**YES** (100% of survey respondents). Comments included: "create more time for attending organizations to network; great event; well organized"

## **2. Please list something(s) you learned today about another culture:**

### **Answers included:**

- Learned more about Chinese culture
- In the Irish culture people are not afraid to die and celebrate when people die
- Learned from a French speaking person
- Enjoyed the two guest presenters
- Learned about personal identity
- Ask questions when you are uncertain about a cultural element in someone's life
- Strong guest speakers
- Similarities that exist between cultures
- There are many similarities between many cultures
- I share many similarities with people from different cultures
- We all have so many similarities
- Culture around death is much different than mine
- Tobacco is part of the Kenyan culture
- In Nigerian culture, they also offer their elders tobacco, similar to First Nations culture
- We are all similar in ways we do not imagine

## **3. What, if anything, will you do differently as a result of today's discussions? I (or our agency) will...**

### **Answers included:**

- Ask questions
- Engage in good conversation
- Dialogue whenever possible
- Make more time for community discussions
- Share more personal stories about my culture so others can understand better
- Include newcomers in events; create opportunities for dialogue
- Make more efforts to get people together for discussion about cultural similarities and difference
- Encourage dialogue and interchanges between cultures
- Connect to other service providers
- Continue to encourage others to learn about First Nations culture
- Look for similarities instead of differences
- Know that many people just want the chance to be heard

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE INFORMATION GAINED FROM THE COMMUNITY FORUM**

---

Forum participants will receive the report through email. The report will also be shared widely with the broader community through inclusion on the RRLIP project blog, project newsletters, RRLIP website and in meetings with stakeholders.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

### *The RRLIP is a community initiative that...*

- **Convenes** a multi-sector Council, diverse Immigrant Advisory Table and Working Groups to support the community's settlement and integration priorities
- **Strengthens** the local capacity to integrate newcomers
- **Increases knowledge** about newcomer needs, strengths and local strategies for support
- **Promotes** welcoming attitudes and increases the full participation of newcomers in the Regina community

The RRLIP project is very grateful for the **collaborative partnership with MCoS**, which created an opportunity for important community dialogue around the topic of cultural bridging.

Many thanks to all **forum participants**, who discussed the topic openly and honestly, and offered viable solutions to enhanced cultural bridging in our community.

Finally, thank you to the **RRLIPs project partners and funder**, for without their support, this forum would not have been possible.

