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FOREWORD

Many of the human service organizations in Canada are aware of the racial, cultural and other types of social diversity in the communities that they serve, and know that they have to develop their capacity for serving those groups effectively. They want to become diversity-competent. This means that they want to be competent in providing services to people from various social and cultural backgrounds. They want to have a diverse Board, a diverse workforce, and a diverse volunteer base. They want to provide services that are socially and culturally appropriate for diverse groups in the community.

The challenge for human service agencies lies in the process of becoming diversity-competent. Where do they start? What do they have to do? Where will they find the people who can help them do it? How will going through organizational change to develop diversity-competence affect the regular work they have to do and the services that they have to provide right now? Where will they find the time to make the changes and to provide the necessary training to staff and volunteers? Equally important, where will they find the money to do all these things?

This resource manual has been written for non-profit human service agencies. It provides a framework that these agencies can use to develop their competence in providing services to diverse groups in the community. This framework includes a definition of diversity-competence and best practices for developing this competence within non-profit, human service agencies.

The manual has been designed primarily for senior managers of non-profit, human service agencies. It has been designed to function as both a planning resource and a training resource. Each module has been designed as a “stand-alone” document. Together, the modules constitute a set of planning tools for diversity-competence and a training program on the latter.

This manual represents one of the many efforts that ordinary Canadians are making to develop a society that values diversity among people and promotes equal and fair treatment of all people, regardless of their particular social or biological characteristics. From this perspective, the manual is not only about diversity-competence within human service organizations. It is also about building a diverse and egalitarian society for all people.

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Angela Nijhar	-	Community Leadership Alliance of Peel
Veronica Tyrell	-	Halton Caribbean Canadian Association
Suzanne Muir	-	Halton District School Board
Laila Eiriksson	-	Halton Multicultural Council
Sophia Makridis	-	Halton Multicultural Council
Elizabeth Carmichael	-	North Halton Cultural Awareness Council
Lenora Sleep	-	Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse
Heather Hufton	-	Peel Literacy Guild
Joanne Preston	-	SAVIS
Elcira Salas	-	SAVIS
Sunanda Mohanty	-	Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre
Lorna Dixon	-	Telecare Distress Centre Brampton
Maureen Brown	-	Independent Consultant

HOW TO CONTACT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Paula DeCoito and Dr. Laurie Williams, in care of:

The Social Planning Council of Peel

1515 Matheson Blvd. E. #103

Mississauga, Ontario L4W 2P5

Telephone: (905) 629-3044

Fax: (905) 629-7773

Email: info@spcpeel.com