

Forty two years
of services to communities



Intercultural Institute of Montreal

May 2005

The intercultural Institute of Montreal is probably most known for its non-mainstream and radical thinking in matters of cultural diversity in societies around the world and for its discourse on the nature of pluralism. It is also known locally for its variety of programs of public education, intercultural training and research-action. And internationally IIM's journal INTERculture has established its reputation in some circle of intellectuals, for providing seminal thinking in cross-cultural social critic and search for alternatives.

IIM is less known for the numerous services to persons, to families, to communities, to 'professionals', to institutions that it has been offering over the past four decades. And almost all of these services are given without a fee. We receive no funding for redering these services. Why is it so?

Are we to think that there is a particular definition of what constitutes a 'service'? It seems there are tacit norms for considering what should be recognized as services that are worth financial support, such as services that respond to the needs related to poverty, health, physical subsistence, and shelter.

What about our responsibility of combating social ills, such as prejudices, discrimination, ethnocentrism, subjugation of peoples that constantly poison our minds and attitudes towards "others"? And these in turns very often flare up in inter-racial and inter-religious tension, intercultural and inter-group conflicts that effect social cohesion, community living and family's and person's mental health!

What is needed to assume that responsibility? Giving adequate information? Awareness-raising? Acquiring abilities to act when a crisis arises? Providing "tools" to help key social actors in order to prevent intercultural, inter-racial, inter-religious tensions in our society? Helping an immigrant mother in distress regarding her teen-age daughter's culturally unacceptable behavior that is tearing apart the whole family? Or when a social-worker/health-care worker, frantically seeking professional guidance to deal with a crisis in a family that is culturally different?

**Don't the "services" responding to these urgent social needs
deserve financial support and sustenance?**

**Annual Fundraising Campaign
2005**

INTERCULTURALITY

A way to justice and social cohesion in a plural world

DOCUMENTATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES

The library and documentation centre was established in 1963 at the time of the founding of the Intercultural Institute of Montreal. The entire collection of intercultural documentation and resources offers a profound understanding of cultural pluralism, intercultural relations and helps promote research on

intercultural alternatives. The collection contains especially philosophical, anthropological, psychological and sociological studies on cultures and intercultural issues. Moreover a particular attention is given to narrative discourses and oral traditions.

Some data on our collection:

Books	6 000
Articles and reports	3 800
Magazines, periodicals and journals	140
Audio discs and cassettes	150
Video cassettes	80
Ethnographic illustrations	600

INTERculture JOURNAL

This is an international journal of intercultural and transdisciplinary research, published bi-annually in French and in English editions. This year we have begun to publish an Italian edition. Its consulting editorial team is composed of writers, scholars and social activists from various regions of the world.

The journal is reputed for its in-depth intercultural analysis and reflections on contemporary social issues at local and international levels. The subscribers to the journal comprise many institutions such as, universities, libraries and individuals and it is distributed in 30 different countries. This is the 37th year of this publication (since 1968). Most of the past issues can be steel be bought or consulted on the spot.

A list of last issues of Interculture

- ii "Diversity of Educational Cultures". By *Grimaldo Rengifo* and *Lomomba Emongo*. Issue 148.
- ii "The terrorism of money. Intercultural perspectives" (I). By *Robert Vachon*. Issue 147.
- ii "Beyond the religion and culture of Human Rights, the Nation State and the Rule of Law. A chronicle / testimony of IIM's research-action (1970-2002)" (III), By *Robert Vachon*. Issue 146.
- ii "Worldviers in collision. The Challenge of Genetic Engineering". By *Scott Eastham*. Issue 145.

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REFERRAL SERVICES AND ETHNODOC

Every year between 250 to 350 people seek this service. This service is supported by a database comprising documented community resources within diverse ethnocultural communities. This database contains more than 600 descriptive notices and 40

titles of catalogues and specialized directories. This body of information allows us to maintain the quality of our referral services.

Statistical Profile 2004

Total users:

Information and referral to other organizations and institutions	50%
Documentation referral	35%
Cultural resource-persons	15%

User's Profile

ii Public institutions (health and social services, Educational institutions, government institutions)	35%
ii Non-profit and Community organizations and individuals including students	45%

INTERCULTURAL CONSULTING SERVICE

The Intercultural Consulting Service responds to a variety of professional, social and personal needs of individuals facing difficult situations related to cultural, religious and racial diversity in our society.

Topics and issues treated: relations between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Quebec and Canada, religious diversity and interreligious dialogue, immigrant settlement and integration policies and programs, initiating intercultural training programs, mixed marriages, international development and interculturality, intercultural conflict resolution, international adoption and intercultural issues and much more.

Some data about this service in 2004:

Number of individual based consultations given	118
Evaluation and assessment of articles, theses and projects	15

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The Intercultural Newsbulletin is a very effective tool to disseminate information about cultural and intercultural activities that are going on in Montreal and other regions of Quebec. Moreover, it helps

us to maintain links with various ethnocultural and intercultural organizations.

Total subscribers	600
Community organizations	65%
Public institutions	35%

1963 - Our story in brief - 2005

For the first two decades (1960s and 1970s), the Intercultural Institute of Montreal had devoted its energy toward opening up various vistas for reflection and raising public awareness of cultural, racial and religious diversity in Quebec and Canadian societies as well as in the world. In order to reach this goal, a multitude of programs and services were developed and offered to the general public, communities and institutions. Features of our action had been the following : providing information on cultures and religions of the world, giving voices to the immigrant and ethnocultural communities, exposing immigrant communities to the culture(s) of the host society, advocacy for the Aboriginal Nations of Canada, offering innovative intercultural education and training programs for the key actors (professionals) in community organizations and in various institutions, elaborating methodologies and approaches for intercultural and inter-religious relations and for research-action, publishing an international Journal INTERculture and other documents.

Since mid-1980s we have integrated explicitly three other features into our action, namely the international dimension of interculturality, empirical research-action projects on social issues concerning diverse communities and research-action for intercultural community development. Moreover, the inclusion of local-global and North-South dynamics of interculturality and the concern for affecting social change in the pluralistic context of our societies, had given a new direction to our work.

Thus since 1990s a new image of the Intercultural Institute of Montreal began to emerge. Today its vision, philosophy and action are articulated around three fundamental notions: *grassroots*, *interculturality* and *alternatives*. Revitalization of civil society and its diverse communities, engaging in community-based interculturalism and search for intercultural alternatives for our common good, find their expression in our programs, activities and services.

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