What is multiculturalism

Multiculturalism supports the belief in Canada that all citizens are equal. Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can maintain their identities, take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. It supports our shared values of human rights, inclusion and mutual respect.

Our country's collective identity is rooted in the recognition that our many languages, traditions and beliefs enrich our social fabric. In fact, Canada was the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy in 1971 and further committed to this value by enshrining it in law through the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988.

Multiculturalism is not just a characteristic of our society, but a source of strength and resilience. Because they live in the world's first nation to have an official policy on multiculturalism, the people of Canada know that diversity enriches cultural expression, contributes to innovation in the workplace, stimulates creativity, and helps expand markets for goods and services.

Multiculturalism helps Canada forge new links with countries around the world and supports its role in international affairs and the global economy.

Multiculturalism at its core encourages all Canadians to take an active role in society and to build inter-cultural understanding. It strives to unite people in Canada to act against discrimination based on race, ethnic origin and religious belief.

The Canadian Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantee that all Canadian citizens have rights and responsibilities—including equality before and under law, and equal protection and benefit of law—no matter where they come from.