



Learning Arabic; from the left : Éric Mercier, GMR, Maïsa Askari, teacher, and Carl Pilon, GMG.

Foreign Language Training Is Key to Social Integration Abroad

All in all, I believe that the time I spent in language training prior to arriving at post was extremely valuable and has helped me in my transitions. Many of my colleagues who did not have the time to benefit from such an experience have expressed their regret and say that they wished they had received training before the posting, because once they are here they are usually too busy to concentrate on improving their language skills. ... the depth and richness of your interactions is greatly enhanced when you can conduct at least some of your affairs in Malay.
—Foreign language student, 1999

Foreign Language training can be an essential building block of overseas effectiveness. Language proficiency can provide independence, facilitate social adaptation, demonstrate individual commitment and provide understanding of the host nation. Even when foreign language proficiency is not necessarily required on the job, the Department has been committed, since 1983, to the principle that employees and their families need access

to language training to increase their personal effectiveness and sense of well-being in an overseas environment.

In anticipation of this year's posting season, the Centre for Language Training (CFLS) has announced its calendar of the foreign language training programs that will be available to employees and members of their families being assigned this year. For the first time, French and English training will also be offered as part of the Social Integration program. These courses should be of particular interest to spouses and family members.

The training objectives of the Social Integration programs are to:

- develop a limited knowledge of the foreign language in preparation for an assignment;
- communicate with the people of the host country in everyday life situations;
- facilitate social integration of the family into the country of assignment; and
- ease the impact of the cultural shock experiences at the beginning of an assignment abroad.

After completion of the program, graduates will be able to:

- ask and answer questions dealing with everyday situations,

- give and understand information and directions,
- participate in casual conversations,
- give basic information about themselves, their family or associates,
- avoid basic cultural errors, and
- have operational foreign language skills.

Check out the course dates on the CFSI Intranet site or for further information contact J. Guitard, Registrar (CFLS) (Phone: 953-4751/Fax: 953-3632).

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 English Editor: Sharon Kessel, CFSD
 French Editor: Christine Moisan, CFSD
 Writer/Editor: Suzanne Friedlaender
 Co-ordination & Photos: Jean-Pierre Leduc, CFSM

Where to reach us:

Canadian Foreign Service Institute – CFSI 944-0011
 Centre for International Affairs Learning and Management Development – CFSD 944-7763
 Centre for Corporate Services Learning – CFSS 944-0616
 Centre for Language Training – CFLS 953-4751
 Centre for Intercultural Learning – CFSC 997-1197
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