

Language Training

If you are proficient in English, French or both, you have a good language base for working in many areas of the world and communicating effectively. But if you are planning to work in a country that is neither Anglophone nor Francophone, you will have communication problems. If you are planning to learn the language of your host country, you might consider beginning your studies before your departure by obtaining audio tapes or registering in a language course.

Culture Shock

Many people who go overseas to work experience what is commonly referred to as culture shock. Although its intensity varies from one individual to another, most people experience a period of cultural adjustment. Symptoms include:

- a feeling of anger, frustration and irritability, and loss of sense of humour;
- withdrawal, spending excessive amounts of time alone, or spending time only with Canadians or other foreigners and avoiding contact with local citizens;

- negative feelings about the people and culture of the host country;
- compulsive eating and drinking, and a need for excessive amounts of sleep; and
- boredom, tiredness, and an inability to concentrate or work effectively.

You should also be aware that you might experience a reverse form of culture shock after living abroad. Be prepared to face a period of readjustment when you return to Canada. For more information about the symptoms of culture shock and coping strategies, see Alan Cumyn's book *What in the World Is Going On?: A Guide for Canadians Wishing to Work, Volunteer or Study in Other Countries* and other recommended reading listed at the back of this booklet.

Preparing for Your Return Before You Leave

Before you leave Canada, it is a good idea to assess how working abroad fits into the context of your career and life goals. Bear in mind that, after living overseas, returning to Canada can be difficult and stressful. Coming home