

Cultural attachés and academic and cultural communities meet in Ottawa

On December 2-4, 1991, the officers responsible for the delivery of International Cultural Relations programs at key missions abroad met in Ottawa with over 40 representatives of Canada's cultural and academic communities.

This was the first time such consultations occurred and it was agreed by the officers from overseas, the International Cultural Relations Bureau and members of the Canadian cultural and academic worlds that the personal contacts developed were vital and similar meetings should be held regularly.

Unity and Competitiveness

The main purpose for the consultations was to evaluate how the \$26 million spent annually on the ICR program might best contribute to the two overriding government objectives of national unity and competitiveness.

The talks pinpointed the economic significance of culture to Canada, the ability of ICR to project Canadian identity abroad, the export and marketing of cultural products, strengthening domestic and foreign partnerships, the necessity of focusing efforts on key markets such as the Group of Seven leading industrial countries (G-7) and Mexico, and discussed issues pertaining to touring of major performing arts companies, museum exchange, and sport as a diplomatic instrument as means to further the twin goals of unity and competitiveness.

The Projection of Canadian Identity Abroad

Canadians are seen as creative, original, and unique. What other country is an amalgam of aboriginal heritage, two founding immigrant movements, and a modern multicultural state?

It's artistic achievements frequently receive a warm reception abroad and give Canada an enviable reputation as a source of invention and excellence in the arts.

Through the playback of this international reputation

to Canadians, it is possible to reinforce a sense of pride at home.

Education and Prosperity

Nowhere is there a clearer link between economic prosperity and cultural relations than that between competitiveness and education.

In a global competitive economy high skill, high value jobs will gravitate to the countries with the best and most available talent. Education is becoming more and more vital to the economic well-being of a nation.

Fully three-quarters of the ICR budget is devoted to Academic Relations. Issues of importance raised at the consultations included the internationalization of the campus, the relationships possible between non-governmental organizations and the posts, and the need to harmonize academic relations with the other programs of the post.

Export Marketing of Cultural Products

The consultations highlighted the need for departments, agencies and missions abroad to work in close collaboration with the Canadian film, television, recording and publishing industries to target promotional activities which meet both our cultural and economic needs.

Toward this end, representatives of the cultural industries felt that posts abroad should be providing the following services:

- seeking out and remitting market intelligence, particularly on niches that Canada can exploit;
- support of marketing;
- continuing reinforcement of activities ensuring that permanence is maintained;
- feedback to exporters.

It would greatly assist in these efforts if cultural officers had the same tools as were available to their colleagues, such as information systems and access to Canadian marketplaces.



Cultures International is a publication of External Affairs and International Trade Canada's International Cultural Relations Bureau (BKD).

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Circulation: 5 000