

STUDENT'S HANDOUT

ABORIGINAL YOUTH HERE AND ABROAD



Background Information

Guyana, a country on the north shore of South America, is currently suffering from political instability and numerous social divisions. Nine aboriginal cultures and five other ethnic groups inhabit the country, meaning that keeping one's cultural identity and maintaining traditions are not easy tasks. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provides funds for projects initiated by NGOs that contribute to social development and governance. Hence, organisations such as the Ghost River Rediscovery Society are able to send young Canadians overseas in the context of leadership development projects for aboriginal youth.

Sources: CIDA and the Ghost River Rediscovery Society



Instructions

Read the following text. Then, create a short radio message approximately 30 seconds long to present to the class. Your message must communicate the importance and pertinence of NGOs such as the Ghost River Rediscovery Society and their projects, as much for Canadian youth as for aboriginal youth of other countries. Use the text to develop your arguments: what could such an experience mean to Canadian youth? To youth in the host community? Why should we continue to encourage such projects? Do not forget that your message is directed to your audience, to convince the public of the merits of your argument. You will not further your argument with gestures and facial expressions, but rather with the intonation of your voice.



Aboriginal Youth Here and Abroad



Several years ago the Ghost River Rediscovery Society (GRR) from Calgary, Alberta, developed a foreign exchange program to a Macushi aboriginal community in the Rupununi region of Guyana. Youth between the ages of 18 and 30 participate in the project for several weeks. The first part of the exchange takes place in Canada, where the youth take part in different activities and events such as conferences dealing with aboriginal issues, outdoor activities, and wilderness survival. The second part takes place in Guyana where participants work in collaboration with the Bina Hill research institute. This institute focuses on aboriginal communities and cultural development.

In the face of addiction, crime, and other family problems, the GRR offers activities at camps that it owns in the Nakoda nation's territory, for youth from both aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities. While experiencing forest life and reviving First Nation traditions, the youth enhance their self-esteem and self-confidence.

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In accordance with these objectives, the GRR participates in a very special program, the Youth Leadership Program. This project unites numerous youth from diverse regions of the world, providing a cultural exchange and creating links of solidarity between the youth.

In Guyana, the interns participate in a wide variety of activities, from giving training in local schools to organizing cultural activities for youth and elders in regional villages. The program emphasises awareness of oneself, and learning about aboriginal culture in Canada and abroad.

This example of partnership between First Nation community organisations shows to what point cultural exchange and international collaboration can promote the development of a young generation, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal, who are involved in their communities. This project teaches the youth aboriginal values and traditions, encourages them to broaden their horizons, and to enhance their respect for differences through awareness of diverse cultures.

	Guyana	Canada
Country :	Co-operative Republic of Guyana	Canada
Capital :	Georgetown	Ottawa
Population (in millions of inhabitants):	0.767 (2004)	32.0 (2004)
Population density (per km ²):	4 (2004)	3 (2004)
Urban population (%-2003):	38%	80%
Life expectancy at birth:	57 years (1960), 63 years (2003)	71 years (1960), 79 years (2003)
Mortality rate for children under age 5 (per 1000 children):	126 (1960), 69 (2003)	33 (1960), 6 (2003)
Adult literacy rate (% 2000-2004):		
<input type="checkbox"/> Total	99	99
<input type="checkbox"/> Men	99	99
<input type="checkbox"/> Women	98	99



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