

GENERATION ONE: LIVING IN TWO WORLDS

Introduction

Focus

Canadian multiculturalism has become a legally and politically entrenched institution, as well as an identifiable and, for many other countries, an enviable characteristic of Canadian life. But today's Generation One youths are challenging this multicultural ideal as they struggle to secure an identity within Canadian society. This *News in Review* story profiles the experiences of various Generation Ones and examines their imprint on Canada's cultural fabric.

Did you know . . .

In 1988, the federal government passed the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, which recognizes the importance of preserving and enhancing the heritage of Canadians, protecting the rights of aboriginal peoples, and ensuring that every person is equal under the law regardless of his/her ethnicity.

Canada's ethnically diverse population is often referred to as a cultural mosaic. According to Statistics Canada, recent census data identified over 200 ethnic origins and 100 languages spoken in the country. One out of every five persons in Canada was born in another country, with the vast majority of new immigrants settling in Canada's three largest cities: Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. Canada's ethno-cultural diversity is expected to further increase, and by 2016, it is estimated that foreign-born youth and Canadian-born youth from immigrant families will make up a quarter of the country's population. This number will increase to nearly one-half of Canadians by 2031, with the majority of immigrants coming from Asia and the Middle East.

Diversity will also continue to grow among "Generation Ones," who are defined as the first generation born in Canada to immigrant parents. Almost one-half of this demographic group is projected to belong to a visible minority—nearly double the proportion reported in the 2006 census. However, Canada's ideal of multiculturalism is

under greater scrutiny as new data and surveys reveal significant challenges facing today's Generation One youths. Contrary to past assumptions that Generation One youths are high achievers, some groups, especially those from some visible minorities, continue to face discrimination, wage gaps, and barriers to post-secondary opportunities. In addition, these Canadian-born youths seem to be caught between the customs, cultures, and expectations of their immigrant parents and the need to find acceptance within societal norms—especially those of their teenaged peers.

In order to learn more about this group of Canadians, Nahlah Ayed, an award-winning CBC journalist, returned to her old school, Churchill High School, in her hometown of Winnipeg, Manitoba, to investigate why today's Generation One youths do not feel "100 per cent Canadian." A Canadian-born daughter of Palestinian immigrants, Ayed and her journey not only reflect her own Generation One experiences but highlight the struggles encountered by today's Generation One youths in their search for Canadian identity.

To Consider

1. What does it mean to you to be Canadian? Reflect on your own experience or those of your classmates.
2. Do you think Canada's multiculturalism makes it easier or more difficult for new immigrants and Generation Ones to feel they belong to Canadian society? Explain.

GENERATION ONE: LIVING IN TWO WORLDS

Video Review

Pre-viewing Questions

With a partner or in a small group, discuss and respond to the following questions.

1. Are you a newcomer, a Generation One, or some other generation of Canadian?

2. Do you speak a language other than English or French at home? Which one(s)?

3. Would you classify yourself as a visible minority?

4. With which ethno-cultural group(s) would you identify yourself?

Viewing Questions

As you watch the video, respond to the the questions in the spaces provided.

1. How are Generation One Canadians defined?

2. Do Generation One citizens feel 100 per cent Canadian? Why or why not?

3. Why do some parents of Generation One youths think they are in a cultural war zone 24/7?

4. Why do some Generation One youths feel less Canadian at home compared with when they are at school?

5. What do recent surveys tell us about today's Generation One youths?

6. What are these people's viewpoints on being Canadian: Nahlah Ayed (reporter), Tariq (Generation One student), Shirin (Tariq's mom from Egypt), Melissa (Generation One student), Elizabeth (Melissa's mom from Portugal)?

7. Why is the struggle for a Canadian identity among today's Generation One youths a potential concern for our society?

Post-viewing Questions

1. Review your answers from the Pre-viewing Questions and reflect on your responses from the Viewing Questions. Has watching the video changed your views regarding what it means to be Canadian? If so, in what way(s)?

2. Based on the viewpoints of the Generation One youths in the video, do you think we should be greatly concerned, somewhat concerned, or not concerned about how they feel about being Canadian? Support and discuss your position.

GENERATION ONE: LIVING IN TWO WORLDS

Generational and Cultural Conflicts

Focus for Reading

While you read this section, complete a multiple causation web. A copy of this organizer can be accessed at <http://newsinreview.cbclearning.ca/wp-content/uploads/worksheets/nir-sw2-multiple-consequences2.pdf>.

In the centre triangle write *Generation One* and then record all of the challenges impacting today's Generation One youths.

Today's Generation One youths describe themselves as living in two, at times conflicting, worlds: the cultural expectations of their immigrant parents and the social norms of their Canadian peer group. They often feel they do not fit in to Canada's diverse cultural landscape. Along with dealing with typical teenage pressures about acceptance and popularity, this demographic group, especially those belonging to visible minorities, is exhibiting a drop in post-secondary education, income earnings, and an overall sense of belonging to Canadian society. These trends, coupled with Statistics Canada's population projection that by 2031 almost one-half of Generation One Canadians will belong to a visible minority, are prompting increased research and more programs to strengthen their societal integration and enhance their sense of self-esteem.

Education

Canadian immigrant students, including both newcomers and Generation One students, have ranked at the top of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) standardized tests of math and reading. Statistics Canada has reported that Generation One youths tend to have lower high school drop-out rates when compared with youths of Canadian-born parents (www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2007110/article/10372-eng.htm).

However, what these studies fail to show is that "not all immigrant groups are thriving in Canadian schools." The success of groups from China and other Asian countries is "masking the struggles of others" (*The Globe and Mail*, January 22, 2011). For example, the Toronto District School Board, where 70 per cent of students from grades seven through 12 have both parents born outside Canada, noted that students from Latin American or Caribbean immigrant groups have some of the lowest rates of post-secondary education. Student responses indicated that discrimination, difficulties with language, and low levels of income prevented them from entering post-secondary institutions.

Filipino youths, part of an immigrant community that has become a prominent source of workers for Canada's caregiving industries, are showing declining numbers of university-degree completion—from 37 per cent for newcomers to 24 per cent in the Generation One category. Lengthy separation of family members, financial pressures to send earnings back home, and efforts to leave caregiving jobs in order to retrain for alternate employment, are placing additional strains on the next generation (*The Globe and Mail*, March 19, 2011). Even though the overall percentage of Generation One youths attending university is higher than that of its non-immigrant counterparts, ensuring that all immigrant groups have academic

success is vital to Canada's economic future.

Income

Canadian multiculturalism involves the long-standing belief that the children of immigrants will do better economically than their parents (*The Globe and Mail*, February 26, 2011). But how well are the offspring of immigrants—especially visible minorities—really doing?

Research indicates that the cultural, linguistic, economic, and educational barriers faced by their immigrant parents may continue to persist into the ranks of Generation One Canadians (Association for Canadian Studies, http://canada.metropolis.net/publications/Diversity/can_diversity_vol_62_spring08_e.pdf).

Discrimination plays a significant role in the workplace, starting with the job application process. Researchers have found that “applicants with English-sounding names were 40 per cent more likely to get an interview than those with identical resumes and an Indian or Chinese name” (*The Globe and Mail*, February, 26, 2011). The result? Visible minority Generation Ones may experience lower levels of employment and income earnings than non-visible minority groups. For males with similar educational and employment experience, the income gap is 18 per cent. Females appear to have a smaller gap, at three per cent, due to the fact that young women with immigrant parents tend to live at home longer, were less likely to be married or have children, and predominantly lived in large urban centres with greater employment opportunities (Statistics Canada, www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2007110/article/10372-eng.htm).

Researchers also found income disparities among visible minority Generation One groups when compared with their non-minority, Canadian-born

counterparts. For example, the wage gap for Canadian-born children of Chinese immigrants was eight per cent, for South Asians it was 13 per cent, and for African-Canadians it was approximately 19 per cent. This wage gap tends to decline over time for some groups, but does not completely disappear, which may cause future social tensions.

Family Expectations

The relationship between immigrant parents and their Canadian-born children is one that is often stereotyped as a clash of cultures. In reality, this relationship is complex and dynamic. Parenting teenagers can be stressful at the best of times, but employment and income loss, language barriers, and a lack of familiarity with Canadian social institutions and cultural values pose additional challenges for immigrant parents.

Often many immigrant parents work multiple jobs or face re-training and underemployment. As a result, their children may share less of their parent's time, and some offspring may need to work in order to contribute to the family income. Female family members might also be required to work which, in some cultures, challenges their traditional norms. A role reversal can occur in families when immigrant parents need to rely on the language skills and societal awareness of their children. Some parents may find this shift in authority difficult and feel they are losing their position as the heads of the household (Association for Canadian Studies, Canadian Diversity, http://canada.metropolis.net/pdfs/Pgs_can_diversity_parents_spring08_e.pdf).

The CBC's *The National's* Generation One feature further examined the impact of immigrant parents' expectations on their Canadian-born children. In it, journalist Nahlah Ayed reflects on her

experience growing up in a Generation One cohort and how she was encouraged by her parents to embrace the Canadian identity and fit in with Canadian society. She thought of herself as Canadian first and placed her Palestinian ethno-cultural heritage second.

However, many of the parents of today's Generation One youths want their children to know and be proud of their heritage. The mother of Tarek Elmayergi, one of the teenagers featured, wants him to embrace more of his Egyptian background. She says, "I'm not going to turn my back and say, 'Okay, I'm an Egyptian in Egypt, but here I'm going to become Canadian.' I can't do that. They (my Generation One children) can't do that" (CBC News Online, www.cbc.ca/news/yourcommunity/2012/02/are-you-a-generation-one-canadian.html).

These parents also feel at a loss in Canadian society since they were not born or raised in Canada. Like most parents of teenagers, they expressed concern about their children's performance in school and the influences of their peers, but they also want their children to place their cultural heritage at the forefront of who they are.

Possible Solutions

Needless to say, Generation One youths often feel torn between their desire to fit in with their peer groups in Canadian society and their desire to meet their

parent's expectations. Possible solutions to bridge this gap and to help Generation One youths succeed could include the following:

- Expand research to focus on the experiences and perceptions of all family members, especially those from today's Generation One youths.
- Ensure future research makes distinctions between first, second, and third immigrant generations to examine the different expectations and experiences these groups have toward education and employment.
- Extend employment equity laws to the private sector to help close the wage gap between visible minorities and their "white" counterparts.
- Improve co-ordination of educational support from parents, schools, governments, and local communities for youths. Also, restore recent federal funding cuts to Settlement Worker programs in the schools that help newcomer and Generation One students and their parents integrate.
- Broaden availability of community support programs where each adult is paired with a youth who teaches him/her English language and computer skills.
- Help immigrant parents find jobs that recognize their experiences and qualifications through government programs such as the Canadian Immigration Integration Program.

Follow-up

1. Review your completed causation web organizer. Beside each recorded challenge, provide at least one solution you think could help Generation One youth to deal with it.
2. Read the following three statements. Write a one- to two-sentence response for each statement. Pass your responses to at least three other classmates. Review and add new ideas to their responses.

Rakhi Henderson, 42, is a senior brand manager at ING Direct. She recalls her father, a geologist from India, often complaining about the wage gap and being passed over for job opportunities in Canada. Her situation is

markedly different than his, but at times in her career, “there were people that I saw rising very quickly without additional qualifications whereas I was left behind. You never knew, what it is, but there were opportunities where I just went, Hmmm” (*The Globe and Mail*, February 26, 2011).

Carolina Estrella, 17, a high-school student in Toronto, was born in Canada to parents from Uruguay and Ecuador. She should be graduating but has only completed about one-third of the required credits to earn her high school diploma. “You know what the problem is in these school districts? The lower people like the Latinos don’t go to school and don’t graduate. I don’t think it’s our culture, I think it’s more that they don’t have enough money” (*The Globe and Mail*, January 22, 2011).

Sophia Juan, 21, a university student, is the Canadian-born child of immigrants from the Philippines. “Education is really important in my family and in Filipino culture. They always teach you that you have to go on to post-secondary school” (*The Globe and Mail*, January 22, 2011).

3. What do you think are the most serious challenges facing Generation One youth in Canada today? How can they be overcome?

GENERATION ONE: LIVING IN TWO WORLDS

Generation One Profiles

Focus for Reading

In your notebook, create a chart like the one below and, as you read each of the following profiles, record information for each one.

Profile	Heritage	Occupation	Challenges	What it means to be Canadian
Khalid Elgazzar				
Joyce Yan				
Nazem Kadri				
Esi Edugyan				
Ronia Arab				
Sammy Farah				
Jamil Peyawary				

Generation One Canadians are defined as either being born in Canada to immigrant parents or having immigrated to Canada as young children. But let's look beyond this definition and explore their experiences, struggles, and perceptions of what it means to be Canadian. The following profiles outline their varied experiences.

Profile: Khalid Elgazzar

Age: 33 years • Heritage: Egyptian
Occupation: Lawyer living in Ottawa
“When I was in high school, I listened to a lot of hip hop and gangsta rap. I definitely wouldn't be blasting it at home, but if I was at school, I would be playing it and discussing it with my friends. It's sometimes a matter of survival; you want to fit in with your friends and you don't want to fall out with your parents. You live different roles. It's not necessarily healthy. You can sometimes lose yourself and you are not really sure where you belong. There is a responsibility on those who have gone through that experience to say, ‘It's not the end of the world, make sure to communicate with your family, things

will get better’” (*The Globe and Mail*, February 18, 2012).

Profile: Joyce Yan

Age: 22 years • Heritage: Chinese
Occupation: Undergraduate student at Simon Fraser University, British Columbia
“Growing up, I was always strong-headed. Mom said not to go out; I went anyway. I didn't see it as rebellious against my parents. I was just doing what I wanted to do. One day, we got into a big argument about how I was wasting my life away. I used to say to my father all the time: ‘You're not in China. You're in Canada now.’ But within the last few years I've definitely grown up a lot, figured out what I wanted to do. I've settled down and my dad has become more tolerant and understanding. It's wonderful at home now” (*The Globe and Mail*, February 18, 2012).

Profile: Nazem Kadri

Age: 21 • Born: London, Ontario
Heritage: Lebanese • Occupation: NHL hockey player
“First thing that comes to mind when

Quote

“Many immigrant children feel torn about their identity. Sometimes they express their conflict by asserting their Canadian-ness, other times they express it by talking about how they feel excluded.” — Dr. Audrey Kobayashi, cultural geography professor at Queen’s University (CBC News Online, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2012/02/15/f-audio-photos-immigrant-canadian-children.html)

I think of Canada is hockey, pancakes, and the maple leaf. By playing hockey and other sports it helped me to fit in and to become part of Canadian society. I have always felt part of the Canadian culture but do not feel that I have lost my heritage” (CBC News Online, www.cbc.ca/thenational/indepthanalysis/generationone/).

Profile: Esi Edugyan

Age: 33 • Born: Calgary, Alberta
Heritage: Ghanaian • Occupation: Award-winning novelist
“I felt very Canadian growing up. But, of course, my parents’ culture was constantly balanced against the world outside of home. I went to a French immersion school and learned both official languages—an important part of our national fabric. There were very few African-Canadian students at my school and sometimes I was viewed as ‘other.’ Nevertheless, I have always felt Canadian and it is not a big issue for me” (CBC News Online, www.cbc.ca/thenational/indepthanalysis/generationone/).

Profile: Ronia Arab

Age: 16 years • Heritage: Kurdish
Occupation: High school student in Winnipeg, Manitoba
“My parents do not like how I dress. I do not wear revealing clothes, but my dad makes a big deal out of it. He thinks that because of the way I dress, I am acting like a Canadian. He wants me to wear traditional Iraqi clothing and to act like I am from Iraq. But I was born in Canada. I don’t know much about my parents’ culture or homeland since I have never been there. My father wants to send me to Iraq to learn the culture and the lifestyle, but this is not what I want. I have been living away from home for one year. For the future,

I would like a good job and a family” (CBC News Online, www.cbc.ca/news/yourcommunity/2012/02/are-you-a-generation-one-canadian.html).

Profile: Sammy Farah

Age: 14 years • Heritage: Somali
Occupation: High School student in Winnipeg, Manitoba
“Gangs, crime, getting arrested—I’ve seen it happen and I do not want to be a part of it. I want to finish high school and go to college. I don’t want to be just an average person. My mom has been a good influence. She wants me to be a good kid, a good person, and to stay away from drugs—this is what I am working towards. Some immigrant parents are strict since they want their kids to do the right thing and to become better people—this is why they came here” (CBC News Online, www.cbc.ca/news/yourcommunity/2012/02/are-you-a-generation-one-canadian.html).

Profile: Jamil Peyawary

Age: 18 years • Heritage: Afghan
Occupation: Working in a restaurant in Winnipeg, Manitoba
“My parents had a hard life in their home country. From their experiences and stories, I am very grateful to be here in Canada and not there. However, it was difficult as a kid. I was bullied and named called—I tried to correct them that I was Afghan not Pakistani, but it didn’t work. In grade eight and nine I hung around with gang members and thought I could fit in with that crowd. By grade 10 I realized that this was not my scene. The biggest expectation and challenge for my family is to succeed. In the future, I want to become a chef” (CBC News Online, www.cbc.ca/news/yourcommunity/2012/02/are-you-a-generation-one-canadian.html).

Follow-up

1. Using a Venn diagram summarize the challenges that are unique to Generation One Canadian teenagers on one side and challenges that are unique to older Generation One Canadians on the other side. Record challenges that are shared by both groups at the points where the circles overlap. For a template of a Venn diagram, consult <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/venn-diagram-chart-TC030002098.aspx>.
2. For each of the profiles, write a two- or three-line response from the respective parent's point of view. What challenges would they face? What is their perception of being Canadian?
3. Select one of the Generation One profiles and create a mock Facebook profile page for it. Your page could contain information about the person's heritage, occupation, reasons parents came to Canada, and a two- or three-line statement that starts with "Being a Canadian means . . ."

GENERATION ONE: LIVING IN TWO WORLDS

Nahlah Ayed: The Face of Generation One

Focus for Reading

In *The National's* special feature on Generation One youths, journalist Nahlah Ayed commented that, "the place where you grow you grow up makes you. Some parts of it stay with you, even if you leave it behind. While we knew that our origin was from elsewhere, we were Canadian kids." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? As you read the following section, gather evidence to support your position.

Nahlah Ayed, an award-winning CBC journalist and Generation One Canadian of Palestinian background, recently returned to Churchill High School in her hometown of Winnipeg, Manitoba, to report on the cultural struggles facing today's Generation One youths.

Biography

- Born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba
- Palestinian heritage
- Speaks English and Arabic fluently
- Attended Churchill High School in the 1980s
- Graduated from Carleton University's master of journalism program
- Graduated from the University of Manitoba master's degree in interdisciplinary studies program
- Holds a bachelor of science degree from the University of Manitoba
- Former parliamentary reporter for the Canadian Press
- Joined CBC News in 2002 as a foreign news correspondent reporting mostly on Middle East events
- Currently is *The National's* correspondent focusing on Canada's foreign policy, the country's cultural diversity, and international events, especially the Middle East

Source: www.cbc.ca/thenational/about/correspondents/nahlahayed/

Accomplishments

Nahlah Ayed is a familiar and trusted foreign news correspondent, particularly

dealing with events occurring in the Middle East. Reporting for the CBC on national television, radio, and online, Ayed has covered numerous high-profile news stories such as the Iraq war and subsequent fall of its capital, Baghdad (2003), the war in Afghanistan, the Arab Spring (2011-12) political uprisings, and most recently, the crisis in Syria. Ayed has also reported on major stories beyond the Middle East, including the Haiti earthquake, the Pakistan floods, the London riots, and the 2011 mass shootings in Norway.

In 2004 and 2010, Ayed received Gemini awards for her news reports about conflicts in the Middle East. She received a doctor of laws (honorary doctorate degree) from the University of Manitoba in 2008 for her distinguished achievements in broadcast journalism. The University of Manitoba also established the Nahlah Ayed Prize for Student Leadership and Global Citizenship to celebrate the achievements of their former graduate. Ayed joined other prominent Canadian journalists as part of a media panel discussing the high pressures and often dangerous work of foreign news correspondents.

Away from the media spotlight, Ayed penned and recently released a memoir entitled *A Thousand Farewells: A Reporter's Journey from Refugee Camp to the Arab Spring*.

Additional Research

Find out about other famous Generation One Canadians by going to www.cbc.ca/thenational/indepthanalysis/generationone/.

Canadian Identity

Nahlah Ayed offers a unique Generation One experience. Born in Canada to Palestinian immigrant parents, her family returned to the Middle East where she spent a number of childhood years in a refugee camp in Amman, Jordan. As a teenager, she and her family came back to Winnipeg. Some of these experiences were highlighted in her recent book.

But it is in the CBC's *The National*'s Generation One segment where Ayed explores the question of why her sense of being Canadian is different from that of today's generation of high-school students. Attending high school in the mid-1980s, she was one of a few students classified as Generation One.

For Ayed, it was sometimes difficult adjusting to new social norms, but she viewed herself as a Canadian first and someone of Palestinian-Arab background second.

Ayed's journey not only reflects on her Canadian identity, but also the struggles of today's Generation One youth caught between their parent's cultural expectations and their desire to fit in with Canadian society. As the face of Generation One, Ayed's impressive accomplishments as a journalist and a writer, as well as her personal cultural experiences, may help to guide today's Generation One youths in their search for Canadian identity.

Follow-up

1. Now that you have finished reading this section, return to the quote by Ayed in the Focus for Reading section. Has your stance—agree or disagree—in response to her statement changed? If so, why? Discuss your stance with a partner. Does he/she agree or disagree? Why or why not?
2. Select three of Ayed's accomplishments that you found to be most interesting. Explain the reasons for your choices.
3. Do you think Ayed is representative of the faces of today's Generation One youth or is there too much of a generational divide between her and today's Generation Ones? Record and discuss your thoughts.

GENERATION ONE: LIVING IN TWO WORLDS

Activity: The Challenges Facing Gen One

- I don't feel 100 per cent Canadian.
- I act less Canadian at home.
- Where do I fit in with Canadian society?

The statements above mirror recent surveys that indicate that today's Generation One youths do not share the same sense of belonging to Canada as many others. Many Generation One youths feel torn between two worlds—upholding their parent's cultural expectations versus their desire to integrate with Canadian society.

Your Task

Working in small groups, discuss the present concerns and challenges of Generation One youths in Canada, based on your experiences and those of your classmates. Your group will also need to develop a five-point Gen One action plan to outline how each of the following groups can help Generation One youths become: a) aware of the importance of being part of Canada's diverse fabric and b) aware of strategies to help them achieve greater success personally, academically, and in their present or future jobs.

- Teenaged peers
- Parents
- Teachers/guidance counsellors/school administration
- Employers
- Federal, provincial, and municipal governments

Use information from this *News in Review* video and guide as well as the CBC Generation One online link at www.cbc.ca/thenational/indepthanalysis/generationone/ to help develop your action plan.

If appropriate, share your own and/or your classmates' Generation One experiences to help start the discussion about why today's Generation One youths have mixed feelings about being Canadian.

When the Gen One action plans are complete, display, share, and discuss them with the entire class. Select at least one additional suggestion from each of the other groups' action plans that will strengthen your original Gen One action plan. On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), determine and explain how successful your final action plan will be to help Generation One youths integrate into Canadian society.