

PRESS RELEASE

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LAUNCH OF THE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN “WE’RE + ALIKE THAN WE THINK” (*ON SE RESSEMBLE + QU’ON PENSE*)

Sherbrooke, January 15, 2021 – As part of its Dialogue+ project, Actions interculturelles and its partners officially launched today the awareness campaign “We're + alike than we think” (*On se ressemble + qu'on pense*) to counter prejudices towards cultural diversity. The launch ceremony took place via Zoom in the presence of many important stakeholders from the region and young leaders from the Dialogue+ project who support this major initiative designed to foster intercultural understanding.

The Dialogue+ survey, published in March 2019, on the perceptions of the Canadian population regarding discriminatory practices and the phenomenon of violent radicalization, revealed that 31% of the respondents reported having experienced discrimination in the six months preceding the survey. In addition, 53% said they had witnessed discrimination in the same period. In this survey, discrimination included possible hateful gestures, discriminatory or derogatory words directed against respondents or against people around them.

This awareness campaign is therefore a response and an additional tool to position intercultural dialogue as an essential condition for better living together and to make Sherbrooke residents aware of the richness that cultural diversity represents for our community. The “We're + alike than we think” campaign is a concrete illustration of how, beyond any cultural differences, we are all very similar.

This awareness-raising campaign, which targets a wide audience using posters and social media, will be based on visuals featuring Eastern Townships citizens and striking phrases that will highlight our similarities in everyday life while reiterating that our differences, far from being a threat, are a collective asset. Street marketing operations are also planned to reinforce the key message, that “We're + alike than we think”. Free activities and conferences will also be organized, again with the aim of informing and raising awareness among the population.

Dialogue+ is proud to be able to count on the adoption and active participation of some twenty organizations and major institutions in the region that have unanimously expressed their willingness to contribute, in their own way, to the enrichment of intercultural dialogue within their communities. Among the partners are the CIUSSS de l'Estrie - CHUS, the Société de transport de Sherbrooke, the Appalaches bookstore, Estrie Aide, the Cégep de Sherbrooke, the Université de Sherbrooke, Global Excel, and the Sherbrooke Chambre of Commerce and Industry, CGI, to name but a few.



Marie-Ève Genest, pedagogical advisor for internationalization at the Cégep de Sherbrooke, tells us: "*Cultural diversity is not only a richness, but also a reality. The reality of the different cultures that surround us, which we need to integrate into our daily lives. We are + alike than we think, yes, and we must not only live it day after day, but also claim it as our strength.*"

The young leader, Brice Obianga, has a very clear vision of reality : "*As a young Sherbrooke native, from an immigrant background, I evolve in a complex reality where diversity is necessary. The campaign, "We are + alike than we think", gives full meaning to this reality which evolves thanks to the richness of diversity. I am proud to be part of the young leaders of the Dialogue+ project and to have the opportunity to contribute to a society that is increasingly rich in its diversity.*"

About the Dialogue+ project

The Dialogue+ project offers a series of public actions to reinvigorate ethno-cultural relations and foster greater engagement of youth, whether they are Canadian-born or from different cultural communities. This project, which aims to give youth a voice to prevent discrimination and violent radicalization, is carried out thanks to the Mobilisation-Diversité program of the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration. Thanks to this precious support, the young leaders of the project have the opportunity to create spaces for dialogue and to make public interventions in order to foster intercultural understanding: <https://www.aide.org/dialogue-plus/>

About Actions interculturelles

Actions interculturelles is celebrating 30 years of projects, activities, research and training this year promoting a society rich in its diversity. Whether for seniors, women, young people, disabled people, people with a criminal record or integration into employment, all its services have only one goal: sharing between the different communities here and elsewhere to be able to live together in a single community. Convinced that "diversity is people", Actions interculturelles promotes the social, cultural and economic integration of immigrants both in the region and at the provincial, federal and international level: <http://www.aide.org/>

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