Part III
Applying Our Knowledge: Incorporating Multi-Culturalism Into Social Policies and Programs

In this Section we will draw upon the experiences of respondents from multi-cultural families to suggest ways in which a multi-cultural society such as ours can accommodate the diversity of its members more effectively. This section will focus on social relations at all levels: micro level groups, such as the family; meso level groups, such as communities and schools; and the macro level, structures of society as a whole.

Micro-Level Recommendations – Individual Interactions (Chapter 8)

Chapter 8 will begin at the level with which the multi-cultural respondents were most familiar: the family. This chapter will summarize the problems which the multi-cultural respondents had in their formative years, and the ways in which families could assist them in the process. This chapter will focus on micro-level relations, suggesting ways in which families could deal more effectively with their mixed background children. It will also discuss ways in which outside agencies could also provide assistance in the difficult process of "growing up multi-cultural," by providing suggestions for family or individual counselors to use in their work with multi-cultural clients. These recommendations could also be extended to professionals of various types, such as counselors, teachers, and the health professions, for their use in work with individuals and families from mixed racial and cultural backgrounds. Chapter 8 will also describe ways in which the approaches of schools, communities, and government agencies might incorporate multi-cultural-friendly approaches into their policies and procedures.

Meso-Level Recommendations – Community and Institutional Programs (Chapters 9 and 10)

Chapters 9 and 10 move the emphasis to the meso level of social structure: the level of community development and social institutions. These chapters describe

programs which illustrate how multi-culturalism can be incorporated into programs at the level of communities and institutions. Since schools are a major institution in which multi-culturalism is incorporated, and since so many of our respondents specifically mentioned the school as a problematic institutions in their childhoods, we will provide examples of multi-cultural programs in schools, together with their advantages and difficulties. We will also discuss the impact which multi-cultural programs may have on multi-cultural individuals.

As we have suggested, altering social institutions and communities cannot depend upon people of good will operating on an individual-to-individual level. Special programs must be developed which assist these groups and institutions to deal with the problems and difficulties they face. In this instance, we are dealing with the special problems which occur in communities and institutions which encompass persons from a variety of racial and cultural backgrounds. As we suggested at the outset, the experiences of our mixed background respondents provide a useful basis on which to recommend the way in which racial and cultural diversity can be handled in social settings. In this chapter, we will describe two programs which attempt to accommodate the community institutions to the needs of multi-cultural and multi-racial backgrounds. Both programs focus on the school setting. However, both could be adapted to other social institutions, such as religious groups or business organizations, as well as to residential communities, if they sought to achieve improved relations among the diverse ethnic and racial components which make them up.

Choice of the school setting as our example is appropriate for two reasons. First, and most obvious, public schools are responsible for educating all children in their communities. Consequently, the schools are often the first institutions to encounter the problems of diversity, in the person of new groups of entering children. While other groups and institutions can often avoid the problems of diversity by ignoring them, the responsibility of the schools to educate the community's children means they do not have the same option. As we noted with the case of Regina, private schools, like other nonpublic institutions, have the option of turning down students they wish to avoid. Public schools, however, are required to accept all children and provide them with the required educational experience, whether they like it or not. Hence schools are more likely to have developed techniques for dealing with the problems their diverse student populations present.

Second, as we have indicated at several points, children from diverse backgrounds often find school to be a particularly daunting experience. Numerous respondents recalled negative encounters from their school days. Children like Regina were refused entry into their chosen schools, apparently because an administrator believed they did not fit into the school population, or thought they might create problems for the school. Teachers and administrators often pressured students into choosing an identity other than the one they preferred. Many respondents reported hearing other children make derogatory comments, sometimes with the tacit or explicit consent of teachers.

These reports came from respondents who were students in the 1940s and 1950s, as well as those whose school days were more recent. Such occurrences are not

likely to promote a satisfactory learning environment. It is difficult for children to devote their attention to learning if they are worried about being ridiculed or rejected by their teachers or classmates. As Title I of the "No Child Left Behind Act" specifies, it is critical that children from minority and disadvantaged groups be accorded the same educational opportunities as children from the dominant and more advantaged groups:

> ...to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. ... [including]:
> ...(2) meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children in our Nation's highest-poverty schools, limited English proficient children, migratory children, children with disabilities, Indian children, neglected or delinquent children, and young children in need of reading assistance;
> (3) closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more (advantaged peers.... (NCLB, 2001: Title I).

Hence public schools are faced with the challenge of dealing with a diverse student body.

In Chapters 9 and 10, we describe two quite different programs which were designed for use in the public setting. While the two programs are quite different, both are focused on the objective of improving the school experience for children from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, an issue which our multi-cultural and multi-racial respondents found so painful. The two programs differ not only in their specific objectives but also in their format.

The first example, presented in Chapter 9, describes and analyzes an educational program at the high school level which specifically included aspects of racial and cultural diversity within the curriculum. The program, referred to as the "Diversity Program," encompasses the entire high school program, and attempts to include diversity-related issues within the entire school curriculum. The Diversity Program is the topic of the author's Ph.D. dissertation. The author describes the structure and content of the program, and evaluates it from the perspective of both the teachers and the participating students. The Diversity Program attempted, with some success, to develop and implement educational approaches which were more accommodating to the needs of children from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds. One dimension of this program was to include the child's family in the development of educational goals and objectives, and to involve family members in the assessment process as well.

It stands to reason, however, that major racial or cultural differences between teachers and children may create problems in the interaction process between the family, the child, and staff members. In such instances, it is likely that family and staff members may have difficulty communicating and understanding each other's points of view. In this section, we focus on a different type of program, also located in the school setting, which attempts to improve communication between the family and the school, specifically in the case of children who are recent immigrants to the USA.

As we discussed in Chapter 2, recent immigrant children frequently require special programs, particularly focusing on English as a foreign language, to assist them in adapting to the US school setting. Once they have learned English at a sufficient level, they no longer require special treatment and can be "mainstreamed," or included within the student body as a whole, for the majority of their classes. As we also discussed in Chapter 2, immigrants who entered the USA during the late decades of the 20th century and the early 21st century tend to be more diverse, in terms of race and religion, than earlier waves of immigration. Consequently, the children of these immigrants present an unfamiliar set of problems to the American school setting.

Chapter 10 focuses on the second program, a series of coordinated workshops which were designed by the author, and which make use of "Parallel Socialization" as an approach to improving the educational experience of immigrant children in American Schools. The workshops are established to enlist cooperation among the three sets of participants in the educational experience of immigrant children: the students, parents, and teachers. The author describes the structure and process employed in the workshops, and suggests techniques likely to ensure their success.

Hence Chapter 10 continues to focus on the development of institutional and community programs which can enhance diversity. Again, an educational program is the example. However, this is a very different type of educational program, although it too focuses on improving the educational experience of children who are "different." In the case to be described, the children are immigrants to the USA, and are caught, in many respects, between the culture of American society and school, on the one hand, and that of their immigrant parents which pervades their home life. This program was developed to increase the rate at which today's immigrant children could be "mainstreamed," or included in the student body as a whole. The program consists of a series of workshops with teachers, parents, and students, with the intent of bringing them together in a coordinated effort to improve the educational environment for these immigrant students.

A unique aspect of the program is the *coordination* of the workshops. That is, each workshop does not operate independently. Instead, the workshop organizer meets with each group, explaining to each group the concerns of the other participants in the process. Members of each set of workshops were expected to commit to working together, to achieving a mutual understanding of the problems, and to achieving a better educational environment for the children's education. It is this coordination among the workshop participants which makes this program particularly useful in attaining mutual understanding among persons from different cultural backgrounds.

Macrolevel Recommendations – Different Structures at the National Level (Chapter 11)

Our concluding chapter focuses on macro-level multi-culturalism. Chapter 11 will examine the manner in which several different societies in the world today have

dealt with a multi-cultural and/or multi-racial population. This chapter will compare multi-cuturalism in the USA with other nations which are notably multi-cultural. This will give us an opportunity to examine varying ways in which different societies have coped with cultural variations, and the impact these varying approaches are likely to have. Among the societies to be included are Canada, Australia, Trinidad and Tobago, and France. This chapter will analyze the different approaches taken to their diverse cultural components by each of these modern societies. Attention will be paid to the possible consequences of each of these approaches, and suggestions will be made as to which approaches are likely to achieve different national objectives.