

### **Accessibility: Creating a Universal Culture**

Bringing cultures together entails understanding one another. To understand one other, interaction is essential. As a development communication student, I strongly believe that interaction is key to bringing cultures together. Communication is the initial turn towards resolving conflicts or bridging gaps between and among people, in this case, between and among cultures.

For us to understand a culture other than what we were brought up in, we must be exposed to that culture. This is where accessibility becomes a crucial factor in exposing ourselves to other cultures.

**Access to global education:** From the stand point of a former foreign exchange student, international youth exchange programs are effective channels for bringing youth of different cultures together. It is true that experience is the best teacher. One of my professors said that learning is a continuous process, and breaking out of the four corners of the classroom is probably the best learning experience I have ever had. Interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds, with different beliefs, and having different perspectives made me understand how relative culture is. No single culture is better than another.

**Access to electronic media:** Eliminate the technological divide. Easier said than done but this is a vision that can change the lives of those who cannot reach out to the rest of the world through online communication. Breaking the technological divide would also mean solving geographic isolation. Information support on the utilization of technology is the starting block in learning about technology and, consequently, learning about the bigger world and its various cultures.

**Access to international or inter-regional partners:** Matching towns from two different countries to be a sister or brother country is a mode of achieving intercultural relation. From time to time, these sister or brother countries can exchange views on their cultures and foster friendship. This can aid in opening our cultures to our international networks, therefore exposing us to cultures other than our own. Interaction between and among countries may promote a healthy intercultural relationship.

Each of us should play a role. For us youth, do not be afraid to grow. Open our minds to the truth that there is a world bigger than our own. Discover the world and its cultures by creating networks over the internet and interacting with different cultures.

To those in position, the education system should encourage the youth to get out of their own world, their comfort zone. Transform local education into global education. Let the youth experience how exploring the world can change their misconceptions of other cultures. Lead the elimination of the technological divide and reach out to others. Maintain and create international and inter-regional partnerships.

There is always something to learn from a diversity of cultures. There is nothing impossible for those who have a real vision. We can create a universal culture – a culture that we can share despite our known differences, a culture that is not just for one but for everyone.

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