

Race Relations Day 2012



Celebrating Race Relations Day in your Workplace

Race Relations Day is a time to reflect on our journey towards being a culturally diverse and inclusive nation. The theme for this year is Aotearoa: A Fair Go for All.

You can do something to support this journey – plan an activity to mark Race Relations Day at your workplace.

This sheet gives you some ideas on how to promote inclusion but these activities should be carried out respectfully. They are a starting point for a discussion about cultural diversity and how we can support it in the workplace. This discussion requires everyone to be respectful of the views and feelings of colleagues – but do start the talk!

If you're planning an activity, we would like to know more so we can share ideas. Email us at nzdiversity@hrc.co.nz. Some of these events may even be acknowledged in the *On The Bright Side* newsletter.

Why not become a participant of the NZ Diversity Action Programme? The first project can be your workplace Race Relations Day event. Find out more about this programme or sign up by visiting www.hrc.co.nz/diversity.

Background to Race Relations Day

Each year, 21 March is observed globally as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The date recalls the tragic loss of life at Sharpeville in South Africa in 1960 and the United Nations has dedicated this day to the achievement of the goals of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). New Zealand signed this convention on 25 October 1966 and ratified it on 22 November 1972.



Simple ideas to promote inclusiveness in the workplace

Putting up a Commission's Race Relations Day poster is a good way to start your planning and advertise your office Race Relations Day events. These posters, along with other resources, are available for free from the Commission – to order copies call 0800 496 877.

Organise a shared meal ... or an afternoon tea

Set a date and time for a breakfast, shared lunch or afternoon tea. See who might be interested in bringing in some food items for everyone to try. This can be supplemented with a visit to the local supermarket's international food section. You can mix this up with a quiz. See if you know the answers to these questions: what are the origins of fish and chips? Or, what came first, noodles or pasta?

The world and our connections: World map exercise

Print out a world map and get people to stick drawing pins into places they have connections with. These connections can be where people were born or where they have family living. People can take it in turn to chat about these connections.

Let's quiz ...

Produce a race relations quiz. The Human Rights Commission has produced three booklets which might be helpful, Race Relations in Aotearoa, Religious Diversity in Aotearoa and Languages in Aotearoa. These can be downloaded from the Commission's website or call 0800 496 877 to order copies.

You can also try these:

- put up (or print out and display) 10 flags and ask people to guess which country they represent
- list 10 countries' national symbols and sports
- list 10 greetings (How many languages are spoken by people in your workplace?).

Invite a speaker

Invite a local person to talk about the history of your local area. Or ask somebody from a nearby marae, mosque or iwi trust to tell his or her stories. People in your own organisation could be asked to talk about their culture and community. What is life like in Stewart Island, Kalahari or Osaka in winter? Invite a speaker from a community your workplace does business with. This builds good relationships which is great for business.

Cultural wear and national dress

Change mufti-Friday to a cultural wear day on the Friday before or after Race Relations Day. Have fun but be respectful. Get people to think what outfits they will wear.

Displays

Invite colleagues to put together a cultural display. This can include items of clothing, food or taonga that people feel comfortable sharing. Alternatively, each person/work group could pick a country out of a hat and produce a display or presentation about it, or bring in some food from that region.

Now a work business activity ...

Ask your workmates and customers for ideas on how to promote positive race relations at your workplace. Have a discussion about how your organisation is meeting the needs of the diverse communities it works with.

These events don't have to happen on Race Relations Day but can be celebrated throughout the month.

www.hrc.co.nz/diversity

0800 496 877

