

Stand together or fall apart: Professionals working with immigrant families ^[1]

Author: Bernhard, Judith K.

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AVAILABILITY

Book website with preview and ordering information ^[2]

Excerpts from book review by Gyda Chud in *Interaction*, Spring 2013, Volume 27, Number 1 (Canadian Child Care Federation ^[3]):

What a pleasure and an honour to recommend Stand Together or Fall Apart, a new publication with a bold title!

Designed for the wide variety of professionals who work with immigrant families, this book is so very timely and relevant for our early childhood world.

Author Judith Bernhard, Professor in the School of Early Childhood Education at Ryerson University, is very well respected at the pan-Canadian level for her groundbreaking work in the areas of multiculturalism, diversity and immigrant issues over the past several decades.

In this volume, she introduces us to some historical contexts, critical data, theoretical perspectives and current practice that has much to teach us about immigrant families. Integrating all of these dimensions, Judith also introduces her readers to a number of initiatives that she and her colleagues have been involved with, both here and afar.

Did we know that globally, there are approximately 200 million immigrants? Did we know that Canada accepts an average of 250,000 immigrants and 40,000 Convention refugees each year? This new "Us" can be attributed to our multiculturalism policies and our humanitarian reputation, yet at the same time is a story of isolation, depression, precarious legal status and economic hardship that paints the real picture for so many newcomers.

I was immediately drawn to the powerful titles of many chapters and themes including such examples as Uncomfortable Truths; Voices That Have Been Silenced: Day to Day Struggles of Newcomers; Discrimination is Ugly but Common; The House Cleaner with a PhD, and to the compelling personal stories that tell us about the realities of immigrant life here in Canada. At the same time, Judith introduces us to several progressive, social justice and advocacy oriented concepts such as "social and cultural capital" and "funds of knowledge" that define immigrant contributions to our society.

I remain committed to her comment about the fact that we need to begin thinking outside the box and recognize that even with the best of intentions, we are an expression of our dominant cultural discourse-another dimension for thoughtful reflection and change at both the personal and professional levels.

Bernhard commends the radical educator Paulo Freire for his compassion and passion to empower oppressed communities as the philosophical foundation for this empowerment of newcomers.

For those of us who are Faculty in Early Childhood Programs or facilitate community gatherings, a brilliant bonus is the free "Teaching Resources" supplement. Developed by Vicki Mulligan, a collaborator and colleague of Judith, this chapter-by-chapter document offers a multitude of activities for participants to assist with the teaching/learning process as they explore the book. Having now used a variety of these activities with different groups, I can attest to the ways in which they were stimulating, engaging and provocative and thank Vicki for her amazing breadth and depth of ideas to encourage group reflection and conversation.

It has been said that reading remains an unsurpassed vehicle for the transmission of new ideas and perspectives, and in this regard, "Stand Together or Fall Apart" truly shines. I urge you to bring this book into your world, devour it, reflect on it, return to it, share it, and most importantly act upon the multitude of learnings it offers.

Region: Canada ^[4]

Tags: staff ^[5]

diversity ^[6]

curricula and pedagogy ^[7]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/13/04/stand-together-or-fall-apart-professionals-working>

Links

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