

# **Culturally Responsive Leadership for Multiracial Schools: Developing Knowledge Base for School Leaders**

Suseela Malakolunthu

## **Abstract**

In the multiracial/multiethnic Malaysia, the fostering of racial coexistence, integration, and solidarity become important agendas of education. These ideals can be achieved through well developed and carefully led multicultural education programs. But such efforts are not possible without the support and guidance of the school leadership. Principals need to be 'culturally responsive' in order to provide the supportive environment to students and teachers so that multicultural education for diversity can become a reality. While culturally competent leadership is crucial for the creation of a multicultural teaching-learning environment, there are signs of lack of consciousness and gaps in the principals' knowledge base with regard to the implementation of multicultural education. In order to help principals become culturally competent leaders, principal professional development programs can be organized based on the prescribed model on 'Knowledge Base for Culturally Responsive Leadership'. This model outlines the prerequisites needed for principals to act as culturally responsive leaders who could lead schools toward the successful practice of multiculturalism.

**Keywords:** Leadership, diversity, multicultural education, principal knowledge-base