

Department for Culture, Media and Sport	
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I am writing to you to give you some feedback regarding the BBC's purposes and plans for the future. I hope you will find these ideas useful. My sole intention is to contribute towards the improvement of your services.

I have read your leaflet 'BBC Charter Review, your BBC, you've spoken' and therefore I would like to express my opinion and make some suggestions.

I would expect purposes to be more objective, so as to suggest what has been planned. The words 'promote' and 'stimulate' seem quite appropriate, however, the words 'reflecting' (the UK's nations...) and 'bringing' (the world...) seems a little too broad. Similarly, the expression "stimulating cultural excellence" seems quite vague to me.

If I am allowed to make a suggestion, I would like to say that I would replace 'stimulating cultural excellence' by 'stimulating (or promoting) cultural awareness'.

As for the final two purposes, 'reflecting the UK's nations, regions and communities' and 'bringing the world to the UK and the UK to the world', they could be omitted at this stage, since they would be implied in 'cultural awareness'. They could be included later on.

Culture is quite important and it is good to know that it remains at the heart of this Corporation's aims. Without a sound cultural identity, one does not know where one's stands and in a changing world people do expect the BBC to take the lead as to show people or remind them of their own cultural identity.

Taking into account that Britain contains a great number of foreign communities, it is paramount to teach culture in a more explicit way. Not only British culture, but also other cultures, so that people in general and children and young people in particular know where the influences come from.

To British people it is important to see their identity reflected on the TV they watch and to define themselves culturally. I feel it is the duty of TV corporations to help define that identity.

To foreigners such as myself, it is important to know who the British are, where they come from, what they like. Living in London can leave one quite confused.

I would like to make a few suggestions as to how the BBC could 'Reflect the UK's Nations, Regions and Communities' and 'bring the world to the UK and the UK to the world'. Even if these suggestions or reminders seem ^{too} obvious, my intention is really to make simple and obvious things visible. My intention is not to come up with a total different or original idea, but simply to organize or help organize what is already there, what is visible.

The best way to realize one's identity is to see it through the eyes of a foreigner - to analyse the most simple things, but with the inside knowledge.

To promote cultural awareness it is essential to define ourselves culturally first. Therefore the first step would be to define the British Identity. Then, it would be useful to analyse the world's cultures. In that way, it would be easier to realize where one's influences come from.

People in London complain that there are so many different cultures here, that they feel they are being invaded. I agree to some extent, but then that would mean that the boundaries might not have been set. It is hard to set the boundaries, but it's not impossible. All that has to be done is to establish how much of 'otherness' can British culture digest at a time.

The influence of a large number of cultures is not necessarily negative, for it will mean that less of each culture will be assimilated.

What follows are guidelines which might be useful when establishing who the British are.

Step 1

To establish the boundary between British identity and the world.

- ① The British identity
- ② The world

Step 2

To distinguish between the British today and British heritage.

The British identity

- ① ^{The} British today
- ② British heritage

Step 3

To acknowledge the complexity of the British identity by dividing 'The British today' into four categories: 'what makes the British who they are?', 'British identity all around us', 'multi-identities' and 'one Britain'.

The British today

- ① what makes the British who they are?
- ② British identity all around us
- ③ Multi identities
- ④ one Britain

Step 4

To define what makes the British who they are by establishing:

- ① what do the British like?
- ② what do the British hate?
- ③ How do the British dress?
- ④ what are the favourite pastimes of British people?
- ⑤ what is the British life style?

- ⑥ How do the British see themselves?
⑦ How do other people see the British?

Answers are what all the British or the majority have in common. It is not just about the English.

To find the British uniqueness one could relate the same questions to different countries.

Step 5

To identify British identity all around us in contemporary British:

- ① painting
- ② literature
- ③ drama
- ④ fashion
- ⑤ cooking
- ⑥ architecture...

(many other categories can be added)

Step 6

To acknowledge the complexity of British identity
Multi identities

- ① individual identities within the UK → The English / The Welsh / the Scottish / the Northern Irish
(The same questions could be asked as in 'what makes the British who they are'.)
- ② The identity of individual regions in Britain
- ③ The identity of individual towns and cities
- ④ The identity of different communities within the cities
- ⑤ The identity of different English communities around the world

Step 7

To identify what makes the big picture

- ① contribution of different regions / towns / cities to British collective identity
- ② contribution of foreign identities to British culture

step 8

to define British heritage

- ① British Past History
- ② literature
- ③ Fashion
- ④ drama
- ⑤ architecture
- ⑥ painting

(many other categories could be added. Each could be sub-divided into ... famous British painters/writers and so on, and British Painting throughout the ages / literature...

step 9

To establish the British contribution to the world

- ① world famous British painters/writers...
- ② How much of British culture has been digested by other cultures (i.e. British porcelain / ^{classic} furniture design)
- ③ British Communities in the world - how they have influenced their surroundings
- ④ How the world sees Britain and the British

step 10

to show the world to Britain

- ① different cultures
- ② cultural gaps / clashes
- ③ different cultures in Britain
- ④ world music

I hope you have found these suggestions useful.
I look forward to hearing from you.

yours faithfully

Isabel Mendes