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CREATING INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE CITIES



United Nations
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Cultural Organization

International Coalition
of Inclusive and
Sustainable Cities – ICCAR

Prepared by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO with Dr. Meghan Brooks, with contributions from UNESCO, Secretariat of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – ICCAR.

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO connects Canadians with the work of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It aims to create a society in which people share knowledge and learn from each other, locally and globally, in order to build peaceful, equitable and sustainable futures. It does so by supporting collective reflection, identifying priorities and facilitating concerted action in the fields of education, sciences, culture, communication and information to address some of the most complex challenges facing humanity. Recognizing that this mandate can only be fulfilled by engaging a broad range of partners, a spirit of cooperation is at the core of the Commission's work. The Commission operates under the authority of the Canada Council for the Arts.

Along with other networks, the Commission (with partner support) facilitates the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination, and coordinates its activities.

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SOCIAL INCLUSION IN CITIES:
HABITAT III AND THE ROLE
OF MUNICIPAL ACTORS



Cities are key actors in the fight against discrimination. Their level of government is closest to the people and has the potential to significantly improve lives. They share the responsibility to protect citizens from discrimination by bringing together a broad range of stakeholders. When cities and towns do not work for the benefit of all, barriers prevent progress and discrimination creates cycles of deprivation.

Effective social change requires a commitment to action on all levels. Cities are increasingly acting on a global scale through their own international and regional relations and their participation in various kinds of cross-border partnerships. These new connections open up opportunities to share issues and local responses. When they identify good practices related to inclusion in the design, implementation and evaluation of city-level policies and services, municipal governments are better equipped to take timely and effective action to address exclusion (UNESCO, 2016).

Despite beneficial local inclusion initiatives, municipalities remain fertile grounds for unemployment, poverty and inequality. The pressures of changing populations and growing diversity have resulted in exclusion, gaps in service delivery, and threats to social harmony. Discrimination threatens the sustainability of social, economic and political systems, and endangers the full enjoyment of human rights guaranteed to people living in Canada. Racism, discrimination and other forms of exclusion have become increasingly subtle and difficult to identify and address. As a result, they more easily permeate the democratic discourses and structures that inhabitants hold dear.

The international community has made strides in naming inequalities and developing a global agenda to address them. Canada's work in the

“Cities have stepped in to fill the gaps in the social safety net left by federal and provincial governments as they retreat from funding social programs. But even with these investments, long waiting lists for services, homelessness and working poor families suggest that demand is outpacing the municipal capacity to respond.” (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2010, p.6)

area of social inclusion is extensive and the country is well placed to contribute to discussions. This report reviews the context in which municipal actors work to eliminate racism and discrimination, and it highlights strategies to further social inclusion, especially for groups most at risk of marginalization. The report closes with recommendations for local actors.

Habitat III and UNESCO's Focus on Cities

The United Nations' (UN) mandate is the promotion of peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and equality. Since 1945, it has provided a forum for global cooperation and mobilization. The UN Habitat conferences on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development have brought international actors together to find new ways to address urban challenges and create opportunities to implement UN initiatives. As the global community comes together for Habitat III, it shares ideas and tools for building sustainable cities. The aim of Habitat III is to promote a new model of urban development that integrates all facets of sustainable development to promote equity, welfare and shared prosperity (United Nations, 2016).

A key focus of Habitat III and the New Urban Agenda is equity and social inclusion. By ensuring equity in opportunities and services, as well as fair distribution of society's benefits and burdens, states and local actors advance social and urban development in line with human rights, and give individuals the chance to live to their full potential.

Groups at Risk of Exclusion in Canada

- *Indigenous Peoples*
- *Francophones*
- *LGBTQ2 people*
- *Immigrants*
- *Older adults*
- *People with disabilities*
- *People living in poverty*
- *Racialized people*
- *Rural residents*
- *Women*
- *Youth*

Since its creation in 1945, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has worked on many fronts to protect the human rights and extend the freedoms of all people, without discrimination. With this guiding purpose, UNESCO has contributed to the fight against exclusion both practically and theoretically. Examples include the Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (1978), the Transatlantic Slave Trade Education Project, and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001). On a programmatic level, UNESCO has spearheaded initiatives that have garnered interest and support worldwide. In response to the outcomes of the World Conference against Racism, Racial

Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (better known as the Durban Conference), UNESCO (2003) developed an Integrated Strategy driven by the need to involve local actors in the fight against discrimination and other forms of exclusion.

Recognizing the key role that local authorities play as policy-makers and guarantors of rights embodied in international law, UNESCO turned to city councils as partners to implement its Integrated Strategy. To build the local capacity needed to address social issues, UNESCO launched the International Coalition of Cities against Racism (ICCAR) in 2004, a network of cities committed to enhancing social inclusion through policies and programs. Up to this point, human rights strategies were mainly developed at the state level. Cities are now also part of UNESCO's efforts to promote equity worldwide.

According to the ICCAR Secretariat (UNESCO, 2016, p.2), "in our increasingly interconnected world, it is by bringing together and multiplying the local actions of cities that we may amplify their resonance and impact at a global scale." ICCAR advocates for action and change at the city level, but raising awareness and building capacity through networking and the sharing of experiences and information take time. ICCAR is part of a long-term effort to facilitate the construction of extensive networks of actors engaged in dialogue.

On June 1, 2016, ICCAR was renamed the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – ICCAR. The change in name aligns the Coalition and its efforts with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) and underscores the importance of cities as key sites in the realization of sustainable and inclusive development. The call for global unity in combating racism and all forms of discrimination has never been more relevant, and the complexity

of the challenges faced in cities around the world requires shared action and leadership (UNESCO, 2016). The re-alignment of the Coalition demonstrates its commitment to serving Agenda 2030 and the emerging New Urban Agenda. The Coalition advocates for inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities through the implementation of global directives. It recognizes that sustainable urban development can only occur if racism and other forms of discrimination are prevented through concrete actions and mechanisms that respect human rights and acknowledge the value of diverse communities.

Systemic Discrimination

“The institutionalization of discrimination through policies and practices which may appear neutral on the surface but which have an exclusionary impact on particular groups, such that various minority groups are discriminated against, intentionally or unintentionally.”
(Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2015)

UNESCO stresses the importance of city-level action in fostering social inclusion in the “Inclusive Cities” Issue Paper (United Nations, 2015). Through the lenses of Habitat III, the New Urban Agenda and ICCAR, both UNESCO and CCUNESCO are examining racism and discrimination in cities as a way to bring visibility to an under-explored avenue for change (a topic of primary importance within the priority area of “Social Cohesion and Equity – Livable Cities”). When mayors, city-level decision-makers, international experts and representatives

of various organizations come together to discuss forms of urban exclusion and to brainstorm ways to implement change, global action takes on a new shape.

To contribute to Agenda 2030, UNESCO and CCUNESCO are focusing on, among other things, inclusion in cities and the elimination of discrimination in order to address the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- SDG #10: *“Reduce inequality within and among countries”*
- SDG #11: *“Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”*
- SDG #16: *“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”*

UNESCO and CCUNESCO also contribute to the implementation of Agenda 2030’s cross-cutting priorities of gender equality, human rights and poverty eradication as prerequisites for sustainable development. UNESCO is the lead agency for the implementation of SDG #4: Quality Education (Education 2030).

Canada joins other countries working to eliminate poverty in order to secure more sustainable futures for people. The transformative outcomes outlined in Agenda 2030 require a multifaceted approach to equity, recognizing that poverty and other forms of exclusion are interconnected. Safeguarding human rights is critical to sustainable social and political systems in which “no one will be left behind” (United Nations, 2015).

THE CONTEXT OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES

The Canadian government system is divided into three tiers, with each order of government responsible for providing certain services. The federal government oversees all matters including (but not limited to) criminal law, national defence, global affairs and banking. Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for matters such as education, health care, municipal institutions and civil rights. Sometimes the federal and provincial/territorial governments share jurisdiction, such as in the areas of culture, immigration, agriculture, language and consumer goods. The lowest tier of government, municipal government, delivers most of the services people use on a daily basis, such as police, bylaw and fire services, public transportation, parks, childcare and water (Parliament of Canada, 2016). They are also most likely to take immediate action to solve problems that affect quality of life.

Municipal governments are local authorities created by the provinces and territories to provide services that are best managed under local control. Municipal governments include cities, towns, villages and rural (county) municipalities. They are made up of elected officials and municipal employees who represent and work on behalf of residents. Mayors are elected in accordance with provincial and territorial electoral laws and work alongside municipal staff to shape the vision for

the community and deliver on the government's mandate. Municipal governments raise revenue (largely from property taxes and provincial grants) and influence people's daily lives in numerous ways.

Municipal governments are not recognized under the Constitution of Canada but are creations of provincial legislation, which assigns to them duties and responsibilities. In Canada there are over 3,600 municipal governments. Canada's municipalities range from large metropolitan areas with highly urbanized populations, to mid-sized cities and rural and remote municipalities (with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants). Most municipalities in Canada are small in size, with very few hosting more than 1 million people. Northern and Indigenous communities make up about 20% of municipalities (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2006, p.10).

Municipalities in Canada not only vary in size, but in their degree of urbanization. While over 80% of Canadians live in an urban setting, levels of urbanization are not equal across the country. In the eastern provinces and northern territories, the urban/rural population split is closer to parity. In the largest provinces (such as Ontario and Quebec) the split leans towards the urban (Statistics Canada, 2011). As most do worldwide, municipal governments in Canada face social, environmental and economic challenges. Their search for new

ways to effectively deliver services is motivated by common pressures: inadequate revenue, restricted authority, changing local contexts, and growing responsibilities (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2006, p.2).

Canada's Contribution to the Global Agenda

Canada has endeavoured to bring peace and stability to the global community. It has been an active partner not only in the United Nations, but in UNESCO's partnerships to build solidarity to protect the world's most vulnerable people. Various governments, representatives of government

agencies, organizations and researchers have all contributed expertise to global dialogue around the most pressing issues of our time. Canada hosted the first Habitat Conference in 1976, and, in 2015, hosted the Montréal Thematic Meeting on Metropolitan Areas, one of eleven thematic and regional meetings held in preparation for Habitat III. The Montréal Declaration is an important milestone that encompasses gender equality, cultural diversity and the rights and realities of Indigenous Peoples. It is fitting that, within the framework of Agenda 2030, the country reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the United Nations, its national Constitution and its inhabitants.

Figure 1: Map of Canada's Provinces and Territories



Canada and CCUNESCO continue to play a role in the global agenda in two important ways. First, by taking action at home to recognize, document and address exclusion and injustice, the human rights of people living in Canada are reinforced, economic advantages are shared more equitably, and every child has a greater opportunity to reach their potential. Second, by learning from past experiences, Canada shares knowledge globally to inform key strategies and commitments. Harnessing its own diversity and experiences allows Canada to help pave a collective path forward for all countries.

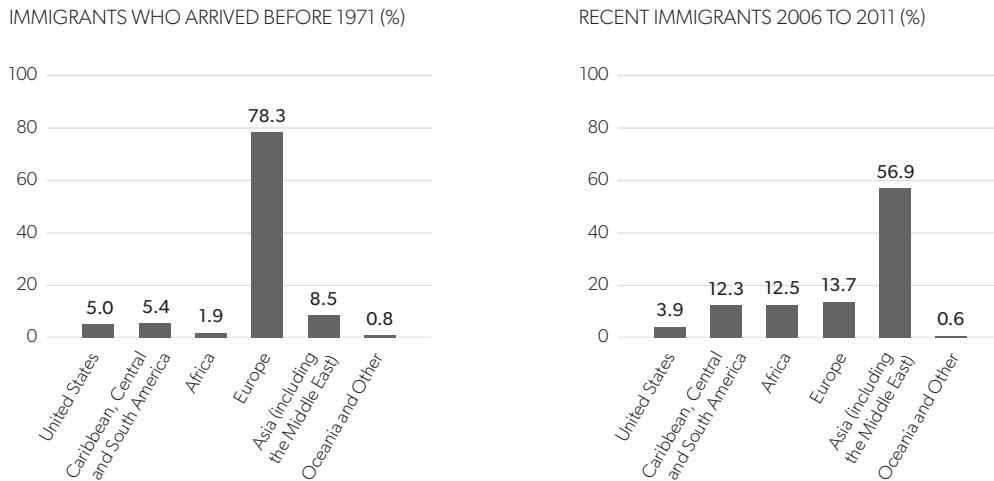
Racism and Discrimination in Canada

Canada is an increasingly diverse country with numerous ethnocultural, religious and linguistic groups living together in rural and urban settings. Much of this diversity is the result of successive

waves of immigration from shifting source countries. Ethnocultural and religious tensions and debates have renewed government interest in the integration of immigrants. The attacks of September 11, 2001 on the United States have affected human rights and sparked debate on the necessity of integration and the value of inclusion. In Canada, the complexities of respecting cultural difference, making religious and other types of accommodation, and challenging negative stereotypes in media and political discourse have led to intense introspection and mobilization.

In such a context, harnessing the capacities of municipalities is critical to generate true social inclusion and sustainability. Striking a balance between accepting diversity and nurturing a national sense of unity has long been at the heart of the approach in Canada. These two principles

Figure 2: Immigrants to Canada, Source Countries pre-1971 and 2006 to 2011



Note: "Oceania and Other" includes immigrants born in Oceania, in Canada, in Saint Pierre and Miquelon and responses not included elsewhere, such as "born at sea." Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

underlie the concept of multiculturalism in Canada. This is not just a demographic reality but a guiding ideal for inter-group relations and official government policy—Canada was the first country to adopt multiculturalism as a policy (1971). The Canadian Multiculturalism Act, assented to in 1988 (Government of Canada, 2014), seeks to “promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society.” While there has been debate on the effectiveness of multiculturalism in Canada (especially with regards to the elimination of discrimination), it has framed the belief that all inhabitants are equal, can take pride in their diverse ancestries, and are entitled to a sense of belonging.

Canada’s human rights landscape is varied and its history is marked by uneven success. It boasts strong legislative foundations for social inclusion, such as the protection of equality and other fundamental rights through the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the safeguarding of people from discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act (1977). Even though these rights are enshrined in federal, provincial and territorial legislation, the issues that affect people most often arise in the course of daily life. For this reason, municipalities play a key role in protecting and promoting rights through innovative and practical solutions.

While Canada has a relatively well-organized municipal sector, discrimination and barriers remain nation-wide due to many challenges. Canada’s municipalities show tremendous difference in demographic makeup. Levels and types of diversity are not equally distributed across the country.

Canadian Diversity at a Glance

- *200 ethnocultural groups*
- *2 official languages*
- *Indigenous Peoples make up 4.3% of the population*
- *50% of Indigenous Peoples live in urban centres*
- *13 million immigrants welcomed over the last century*
- *20% of the population is foreign-born*
- *2 out of 3 immigrants live in the largest cities (Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver)*
- *A majority of immigrants are economic class*
- *Leading source regions of immigrants are Asia, Africa and the Caribbean*
- *1 in 5 Canadians are members of a racialized community*
- *Arab and West Asian communities will grow the fastest over the next 20 years*
- *The number of non-Christians will more than double by 2031¹*

¹ Statistics on diversity in Canada compiled from various Statistics Canada data sources.

Most highly urbanized areas are diverse along multiple lines of identity, whereas rural ones are less so. Urban areas are attractive to newcomers as they often possess established social, economic and community networks. For this reason, municipal governments and organizations are often reacting after the fact to changes in the population and its needs. Conversely, rural areas are more likely to plan and mobilize in preparation for newcomers in order to maximize their contribution to the local labour market.

“Racism and discrimination divide communities, pose a serious threat to peaceful coexistence and exchange among and within communities, imperil democratic and participatory citizenship, and entrench and aggravate inequalities within society.” (Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 2012)

Several groups have been identified by government and local organizations as being at risk of exclusion from political, social, cultural and economic life. Women, Indigenous Peoples, racialized individuals and people with disabilities have been formally recognized by the federal government as facing barriers to education, employment and services (Government of Canada, 2014). Municipal governments may also tailor their work to support immigrants, members of the LGBTQ2 communities, older adults, youth, linguistic minorities, people living in poverty, and rural residents.

There is a growing population of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Unfortunately, they face many social and economic issues. Indigenous

Peoples (i.e. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples) endure persistent conditions of disadvantage and encounter barriers to equality. Examples of exclusion include income that is only 60% of the national average, levels of unemployment that are double the national average, inadequate housing, higher rates of abuse, violence and incarceration, and lower high school completion rates on reserves (Statistics Canada, 2015). Indigenous women are particularly vulnerable to violence. According to a Royal Canadian Mounted Police report (2015, p.3) there are over 1,100 unsolved cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada. In an effort to document and address the historical injustice, abuse and cultural destruction enacted upon multiple generations of Indigenous Peoples through Canada’s residential school system, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was struck. In 2015, the TRC released a report with 94 Calls to Action. The aim of the TRC and its report is to rebuild trust between Indigenous Peoples and the non-Indigenous population.

Women in Canada have long worked to redefine their place in society and demand equality and justice. Women’s movements have been led by women’s and grassroots organizations and their allies acting on national, provincial and local scales. Today, women represent over half (50.4%) of Canada’s population (Statistics Canada, 2015). They have steadily increased their presence in the labour market and have posted significant legal gains. The United Nations (2005, p.9) defines 30% as the minimal percentage of elected women required for government to reflect women’s concerns. In Canada, women currently represent 24% of elected officials and councillors (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2015). However, in 2015, the federal government achieved its first gender-equal Cabinet of Ministers.

Despite much advancement, there remain significant inequities in the distribution of power between men and women in Canada. When it comes to leadership, paid and unpaid work, and experiences of violence, women continue to lead different lives than men (Klodawsky, 2014, p.38). Women are less likely to hold a job than men, earn less for equivalent work, are more likely to hold multiple and part-time jobs, and be under-represented in certain occupations (e.g. trades, manual labour). While women's reproductive rights have been enshrined in law, debate continues in the public sphere. Multiple demands on women's time—including employment, volunteering and childcare—limit their ability to participate in local consultations and civic life. These barriers are magnified for women with intersecting exclusions, such as race, Indigenous ancestry, poverty and disability.

Most inhabitants believe that Canada is a good country in which to live, yet awareness of persistent and emerging inequities is growing. Research shows that two-thirds of people living in Canada are worried about the rise of racism (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2014). Religion has also proven to be a significant area of debate

with only a slight majority believing that wearing visible religious symbols is an essential part of religious freedom. Although hate crimes have been on the decline, Black people remain the most targeted group while incidents against Muslims are on the rise (Allen, 2015). Research additionally shows that six in ten people are concerned about Muslim/non-Muslim relations.

As immigration continues to bring tremendous levels of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, municipal governments must find creative ways to encourage mutual respect, understanding and sustainable social systems. When it comes to Indigenous communities, considerable misunderstanding persists. For example, Canada's non-Indigenous population is likely to believe that Indigenous Peoples do not pay taxes, do not pay for post-secondary education, live exclusively on reserves and in rural areas, contribute little to the job market, do not run successful businesses, and gain unfair unemployment through a quota system (TD Economics, 2012). Each of these misconceptions contributes to the continued stereotyping of Indigenous Peoples and the de-valuation of their social contributions.

A NETWORK FOR CHANGE: THE CANADIAN COALITION OF MUNICIPALITIES AGAINST RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION (CCMARD)

Efforts to promote equity at the municipal level have varied across Canada. There is currently no single initiative that brings together all Canadian municipalities to share their equity practices in a consistent and organized manner. This is due to several factors, including the absence of a mandated governing body, a lack of funding, diverse local demographics and community issues, unequal recognition of the prevalence and effects of exclusion, and varied degrees of political and social will to mobilize. As such, difficulties arise in identifying common goals and coordinating efforts across local and provincial/territorial boundaries to build inclusive and sustainable social systems.

The Role of CCMARD

The largest network of municipal governments working to eliminate discrimination and foster inclusion is the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD). CCMARD is a network of signatory municipalities from across the country committed to addressing discrimination at the local level. The network is one of seven regional and national coalitions that form ICCAR, the global Coalition led by UNESCO. The main objective of CCMARD is to provide a platform to broaden and strengthen human rights through coordination and shared responsibility among local governments, civil society organizations and other democratic institutions. To date, in 2016,

CCMARD comprises nearly seventy participating municipalities. CCUNESCO, with partner support, facilitates CCMARD in Canada and coordinates its activities.

CCMARD promotes inclusion by encouraging the integration of equity matters into the policy, planning and programming of a municipal government's work, as well as supporting initiatives with communities. CCMARD's Ten Common Commitments (see Appendix A), which cover areas of municipal responsibility such as housing, employment and cultural activities, are meant to guide the work of local authorities in the development of policies and programs. The commitments are organized around three areas of municipal responsibilities:

- a guardian of the public interest;
- an organization in the fulfillment of human rights; and
- a community sharing responsibility for respecting human rights and diversity.

When a city council signs the Declaration to join CCMARD, it is de facto endorsing the Ten Common Commitments and required to develop or adapt a plan of action to implement them. This process is flexible so the unique reality of each municipality can be respected as it addresses issues related to racism and discrimination. The plan of action is a key engagement tool of CCMARD municipalities;

once adopted, it becomes integrated into the municipality's visions, strategies and policies.

Membership in CCMARD is based on a common desire to achieve two goals: share experiences and strengthen policies to achieve greater inclusion. CCUNESCO has enabled considerable knowledge-sharing of common challenges and successful practices among municipalities. Since its inception in 2004, CCMARD has organized two national meetings and contributed to more than ten regional or provincial meetings on specific issues. A practical toolkit for municipalities (2012) was launched to support members, a special issue of the journal *Canadian Diversity* (2014) was commissioned to explore the role of municipalities in the fight against discrimination, and CCUNESCO endorsed the publication of a national guide for municipalities seeking to advance equity and inclusion (City for All Women Initiative and Brooks, 2015).

Raising awareness and building capacity at the city level take time. CCMARD facilitates the construction of extensive networks of actors who engage in dialogue. It also acknowledges and accommodates the fact that change, on both individual and systemic levels, is a process that requires sufficient time for assessment and resolution (Brooks, 2014, p.54). Just as CCMARD is not sufficient to eliminate exclusion in Canada, a municipal government's membership in CCMARD is not enough to create sustainable communities. CCMARD is, however, an important step in recognizing and strategizing for change. Several characteristics of the network have proven to be successful at fostering inclusion.

Successful CCMARD Strategies

The experience of ICCAR shows that an international project can be sustainable and efficient at the local level by allowing partners room to maneuver within a flexible framework. In Canada, the fact that

municipalities are invited to adapt the proposed plan of action to their specific circumstances adds interest and value to the project and helps rally new members. Successfully adapting an international initiative to national context requires a willingness to face opposition on certain issues. The term "racism and discrimination" itself generated backlash among CCMARD stakeholders as some partners sought to soften the language. On the other hand, others supported the naming of, and a focus on, racism as it intersects with other forms of oppression. This negotiation raises the question of how best to maintain a balance between the expectations of partners and the importance of remaining true to the essence of the initiative. It is inevitable that equity initiatives will endure setbacks; a determination to tackle challenges head on and strategically navigate the politics of change is essential to their survival and ultimate success.

Here are five examples of successful strategies that have been adopted by CCMARD communities:

1. Securing Strategic Partnerships

Issues related to racism and discrimination are extremely complex and often transcend the responsibility and capacity of municipalities. It is therefore important to adopt a holistic approach to bring together diverse stakeholders from different levels (national, provincial and local) who represent both government and civil society.

At the federal level, the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, and the National Association of Friendship Centres have all expressed their support for CCMARD and its objectives in some fashion. Interest in the initiative also continues to grow among federal government departments. At the provincial level, the Human Rights Commissions

S U C C E S S F U L S T R A T E G Y

CCUNESCO involved national and regional stakeholders in the development of CCMARD as a way to bind members together across the vast geographical distance of Canada. With mandates to work on larger scales, these partners are well placed to bring CCMARD members together to network and share resources. Strategic partners working across scales have provided critical support to CCMARD, helping it maintain its momentum and foster a sense of unity.

of Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan, as well as the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, l'Union des municipalités du Québec, and the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities have also officially offered their support. In some cases, the backing of these organizations expanded beyond formal endorsement and led to awareness-raising on racism and discrimination and direct participation in events related to CCMARD.

At the local level, partnerships and cooperation are not only important, they are necessary for action. The needs and mandates of elected officials, municipal administrators, police authorities, citizens and local organizations are considered when initiating dialogue on CCMARD, in the elaboration of the plan of action, and in all subsequent activities. Engaging stakeholders on an ongoing basis by building on their strengths preserves the original vision and ensures the development of a sense of belonging. Securing involvement of various partners is also a key condition for the sustainability of the initiative, ensuring continuity through changes in

political leadership—at the municipal, provincial/territorial and federal levels (Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 2011).

2. Enabling Knowledge-Sharing

Knowledge- and experience-sharing are cornerstones of CCMARD and of the interaction among its members. By joining the network, municipalities access resources and advice from dozens of partners across the country, including national and regional organizations. In this way, the network is a model for collaborative social change. Knowledge-sharing among municipal governments is one way to move equity and inclusion forward quickly. Not only does CCMARD encourage municipal governments to share knowledge, but it promotes the creation of avenues for dialogue with communities, local organizations and other stakeholders (e.g. meetings, conferences, publications, newsletters, etc.).

While there is a growing body of research on urban Canada and urban geographies, a limited amount of work has focused on municipal governments and how they share equity and inclusion knowledge.

S U C C E S S F U L S T R A T E G Y

CCUNESCO and the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) partnered to deliver a webinar (2015) that brought together stakeholders from across the country to discuss equity initiatives. Communications technology is a promising tool for sharing knowledge across a large country like Canada, where long-distance travel can severely limit the opportunities of network participants to come together.

The work of CCMARD demonstrates how transformative social change can be leveraged and applied in different contexts—in urban and rural settings with varying degrees of local diversity. To maximize the impacts of knowledge dissemination to outside organizations, local governments require infrastructure and sufficient institutional capacity to assess the relevance of such opportunities. Members of CCMARD are encouraged to take part in networking events, engage in informal sharing, look to their own communities for expertise, and give knowledge in return.

3. Adapting to Local Contexts

The structure of CCMARD allows flexibility to address local issues. While it is useful to share practices in order to save time and resources and to stimulate innovation, adapting initiatives to a specific local context ensures the most effective outcomes. The flexibility to identify initiatives that meet local needs and take resources into account leads to more buy-in from communities. It also ensures that all municipalities are able to work to some degree on each of CCMARD's Ten Common Commitments.

The diversity of municipalities in Canada results in local issues being highly contextual. In rural areas, municipal governments may not have staff or programs in place to enhance the inclusion of specific diverse communities. Incorporating dimensions of equity work into existing services is often the only option. It can take time to build awareness around exclusion and the benefits of creating sustainable communities—this may best be achieved by focusing on one group at a time. Such a narrowly scoped approach is also common to municipalities that have not formally adopted equity practices in the past. In larger cities, initiatives may focus more on building relationships with communities and collaborating with local experts. Where there is greater diversity, municipal

S U C C E S S F U L S T R A T E G Y

Although all CCMARD members may agree to support police services in order to combat discrimination (one of the Ten Common Commitments), one municipal government may institute a consultation process to hear community concerns while another may focus on diversifying the composition of its force.

governments may have already developed initiatives and benchmarked progress. By providing a flexible framework with options for priorities and activities, CCMARD ensures that every municipality in Canada can participate in the network.

4. Identifying Groups at Risk of Exclusion

Identifying groups at risk of exclusion is an important step in shaping a strategy for sustainable municipalities. Without the full participation of members from all communities, local governments cannot reach their full potential. CCMARD has identified women, visible minorities, youth and Indigenous Peoples among groups at risk of facing barriers and, as a result, promotes the inclusion of their voices in all municipal activities. By identifying specific groups, municipal governments are able to tailor initiatives to improve social inclusion through the reduction of specific barriers and forms of discrimination.

CCUNESCO recognizes that identity is dynamic and diverse. Individuals experience advantage and disadvantage in society depending on their real or perceived identities. Several groups at risk of exclusion are identified in this report. These groups have a harder time participating in local economic life, contributing to the social fabric of the larger

S U C C E S S F U L S T R A T E G Y

Youth are actively engaged in many initiatives combating racism and other forms of discrimination in local communities. Their involvement often brings energy, new ways of looking at issues, and creative solutions. Municipalities that engage youth, both formally and informally, benefit greatly from their involvement. By including youth in consultations, municipal governments can be confident that the needs of this population are reflected in their work.

(Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 2012, p.65)

community, and having their voices represented in political decision-making processes. By explicitly naming these groups, CCMARD and municipal governments build inclusive practices into their daily operations, including community outreach and consultation.

5. Building Political Support and Visibility

In requiring membership approval by local city councils, the very process of joining CCMARD builds political will and visibility within local government. Documentation of anti-discrimination initiatives through the creation and implementation of a plan of action approved and adopted by city council increases sustainability. By creating a public action plan, municipalities also increase the success of their initiatives and their accountability. Many municipal governments work with community groups to host a signing ceremony to mark membership in the network. Though it can take time to get the right people working together, support and visibility are enhanced when diverse identities

are included. It is important to establish a shared vision for the municipality. Municipal representatives can foster trust and support for their work by attending community events, clearly communicating with stakeholders, and recognizing the value of collaboration. CCMARD members are encouraged to involve municipal and local stakeholders in coalition work from the very beginning.

Association with an international set of actors adds to the legitimacy and appeal of joining CCMARD. Membership allows municipalities to showcase their work on a larger scale. In some cases, recognition of promising initiatives at the regional, national and even international levels can be leveraged to build momentum for equity work and energize stakeholders to become involved. Within municipal government, this acknowledgement can influence the quantity of resources allocated to inclusion programs and activities.

S U C C E S S F U L S T R A T E G Y

Arts and culture bring awareness to issues of exclusion and highlight the municipal government's efforts. By supporting local arts and culture and being present at events, municipal governments can engage communities (such as youth, immigrant and ethnocultural groups) and celebrate imaginative thinking. Arts and culture are tools that can deepen capacity for change. Links among arts, culture and social change are present in the mandates and/or activities of CCUNESCO, UNESCO and the UN. Therefore, there is significant opportunity for learning and cooperation in this field at the national level and beyond.

CHALLENGES TO MUNICIPAL EQUITY WORK

Urban landscapes around the world are undergoing dynamic change. While urbanization has brought much progress, it has also brought challenges. Rapid changes in cities exacerbate underlying tensions in the social fabric. In many cases, the speed of change makes it hard to keep up with policies and programs. Levels of urbanization are increasing, heightening demands on services, but also stressing communities' ability to integrate residents in inclusive ways. The movement of people through migration has tested both the effectiveness and reactivity of political and social intervention at the urban level. Recently, displacements of large numbers of refugees have sparked debate on how best to mobilize community welcome activities and provide an inclusive social environment.

Environmental disasters and climate change have resulted in deteriorating living conditions in many parts of the world, straining local resources and further marginalizing groups at risk of exclusion. Many governments are also under pressure to balance competing priorities. Unfortunately, inclusion initiatives are often framed as peripheral to the core work of government, with dampening results. However, we know that when people are excluded at the community level and treated unfairly, priority areas such as security and economic growth are affected.

Municipal governments in Canada face barriers to taking on and sustaining equity work. Factors (re)shaping municipalities include aging populations, commodity and home prices, changes in lifestyles and living arrangements, increasing ethnocultural diversity, technological innovation, concerns about sustainability, income inequalities, fiscal pressures and the infrastructure gap.

One of the greatest challenges for local government is generating revenue for social programming. In Canada, only 8% of income tax revenue goes to municipal government. While municipal governments are entitled to collect property taxes, they are not permitted to collect personal taxes. They are also unable to incur a deficit. These factors create financial shortfalls that result in difficult spending decisions (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2012, p.2). The funding regimes that emerge when resources are insufficient are detrimental to equity work; they are increasingly uncertain and short-term, and vulnerable to unexpected cutbacks. Such conditions force committed individuals to contribute their time and money on a voluntary or quasi-voluntary basis to ensure any progress towards equity goals is made. Unfortunately, these funding regimes do not take into account the complexities of social change and instead promote quick and easy solutions that may

not be successful (Brooks, forthcoming). When staff have dedicated time to work on inclusion initiatives, they are more likely to engage diverse stakeholders, participate in partnerships, consider multiple approaches and produce more meaningful results.

Insufficient human resources also limit a municipality's ability to commit to equity work. According to CCUNESCO (2014, p.8), "municipalities face limitations in terms of human and financial resources and as a result, competition arises between inclusion and diversity objectives and other major issues with a more visible impact. [...] In addition to this, changes in political directions and priorities can create dynamism but also uncertainty at a program level." The level of political and public support for municipal equity work may also vary. In places where diversity is less visible and the issues are less prominent, there may be disbelief that they even exist. In these cases, education and awareness campaigns are a first step to recognizing local realities and finding allies.

Backlash against social inclusion initiatives can range from perceptions that equality already exists to claims that stories of exclusion are exaggerated

or untrue. Progress can be hampered when backlash leads to the intentional withdrawal of support and/or resources, the invocation of the status quo, and the refusal to re-think social relations. It is critical that municipal governments challenge backlash and generate widespread support for social inclusion locally, nationally and internationally.

Despite the setbacks that occur in Canada, the diversity of municipal contexts and experiences enriches and expands the knowledge that can be shared across the country, allowing municipalities to learn about exciting new approaches that they might not have otherwise imagined for their communities. Many municipalities are already leaders in equity work and make a difference within their communities.

By continuing to bring together stakeholders in meaningful collaboration, municipal governments counter the effects of limited funding, backlash, geographical distance and differing contexts by creating new spaces for dialogue and action.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

1. Bring Diverse Voices to the Table

Ensuring the inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders at every stage of municipal government work (planning, consultation, implementation and assessment) enhances the effectiveness of the design and delivery of programs. By identifying groups at risk of exclusion (including women, youth, visible minorities, Indigenous Peoples and people with disabilities), municipal governments can map out strategies to reduce further harm. Consultation is one way municipal governments can collect feedback. Equity should be built into all public consultation including the logistics, content, promotion and delivery of the event. Consultation should be accessible to all groups and should contain a process for follow-up.

Community stakeholders come to the table with a vast amount of experience, expertise and resources. When a challenge arises in the implementation of a plan of action, stakeholders can offer solutions, share resources, or bring a fresh perspective to a problem. Partnering with community and local actors is another way that municipal governments can be more inclusive while sharing resource demands.

2. Work with Youth

There are about 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 worldwide—the largest youth population ever. This size creates unprecedented potential for economic and social progress. Unfortunately, “too many of these young people see their potential hindered by extreme poverty, discrimination or lack of information. But with proper investment in their education and opportunities, these young people’s ideas, ideals and innovations could transform the future” (Edwards, 2015). For this reason, it is paramount that municipal governments recognize youth as key stakeholders in their local communities; they are at a heightened risk of exclusion but they are also present and future leaders. In Canada, municipalities that engage youth benefit greatly from their involvement. This engagement can be formal (e.g. working with established youth councils and advisory groups) and informal (e.g. working with established youth programs and implementing recreation and arts-based activities).

Youth possess the desire, energy, creativity and capacity to address pressing social issues. They also hold the right to participate in their communities and to have a voice in decisions that will affect their lives. In the field of anti-discrimination, where outcomes may emerge only in the long term, supporting youth participation through the building of interest

Effective Youth Engagement:

- *Listen to a range of youth ages*
- *Include youth on municipal staff*
- *Make access youth-friendly*
- *Ensure diversity*
- *Introduce youth to policy-makers*
- *Put necessary supports in place*
- *Work for continuity of youth involvement*

and skills for the future can ensure the sustainability of efforts. The development and strengthening of partnerships with youth-led and youth-focused organizations and the active engagement of youth in decisions that impact them are key to building more inclusive communities.

3. Apply an Intersectional Lens

People’s unique experiences of advantage and disadvantage may not be captured as singular facets of identity. Applying an intersectional lens to the work of municipal governments—that is, recognizing that individuals have multiple and intersecting identities—carries significant benefits. The concept of intersectionality can be applied to all people as a way to understand how power is unequally distributed in society. To build sustainable local settings, municipal governments must ask the following questions (City for All Women Initiative and Brooks, 2015, p.14):

1. How might this person experience the municipality?
2. What insights might this person bring to the municipality?

3. What barriers might they experience?
4. What can the municipal government do to improve life in the city?

An intersectional lens allows municipal governments to move beyond single identities or group-specific concerns, which are ineffective in explaining the nuances and dynamics of human lives. It also enables them to deliver more effective and efficient responses to growing social inequities and to explore new research and policy approaches on the structures that shape diverse populations. Such an approach recognizes that Canada is home to a diverse population and that an increasing number of people are identifying with multiple ethnicities and communities. It also generates new and more complete information on the origins, root causes and characteristics of social issues. Taken in sum, an appreciation of the complexity of human identity ensures the health of individuals and communities.

4. Change Discriminatory Attitudes

Municipal governments must strive to change discriminatory attitudes through awareness, education and programming. Efforts should include both municipal employees whose work affects the lives of local constituents, but also members of the public at large. Municipal governments should act as role models for other organizations by employing a workforce that reflects the communities they serve and by providing a workplace that is inclusive and free from discrimination. They can also bring visibility to issues and give a voice to those who have been silenced.

Municipal governments can develop a clear vision for social inclusion. Given pressures to do more work with less money, equity champions should articulate a persuasive case for inclusion. Often

referred to as the “business case,” a rationale expounding the economic advantages of equity and inclusion can go a long way to generating support and financial resources. Developing equity and inclusion policy to guide staff interactions, the delivery of services, and internal practices (e.g. hiring) can enforce standards to be emulated by other organizations. Developing a comprehensive equity and inclusion program that embraces education and training equips staff to be allies in the organization and champions in their communities.

5. Use Data to Inform Decisions and Monitor Progress

Over the last decade, international organizations have focused on the question of measuring equality through data collection and analysis. With respect to the general form of evaluation, the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (2010, p.10) has posited that the “diversity and the multitude of participating cities in respect to size, cultural heritage, legal system, number and diversity of their inhabitants [require] a meaningful, non-rigid and flexible, but standardized model which can be applied according to capacity and resources, as well as according to local specificities.”

When a municipal government demonstrates results, it shows the value of equity and inclusion. By demonstrating results it can also judge change, build trust with communities, identify strengths and weaknesses in approach, gather data to justify actions, and show partners the value of initiatives. Understanding how to measure success from the outset will enable more effective data collection methods and ensure information is available for assessment. Municipal governments typically collect three kinds of data to inform their work:

(1) community demographics, (2) program evaluation and (3) municipal workforce composition. Data should be disaggregated to show how various groups are affected differently.

Municipal governments can collect and analyze data on local demographics and on the intersection of discrimination with other forms of exclusion. Census data published by the government can be useful to understand the composition of a community, employment rates, income levels, housing and crime rates. Local data can also be gathered through focus groups, community forums, advisory groups and reviews of scholarly research. All of this data helps to establish baselines against which real improvement can be measured. Quantitative and qualitative data can be used in the assessment of the effects of policies and programs.

Benchmarking progress ensures that efforts are producing tangible results. Municipal governments can additionally collect information on the diversity of their workforces through a voluntary self-identification survey that captures information on any number of diversity groups. When municipal governments monitor data on the representation of diversity groups within their workforce, as well as on new hires, promotions and terminations, they can identify trends to inform strategies for increasing representation. By providing data at the departmental level, departments can tailor their initiatives to their work context.

CCMARD members set SMART objectives (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-limited goals) in their action plans. Some common approaches to assessment have been identified in Canada and shared internationally. One approach calls for the identification of expected results and the use of indicators to track change (Icart, Labelle and

Antonius, 2005). An expected result is an outcome one seeks to produce. Indicators are the parameters applied to measure the extent to which the desired outcome has been achieved. Some indicators may measure performance (e.g. mechanisms, policies or programs) while others generate results (e.g. specific data analyses).

Data collection and monitoring are not without their challenges. In many municipalities, especially small, rural or isolated ones, local data may be limited. While basic census data may be available for analysis, it may not provide the comprehensive view of social wellbeing that is needed to address exclusion. A municipal government may also encounter technical issues centred on the complexity of various methodologies, sample sizes, and the capacity of employees to interpret and apply findings to policies and programs. While much can be gained from sharing promising practices in this field, a diversity of local contexts in Canada renders it difficult to model other local

An expected result of a municipal employment campaign could be increasing the recruitment of applicants from equity groups into positions within the local government. A performance indicator could capture the number of recruitment sessions or postings in local media outlets. A results measure could include the percentage of new hires of employees from diverse backgrounds.

approaches and craft a national framework. The value of data lies in its ability to tell a timely story of local life. For this reason, data must be reliable and up-to-date. Municipalities with limited resources may not be able to maintain a high standard of data relevance and quality on an ongoing basis.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Social change does not happen overnight. It requires a solid ideological foundation and active involvement. Work must begin immediately to remove barriers and bias from society. Creating the conditions for sustainable social development means harnessing cities and towns as new spaces for change. As the closest level of government to the people, municipal governments are well placed to craft connections that reach across geographical boundaries and into the global community.

Human rights-related issues are a relatively new area of responsibility for municipalities. As a result, innovative strategies and tools are needed for the future. In Canada, CCMARD confirms that the elimination of racism and discrimination is everyone's responsibility and requires a long-term commitment to social and attitudinal change. It demonstrates that when diverse interests work together, they can contribute to local communities that are free of racism and discrimination and therefore more sustainable.

Enhancing equity and inclusion requires knowledge of how people from diverse backgrounds experience urban areas. By recognizing and working with groups most at risk of exclusion, we can begin to close the gaps in opportunities and outcomes. Initiatives like CCMARD are effective tools in achieving not only local and national goals, but also global ones. CCMARD is one way that Canada is giving shape to Agenda 2030 to secure a sustainable future. Reinforcing the global infrastructure so that cities and towns can share and learn from one another multiplies effects and leaves no one behind. Given the urgency of the issues we are facing, this is a timely strategy.

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Appendix A:

CCMARD'S TEN COMMON COMMITMENTS

Commitment 1:

Increase vigilance against systemic and individual racism and discrimination.

Commitment 2:

Monitor racism and discrimination in the community more broadly as well as municipal actions taken to address racism and discrimination.

Commitment 3:

Inform and support individuals who experience racism and discrimination.

Commitment 4:

Support policing services in their efforts to be exemplary institutions in combating racism and discrimination.

Commitment 5:

Provide equal opportunities as a municipal employer, service provider and contractor.

Commitment 6:

Support measures to promote equity in the labour market.

Commitment 7:

Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in housing.

Commitment 8:

Involve citizens by giving them a voice in anti-racism initiatives and decision-making.

Commitment 9:

Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in the education sector and in other forms of learning.

Commitment 10:

Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and racialized communities in the cultural fabric of the municipality.