Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for Settlement Workers: Assessing Your Organization's Progress

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N4-SPU Inclusion Research: Our Starting Point

- Settlement agencies are at the forefront of efforts to foster the social and political inclusion of immigrants in Canada.

- To what extent do they, as employers, foster a climate of inclusion within their organizations?

- We asked this question looking at the employment of immigrant frontline workers in the Ontario settlement sector.

- Diverse sector but we know little about the experience of inclusion for frontline workers.

- Lack of resources, time and possibilities to train frontline staff (settlement of waves of refugees from diverse regions).

Theory and Methodology

- **Climate of inclusion:** a work environment where the implementation of inclusive norms and practices enables everyone to be themselves and to accept others as they are within the parameters of a shared mission.

- Nishii (2013) scale measures it based on three dimensions:
  - integration of differences,
  - inclusion in decision-making,
  - and equitable employment practices.

- **Method:** We adapted its short version (15 questions) and used it in the context of semi-directed interviews.

- **Sampling: 8 organizations from across Ontario**
 - 25 immigrant frontline workers
  - 8 managers

1. Integration of Differences: Celebrating Some Differences More Than Others

Being One's True Self at Work
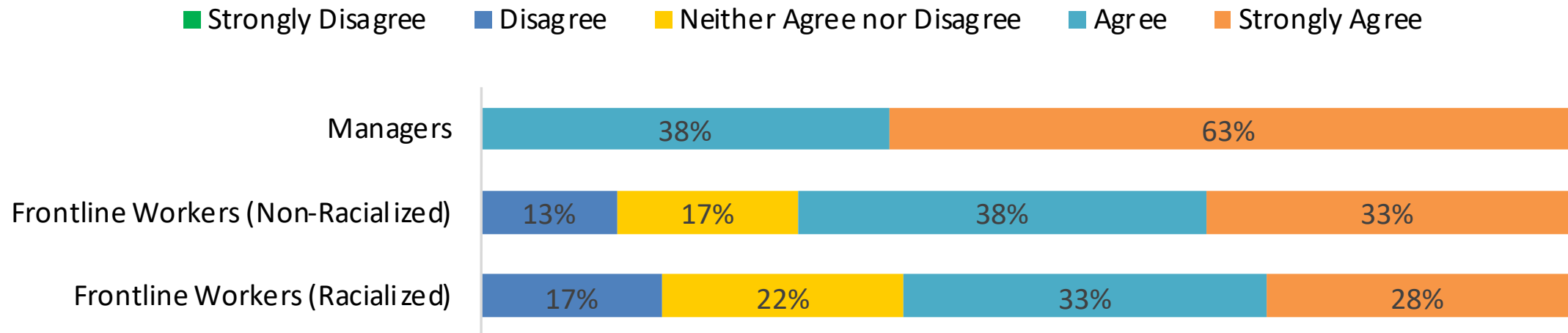
Graph 1: My workplace is characterized by a non-threatening environment in which people can reveal their "true" selves.

■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree   ■ Agree   ■ Strongly Agree

Managers	38%	63%
Frontline Workers (Non-Racialized)	100%	
Frontline Workers (Racialized)	6% 11% 50%	33%
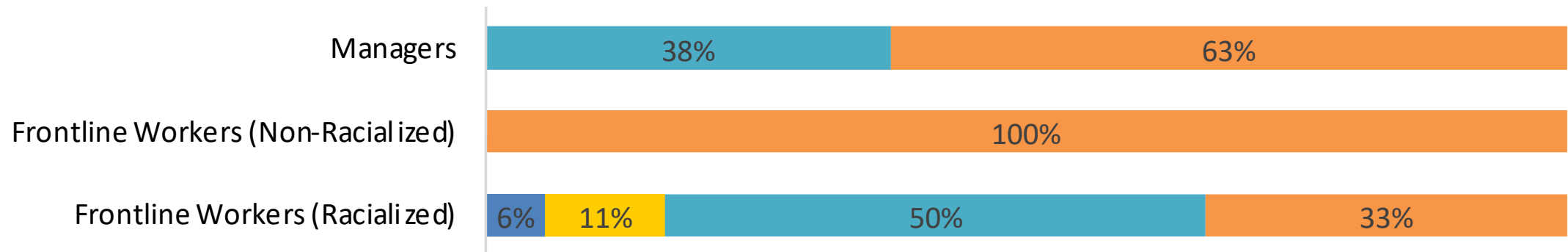
Feeling Valued for Whom a Person Is

Graph 4: Employees in my workplace are valued for who they are as people, not just for the jobs that they fill.

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Managers: Agree 38%, Strongly Agree 63%

Frontline Workers (Non-Racialized): Disagree 13%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 17%, Agree 38%, Strongly Agree 33%

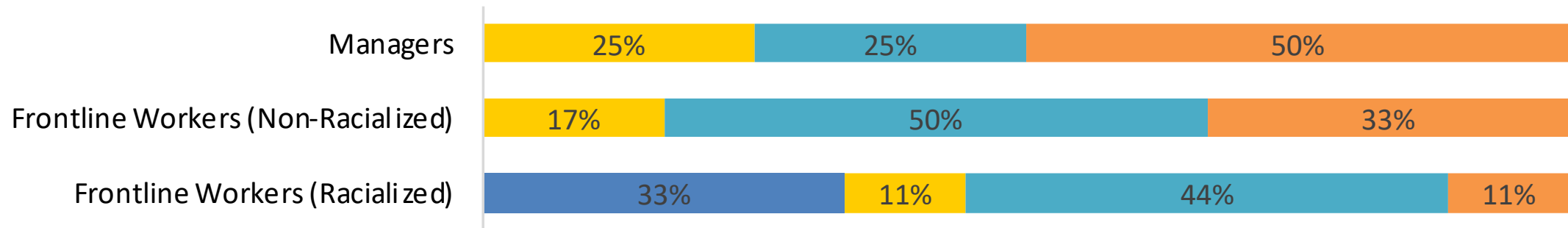**Frontline Workers (Racialized):** Disagree 17%, Neither Agree nor Disagree 22%, Agree 33%, Strongly Agree 28%

2. Inclusion in Decision Making: Being Consulted, But Unheard?

Engaging Employees in Decision-Making and Policy Drafting

**Graph 9:** In my workplace, all employees' insights are used to rethink or redefine work practices.

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Group	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Managers	25%	25%	50%
Frontline Workers (Non-Racialized)	17%	50%	33%

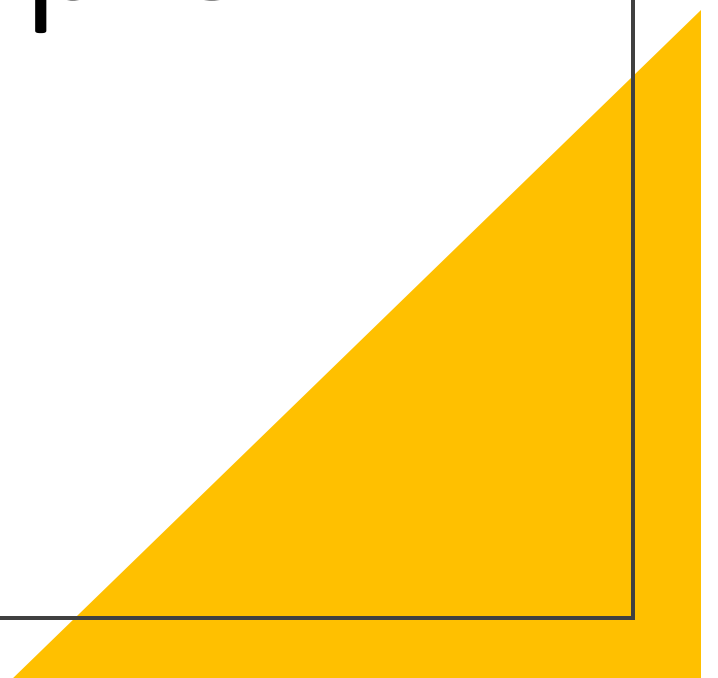| Group	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Frontline Workers (Racialized)	33%	11%	44%	11%

Fostering Frontline Workers' Autonomy and Empowerment

Graph 10: In my workplace, all employees are empowered to make work-related decisions on their own.

- ■ Strongly Disagree
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Strongly Agree

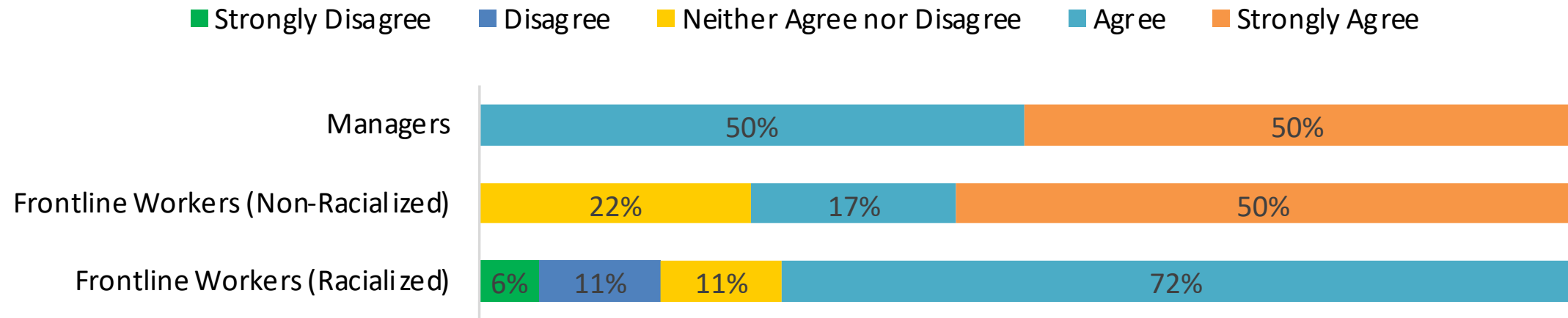|	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Managers			25%	63%	13%
Frontline Workers (Non-Racialized)			17%	50%	33%
Frontline Workers (Racialized)	11%	6%	28%	39%	17%
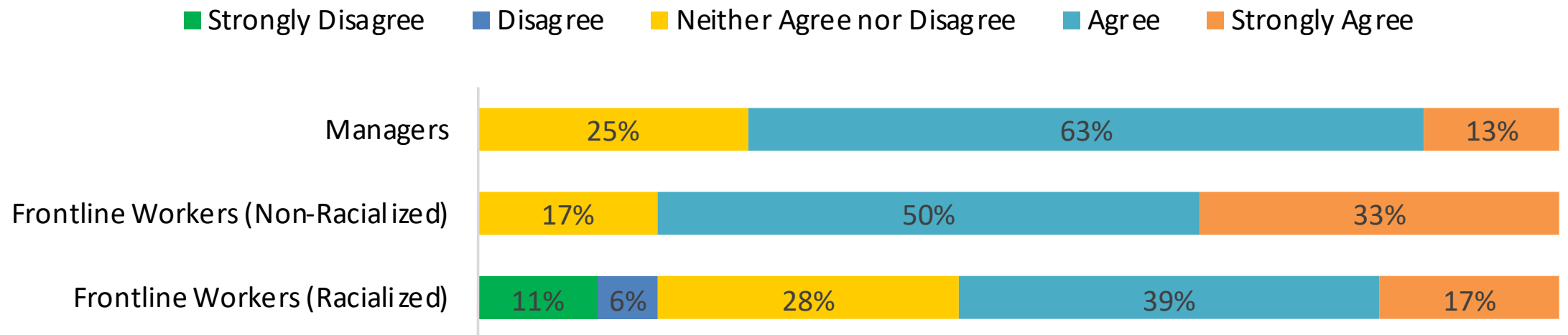
3. Fair Employment Practices: The Multiple Meanings of Equity

Hiring Based on Experience and Skills

Graph 12: The recruitment in my workplace is equitable.

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Group	Values
Managers	50% Agree, 50% Strongly Agree
Frontline Workers (Non-Racialized)	22% Neither Agree nor Disagree, 17% Agree, 50% Strongly Agree
Frontline Workers (Racialized)	6% Strongly Disagree, 11% Disagree, 11% Neither Agree nor Disagree, 72% Agree

Promoting Employees Based on a Fair Process

Graph 13: My workplace has a fair promotion process.

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Managers	43% Neither Agree nor Disagree	43% Agree	14% Strongly Agree
Frontline Workers (Non-Racialized)	17% Disagree	17% Neither	33% Agree	33% Strongly Agree
Frontline Workers (Racialized)	6% Strongly Disagree	33% Disagree	28% Neither	33% Agree
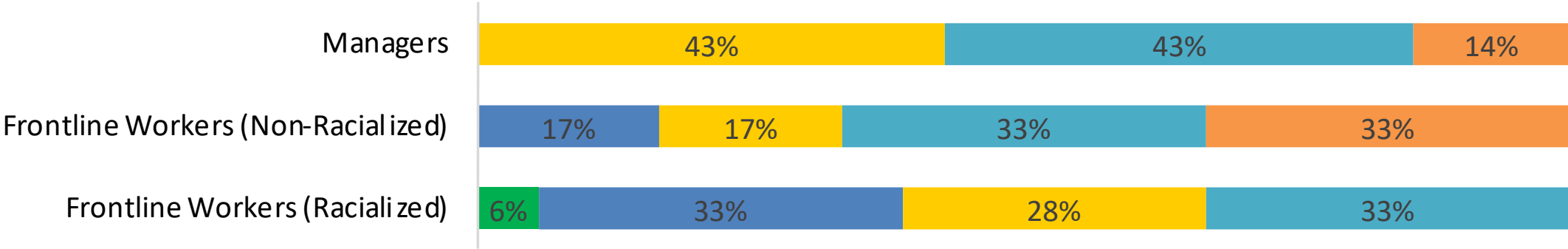
Conclusion

Settlement agencies are trying to walk the talk of integration of newcomers by creating a climate of inclusion for newcomer employees.

1. Integration of differences

- Most people feel they can bring what is unique about themselves in a work environment they belong to

2. Empowerment by inclusion in decision-making

- There are many opportunities for employees to be heard, but this can turn into lip service – not including their concerns in major decisions (especially for racialized workers).

3. Equity in employment conditions

- There is a need to create norms that reduce systemic disparities, especially the racial gap.
- There is a need for structural changes based on inclusion norms (pay equity, coaching, training, advancement opportunities)

Desired Inclusion norms

Systemic exclusion
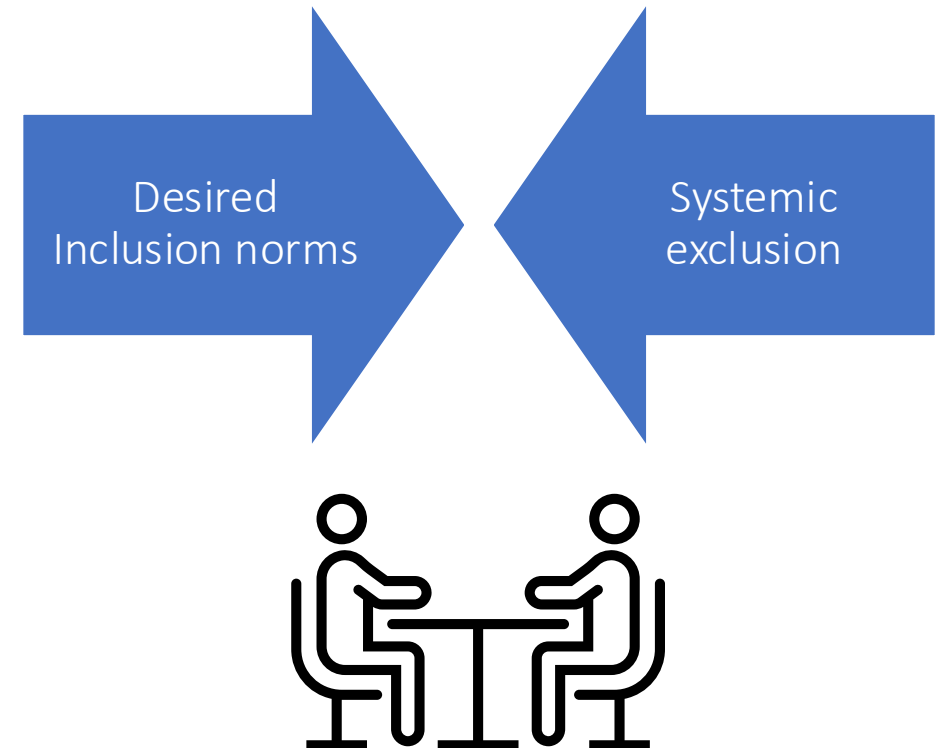
Recommendations

Foster a work environment where people feel safe to reveal their authentic selves
1. Celebrate culturally diverse holidays.
2. Offer worker-centered accommodations based on cultural, religious, family, and mental health needs.
3. Create a diversity committee in charge of raising awareness of cultural differences.
4. Create safe means for workers from marginalized communities to talk about their experiences of microaggressions or exclusion.
5. Increase 2SLGBTQI+ representation and support.

Recommendations

Empowering Employees by Inclusion in Decision-Making
1. Seek employee anonymous input and feedback through surveys, meetings, emails, intranet and newsletters.
2. Create good communication flow and share information effectively through various platforms: Facebook messenger groups, WhatsApp groups and Microsoft Teams.
3. Include workers' suggestions and opinions both in job-related decisions and decisions about policies and practices, especially those that have a direct impact on employees.
4. Avoid micromanagement and control based on hierarchical roles and encourage accompaniment based on knowledge of the field.
5. Develop leadership trust in expertise that comes from frontline and lived experience.

Recommendations

Provide fair compensation and build the capacity of employees
1. Gather annual data about salary inequities and compare them with the OCASI annual salary survey.
2. Address gaps between salaries for certain types of work that reflect social discrimination.
3. Offer more training for managers on EDI and inclusive leadership.
4. Offer more opportunities for cross-cultural education and awareness of different traditions.
5. Leverage training opportunities offered by umbrella organizations and/or create cross-agency exchanges and cooperation initiatives.

What Are the Next Steps?

We await funding to start the second phase with a focus on inclusive leadership.

- We hope to:
  - Develop inclusive leadership through communities of practices ;
  - Better understand EDI challenges settlement leaders face ;
  - Collaborate with individual settlement agencies for EDI capacity building.
- Please reach out to us if you would like to collaborate: inclusionresearch@ustpaul.ca