

Pathways to Prosperity 2024 National Conference - Vancouver

Sustaining EDI in Settlement Services: Insights from Toronto's InterLIP Framework

Mounir Nasri, Toronto East LIP

Marycarmen Lara-Villanueva, Toronto South LIP - NLS

Rachelle Molto, Toronto North LIP

Misha Hossain, Toronto North LIP

Kuuku Quagraine, Toronto West LIP

BEFORE WE BEGIN, LET'S TAKE A MOMENT FOR A QUICK CHECK-IN

In one word – how are you, really?

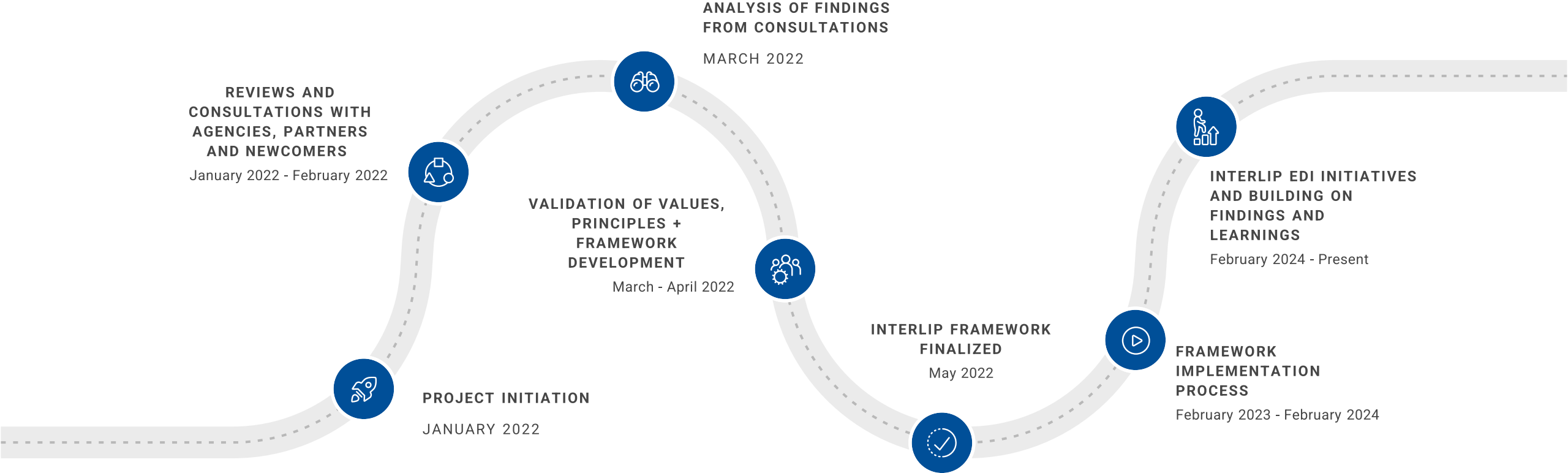


Agenda

- 1.TORONTO'S INTERLIP EDI FRAMEWORK: BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW**
- 2.EDI: THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE & SYMBOLIC WORK**
- 3.LEARNING AND RECOMMENDATION: THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**
- 4.CRITICAL FACTORS FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION**
- 5.PRESENTATIONS: TWO INTERLIP EDI PROJECTS**
- 6.DISCUSSION**
- 7.NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING**

Toronto's InterLIP EDI Framework: Background and Overview

Our EDI framework is the result of a collaboration between five Toronto LIPs and was developed through an extensive **process involving the directors and managers of the participating LIPs**. This **two-year effort** involved ongoing dialogue, strategic planning, and multiple rounds of input from all stakeholders.



An Overview of the Framework: Key Components

- EDI frameworks are evolving documents that remain in active dialogue with the teams and communities they serve.
- The framework is structured around seven dimensions, each with specific dimensions and measures of success.
- Partnership Culture, Service Coordination, Community Engagement, Research and Evaluation, Capacity Building, Advocacy and System Change, and Communication and Knowledge Sharing.
- Strengths: Comprehensive scope, integration of lived experiences, and a commitment to accountability.

DIMENSION: RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

SUBDIMENSION	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Data collection, analysis, management, utilization, and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholders are engaged meaningfully in the development and planning of disaggregated data gathering to identify potential disparities in access and outcomes• Data is shared with stakeholders
Methodologies – qualitative (lived experiences), not just quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barriers to participation in research/evaluation studies for newcomers are removed, such as technology access, language barriers, transportation, etc.• Diverse newcomer communities are engaged to ensure appropriateness of research questions and tools regarding lived experiences with racism• Intersectional lens is applied e.g., experiences of both new and settled immigrants• Honorariums are provided to participants
Needs assessment/gap analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data analysis reports are collected and reviewed• Deliberate follow up with research results is carried out• Accessible strategies for outreach to places of worship, childcare, and other locations where newcomers gather are in place
Piloting solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sufficient resources are committed for evaluation of pilots to ensure lessons are learned

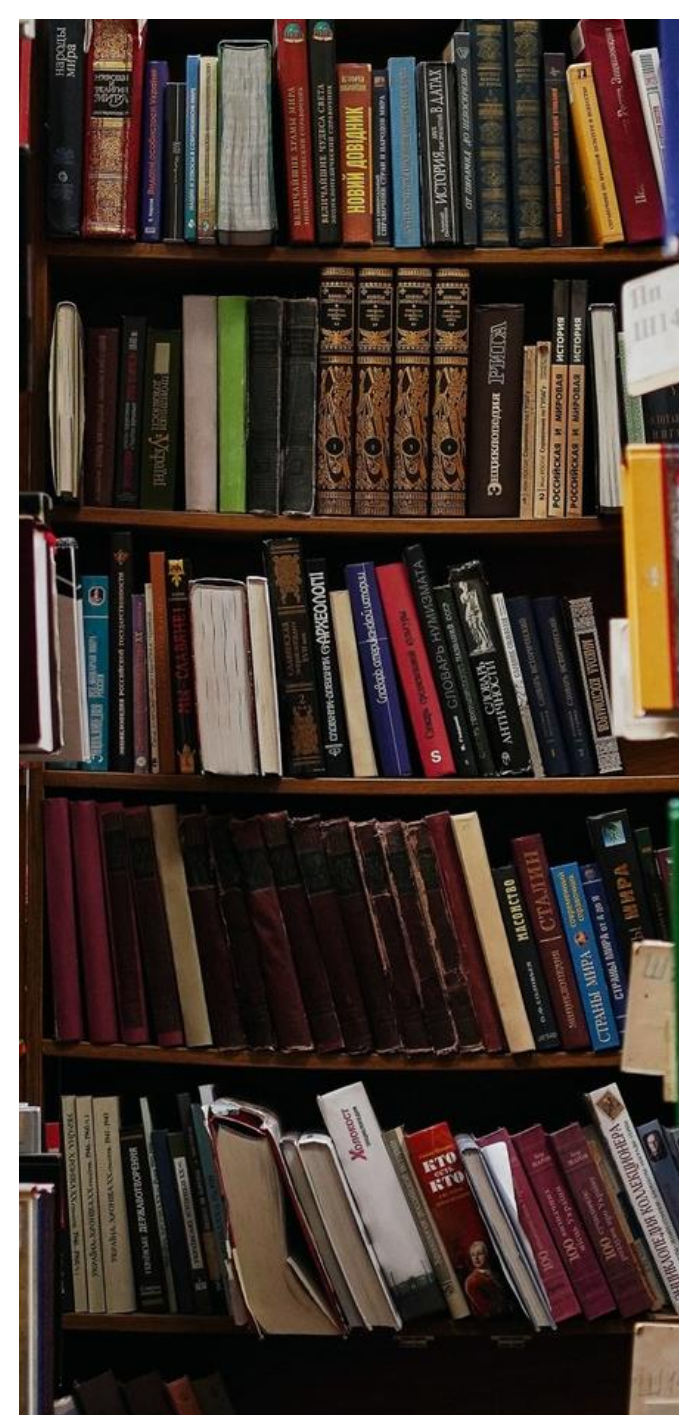
EDI: The Current Landscape & Avoiding Symbolic Work

- Rising anti-immigrant sentiments, right-wing rhetoric, and funding cuts: EDI work is simultaneously more necessary and increasingly difficult to sustain.
- Approaching EDI work with integrity: committing to systemic/structural transformation.
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion can become an Institutional "Happy Project" (Ahmed, 2012): a celebratory "feel-good" initiative that only serves the organization.
- EDI can be used to make organizations appear progressive instead of transforming the conditions within organizations or the communities they serve.



Learning and Recommendations: The Implementation Process

FROM E-CALIBER GROUP'S FINAL REPORT ON THE INTERLIP EDI FRAMEWORK
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS



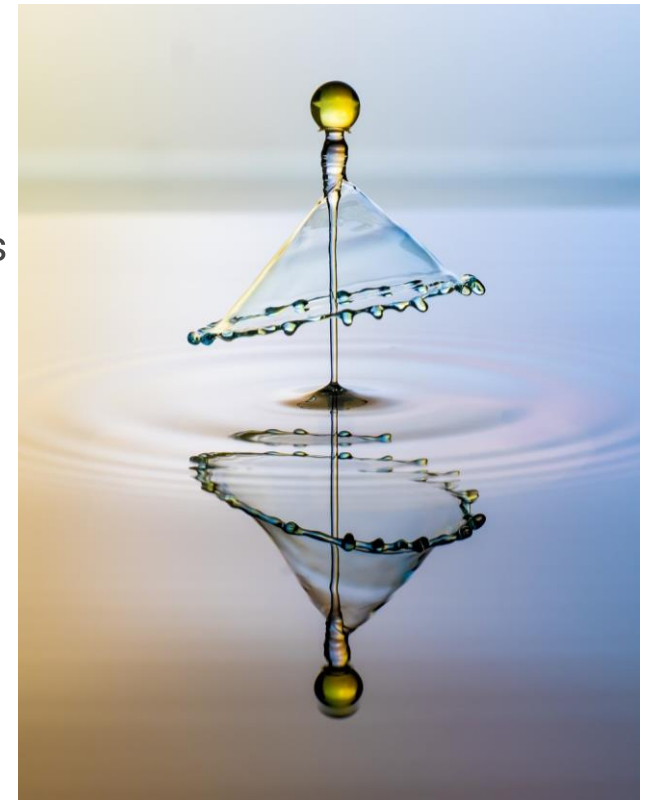
1 - THERE IS A NEED TO ADD INTERNAL WORK ON ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC INEQUITIES IN LIPS THEMSELVES

This internal work is **imperative** to take place at the same time as teams such as LIP are trying to address the systemic inequities impacting the stakeholders in the settlement sector.

This means that all **LIPs need to acknowledge that there are systemic inequities in themselves** and **include internal EDI as a priority in their EDI work**. They need to add specific priorities and actions related to identifying and addressing systemic barriers that result in inequities within LIPs.

This can include initiatives that can aim to improve on areas related to LIP staff:

- **JOB SECURITY**
- **COMPENSATION**
- **OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT (E.G CLEAR CAREER PATHS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**
- **BUILDING A CULTURE THAT FOCUSES ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING**
- **THE RATE OF TURNOVER AMONG STAFF**

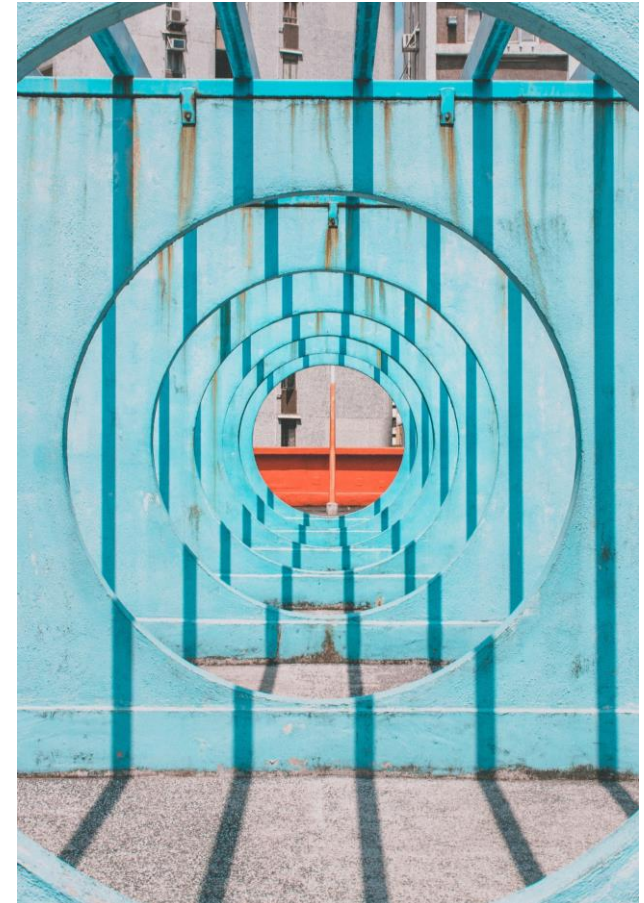


2 - THE EDI FRAMEWORK NEEDS TO EVOLVE AFTER BEING PILOTED

In an ever-changing world, to remain relevant and effective, every framework needs to evolve.

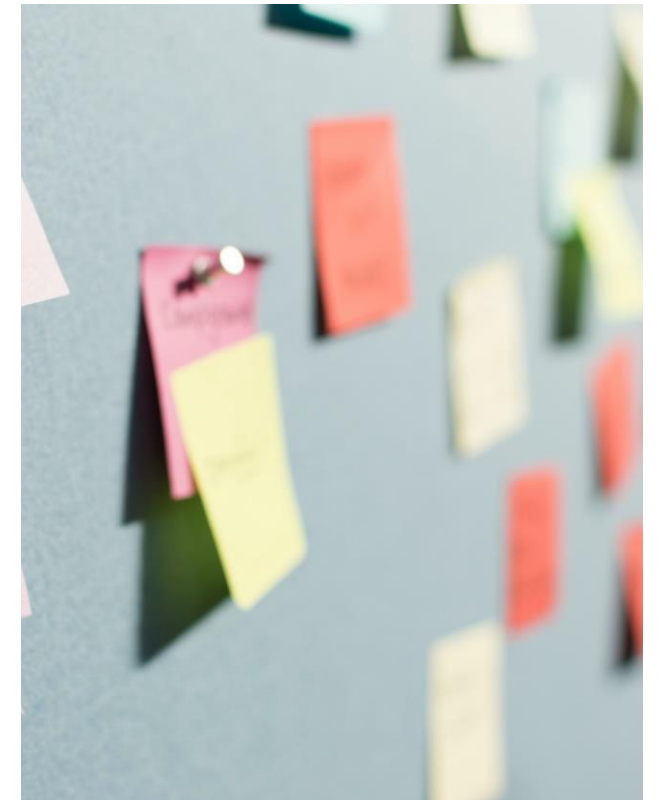
An equitable consultation or co-creation process should be designed so LIP staff, partners, and newcomers have ample opportunity to impact the following elements of the framework meaningfully:

- **VISION AND VALUES**
OVERTIME THESE FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS CAN BE FURTHER DEFINED AND REFINED BASED ON THE INPUT FROM DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS AND LEARNINGS
- **THE PRIORITIES SET - DIMENSIONS, SUBDIMENSIONS, AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS**
 - WHAT IS MISSING IN THE FRAMEWORK?
 - WHAT SHOULD BE REMOVED AS IT IS OUTSIDE OF LIPS CONTROL?
- **RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE FRAMEWORK AND EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING EDI WORK**



3 - CRITICAL FACTORS FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS, DECISION-MAKING AND RESOURCES

- **RECOGNIZING POWER IMBALANCES** IN SOCIETY IN GENERAL AND ORGANIZATIONS SPECIFICALLY, THERE NEED TO BE CLEAR PROCESSES THAT **ENSURE THAT THE VOICES OF MARGINALIZED EMPLOYEES ARE HEARD AND CONSIDERED** IN IDENTIFYING & ADDRESSING PRIORITIES.
- TO MAXIMIZE EFFECTIVENESS, THE IMPLEMENTATION LEADS **NEED TO BE GIVEN THE RESOURCES NEEDED** - TIME, BUDGET, AND LATITUDE TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT.
- DEFINING CLEAR **EDI OUTCOMES**, SETTING UP **ACCOUNTABILITIES** AND CREATING A PROCESS FOR CONTINUOUS **EVALUATION** OF IDENTIFIED GOALS AND OUTCOMES IS A CRITICAL FACTOR IN MOVING EDI FORWARD.



EDI requires us to question the *E*, the *D*, and the *I* of EDI:

E

CAN WE HAVE EQUITY WITHIN
UNEQUAL SYSTEMS?

D

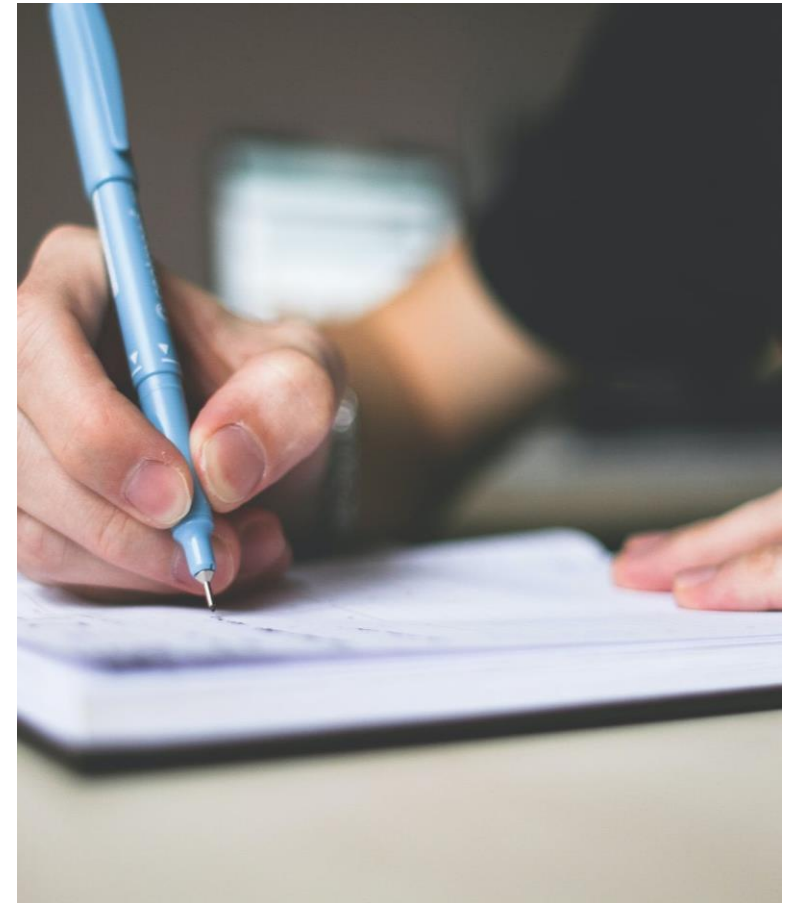
DO WE WANT TO DIVERSIFY WHO
PARTICIPATES IN STRUCTURES OF
OPPRESSION?

I

WHAT ARE WE BEING INCLUDED IN? IS
INCLUSION A WAY OF SUSTAINING
EXCLUSION?

Sustaining the Work With Care: A Process-Driven Approach

- The process matters: think about who does what work & who are the beneficiaries.
- **Centre collaboration, solidarity, relationships and mutual learning.**
- Reject neoliberal frameworks that prioritize quick measurable outcomes which align with capitalist productivity goals.
- Focus on institutional accountability: regular reviews, feedback loops, asking uncomfortable questions, and transparent & accessible reporting.
- Do not let the work be reduced to outcomes and optics, but on **challenging the very infrastructures of inequality.**





Introducing Two InterLIP EDI projects



Toronto West
Local Immigration Partnership
Community Collaboration at Work

TWLIP EDI Project

Toronto Newcomer Workplace Inclusion Charter

Toronto Newcomer Workplace Inclusion Charter

1

WHAT IS IT?

- An employer assessment and recognition program to create more inclusive workplaces for newcomers in Toronto.
- 8 practical actions designed to support employers with the recruitment and retention of diverse newcomers

2

WHO IS IT FOR?

- Businesses of any size in Toronto.
- Employers will be recognized as Workplace Inclusion Champions

3

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Develop Charter Draft
- Focus Group Discussions
- Information Exchange Session Final
- Deliverable

Toronto Newcomer Workplace Inclusion Charter

1

To address power imbalances and ensure **marginalized voices** are heard, research and adopt effective **inclusive practices** to enhance **equitable decision making**.

2

Implementation leads need **sufficient resources** (time, budget, and autonomy)—to **maximize project effectiveness**.

3

Establishing **clear EDI outcomes**, assigning **accountability measures**, and creating a process for **ongoing evaluation of goals and results** are crucial for advancing EDI initiatives.

TNLIP EDI Projects

Toronto North LIP

TWO STUDIES OF EDI RELATED RESEARCH, RELEVANT TO OUR WORK WITH NEWCOMERS:

1) HEARING FROM NEWCOMERS DIRECTLY

Learning from Newcomers' Lived Experiences of Racism: Towards Solutions Based in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for the Toronto North Region

2) FOCUSING ON EDI WITHIN THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR AND AMONG OUR PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

Environmental Scan of EDI Strategies, Policies, Practices and Tools and their Context at the TNLIP.



Learning from Newcomers' Lived Experiences of Racism:

TOWARDS SOLUTIONS BASED IN
EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION
FOR THE TORONTO NORTH REGION

A Research Study by:



Research Team:

Hodan Mohamed, Toronto North LIP
Katharine Neale, Toronto North LIP
Kaitlin Murray, Toronto North LIP
Larry Matthews, KMA Consulting
Melanie Persaud, KMA Consulting

- Primary research in the form of focus groups
- Focused on the **experiences of newcomers in North York**, analysed through an **anti-racism lens** in order to better support the future work and decision making of the TNLIP
- The research question guiding this report is: **What do newcomer experiences reveal about racism and other forms of discrimination when accessing settlement, employment, and health services in North York?**
- Findings are organized into the themes of the 3 TNLIP working Groups - Settlement, Employment, and Health

Learning from Newcomers' Lived Experiences of Racism: Towards Solutions Based in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for the Toronto North Region

- Internal initiative with the goal of **using the findings to guide** our action plans and keeping the **experiences of newcomers** in focus
- Infuse an **anti-racism lens** into the work of the TNLIP work groups
- Have concrete information and research to **inform the work of the 3 working groups, task groups, and projects** from a newcomer lens

Learning from Newcomers' Lived Experiences of Racism:

TOWARDS SOLUTIONS BASED IN
EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION
FOR THE TORONTO NORTH REGION

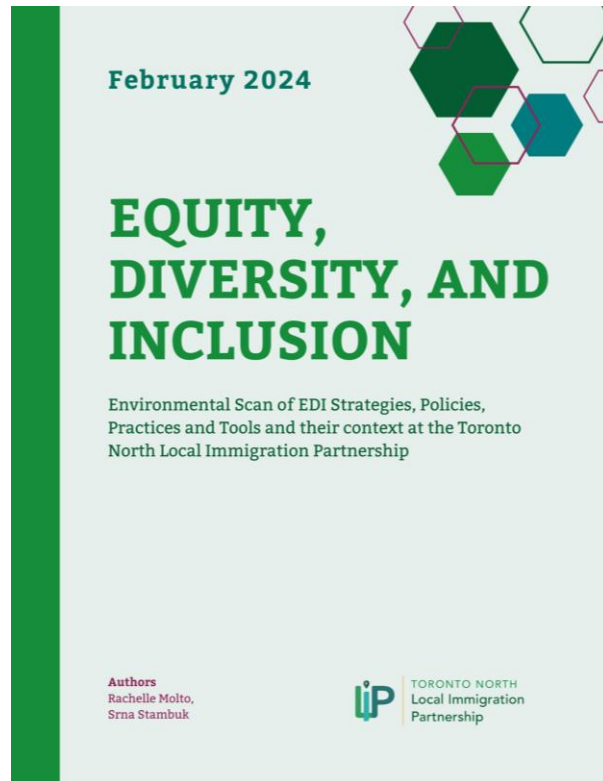
A Research Study by:



Research Team:

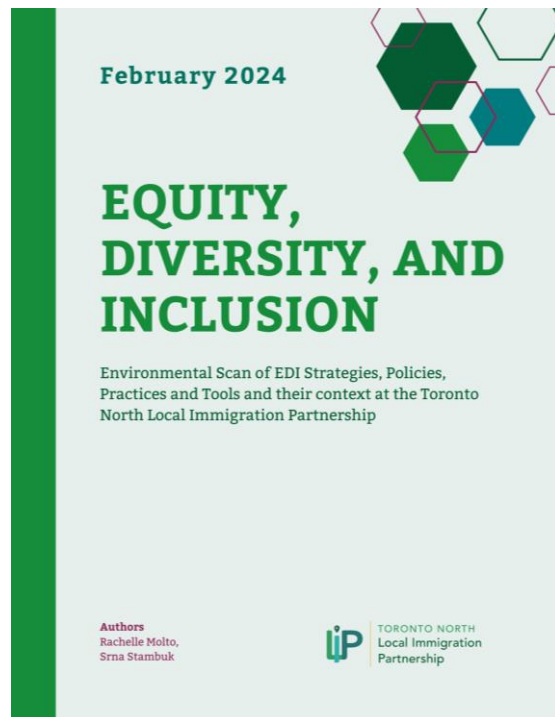
Hodan Mohamed, Toronto North LIP
Katharine Neale, Toronto North LIP
Kaitlin Murray, Toronto North LIP
Larry Matthews, KMA Consulting
Melanie Pensaud, KMA Consulting

Environmental Scan of EDI Strategies, Policies, Practices and Tools and their Context at the TNLIP



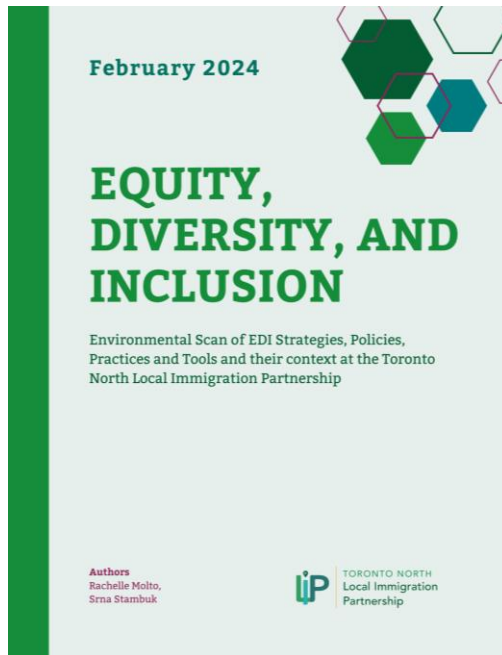
- **Secondary research:** literature review & media scan of the wider context of EDI
- **Primary research:** survey of the TNLIP PC members
- Came out of the InterLIP EDI Framework implementation phase
 - TNLIP started with the dimension of **capacity building**

Challenges



- Sustainability/long-term impacts on approaches to work
- Staff capacity, changing funding priorities
- Capacity can be tied to funding structures. This past CFP, major emphasis on GBA+ (which is in the same vein as EDI)
- Neo-liberal funding structural issues of the non-profit sector as a whole
- Funding to non-profits is deliberately fixed, short-term
- Greater competition between agencies hinders collaboration between organizations carrying out similar work, as agencies compete for the same limited funding

Area for Improvement



- **While there have been increased commitments to implementing EDI measures**
- Recent IRCC Call for Proposals (CFP2024): Emphasis GBA+ analysis into settlement program planning, delivery, and evaluation with special focus on needs of newcomers with intersectional identities
- Commitments toward implementing calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- **Opportunities for improvements moving forwards given the challenges of the sector landscape**
- TNLIP to incorporate EDI into a particular role rather than on a project basis



Facilitated Discussion:
The Role of LIPs in Informing EDI Practices

BEFORE WE BEGIN

What comes to mind when
you hear or think of equity,
diversity and inclusion?



Questions

QUESTION #1

What lessons and challenges have emerged from successful EDI practices in your LIPs, and how can EDI principles be better applied in your work?



DISCUSSION AND SHAREBACK

10 minutes

Questions

QUESTION #2

How does the current settlement sector funding model impact the depth of EDI work, and what would a sustainable EDI funding model look like for your LIP?



DISCUSSION AND SHAREBACK

10 minutes

Thank you!

Let's keep the conversation going.