

# Municipal Diversity and Anti-Racism Programs in Canada



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# Research

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- The Laurier Institution
  - Web search of 50 Canadian municipalities
  - Interviews with 5 Canadian municipalities
  - Report
    - Overview of programs and major benefits
    - Focus on 5 municipalities
      - Calgary, Edmonton, Prince George, Saskatoon, Halifax



# The Challenge

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“Municipal governments must make equity and equality the cornerstone of the way they work, do business and govern to enjoy the full benefits of future growth and productivity.”

Federation of Canadian Municipalities, June 2003



# New Reality of Diversity

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- Aboriginal, visible minority and new immigrant populations are significant and growing
  - 20% to 50% of the population in major cities
  - 10% to 30% of the population in many smaller cities and towns, especially in BC



# Policies and Programs

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- Most municipalities have some policies and programs related to diversity and racism



# Policies and Programs

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- Two categories
  - City as organization
  - City as community



# City as Organization

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- Putting the city's house in order
  - Employment practices
  - Employee training
  - Service provision
  - Business practices



# Employment Practices

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- Most municipalities adopted ‘equality of opportunity’ policies in the late 1970s or 1980s
- Some municipalities began adopting ‘equity’ policies in the mid-1980s





# Employment Practices

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- Equality and equity policies are meant to ensure that all employees have an equal opportunity to function successfully within the organization
- Most municipalities now include cultural background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability along with race, gender, and religion as targets of these policies



# Employee Training

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- Many municipalities require employees to undergo diversity training
- One of the benefits of sensitizing employees to diversity issues is that it makes them more effective in dealing with both fellow employees and members of the community who are from backgrounds different than their own



# Service Provision

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- It is now common for cities with a high rate of immigration to provide multilingual services, including document translation in as many as, or more than, 10 different languages



# Business Practices

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- Some municipalities require business partners to demonstrate compliance with laws relating to equality
  - In Prince George, this principle has been extended to the use of public facilities, in a rental clause that excludes hate groups from renting space from the city



# Benefits

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- Attract, retain and motivate employees
- Greater taxpayer satisfaction with government services
- Being perceived as a socially conscious and progressive organization
- Compliance with the law
  - Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
  - Canadian Human Rights Act
  - Human Rights Code of BC



# Focus City

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- Edmonton has programs covering employment practices, employee training, business practices and service provision
- Its Diversity Leadership Team supports staff training and encourages business units to ensure that services are inclusive and diversity sensitive



# City as Community

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- Building strong and diverse communities
  - Events
  - Community liaison
  - Funding programs
  - Community services
  - Awards
  - Partnerships



# Events

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- Most cities support multicultural events
  - International Day for the Elimination of Racism
  - National Aboriginal Day
  - South Asian History Month
  - Asian Heritage Month
  - Black History Month
  - Multicultural festivals that showcase diversity





# Community Liaison

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- Many cities have community liaison offices or advisory committees that liaise between the city and diverse communities



# Funding Programs

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- Some municipalities fund diversity initiatives
  - Toronto's Access and Equity Grant Program was established in 1980 to promote its multicultural and multiracial character and support a community infrastructure that addresses racism and racial inequality
  - Vancouver's Community Services Grant Program provides financial support to about 100 non-profit organizations



# Community Services

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- Many cities provide community services to address needs and issues related to social diversity
  - Ottawa's Multicultural Health program increases access for ethnic, racial and cultural groups who experience barriers to health services
  - Saskatoon's Peacekeepers Youth Camp pairs aboriginal youth with police on camping trips to create trust between the two groups



# Awards

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- Some cities recognize contributions to diversity and anti-racism efforts and achievements
  - Includes awards for schoolchildren whose artwork, poetry, *etc.* celebrates diversity, and for individuals and businesses that have contributed to the city's diversity initiatives



# Partnerships

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- Many cities partner with aboriginal, multicultural and immigrant-serving organizations to develop and deliver programs
  - Prince George partnered with the Multicultural Heritage Society to develop comprehensive anti-racism initiatives



# Benefits

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- Encourages people to stay, move to, and invest in the community by contributing to a culture of tolerance and respect
  - Minority groups and immigrants create jobs, through entrepreneurial ventures and the expansion of the local consumer base
  - Federal government is encouraging immigrants to settle outside MTV (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver)
  - Cities compete for immigrants



# Focus City

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- Calgary created Diversity Calgary, an independent, non-profit organization that brings together ‘champions of diversity’ from public, business, community, and non-profit sectors
  - Strengthens the community through anti-racism education and promotion of best practices and policies in organizations, institutions and the community
  - Calgary is targeting substantial increase in new immigrants



# Racism and Hate Crimes

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- “A 1995 Department of Justice study estimated that there were over 60,000 incidents of hate crime in 1994.”
- “Sadly, racism and discrimination have become more overt and visible since September 11, 2001, the ‘war against terrorism’ and the threat of a war against Iraq.”

Federation of Canadian Municipalities, June 2003





# Responding to Racism

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- Most municipalities are not prepared to respond quickly to incidents of racism and hate crimes
- Most programs are infrastructural
  - Analagous to seismic upgrades; not designed to respond quickly to earthquakes



# Responding to Racism

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- BC Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services supports the development and implementation of a Critical Incident Response Model (CIRM)
- Only critical incident response model in Canada



# Critical Incident Response

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- Includes establishing a broad-based steering committee to develop community-wide protocols for responding to racism and hate activity
- These protocols are the community's “racism preparedness” manual – they tell people how to respond quickly and effectively to hate and race based incidents



# CIRM Communities

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- February 2004
  - Campbell River
  - Cranbrook
  - Kamloops
  - Quesnel
  - Terrace



# Conclusion

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- Many municipal governments have some diversity and anti-racism programs
- Some have developed community-wide protocols for responding to racism and hate activity
- Policies, programs and protocols benefit the city as an organization and as a community