Forum on Diversity and Inclusion

Initiative of the Peace Network for Social Harmony

UNITING TO STRENGTHEN THE FIELD

April 21 and 22, 2022
At the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

REPORT

In partnership with

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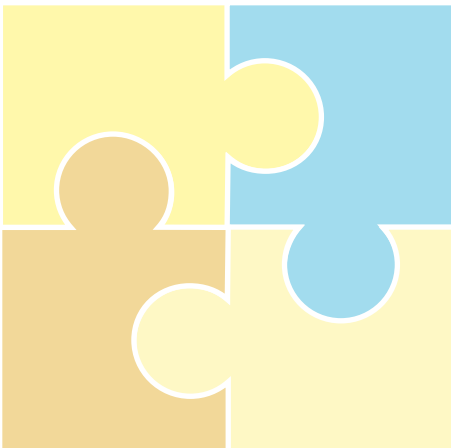MONTRÉAL

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Peace Network for Social Harmony

REPORT OF THE FORUM ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: UNITING TO STRENGTHEN THE FIELD

NOVEMBER 22, 2022

Photos: Michael Abril

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PEACE NETWORK FOR SOCIAL HARMONY

The Peace Network for Social Harmony is made up of philanthropic foundations and corporate members.

Grounded in an inclusive and collaborative approach, the Network focuses its efforts on three fields of activity: Diversity and Inclusion, Violence Prevention, and Peace Promotion.

The Network is uniquely positioned through its multiple relationships across all sectors of society. Our many partners include grassroots organizations, institutions, businesses, arts and cultural organizations, and representatives from government.
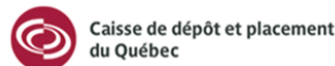
INTRODUCTION

The Peace Network for Social Harmony is pleased to present the Report of the Forum on Diversity and Inclusion: Uniting to Strengthen the Field. This project, carried out in partnership with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, was an opportunity to bring together those working on diversity and inclusion within their professional mandates, as well as members of the general public (on the first day of the event).

The creation of spaces for dialogue, exchange and sharing of practices is crucial in fostering collaborative work. Combining the knowledge of all participants is part of an effort to develop projects with greater scope and complexity, while bringing new ideas to the forefront. This is why the Forum focused on a convergence of practices in different sectors and environments, in order to bring out innovative solutions.

This document describes the approach used, whereby the Forum was set up as a space for dialogue, as an opportunity for sharing, and as a site for the convergence of knowledge. The document also presents the results of the collective work carried out during the intersectoral and sectoral workshops. It is important to note that the Forum is the starting point for a longer-term project and aims to generate social impact through the power of collaboration, particularly through the efforts of a working group that will continue to partner with the Peace Network in developing an action plan.

In the final section of the report, we present the results of communications and outreach efforts, which contributed significantly to the transmission of information about the Forum (articles and interviews are available via the hyperlinks).

All of the products (videos, report, forum proceedings) will be available on the Peace Network for Social Harmony website: thepeacenetwork.ca and on the Forum-specific site: forumdi.ca.

LE CONTEXTE

Over the past few years, the Peace Network for Social Harmony team has met and collaborated with about a hundred partners active in the field of diversity and inclusion, including NGOs, cultural, educational and financial institutions, representatives of different levels of government, businesses, etc. We have found that these actors rarely have the opportunity to meet and share data, knowledge, experiences and practices, or to exchange on key, overarching issues. The lack of connection between stakeholders working in the same sector (e.g. education/immigration/business/arts/etc.) and the general absence of contact between sectors leads to a depletion of human and financial resources, and reduces the scope and impact of initiatives, which end up being carried out in silos. These shortcomings also lead to duplication of services, mistrust between organizations, and harmful competition for funding, visibility and recognition.

In response to these needs in the field, the Peace Network for Social Harmony, in partnership with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA), organized the Forum on Diversity and Inclusion: Uniting to Strengthen the Field. The event took place on April 21-22, 2022 at the MMFA, bringing together over 200 participants from more than 100 organizations.

1.1 OBJECTIVES AND FORMAT

The Forum on Diversity and Inclusion had a number of key objectives, such as providing opportunities to:

» Discuss and analyze current issues;

» Share knowledge and best practices;

» Facilitate collaboration;

» Exchange tools;

» Build sectoral and cross-sectoral synergies;

» Create greater effectiveness for individual and collective actions.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Network adopted a **formula** that included panel discussions (day one of the forum) and workshops (day two).

Day one was designed to promote learning, knowledge sharing and cross-fertilization of perspectives, in order to obtain a transversal understanding of current intercultural issues. Day two was devoted to developing proposals for solutions to key issues, as identified by stakeholders.

The **themes** of the panels and the topics for discussion in each workshop were first gathered based on the results of a stakeholder survey, and then refined with the advisory committee. The Advisory Committee was composed of 14 experts from diverse backgrounds and communities.

This close collaboration with the Advisory Committee was intended to ensure that the Forum's work was as inclusive and beneficial as possible, and for the whole of society.

André Ho — Bochra Manaï — Charlène Bélanger

Déborah Cherenfant — Habib El-Hage, Ph.D. — Hayder Achouri

Julie Savaria — Lawrence Witt — Linda Gauthier

Micheline Chevrier — Nadine St-Louis — Patrice Brodeur

Rani Cruz — Souleymane Guissé

1.2 THE PROGRAM

The Forum began (**April 21**) with words from the Honourable Michèle Audette. Her strong and moving speech was received with tremendous enthusiasm by participants, resulting in a standing ovation[1].

The Honourable *Michèle Audette*

Photos: Michael Abril

The second part of the afternoon, moderated by Déborah Cherenfant, was dedicated to panel discussions: "Diversity and Inclusion: Where We Stand, Blind Spots, Approaches and Perspectives", presented by Rachida Azdouz[2] and Fabrice Vil[3], and "Transversality and Intersectionality: Theory vs Practice", presented by Nathalie Carrénard[4] and André Ho[5].

Rachida Azouz

Fabrice Vil

Déborah Cherenfant

Nathalie Carrénard

André Ho

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1 All speeches are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzKxVGCb-O3PyVhvR-Sszag

2 Rachida Azdouz - psychologist specializing in intercultural relations and affiliated researcher at the Laboratoire de recherches en relations interculturelles (LABRRI)

3 Fabrice Vil, lawyer, columnist and social entrepreneur

4 Nathalie Carrénard, Diversity and Inclusion Equity Advisor (EDI)

5 André Ho, Community project coordinator at the Montreal LGBTQ+ Community Centre

The afternoon concluded with an emotional performance of throat singing, by Inuvialuit and Dìne artist Nina Segalowitz and her guest Lydia Etok, originally from Nunavik.

The second day of the Forum (**April 22**) featured intersectoral workshops as well as workshops by sector, in which participants discussed the following themes:

Intersectoral Workshops:

- » Organizational Transformation and Practice;

- » Developing a Common Language: Diversity, Inclusion, Discrimination, Racism, Oppression;

- » Representation;

- » Gender and Intersectionality;

- » Finance: Donor Relations.

Workshops by Sector:

- » Education and Youth: Bridge-Building and the Fight Against Discrimination

- » Arts and Culture: Leadership and Programming;

- » Intercultural Relations: Continuous Learning;

- » Business and Workplace: DEI - Concepts and Practices;

- » Immigration and Refugees: Approaches and Support;

- » Public Services: DEI.

The Forum concluded with a plenary session, in which participants gathered for a closing address by the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, former Governor General of Canada, as well as an opportunity to interact with her afterwards.

Nina Segalowitz and Lydia Etok

The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean

Photos: Michael Abril

RESULTS

The Forum was a great success. More than 250 people registered for the first day and over 100 people for the second. For both dates, we had to create waiting lists.

"I would like to emphasize the wonderful encounters I had there, the relevance of the exchanges and panels, and also the incredible energy felt among participants, which clearly reveals that a movement is taking place in Montreal."

"I left with greater knowledge of the struggle of immigrant and racialized communities to make themselves heard and understood, and a greater sense of the demands and dilemmas facing teachers who want to educate their students about racism, especially in schools with a diverse student population."

"Thank you for organizing the Forum! I am convinced that the event will have a positive impact on the community."

"We come away nourished and with an even stronger commitment to collaborate with our fellow stakeholders."

2.1 DAY ONE: PANEL DISCUSSIONS

At the end of the first day, we asked participants to fill in an evaluation form:

GENERAL SATISFACTION

Satisfied
17%
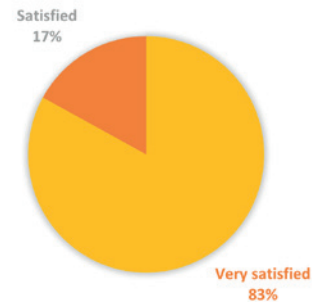
Very satisfied
83%

According to the results, 83% of people were very satisfied and 17% were satisfied with their participation.

THEMES PROPOSED

Interesting
17%

Very interesting
83%
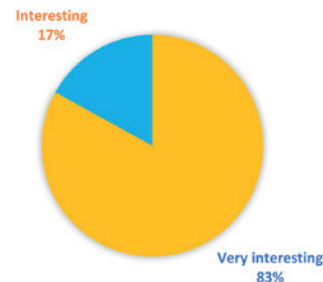
The themes proposed were considered very interesting by 83% of participants and interesting by 17% of participants.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT

Clear
26%
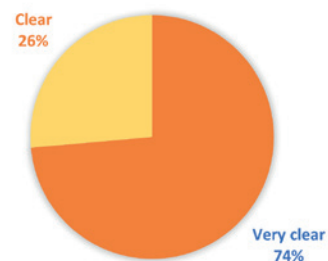
Very clear
74%

The content of the presentations was considered very clear by 73.6% and clear by 26.4% of the participants.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Not useful
1%

Useful
33%

Very useful
66%

66.1% of Day One attendees considered their participation to be very useful, 33% considered it useful, and 0.9% considered it not useful.

PARTICIPATION IN THE FORUM HELPED

Learn
19%

Informed my thinking
31%

Improved my knowledge
25%

Better understanding of certain issues
25%

For 31.2% of attendees, participation in the Forum informed their thinking, while 24.7% said that participation improved their knowledge and understanding of certain issues. For 19.4% of participants, the Forum was a learning opportunity.

THE FORMAT : PANELS + DISCUSSION

Not satisfactory
3%

Satisfactory
27%

Highly satisfactory
70%

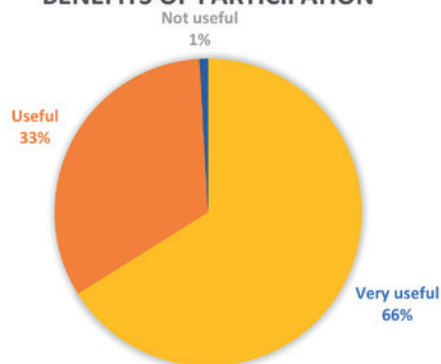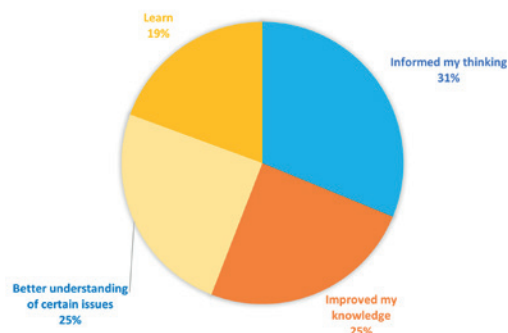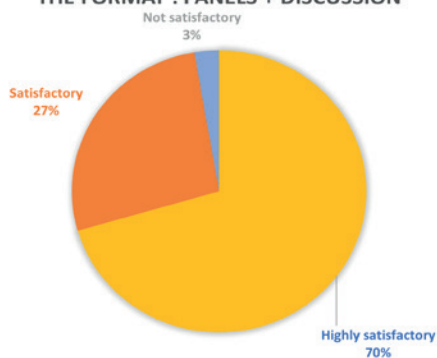The format, involving panels + discussion, was considered highly satisfactory by 70.5% of participants, satisfactory by 26.8% and not satisfactory by 2.7%.

2.2 DAY TWO: WORKSHOPS

The workshops were designed to encourage interaction, to cross-fertilize views, and to share experiences and practices, in order to promote the development of possible solutions to the proposed issues. The ultimate objective of this work is to develop a collective action plan for DEI stakeholders that will encourage collaborative work, improve DEI approaches, and guide the implementation of solutions. For each workshop, in collaboration with members of the Advisory Committee, we developed a list of questions that helped to focus the issues and guide the discussions.

The morning was devoted to work on transversal issues (inter-sectoral workshops). Participants worked on five topics: organizational transformation and practices; common language; representativeness; gender and intersectionality; and finance.

In the afternoon session, participants worked on issues specific to their sector of expertise (sectoral workshops) such as: education; arts and culture; intercultural rapprochement; business; immigration and refugees; and public services.

Each table was supported by a scribe and a facilitator, who ran the discussions and ensured that the exchanges flowed smoothly and respectfully.

2.2.1 Intersectoral workshops

In these workshops, we brought together people from different sectors (education, arts, etc.) and different backgrounds (NGOs, philanthropy, business, etc.) in order to allow for a cross-fertilization of views, perspectives, experiences and practices.

2.2.1.1 Organizational transformation and practices

In this workshop, three questions were considered:

» How to value experience and link it to relevant competencies?

» How to identify worthwhile practices and make them evolve in a context of endless transformation?

» How to measure progress?

Results: Firms are increasingly focused on matters of organizational transformation and conducting effective practices in the area of diversity and inclusion. These are elements within a larger objective of achieving socio-demographic representativeness of the general population and the community served by the organization. However, population demographics and the overall context within which organizations operate are constantly changing. Their ability to adapt their structure and practices to these changes is therefore constantly being tested. This organizational transformation involves, among other things, reflecting on the firm's hiring process and the effective measuring of impact.

Structural transformation requires the deliberation and involvement of the entire organization - the board, senior management and employees. One key is the ability of organizations to communicate the need for and purpose of structural change, matters which must be understood and shared by the whole organization.

The processes of hiring and integrating employees must be examined in light of the value of each candidate's experience and its relation to their underlying skill set. In order to diversify their socio-demographic profile, organizations must deploy initiatives to reach candidates outside their traditional recruitment pools. These so-called external actions consist, among other things, in reconsidering the processes, methods and locations of job postings. Other actions are part of internal changes, such as analyzing skills equivalence, valuing atypical career paths, reviewing the composition of selection committees, interview guides and criteria, and integrating new recruits plus setting up collaborative networks.

The development of impact measures is an important part of the organizational transformation process. It allows for the setting of targets, milestones and ultimately a better snapshot of the progress being made.

2.2.1.2 Common language: diversity, inclusion, discrimination, racism, oppression

In this workshop, the following questions were considered:

» What is the importance of having a common language?

» What are we talking about when speak of: diversity, inclusion, discrimination, racism and oppression?

» How can we work towards a more inclusive language?

» How can we work on a shared understanding?

Results: Words carry meaning, and their meaning may differ from one context to another, according to linguistic, professional and/or organizational cultures. While we share the objective of working on issues related to diversity, inclusion, discrimination and racism, their ambiguity can be the source of misunderstandings and communication barriers.

The adoption of an intercultural communication approach could assist in the development of a common language and could help create a bridge between individuals with different frames of reference. In a process of co-construction of meaning, the development of a common language encourages the clarification of each person's frame of reference and allows the introduction of the necessary nuances and the taking into account of lived experience. While reference to this common language is important, attention must also be paid to the fact that the meaning of words changes over time and according to circumstances. This underlines the need to adapt the common language, and this adaptation must be the result of shared reflection.

The development of inclusive language is based on the principle that no one holds the absolute truth. It implies, among other things, that those affected by our actions are included in the discussion, that their sensitivities can be expressed, and that these can be taken into account in the development of a common language.

2.2.1.3 Representativeness

The questions considered in this workshop were the following:

» What are we talking about when we talk about representativeness?

» How can we work on issues of representativeness to ensure equal opportunities in all circumstances?

» What is the relationship between representativeness and intersectionality?

Results: The notion of diversity expand to include, for example people with disabilities. In organizational settings, it should reflect the general population, with emphasis on an organization's clientele. By taking this diversity into account, multiple points of view can be considered, different issues can be better understood, and equal opportunities become more likely.

To ensure this representativeness in the development of projects or actions, two initiatives can be implemented. The first is to bring together organizations with similar backgrounds and clientele for a better understanding and synergy of actions, and the second is to diversify the collaborating organizations in order to multiply the points of view and opinions leading to decision-making.

Listening to the needs of the people for whom the project or action is being developed and including them in the whole process - from creation to completion - will help to ensure that they are represented.

Rethinking the hiring process will make it possible to reach candidates outside the usual recruitment networks. It is also necessary to re-examine skill profiles and hiring criteria, by taking into account the diversity of educational and migratory backgrounds and by promoting a balance between diplomas and professional experience. Finally, it is important to support new recruits in order to facilitate their integration into the organization and their career development.

2.2.1.4 Gender and intersectionality

Three topics were examined at this workshop:

» What are the issues related to intersectionality in the context of gender expression and ethno-cultural background?

» How do race, gender, sexuality and religion intersect, and how can they be discussed together?

» How can intersectionality be made operational?

Results: Intersectionality is about more than just appearance or the visible side of the self. It is about seeing the individual as a complex being. One of the challenges of intersectionality is the need to avoid labels that may reinforce prejudice, while recognizing and documenting the fact that some groups experience multiple forms of discrimination. Intersectionality issues are often overlooked and need to be addressed at all levels of society, including governments, organizations and civil society.

It is important to have an action plan in order to both operationalize intersectionality and reduce discrimination. In this sense, the establishment of a specialized committee is necessary to identify targets, compile data and propose recommendations that ensure a more inclusive environment. Employee assistance programs (EAPs) could also integrate discrimination-related issues into the support they provide.

Awareness-raising and training are important elements in making intersectionality operational and in creating a network of allies. This awareness-raising should be transversal, ranging from the different levels of government to primary schools. Other educational channels can be used, including popular education, through the development of workshops on intersectionality and its consequences for women.

DEI programs need to be redesigned in order to incorporate intersectionality issues. First and foremost, it is important to explain and remind all members of the organization of the reasons why these programs were designed in their present form and what their purpose is. However, there are also issues related to the standardization of the forms, as they do not allow, among other things, for the complexity of migratory and identity realities to be taken into account.

2.2.1.5 Finance: Relationship with donors

Four questions were considered at this workshop:

> »   How to improve relationships with donors?

> »   How can needs be matched with ongoing programs?

> »   What are the best strategies for obtaining funding?

> »   How to find out about available resources?

Results: Funding should be seen as a two-way relationship between funders and organizations. Both parties have an interest in investing in their collaboration in order to create greater impact.

For organizations, researching and writing applications for funding is always a major challenge. To make this process more effective, it is essential to allocate the time necessary for adequate preparation, i.e. to know the existing resources that correspond to the field of activity; to identify needs in a precise manner; to look for collaborators in order to develop a larger and more impactful project, including a community component and a component that allows for the strengthening of organizational capacity while preventing staff burnout.

Taking into account the fact that for many organizations, applying for funding is a recurring process, it is important to document the deployment of projects and to measure their impacts.

However, several questions remain: How to identify the needs? How to measure the impact? How to know/learn strategies and ways of documenting that are not too burdensome for the organization? How to promote the actions that are taken? How can we make ourselves known? How to translate qualitative results into quantitative data? How to enhance the value of the qualitative? How to collaborate between organizations to achieve a win-win result?

For funders, the focus is on questions of visibility, accessibility and consistency of programs with the needs of the field. Information about available funding programs needs to be communicated as clearly and widely as possible, and shared across diverse networks. Communication with grassroots organizations would help to improve funding strategies and the selection process: criteria, forms, steps to follow. The proposed programs should include a component for capacity building and/or diversification.

Other issues and questions raised by funders concerned the posture to adopt (How to become proactive?) and the design of the programs (How to develop flexible programs that still allow for the sustainability of actions?)

2.2.2 SECTORAL WORKSHOPS

2.2.2.1 Education and youth: intercultural rapprochement and the fight against discrimination

Three questions were considered at this workshop:

> »   How to address these matters in the educational environment, including with teachers and students?

> »   Cyberspace: what tools and approaches can address issues of intercultural rapprochement, the fight against discrimination and cyber-violence? What importance should be placed on these issues?

> »   Which sector(s) should be worked with more closely to maximize impact of these initiatives?

Results: When talking about education, it is necessary to keep in mind that it is a triangular relationship, i.e. between the teacher, the student and the parent. The proper functioning of this relationship is the basis for success in school. It is necessary to define the roles and responsibilities of each person and to develop a functional school-pupil-family ecosystem.

The issues of intercultural rapprochement and the fight against discrimination are becoming increasingly important in the education sector and are considered sensitive subjects. The first question that arises is that of responsibility - whose responsibility is it to address them? While some members of the school system are implementing intercultural rapprochement initiatives, it is important to emphasize that these need to be disseminated to

all parts of the system (parents, management, teachers, service centres). However, faced with the scope of this work, many people may feel powerless.

The proposals put forward suggest that responsibility should be shared among those who work with young people, and that three levels are involved. **At the political level** - the Ministry of Education should ensure that the means are in place for educational institutions to intervene with students. Teachers should be trained or have access to resources that enable them to feel comfortable in addressing issues of intercultural understanding and anti-discrimination. The course aimed at developing citizenship and intercultural competences should be included in the school curriculum at secondary and college levels, and it is necessary to consider the section on cyberspace. Indeed, cyberspace plays a very important role in the lives of young people, as it is a space that they visit together and where there are frequent experiences of violence, discrimination, etc.

At the level of schools and scholastic service centres - it is important to develop a collective plan and then to develop a network of partners (e.g. community organizations, youth centres, libraries) that can support and complement young people's activities and strengthen the links with **parents**. Indeed, parents are an integral part (third level) of the educational ecosystem and should be encouraged to take part in initiatives and workshops, and be offered coaching when needed.

Cyberspace deserves special attention from the three levels mentioned above, as it is often omitted in the deployment of diversity and inclusion initiatives. However, all the phenomena we observe in the real world also occur there. It is therefore important to educate students and parents about the use of digital media, and to raise awareness of problems involving all forms of violence.

Following these reflections, several issues were raised: To what extent is it possible to make changes in a school system that is currently experiencing various difficulties? How can we break down prejudices among young people? How can we implement a process for receiving and handling complaints in schools? How can we then support students in this process? And most importantly, who is responsible for these matters?

To maximize the impact of initiatives, it would be important to collaborate with the following sectors:
Business (including the social economy);
Agriculture;
Arts.

2.2.2.2 Arts and culture: leadership and programming

For this workshop, the following questions were considered:

» How to develop a DEI approach to leadership and programming?

» Who should be responsible for these issues in order to generate change?

» Diversity and inclusion - who and what are we talking about?

» How to approach and attract diverse audiences, and how to ensure sustainability of initiatives?

» What criteria should be used to measure the impact of an initiative?

» Access to resources (e.g. funding): rethinking the criteria for evaluating projects – How to integrate for the reality of communities? Where does the intersectional approach come into play?

» Funding: what budget is needed in order to generate, implement and consolidate change?

» To maximize the impact of initiatives, which sector(s) should we be working with more closely?

Results: Diversity and inclusion in the arts and culture sector includes not only the socio-demographic dimension, but also territorial and artistic diversity. One of the issues raised is the difficulty of documenting long-term impacts when actions are taken in the short term.

Rethinking governance is necessary in order to provide greater leadership and an agenda for diversity and inclusion. This new form of governance requires, among other things, a clear commitment from boards of directors and management; the creation of a DEI committee and measures; and the inclusion of diversity and inclusion issues as priorities in organizational policies and practices. Diversity and inclusion issues should be a concern for everyone in the organization. In this sense, it is important to raise everyone's awareness and provide them with the necessary tools and support to deconstruct implicit biases and structures of exclusion.

Keeping a watchful eye on effective practices related to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion would be a way of providing leadership in this area.

To foster the **development of inclusive programming**, it is both important to consider different forms of diversity, including generational, linguistic, cultural and artistic, and to give a voice to these groups when creating programming.

The commitment to DEI should also **be applied to the network of collaborators** in order to ensure alignment and coherence with the organization. In terms of funding for organizations, programs could be created for those that dedicate a portion of their programming to diversity.

While the adoption of quantitative criteria seems important to **measure the impact of projects**, the adoption of more qualitative criteria allows for a better understanding of short, medium and long-term impact, as well as the impact that the project has had in the lives of individuals. In this sense, measurement methods should rely more on direct interviews with participants and less on traditional methods such as taking photographs.

2.2.2.3 Intercultural Rapprochement: Continuing Education

The following questions were considered:

- » How to develop (new) skills?

- » How to share good practice effectively?

- » How to get to know other actors working in the same sector?

- » Which sector(s) should be worked with more closely in order to maximize the impact of initiatives?

Results: The lack of mutual awareness among those working in the same sector leads to duplication of services, competition and absence of collaboration. We note that there are two levels of continuing education that are closely linked: the development of the individual skills of stakeholders, and the development of collective skills, either on a territorial scale or for a specific issue.

The development of skills in intercultural rapprochement among practitioners first requires a skills analysis. On the one hand, it is a question of recognizing and listing the existing competencies of stakeholders and the collective competencies of each organization. On the other hand, it is essential to document knowledge gaps and identify training needs in order to develop a training plan. However, skills development is not only based on training, but also on knowledge sharing between colleagues and among partners within one's own sector or in related sectors. Workers trained in this way can then develop projects or training programs appropriate to their colleagues or to a wider audience.

Intra-network and extra-network sharing is an effective practice for exchanging effective practices in intercultural rapprochement. The creation of sharing spaces (e.g. communities of practice) is an interesting possibility provided that financial, technological and human resources can support these initiatives. The development of knowledge transfer initiatives is also a practice that can help disseminate information beyond the usual networks, as well as benefitting from information that is already documented.

The identification of partners and stakeholders likely to strengthen the development of competencies in intercultural rapprochement is a major challenge for organizations. Whereas the development of networks and partnerships may seem self-evident, it is important to recognize this as a practice that supports the achievement of the organization's mission.

It is important that **funders assume responsibility** in supporting the development of networks and partnerships. In addition to encouraging collaboration among organizations, they should help with knowledge acquisition and the development of effective practices related to business development, networking and funding.

2.2.2.4 Business: DEI - concepts and practices

The following questions were considered: :

- » Diversity and inclusion: who and what are we talking about?

- » DEI: What are we talking about?

- » DEI in SMEs and social economy enterprises: what practices for collaboration with other actors?

- » How to innovate in business practices?

- » Accessibility and equal opportunities for greater impact from initiatives: which sector(s) should we work with more closely?

Results: The concept of DEI is complex in that its central terminology - equity, diversity and inclusion - is inherently ambiguous. However, in order for everyone to embrace DEI and take action, it is important that a common language is developed and understood. Actions taken on equity, diversity and inclusion are guided by the meaning attributed to each of these terms. These actions also have the indirect impact of helping to reduce social and economic inequalities, as well as discrimination and racism.

Another topic covered was the audience for DEI programs. Everyone deserves to be seen and recognized, and DEI is the responsibility of everyone both individually and as a member of an organization. Thus, actions should not only be directed towards people living in situations of exclusion, discrimination and racism, but should also involve people who are privileged and/or belong to a majority group.

When an organization is said to be inclusive, it means that all staff members belong to the organizational community by right, and that the organization would not exist without the people in it. Furthermore, **the inclusive organization** is an actor in society and has responsibilities towards it. One of these responsibilities is to recognize diversity and inclusion. As stakeholders, organizations therefore have a role to play in reducing social and economic inequalities and in enabling all people to participate in community life.

To ensure its long-term viability and embodiment in sustainable change, DEI must be part of **a genuine organizational commitment** to building a community that is reflected in the well-being of its employees and the retention of its talent. Responsibility for the implementation and effectiveness of the DEI program cannot rest solely with one person or department. This organizational commitment must be reflected in the recognition of employee engagement as an integral part of their work and in the provision of training for the whole organization, not just the DEI committee.

The creation of a support network and the resulting collaboration are important practices in the implementation of a DEI program. Collaboration responds to a need to develop knowledge about DEI, but also to share effective practices

and strengthen partnerships. One of the needs expressed by stakeholders, mainly from the community sector and SMEs, is the need to have access to platforms that help to monitor and centralize knowledge and practices. The dissemination of this information in the media allows best practices to be publicized, while promoting awareness of these issues among the general public.

The need to develop DEI skills is an issue for certain organizations, especially NGOs and SMEs. Many express the need to develop awareness-raising activities, but also to have access to training on launching a DEI process and on evaluation techniques. The affordability of such training is a significant barrier for these organizations. Development support from funders of such training, or corporate donations to grassroots organizations or SMEs, are avenues to promote accessibility.

Among practices identified, effective **listening and dialogue** seem to be the cornerstones. In order to provide the winning conditions for establishing a dialogue between employees and management, organizations must focus on the development of a learning culture and take into account hierarchical issues, as well as providing support for change.

The sectors identified as important for maximizing the impact of collaborative efforts are: mass media, municipalities and youth organizations.

2.2.2.5 Immigration and refugees: approaches and support

The following questions were considered:

- » The following questions were considered:

- » How can we, as an organization, avoid the role of savior and work without power dynamics?

- » How can we train in order to go beyond mere awareness-raising regarding anti-discrimination and anti-racism issues?

- » How can we equip newcomers to become full citizens?

- » How to address and work on mental health issues (for newcomers and staff members)?

- » Which sector(s) should be worked with more closely in order to maximize impact?

Results: The asymmetrical relationship between community workers and immigrants is a major concern that requires organizations to reflect on their mission, their modes of intervention, and the language that they use. A mission that takes an inclusive perspective will help to ensure organizational change and appropriate modes of intervention. Community workers play an essential role in educating the public about the functioning of institutions and about rights, in addition to the crucial role they play in assisting immigrants.

The use of language that ensures the dignity of immigrants is a very important element. Consideration must be given to the terms that are used in naming the services offered, and their impact of these terms on immigrants must be evaluated (for example: «employment assistance» vs. «job search support»). In order to reach immigrants, the language used must be easily understood and a variety of communication methods must be used (such as the use of images).

The establishment of a dynamic of reciprocity between the practitioner and the immigrants is a key element in reducing power issues. On the one hand, each encounter is a unique experience that the community worker must navigate. On the other hand, community workers must offer their basic services while, at the same time, demystifying the role of the organization in the community, i.e. they must explain that these are the means that society has adopted to support immigrants.

The training of community workers is only helpful if all organizational levels (board of directors, employees and volunteers) are also trained, or at least made aware of the realities of migration, intercultural rapprochement and intercultural mediation.

In order to equip newcomers and enable them to become full citizens, it is important to recognize their realities, and thereby demystify the status of immigrants and asylum seekers. It is also important to offer services adapted to their realities, and to remove obstacles so that people who arrive in Canada can lead good lives. In addition, we should put in place a civic education structure to inform immigrants of their rights, including the mechanisms for lodging a complaint, if necessary. Finally, it is essential to make resources and local information available to newly arrived populations.

Certain taboos surround **mental health among immigrants**. For one thing, not all service points are adapted to the needs of cultural communities. Furthermore, it is taboo to talk about mental health within certain newly arrived populations. New approaches must therefore be developed in order to accompany them.

2.2.2.6 Public services: DEI

The following questions were considered:

- » DEI: what are we talking about?

- » The state of play: what are the best practices?

- » How to move forward effectively?

- » Which sector(s) should be worked with more closely in order to maximize impact?

Results: DEI for public service organizations involves issues of valuing diversity, providing equal opportunities, ensuring representativeness, and matters of ethics, both within the institution itself and in the services offered to the public.

The need to work collaboratively is a cornerstone of DEI in public services. This collaboration must take place, on the one hand, internally between management and employees and, on the other hand, with actors in society (educational institutions, businesses, community organizations).

There are several ways of approaching DEI collectively. The setting up of intercultural meetings and the organization of spaces for sharing knowledge and experiences are recognized practices. In order to make further progress, it is necessary to establish a development plan and a timetable.

One of the challenges related to the implementation of DEI lies in the resistance to change felt by certain of the actors. Beyond mobilizing strategies to accompany them through organizational change, the implementation of DEI requires actors to reflect on their own position, as a means of countering implicit bias and prejudice.

THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE FORUM

The Forum marks the beginning of a longer-term project, with the ultimate goal of developing a **collective action plan**. The results of the work done during the workshops will be taken up by a working group, who will improve and enhance the output in order to produce a plan proposing concrete solutions and their deployment.

Presentations, panels and vox pops available on video: We are posting videos of all of Day One's presentations and panels, as well as vox pops filmed on Day Two of the Forum. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzKxVGCb-O3PyVhvR-Sszag

Conference proceedings: This document will contain summaries of all lectures, enriched by contributions from experts who collaborated with us in the design and implementation of the Forum.

COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES AND MEDIA OUTREACH

The Forum and its featured speakers attracted the attention of major media, in both French and English. The event was covered on radio, television and in newspapers (see our "In the media" section). The text co-authored by Michèle Audette and Michaëlle Jean, L'exclusion est une arme de destruction massive (Exclusion is a Weapon of Mass Destruction), was first published in Le Devoir and then shared in English on the CTV News platform.

On the social networking front, **more than 80 publications** were shared on the Peace Network for Social Harmony's various social media pages: LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Certain partners with whom the Network has forged close ties over the years helped spread the word about the event by sharing the information in their networks and communities, including: BMO, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, the Michaëlle Jean Foundation and Philanthropic Foundations Canada (PFC). In addition, an episode of Coconut Flash (presented by Coconut Podcast, recipient of the 2022 Award for a Racism-Free Quebec) was devoted to the Forum.

Finally, numerous mailings were sent to our members and friends to inform them of the event and the details of its programming.

Photo: Michael Abril

In the media

Brian Bronfman's Peace Network for Social Harmony to host Forum on Diversity and Inclusion, April 21 & 22, **The Montrealer**
https://themontrealeronline.com/2022/03/brian-bronfmans-peace-network-for-social-harmony-to-host-forum-on-diversity-and-inclusion-april-21-22/

Michaëlle Jean et son combat acharné contre l'exclusion, **Pénélope, ICI Première, Radio-Canada**
https://ici.radio-canada.ca/ohdio/premiere/emissions/penelope/segments/entrevue/397946/michaelle-jean-diversite-inclusion-racisme-discrimination

Michaëlle Jean on the Importance of Diversity, **CTV News**
https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=2425685

Community Events: Diversity and Inclusion (video by Brian Bronfman), **Global News**
https://globalnews.ca/video/8771664/community-events-diversity-and-inclusion/

L'exclusion est une arme de destruction massive (lettre cosignée par Michèle Audette et Michaëlle Jean), **Le Devoir**
https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/idees/701616/societe-l-exclusion-est-une-arme-de-destruction-massive

Interview with Brian Bronfman, **Montreal Now with Aaron Rand & Natasha Hall, CJAD 800**
http://forumdi.ca/sitepad-data/uploads//2022/05/MTLNOW-APRIL-22-Brian-Bronfman.mp3

Montreal Forum on Diversity and Inclusion (interview with Brian Bronfman and Nadine St-Louis), **CityNews**
https://montreal.citynews.ca/video/2022/04/27/montreal-forum-on-diversity-and-inclusion/

Peace Network Works to Unite Diversity, **Westmount Independent** (p. 28)
https://www.westmountindependent.com/WIv16.5a.pdf

Exclusion is a Weapon of Mass Destruction (cosigned letter by Michèle Audette and Michaëlle Jean), **CTV News**
https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/opinion-exclusion-is-a-weapon-of-mass-destruction-1.5892544

Coconut Flash — Forum sur la diversité et l'inclusion, **Coconut Podcast**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WEd2r8Puzc&t=1s

ANNEX

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Keynote Speakers
The Honourable Michèle Audette
The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean

Forum Host and Panel Moderator
Déborah Cherenfant, Regional Director, Female Entrepreneurship, Banque TD, past president & spokesperson, Jeune chambre de commerce de Montréal, 2020-2021

Panelists
Rachida Azdouz, psychologist, specialist in intercultural relations and affiliated researcher at the Laboratoire de recherches en relations interculturelles (LABRRI)

André Ho, activist for LGBTQ+ rights (Montreal LGBTQ+ Community Centre) and the fight against anti-Asian racism (Coalition asiatique pour une relève émancipatrice — CARE)

Nathalie Carrénard, Diversity and Inclusion Equity Advisor, Office for the Fight Against Racism and Systemic Discrimination for the City of Montreal

Fabrice Vil, lawyer, social entrepreneur and columnist

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Filiale — Stéphanie Girouard

LABRRI

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

Outreach Partners
BMO

Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Institute for Canadian Citizenship

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