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# Addressing the Cuts Left Behind: Anti-Racism and Discrimination Initiatives for an Inclusive Northern Ontario

By: Larissa Yantha

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NPI would like to acknowledge the First Peoples on whose traditional territories we live and work. NPI is grateful for the opportunity to have our offices located on these lands and thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land.

**Our main offices:**

• Thunder Bay on Robinson-Superior Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg and Fort William First Nation.

• Sudbury is on the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of the Atikameksheng Anishnaabeg as well as Wahnapitae First Nation.

• Kirkland Lake is on the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of Cree, Ojibway, and Algonquin Peoples.

• Each community is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.

We recognize and appreciate the historic connection that Indigenous people have to these territories. We support their efforts to sustain and grow their nations. We also recognize the contributions that they have made in shaping and strengthening local communities, the province, and Canada.

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The Northern Analyst Collective, a project of Northern Policy Institute, will allow members to "time share" a professional policy analyst. By merging our collective resources we can ensure that the smallest municipality or local charity can access high-end skills at an affordable price.

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Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Kirkland Lake. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.

# NAC Partner

### Sudbury Local Immigration Partnership

The Sudbury Local Immigration Partnership (SLIP) focuses on the development of different initiatives to ensure that Greater Sudbury continues to be a welcoming community for newcomers of all walks of life. The SLIP fosters an inclusive, engaging and collaborative environment with local stakeholders to identify issues, share solutions, build capacity and preserve collective memory for the purpose of ensuring the attraction, settlement, inclusion and retention of newcomers in the City of Greater Sudbury.
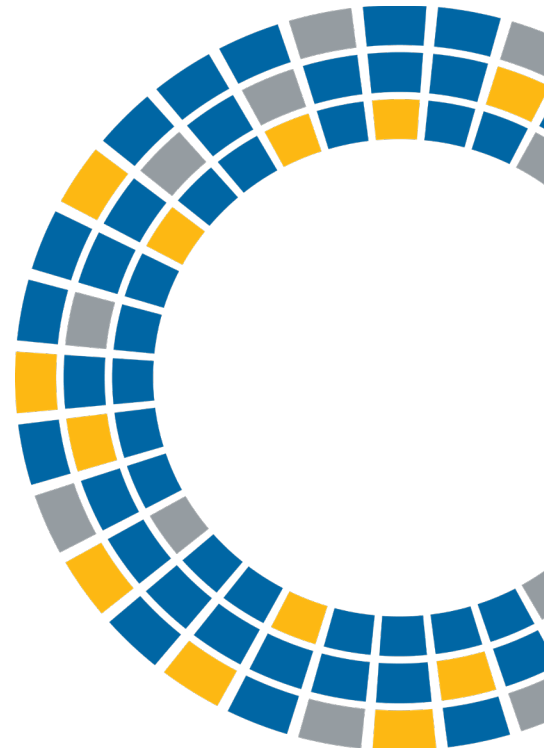
# About the Author

# Larissa Yantha

Larissa Yantha is a prior former analyst/NOHFC intern at Northern Policy Institute. During her BA in Global Studies and MA in Religion, Culture and Global Justice, she became interested in Indigenous capacity and innovation, immigration, and community-driven approaches to anti-racism. Larissa currently acts as the Special Projects Coordinator at the Municipality of West Nipissing where she applies her interdisciplinary knowledge and intersectional research approaches. When not buried in research, Larissa can be found in her hometown of Englehart, volunteering with local initiatives, and roaming Northern Ontario.

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# Introduction

*You're constantly reminded that you're the 'Other'.*

Conversations about racism and discrimination are not supposed to be easy. There can be a frankness to them that is easy to turn away from and file "For Later". During the recent 2021 Magnetic North conference that focused on migration, reconciliation, and anti-racism/discrimination in Northern Ontario, a panel of individuals had that frank conversation with the audience.[1] It was at this time that more unmarked graves of First Nations children at the former residential school on Cowessess First Nation were discovered and brought to light.

But this anti-racism and discrimination conversation is not just starting. Rather, it is picking up speed and as such meaningful public policy making coupled with community initiatives are critical. And there is certainly evidence of such in the City of Greater Sudbury – from local events like Afrofest Sudbury to the City's diversity policy which was developed in 2014 by the Diversity Advisory Panel (City of Greater Sudbury n.d.).

The Sudbury Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) is one organization that is working to achieve this goal. Funded by the federal government, LIPs are designed to ensure that their cities are welcoming places for newcomers. They do this by engaging with key community organizations and individuals to support the retention and settlement of newcomers (Sudbury.com n.d.). It is from their wider welcoming communities pursuit that this paper was born.

Across Canada, racialized newcomers often face systemic racism, which has substantial impacts on retention (Zefi 2019). There is also clear evidence that Indigenous peoples have also faced overt and covert forms of racism. Sudbury and other multicultural cities experiencing growth face the challenge of incorporating various programming and initiatives to address racism. Doing so would not only assist Ontario's northern, western, and central regions in achieving their immigration goals and outcomes but also ensure that society is more inclusive for Indigenous peoples.

To promote long-term retention in the City of Sudbury and Ontario's northern, western, and central regions on a broader scale, this report will present a series of case studies that demonstrate how other individuals, organizations, and municipalities are working to address issues of systemic discrimination and racism. Each of the following five case studies were handpicked to represent a variety of actors that are aiming to minimize the racism experienced by two central groups: newcomers and Indigenous peoples. These different cases represent a variety of platforms that are making positive change possible. They are, however, similar in that they all employ a practice or service that seeks to educate the community via dialogue, celebrate the diversity of each cultural demographic, and address the larger issues of racism and discrimination in their respective communities. Such initiatives can complement the ongoing work in the Sudbury community.

Of course, we must also recognize that these initiatives need to be coupled with other efforts at the community, provincial and federal levels otherwise they are just drops in the welcoming community bucket. For example - adjusting the provincial nominee system so that there are regional allocations or even creating a separate provincial nominee program for the North (El-Assal 2019; Zefi 2019b). As well, the sharing of resources in small municipalities could help to ease the burden some municipalities are shouldering to pay for attraction and welcoming efforts (see Zefi 2019).

The case studies are formatted with a brief introduction, an overview of the initiative, successes and achievements, and overarching lessons that are represented by the outcomes. In addition to offering a synopsis of each program and what they achieved, this report showcases how these case studies can and should represent opportunities for replication in not only Sudbury, but in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions more broadly. These successful examples do more than offer a glance at what other municipalities, organizations, and individuals are doing to combat racism and discrimination. They offer predesigned solutions for communities like Sudbury as it continues its work on being multicultural, progressive, and economically driven city.

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[1] Italicized quote from the panel where an individual was speaking to microaggressions.

# Using Art as a Catalyst for Change

## *Glenherst Art Gallery of Brant*

Srimoyee Mitra is a performance artist, curator, and writer. In 2008, she developed an art installation titled *Let's Talk, Get to Know Each Other Better, We Are All Human* at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Her projects have been included at conferences at the University of Toronto and in art galleries across Canada. Since 2008, she has worked at SAVAC (South Asian Visual Arts Centre) in Toronto (Mathur, DeGagné and Dewar 2011). She is of South Asian heritage and uses her experiences as an immigrant to Canada and her interest in socially relevant projects to engage with artists and audiences alike (STAMPS n.d.). The reserve locations reflected the realities of the times during the establishment of the reserves in the 1870s through to the 1920s. First Nations wanted reserves set aside within their traditional territories and in settings that had immediate utility as fishing or hunting grounds, were near trading posts, or were in areas with agricultural promise. For its part, the Government of Canada did not want First Nations peoples living near major centres, if this could be avoided, and hoped to reserve prime agricultural land for commercially minded non-Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, the reserves were allocated on the basis of 640 acres per family of five, although there were many examples of government officials undercounting the number of members eligible for inclusion —deliberately or through neglect. As a result, many of the reserves were too small from the outset and were not sufficient to accommodate growing First Nations populations.

# The Initiative

In 2008, Mitra listened to the federal government's apology to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples of Canada. She found it intriguing that the apology was framed as a simple binary between European settlers as the perpetrators and Indigenous peoples as the victims. In reality, Mitra says that the process for reconciliation must account for the multicultural reality of current Canadian society. Avoiding the facts of recent immigration and the mingling between the three demographics minimizes the responsibility that all non-Indigenous people in Canada should have over historic and ongoing racism against Indigenous peoples (Mathur, DeGagné and Dewar 2011).

Mitra wanted to explore how Indigenous peoples and newcomers co-exist and experience racism together (STAMPS n.d.). She felt it was important to use her work and personal locale as a South Asian curator in Canada to showcase her new understanding of society in an exhibition (Mathur, DeGagné and Dewar 2011). As such, she invited eight artists from Indigenous and South Asian backgrounds to create art based on their experiences of racism, loss, identity, and displacement. The exhibition took place in 2009 at the Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant, which is located on the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. This choice of location was strategic as it is located on the traditional territory of the Six Nations of the Grand River but it also happens to be home to a fast-growing population of South Asian migrants (Chung 2012). The exhibition was called *Crossing Lines: An Intercultural Dialogue.*
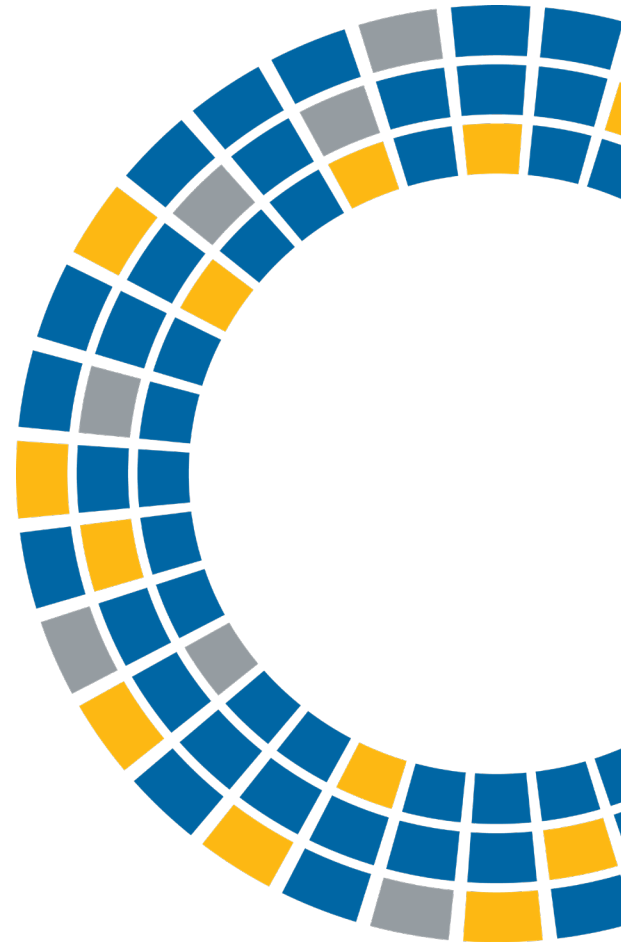
# Successes & Achievements

Mitra's project explored the possibility of building mutual understanding, trust, and solidarity among the local South Asian and Indigenous populations (Chung 2012). Her goal was to mount an exhibition that demonstrated the common themes and experiences of both groups, hoping that the attendees would learn something from the shared hardships represented in the art pieces. The event drew a significant regional audience, which was exposed to art that showed both pain and accomplishment from local artists. It promoted dialogue within, and arguably beyond, the context of the event.

The exhibition also prompted a sense of friendship and solidarity among the artists. Two of them, Indian filmmaker Ali Kazimi and Iroquois photographer Jeff Thomas, collaborated to reflect on Thomas' art while offering an autobiographical approach that revealed the filmmaker's history as a newcomer. Their collaboration prompted internal reflections about personal histories while also giving art enthusiasts a glance at the contradictions of 'Indianness.' The artists discovered that South Asians are often misidentified as being 'Indian' just as Indigenous peoples in Canada were historically labelled 'Indian' (Mathur, DeGagné and Dewar 2011). Mitra chose to project Kazimi's film in the same room and directly across from Thomas' large photographic print. This was intended to convey the importance of having ongoing cross-cultural dialogue.

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# Key Lessons

For some, art may be viewed as an unlikely catalyst for change, but in this case it created space for unorganized dialogue between unique demographics. In this sharing of art and dialogue, it was found that both demographics often experienced mislabeling and had similar experiences and histories of marginalization and colonization. Art forms were one way for each artist to reflect upon their own stories and barriers, and the exhibition ensured that they were able to share these reflections with community members who may be unaware of the discrimination that minorities and Indigenous peoples face. Additionally, art can offer a path toward healing. Collaborations between artists, and the exhibitions that are created from these new relationships, can lead to mending for newcomers and Indigenous peoples (Chung 2012). Art can lead to self-reflexivity and provide space for listening and learning, which are all necessary initial steps to understanding and preventing racism in such a diverse and growing community.

**For more information about *Crossing Lines: An Intercultural Dialogue,* visit
https://www.glenhyrst.ca/2009-exhibits/.**

# Change Comes from Within at the City of Saskatoon

## *Saskatoon, Alberta*

The City of Saskatoon recognized that as newcomers began moving more frequently to rural and small urban communities, including their city of approximately 273,000, the potential for racism and social rifts increased. In 2016, it began brainstorming ways to ensure that newcomers felt welcomed and understood by long-time Saskatonians. This led to initiatives like I Am the Bridge, which focuses on individuals and their role in preventing racism and discrimination (City of Saskatoon n.d.).

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## The Initiative

I Am the Bridge is a public education campaign to increase awareness of racism in the city. The City of Saskatoon recognized that racism could take many forms and combatting it requires conversation to confront the misconceptions that locals have toward newcomers (City of Saskatoon n.d.). In 2016, the city invited residents to submit videos in which they talk about their personal experiences with racism in the community, and how they propose the city and its residents eliminate it. The videos were shared on an online video platform that is now showcased on the city's website (Holley and Jedwab 2019). It was intended to help residents better understand their role in contributing to, or eliminating, racism. It raised awareness of how pervasive racism is in their community and inspired people to 'be the bridge' in changing the racism landscape of the city (City of Saskatoon n.d.). This campaign used dialogue and technology to allocate a platform for minorities to share their negative experiences to further spread awareness of current racist attitudes in the city and create social change.
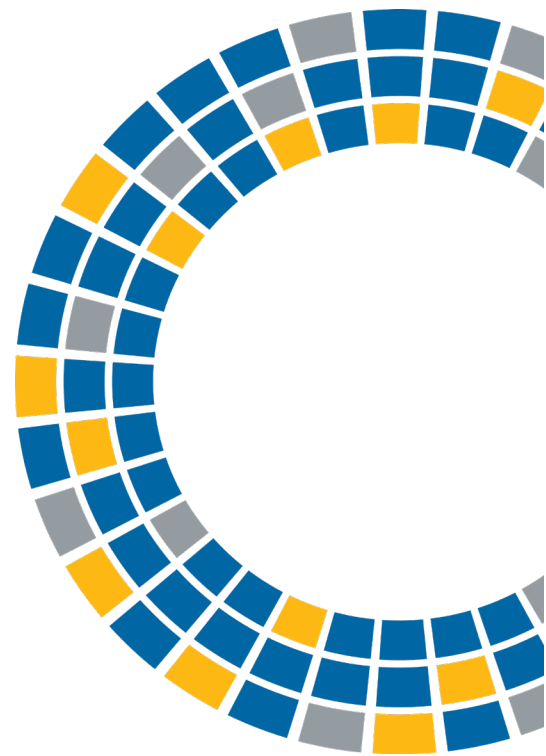
## Successes & Achievements

I Am the Bridge was a successful campaign that has since been replicated by other cities and organizations. It also took a relatively small public education campaign and turned it into a larger educational platform. The project became a resource on the City of Saskatoon's website. The videos are posted to the project's webpage along with information about how individuals and organizations can become a 'bridge' (City of Saskatoon n.d.). The webpage encourages people to educate themselves so that they understand what racism is and how it looks in their community. It urges readers to be inclusive, continue to educate themselves and others, and to speak up when they see unfavourable behaviour in the city. Most important, the website says that people need to continuously reflect on an individual level to assess their role or complacency in the broader scope of racism (City of Saskatoon n.d.).

In its third year, the I Am the Bridge campaign continued its themes of art and public participation by extending its efforts beyond the video and city website platforms. In 2019, the City of Saskatoon undertook construction to transform a pathway under a bridge into a brighter, more inclusive, and welcoming space (Findlay 2016). The area became a place where people could gather and celebrate culture and difference through music, film, art, and conversation. In the summer, the city hosted outdoor film screenings by the river. This initiative was an extension of using art and dialogue to promote connections. It encouraged residents to view public places as spaces that should support diversity and equality. It also inspired the transformation of individual knowledge generated by the original campaign into outward community participation and acceptance (Findlay 2016).

# Key Lessons

Available data show that nine per cent of newcomers between 2011 and 2016 chose to settle in rural areas of Canada (Holley and Jedwab 2019). The City of Saskatoon recognizes that racism, discrimination, and equality pose challenges for their city, and that much of the racism is directed at newcomers and Indigenous peoples (City of Saskatoon n.d.). The city's website cites an Environics report that says, "In a sampling of over 3000 Canadians, 47 per cent admitted to being strongly, moderately or slightly racist" (qtd in City of Saskatoon n.d.). The same report found that Indigenous peoples were three times more likely to be the victims of violence than non-Indigenous people (City of Saskatoon n.d.). Welcoming newcomers and supporting the social involvement of Indigenous peoples in rural and smaller urban communities is important due to increased immigration to these smaller centres. But this comes with unique challenges such as language barriers, lack of support services, and transportation. Support for social inclusion is paramount to the success of immigration in these areas (Holley and Jedwab 2019). The City of Saskatoon's I Am the Bridge campaign and its subsequent efforts mark an important distinction between self and community, suggesting that for change to occur, it must start within one's self.

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# Hashtag to Change Hamilton

*Hamilton, Ontario*

The Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI) is an organization that was created as a response to the burning of a Hindu temple in Hamilton, Ontario, on September 14, 2001. The goal of the HCCI is to give Hamilton residents access to knowledge and resources that are required to build a racially diverse and welcoming community. It has produced several programs and services, including initiatives targeting youth, conversation groups, and training programs. Although each of their programs are unique and successful, one in particular stands out for operating primarily through social media—the #HamiltonForAll campaign (Ontario Human Rights Commission 2010).

# The Initiative

The #HamiltonForAll campaign was started by the HCCI in partnership with the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) and the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) (#HamiltonForAll 2017). It is a public awareness campaign to promote and help reach Hamilton's goal of being a socially inclusive city. The idea for this initiative arose after Hamilton's mayor, Fred Eisenberger, heard about the Greater Toronto Area's #TorontoForAll campaign and the #AjaxForAll campaign and wanted to replicate it in his city. At the time, Hamilton was facing serious problems with racially motivated violence and hate crimes. In 2016, Hamilton had the second-highest number of police-reported hate crimes in Canada, with over 115 being reported (#HamiltonForAll 2017).

#HamiltonForAll was formally launched on November 28, 2017. The core message is 'you don't just belong in Hamilton, you are Hamilton' (#HamiltonForAll 2017). Using a myth-busting approach to educating the community, the hashtag was used on positive social media posts about newcomers in Hamilton. Both digital posters and social media campaigns were used, which enlisted the hashtag (#HamiltonForAll 2017). The initiative aimed to address misconceptions and stereotypes, drawing attention to similarities while still celebrating differences. The campaign hoped to encourage the people of Hamilton to connect with newcomers, paving the way to creating long-lasting friendships, becoming a truly welcoming city to newcomers, and address racism in the broader community (#HamiltonForAll 2017).

# Successes & Achievements

Although the #HamiltonForAll campaign has officially ended, it resulted in several new programs and services inspired by the dialogue that occurred about racism and community exclusion (Cities of Migration 2020). The HCCI subsequently ran a human library project, campaigns that further promote and share the stories of newcomers, a monthly scheduled 'Communi-TEA' event, and more. Each program built off the core themes and lessons of #HamiltonForAll—that dialogue and knowledge are key to overcoming social barriers (Cities of Migration 2020). The program itself was rather successful. It was praised for providing a valuable opportunity for people to become knowledgeable about their growing newcomer community and to confront problematic assumptions (Cities of Migration 2020). Although hate crimes are still an issue in this city, they have reportedly decreased. In 2019, there were 84 police-reported hate crimes (Craggs 2020). But Mayor Eisenberger and the executive director of the HCCI say it is likely that these crimes are still going underreported, and they call for continued work in lowering the numbers even further (Craggs 2020). "One hate crime in any community is one too many" (qtd in Craggs 2020).

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## Key Lessons

The #HamiltonForAll campaign cleverly used social media to encourage dialogue among the different demographics that make up the City of Hamilton. Hamilton is one of many Canadian cities that have experienced a recent surge in immigration. Twenty-five per cent of people living in Hamilton are newcomers, ten per cent of whom arrived in Hamilton within the last five years (#HamiltonForAll 2017). The city, and the HCCI specifically, have several unique programs and services that recognize the value of immigration, seek to support newcomers, and attempt to bridge relationships between individuals of all backgrounds. Providing people with a space to ask frank questions and engage in respectful, curious conversation is necessary for them to gain a better understanding of their similarities, differences, and needs. Conversation, whether it is one-on-one and face-to-face like that of the HCCI's other programs, or social media like that of #HamiltonForAll, humanizes newcomers and groups that people may not have previously interacted with (Cities of Migration 2020). This is more important now in the time of a pandemic, when social media is what people rely on to interact socially.

**For more information about #HamiltonForAll, visit https://www.hamiltonforall.ca/.**
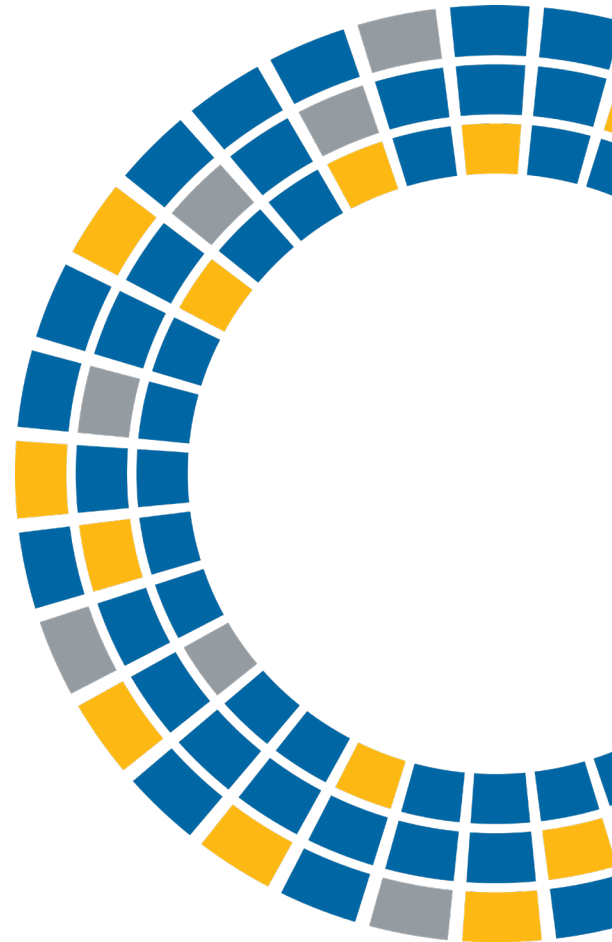
# Reducing Racism in the Housing Sector

*Toronto, Ontario*

LUSO Community Services is a Southwestern Ontario-based nonprofit neighbourhood resource centre that services Northeast London. It was originally funded by United Way but is now mostly funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) (Rodriguez 2021). It is dedicated to promoting inclusiveness and the well-being of all demographics in the London community. LUSO believes in diversity and the benefits it can bring to cities, so it celebrates the cultural differences that make up London. It recognizes the unique needs and circumstances of newcomers and thus focuses on providing educational programming that can improve lives, reduce poverty, and reduce unemployment (LUSO n.d.).

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# The Initiative

LUSO has a variety of educational programming that focuses on overall community improvement, many of which are intended to ensure that newcomers feel welcomed and supported. Its support services and programming include a cultural awareness and sensitivity program. Introduced in 2016, the program targets representatives of the housing and rental sector in London to provide better support, resources, and training so that the sector is able to create and maintain positive relationships with newcomers (LUSO n.d.). The program works directly with landlords, superintendents, and other housing representatives to help them develop awareness of the needs of the newcomer community to prevent discriminatory practices (LUSO n.d.).

This program was developed based on feedback provided by the housing and rental sector. It was found that many newcomers are unfamiliar with tenant rights and laws. Landlords and other related personnel were unfamiliar with working directly with newcomers and those who speak little English. To combat this, the program developed a series of sensitivity trainings and resources to aide both parties. Translation cards were created to help landlords and tenants communicate their needs and allow them to communicate more smoothly when questions or issues arise (Rodriguez 2021). The translation materials are currently in Arabic, Spanish, and Mandarin, but LUSO has also created a non-verbal booklet with pictures that can facilitate effective communication. The sensitivity training also helps landlords understand the unique needs of newcomers and how best to support them while refraining from discriminatory practices (LUSO n.d.).
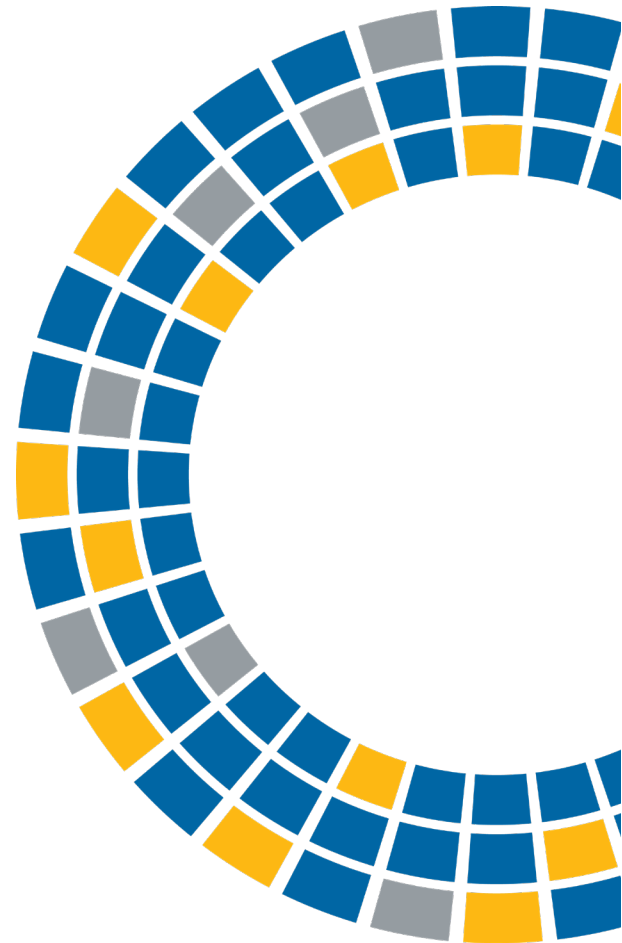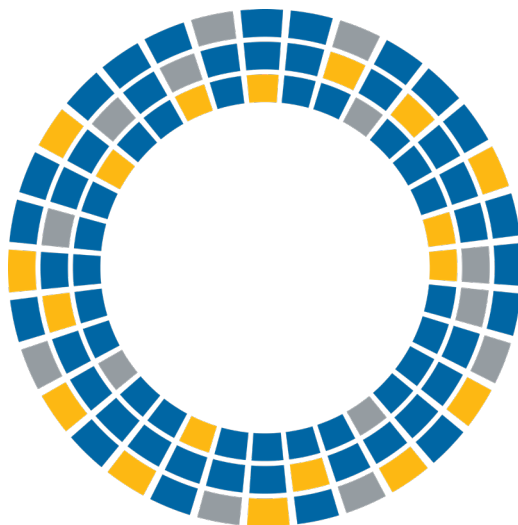
# Successes & Achievements

Currently, LUSO is working with 24 housing companies and is providing training to 466 housing representatives. Fifteen unique communication and informational tools have been developed, which have benefitted 1,600 newcomers in London (Rodriguez 2021). Three cultural groups in particular have benefited from this programming—the community's growing Syrian population, Latin American communities, and, more recently, Nepalese and Bhutanese refugees (LUSO n.d.). The program has been so successful that it has garnered the attention of others and received an additional $100,000 from the IRCC to continue and to expand its programming (Rodriguez 2021).

## Key Lessons

Newcomers to Canada have many hurdles that they must overcome in order to settle into our communities and make their new locations feel like home. One of the most challenging barriers is tied to housing and this is exacerbated when there are language barriers and discrimination in the housing and rental sector. Access to adequate housing and welcoming neighbourhoods is not just an indicator of a welcoming community; it is a determinant of whether newcomers are likely to stay or leave (Esses and Carter 2019). A report by Esses and Carter (2019) found that inadequate housing coupled with racism and intolerance increases the likelihood that newcomers will move away. Unfortunately, when landlords do not understand newcomers, and newcomers cannot effectively communicate with their landlords, it is more likely that the housing experience will be negatively impacted. LUSO aims to minimize the possibility for confusion, insensitivity, and discrimination between those in the housing sector and newcomers. This program is necessary as it curbs racism and intolerance while also ensuring that newcomers have a positive settlement experience (Esses et al. 2010).

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# Municipal-led Anti-Racism Dialogue

## *Vancouver, British Columbia*

In 2010, the City of Vancouver put together a project to create a more cohesive city despite being so diverse. Originally called Dialogues between First Nations, Urban Aboriginal and Immigrant Communities in Vancouver, it was shortened to the City of Vancouver Dialogues Project (CVDP) (Suleman 2011). It focused on creating relationships and improving the futures of Vancouver's two most at-risk populations: Indigenous peoples and newcomers (Suleman 2011).

# The Initiative

The City of Vancouver Dialogues Project (CVDP) was led by a Steering Committee, a diverse group of representatives of Indigenous and newcomer origin. The Steering Committee determined that newcomers receive too little information about Indigenous peoples, which leads them to have similar presumptions against Indigenous peoples as many white Vancouverites (Mathur, DeGagné and Dewar 2011). Its goal was to strengthen relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in general (City of Vancouver 2010). As a result, the Steering Committee developed a series of dialogue circles to bring people together to share stories and perspectives on social inclusion, social exclusion, and community relations.

Nine dialogue circles were hosted as part of the original programming between April and July 2010 (City of Vancouver 2010). These circles had 123 participants each and met three times. Two of the dialogue circles were reserved for youth (Suleman 2011). The circles were hosted by various community members such as First Nations leaders, newcomers, and other educational leaders (Chung 2012). These leaders facilitated organized discussion about themes that focused on past, present, and hopeful future relations between Vancouver's key demographics (City of Vancouver 2010). The circles were hosted at significant locations across Vancouver, including First Nations land and newcomer settlement organizations. The main goal of the circles was to embrace Canada's complex past and future realities while overcoming harmful stereotypes (Chung 2012).
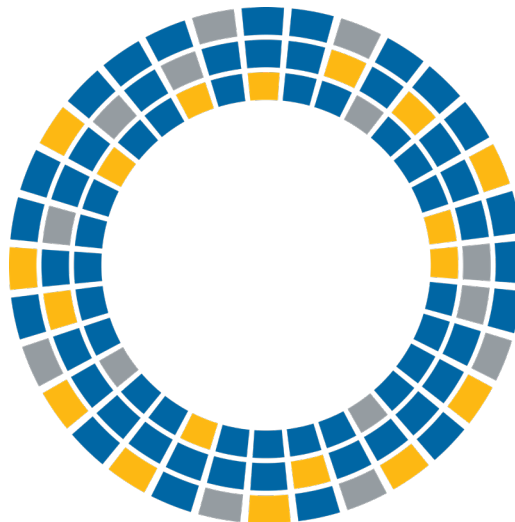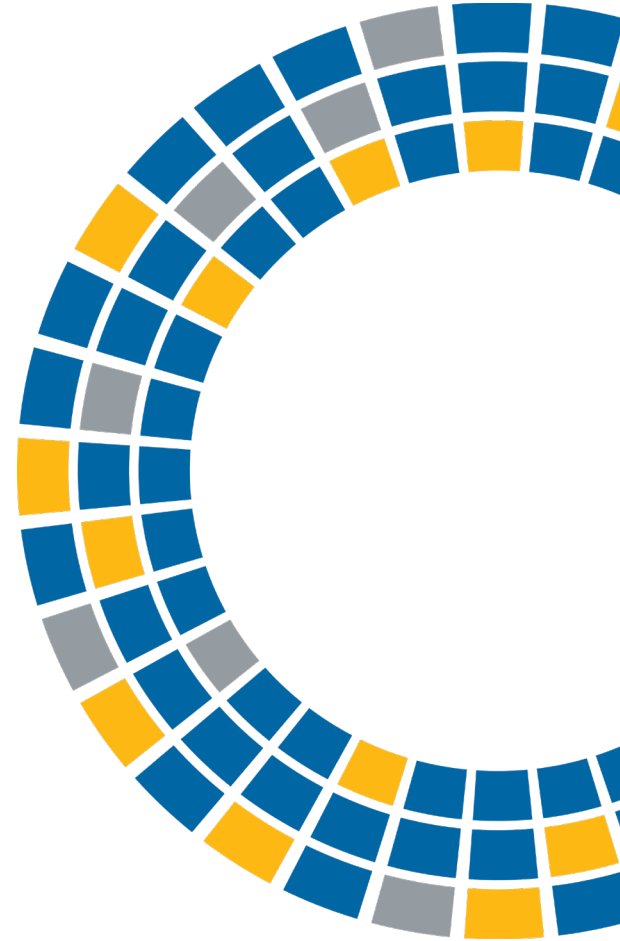
# Successes & Achievements

The facilitators of each dialogue circle found the exercise of dialogue and discussion to be very successful in terms of creating friendships. Common themes and concerns arose in the circles, including racism, identity, language, and healing. Participants, regardless of their origin, realized that they had many shared experiences, which prompted an understanding and appreciation of one another (Chung 2012). Contrary to the Steering Committee's initial fears, participants were open to talking about personal and emotionally charged topics. All participants expressed a desire to get to know other cultures better (City of Vancouver 2010).

Beyond the discovery of shared experiences, the dialogues project was also successful because it recognized the need for further programming, a gap that the City of Vancouver has since attempted to fill. Participants urged the city to consider more multicultural aspects to existing public events, as well as using arts and the film industry to share cultural expression and stories with the wider public. They also identified concerns around lack of representation in the media. Lastly, the project made room for impactful community research, which led to the formation of a newcomer's guide that has since been published on the City of Vancouver's website (Reesor 2013). It offers information on community services but also educates readers about urban Indigenous peoples, the history of residential schools, the dialogues project, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The project identified gaps in newcomer relations and addressed issues of racism.

## Key Lessons

Municipalities have an important and fundamental role to play in sustaining multiculturalism and retaining newcomers (Chung 2012). The City of Vancouver recognized that one approach to managing the coexistence of multiple cultures is to create a space that prompts dialogue. Doing this can enable potentially antagonistic parties to talk through concerns and learn from one another. At the very least, dialogue circles can bring curious individuals together for personal growth and social mingling (Chung 2012). The CVDP is one example of a municipal-led initiative that aims to build stronger connections to address discrimination and violence. The circles taught the facilitators that identity can play a large role in marginalization and exclusion. Almost every participant expressed a desire to understand their fluid cultural and racial identity (City of Vancouver 2010). The province of British Columbia, as is true with the rest of Canada, has an unfortunate history of injustices that have been directed at Indigenous peoples and newcomers. Residential schools, land dispossession, societal exclusion, slavery, and racial discrimination have highly affected, and continue to affect, both groups in their struggles for voting rights, safe housing, and employment. Dialogue and shared experience are important themes to uphold in future municipality-driven initiatives. As the CVDP demonstrates, these themes are crucial for breaking down barriers and a must for cities whose populations are continuing to grow (Chung 2012).

**For more information about the City of Vancouver Dialogues Project, visit
https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/dialogues-project.aspx.**

# Recommendations and Concluding Thoughts

This paper considered five different examples of individuals, community organizations, and municipalities that developed initiatives to reduce discrimination and racism in their communities. The lessons from these examples can promote long-term retention of newcomers and Indigenous Peoples in the City of Sudbury, as well as across Ontario's northern, western, and central regions. This final section will provide some recommendations and conclusions will be drawn.

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**Dialogue should be made a priority in anti-racism programming and initiatives.**

A fundamental component of each case study was dialogue. Dialogue, whether structured or not, helped participants overcome confusion and negative feelings toward one another. It also presented what appeared to be a much-needed opportunity for asking questions. When voicelessness is the result of the failure to recognize and accept others, dialogue is a natural remedy. By socially including people who are different from us, and by addressing the overall racism and discrimination that is present in our cities, we can build a healthier and happier community overall (Omidvar and Richmond 2003). Dialogue is the key theme here and one that needs to be a primary goal when developing similar initiatives.

**Anti-racism policies need to be continuously developed and reviewed.**

According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2010), there are several steps that can be taken at the policy level to address racism and discrimination. "Municipalities should review old and new by-laws to make sure they conform to human rights principles and the Ontario Human Rights Code. Establishing by-laws is among the most powerful tools available to municipalities" (Ontario Human Rights Commission 2010, sec.4). This is not only a legal requirement but also shows the community that leadership is committed to anti-racism. This could take the form of periodic reviews of bylaws and policies to ensure they do not contain discriminatory clauses and mimicking the policies developed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Municipalities should develop and enforce anti-racism policies and aim to review these frequently.

**Program development needs to occur with participation from Indigenous peoples and others who identify as marginalized groups.**

Change requires the participation and consultation of those already experiencing racism in our cities and regions. The experiences of Indigenous peoples vary from that of racialized communities and thus feedback and active participation from both groups is necessary. The City of Sudbury needs to consult with newcomers living in the community and Indigenous peoples when strategizing and implementing programming. This could take the form of direct consultation like polling and surveying Indigenous peoples and others who identify as marginalized groups, hosting public forums, and engaging with Indigenous peoples and others who identify as marginalized groups business owners, workers, and students. Or it could take the form of funding for Indigenous-led programming, supporting cultural associations, and encouraging Indigenous peoples' and others who identify as marginalized groups' leadership on anti-racism initiatives and committees. Collaboration in any setting depends on the voices of the marginalized being heard. Ensure that they are included as leaders right from inception.

**Newcomer retention and reconciliation efforts need to occur side by side.**

One of the key themes in the case studies, and the logic for including them in this paper, is that many of the organizers appeared to recognize that immigration and reconciliation must not be understood as separate community efforts. Rather, they need to occur in tandem. There are many other strong initiatives that work to address racism towards newcomers, but they often fail to acknowledge the way that immigration can play into complex colonial-settler relations. Many of the initiatives featured in this paper ensured that the voices of Indigenous peoples and their needs were elevated, all while recognizing and prioritizing the needs of newcomers. By recognizing the unique benefits of participation from these two groups, cities looking to improve welcoming efforts will do so in a more effective manner, thereby minimizing systemic racism against Indigenous peoples and others who identify as marginalized groups.

**Instances of racism need to be dealt with and victims supported.**

Even if communities, governments, and individuals were to implement a myriad of anti-racism initiatives to support all Indigenous peoples and others who identify as marginalized groups, instances of racism will still occur. It is most important to know how to respond to such incidents. Again, the Ontario Human Rights Commission has some advice. "Municipalities can promote the values of anti-racism and anti-discrimination in their communities by promptly and actively responding to incidents. They should do this by collaborating with community organizations and law enforcement bodies to establish and support ways to identify, monitor and respond to acts of racism, such as hate crimes" (Ontario Human Rights Commission 2010, sec. 5). Local news outlets and social media can be used to promote reporting and support services that help people deal with the effects of discrimination. Finally, personnel who respond to calls related to racism and/or hate crimes need to be trained (if not already) and prepared to diffuse the situation, and to help the victim feel at ease.

**Anti-racism initiatives and programming must be accompanied by larger institutional change.**

The final consideration from this paper may well be the most important. The above recommendations must be accompanied by larger institutional change. This report considers the smaller scale initiatives that address racism and help develop a sense of community cohesiveness among groups. They must take place in the context of a larger web of long-term investments for anti-racism. That means these initiatives only go so far if the societal systems (e.g., education, housing, justice, etc.) are not also taking steps to minimize racism. Community change requires just that—wide-scale and long-term efforts to reduce the barriers and create truly welcoming communities.

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*Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern Communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Kirkland Lake.*
*We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.*

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