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# Change Comes from Within at the City of Saskatoon

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## Land Acknowledgement

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 Wahnapiitae 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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Author's calculations are based on data available at the time of publication and are therefore subject to change.

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## About the Northern Analyst Collective

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.

## About Northern Policy Institute

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.

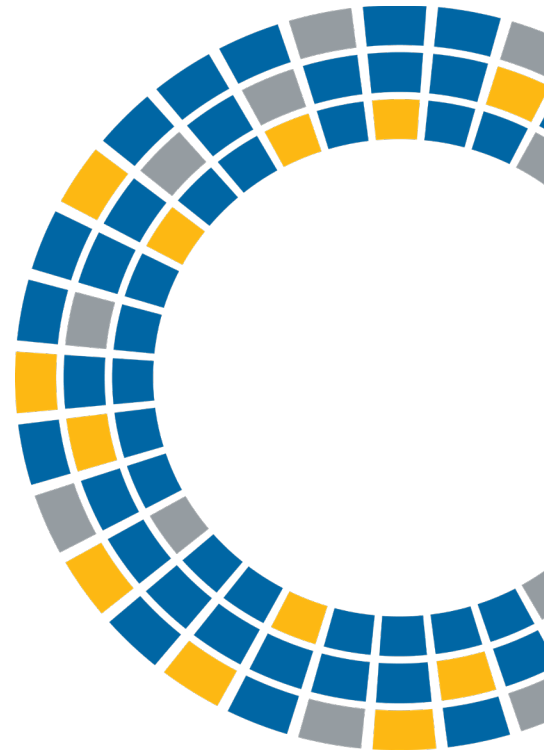


## About the Author

# 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.



## Notes

This case study is a part of a larger series of initiatives that analyze anti-racism and discrimination initiatives across Canada. Borne out of a partnership with Northern Policy Institute, this anti-discrimination and racism work is but one of several efforts the Sudbury Local Immigration Partnership is undertaking.

Please refer to the full report for other case studies and lessons that not only the City of Greater Sudbury can employ, but other communities across Ontario's northern regions as well.



# 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.).



## 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

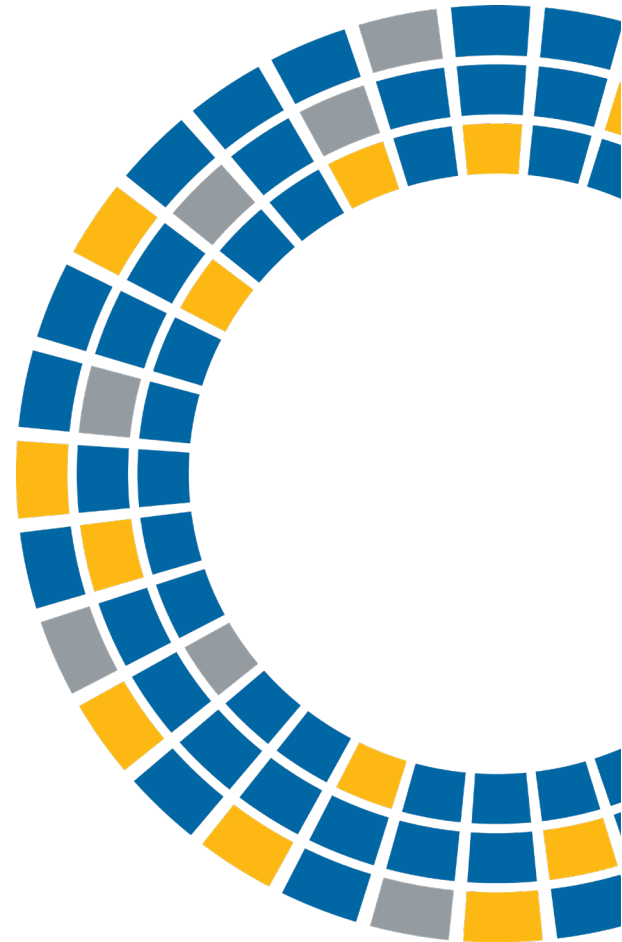
I Am the Bridge was a successful campaign that has since been replicated by other cities and organizations. It also took a relatively small public education campaign and turned it into a larger educational platform. The project became a resource on the City of Saskatoon's website. The videos are posted 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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# References

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- Holley, Paul, and Jack Jedwab. Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees to Canada: The Role of Municipalities Toolkit for Inclusive Municipalities in Canada and Beyond. Ottawa: Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 2019. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335207459\\_Welcoming\\_Immigrants\\_and\\_Refugees\\_to\\_Canada\\_The\\_Role\\_of\\_Municipalities\\_Toolkit\\_for\\_Inclusive\\_Municipalities\\_in\\_Canada\\_and\\_Beyond](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335207459_Welcoming_Immigrants_and_Refugees_to_Canada_The_Role_of_Municipalities_Toolkit_for_Inclusive_Municipalities_in_Canada_and_Beyond).

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## Related Research

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

Larissa Yantha

**Using Art as a Catalyst for Change**

Larissa Yantha

**Hashtag to Change Hamilton**

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