

EXAMINING EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION PRACTICES IN GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS: INSIGHTS FROM A YEAR-LONG STUDY

OTTAWA (Ontario), Friday, May 24, 2024 — Researchers at Saint Paul University have just released the report of a year-long research project that explored the implementation of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) practices of grassroots settlement organizations in Ontario.

Conducted in partnership with the National Newcomer Navigator Network (N4), the study was led by principal researcher Dr. Michaël Séguin, Director of the School of Leadership, Ecology and Equity, and co-researcher Dr. Bianca Briciu, Assistant Professor in the School of Leadership, Ecology and Equity.

The resulting report – [*Feeling Like an Insider or Just a Means to an End?: Equity and Inclusion Through the Lens of Immigrant Frontline Workers in the Ontario Settlement Sector*](#) – paints a nuanced picture of EDI practices at the grassroots level. Despite concerted EDI initiatives in the workplace, the researchers observed a clear gap between racialized and non-racialized employees.

“When we spoke with racialized employees, most of them expressed that their organizations have successfully created a welcoming environment where individuals are free to be who they are,” shared Dr. Séguin. “However, this welcoming environment does not always translate in terms of shared power or the ability to fully participate in decision-making within the organization. In other words, people can be themselves, but only up to a certain point.”

In many ways, the report describes the unspoken issues of equity that are experienced by racialized employees within the settlement sector. Not only does it validate these employees’ perceptions, but it also provides leaders in settlement organizations with an opportunity to make positive changes.

“This report has provided managers within these organizations the opportunity for self-reflection and to see a more nuanced picture of EDI in the sector,” explained Dr. Bianca Briciu. “It allows those in leadership positions to better understand the barriers to true equity and inclusion within their own workplaces and among their own colleagues.”

Tackling these barriers is exactly what the research team intends to focus on in the second phase of their research. This phase – which is currently in progress– will focus on organizational leadership. Through conversations and workshops

with managers and frontline workers, the action-oriented project will aim to foster more inclusive work environments.

About the Study and Additional Resources

This study was funded in large part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's (SSHRC) one-year Partnership Engage Grant. For the original announcement, please [click here](#).

To read the full *Feeling Like an Insider or Just a Means to an End?: Equity and Inclusion Through the Lens of Immigrant Frontline Workers in the Ontario Settlement Sector* report, please [click here](#).

N4 also hosted a webinar with the researchers to discuss their findings. To watch a recording of this presentation, please [click here](#).

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