



**TEACH
FOR
CANADA**

Improving Diversity & Inclusion at Teach For Canada

A project for the AFP Fellowship in
Inclusion and Philanthropy

Gerri Lutaaya
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Introduction

Education in Canada is a success story. Study after study shows that our public schools are among the best in the world. But high overall quality masks deep inequality. On First Nations reserves, 3 in 5 students do not complete high school. Too often, teachers arrive in remote and Indigenous communities without the preparation and support they need to succeed. The twin challenges of teacher supply and turnover compound historical injustice and systemic inequities to produce an education gap between First Nations and non-First Nations communities.

Like other nonprofits, Teach For Canada is a product of its time, as is its performance a function of its operating environment. Teach For Canada came into existence to address educational disparities between First Nations youth on reserve and other Canadian youth living off-reserve. These disparities are rooted in the evolution of Canadian society whereby First Nations people became marginalized, squeezed spatially of access and opportunity to basic human rights and resources.

Teach For Canada is a nonprofit organization that works with First Nations communities in northern Ontario to recruit, prepare, and support committed teachers. Part of the organization's programming includes selected Teach For Canada teachers participating in the organization's Summer Enrichment Program at Lakehead University and providing two years of professional and personal support to ensure the teachers succeed--and stay--in the classroom.

Project Overview

In 2015, with only six full-time staff, Teach For Canada launched a national recruitment campaign, received 300+ applications and selected a Cohort of 31 teachers who were placed in 7 First Nations communities in northwestern Ontario. Less than a year later, Teach For Canada's staff doubled in size, added 6 First Nations Community Partners and placed 50+ teachers in the classroom for the 2016-2017 school year.

Despite their rapid growth, Teach For Canada does not have a Diversity and Inclusion strategy. Thus, this project is aimed at improving diversity and inclusion (hereafter D&I) at Teach For Canada through the following 3-step approach:

- Assessing Teach For Canada's existing D&I practices using D&I benchmarking resources
- Creating a comprehensive D&I strategy, complete with recommendations
- Developing a realistic timeline of next steps for gradual implementation across the organization

Overall goal: cultivate safe and inclusive environments where all Teach For Canada stakeholders feel respected, and where any individual can participate in open and meaningful dialogue about shared values and contribute to Teach For Canada's ongoing organizational development.

The Rationale

Currently, Teach For Canada does not have a strategy relating to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Further, there are no guidelines for the way the organization operates when it comes to full-time staff engaging key stakeholders and/or linking diversity and inclusion with its values or standards. Thus, a well-designed D&I strategy, including recommendations for policy implementation, offers an invaluable opportunity for Teach For Canada to succeed not only in achieving additional substantial performance goals, but also transforming the organization into an inclusive work environment.

The end goal is the creation and implementation of D&I strategies, policies and practices; and furthermore, that their continual refinement will facilitate ongoing opportunities to discuss the impact a strong organizational D&I structure can have on Teach For Canada's ability to achieve its goals and fulfill its mission. Serving as a basis, the "Capacity Framework" (Price Waterhouse Coopers 2013)¹ is central to Teach For Canada's understanding of the importance to develop, adjust and manage the many different parts of the organization in order to build resiliency and sustain its effectiveness, particularly in the areas of diversity and inclusion. Therefore, in order to strengthen Teach For Canada's organizational capacity and effectiveness, it is critical to implement a D&I strategy that will motivate its full-time staff to act as leaders, foster an inclusive workplace and structure that supports the organization's values, and help steer Teach For Canada towards even greater success.

¹ See Appendix on slide 10

D&I Assessment: Benchmarks and Results

This project began with an assessment of Teach For Canada's current practices related to D&I using the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks. For each category, the benchmarks are divided into five levels that indicate progress toward the best practices in that category:

LEVEL 5: BEST PRACTICE

- Demonstrating current best practices in D&I; exemplary for other organizations globally

LEVEL 4: PROGRESSIVE

- Implementing D&I systemically; showing improved results and outcomes

LEVEL 3: PROACTIVE

- A clear awareness of the value of D&I; starting to implement D&I systemically

LEVEL 2: REACTIVE

- A compliance mindset; actions are taken primarily to comply with relevant laws and social pressures

LEVEL 1: INACTIVE

- No D&I work has begun; diversity and a culture of inclusion are not part of organizational goals

From the assessment, the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks conclude Teach For Canada is in an inactive state. While it is doing reasonably well in the area of benefits, work-life integration and flexibility, the reality is, even with the best of intentions, because Teach For Canada is a fairly new and small nonprofit, the organization simply has not had the necessary resources, systems or capacity to create and/or implement D&I standards.

Recommendations and Limitations

While Teach For Canada has quickly achieved significant external milestones, the organization is now at a point where it must make time to reflect, re-set and identify a course of action from an internal vantage point. D&I needs to become a core organizational value and practice that involves all Teach For Canada enthusiasts, and is integrated at every level of Teach For Canada's programming, operations and frameworks - not merely as an isolated strategy.

At the same time, Teach For Canada is faced with a number of challenges: the organization is still in its infancy, has limited staff and financial capacity and has high demand for teachers by First Nations communities. This makes it extremely difficult to focus efforts on D&I. As such, the proposed three-phase D&I workplan (slide 7), was intentionally developed without constraining timelines, taking into consideration that each phase and its components will take time to complete, even to the point that during extremely busy (peak) times, the entire process may need to be put on hold.

However, Rome was not built in a day and for important work such this, the development and eventual implementation of D&I practices at Teach For Canada will certainly be richer and stronger by working at the appropriate pace. As the organization continues to grow, Teach For Canada will acquire a larger breadth of perspectives and experiences, thus contributing to a more inclusive environment and experience for all involved.

Proposed D&I Workplan

Phase 1: Educate

- Participate in the following D&I training sessions/programs:
 - TRIEC's [Leading the Conversation: Inclusion in Non-Profits](#)
 - San'yas' [Indigenous Cultural Safety Training](#)
- Review Teach For Canada's current policies, procedures & practices
- Conduct a working session to identify and discuss D&I objectives, needs, roles, accountabilities and expectations with the goals of:
 - (1) increasing staff's understanding of "diversity" and "inclusion"
 - (2) improving diversity and inclusion at Teach For Canada
- Identify D&I champions to lead subsequent phases

Phase 2: Engage

- Facilitate various opportunities (forums, interviews, surveys) for discussion in order establish a D&I baseline and vision that is of greatest relevance and representative of the following Teach For Canada stakeholders and their interests:
 - Advisory Council Members
 - Board of Directors
 - Donors
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Teachers
 - Volunteers
- Review objectives, goals and progress from Phase 1, and if necessary make changes or updates to ensure relevancy and achievement of overarching goals
- Provide quarterly updates to all TFC stakeholders

Phase 3: Endeavour

- Define and publicly declare Teach For Canada's commitment to D&I
- Establish a D&I Committee representative of Teach For Canada stakeholders from Phase 2
- Create an action plan with specific goals, immediate next steps, a timeline of events for completion and measures of success
- Review objectives, goals and progress from Phase 1 & 2, and if necessary make changes or updates to ensure relevancy and achievement of overarching goals
- Provide quarterly updates to all TFC stakeholders

Conclusion

This preliminary D&I strategy has been designed to guide Teach For Canada's initial development and movement towards becoming a leading organization in D&I within the nonprofit sector. The hope is that this evolving resource will encourage the opportunity to discuss, and model, the impact strong D&I practices can have on Teach For Canada's operations, and have those practices embedded in the organization's everyday culture. Looking forward it is critical that Teach For Canada consider the best way to adopt D&I practices, albeit being mindful of their circumstances and capacity.

Through this process and beyond, a focus on improving diversity and inclusion at Teach For Canada will further clarify the organization's mission, values and principles, linking them with standards of professional conduct, and ultimately improving Teach For Canada's organizational effectiveness. Ultimately, D&I practices will allow all Teach For Canada stakeholders to collaboratively explore the best strategies, tools and practices to build, and sustain, long-term resiliency and change.

References

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Appendix: The Capacity Framework

The Capacity Framework defines nonprofit capacity in a pyramid of the following seven essential elements:

- Three higher level elements - aspirations, strategy and organizational skills;
- Three foundational elements - systems and infrastructure, human resources, and organizational structure; and,
- A culture element which serves to connect all the others.

By combining the seven essential elements of organizational capacity into one single diagram, the pyramid emphasizes the importance of examining each element both individually and in relation to the other elements, as well as in context of the whole operation.



EXHIBIT
CAPACITY FRAMEWORK