Racial Equity in the Settlement Sector

This info sheet provides recommendations and resources to senior leadership, management and frontline staff on how to develop racial equity in their organizations and assist clients who report being victims of racism. A racial equity lens is central to a sector that simultaneously focuses on the settlement and integration of newcomers.
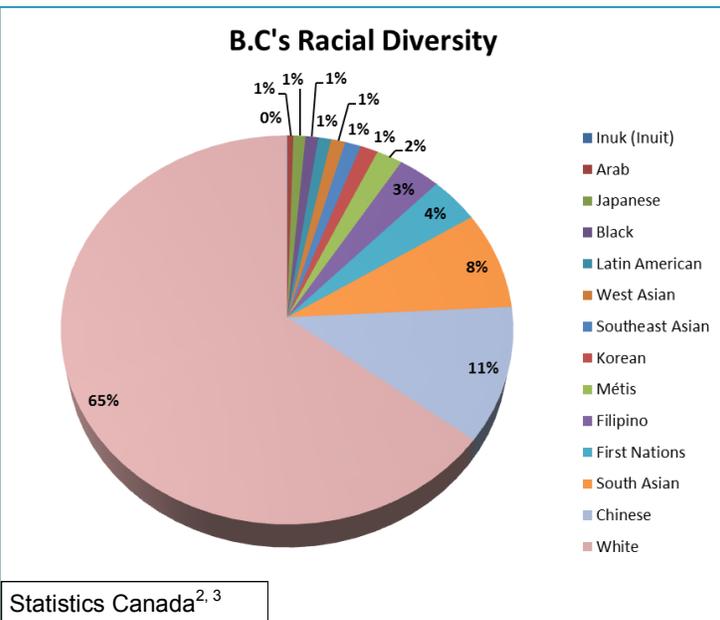
Introduction

Studies[1] show that newcomers–especially racialized newcomers–experience discrimination. The sector needs to be more proactive in creating support services to address this issue. Strategies exist to mitigate racism and its effects. This info sheet begins with definitions of key concepts, followed by recommendations/resources for racial equity.

B.C's Racial Diversity

Pie chart values: 0%, 1%, 1%, 1%, 1%, 1%, 1%, 1%, 2%, 3%, 4%, 8%, 11%, 65%

Legend:
- Inuk (Inuit)
- Arab
- Japanese
- Black
- Latin American
- West Asian
- Southeast Asian
- Korean
- Métis
- Filipino
- First Nations
- South Asian
- Chinese
- White

Statistics Canada[2,3]

Definitions

Diversity: The demographic composition of a population in a place. Has *primary* and *secondary* dimensions, also called, 'observable' and 'invisible' differences. For example: race, age, or gender, and education, religion, or sexuality. Focus is mainly on group rather than individual differences.

Inclusion: The degree to which an organization seeks an individual's or group's participation, and provides them access to resources, information and the ability to influence decision-making processes. Inclusion implies an organization evolving to incorporate dimensions of difference in its culture and structure, as well as including a sense of belonging and valuing uniqueness. Diversity does not automatically foster inclusion.

Equality: Asserts that all persons are equal; no one is legally more worthy or has more rights than another. Also referred to as *equal opportunity*, the principle that people should be treated the same, subjected to the same conditions, and have equal opportunity to succeed irrespective of differences between them. In a competitive market, equality leads to some having more than others. This is considered fair if it results from individuals' own talent and effort and not discrimination or arbitrary factors such as place of birth.

Equity: While equality is about fairness in *process*, equity promotes fairness in *outcome*. It acknowledges that some people unfairly face more social barriers than others. Thus, equity supports treating people differently and allocating resources based on peoples' needs. Strongly tied to the concept of justice, the focus of equity is on addressing historical wrongs that continue in our present world (e.g., classism, sexism, and racism).
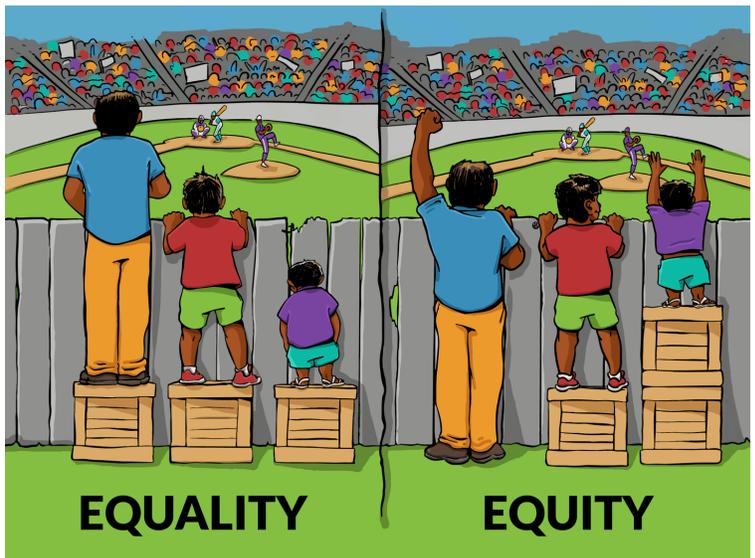
A successful organizational racial equity strategy implements these four concepts into practice in the five levels that racism manifests: personal, interpersonal, institutional, cultural, and structural.

By Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire[4]

References

[1] Nangia, P. (2013). *Discrimination Experienced by Landed Immigrants*.
[2] Statistics Canada. (2017). *BC and Canada. Census Profile*.
[3] Statistics Canada. (2016). *Census of Population*.
[4] Angus Maguire. (2016). *Illustrating Equality VS Equity*.

Recommendations for Building Racial Equity:

The following are recommendations and tools on components of organizational antiracism:

1. Develop a concrete **antiracism policy and vision statement** that frames and captures the leadership's commitment. Policy sections should include a policy objective and statement, application, requirements, responsibilities, monitoring, and accountability. Examples:
   * Government of Canada: Guide to Implementing the Employment Equity Policy
   * Nova Scotia Racial Equity: Policy Guide
   * The Law Society of Alberta: Guidelines for Diversity and Equality Policy
   * Ontario Human Rights Commission: Policy and guidelines on racism and racial discrimination

2. Develop a **race-based impact assessment** tool to evaluate if organizational policies, practices and decisions (will) have discriminatory outcomes. Examples:
   * Race Forward: Racial Equity Impact Assessment Toolkit
   * Center for the Study of Social Policy: Race Equity Impact Assessment

3. Collect **disaggregated race data** to identify baselines, racial disparities, areas for intervention, inform resource allocation, keep track of progress, monitor racism, and more. Share progress report with the public. Examples:
   * National Forum on Education Statistics: Collecting and Using Disaggregated Data on Racial/Ethnic Subgroups
   * Wellesely Institute: Socio-Demographic Data and Equity

4. Go beyond a 'check-the-box' approach and develop organizational **culture, values and norms** that embody diversity, inclusion, and equity. Requires the support of and supporting staff, and awareness of the biased influence of unwritten rules. Examples:
   * Equity in the Centre: Building a Race Equity Culture
   * DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society: Cultural Diversity Best Practices

5. Establish a wraparound-like service for clients who report being **victims of racism**.

6. Be proactive about **minimizing diversity backlash** and **diversity fatigue** from staff and community members.

Etiquette for Responding to Racism:

The following pointers are to help staff support victims of racism and develop a racial equity lens to their practice:

DOs:	DOs:
Active listening	Take diversity, inclusion and antiracism training (e.g., AMSSA's Safe Harbour training and Abbotsford Community Services' Diversity Education Program)
Empathize with client's feelings, interpretation, and concerns, and record the incident	
Be mindful of your projections and work with uncomfortable emotions	Reflect on and amend how your language, behavior and decision-making may have (unintended) negative impact on clients from equity-seeking groups
Assess the potential impact of the incident to the victim (and their family)	
	DONTs
Explore racial and ethnic networks/resources in the community for yourself and clients; for example, BC's Organizing Against Racism & Hate program may exist in your area	Avoid minimizing a client's experience
	Avoid hypothesizing that the incident was not racially motivated. Focus, instead, on the impact the incident has on the client
Offer actionable support where possible and in respecting the wishes of the client; for example, assistance lodging a complaint and referral to a legal aid, multicultural victim services[5], or counsellor	Do not engage in color-blindness ('race is not important') or claim that 'only a few people discriminate'
	Do not only focus on interpersonal racism
Follow-up with clients	**Resources:**
See Burnaby's OAHR guide for responding to violent and non-violent incidents of discrimination	a) AMSSA: Diversity & Inclusion Resources b) Canadian Heritage: Board Diversity Training - A Toolkit

References

[5] MOSAIC's Multicultural Victim Services, Vancouver & Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society, and the Islamophobia Legal Assistance Hotline all offer support to newcomers