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Come Together Alberta Conference

Building Welcoming and Inclusive
Communities

February 6 & 7, 2014



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Background

Conference Objectives and Philosophy

On February 6 and 7, 2014 municipalities, businesses, community organizations, academic institutions and other stakeholders met in Calgary to dialogue, learn and share best practices on making Alberta communities more welcoming and inclusive of diverse populations. Participating organizations learned how they can play a role in building vibrant, sustainable communities that are inclusive of all residents.

Our goals for this conference were to:

- Share best practices in being welcoming and inclusive.
- Present new knowledge, frameworks and practical tools to take home.
- Provide an opportunity for attendees to network for the purpose of sharing ideas, challenges and successes.

In order for the event to have maximum benefit, we envisioned that it would:

- Focus on knowledge sharing – from best practices to enduring challenges and new ideas.
- Introduce attendees to new ideas and research in the field.
- Balance theory and practical application.
- Use interactive and participatory learning methods.
- Emphasize relationship building and networking.
- Inspire new and continued commitments to this important work.

Welcoming and Inclusive Communities (WIC)

The Welcoming and Inclusive Communities (WIC) initiative is a partnership between the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and the Alberta Human Rights Commission to create communities with positive reputations, where diversity adds to the social and economic vibrancy of the community and the quality of life enjoyed by all residents. The WIC initiative supports municipalities who have joined the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD) in addressing ten common commitments of areas of municipal responsibility (see <http://www.unesco.ca/en/home-accueil/ccmard-ccmcrd>).

Come Together Alberta (CTA)

The Come Together Alberta (CTA) initiative is a partnership between the AUMA and Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour to assist municipalities in addressing Alberta's labour needs and changing demographics. CTA has been developed and carried out in close collaboration with the WIC initiative.

The first phase of CTA ran from 2011 to 2012 and focused on the attraction, retention and integration of newcomers. In the current phase of the initiative, the focus has evolved and expanded to address how diverse segments of Alberta's population are integrated into the labour force and social fabric of communities.

The conference was made possible through the generous support of the Alberta Human Rights Commission and Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour.

“We seem to understand what diversity is and what marginalization means, but I’m not sure that we know how to include the target groups in discussions of this sort”.

■ ***Conference Participant***



Delegates

Municipalities

City of Airdrie
City of Brooks*
City of Calgary*
City of Cold Lake
City of Edmonton*
City of Grande Prairie*
City of Lethbridge*
City of Lloydminster
City of Medicine Hat
City of Red Deer*
Town of Banff
Town of Chestermere
Town of Cochrane
Town of Drumheller
Town of Redwater
Town of Sedgewick
Lac La Biche County
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo*

Organizations

Accredited Supports to the Community
Aga Khan Council for Peace
Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Alberta Association for Community Living
Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre
Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities
Alberta Council of Disability Services

Alberta Health Services
Alberta Human Rights Commission
Alberta Human Services
Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour
Alberta Recreation and Parks Association
Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan
Alberta Works
All Weather Windows
Allegro Consulting
Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta
Bow Valley College
Bow Valley Local Immigration Partnership
Bredin Centre for Learning
Brooks and County Immigration Services
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
Calgary Catholic School District
Calgary Local Immigration Partnership
Calgary Police Service
Calgary Public Library
Calgary Roman Catholic School District
Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta)
Catholic Social Services
Central Alberta Refugee Effort
Centre for Race and Culture
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CMARD Lethbridge

**Member of the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD).*

Conectate con Nash
Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary
Federation of Calgary Communities
Flagstaff Community Adult Learning
FOCUS on Seniors
Fort McMurray Public School District
Government of Alberta
Grande Prairie Centre for Newcomers
Immigrant Access Fund
Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary
Immigrant Services Calgary
Independent Living Resource Centre of Calgary
Indigenous Employment Coalition
Kerby Centre
Leduc-Nisku Economic Development Association
Legislative Assembly Office of Alberta
Lethbridge Regional Police Service
Living Waters CRD No. 42
Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo
NorQuest College
Northern Alberta Development Council
Program for Adult Learning
Rocky View Schools Community Learning
Safe Harbour
Settlement Services in the Bow Valley
St. Albert Public Schools
Stepping Stones to Mental Health
Sustainable Calgary
The SPEC Association for Children and Families

Turn Hate Into Hope
TV Filipino
UC Communications
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
United Way
University of Alberta
University of Calgary
Valor Group
Workplace Speaker Network
Zenev and Associates

Conference Conveners

Tymmarah Zehr, Program Manager, Welcoming and Inclusive Communities, AUMA

Ivana Radojevic, Program Coordinator, Welcoming and Inclusive Communities, AUMA

We would like to thank the Alberta Human Rights Commission and Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour for their generous support in making this conference possible. We would also like to extend our gratitude to representatives from these organizations and our various municipal and community partners for their contributions to the development of the conference concept and details.

“Diversity is everybody’s business”.

■ ***Conference Participant***

Agenda

DAY 1 – February 6, 2014, MC: Martin Shields, Mayor of the City of Brooks and AUMA Board Member

9:00 – 10:00 am	Registration and Refreshments
10:00 – 10:10 am	Opening Prayer: Casey Eagle Speaker
10:10 – 10:20 am	Welcome from the Province of Alberta: Hon. Kyle Fawcett, Associate Minister for Recovery and Reconstruction of Southwest Alberta
10:20 – 10:30 am	Importance of Diversity: Hon. Thomas Lukaszuk, Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour
10:30 – 10:45 am	Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination: Meghan Brooks, Programme Officer, UNESCO
10:45 – 12:00 pm	Action Model for Inclusion – INCLUSION = DIVERSITY + ENGAGEMENT: Todd Odgers, Principal, Centre for Intercultural Education, NorQuest College
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 – 1:15 pm	Tools and Resources for Welcoming and Inclusive Communities: Tymmarah Zehr, WIC Program Manager, AUMA
1:15 – 2:15 pm	Municipal Assessment and Planning Tool: Zenobia Jamal and Aliya Jamal, Consultants at Zenev and Associates
2:15 – 2:40 pm	Coffee Break
2:40 – 3:15 pm	17 Characteristics of a Welcoming and Inclusive Community: Jeny Mathews-Thusoo, Issue Strategist, City of Calgary
3:15 – 4:00 pm	Diverse Communities, Strong Communities – Developing the Immigrant Workforce in Small Towns: Vanessa Lodermeier, Bow Valley College and Anna-Lisa Christilaw, Settlement Services in the Bow Valley
4:00 – 4:30 pm	Calgary Local Immigration Partnership: Jeny Mathews-Thusoo, Issue Strategist, City of Calgary
4:30 – 6:00 pm	Tradeshow Meet and Greet

DAY 2 – February 7, 2014, MC: Amarjeet Sohi, Councillor, City of Edmonton and Chair of AUMA’s Safe and Healthy Communities Committee

8:00 – 9:00 am	Registration and Breakfast
9:00 – 9:15 am	Greetings from the Commission: Hon. D. Blair Mason, Q.C., Chief of the Commission and Tribunals, Alberta Human Rights Commission
9:15 – 10:15 am	Addressing and Preventing Hate Crimes in Your Community: Cst. Eric Levesque, Alberta Hate Crimes Committee
10:15 – 10:45 am	Coffee Break
10:45 – 12:00 pm	Breakout Session I <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Canada’s Changing Immigration Policies: Impacts on Alberta Municipalitiesb) A Role for Everyone: Engaging Youth and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Community in Combating Racism, Discrimination and Bullyingc) Identifying Diversity Champions: The Importance of Community – Business Partnerships and Getting Your Council on Board
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 – 2:15 pm	Breakout Session II <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Programs for Newcomers: Best Practices for Helping Newcomers Succeedb) Strategies for Inclusion of Alberta’s Indigenous Peoplec) From Disability to Ability: How Accessible is Your Community?
2:20 – 2:30 pm	Closing Remarks: Councillor Amarjeet Sohi

“Feeling part of a bigger movement”.

■ Conference Participant

Breakout Session I

a) Canada's Changing Immigration Policies: Impacts on Alberta Municipalities

Moderator: **Tammy Arif**, Policy Analyst, AUMA

- **Marc Colbourne**, Manager, Immigrant Settlement and Integration, Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour
- **Mohammed Yusuf Idriss**, Service Manager, Brooks and County Immigration Services

b) A Role for Everyone: Engaging Youth and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Community in Combating Racism, Discrimination and Bullying

Moderator: **Zohreh Saher**, Policy Analyst, AUMA

- **Wade King**, Advisor, Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights, University of Alberta
- **Chevi Rabbit**, Turn Hate Into Hope: A Personal Story
- **Kristopher Wells**, Gay-Straight Student Alliances

c) Identifying Diversity Champions: The Importance of Community – Business Partnerships and Getting Your Council on Board

Moderator: **Ivana Radojevic**, WIC Program Coordinator, AUMA

- **Tom McKenzie**, Lethbridge Police Chief, Member of the City of Lethbridge CMARD Committee
- **Amarjeet Sohi**, City of Edmonton Councillor and Chair, AUMA Safe and Healthy Communities Committee
- **Morris Flewwelling**, Former Mayor, City of Red Deer

Breakout Session II

a) Programs for Newcomers: Best Practices for Helping Newcomers Succeed

Moderator: **Tammy Arif**, Policy Analyst, AUMA

- **Jason Fleming**, All Weather Windows: An Employer's Perspective
- **Violet Poon**, Director, Program Development, Immigrant Access Fund
- **Fariborz Birjandian**, Chair, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies

b) Strategies for Inclusion of Alberta's Indigenous Peoples

Moderator: **Zohreh Saher**, Policy Analyst, AUMA

- **Roy Pogorzelski**, Inclusion Consultant, City of Lethbridge
- **Ian Mathieson**, Senior Consultant, Centre for Race and Culture
- **Winona Lafreniere**, Co-Chair/Team Leader, Indigenous Employment Coalition

c) From Disability to Ability: How Accessible is Your Community?

Moderator: **Ivana Radojevic**, WIC Program Coordinator, AUMA

- **Mieke de Groot**, Client Services Coordinator, Canadian Paraplegic Association, Grande Prairie
- **Wendy McDonald**, Development Director, Alberta Association for Community Living on Rotary Partnerships with Municipalities
- **Bev Matthiessen**, Executive Director, Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities

“Come Together Alberta isn't just a conference. It's a destination!”

■ ***Conference Participant***

Speakers

Fariborz Birjandian has served on many committees, boards and task forces related to immigration, refugees, diversity, equal rights and the cultural arts. Fariborz was a refugee when he left his home country of Iran with his family and settled for a brief time in Lahore, Pakistan, where he began his involvement and work with refugees through the UNHCR. Fariborz resettled in Canada, where he volunteered with the Red Cross and Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS). He soon began employment as a Settlement Counselor for CCIS and shortly after became the Business, Employment and Training Services Manager. For the past 20 years, he has been the Executive Director of CCIS and led the agency from 50 staff operating out of two locations to now over 210 staff, 1,600 volunteers and approximately 70 programs in 8 locations in Calgary and Southern Alberta. Fariborz has received numerous awards and recognitions for his lifelong commitment to diversity and equal rights, and for improving immigration and refugee settlement and integration policies and practices in Alberta, including the Government of Canada's Citation for Citizenship, the Queen's Jubilee Commemorative Medal and the Alberta Centennial Medal, amongst others. His formal education is in Maritime Science and Administration Management.

Contact: fbirjandian@ccis-calgary.ab.ca, aaisa.ca
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/AAISA/>

Dr. Meghan Brooks is Programme Officer for the Social and Human Sciences at the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. In her role at the Commission, Meghan strengthens and supports the engagement of Canadians in a variety of files including ethics, social transformations and the fight against racism and discrimination. A geographer by training, Meghan completed a B.A.H. at Carleton University, M.A. at Queen's University and PhD at Queen's University. In addition to her work at the Commission, Meghan has been contracted to teach at Queen's University and at the University of Ottawa.

Contact: meghan.brooks@unesco.ca
613-566-4414, ext. 4550
www.unesco.ca

Anna-Lisa Christilaw joined Settlement Services in the Bow Valley as a Support Worker in October 2012. Prior to moving to Banff from Ontario, Anna-Lisa was passionately involved with the community in her home town of Sault Ste. Marie and then in Southern Ontario, where she spent 14 years as a teacher and administrator with the Niagara Catholic School Board. When Anna-Lisa and her husband decided to move west, they left behind successful careers and worked in the service industry. Anna-Lisa refers to her 4.5 years in the hospitality industry as some of the most humbling and enlightening experiences of her life, particularly with regards to her work with immigrants. These experiences, coupled with her family's immigrant story have tremendously impacted the work she does today.

Contact: settlement.support@banff.ca
403-762-1149

www.banff.ca/settlement
<https://www.facebook.com/settlement.services.in.the.bow.valley>

Marc Colbourne is Manager, Settlement and Integration with the newly created Ministry of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour. Prior to working with the provincial government, he worked with several community-based organizations in the fields of international development and diversity and inclusion. He believes strongly in the strength of community and feels privileged to be working with not-for-profit organizations, municipalities and individuals to help ensure newcomers and families have access to the supports and services necessary to achieve success in our province.

Contact: marc.colbourne@gov.ab.ca
780-427-0004

Mieke de Groot has been working for the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta) nearly four years. A risk-taker, she has experienced canoeing, kayaking, spelunking, rock climbing and paragliding. The energy gained from successful adventures brought her to speak on working with municipalities to create accessible communities.

Contact: mieke.de.groot@cpa-ab.org
780-532-3305
www.cpa-ab.org, <https://www.facebook.com/cpaalberta>
Twitter @cpaalberta



Jason Fleming is currently the Operations Manager at All Weather Windows in Edmonton where he has worked for the past 8 years in a variety of roles. He is passionate about helping people engage in their work. His previous roles at All Weather Windows have included leading training department and organizational change initiatives and coordinating and running workplace language training. Jason holds a Master's degree in Education specializing in TESL from the University of Alberta. He has taught in Canada and overseas. Jason currently sits on the board of the Edmonton Regional Immigrant Employment Council (ERIEC) and serves as Vice Chair of the Alberta Workforce Essential Skills Society (AWES).

Contact: jffleming@allweatherwindows.com
780-447-6344
www.allweatherwindows.com

Morris Flewwelling served as Director of Museums in Red Deer for eighteen years prior to his retirement in 1996. Before that he was a regular classroom teacher and special education teacher with the Red Deer Public School District. Morris served as a founding director of the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, as a governor for the Heritage Canada Foundation, Treasurer of the Canadian Nature Federation and President of both the Alberta and Canadian Museums Association. In 1997, he received the Member of the Order of Canada award for his leadership in the voluntary sector and in heritage preservation. Morris served on Red Deer City Council from 1974 – 1978, was re-elected in 1995 – 2001 and was elected Mayor in 2004, 2007 and 2010. In 2012, in recognition of his extensive support and encouragement of the First Nations community of Central Alberta, he was named an honorary Chief of the Cree Nation. Under Morris' mayoralty, the City of Red Deer joined the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD) in March, 2013.

Contact: morrisflew@hotmail.com
403-346-6317

Mohammed Yusuf Idriss is the Service Manager of Brooks and County Immigration Services, a project of the CCIC. Mohammed's community involvement ranged from chairing to sitting as a member of different boards, committees, taskforces, organizations and community initiatives at local, provincial, national and international levels. He is an alumnus of the Governor General Canadian Leadership Conference. He was also a finalist in the Top 25 Canadian Immigrants Award. Originally from Ethiopia, Mohammed moved to Canada in 2006 after living on four different continents. He now calls Brooks home with his wife and daughter.

Contact: mohammed.idriss@bcis-brooks.ca
403-362-0404
www.ccis-calgary.ab.ca

Aliya Jamal has been involved through the years in facilitation, social service provision, youth and adult education, research, equity, organizational development, as well as feminist, queer and anti-racist activism. She has worked with organizations like the Edmonton Multicultural Coalition, Next Up Edmonton, the AUMA and ASSIST Community Services Centre. Other current

adventures include creating new works of theatre with groups of women artists and exploring the relationships between dance and politics through community education. Aliya has a BSc from the University of Alberta with a minor in Women's Studies.

Contact: aliya@zenev.ca
 780-695-0000
 www.zenev.ca

Zenobia Jamal has a special interest and expertise in issues of difference, diversity, equity and inclusion in workplaces and learning environments. She has many years of experience teaching, facilitating, developing curriculum and helping organizations develop and implement strategies as part of their diversity initiatives. She has worked with both public and private sector organizations to increase awareness of the many kinds of difference encountered in workplaces and to provide effective site-specific strategies to respond to the ongoing challenge of creating equitable organizations. Zenobia has also developed and delivered programs to help employers create welcoming and inclusive workplaces for newcomers.

Contact: zenobia@zenev.ca
 780-604-6065
 www.zenev.ca

Wade King is the Safe Disclosure and Human Rights Advisor at the University of Alberta, a position accepted in February, 2009. He currently serves as Past-President of the Canadian Association for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in Higher Education (CAPDHHE) and is a member of the Advisory Board of the Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion. Wade has over 13 years of experience in the public and post-secondary sectors, primarily in the areas of human rights, community relations and communications. Prior to his current position, he served as the Senior Diversity and Inclusion Consultant with the City of Edmonton, a position he held since the inception of the office. Outside of work, Wade is active in various community organizations, such as the Pride Centre of Edmonton.

Contact: wjking@ualberta.ca
 780-492-7325
 www.disclosure.ualberta.ca
 Twitter @uofahumanrights

Winona Lafreniere has been an active member of the Indigenous Employment Coalition since 2010. She has completed an

“Thanks again for the opportunity to present. I really enjoyed networking with people across the province on the work we all are doing. It was a great conference”.

■ *Conference Presenter*

undergraduate degree from the University of Manitoba in Political Studies and her goal for the coalition is to engage the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community in exploring ways to further increase Aboriginal workforce participation. She also serves on various local boards and committees in Grande Prairie, and continues her passion to educate others about the importance of inclusion and building respectful and lifelong relationships with her community, industry and educational institutions.

Contact: winona_lafreniere@hotmail.com
780-831-1090

Constable Eric Levesque has been a police officer for 26 years, starting his career with the RCMP in 1988, where he was posted to a 3-person detachment in rural Manitoba. Transferring to the Calgary Police Service in 1990, he embarked on a varied policing career, which included positions as a Patrol Officer, Tactical Officer, and Firearms/Use of Force Instructor. In 2005, Cst. Levesque expanded his policing experience to include community based positions such as School Resource Officer, Community Resource Officer and, more recently, a position within the Diversity Resources Team as Hate Crimes Coordinator. As the Hate Crimes Coordinator, Cst. Levesque is the Calgary Police Service's subject matter expert on hate-bias crimes. Cst. Levesque reviews all hate-bias incidents within the City of Calgary; offers support for hate crime victims; investigates hate propaganda offences; gives direction and assistance in hate crime investigations; and provides education about hate/bias crimes, both to fellow officers and the community at large. Cst. Levesque also liaises with other police services and community groups for the purpose of monitoring extremists involved in hate crimes and hate propaganda. In his role as the Hate Crimes Coordinator, Cst. Levesque is also a member of the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee, an organization which creates awareness about hate-bias crimes/ incidents; enhances community and government partnerships in addressing hate-bias crimes/incidents; and initiates and coordinates hate-bias prevention activities and responses throughout Alberta.

Contact: elevesque@calgarypolice.ca
403-428-8155
<http://www.albertahatecrimes.ca>

Vanessa Lodermeier, originally from rural southern Alberta, is a Project Officer at Bow Valley College in Calgary, Alberta. She currently delivers the College's Workplace Communication for Rural Immigrants program. In 2012, Vanessa completed a Bow Valley College applied research study on developing the immigrant workforce in small communities in rural Alberta. Her professional interests are focused on migration and international human rights. Vanessa holds a BA with Great Distinction from the University of Lethbridge.

Contact: 403-410-1449
www.bowvalleycollege.ca/workplacecommunication
www.facebook.com/bvc.workplacecommunication

Jeny Mathews-Thusoo has worked in the field of social change for over 10 years. With a background in education and community health, she began her career at the Calgary Health

Region as the Education Coordinator of Sexual and Reproductive Health and later managed Interpretation and Translation Services for the Calgary Health Region. Currently as an Issue Strategist at the City of Calgary, she works at a systems level to identify and address emerging social issues faced by ethno-cultural communities in order to promote their success, inclusion and well-being. Her portfolio includes representing the City on the Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (CLIP) as well as supporting the City's business units in implementing the Welcoming Community Policy.

Contact: jeny.mathews-thusoo@calgary.ca
403-268-1473

Ian Mathieson specializes in intercultural communication and conflict transformation. Ian's work in training and curriculum development has been applied across a broad spectrum of organizations from law enforcement and educational boards to community NGOs and the private sector.

Contact: imathieson@cfrac.com
780-425-4644, ext. 2
www.cfrac.com; www.crcconsulting.ca
Twitter @RememberMarch21, @ianomath

Bev Matthiessen has worked for more than 25 years in the not-for-profit sector. Since 1991, she has been the Executive Director of the Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities, an organization promoting full participation in society by Albertans with disabilities. Previously, she was the Executive Director of the Personal Development Centre and the first Coordinator of Volunteers at Goodwill Industries. Her education is in social work, and not-for-profit agencies, volunteer, fundraising and conflict management. In 1998, Bev was a founder of the Alberta Disabilities Forum, a partnership of over 40 provincial disability organizations.

Contact: execdir@accd.net
780-488-9088
www.accd.net

Wendy McDonald is an accomplished trainer and adult educator with over 25 years experience in staff training and leadership development. She is currently Development Director for the Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL). She is a Past President of the Rotary Club of Edmonton Mayfield. Currently, Wendy is a member of the Rotary District Training team for Rotary D5370 and Chair of the D5370 Employment Partnership. Wendy is a Past-President of the Alberta Association for Community Living. As a board member for AACL, Wendy was successful in starting and helping to expand a project to create employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities by creating a partnership between the association, Rotary clubs and Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD).

Contact: wmcDonald@aacl.org
780-451-3055, ext. 400

Tom McKenzie is a 37-year veteran of the Lethbridge Regional Police Service and was appointed Chief of Police in January 2007. He is a graduate of the Lethbridge College Criminal Justice program and a recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award. In 2012, he was invested in the Order of Merit of the Police Forces. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Merit (O.O.M) for outstanding meritorious service at the regional and provincial level. In the Blackfoot community, McKenzie is known as Mistaki'ikitstaki. The Blackfoot name was bestowed upon him for his kindness and support of the Blackfoot people. He currently sits on the Lethbridge College Alumni Advisory Council and Law Enforcement Advisory Committee, the Aboriginal Housing Society Board, Special Olympics Alberta Provincial Board, Lethbridge CMARD committee and Team Lethbridge.

Contact: tom.mckenzie@lrps.ca
403-330-5085
<https://www.facebook.com/CMARDLeth>
Twitter @CMARDLeth

Todd Odgers is Principal of NorQuest College's Centre for Intercultural Education (CIE) in Edmonton. The centre's team is unique in Canada and its research and training activities focus on the development of intercultural competence for business, industry, government, educators and not-for-profits nationally and internationally. The CIE has worked with over fifty organizations regionally, nationally and internationally and is recognized for its innovative approach to building inclusive work and community environments. Todd facilitates and speaks widely to groups wanting to improve their effectiveness in engaging and integrating diverse populations. Todd has worked with an international MBA program, Intercultural Communication at the UBC, CIC and Queen's University IETP and advised provincial, national and municipal governments on inclusion related topics and practices. For ten years between 1988 and 2002, he worked in Japan teaching and training nationally to develop intercultural competence with the management and staff of many of the country's best known corporations.

Contact: todd.odgers@norquest.ca
780-644-6757
www.norquest.ca/norquest-centres/intercultural-education-centre.aspx

Roy Pogorzelski is Métis from Saskatchewan. He is also a German citizen on his father's side. Roy has been involved in inclusion work for many years both internationally, nationally and provincially. Roy has worked on human rights in Austria, Switzerland, Sweden and Belgium. He has been a Professor of Indigenous Studies at the University of Regina and was a Human Rights Coordinator for the Aboriginal Council of Lethbridge for years before taking the position of Inclusion Consultant with the Community and Social Development Group at the City of Lethbridge. Roy graduated in 2009 with his Masters of Science in Culture and Development Studies with Distinction from K.U. Leuven in Belgium.

Contact: roy.pogorzelski@lethbridge.ca

403-320-4130
www.lethbridge.ca
Twitter @Pogo2709



“Unity brings trust and diversity brings new ideas and energies”.

■ ***Conference Panelist***

Violet Poon has worked with internationally educated professionals for over 7 years through her work for immigrant serving agencies and as a consultant. Her experience in providing one-on-one coaching and counseling to immigrants helps their understanding of how to find and keep a job in Canada. In Violet’s current role as the Director, Program Development for the Immigrant Access Fund (IAF) Edmonton office, she manages a loan program for internationally educated and trained professionals who need funds for licensure and training costs to get back into the field of work they worked in prior to coming Canada.

Contact: violet@iafcanada.org
 780-756-3023, ext. 302
 www.iafcanada.org

Chevi Rabbit was verbally assaulted, physically attacked and robbed while walking near his campus dorm at the University of Alberta in July, 2012. His story gained a lot of media attention.

Chevi was able to shed light on a negative issue plaguing society and turn a traumatic incident into a positive message. He and a few friends successfully organized a march and rally of 300 citizens in support of his cause. To keep the momentum going and the message of tolerance strong, he decided to create an annual event, "From Hate to Hope". He has been traveling and sharing his story with the goal of inspiring others. Chevi was born and raised in the small farming community of Ponoka and is a member of Montana Cree Nation. He has always lived fearlessly as an openly gay male and credits his mother's unconditional love for supporting him to feel comfortable and confident in who he is.

Contact: rabbit@ualberta.ca
403-783-3630
www.hatetohope.ca
<https://www.facebook.com/hate2hope>
Twitter @TurnHate2Hope

Amarjeet Sohi was elected to City Council in 2007. In his two terms on Council, he has taken on leadership roles in public transit, multiculturalism and poverty elimination initiatives, amongst others. He represents the City provincially at the AUMA and nationally at the Canadian Urban Transit Association. Prior to his election to City Council, Amarjeet worked with the Edmonton Transit System.

Contact: http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/city_organization/ward-12-councillor.aspx
Twitter @SohiAmarjeet

Dr. Kristopher Wells is an Assistant Professor and Director of Programs and Services, Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services, University of Alberta. He is the Co-Founder and Director of Camp fYrefly (www.CampFYrefly.ca), which is Canada's only national leadership retreat for sexual and gender minority youth. Kris is a founding board member of the Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities and is the author of the Alberta government's homophobic and transphobic bullying resources. Kris has also been a consultant with the Canadian Senate, Canadian Museum of Human Rights, Canadian Teachers' Federation, Alberta Teachers' Association, Government of Alberta, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Edmonton Police Service, Edmonton Public Schools, Public Health Agency of Canada, UNESCO, and the World Health Organization. Kris' most recent project, NoHomophobes.com, has been featured across the world in more than 50 publications, including the Economist, Atlantic, Independent and Guardian.

Contact: kwells@ualberta.ca
780-492-9908
Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services: www.iSMSS.ualberta.ca
Gay-Straight Student Alliances: <http://www.ismss.ualberta.ca/students>
Resources on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues:
<http://www.ismss.ualberta.ca/Resources>

Tymmarah Zehr is the Program Manager of the WIC and CTA programs at the AUMA. Her interest in inclusive communities stems back to her involvement as a WIC committee member with the City of Grande Prairie since its inception in 2007. She is a graduate student at Royal Roads University where she is studying International and Intercultural Communication. Her thesis research is “Collectively Building a Welcoming Grande Prairie” through arts-based inquiry engaging local Grande Prairie artists, newcomers and immigrant serving agencies. Tymmarah is a Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Consultant at Allegro Consulting and Event Planning and is a facilitator for the Safe Harbour: Respect for All program in Alberta. She volunteers her time as a board member and marketing committee chair for the Centre for Race and Culture and is a member of the Rotary Club of Edmonton Strathcona and the Edmonton Business Diversity Network.

Contact: tzehr@auma.ca
 Tymmarah@gmail.com
 780-643-5634, 780-850-8966
 wic.auma.ca
 allegroeventsandpromotions.com
 safeharbour.ca
 www.facebook.com/AllegroEvents
 Twitter @Tymmarah, @AllegroEvents

“I enjoyed and learned a lot from the speeches. I came out a better immigrant to this country! Great job!”

■ Conference Participant

Interactive Session Outcomes



On the first day of the conference, participants worked through a segment of the Municipal Assessment and Planning Tool and provided feedback. This also provided them with an opportunity to make links between new information and their own contexts, and to connect with each other personally and professionally. The feedback will be integrated into the tool and the re-formatted tool will be launched through a webinar scheduled for May. We are also providing an opportunity for

municipalities to receive direct support from Zenev and Associates in using the tool.

Participants were asked to discuss five key questions about the tool with others at their table. The below is a summary of their responses.

Q: How do you see your municipality, community or organization using the tool?

- Assessment, planning and self-awareness.
- Appreciate the binary approach.
- Benchmark and define a path for development.
- Support introspection and start discussion about inclusion.
- Gap and asset analysis.
- Can't necessarily use tool as a whole, but certain sections (e.g. diversity in HR practices) might be useful.
- Community associations could adopt a version of this tool to help address inclusion and having a representative board and/or volunteers.
- Best utilized at either the council or senior management level within a municipality.
- Help municipalities fine-tune their inclusion frameworks.
- Seeing different perspectives of the same organization.
- One area of focus at a time – slowly and in-depth.
- Community meetings.
- Although the language needs to be tweaked, this could be done easily and could help community associations determine where they are in terms of inclusiveness.
- Good to have the built-in action piece.
- Assist in the development of strategic plans and communication. Also with HR policies and recruitment.
- Should be rolled out to all agencies.
- May not be so good for a small organization.
- Can't use it in this form. Perhaps as an initial plan but strong follow-up is needed.
- The challenge is the subjective mindset of the assessor. For interpretation of the statements on the in-depth assessment, this can be fundamentally different.

- Would conduct this with different groups (employees/management) and compare/contrast perspectives.
- Certain dimensions may be difficult to apply. Could share it with other stakeholders as the structure and examples are good.
- Internal assessment tools already exist in some organizations so they have no need for this tool.

Q: Who might be involved in the process?

- Leadership (e.g. council, board members and senior management).
- Staff members.
- Internal and external representatives. Informed stakeholders who would be responsible for implementing the plan. People who are aware of the existing programs through either offering them or benefiting from them.
- May or may not need a facilitator.
- Community agencies.
- School boards.
- Government agencies and the health sector.
- Chambers of commerce, industry and regional boards.
- Not-for-profits.
- Aboriginal groups.
- Funding partners.
- WIC committee.
- Staff unit specifically involved in diversity work (e.g. HR department).
- Federation of community leagues.
- Community at large.
- Third-party consultants.
- Multicultural groups.
- Representatives from different levels of an organization may see gaps and successes differently.

Q: What resources would you need?

- Support of management, clear goals and guidance of a diversity and inclusion group/department.
- Time and buy-in from various sections of the organization, including leadership and the community.
- Language in the tool could be a challenge. It would be useful to have a plain language document.
- Organizational commitment and making this an intentional priority.
- Ideas to improve practices and examples of best practices from other communities.

“I really enjoyed the part I had in the conference and managed to enjoy a couple of other presentations as well. I felt the agenda was strong and with good resource people”.

■ *Conference Panelist*

- Definitions of words prior to using the tool to ensure everyone is on the same page.
- An adapted version of this tool that would apply to community associations and volunteers in a not-for-profit organization.
- Education around diversity and inclusion.
- AUMA coming out to do a presentation.
- Facilitation to help mitigate the potential of resistance and defensiveness in giving honest responses.
- Funding to use the tool and implement strategies.
- Technical support.
- Paid staff or volunteers to collate and develop strategies.
- Advice on how to generate good, clear reports – visuals that can help convey results (i.e. something that is easy to cut and paste into power points and reports).

Q: What challenges might you encounter?

- How to handle dominant voices.
- Can trigger defensiveness.
- Resistance to change, lack of interest and buy-in (lack of mandate).
- Parts of the content apply while others don't.
- Certain sections are well done but some parts of organizational culture are not included.
- Commitment to implement is not always there.
- Functions of an organization can be very diverse and priorities different.
- Follow-up after use of the tool.
- Making sure to involve everyone who is directly impacted by the organization to avoid bias.
- Cultural shifts need time.
- In completion of the assessment, we need to be cognizant of cultural undertones and lived experience, which may influence how different individuals within an organization complete the assessment.
- Prioritizing diversity and inclusion.
- Making this relevant to our work.
- Lack of capacity to use the tool (e.g. number of people needed to complete the assessment and time).
- A high level of bureaucracy.
- Wording/language not as specific to certain organizations.
- Different understandings of what the indicators mean.
- Fear of findings.
- Skewed results to reflect personal bias.
- The tool is one-sided and will give us a very wrong image of inclusion.
- Adapting to non-municipal context.
- In large organizations, the effects may not be translated across the entire group of staff.
- Elected officials may not be receptive when presented with initiatives that are perceived by the public to be controversial.

- Lack of self-awareness. Not everyone will honestly self-evaluate.
- Ability to communicate and get the word out.

Q: What kind of support would you need to use the tool?

- Senior leadership and management buy-in.
- Social and other not-for-profit groups advocating for and buying into this process.
- Budget or financial ability to implement the tool.
- Staff support and funding.
- Ministerial orders from portfolio holders would have to be appointed on creation of new committees.
- Make tool available in digital form to produce graphs, charts, etc.
- Facilitator to help use the tool.
- Help in communicating results of the tool.
- Provide education around diversity to council and staff.
- Assistance with larger workshops to increase education/awareness.
- Apply this to community development work.
- Support to encourage different levels of leadership and government to assist/support this work.
- Assistance in analyzing what to do next once the evaluation is completed.
- Additional tools to move to a higher level.
- This tool can be used by someone who has a background and understanding of diversity but is quite high level for the community to use if it were to be given to residents to look at their neighbourhood.



***“Must evaluate!
Looking forward to
finished toolkit”.***

■ *Conference
Participant*

Next Steps



AUMA continues to support municipalities in sharing information and connecting around best practices and learnings regarding immigration and diversity. We encourage event participants to use the contact list that was provided in the conference package to get in touch with others and find ways to continue the knowledge sharing, and perhaps even build collaborative relationships to support each other's work.

Workshops

We continue to offer free capacity-building workshops to Alberta municipalities to develop tangible action plans around their WIC and/or CTA initiatives. These workshops aim to support municipalities at whatever stage of planning they are at – just starting out or highly developed. Contact wic@auma.ca if you are interested in hosting a workshop in your municipality.

Webinars

We are working with Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour on hosting webinars discussing topics such as settlement, the temporary foreign worker program and changes to the immigration system. These will be especially useful to those municipalities and organizations who do not have it within their budgets to travel to conferences and workshops.

Website Refresh

The WIC/CTA website was originally developed in 2008 and requires an upgrade to host the growing amount of information and resources available. Over the next few months, the WIC team will work with a professional web development company to update the website and re-organize its content to make it more user-friendly.

Municipal Assessment and Planning Tool

At the conference, delegates had the opportunity to work through a segment of the tool and provide feedback. The feedback will be integrated into the tool and the re-formatted tool will be launched through a webinar scheduled for May. We are also providing an opportunity for municipalities to receive direct support from Zenev and Associates in using the tool.

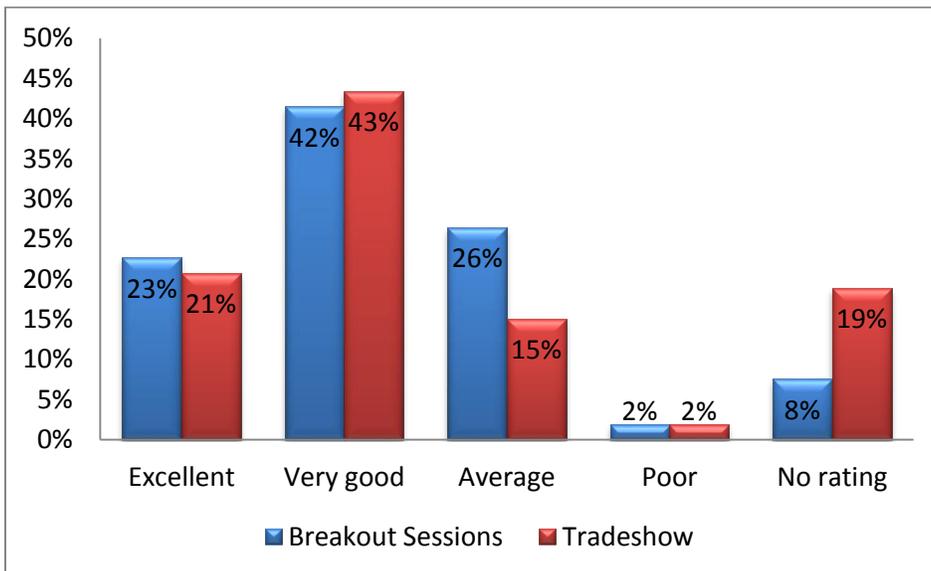
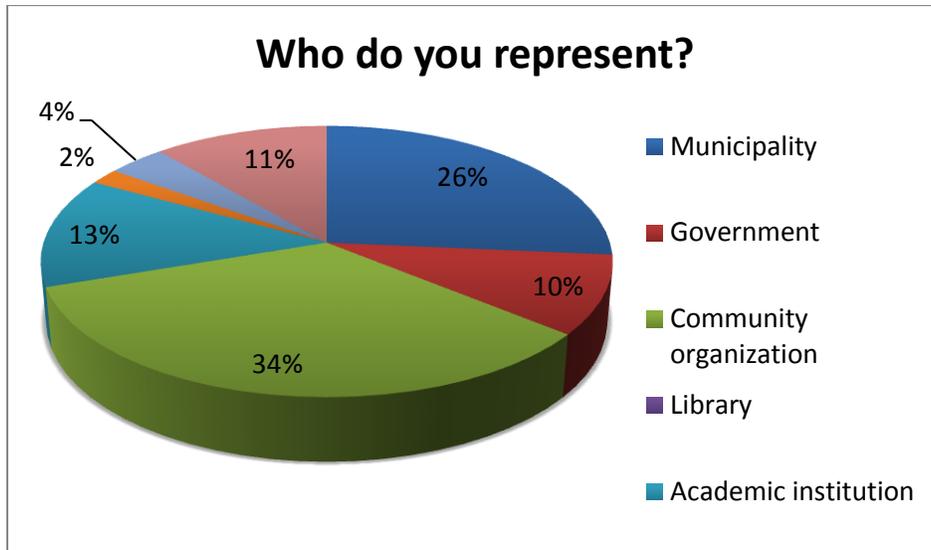
Municipal Sustainability Awards

The AUMA has recently revamped the Municipal Sustainability Awards program. For 2014, we are focusing on recognizing municipalities that have demonstrated excellence in social sustainability, such as by becoming more welcoming and inclusive. The WIC team is encouraging municipalities that have achieved tangible outcomes in reducing racism and discrimination or welcoming newcomers to apply.

Event Feedback

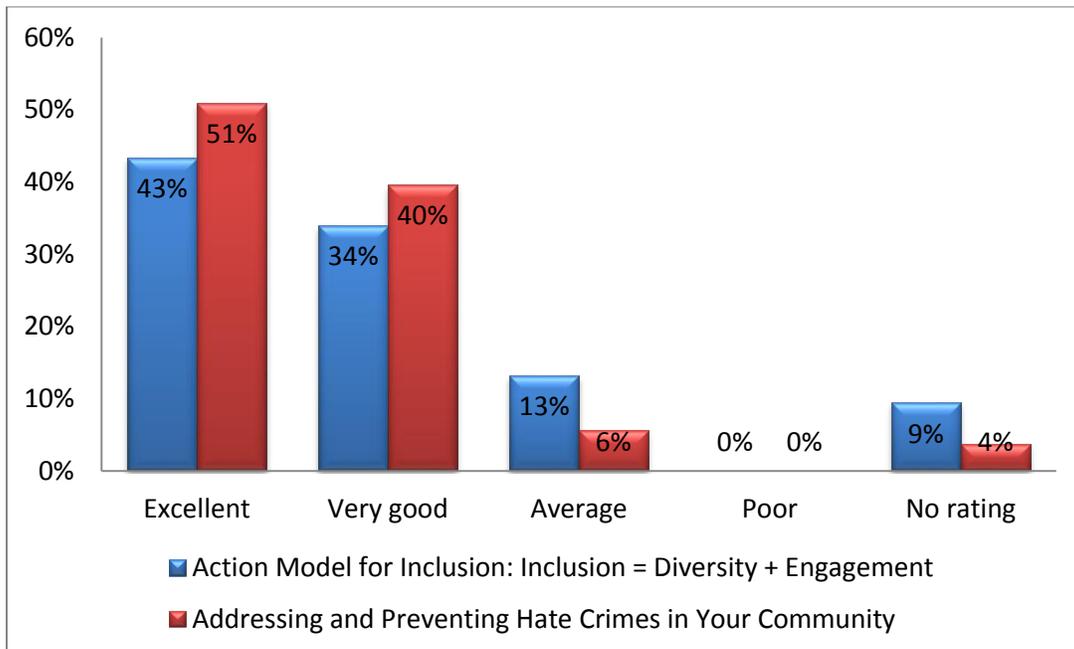
Evaluation forms were included in the conference packages. The week following the event, evaluation forms were also sent out to all conference delegates to provide an opportunity for feedback to those who did not get a chance to complete an evaluation form at the end of the conference. The following is a summary and some highlights of the results.

Results are based on a 31% response rate.



Q: What did you appreciate most about the conference?

- Municipal Assessment and Planning Tool.
- Choice of breakout sessions.
- Mix of organizations and stakeholders.
- 17 characteristics of a welcoming community.
- Variety and knowledge of presenters.
- Different models and services provided through settlement agencies.
- Conversations at tables.
- Best practices and good ideas.
- Opportunity to ask questions.
- Community engagement.
- Range of perspectives.
- Government attendance.
- Free registration.
- Topics covered.
- Well-organized.
- Interaction.
- Open discussion.
- Networking.
- Keynotes.
- Tradeshow.
- Key learnings.
- Encouragement.
- Deep discussions.

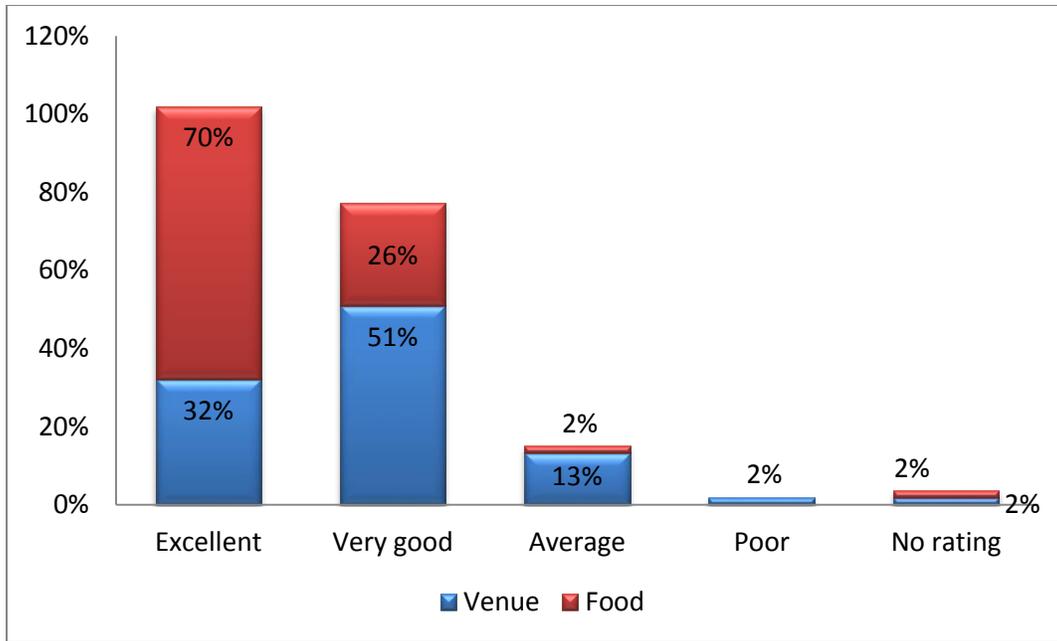


Q: What are one or two key ideas you will take away from the conference that will contribute to your own work?

- Importance of community partnerships.
- Immigrant Access Fund.
- Immigration policy changes.
- Diversity awareness vs. competence.
- Apply learnings from gay-straight alliances to other organizations.
- Engaging local businesses slowly.
- Diversity is complex.
- Maytree Foundation.
- Open dialogue about diversity in school districts.
- Local WIC committees need community members who represent various cultures.
- Try to establish settlement services.
- How municipalities can address the needs of immigrants.
- Municipal Assessment and Planning Tool.
- Importance of collaboration and partnerships.
- WIC tools.
- Target groups need to be included in discussions.
- Identify diversity champions in the community.
- Too much diversity can lack inclusiveness.
- Cultural audit of community is important.
- Information on hate crimes.
- Need to build trust in relationships as foundation to any programming.
- Workplace Communication developed by Bow Valley College.
- Mentoring.
- Encourage local community reinforcement of diversity and how we all benefit.
- Importance of respect, individualism, value of social capital.
- Ways to create safe spaces for LGBT youth.
- Hate crimes are being dealt with in schools.
- Provide orientation to community for newcomers.
- Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) and characteristics of a welcoming community are linked closely.

"The second day was certainly more powerful, having concrete suggestions and conversations about developing inclusive communities and creating safe places. Appreciated the use of personal stories in discussion".

■ Conference Participant



Q: What are some tools/resources that could further assist you in your diversity work?

- Clear instructions on programs available.
- More networking time.
- Changes needed to ESL programming to allow all newcomers to partake.
- Easy access to immigration statistics/research.
- Municipal Assessment and Planning Tool.
- Workshops.
- UNESCO website.
- Workplace Communication developed by Bow Valley College.
- Mentoring.
- Settlement sector websites.
- Dissemination of best practices.
- Funding.
- Social media.
- Hate crimes tools.
- WIC Toolkit.
- 17 characteristics of a welcoming community.
- Best practice videos.
- Inclusion = Diversity + Engagement.
- Strategies to influence change.
- Gay-straight alliances framework.
- Copies of conference presentations.
- Awareness and training for community leaders.
- Educate mainstream community about diversity.
- Implementation.

- Advocacy about negative impacts of current immigration policies.
- Information provided by federal representatives about immigration policies.
- WIC website.
- People connections.
- How community development work relates to diversity.
- Conferences like this to connect with people.

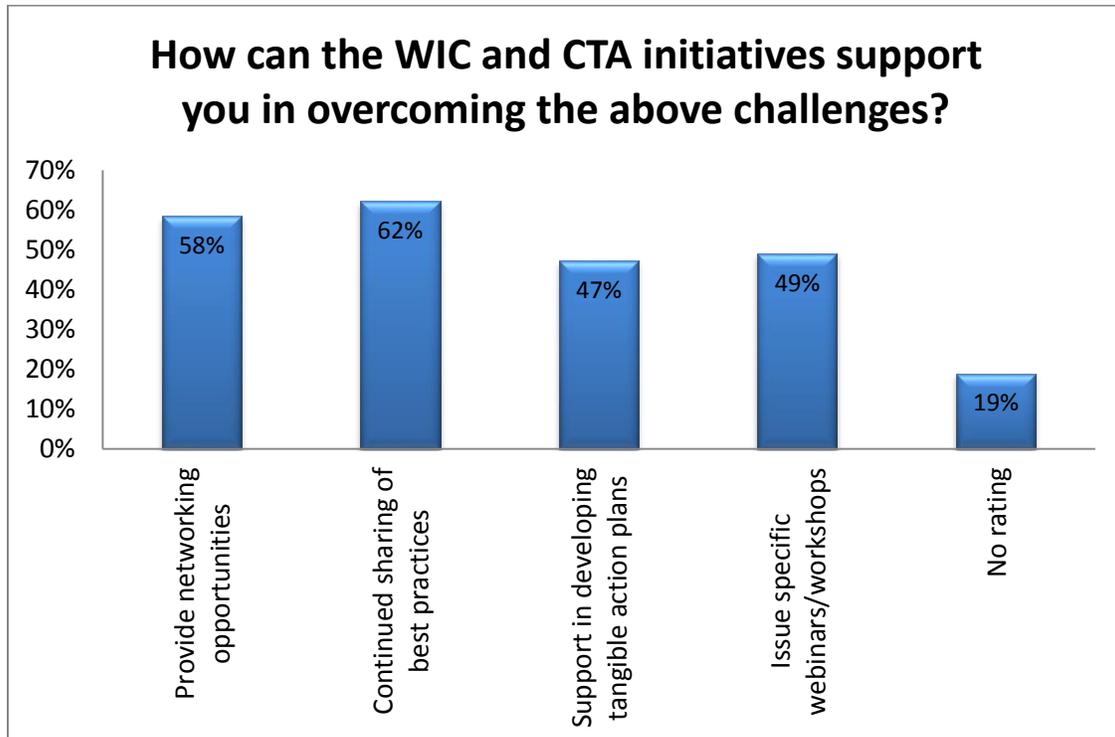
“Unity gives us an anchor to accept diversity”.

■ ***Conference Participant***

Q: What are the biggest challenges facing your municipality/organization in doing diversity work?

- Public engagement.
- Urban sprawl.
- Connecting with new immigrants.
- Funding/lack of resources.
- Partnering and organizing.
- Need tangible examples of best practices/strategic plans.
- Educating the community about negative stereotypes/perceptions and cultural biases.
- Language skills.
- Finding affordable Day Care for immigrant mothers.
- Political issues.
- Lack of consistency in approach across the province.
- Varying skill sets.
- Accommodating inclusivity means different things to different people.
- Obtaining buy-in from council and management.
- Measuring outcomes.
- Disengaged leaders.
- Rural communities face transportation issues.
- Involvement of business partners and other stakeholders.
- Increasing number of patients from different socio-cultural backgrounds who experience access challenges.
- Communities are not fully convinced of the economic benefits of diversity work.
- Continued government re-organization keeps shifting people and priorities.
- Keeping the dialogue going.
- Municipalities and education representatives need to form committees for diversity.
- Recognizing the need and possibility to improve on diversity.
- Cross-organizational cooperation between different entities within certain communities.
- Competition for funding dollars versus collaboration.
- Those who need support don’t know about the supports available and how to access them.
- Time commitments.
- Identifying diversity champions with influence.

- Thinking we are a welcoming community when the reality is different.
- No dedicated staff person.
- Priority is supporting immigrant clients first, then moving to bigger picture strategic plans.
- Dealing with the poor communication of federal government regarding immigration.
- Understanding what each person needs.
- Programming is dependent on volunteers.
- Myths and misinformation about temporary foreign workers.
- Need informed media.



Q: Do you have any suggestions for improving future events?

- More conferences/workshops in northern communities.
- More people like All Weather Windows i.e. industry, not just government.
- Continue to promote to others (besides municipalities) who carry out WIC work (i.e. Family and Community Support Services, libraries, etc.).
- Give participants a list of who is in attendance so we can seek out networking opportunities more effectively.
- Day 1 needed to have more interactive sessions, especially after the afternoon break – hard to sit through 3 lectures.
- Martin Shields was an excellent MC.
- I loved everything – very happy to assist with this great event.
- More opportunities to interact and learn from attendees.

- Too much sitting and listening.
- More Q and A time.
- Better room layout to feel more connected (large space).
- Disappointed Mayor Nenshi changed as closing speaker.
- Amazing opportunity and free.
- More information for front line staff.

“Thank you for a wonderful learning opportunity”.

■ Conference Participant

- Give more time to Jeny Mathews-Thusoo.
- Provide a definition sheet.
- We didn’t talk about some of the “tough” challenges facing immigrants/temporary foreign workers and how we must improve the problems they face (e.g. taken advantage of in their working conditions).
- More inclusiveness of rural areas as included regions of northern Alberta. What works for Calgary and surrounding areas may not work the same in northern areas.
- More of such get togethers – once a year.
- More advertising about these events. It’s great that AUMA is taking this on and I’m sure many missed out who would be interested.
- More involvement of community leaders such as the ethno-cultural brokers and leaders trained to serve the newcomers.
- There was diversity in the speakers, but white men tend to always be over-represented. Even in diversity work. This is a broad systemic issue and I’m aware it creates challenges in planning/incorporating diversity. Not a critique of the event, but something for us all to think about.
- Have more sessions regarding youth inclusion and diversity. There are so many youth struggling with cultural identity as well. How can we help them?
- The conference’s focus was diversity and inclusiveness but in reality the representation was not inclusive. For example, the health service organization and agencies serving most vulnerable groups (such as homeless) were not invited to share their perspective and resources on diversity and inclusiveness.
- Targeted and facilitated networking. Found conference very cliquey – southern and organization focus.
- Day 1 felt very repetitive. More engagement within the audience. Have an icebreaker on ways to group based on interest. Quick ways to network.
- More structured networking – similar communities/organizations.
- Twenty minute keynote sessions barely give time to address the issues. Is there a way that these can be lengthened or come more to the point? I would love to see something on how to act on grassroots initiatives to strengthen the ability of municipalities to meet the needs of their diverse populations. This particular event seemed to come from the top down.

- Inform community-based ethno-cultural organizations about this conference as well. They are great partners in developing welcoming and inclusive communities.
- Sometimes people don't like to ask questions. Provide opportunity to write questions on a piece of paper and for relevant panelists to answer.
- Why were the community organizations not invited? We heard through other organizations about this conference.
- More take home material.
- Local examples that can apply to our work.
- More specific information, not so general.

“Immigration will happen – it’s better to create conditions for success”.

■ ***Conference Participant***

Throughout the conference, a number of participants expressed that they would like to see this conference occur on an annual basis and appreciated the absence of a registration fee, which enabled many, who otherwise would not have had it in their budgets, to attend.

