FIELD NOTES | CENTERING ANTI-RACIST AND EQUITY FRAMEWORKS IN ANTI-POVERTY WORK

BY ALISON HOMER AND MAUREEN OWENS

In response to learning requests from several Communities Ending Poverty (CEP) members, Tamarack's Vibrant Communities hosted two conversations that explored how CEP members were developing, implementing, and centering anti-racist and equity frameworks in their anti-poverty work.

DISCUSSION OVERVIEW

Through two virtual roundtable conversations held in May and June 2022, CEP member communities were asked to speak to:

- How they began shifting mindsets to actively tackle anti-racism
- What internal and external actions demonstrate their commitment to anti-racism and equity
- How they created space to think outside of the box with new partners and to integrate new ideas into practice
- What has worked well, what challenges were navigated, and what advice they had to share.

CONTRIBUTING COMMUNITIES ENDING POVERTY MEMBERS

- Marcie Dewitt, Alberni Clayoquot Health Network
- Austin Lui and Riya Talwar, City of Vancouver Strategic Initiatives Team
- Erick Ambtman, EndPovertyEdmonton
- Dominica Mcpherson, Guelph-Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination
- Colleen Christopherson-Cote, Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership
- Paige Monck-Whip, Wellbeing Waterloo Region
- Kahla Pretty, Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council
- Meaghon Reid, Vibrant Communities Calgary
- Natalie Doyle, Ville de Montréal Service de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion Sociale

ALBERNI CLAYOQUOT HEALTH NETWORK

The [Alberni Clayoquot Health Network](#) is focused on bringing community voices forward as they apply a social determinants of health lens to municipal and community-led decision-making.

They have shifted mindsets and created space to think outside of the box with new partners by ensuring that community voices are at the centre to their direction. For this reason, the Network's leadership table has the task of finding the resources to support those decisions.

> *Alberni Clayoquot Health Network is a community-driven mechanism that speaks with a collective voice on regional and local health issues; builds partnerships and capacity; shares concerns, ideas and resources; and creates innovative solutions that impact the social determinants of health and support sustainable healthy communities*

Intentional engagement

In 2015, the network took on being more intentional about engaging with people living in poverty, to start, by articulating four action-oriented equity-building mechanisms:

- Developing a communications and engagement plan that depicts how they engage from the grassroots level through decision-making and resourcing
- Being intentional about representation at the table and in the community voice, including how they overcome tokenism and ensure that participation is meaningful
- Adopting consensus-based decision-making, making sure meetings are facilitated rather than simply chaired and reconsidering how power can be shared with communities, and to ensure that community ideas are integrated to practice
- In agenda planning, making sure that they build in the time for relationship-building and are intentional about it, particularly with local rural and First Nations communities.

Seven years later

In the seven years since the Alberni Clayoquot Health Network prioritized this work, they are just starting to see their relationship-building efforts paying off. They have also developed a strong foundation of trust, and now have access to a wealth of diverse people and stories that can help educate decision-makers – particularly since decision-makers in the organizations the Network works with do not always reflect the diversity of the populations they serve.

Developing the poverty reduction action plan

In developing the Network's poverty reduction action plan (2020-21), they noted that most feedback received from the community was around racism and equity. For this reason they embedded a framework that was adopted from a [Urban Sustainability Directors Network](#) (USDN) paper [Equity in Sustainability: An Equity Scan of Local Government Sustainability Programs](#).
The USDN resource centres equity in four principles:

![Tamarack Institute logo]

- Procedural Equity (inclusion)
- Distributional Equity (access)
- Structural Equity (dynamics)
- Transgenerational Equity (impact)

Next steps

The Network now sees several opportunities as they transition to a more active phase of their work:

- Applying an equity lens in planning, engaging, and prioritizing the needs of those most affected by decisions
- Increasing community education and action around Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's calls to action and the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Researching and supporting the development of interventions in physical, social and mental health that address the stigma associated with mental health, race, gender and income
- Developing a human rights-based equity framework with guidelines around how municipalities could action it

CITY OF VANCOUVER STRATEGIC INITIATIVES TEAM

Unpacking equity

The City of Vancouver recognizes equity as both a process (the replacement of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes or fail to eliminate them) and an outcome (the condition that would be achieved if one's identity no longer predicted how one fares).

While the City had started to develop a [poverty reduction plan](#) in 2017, the process was put on pause as they realized they hadn't been taking an anti-racist and equity-centred approach.

> *The City of Vancouver is defined by its natural surroundings, strong economy and diverse population. They envision a city where those who are marginalized most are neither excluded from care, nor an opportunity for flourishing. Rather, they are systemically prioritized for it.*

Getting their house in order

Their Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee, which included experts with lived/living experience, highlighted that, in order to effectively respond to inequity, the City would need to first 'get their house in order.' This included naming and addressing systemic inequities that benefit and favour some groups and often disproportionately impact cultural communities; transform structures, policies and processes to balance power and influence; and amplify and affirm the dignity and rights of all people by centering diverse voices.

As they become more intentional about equity work, the City reflected on several questions, which included the following:

- How do decision-making, policies, and investments disproportionately benefit some groups over others?

TAMARACK INSTITUTE

- How does the City as an employer reflects the population that it serves?
- How can the City form better relationships with equity-denied groups
- What is the role of the City as a leader, employer, policymaker, regulator, grantor and representative of its residents?

The 2021 Equity Framework
Development of the City's 2021 Equity Framework was a collaborative process that involved internal groups across City departments and external partners. Relationship-centred and responsive, it helps to shift mindsets.

The framework is a bold declaration that says, "We're doing equity work, and this is our orientation to it."

It also does the following:
- Articulates the City's overarching approach to equity
- Provides the conceptual underpinnings for the City's approach to equity
- Articulates core commitments
- Maps out the relationship between this and other City Frameworks/Strategies
- Identifies broad priority areas in which work needs to be done
- Provides a set of common definitions
- Offers resources/tools that elaborate on some of the core concepts

The adoption of the Equity Framework solidifies the foundations for significant internal work that the City needs to do to have equitable outcomes for communities across Indigenous rights, racial justice, intersectionality, and systems. It is important to note that the equity framework is complementary and supporting to the Reconciliation Framework and does not replace it.

Vancouver's current equity priorities
The City has introduced various municipal priorities that demonstrate an active commitment to equity-building and a plan for moving ideas to practice.

These include the following:
- Actioning the Equity Framework including communicating key messages to all City employees
- Setting three- year organizational equity goals, associated metrics and success indicators
- Building a public equity dashboard to show departmental goals and actions and incorporate across work plans
- Assessing internal resources and opportunities for prioritization to resource this work and incorporating resourcing needs to annual budgets
- Updating the Equity Framework, assessment, and equity goals every three years

Upcoming poverty reduction plan
The City's upcoming poverty reduction plan intends to weave together the many dimensions of their equity work, including:
- the Equity Framework
- the Healthy City Strategy
- the Accessibility Strategy
- a Childcare Strategy

- community benefits agreements
- anti-racism initiatives
- the reduced fare transit pilot
- Indigenous economic well-being.

ENDPOVERTYEDMONTON

EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE) works to ensure that every Edmontonian has the opportunity to thrive. They recognize that programs alone will never solve poverty, as the systems stacked against people continue to reenforce it.

Instead, they believe that a community can eliminate poverty through a systems-focused approach that targets eight big Game Changer areas. To eliminate poverty, each of these big guiding ideas – including anti-racism – must be addressed. As they have become more intentional about their equity-building work, they have sharpened their focus on income and employment to be responsive to the strong correlation between income and racism.

> **EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE)** is a community initiative working towards prosperity for all through advancing reconciliation, the elimination of racism, livable incomes, affordable housing, accessible and affordable transit, affordable and quality childcare, and access to mental health services and addiction supports.

In becoming more intentional about anti-racism and understanding that if we don't know what systemic racism looks, we can't figure out how to solve it, EPE zoned in on race-based data. Funded by the City of Edmonton through defunded police money, they created space to think outside the box with partners, and to shift mindsets. EPE created a committee of more than 50 local systems stakeholders that are now developing policies that support the ethical collection and use of race-based data.

Other actions that demonstrate EPE's active commitment to equity-building include:
- Creating policies, practices and pathways that will foster the movement of racialized people from front line through to top level management positions in the local non-profit sector
- Creating space for and being responsive to Edmonton's Indigenous Circle, who identified the need for leadership and capacity building within the Indigenous community. Together, they are creating systems so that as opportunities are created, Indigenous people are ready and able to take on more senior roles.
- Supporting the development and implementation of supportive municipal policies, including the City of Edmonton's Social Procurement and Living Wage policies
- Supporting the City of Edmonton to require local construction companies to employ a given percentage of diverse workers into jobs (e.g., women, youth, newcomers and Indigenous) that they would not otherwise be able to access
- Working with unions to recruit Indigenous people, newcomers, women, and youth into stable, well-paid, and in-demand jobs

GUELPH & WELLINGTON TASK FORCE FOR POVERTY ELIMINATION

The Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination works collaboratively informed by diverse voices of experience to take local action and advocate for system and policy change to address the root causes of poverty. Membership includes individuals with lived expertise, social service and health sector leaders, government, community organizations and groups that work with communities most impacted by poverty.

Guelph-Wellington became more intentional about anti-oppression work in 2017, as they shifted mindsets by introducing the concept of intersectionality. This included recognizing that to effectively eliminate poverty, all aspects of someone's experience with oppression, and how systems reinforce that oppression, need to be considered. The group initially focused their efforts internally. They created space to think outside the box with new partners by launching an intersectionality committee. Ideas were integrated to practice through recommendations this committee made directly to their steering committee.

Ways that the Task Force demonstrated a commitment to anti-oppression and took an active approach included:

1. Shifting language to more inclusive, racially aware language. Consciously thinking about words and how they shape our thoughts and actions, and how they might demean and exclude others
2. Create a safe and inclusive workplace with mandatory training that reduces risks to employees.
3. Prioritizing relationship building, especially with individuals and groups most impacted, and by adopting a reciprocal – never an extractive – lens
4. Honoring where partner organizations were at and supporting them on the ground
5. Formalizing practices to remove barriers to participation like honorariums and childcare
6. Acknowledging these new priorities in their budget to ensure that their allocation of resources reflected the task force's renewed values
7. Conducting a full membership review and facilitating the shift within their governance, membership, and leadership structures to ensure that representation reflected the diverse populations with which they worked.

TAMARACK
I N S T I T U T E

Current efforts include focusing on embedding a firm anti-oppression lens as a foundation to all their work, continuing to build diverse representation to ensure that those most impacted by poverty were represented in leadership roles, and undergoing strategic planning that meaningfully engages community members and groups to support accountability and grounding for the work to come.

SASKATOON POVERTY REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

The [Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership](#) (SPRP) recognizes poverty as a complex interconnected issue. When COVID-19 hit, the organization knew that an effective pandemic response would need to actively consider the health and equity of populations already disproportionately impacted by racism and poverty. Recognizing the need to focus their efforts on the space where policy and practice interface, they brought 190 people together through the [Saskatoon Interagency Response](#), which functioned as the community's Vulnerable Sector Incident Command Structure.

> **Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership** is comprised of more than 100 partners representing more than 60 agencies across jurisdictions and the human services systems. They apply a collective impact model, a constellation governance structure, and are backboned by a local community agency.

Addressing critical gaps

While all ideas from SPRP's [12 Bold Ideas to Eliminate Poverty](#) plan remained relevant throughout the pandemic, critical gaps emerged, particularly around the following areas:

- Housing (e.g., systems discharging people into homelessness)
- Public washrooms (e.g., vulnerable community members went more than 100 days mid-pandemic without access)
- The digital divide (e.g., access to technology including devices and internet)
- Provincial investment (e.g., the need for the provincial government to invest in the local-level response).

SPRP updated their plan to explicitly name these priorities.

Saskatoon's Anti-Racism Network

The Partnership decided that they needed to be even more bold about the way they talked about the interface between poverty and the legacies and realities of racism. Creating space to think outside the box, they collaborated with Saskatoon's [Anti-Racism Network](#) (ARN), a small group of folks incredibly committed to embedding anti-racist and anti-oppressive education into systems. Together, SPRP and the ARN explored how racism was rooted in each of the Bold Ideas. They recognized that, while anti-poverty efforts usually consider programmatic solutions, what is really needed is a fundamental shift in policy.

Based in a firm belief that poverty is created because of a lack of, or inappropriate, policies that are designed purposely to exclude people, they shifted their thinking from filling gaps to recognizing that service gaps shouldn't exist in the first place. They also explored how new policies could be rooted in equity and inclusion.

Questions for reflection
Questions that SPRP and ARN reflected on included the following:
- How do we make brave and bold decisions to stop doing the same things over and over?
- How do we disrupt and dismantle systems?
- How can policies be rewritten to ensure the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action – specifically Call to Action #47 (see call-out box)?
- How can colonial policymakers design and implement effective policies when the realities and legacies of failed Treaties, The Indian Act and all associated structures exist?

Next steps

Recognizing that equity- and inclusion-building requires all partners to understand privilege, power and constructs of race, SPRP will continue to shift mindsets by implementing mandatory training for all partners, and by gaining commitment from each partner that they will train their own agencies (including staff, decision makers, funders, boards of directors, and volunteers). Next steps include adding youth coordinators and an Elder's advisory committee, enhancing training modules and creating policy review toolkits and a targeted media campaign.

SPRP and APN plan to conduct a full review of the 12 Bold Ideas and associated policy recommendations from an anti-racist and equity-building lens. SPRP will then take the following actions:

- Reframe all of its work with anti-racist and anti-oppressive language

- Integrate Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) and values-based (including equity, wellness, understanding, connection, sustainability and recovery) frameworks

- Continue to explore and action anti-poverty and equity-building conversations from a human rights approach.

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES CALGARY

In addressing what we can do to fix poverty, Vibrant Communities Calgary incorporates a Blackfoot worldview, which includes having empathy and compassion, building mutual respect, learning from lived/living experiences, and providing opportunities to help people become independent and resilient.

> **Vibrant Communities Calgary**'s vision is a community where there is enough for all. They create opportunities to align and leverage the work of hundreds of organizations and thousands of Calgarians to reduce poverty in their city.

Racialized people are overrepresented in poverty – particularly deep poverty – and are less likely to be employed and to be accessing benefits like the Canada Child Benefit[1]. They are also more likely to have poorer health outcomes and lack community belonging.

VCC recognizes the importance of 'walking the talk,' and that it is just as important for us to exemplify what we expect others to do. Anti-poverty initiatives cannot get external credibility if we are not doing

---
[1] Poverty Snapshot in Calgary

the internal work ourselves.

Some questions that they recommend that anti-poverty initiatives reflect on include:

- Does the diversity of your board and staff reflect the diversity of the populations you serve?
- Do you have succession plans in place to ensure that racialized leaders and those with lived/living experience have clear pathways to leadership roles?
- Are you decolonizing your HR and other organizational policies (e.g. do you provide flexibility in observed holidays)?
- Are you decolonizing your meetings (e.g. do you still use an agenda and robust rules of order)?
- Are you strategically spending your funds (e.g. in a way that contributes to the solution by putting money into the hands of black and Indigenous-owned organizations?)
- How you decide what opportunities to speak at and participate in (e.g. are you able to say no to those which lack diversity and do you recommend racialized and leaders with lived/lived experience to speak in your place)?
- For events, do you have an Indigenous advisory committee, are you intentional about recruiting racialized speakers, and are you paying them adequately for their expertise?
- To what extent are you moving beyond land acknowledgements in Indigenous engagement (e.g. how many elders are you working with, are you paying them adequately, and how much of your budget is allocated to your Indigenous strategy)?

Ways that VCC shifts mindsets and creates space to think outside the box with new partners include:

- Using media and communications to create opportunities for conversation, such as their Let's Talk Poverty podcast series that they use as a platform to profile diverse leaders

Next steps include assessing the strengths and gaps of Calgary's Enough for All strategy from a GBA+ lens, developing principles of equity and diversity, and using these to create an EDI framework that can guide future strategy, planning, activities, implementation, and reporting. To improve coordinated municipal and provincial measurement and response, they also plan to work with the City of Calgary and the Government of Alberta on how its many municipal EDI strategies can connect, and how Enough for All can fit in and contribute.

WELLBEING WATERLOO REGION

Waterloo Region's equity-focused work began in 2018, with a focus on connecting community across sectors, including by listening and creating spaces. They actively challenge systems of oppression, and work toward equity, to achieve equitable outcomes and to ensure that everyone has what they need to

succeed. The collaborative works in a way that puts humanity before the work, and gives people "a push, but with a hug," in order to challenge ways of thinking that are either not working or are working for them and not for others.
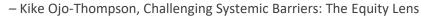
In 2019, they became more intentional about their equity work by bringing together a Systems Change Champions Table that was tasked to eliminate barriers to well-being. This table ties into the region's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, and addresses power imbalances, silos, unresponsive systems, and unfair accountability. In the

> **Wellbeing Waterloo Region** is a place-based community collaborative aimed at strengthening the social fabric of the region with a focus on building connections and relationships. Their vision is a community where everybody thrives and nobody is left behind.

same year, they launched and made publicly available a three-part challenging systemic barriers video series (part 1, part 2, part 3) with Kike Ojo Thompson, inclusive of a discussion and user guide.

> *Reflecting on the powerful unexamined ideas that form our worldview, and the bias they instill, can block or unlock the full potential of our neighbourhoods and community members.*
> – Kike Ojo-Thompson, Challenging Systemic Barriers: The Equity Lens

Ways that the collaborative has shifted mindsets and taken an active approach to equity includes having run cross sectoral trainings on issues such as White Supremacy and runs 30-day equity challenges. They resource, hold space for, and support the first region-wide First Nations advisory circle – an idea that came out of community consultations – and include Journey to Reconciliation pieces in each of their newsletters to keep community consciousness around equity front and centre.

Plans for next steps include continuing their collaborative Theory of Change journey in a way that mitigates power imbalances and updating the collaborative's stipend and honorarium framework to ensure that it serves its function to compensate folks with lived/living expertise of health inequities equitably and meaningfully. They are looking to formalize their commitments to anti-oppression, and are starting to think about how to re-conceptualize governance (e.g. through collaborative agenda setting, or by scrapping agendas altogether to allow the focus of meetings to move to what's coming up). Last, they are interested in exploring municipal Human Resource and financial opportunities that support equal or equitable compensation.

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION COUNCIL

In 2015, WRPC developed a framework for action that included 10 strongly connected aspirations. In recent years, their work has become focused on the aspiration of Income as a leverage point for change

and has led to a deep dive on their TRC 92: Youth Employment Lab initiative[2].

Based on feedback from the WRPC and the broader community, in 2021, the Council became more intentional about equity work by launching a new model. Their new social innovation lab was designed to intentionally center Indigenous youth voices. It draws heavily on the wisdom, knowledge, and experience of the community that is most directly impacted – in this case, local Indigenous partners. It builds on collective impact and systems change but moves to a more action-oriented approach that requires both a different way of working and a different way of showing up.

WPRC's model 'flips the script,' as instead of trying to get youth to fit into existing companies and corporate standards, their efforts focus on making systems change within the companies themselves. It creates space to think outside the box and shifts mindsets by leveraging the Council's unique position of being able to speak the language of, and build relationships across the government, private, and non-profit sectors.

WPRC's guiding strategies include workplace transformation and transitions to employment. Their 'build-measure-learn' process involves:

- Hearing from youth themselves about barriers to employment
- Prototyping solutions with a company who can test them out
- Once they are happy that a solution is sustainable, scaling it out to other companies

Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council is an initiative of United Way that brings together multi-sector leaders to work collaboratively at addressing the underlying causes of poverty. Their approach is based on the belief that greater impact is possible when we work across conventional boundaries, connecting and aligning our efforts and resources to transform the conditions that lead to poverty.

Social Innovation Frameworks

Social innovation frameworks involve defining a problem and mapping the system to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics that hold a challenge in place. They get people from different backgrounds and sectors into one room to co-create and test solutions and to move to action. Key benefits include that these frameworks:

- Create space for co-creation with the people most impacted by the challenge being addressed;
- Emphasize the power of shifting power dynamics;
- Allows an initiative to be very responsive to existing and arising challenges in a community; and,
- Connects individual efforts with collective engagement and action.

Actions that the WPRC undertakes that demonstrate an active approach to equity-building include:

- Ensuring culturally safe workspaces for Indigenous youth
- Finding solutions and offering training that support youth transitions from pre-employment to

---

[2] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #92 calls on the corporate sector's role in reconciliation.

employment and financial stability

- Working with the private sector to education companies around TRC 92 and to make changes within their workplace policies
- Partnering with more than 30 corporations to teach about TRC and how to incorporate DEI and indigenous engagement to workplaces from long-term perspective
- Convening an Employer Consortium of companies where solutions can be scaled to

VILLE DE MONTRÉAL SERVICE DE LA DIVERSITÉ ET DE L'INCLUSION SOCIALE

In 2018, the City of Montreal created space to think outside the box with new partners by holding a large public consultation on racism and discrimination where 800 people participated. The follow up report, released in 2020, led the City to become more intentional about their equity-building work. They formally recognized systemic racism and discrimination, which moved it from a departmental to a city-wide priority, which including top level direction and buy-in.

> **Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)**
>
> The GBA+ approach supports us to understand the challenges that diverse people and populations experience.
>
> - It is a process, a tool and method for analysis and action
> - It aims to fight against all existing discriminations
> - It takes into account rights and specific realities of people that face multiple discriminations

> **The City of Montréal's Service for Diversity and Inclusion** is composed of four divisions engaged in making Montreal a city accessible for everyone. From poverty reduction, to fighting against discrimination and homelessness, as well as urban security and newcomer integration, the SDIS is working towards greater inclusion and diversity in the City.

The report included 38 recommendations that have helped to advance the City's work in Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) and intersectionality. A key recommendation was that the City of Montreal adopt an action plan (with targets, a budget, progress indicators, and a timeline) for the implementation of GBA+ across all action plans, policies, programs, projects and budgets. Many of the GBA+ tools used by the City of Montreal uses were drawn from the Federal Government and applied to their local context.

> *GBA+ is a tool for governance, a mainstreamed approach, an engagement for inclusion, a lever to anticipate, understand, analyse, understand, deconstruct and transform discriminatory practices that are profoundly entrenched and systemic in Montreal.*
>
> – OCPM, 2020, p. 49

The City recognized that to implement these recommendations across departments, they would need to start internally. They have so far trained more than 1000 people from across departments,

TAMARACK INSTITUTE

including professionals, managers and elected officials, thus shifting mindsets and providing them with the tools they need to take action. They have also grown to have 145 peer educators that now accompany a wide range of City projects (e.g. from infrastructure through social development).

In 2021, the City created an office with a Commissioner that works on systemic racism. This office developed the 2021-2021 Solidarity, Equity and Inclusion action plan, for which GBA+ is applied as a guiding principle. To help move this plan to practice, the Department of Diversity and Social Inclusion is taking the lead on implementing 30 of its 70 actions.

Actions from the City of Montreal that demonstrate their committed and active approach include:

- Collecting intersectional data, including a City-wide survey on inclusion of immigrants
- Community funding for projects aimed at fighting racism, discrimination, and poverty, supporting children and youth, and preventing urban violence
- Implementing GBA+ in five City departments, including taking an intersectional approach, and coaching staff to ensure they are comfortable using associated tools and approaches
- Deploying a mobile social intervention and mediation team that provides a rapid response to conflict, distress, or cohabitation situations
- Running capacity building workshops on anti-racism, discrimination, and intersectional approaches for organizations
- Hosting a well-attended monthly Community of Practice where people from across Montreal discuss what's working, challenges, and lessons learned

The City of Montreal's lessons learned for creating winning conditions include that:
- Institutional willingness and adequate and stable human and financial resources are key;
- Equity-building is a long-term progress that requires coaching ad capacity along the way; and,
- Evaluating, systematizing, and sharing results supports the work to get entrenched City-wide

Montreal's future plans include developing a lexicon to define equity-related terms and how they interrelate, as well as working towards a human rights-based approach to equity.

TOP TAKEAWAYS

CEP member communities tackle anti-racism by bringing together system stakeholders, community voices and those with lived experience. Diverse representation highlights intersectionality - how systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other forms of discrimination "intersect" to create unique dynamics and effects. Understanding these effects is key to dismantling systemic racism and discrimination.

E TAMARACK
I N S T I T U T E

Anti-poverty initiatives cannot get external credibility if they are not doing the internal work first. Organizations, governments, and non-profits must formally recognize racism and adopt action plans that include targets, budgets, progress indicators and timelines. Board members, staff, leadership, and volunteers should receive mandatory training and decolonize HR policies and represent the populations served.

Adopting an Equity Framework grounds anti-poverty work and provides an internal and external compass. The framework should be relationship-centred, responsive, and representative of those with lived or living experience. A framework allows organizations to hold space for bold ideas to come forward in areas where work needs to happen.

Equity building is long-term progress; it requires coaching, training, and commitment. Making brave decisions to dismantle systems requires budget resources, centring racialized individuals' voices, and evaluation. It recognizes that while programmatic efforts are well-meaning, significant policy shifts are necessary.

Five quick action items to implement:
- Targeted media campaigns to create opportunities for learning and conversation
- Ensure organizations are as diverse as the population they serve
- Reframe work with anti-racist and anti-oppressive language
- Provide training and capacity-building opportunities for staff, board, and volunteers
- Support organizations aimed at fighting racism, discrimination, and poverty

READ MORE

- Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District: Alberni Clayoquot Health Network
- Waterloo: Wellbeing Waterloo Region
- Vancouver: City of Vancouver Strategic Initiatives Team
- Ville de Montréal: Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale

Winnipeg: Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council - Given your vast experience with Winnipeg's TRC92 and related work,
- Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership
- Edmonton - Given your vast experience working to eliminate racism as a top priority and EPE game changer, we would love for you to be a part of this round robin session to share about your approach as well as hearing from others.

ETAMARACK
I N S T I T U T E