



The Diversity and Inclusion Report and Plan for the Town of Stratford

June 2008 - June 2009

Part I - Background and Executive Summary

1. Authors

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee represents a variety of nationalities of residents of the Town of Stratford - residents with a health care background, members of the business community, and families who have family members with intellectual disabilities.

Although diverse in structure this group had one goal, and that was to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Plan for the Town of Stratford that would allow ALL who wished to reside in Stratford to do so in an inclusive community. This plan will show that, when implemented, the goal of this committee will be met.

2. Members of the Committee

The members of the Stratford Diversity and Inclusion Committee are:

- C Mary Hughes - chair of the committee, registered nurse, resident
- C Sarath Chandrasekere - resident
- C Vahid Ghomoshchi - town staff, resident
- C Rachelle Hughes - occupational therapist, resident
- C Carlos Lourenso - resident
- C Judy MacDonald - family member with intellectual disabilities, resident
- C Sandy McMillan - town councillor, resident
- C Isabel Ong - Filipino origin, resident
- C Mike Rogers - business community (CGI)
- C Thilak Tennekone - provincial diversity councilor, resident

The Committee would like to acknowledge the work of Mary McAskill with this committee.

The Committee would also like to acknowledge the input of the Focus Group in reviewing and adding to the final Diversity and Inclusion Plan. Members of the Focus group were:

- C Marcia Carroll, PEI Council of People with Disabilities
- C Shirley Cleveland, Mayflower Seniors Group
- C Darren Coady, Stratford RCMP
- C Kathy Doucette, K&K Quality Care Ltd
- C Lisa Duffy, The PEI Association of Newcomers
- C Lin Glenister, Mayflower Senior Club
- C Joey Jeffery, PEI Association for Newcomers
- C Margaret Murphy, Mayflower Senior Club

3. Executive Summary

In June of 2007, Stratford Town Council passed a resolution to join the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sponsored Coalition of Canadian Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination.

In this agreement the Town agreed to address three areas of municipal responsibility:

- C The municipality as a guardian of the public interest
- C The municipality as an organization in the fulfilment of human rights
- C The municipality as a community sharing responsibility for respecting and promoting human rights and diversity

In March of 2008, the Town of Stratford became a signatory to the UNESCO Agreement. By signing this agreement, the Town of Stratford was agreeing that Stratford would address the above three pillars of municipal responsibility.

To do this, a Diversity and Inclusion Plan was needed. The Stratford Economic Development Committee mandated a sub-committee to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Plan for the Town. A terms of reference was developed and a member of the Economic Development Committee, Mary Hughes, was appointed to Chair the Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee.

The chair of the committee and the chief administrative officer developed a list of people who would represent all that diversity and inclusion included. People from various nationalities, businesses, health care, seniors, representative for people with cognitive impairments, as well as the Town of Stratford were selected to be members of this committee. Youth were asked to be part of this committee as well, but due to busy schedules were not able to attend.

The mandate of this committee was to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Plan for the Town of Stratford, and the time frame would be no more than one year. After ten committee meetings the major recommendations from the plan are as follows:

- C that the Town approve one employee who will be tasked with managing diversity and inclusion issues
- C that a permanent committee be struck to implement the plan and to assist with promotion, education, and advocacy for diversity and inclusion within the Town of Stratford

4. Methodology

During the ten meetings that the Diversity and Inclusion Committee held, we had speakers inform us on diversity and inclusion, and the effects of racism. We reviewed plans from other communities, developed a “Definition of Terms” then finally brain stormed to begin the first draft of the plan.

At our first meeting, Mary Claire Arsenault, Canadian Heritage and Muticultural Funding, presented to us on her role and available funding for groups doing diversity and inclusion work. She included an Application Guidelines for Funding (Appendix I).

We also had Joey Jeffery from the PEI Association for Newcomers attend a meeting and inform us on the work they were doing. Literature that was reviewed included:

- C Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination - Coalition Commission for UNESCO

- C Munciple and Local management of Diversity, Quebec Metropole Centre
- C Peel's Community Immigration Strategy
- C Innisfail Alberta, Strategy
- C City of Gatineau in the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Diversity
- C Together Policy on Diversity from the Ville de Gatineau
- C Pathways to Change - Merrill Cooper
- C Notes from Workplace Diversity and Inclusiveness Form; Michael Bloom, Dec 3 & 4, 2007

Our "Definition of Terms" (Appendix II) became the standard that we used when developing the "Work Plan." We then ensured that they met human rights definitions as well. See (Appendix II) for list.

The Council and staff of the Town of Stratford had already begun some initiatives on diversity and inclusion in the following departments: administration, utility, public works, recreation and planning. These initiatives were reviewed. It was obvious from these initiatives that a strong plan would extend this work and assist with implementation and evaluation of a diversity and inclusion activities.

Following a session of brain storming a draft plan was conceptualized. Goals, objectives, and process, as well as modes of action were developed. Four meetings were spent refining the actions to ensure that they met the goals and objectives.

A Focus Group was held and suggestions this group put forth were added to the plan. They cautioned the committee regarding working alone and advised us to partner with other organizations to assist in carrying out the plan. Evaluation must be carried out on a regular basis to determine if the plan is working, if changes are needed, or if items need to be added, deleted or changed.

In addition, the Focus Group noted issues that although are not part of the plan needs attention.

- C the current transit system is NOT barrier free as proposed in their contract and as signs on the buses indicate
- C if private group homes open to provide care for intellectually challenged people what protection is there within Town By-Laws to protect against discrimination for the home owner? How will the human rights of the people being care for be protected when it comes to standards of care?

Part II - Diversity and Inclusion Workplan

5. Workplan Outline

The Committee first developed the overall goals, objectives, process and modes of action as follows:

a. Goals

The overall goals of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan are to:

- i. create a sustainable environment for all Stratford residents which meets their social, cultural and economic needs, allowing for self-determination, equal rights, opportunities, security and justice;
- ii. protect human rights, security and justice by removing any kind of distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference which may affect the recognition, equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized in international law; and
- iii. foster social responsibility, engagement and public participation, to eliminate the manifestation of discrimination and racism and to promote inclusion.

b. Objectives

Those who work and live in the Town of Stratford will celebrate the value of inclusion and solidarity, diversity and mutual respect by:

- i. creating a diversified inclusive community in which every Stratford resident can participate effectively in all social, cultural, political and economic activities;
- ii. providing opportunities for all residents to participate in the decision making processes of the Town;
- iii. providing equal opportunities for all residents to access information, facilities and services for positive economic, social and cultural contributions to the Town's future; and
- iv. celebrating the value of solidarity, consensus, diversity and mutual respect.

c. Process

The following steps are required to achieve the overall goals and objectives of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan:

- i. *Understanding and Awareness* - Providing clear understandable definitions and explanations relating to discrimination, exclusion and racism.
- ii. *Identification* - Identifying different types of discrimination and racism within our community.
- iii. *Implementation* - Implementing a plan to act on removing any kind of discrimination, exclusion or racism in the community.

d. Modes of Action

The following modes of action were identified to implement the Diversity and Inclusion Plan:

- i. *Communication*
Communicating and Information disseminated through:
 - (1) audio-visual media.

- (2) printed media “Town News,” brochures and notice boards.
- ii. *Education / Capacity Building*
 - (1) Developing special plans and programs to educate residents, businesses and other stakeholders on human rights, diversity, racism and inclusion.
 - (2) Hosting social events to provide information on diversity, inclusion and racism.
- iii. *Facilitation*

Facilitates access to services, skills, social and cultural events and information for all residents.
- iv. *Collaboration / Participation*

Promoting and encouraging meaningful participation in all Town plans and activities.

The Committee then developed a plan (goals, strategies and actions) for each of the three process steps which form the workplan items in sections 6, 7 and 8 below (also summarized in tabular form in Appendix III):

6. Understanding and Awareness Plan

a. Goal

To have an understanding and awareness of discrimination, racism and exclusion.

b. Strategies

- i. Communicate with and educate residents about the values of community inclusion.
- ii. Make residents aware of their responsibilities to protect human rights and remove discrimination and racism.
- iii. Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and inclusion.

c. Actions

- i. Use awareness materials and campaigns to inform residents about their rights and obligations to protect our community against discrimination, exclusion and racism.
- ii. Establish a sustainable connection with leaders of organizations who advocate, assist and protect those with special needs and challenges.
- iii. Provide transparent, easy to understand Town policies for all.
- iv. Seek media cooperation for the promotion of the underlying key principles of human rights diversity and inclusion.
- v. Develop a Town “Champion of Human Rights” to work in conjunction with places of worship, sports organization, educational institutions and businesses.
- vi. Partner with local education institutions to increase awareness of diversity and inclusion.
- vii. Establish a resource in the town centre to support individuals who experience discrimination, racism, and exclusion.
- viii. Contribute expertise and skills and participate in discussion groups and conferences at the regional, provincial, and federal levels regarding diversity and inclusion.
- ix. Incorporate celebrating diversity into Town special events
- x. Post a written directory of resources on discrimination, racism, and diversity and inclusion and publish it on the web site.
- xi. Develop innovative promotions to celebrate cultural diversity and inclusion.
- xii. Promote the use of various languages on official Town communication, as well as meeting the needs of the visual and hearing impaired.
- xiii. Provide information workshops on diversity and inclusion.

7. Identification Plan

a. Goal

To identify the different types of discrimination and racism

b. Strategies

- i. To recognize and identify special needs of all residents including, but not limited to, areas of planning and development, housing, public transit, recreation, public works and utilities.
- ii. To identify all incidents of racism, discrimination and exclusion in the community, as well as municipal actions that can be taken.
- iii. To take action to address discrimination and racism.

c. Actions

- i. Collect and evaluate data and information on discrimination, racism and exclusion within the Town of Stratford.
- ii. Review the Town's Official Plan, Policies and Bylaws and evaluate their conformity to provincial Human Rights Acts and Regulations.
- iii. Review and assess the Town's recreational services and programs to ensure they conform with human rights, as well as diversity and inclusion regulations.
- iv. Provide a section in the town in order to monitor and identify any types of racism and discrimination in the Town.
- v. Establish a resource in the Town to monitor and identify any type of diversity, racism or exclusion.
- vi. Work with provincial government and local law enforcement agencies to develop strategies to address discrimination and racism, and to protect human rights, diversity and inclusion.
- vii. Conduct an accessibility review of Town facilities, services and procedures to address existing barriers and gaps.
- viii. Review the Town's hiring practices to ensure that minorities or the disabled are not excluded.

8. Implementation Plan

a. Goal

To Implement programs in the Town of Stratford that recognize all people as equal.

b. Strategies

- i. To ensure that all residents, including individuals with physical or mental challenges are treated respectfully and have access to all facilities and services in the Town.
- ii. To provide support for cultural projects, programs, events and organizations so that the cultural diversity and the heritage of the community can be preserved and diffused in a fair and representative way.

c. Actions

- i. Organize community forums in collaboration with existing organizations to offer citizens an opportunity to discuss issues on discrimination and racism and exclusion.
- ii. Take steps to facilitate and increase the representation of diverse communities on municipal boards, commissions and committees.
- iii. Establish a partnership with the PEI Chamber of Commerce to facilitate diversified entrepreneurs and investors to the Town.
- iv. Establish a partnership agreement with the PEI Association of Newcomers for developing an action plan for welcoming and integrating immigrants and building inter-cultural bridges.
- v. Update the Town's employment policy to *ensure that minorities or the disabled are not excluded* from participation in the work environment.
- vi. Recommend a housing policy ensuring all people with different physical, social, economic and cultural characteristics can obtain suitable housing in the Town of Stratford that meets their needs.
- vii. Hold welcome sessions for new residents.
- viii. Provide designated cultural space for facilitating dialogue and building inter-cultural relations.
- ix. Public places, parks, sports centres and recreational areas will be developed on Barrier Free design.
- x. Encourage and facilitate diverse volunteers for volunteering.
- xi. Support the planning of theme-based events aimed at inter-cultural bridge

building, and fostering partnerships with government programs.

- xii. Develop an “Accessibility Policy” that prevents barriers to the Town’s services and facilities, including renovations and purchasing equipment in partnership with the PEI Council for People with Disabilities.
- xiii. Announce and celebrate dates of various cultures’ significance.
- xiv. *Appoint a Committee to implement the plan and to assist with promotion, education, and advocacy for diversity and inclusion within the Town of Stratford.*

Part III - Conclusion

9. Conclusion

Members of the Focus Group have told us that this Diversity and Inclusion Plan is a good one. That it is comprehensive and concrete. As one member said “this will make Stratford a leader on PEI.”

While working on the plan, we were able to put an extra page in the January “Town Talk” welcoming people in seven different languages. We have also been able to have the new web page for the Town of Stratford translated into different languages.

This Diversity and Inclusion Plan completes the work of the committee and we are pleased to present it to the Economic Development Committee.

Appendix I

Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report Funding Application Guidelines

Appendix II

Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report

Definition of Terms

Diversity

The use of the term diversity may encompass differences in racial or ethnic classification, age, gender, religion, philosophy, physical abilities, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, intelligence, mental health, physical health, genetic attributes, behavior, attractiveness, place of origin, cultural values or political view, as well as other identifying features.

Inclusion

The act of including or the state of being included.

Culture

A set of shared values, beliefs, traditions, and attitudes which shape the way people think and act.

Aboriginal People

The original inhabitants of North America. Other terms that refer to these people are First Nation and Indigenous People.

Multiculturalism

A policy introduced by the federal government in 1971 that acknowledges that many ethnic Canadians experience unequal access to resources and opportunities. It urges more recognition of the contributions of each Canadian, the preservation of certain expressions of their ethnicity, and more equity in the treatment of all Canadians. Since 1971, there has been increasing recognition of the limitations of this concept. First, it does not explicitly acknowledge the critical role that racism plays in preventing this vision from materialization. Second, it promotes a static and limited notion of culture as fragmented and confined to ethnicity. Third, it plays insufficient attention to institutional forms of racial discrimination focusing instead on individual expressions and experiences.

Racially Visible People

A term defined by race or color only, not citizenship, place of birth, religion, language or cultural background. The term applies to people who are Black, Aboriginal, Chinese, South Asian, South East Asian, Filipino and Latin American Canadians and others. Some racially visible people prefer to identify themselves as “people of color.” Other terms usually regarded as positive identities include “Non -whites,” “minorities,” “visible minorities,” or “ethnic.”

Ethnic Minority

Individuals whose ancestry is not English or Anglo Saxon.

Immigration

To enter and settle in a country to which one is not native. Migration from one country to another.

Immigrants

Individuals who settle in a country that is not their country of birth.

Influences of Immigration

Variety of languages, religions, and customs.

Contributions made by people from other countries.

Skilled workforce, investment, and economic growth.

Richness and diversity in the community.

Visible Minority

Members of visible minority groups are people other than Aboriginal people, who are non-white in color/race regardless of place of birth. They are a diverse group. Examples of these groups include those whose ancestry is: African, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, and people of mixed origin with one parent in one of the visible minority groups.

Refugees

Individuals who left their home country or previous country of residence to escape religious or political persecutions, civil wars or natural disasters.

Ethnicity

A set of shared heritage, language, and cultural practices that define the identity of a group.

Discrimination

The unequal treatment of non-dominant groups or individuals, either by a person or a group, or by an institution which dominates identity, which, through the denial of certain rights results in inequality, subordination or deprivation of political, social, economic, and cultural rights.

Racism

A constellation of ideas that asserts the superiority or normalcy of one group over another based on biological or cultural characteristics.

Individual racism

attitudes and behaviors of individuals toward racial minorities

Systematic racism

practices and policies built into the institutional framework that prevents full participation of racial minorities

Prejudice

Pre-judging a person or group negatively, usually without adequate evidence or information.

Impairment

Any loss or abnormality of psychological, or anatomical structure or function.

Disability

Any restriction or lack (resulting from impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

Handicap

A disadvantage of a given individual resulting from an impairment or disability that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal - depending on age, sex, social and cultural factors for that individual.

Homosexual

A person whose primary physical and affectional attraction is to people of the same biological sex.

Gay

Refers to both male or female homosexual people - can refer only to men.

Lesbian

Homosexual women.

Bisexual

People who are attracted to both male or female.

Trans gender

Individuals whose behavior and tendencies diverge from the normal gender role (woman or man) commonly but not always assigned at birth, as well as the role traditionally held by society.

These definitions have been taken from a variety of papers that deal with racism, diversity, inclusion/exclusion. They have been accepted by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the Town of Stratford.

Appendix III
Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report
Workplan Tables

Understanding and Awareness	
Strategies	Actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate with and educate residents about the values of community inclusion. 2. Make residents aware of their responsibilities to protect human rights and remove discrimination and racism. 3. Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and inclusion. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use awareness materials and campaigns to inform residents about their rights and obligations to protect our community against discrimination, exclusion and racism. 2. Establish a sustainable connection with leaders of organizations that advocate, assist, and protect those with special needs and challenges. 3. Provide transparent, easy to understand town policies for all. 4. Seek media cooperation for the promotion of the underlying key principles of human rights, diversity and inclusion. 5. Develop a town “Champion of Human Rights” to work in conjunction with schools, places of worship, sports, and community schools, etc. 6. Partner with the school to increase awareness of diversity and inclusion. 7. Establish a resource in the town centre to support individuals who experience discrimination and racism, and exclusion. 8. Contribute expertise and skills and participate in discussion groups and conferences at the regional, provincial and federal levels regarding diversity and inclusion. 9. Proclaim “Stratford Days” for celebrating diversity. 10. Post a directory of resources on discrimination, racism, and diversity and inclusion and put on the town web site. 11. Develop innovative promotions to celebrate cultural diversity. 12. Promote the use of various languages on official town communication, as well as meeting the needs of the visual and hearing impaired. 13. Provide information workshops on diversity and inclusion.

Identification

Strategies	Action
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To recognize and identify special needs of all residents, including but not limited to, the areas of planning and development, housing, public transit, recreation, public works and utilities. 2. To identify all incidents of racism, discrimination and exclusion in the community, as well as municipal actions taken. 3. To take action to address discrimination and racism. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect and evaluate data and information on discrimination, racism and exclusion within the Town of Stratford. 2. Review the Town's Official Plan, Policies and Bylaws and evaluate their conformity to provincial Human Rights Acts and Regulations. 3. Review and assess the Town's recreational services and programs to ensure they conform with human rights, as well as diversity and inclusion regulations. 4. Conduct an accessibility review of Town's facilities, services and procedures to address existing barriers and gaps. 5. Provide a section in the town in order to monitor and identify any types of diversity, racism or exclusion. 6. Establish a resource in the town to monitor and identify any type of discrimination, racism or exclusion. 7. Work with provincial government and local law enforcement agencies to develop strategies to address discrimination and racism, and to protect humans rights. 8. Review the Town's hiring practices to ensure that minorities or the disabled are not excluded.

Implementation

Strategies	Action
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure that all residents including individuals with physical or mental challenges are treated respectfully and have access to all facilities and services in the town. 2. To provide support for cultural projects, programs events and organizations so that the cultural diversity and the heritage of the community can be preserved and diffused in a fair and representative way. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize community forums in collaboration with existing organizations to offer citizens an opportunity to discuss issues on discrimination, racism and exclusion. 2. Take steps to facilitate and increase the representation of diverse communities on municipal boards, commissions and committees. 3. Establish a partnership with the PEI Chamber of Commerce to facilitate diversified entrepreneurs and investors to the Town. 4. Establish a partnership agreement with the PEI Association of Newcomers for developing an action plan for welcoming and integrating immigrants and building inter-cultural bridges. 5. Update the Town’s employment policy to facilitate and encourage a diversified and inclusive work environment. 6. Recommend a housing policy that would enable all people with different physical, social, economic and cultural characteristics be able to obtain housing in the Town of Stratford that meets their needs. 7. Hold welcome sessions for new residents. 8. Provide designated cultural space for facilitating dialogue and building inter-cultural relations. 9. Build parks, sports centres and recreational areas to barrier free design and use universal signs. 10. Encourage and facilitate diversified volunteers for volunteering. 11. Support the planning of theme-based events aimed at inter-cultural bridge building and fostering partnerships with government programs. 12. Develop an “Accessibility Policy” to prevent barriers to the Town’s services and facilities, including renovations, purchasing equipment. 13. Announce and celebrate dates of various cultures’ significance.