

2016-2021

DIEA PROGRESS REPORT

Canadian Association of Science Centers

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ABOUT CASC

The Canadian Association of Science Centres (CASC) is a network of trusted organizations who represent a critical component of our science, technology, and innovation engagement landscape in Canada.

CASC is one of the largest membership-based associations of informal science learning organizations in Canada, collectively reaching more than 8 million citizens per year. We bring together more than 70 organizations committed to a thriving future through science and technology engagement.

Our members include not only science centres and science and technology museums, but also outreach and research organizations, as well as companies and nonprofit organizations that offer commercial products and services that support informal science learning environments.

MISSION We empower a national network of organizations who champion Science and Innovation by making science approachable, relevant, and accessible.

VISION Canada has a thriving science and innovation culture of engaged citizens.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canadian Association of Science Centres (CASC) is committed to breaking down barriers and strengthening Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Accessibility (DIEA) within the informal science learning and public engagement sector.

Beginning in 2016, CASC invested in professional development activities to build a foundation for future DIEA work. In the 2020–2022 Strategic Plan, CASC identified three objectives centered around DIEA:

1.2 Advancing diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility within the informal science learning sector.

1.3 Addressing Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada recommendations within the informal science learning sector.

3.2 Be a platform for inclusive approaches and innovative thinking. Include fresh, new ideas and perspectives in our annual national conference.

In each of these three objectives, CASC has made significant progress towards building internal and external capacity through professional development activities, establishment of member-based committees, incorporating new communications practices, hosting webinars, seeking multivariate diversity in conference speakers and presentations, curating resources for members, revising bylaws and member categories, and joining the Innovation, Science and Economic Development 50/30 Challenge.

While significant progress has been made, CASC recognizes that there is a long way to go to improve diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility in the informal learning and public engagement sector. In 2022, CASC will kickstart our 3 year plan to develop a DIEA strategy and start implementing and measuring progress towards this strategy with efforts toward building capacity within the staff and the board of directors, creating DIEA learning and development opportunities for members and stakeholders, and establishing policies and practices that operationalize diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility.

INTRODUCTION

CASC is committed to breaking down barriers and strengthening Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Accessibility (DIEA) within the informal science learning and public engagement sector.

In 2020 CASC embarked on a three-year strategic plan that included objectives centered around DIEA. The following year we set out to build a framework for learning, accountability, and change. We committed to reflecting, looking inwards, with a thorough organizational assessment of our policies and practices; staff and volunteers; and membership engagement strategies.

While we continue to mobilize and empower a full spectrum of ideas, perspectives, and talent we now need to develop and implement a DIEA Strategy. CASC must focus on building relationships with diverse peoples, groups, and communities. We must be deliberate in our efforts to increase diverse representation across our internal and external stakeholders – only then will we meet our operational strategic objectives centered around DIEA.

CASC operational strategic objectives centered around DIEA:

1.2 Advancing diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility within the informal science learning sector.

1.3 Addressing Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada recommendations within the informal science learning sector.

3.2 Be a platform for inclusive approaches and innovative thinking. Include fresh, new ideas and perspectives in our annual national conference.

The definitions CASC uses for the words diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility (DIEA).

Diversity: The variety of unique dimensions, qualities, characteristics and lived experiences each individual possesses.

Inclusion: Creating a culture that strives for equity and accepts, embraces, respects and values differences of a collective.

Equity: Fair treatment of everyone and ensuring all have equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of society and its benefits.

Accessibility: A measure of how simply a person can participate in an activity.

OUR JOURNEY

From 2016 through 2021 CASC actively sought opportunities to challenge our operations and offerings in the areas of DIEA.

The following section presents our efforts in addressing:

- Truth and Reconciliation
- Gender in STEM
- Combating Systemic Racism
- Inclusive and Accessible Events
- Leadership and DIEA

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Implement actions to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada recommendations by working to transform existing relationships to emphasize open dialogue, mutual understanding and respectful collaborations.

- Established a CASC member Diversity & Inclusion Committee (prioritizing Indigenous focused initiatives)
- Incorporated territory acknowledgement (website, email signatures and events)
- Sought Indigenous representation, offerings and products for the CASC Annual Conference.
- Expanded our social media network and content sharing to be inclusive of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives.
- Hosted a webinar: “Working and Collaborating with Indigenous Audiences - where do we go from here?”.
- To bring internal expertise, the CASC Manager, Member Services & Communications enrolled in 6 certificate courses (Appendix A) with Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.

GENDER IN STEM

Combat gender (identity & expression) barriers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by deepening learning and empowering collective action.

- Introduced gender inclusive language - more specifically within French writing communications.
- Encouraged the use of personal pronouns.
- Expanded our social media network and content sharing to amplify women/girls and 2SLGBTQ+ representation in STEM.
- Enlisted as a Supporter for The First International Day of LGBT+ in STEM - organized by Pride in STEM in 2018.
- Hosted member webinars:
 - Diversity in STEM: What can we learn from Wonder Woman?
 - STEMneutral: Dissecting the Science of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in STEM

COMBATING SYSTEMIC RACISM

Educate and build awareness of racism, anti-Black racism and anti-Blackness within our sector, STEM and throughout systems across society.

- Expanded our social media network to amplify and elevate Black and non-white voices within and across our sector.
- Involved Black and racialized people in CASC speaking engagements - Internal and external sector specific events.
- Released a statement of intent in our response to the universal outcry associated with the murder of George Floyd, on May 25, 2020 and the long-standing and deeply-rooted anti-Black racism and systemic inequities across Canada.
- Curated and distributed an Anti-Racism Resource List.

INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE EVENTS

Deliver an inclusive & equitable event and conference experience that reflects a diversity of perspectives and identities from across our sector and country.

- Established a Conference Diversity and Inclusion Advisor volunteer role to the Conference Planning Committee.
- Developed tools to implement best practices and cultural protocol guidelines:
 - DIEA Conference Checklist
 - Code of Conduct
 - Inclusive registration forms with accommodation requests (pronoun use, accessibility and cultural/spiritual/religious considerations)
- Reinforced the importance of multivariate diversity among CASC Annual Conference speakers and session topics.
 - Added a self-identification section within the learning session proposal application.
 - Updated our learning session selection rubric to value representation of diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
 - Ensured a strong presence of learning sessions (Appendix B) and keynotes/plenaries (Appendix C) that speak to our focus on DIEA.

LEADERSHIP AND DIEA

Increase representation of diverse talent while strengthening leadership and critical roles with development programs.

- Hosted a virtual DIEA Member Consultation in 2020, where our goals were to listen, gather feedback, and generate ideas in terms of better understanding how CASC can support our members.
- Enrolled our Manager, Member Services & Communications in a certificate course in Leadership and Inclusion, offered jointly by Centennial College and the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI).
- Revised our membership levels:
 - Added an Individual membership level
 - Extended Board nominations and voting to all membership levels (previously available to Science Centre/Museum level only)
- Ensured the opportunity for multivariate diversity among CASC Committees Members.
 - Included a self-identification section within the application
- Joined the Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada 50/30 Challenge.
 - In 2021, we left (3) vacant seats on the CASC Board of Directors, which can have a maximum of 15 Board Members to allow space for gender parity (50%) and (30%) of other equity deserving groups, while accounting for intersections across both.

- Revised the CASC Board of Directors recruitment recommendations to allow those in senior leadership roles with an overall target of at least 50% CEOs (previous recommendations were for majority CEO's).

WHAT'S NEXT?

In 2022 CASC is in a pivotal position to take a proactive approach to integrate DIEA practices into a DIEA Strategy that will guide and influence the associations day-to-day operations. We will begin the process with an internal focus and then expand into external influences in five (5) steps as follows:

- Internal Capacity Building & Resource Allocation
- Membership and Stakeholder Engagement
- Protocol, Policy and Procedure Development
- Development of our DIEA Strategy
- DIEA Strategy Implementation and Performance

STEP 1:

Internal Capacity Building and Resource Allocation

1. Survey Board, staff and volunteers

- Self-Identification and DIEA related training
- Curate a series of training/self development resources (unique to individual response).

2. Evaluate association financials and dedicate a DIEA specific budget

- Membership dues (ei. CCDI)
- Training for CASC staff and volunteers
- Accessibility standards (website and events)
- Live interpretation and translation
- Membership offerings (training, skill sharing, webinars, workshops)
- Honorarium (facilitators and presenters)

3. Benchmarking to determine strategy

- Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World (GDEIB)

STEP 2:

Membership and Stakeholder Engagement

1. Establish a DIEA Advisory Committee

- Chaired by a CASC Board Director and made up of staff members from across our membership.

2. Implement a Community of Practice (CoP)

3. Support CASC non-for profit members with implementation of the 50-30 Challenge.

4. Provide a DIEA resource section on CASC Website (exclusive to CASC members)

5. Offer opportunities for training, skill sharing, webinars and workshops (exclusive to CASC members)

STEP 3:

Protocol, Policy and Procedure Development

1. Review & revise current operational protocols, policies and procedures (through a DIEA lens)

- Membership: recruitment, retention & engagement
- Staff, Board of Directors, & Volunteers: recruitment, onboarding and management
- Partnership & Procurement: standards and requirements

STEP 4:

Development of our DIEA Strategic Plan

1. **Establish mission, vision and values**
2. **Identity 3-5 year goals (strategies, objectives, responsibilities and timelines)**
 - Ensure adequate human and financial resources
3. **Conduct external analysis**
 - Explore opportunities for DIEA External Expert Advisory Council
 - Professionals from across and outside of our network involved in DIEA initiatives.

STEP 5:

DIEA Strategy Implementation and Performance

1. Establish metrics and milestones to measure

- Membership
- Staff & Volunteer
- Partnership & Procurement

2. Benchmarking to measure progress

- Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World (GDEIB)

3. Adapt and adjust the strategy as conditions change internally and externally

FINAL THOUGHTS

CASC is committed to a future with a thriving science and innovation culture of engaged citizens that is diverse, inclusive, equitable and accessible. With the support of the CASC Board of Directors and leadership team, the expertise of the Manager, Member Services and Communication and engagement across our membership, our efforts will result in the reduction of systemic barriers of oppression within the informal science learning and public engagement sector.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The CASC board of Directors would like to thank Tina Leduc, Manager, Member Services and Communications (employed with CASC from February 2015 through to May 2022) for the crucial role she played in leading all CASC DIEA efforts and practices since its commencement in 2016 and her unwavering dedication to diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility.

We appreciate the leadership of the Executive Director, Marianne Mader and the ongoing support of both past and present CASC Board Directors, especially Tracy Calogheros, Sandra Corbeil, Carol Pauzé and Cybèle Robichaud in reinforcing DIEA efforts in CASCs strategic priorities.

We extend special gratitude to the following individuals who volunteered their time in support of CASC's DIEA efforts through numerous conversations, sharing of resources, conducting workshops, participating in committees, and being a sounding board:

- Emily Kerton for being a leader and mentor, and the Science North Outreach team, in creating and delivering respectful and collaborative science education programming to Indigenous schools and communities.

- Jefferson Darrell for advocating and working to instill organizational change centered around diversity, equity and inclusion and continued commitment to ensure significant representation of racialized, Black and other equity deserving people in STEM and the Informal Public Science Engagement Sector;
- Rike Moon for advising and helping implement best practices for inclusive events that challenge gender stereotypes, increase accessibility and promote representation and inclusion of all systematically marginalized people and groups.

CASC Staff and Board of Directors would also like to express gratitude to all past DIEA Committee Members who gave time, contributed knowledge, and shared lived and professional experience towards the progress of CASC's DIEA efforts between 2016 and 2022, particularly: Harpreet Dhanjal, Karen Lee, Samantha Matters, Trish Pattison, Stephanie Puleo, Merissa Scarlett, and Cindy Wagner.

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<https://ccdi.ca/our-story/diversity-defined/>
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Working and Collaborating with Indigenous Audiences - where do we go from here?

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Diversity, Inclusion, Equity & Accessibility: CASC Membership Consultation

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Centennial College: Leadership and Inclusion Certificate

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50 - 30 Challenge

www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/icgc.nsf/eng/07706.html#About_the_50/30
(Feb. 14 2022)

Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World

<https://centreforglobalinclusion.org/downloads/>
(Feb. 14 2022)

APPENDIX A

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. completed by Tina Leduc, CASC Manager, Member Services and Communications

- 2016: Working Effectively With Indigenous Peoples
- 2016: Creating an Indigenous Engagement Plan
- 2016: How to Negotiate with Indigenous Peoples
- 2016: Indigenous Consultation & Engagement
- 2019: Indigenous Employment: Recruitment & Retention

APPENDIX B

CASC Conference Learning Sessions (2016-2021):

- Working and Collaborating with Indigenous Audiences: Successes and Challenges of Bringing Science to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students (2016)
- Diversity: Not just for the ecosystem (2017)
- Inclusivity: Worldviews and your Science Centre (2018)
- Bridging Science & Tourism to Reach Diverse Audiences (2018)
- Accessible Exhibit Design Strategies (2018)
- Does Student Success in STEM Require Mentors? (2018)
- Strong Teams, Strong Culture (2018)
- Co-creating Exhibitions with Indigenous Communities (2018)
- Converging Waves: Science Centre to Community Hub (2019)
- Diversity Creates Waves: Making science centers and museums more inclusive and welcoming to staff, volunteers and diverse audiences (2019)
- Enriching the Experience with Accessible Design Solutions (2019)
- From Ripples to Waves: The Growing Impact of Outreach (2019)
- Decolonizing Science History (2021)
- Recipes for Digital Engagement (2021)
- Learning to Centre Girls' Engagement in Exhibit Design (2021)

APPENDIX C

CASC Conference Keynotes & Panels (2016-2021):

- Women, Science & Innovation, Sarika Cullis-Suzuki / Agnes d'Entremont / Dr. Sandy Eix / Sanaz Jahanbakhsh / Zhila Pimoradi (2016)
- The Art of Relevance, Nina Simon (2017)
- Everything is Connected: Environment, Economy, Foreign Policy, Sustainability, Human Rights and Leadership in the 21st Century, Sheila Watt-Cloutier (2017)
- Indigeneering STEAM: A Path Forward in Reconciliation Together, Deanna Burgart (2018)
- Pushing the Limits: Cultivating Resilience & Critical Thinking in an Increasingly Polarized World, Shawna Pandya (2019)
- The Power of Indigenous Inclusion and Innovation in Navigating a Future Imperfect, Kelly Lendsay (2021)

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