Event	**UNESCO AGM**
Location	**Hyatt Regency Hotel
370 King Street West, Toronto**
Date / Time	**Friday, May 3, 2013
2pm – 4:30 pm
8 am – Breakfast ,12:30 – 2 pm – lunch (optional attendance)**
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Speech length/type	**Panel discussion – 10 minutes opening remarks
Q&A to follow**
Topic	**Social Inclusion, Innovation and Transformation**
Event format	**Thematic (concurrent) session as part of 2-day AGM**
Audience	**150+ government, NGO, public policy institutes, youth
Session: 60-70 people**

Notes:

Other Panelists:

- Angie Osachoff, Regional Program Coordinator, Equitas (Moderator)
- Patrice Allard, Head of Social Diversity Division, City of Montreal
- Gerald Farthing, Deputy Minister of Education and Advanced Education and Literacy, Government of Manitoba
- Cassandre Perusse, Project Officer, Funding and Partnerships, Wapikoni Mobile

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Hello.

- Past couple of weeks thinking a lot about the role of communities in creating a culture of human rights and inclusion…and what happens when we don't.

- Boston bombing reference: "I don't understand Americans"

- Story: "I never talked to a white girl."

If we are going to make sure these types of things don't happen – we are going to have to "do some sociology"...

What is inclusion?

- We used to talk about equality, equal opportunity - "fair" treatment and "tolerance"

- But globalization and the growing diversity of communities means we need to push the boundaries of what human rights are...

- Can't just talk about meeting quotas and making sure the numbers are there (though that is part of it)

- We have to move towards building a sense of belonging for everyone

- When it comes to newcomers or groups that have been historically disadvantaged or left out. It means...

- Accepting, accommodating and appreciating unique differences – looking at talents, skills, abilities and differences – and seeing their value.

- And making sure their voices and perspectives are included both at the leadership table and in all areas of society

- By doing so we open ourselves up to new ideas and perspectives, new ways of doing things.

An inclusion lens is an opportunity to innovate.

- But to capitalize on this opportunity we need to build a society and organizations that are dynamic and versatile.

- That isn't how our public and private institutions have historically been set up.

- To make this culture shift have to begin taking a good hard look at our prejudices and break down the status quo.

- And ask ourselves some tough questions, have some uncomfortable conversations.

- The kind of change and social transformation we're talking about when we make inclusion happen can sometimes meet resistance. Change is hard.

- Often, it can bring about conflict at first.

- But with the right processes and framework in place (and a commitment to making change) we can resolve that conflict...

- Competing rights - Barber shop story.

The *Human Rights Code* and the *Charter* are a good place to start.

- Human rights systems across the country are set up to enforce these laws.

- And we are also here to proactively work with communities and organizations to remove barriers to inclusion.

When we develop human rights policy we reach out to communities and listen to their stories...

- Mental health consultation

- Right now we're updating our policy on Creed (talk about process)

Many local organization work with people on the ground to build and nurture a sense of belonging...

- Community support agencies work with groups that have been historically disadvantaged to make sure kids stay in school, that people with disabilities can access housing...

- Settlement agencies work with newcomers to help them find work, access services and integrate into Canadian society.

- Other organizations, like Maytree, run programs to make sure diversity is reflected in leadership – in communities, businesses, and in politics.

- Others work with newcomers and refugees to help them process their experiences and share them with the broader community.

- Example: Roma Community Centre runs arts programs that draw out the culture and experiences of Roma people settling in Toronto.

- Vietnamese boat people (mid-1970's to mid-1980's)

[link to personal history/experiences in municipal politics]

Municipalities and local communities are the closest to people: they develop and fund programs, are involved in policing and public health, run community centres and enforce local bylaws.

- They are also a major political force and have the capacity to influence public opinion and bring diverse interests together.

- That's why we took a leadership role in the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination when the International Coalition of Cities Against Racism was formed by UNESCO in 2004.

- As part of coalition, CCMARD works as part of a larger network of cities interested in sharing experiences and improving policies against racism, discrimination, exclusion, intolerance...

- and to protect and promote human rights.

- OHRC worked with other local, provincial and national partners to build the network (now has 51 municipalities in nine provinces across Canada).

- Network shares best practices and resources, helps to strengthen partnerships with local organizations, business and people...

- And supports ongoing anti-discrimination initiatives by outlining how to make a Plan of Action – and how to measure success.

- 10 common commitments:

  o Vigilance against systemic and individual racism

  o Monitor racism and discrimination and local actions against these

  o Raise public awareness and support people who experience racism and discrimination

  o Support policing services to combat racism

  o Provide equal opportunities as an employer

  o Support equity in the labour market

  o Promote diversity and equal opportunity in housing

  o Involve citizens and give them a voice in anti-racism and decision-making

  o Support diversity and equal opportunity in education and learning

- o Promote diversity and equal opportunity in education and learning

- This work involves looking at root causes and making change at the systemic level (internal policies and processes).

- And making sure that a human rights lens is applied at all levels of local government – including at the policy level.

- Idea is to remove barriers to equality and create a cultural shift.

- Involves organizational transformation: looking at how things have always been done and coming up with creative solutions (innovation).

- OHRC does ongoing work with municipalities and other organizations and services provided by local governments.

- Examples:

  - o Transit Accessibility

  - o Police Services: racial profiling, human rights organizational change

  - o Zero tolerance school policies/Inclusive Education Act

  - o Zoning by-laws – Lynwood Charlton

Real, transformational change doesn't happen overnight.

- All the panelists can testify to the years of hard work they, their agencies and their colleagues have put in.

- We've seen a huge cultural shift since human rights protections first came into effect in Canada 50 years ago.

- Society much more accepting and open to difference than it was.

- Still have a lot of work to do.

- Many people still not able to find a decent, affordable place to live, children with disabilities and racialized children aren't being included equally in schools, Gay, lesbian and trans people continue to be discriminated against, and newcomers to Canada aren't getting the welcome and jobs they are entitled to.

- We all know what not being included feels like...it hurts.

- It tears at communities.

Building inclusivity requires collaboration, partnership and an openness to new perspectives and ways of doing things.

- Doesn't mean just being "fair", it means really opening ourselves up to building environments where we are acknowledging difference and building a sense of belonging.

- So that people can bring their whole selves to their communities and fully contribute in all areas of society.