# Diversity
# and Inclusion
## Strategy

Réseau d'analyse
stratégique

Network for
Strategic Analysis

Strategy developed by Isabelle Caron, Ph.D.

## Isabelle Caron

Assistant Professor, School of Public Administration,
Dalhousie University

Isabelle Caron is Assistant Professor at the School of Public Administration in Dalhousie University. She is a former senior policy analyst with the Canadian Government. Her research interests include diversity and inclusion, management in public organizations, comparative public administrations, administrative reforms, accountability mechanisms, control in public organizations. She has published in academic journals *Administration publique du Canada, Journal of Agricultural Studies, Food Protection Trends*. She is the author of many reviewed book chapters : « Entre ouverture et transparence: situer le cas canadien » in Savard, Jean-François & Jean-Patrick Villeneuve (eds.), *L'État et le citoyen. Analyses et expériences au Canada et en Suisse* (Éditions universitaires européennes, 2016); « En quête d'une plus grande transparence de l'État : une analyse du plan d'action du Canada pour un gouvernement ouvert » in Fiset, J. & Fallon, C. (eds). *Crise de la démocratie et nouveau management public – Discours, pratiques et instruments* (L'Harmattan, 2016).

# Context

Rooted in the Black American feminist movement of the 1980s and 1990s, the notion of intersectionality refers to the intersection of an individual's various social, physiological, and psychological identities that shape their perception of the environment and their life experience. In a desire to achieve parity and create a more inclusive society, the Canadian federal government committed in 1995, as part of the ratification of the Beijing Platform for Action, to implement a tool to advance gender equality in Canada (Canada, 2018a). In the early 2000s, the Canadian government launched the Gender-Based Analysis (GBA), a tool for taking gender differences into account in program and policy development and eliminating discrimination against women. In 2011, Status of Women Canada modernized its approach by introducing Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to consider other identity factors along with gender (Canada, 2018b). Since 2016, memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board of Canada submissions have been required to include a GBA+. In addition, Status of Women Canada has developed an online course available to all to teach the basics of the tool and encourage public servants to apply GBA+ to their work. Furthermore, the Strategic Analysis Network is committed to using a similar approach to achieve its goals.

# Implementation of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

## Gender-based analysis plus (GBA+)

The GBA+ "is used to assess the potential impact of policies, programs, or initiatives on various sets of people-women, men, and others" (Canada, 2018). The tool proposes a series of questions to ask before undertaking any research or activity to challenge the researcher or analyst's beliefs or biases. GBA+ includes seven distinct stages: identifying main issues, challenging assumptions, gathering facts through research and consultation, formulating options and recommendations, monitoring and evaluating, and communicating (Canada, 2018).

Some researchers have noted the limits of GBA+, including that the tool is primarily based on analysis according to gender and sex before it includes other identity factors. In addition, the various factors are approached as independent categories that are added to each other, which goes against the very essence of an intersectional approach (Hankivsky & Mussell, 2018; Maillé, 2018). Some have also noted that the long list of proposed questions often results in a box-ticking exercise rather than an honest reflection on the inclusion of minority groups. Finally, we add that the discriminating factors are all grouped under the category "identity factors," without any distinction in their real nature.

While our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy builds on GBA+, it recognizes the limitations and challenges of applying the concept of intersectionality in practice. Nonetheless, our strategy breaks new ground by going beyond it to ensure that diversity and inclusion issues are present in the body of work of Strategic Analysis Network researchers and that it incorporates elements specific to traditionally underrepresented groups.

## Our approach to diversity and inclusion

Our strategy argues that individuals' perceptions and life experiences are shaped by several factors that may be discriminatory. The importance and effect of these factors may vary depending on the context and the situation. Moreover, these factors do not operate independently but interact with each other and can contribute to unique forms of discrimination.

Our diversity and inclusion strategy differs from GBA+ in two ways:

1. **The starting point is not necessarily the gender** - The starting point is not necessarily gender but varies depending on the nature of the project or initiative. For example, the main discriminating factor can be a physical handicap or even language in some cases, while gender can have a secondary influence.

2. **The strategy includes three types of discriminating factors -**

- **Identity factors**
  Factors that define an individual's identity. Identity factors include gender, sexual identity, race, language, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.

- **Psycho-bio-neuro-physiological factors**
  Psychological, biological, neurological, or physiological factors that affect the way people perceive or experience the external environment. Psychological bio-neurophysiological factors include biological sex, age, physical or mental disability, physical appearance, learning styles, learning disorders, etc.

- **Socio-economic factors**
  Features relating to the social or economic position of an individual that influences life experiences. Socio-economic factors include income, education, place of residence (rural vs. urban, region vs. centre, etc.), economic conditions in the community where an individual lives, employment status, marital status, family status, etc.

# How do I apply the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to my work?

All the activities of the Network for Strategic Analysis can be grouped under three main categories:

- Research and analysis activities
- Dissemination of research results
- Training activities for new researchers and new practitioners

To ensure that activities conducted by members of the Strategic Analysis Network within these categories promote diversity and inclusion, they must adhere to three fundamental principles: 1) accessibility of events and content; 2) diversity of participants, and; 3) diversity of content. Thus, before undertaking any activity, network members must answer questions that apply to the activity'nature. Appendix I provides a list of questions to consider for each principle.

## 1. Accessibility of Events and Content

Accessibility ensures that users have a positive experience when using websites, tools or platforms or when visiting a venue for a conference or other event. There are many guidelines and rules regarding physical and online accessibility in Canada.

It is estimated that 22% of Canadians live with a disability that can affect their travel, participation in events and use of the web (Statistics Canada, 2017). Consequently, it is necessary to implement specific measures that allow full access to all. Given the small size of many of the Strategic Analysis Network's events, it would be unrealistic

to require that all events and tools used include all of the measures described in the international guidelines. However, to ensure the accessibility of the Network's main website, specific standards identified below should be met. In addition, to ensure that events held online or in person are accessible to all, organizers should always ensure that participants requiring special accommodations can easily contact them to discuss and identify measures that can be put in place to facilitate their participation. However, the accommodation measures put in place should also ensure the protection of personal data and information and the confidentiality of participants.

☐ Does the website comply with current web accessibility standards?

    ☐ https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/

    ☐ https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-make-websites-accessible

    ☐ Equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content (e.g., descriptive text for images, screen reader software or compatibility with such software, subtitles for videos)

    ☐ Use of several different colours

    ☐ Allow users to control the speed or pause automatic text or video

    ☐ Enable accessibility via mechanisms built into the interface (e.g., compatibility with screen readers, use of the "tab" key to replace the mouse)

☐ Do the tools and platforms used to register for events allow users with disabilities to use them easily?

☐ Are communications available in both official languages?

☐ Can an attendee easily communicate with organizers to discuss possible accommodations?

**Online Events**

☐ Do the platforms used to hold online events allow for full participation of all participants?

    ☐ Physically accessible for people with disabilities

    ☐ Ability for an attendee to easily contact the organizers to discuss possible accommodations

## 2. Diversity of Participants

Our strategy argues that individuals' perceptions and life experiences are shaped by many factors that can be discriminatory. Therefore, it is necessary to implement measures that encourage the participation of diverse participants.

First, it is essential to know the participants and their diversity dimension. Who are the participants?

- ☐ Gender (male, female, other, prefer not to answer)

- ☐ People with disabilities

- ☐ Members of a visible or ethnic minority

- ☐ Indigenous people (First Nations, Métis of Canada, Inuit)

- ☐ The primary language spoken (French, English or other)

- ☐ Location (city, province, country)

- ☐ Occupation

- ☐ Level of education

- ☐ Etc.

While the diversity dimensions of some participants may already be known to the organizers, other factors may be more difficult to identify. To get a better understanding of the type of participants, a short questionnaire can be distributed at registration, during the event, or following the event. This questionnaire can include the following questions:

- ☐ Country of residence

- ☐ Province

- ☐ City

- ☐ Occupation

- ☐ First language

- ☐ Languages spoken fluently

- ☐ Gender (female, male, other, prefer not to answer)

☐ Do you identify as a racialized person?

☐ Do you identify as an Indigenous person (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)?

☐ Do you identify as a person with a disability?

Because response rates to questionnaires are often very low, this information may not be available to organizers before the event. Recruitment measures should be put in place to increase the diversity of participants. For example:

- Are event invitations (including emails) available in both official languages?
- Have event invitations been sent to diverse groups not necessarily part of the regular attendees?
- Based on the composition of participants at past events, is it possible to identify under-represented groups? If so, what steps were taken to ensure that invitations were sent to these particular individuals?
- Were specific steps taken to ensure that individuals from the four employment equity groups were invited to participate?
- If some communities remain under-represented, is it possible to tailor the invitation's content so that the nature of the event is clearly understood, and community members feel welcome to participate?

### 3. Diversity of Content

Access and exposure to diverse content at our events and in creating materials are critical to ensuring greater inclusion in the Network. This diversity of content allows Network members and participants to be exposed to a wide range of perspectives, leading to a better understanding of the issues and solutions that are more relevant to the context and reality of all people.

In a context where most participants are experts on the same topic, it is sometimes risky to limit oneself to a narrow view of that topic and forget about the presence of different perspectives or topics that could enrich the reflection and discussions. Greater diversity of participants can lead to a greater diversity of content. Diversity of participants and diversity of content are therefore closely linked. However, it is essential to pay particular attention to the topics addressed and the perspectives favoured to ensure that they do not simply reflect a mainstream perspective that neglects the specificity of certain groups or communities.

To do so, when identifying themes for events or documents, it is essential to answer the following questions:

- Is it an original and new theme?
- Is the theme chosen from various perspectives, or does it allow for a variety of perspectives to be included?
- Are there themes specific to certain communities that could be addressed?
- What mechanisms have been put in place to survey specific communities to identify issues they would like to address?

## 1. Accessibility to events and various contents

| For all Events | Remarks |
| --- | --- |
| ☐ Does the website comply with current web accessibility standards?<br><br>  ☐ https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/<br><br>  ☐ https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-make-websites-accessible<br><br>  ☐ Equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content (e.g., descriptive text for images, screen reader software or compatibility with such software, subtitles for videos)<br><br>  ☐ Use of several different colours<br><br>  ☐ Allow users to control the speed or pause automatic text or video<br><br>  ☐ Enable accessibility via mechanisms built into the interface (e.g., compatibility with screen readers, use of the "tab" key to replace the mouse) | |
| ☐ Do the tools and platforms used to register for events make it easy for users with disabilities to use them? | |
| ☐ Are communications on the website or social media available in both official languages? | |
| ☐ Are event materials available in both official languages? | |
| ☐ Were event participants invited to speak in the official language of their choice? | |
| ☐ Can participants easily communicate with officials to discuss possible individual accommodations? | |

| For Online Events | Remarks |
|---|---|
| ☐ Do the platforms used to hold online events allow for the full participation of all participants? | |
|    ☐ The platform used is adapted for people with visual or hearing disabilities | |
|    ☐ Instructions are available as needed (in both official languages) so that participants who are less comfortable with technology can still participate. | |

| For In-Person Events | Remarks |
|---|---|
| ☐ For a face-to-face event, is the physical site accessible to all participants | |
|    ☐ Is the site physically accessible to people with reduced mobility? | |

## 2. Diversity of Participants

| A short questionnaire can be distributed to participants at registration, during or after the event. This questionnaire can include the following questions: | Remarks |
|---|---|
| ☐ What is your gender identity? (male, female, non-binary, other, prefer not to answer) | |
| ☐ Are you an Indigenous person (First Nation, Métis of Canada, Inuit)? | |
| ☐ Are you a person with a disability? | |
| ☐ Are you a member of a visible or ethnic minority? | |
| ☐ What language do you primarily speak (French, English or other)? | |
| ☐ What is your main occupation? | |
| ☐ What is the highest level of education you have achieved? | |

| | Remarks |
|---|---|
| ☐ What is your current place of residence? (country, province, city) | |
| ☐ Etc. (you may add any other information you deem relevant) | |

| **Recruitment measures should be implemented to increase the diversity of participants. For example:** | **Remarks** |
|---|---|
| ☐ Have invitations to events been sent to various groups not necessarily part of the regular attendees? | |
| ☐ Based on the composition of participants at previous events, is it possible to identify underrepresented groups? If so, what steps were taken to ensure that invitations were sent to these particular individuals? | |
| ☐ Have specific measures been taken to ensure that individuals from four employment equity groups are invited to participate (women, Indigenous people, visible minorities, persons with disabilities)? | |
| ☐ If some communities remain underrepresented, is it possible to tailor the invitation's content so that the nature of the event is clearly understood and community members feel welcome to participate in the event? | |

## 3. Diversity of Contents

| **When identifying themes for events or documents, it is essential to answer the following questions:** | **Remarks** |
|---|---|
| ☐ Is it an original and new theme? | |
| ☐ Is the topic chosen from various perspectives, or does it allow for the inclusion of various perspectives? | |
| ☐ Are there any community-specific themes that could be addressed? | |
| ☐ What mechanisms have been put in place to survey specific communities to identify issues they would like to address? | |