Faces of Philanthropy

DIVERSITY STORIES OF HUMAN SERVICE

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AFP FELLOWSHIP IN INCLUSION & PHILANTHROPY 2016

This paper accompanies my Fellowship project that can be found at:
www.facesofphilanthropycanada.com

AFP Fellowship in Inclusion & Philanthropy 2016

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Section 1. Synopsis

My Fellowship project, titled Faces of Philanthropy, takes an advocacy and awareness approach towards diversity and inclusion in the public sector. Focusing on individuals who work in non-profits, charities, and any other human service organizations, Faces of Philanthropy is about telling the stories and sharing the experiences of individuals in the public sector living with visible or non-visible elements of diversity.

The project aims to create an open and inclusive space for diversity stories and perspectives to be shared, and to engage the broader public in learning about how diversity on the front lines of philanthropy drives tremendous impact across human service work.

Section 2. Context & Literature Review

A. Current Approaches to D&I Advocacy in Philanthropy

Existing approaches to D&I advocacy in the public sector primarily focus on implementing strategic frameworks or toolkits in the more specific context of an organization. The Canadian Institute for Diversity and Inclusion's Toolkit for Developing a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2014) is perhaps one of the best efforts to broaden awareness for D&I within the for-profit sector – built on a collaborative consultation with 25 founding partner organizations, including: Microsoft, Accenture, Deloitte, PwC, KPMG, and more. While driven by an implementation focus – these efforts are motivated by a strategic mandate, and they do not necessarily bridge the gap between for-profit and non-profit sectors from an awareness standpoint. As many D&I toolkits, including the CCDI material state – "inclusion is everyone's responsibility."

From equity and inclusion policies driven by provincial governments to compliance efforts by universities and corporations – much of the existing conversations and advocacy efforts for D&I remain largely in corporate speak and removed from the personal front lines of experience with D&I. It could be argued that many of these stakeholders are jumping into implementing the D&I strategies and frameworks without first understanding the personal implications for D&I for individuals. The alternative offerings come largely from grassroots organizations such as Change.org (2016)

aiming to drive progress in policy change for D&I through petitions on issues including: disability, LGBTQ, race, and more. From a political standpoint, online resources such as Policy Options (2016) provide a broader audience with access to "viewpoints from a diversity of voices" to advance progress in fields including: social policy, politics, law, health, economics, education, and global affairs.

We have grassroots movements and petitions, policies and practices, and toolkits and strategies ready to be implemented. What I have found to be missing though, is the actual conversation and two-way dialogue on D&I – the advocacy angle that listens instead of speaking for. To build more diverse and inclusive workplaces, communities and schools – I believe that we have to first learn to listen before we act, to reach a fundamental understanding before we can effectively speak to implementation, and to promote open and inclusive spaces for these real conversations about D&I to move beyond siloes.

My project is an effort to move in this direction from an advocacy standpoint. It is my hope that as we learn more about the people in the world around us, and the more we make space for their stories, we'll be better able to move towards D&I with both the strategic implications in mind, but also the fundamental personal ones. I defined the scope of my project as sharing the D&I perspectives of people working in human service in Canada in order to broaden the conversation and to demonstrate the value of D&I in the public sector.

From an employment perspective, the current hiring of people from diverse backgrounds and communities also motivated the direction of my project. The HR Council for the Non-profit Sector (2005-2013) served as a "catalyst," "convenor," and "research instigator" to build knowledge and improve the public sector's understanding of the non-profit labor force for almost a decade. Exploring issues from increasing ethnic diversity in the sector to understanding the talents of early and late career employees – the council took a holistic approach to D&I in the public sector. They successfully collected labor market data, training resources, and capacity-building frameworks – all put forward through the lens of inclusion as a means to progress. The council's work has now been migrated to the Community Foundations of Canada, who continue to develop "a conversation with the sector" in order to foster a culture of inclusivity across the public sector.

As for inclusive HR and hiring practices – a shift is taking place in how D&I is perceived from a retention standpoint in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. Intel's $300 million diversity initiative to reach "full representation" by 2020 (2016), for example, has focused initially on more diverse recruitment, boosting representation of women (by 5.4% in 2015) and

reducing the pay gap against industry standards. Their next steps will endeavor to address underrepresented minorities in staffing, recognizing that retention based on a personal feeling of inclusion and a focus on community building are critical steps to retaining a newly diverse workforce. I think this demonstrates good movement in a progressive direction – and a willingness to acknowledge that D&I is very much about a person's own narrative, their values, and how they see themselves contributing to or standing in isolation from a larger community or organization.

Joelle Emerson, CEO of D&I consultancy firm Paradigm (2016) notes that for large organizations such as Intel, hiring and retaining diverse staff is about a "growth mindset." From unconscious bias training to learning new habits, language, and embracing a growth-mindset, D&I in both the for-profit and non-profit labor force is about embracing individuals and all that their life's experience offers a mission and vision for greater impact.

In The Voice of Nonprofit Talent (2016) – a national study in the US on perceptions of diversity in the workplace, the challenge of "building and sustaining diverse [non-profit] organizations" is addressed with particular attention to "sharing the views of non-profit employees" who feel it is critical to have inclusion embedded in their everyday lives. Two distinct findings of this study points to: a) the fact that actions speak louder than words and that good intentions need to translate into concrete results when it comes to D&I; and b) that "differences in perspective and experience" need to be embraced as fundamental to real inclusion.

The existing literature on D&I across both sectors signals a desire for more openness and understanding of what diversity and inclusion mean in terms of a person's values and life experiences that they bring to the world around them. It is not just about feeling included, it is about feeling heard and understood. I hope that my project's storytelling approach will allow some more of these perspectives to reach people.

B. Focus Areas, Goals & Intended Outcomes for D&I Advocacy

Faces of Philanthropy aims to highlight a key D&I theme: promoting inclusive HR/hiring of individuals from diverse communities. Diversity has been treated broadly for the purposes of this project, inviting stories to be told from the following perspectives: disability, race, religion, mental health, gender, and more.

The project's importance is focused on the concept that having people from these diverse communities working in charitable and non-profit organizations in both fundraising and service delivery capacities strengthens these organizations' ability to meaningfully address the needs of the diverse communities they aim to serve.

Key **project goals** are as follows:

- I hope that this project will bring down barriers to sharing diversity stories in the public sector. Offering a new approach with open storytelling, this project aims to create a new way of sharing impact from the front lines of human service work by people from diverse communities, backgrounds, and experiences.
- By focusing on finding relatedness and shared values across diversity experiences, this project hopes to increase understanding and awareness for how diversity shapes impact in our sector.
- Faces of Philanthropy is an opportunity to share stories and perspectives that haven't been heard before, perhaps because there wasn't an open and inclusive platform to share them, and perhaps because it hasn't always been comfortable for individuals to share a personal message on this topic.

Key **projected outcomes and impact** are as follows:

- Awareness that people from diverse communities are working within these organizations (versus only being served by them)
- Understanding the value proposition of having people from diverse communities working in non-profits and charities and being able to better engage, understand, and meet the needs of people being served by these organizations
- Expanding advocacy and awareness of D&I within this sector and elevating the value proposition of staffing the front lines of philanthropy and human service work with individuals from diverse communities

Section 3. Method

A. Approach & Platform

Faces of Philanthropy is an advocacy and awareness-driven digital media project showcasing select individuals from diverse communities who are working in charitable and non-profit organizations. I created this project at www.facesofphilanthropycanada.com. The intent is to share individuals' diversity stories with a focus on any of the following key topics:

- *Why* they decided to work in this sector;
- *How* their experience with diversity has shaped their charitable outlook and the work that they do; or
- *What* impact they hope to have in building a more inclusive society – both within this sector and beyond.

My intention is for the platform and aesthetic to showcase the diversity stories rather than distract from them. On the website, there are additional sections of content, including: a summary about the project concept, an FAQ on why the project was created and what it is intended to achieve, and a section that invites story submissions and feedback.

B. Audience & Promotion

In a call for participants, individuals living with any visible or non-visible element of diversity were asked to submit a quote of approximately 100 words on any of the above topics and a photograph of themselves. Prospective contributors were given approximately a month to make their submissions. I created a simple website to house Faces of Philanthropy's first submissions with a minimalist approach to design. These submissions represent the first installment of Faces of Philanthropy, which I hope to grow over time with future installments of new faces and stories to share.

The intended audience for this project is people working in the non-profit and charitable sector; more specifically, working professionals with capacity to influence hiring practices and improvement of D&I practices within these organizations. Faces of Philanthropy is also intended to reach young non-profit and charitable professionals from diverse communities or backgrounds as well as those that aspire to begin such career paths. I believe that any of these audiences would be able to take something away from this project that would be meaningful to them on a personal level or applicable to the work that they do.

In terms of **promoting this project** to reach the intended audience, the following **communications channels** will be utilized in the following capacities:

- AFP Fellowship in Inclusion & Philanthropy website announcement; sharing via e-blast/newsletter and social media channels
- AFP Chapters (various) promotion across news and announcement pages; sharing via social media channels
- Ryerson Fundraising Management program; Humber Fundraising Management program promotion
- npENGAGE; Canada Helps; Charity Village; Chimp, some charities and non-profit organizations in my network, etc. (sharing via e-blast and social media)
- I also plan to approach the following news/media/publishing digital media outlets to share or feature the website once it goes live:
    - The Globe & Mail "Giving" section
    - The Huffington Post Canada "Canadian Philanthropy" section
    - The Toronto Star "Initiatives" section

C. Work Plan:

Critical Path	
Activity	**Timeframe**
Project outline submission	August 19, 2016
Create "Call for Participants" memo; map website content	September 5, 2016
Launch of "Call for Participants" memo via AFP	October 14, 2016
Participant submissions; website design	October 14 – November 11, 2016
Website editing	November 4 – 11, 2016
Project paper submission	November 14, 2016
Website public launch	November 15, 2016
Project promotion	November 15, 2016 onwards

Section 4. Results & Conclusions

A. Successes

Key success of Faces of Philanthropy as a D&I advocacy and awareness project pertain to a broad representation of individuals across diversity areas, such as:

- **Participant diversity demographics:** geographical location in Canada, age, ethnicity, heritage, religion and spirituality, gender, disability, etc.
- **Participant experiences in human service work**: non-profit, charity, volunteerism, policy, education, health, priority neighborhoods, international development, mentorship, etc.
- **Participant voices & storytelling:** personal values, life experiences, alignment to work or volunteer roles, perspectives on D&I, calls to action, etc.

B. Limitations

Key limitations of Faces of Philanthropy as a D&I advocacy and awareness project pertain to the scope of the project, such as:

- **Timeframe & Reach:** due to a limited project timeframe for completion, the scope of the project involves a modest number of initial submissions and reached prospective participants through a selection of networks that were targeted. Over time, it would be fantastic to see the participants for future installments grow in quantity and across a broader scope of philanthropic networks.
- **Budget & Promotion:** Due to this project being a voluntary contribution to a Fellowship program, there were limitations surrounding the scope of the website itself and advertising and promotion. Despite this limitation, the project has been met with great responses from the public sector community and a willingness to share and promote through peer networks.
- **Readiness of Participants:** This project tackles a deeply personal topic in the context of a broader dialogue within the public sector; it will take time for more individuals to feel ready to share their diversity stories, and I hope this project has made a valuable contribution to opening up that process.

C. Recommendations/Future Work

As a sector, I believe we are moving closer to reflecting the diverse communities we serve through non-profits, charities, and other human service organizations. There is a willingness to move in this direction through more inclusive hiring and recruitment strategies and more platforms for advocacy and awareness to reach people from both a thought leadership perspective and from individuals living with diversity.

Working on Faces of Philanthropy crystalized a few themes that I believe translate into **future work and progress** in this area:

- Progress in D&I within the public sector context is about starting a dialogue, and creating a platform for diverse perspectives to be heard and shared.
- Storytelling and individual experiences are core to a comprehensive understanding of what D&I means in our sector.
- People living with diverse identities and experiences are an asset to the work we do in human service; whether it is an increased level of empathy or understanding for another's struggle, an open "growth mindset" approach to working in the sector, or a willingness to share and listen to others – we must make inclusive spaces for these individuals in order to achieve impact in improving the lives of others.

I encourage you to go check out Faces of Philanthropy as it will continue to grow and evolve with the community it aims to serve:

www.facesofphilanthropycanada.com

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