

HALIFAX

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Item No. 13.1


Halifax Regional Council
November 13, 2018
November 27, 2018

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed by Director

SUBMITTED BY:

Catherine Mullally, Director, Human Resources/Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: July 9, 2018

SUBJECT: Diverse Voices for Change – FCM Project Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Motion of the Regional Council passed on May 10, 2016:

THAT Halifax Regional Council pass the resolution in Attachment 2 of the staff report dated April 15, 2016 to endorse HRM's participation and invite Council's participation in Federation of Canadian Municipality's (FCM) *Diverse Voices for Change* from March 8, 2016 to August 2018.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter

2 The purpose of this Act is to

(a) give broad authority to the Council, including broad authority to pass by-laws, and respect its right to govern the Municipality in whatever ways the Council considers appropriate within the jurisdiction given to it;

(b) enhance the ability of the Council to respond to present and future issues in the Municipality; and

(c) recognize that the functions of the Municipality are to

(i) provide good government,

(ii) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality, and

(iii) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

BACKGROUND

Diverse Voices for Change was a new initiative of FCM's Women in Local Government funded by Status of Women Canada and developed by FCM to strengthen the role of women in local government. Through this project, FCM aimed to increase the number of women from diverse communities who are actively informed by and engaged in local government decision making. FCM intended that this project would contribute to its mandate of attaining 30 per cent participation of women in local government by 2026 by increasing the diversity of women in leadership roles at the municipal level.

DISCUSSION

Through ***Diverse Voices for Change***, FCM committed to working with the five (5) municipalities of Sioux Lookout, Montréal, Edmonton, London and Halifax. FCM also committed to support municipal staff and elected officials to engage with urban Indigenous, racialized, and underrepresented immigrant women in creating a more inclusive municipal decision-making system.

As part of the project, Halifax was asked to:

- Participate in ***Diverse Voices for Change*** from March 2016 to August 2018.
- Ask Council to adopt ***Diverse Voices for Change*** as a resolution.
- Contribute 1.5 days per month to a local working group consisting of elected officials, municipal staff members and/or community organizations/advisory groups.
- Take part in a scan on municipal decision-making processes in March 2016.
- Facilitate focus groups from April to November 2016.
- Take part in civic engagement workshops in March 2017.
- Take part in strategies and recommendations workshops from April to November 2017.
- Work collaboratively with one or more community partners (e.g., women's organizations, community organizations, and/or advisory groups).

Through the Halifax project, women from urban Indigenous, immigrant, African Nova Scotian and racialized communities were engaged in capacity-building activities that included environmental scans, focus groups, civic engagement and strategy-building workshops.

Halifax Regional Municipality worked with an advisory group consisting of members from the Association of Black Social Workers, Black and Immigrant Women's Network, Immigrant/Migrant Women's Association of Halifax, Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre, and Teamwork Cooperative - Women's Employment Services, African Canadian United Women's Association. The advisory group also included Councillor Lisa Blackburn - District 14 as the representative of Regional Council.

HRM started by collecting data through focus group discussion. Six focus groups were held and included the following groups:

- African Nova Scotians/African Canadians
- Community Organizations working with women from diverse backgrounds
- Aboriginal Women
- Current and past Councillors/Mayor in Halifax Regional Municipality
- Immigrant Woman
- Women in senior management positions in Halifax Regional Municipality

Focus group discussion objectives were to:

- Collect qualitative information.

- Raise awareness among municipal staff, elected officials, community organizations and grassroots women about the barriers and opportunities for diverse women in municipal decision making and bringing their views to the Council.
- Assess the level of knowledge that the community has of municipal practices, and that the municipality has of community practices.

Identified barriers included:

- Systemic barriers - institutional, societal and internalized oppression. Those can be summarized in the intersection of racism, sexism, immigration, and social status.
- Lack of knowledge of municipal politics.
- Lack of faith in the municipal politics.
- Lack of welcoming communities/municipal spaces.
- Lack of mentorship opportunities for marginalized women.
- Absence of gender and cultural perspective analysis when policies and programs are developed.

Focus groups' participants identified the following strategies to address the barriers mentioned above:

- Mentorship and Connection: created opportunities for women to build connection and find mentors to work with;
- Diversity and Inclusion Policies: one of the major priorities the Diversity and Inclusion Office has been working on;
- Fixed Terms and Designated Seats: explored possibilities having a limited time to serve as elected officials and having designated seats for women from Indigenous and racialized communities;
- Leadership Training and Civic Engagement: training sessions to educate women on municipal government;
- Self Confidence and Capacity Building: provided opportunities for women to strengthen their self confidence and work on building their capacity;
- Culturally Competent Campaign School: established a campaign school that is inclusive of women of diverse backgrounds;
- Support from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities: funding and expertise help from FCM; and
- Build a support system within Indigenous and Racialized Communities: encouraged Indigenous and racialized groups to build support within their communities.

Following the focus groups, activities were designed to discuss barriers and to provide knowledge and exposure on local government and municipal policy as well as working on addressing those barriers. These activities included:

- Workshops: FCM staff visited Halifax in April 2017 to facilitate a two-day workshop. Thirty-Eight women from Indigenous, African Nova Scotians and immigrant communities participated in the workshop. Several informative sessions on municipal government, how it works and how it is funded, were facilitated by municipal staff and Councillor Blackburn. Participants not only learned about municipal government but also shared their experiences and barriers related to municipal services. Participants also had opportunities to meet the Mayor, some Councillors, and to sit in Council chambers.
- During Women's History Month, October 2017, 10 indigenous and racialized women were invited to an event titled "Leaders in Action" to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Status of Women. It was an opportunity for women to network and enhance their leadership skills.

- In November 2017, *Diverse Voices for Change* hosted Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard and the Association of Black Social Workers in a presentation on Black Women in Leadership. Participants from *Diverse Voices for Change* were present along with HRM Council, staff and female municipal leaders. The event was attended by approximately 100 people.
- In November 2017, a subcommittee was formed to work on creating a culturally grounded curriculum for the Women's Campaign School. The subcommittee consists of Diversity and Inclusion Office staff, NS Status of Women, and representatives from African Nova Scotian, immigrant, and Indigenous women. The committee developed the Campaign School curriculum and a communication plan. Information about the schools was shared widely, resulting in interest in the campaign school registration. The curriculum was piloted in May 2018. It is proposed that this curriculum be evaluated and adopted for the upcoming municipal election.
- The Women's Campaign School, held on May 25-27, 2018, witnessed unprecedented interest from women in general, with increased interest from Indigenous and racialized women. Approximately 200 women showed interest in the school: 170 women registered and 115 attended. It is worth noting that approximately 40% were Indigenous and racialized women. Indigenous and racialized women participated at all levels of the school, not only as participants but as facilitators, panelists, and mentors. Resources developed to support female candidates are available on <https://women.gov.ns.ca/content/women-leadership#overlay-context=publications>.
- On March 8, 2018, *Diverse Voices for Change* along with the African Nova Scotian's and Visible Minority Women's groups put together an event celebrating International Women's Day. The event centred around the experiences of Indigenous and racialized women in leadership. The event was attended by over 100 people and gained a lot of public and media interest.
- On March 16, 2018, FCM organized a full day workshop with Indigenous and racialized women as well as municipal staff and partners to complete the Outcome Mapping for the project. The main objective of the outcome mapping was to leave HRM with a road map on gender+ analysis designed to address HRM's specific needs and context.

Project Highlights:

- 51 Indigenous and racialized women participated in the focus groups.
- 38 attended the FCM sessions.
- 10 attended the Status of Women's 40th anniversary celebration.
- Approximately 60 Indigenous and racialized women, over 40 HRM employees and external partners attended Senator Bernard's session.
- Over 10 external partners worked with HRM on this project.
- International Women's Day focused on Indigenous and racialized women's leadership, attended by over 100 people.
- 25 women attended outcome mapping session.
- 200 women showed interest in the Campaign School.
- Registration for the Campaign School was closed with 170 participants.
- 115 attended the Campaign school, approximately 40% of whom were of diverse backgrounds.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project was funded by FCM in the amount of \$6,770.80. Financial report was completed and submitted to FCM for reimbursement. The reimbursement of expenses was received in Aug 2018.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This project was led by the above mentioned advisory group which included women from diverse communities as noted. The project participants were women from Indigenous communities, African Nova Scotian and other racialized women, as well as female Councillors and female municipal leaders including directors and managers.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Diverse Voices for Change Final report, August 2018

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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Report Approved by: Tracey Jones-Grant, Managing Director, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, 902.490.3677

Attachment 1

Diverse Voices for Change

Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Project

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Prepared by:

Huwaida Medani

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

August 2018



HALIFAX

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Overview

Diverse Voices for Change is a three-year initiative that aims to strengthen the capacity of municipalities to increase the number of women across diverse communities who are actively informed by and engaged in municipal decision-making processes. The initiative addresses the pressing issue of women's lack of participation in local government and leadership positions, including advisory committees, local agencies, boards and commissions. This initiative builds the capacity of municipalities through an innovative and collaborative approach leveraging the efforts of elected officials and community based organizations.

The Diverse Voices for Change initiative works with five municipalities: Halifax, Montreal, Edmonton, Ottawa and Sioux Lookout, aiming to support elected officials to engage with urban Indigenous, racialized, African Nova Scotian and under-represented immigrant women in creating an inclusive municipal decision making system. Project activities are delivered within municipalities with key roles played by elected officials and community based organizations. Women from urban Indigenous, immigrant, African Nova Scotian and racialized communities are engaged in capacity building activities that include environmental scans, focus groups, civic engagement and strategy building workshops with a crosscutting intersectional gender based focus. Currently, for all management positions within Halifax Regional Municipality staff, there are 30% female and 70% male employees.

Advisory Group

Halifax Regional Municipality is working with an advisory group consisting of members from the Association of Black Social Workers, Black and Immigrant Women's Network, Immigrant/Migrant Women's Association of Halifax, Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre, Teamwork Cooperative-Women's Employment Services and African Canadian United Women's Association. The advisory committee also includes Councillor Lisa Blackburn, District 14, as the representative of Regional Council.

Focus Groups

The Halifax Regional Municipality, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, has been involved with FCM's project Diverse Voices for Change since June 2016. In January and February 2017, the office conducted 6 focus group discussions with women from the following backgrounds:

- African Nova Scotian/ African Canadians
- Community Organizations working with women from diverse backgrounds
- Aboriginal women
- Current and past Councillors/Mayor in Halifax Regional Municipality
- Immigrant women
- Women in senior management positions in Halifax Regional Municipality

The objective of the focus groups was to collect qualitative information from the participants, raise awareness among municipal staff, elected officials, community organizations and grassroots women about the barriers and opportunities for diverse women in municipal decision making and bringing their views to the Council as well as assess the community's level of knowledge of municipal practices.

Focus Groups Questions

The questions focused on identifying and addressing barriers to municipal participation and generating innovative ideas to raise participation.

Focus Groups Findings

The following were identified as the barriers:

- Systemic barriers
- Lack of knowledge of municipal politics
- Lack of faith in the municipal politics
- Lack of welcoming communities/municipal spaces
- Lack of community support
- Poverty
- Erosion of self confidence
- Lack of mentorship
- Absence of gender and cultural perspective analysis

Addressing Barriers

Participants identified the following strategies to address the barriers:

- Mentorship and connection
- Diversity and Inclusion policies
- Fixed terms and designated seats
- Leadership training and civic engagement
- Self confidence and capacity building
- Culturally competent campaign school
- Support from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Build support system within aboriginal and racialized communities

Promising Practices and Champions

The groups mentioned practices they considered valuable initiatives, pointing out that this is the basis for generating stronger ideas.

- The campaign school, run by the Status of Women – There is a need to develop this to make it more inclusive.
- Some HRM programs such as Step Up to Leadership have been helpful for those interested in joining boards and advisory committees.
- Some community organizations are working to leverage women's leadership, including: The Congress of Black Women, the Native Women of Nova Scotia, The Indigenous Council of Elders, Alexa McDonough Institute, Black Business Initiative, and the United African Canadian Women's Association.
- Some current and former female and male Mayors and Councillors are ready to support and mentor women of diverse backgrounds.
- Retired Federal and Provincial MPs and MLAs may be available for mentorship.
- Some women in leadership positions within HRM are willing to support and mentor women who are interested in leadership opportunities.

FCM Workshops

Following the focus groups, two workshops were designed to discuss some of the barriers and to provide knowledge and exposure on local governments and municipal policy. The Halifax workshops took place on April 20 and 21, 2018 with 38 women from Indigenous, African Nova Scotians and immigrant communities participating. A few municipal women leaders facilitated several informative sessions on the municipal government and its funding.



Participants at the Council Chambers, April 2017



Participants at the Council Chambers, April 2017



Participants with Mayor Savage, April 2017

Other Activities

During the Women's History Month, October 2017, Diverse Voices for Change participated in the 40th anniversary of the Status of Women. Ten Indigenous and racialized women were invited to participate in the event. It was a significant opportunity for women to network and enhance their leadership abilities.

In November 2017, Diverse Voices for Change hosted Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard and the Association of Black Social Workers in a presentation on Black Women in Leadership. Participants from Diverse Voices for Change were present beside HRM council, staff and female municipal leaders. The event was attended by approximately 100 people.



Audience at Sen. Wanda Thomas Bernard's session, November 2017

International Women's Day

On March 8, 2018, Diverse Voices for Change along with the African Nova Scotian's and Visible Minority Women's groups organized an event celebrating the International Women's Day. The event centred the experiences of Indigenous and racialized women in leadership and was attended by over 100 participants, gaining public and media attention and interest.



Some key players at the International Women's Day celebration, March 2018

Women's Campaign School Curriculum Development

In November 2017, a subcommittee was formed to work on creating a culturally grounded curriculum for the Women's Campaign School. The subcommittee consists of HRM, Nova Scotia Status of Women, and a group of African Nova Scotian, immigrant and Indigenous women. As of January 2018, the subcommittee has been meeting frequently designing the

campaign School curriculum. The subcommittee developed a communication plan resulting in vast interest in the campaign school registration. The developed curriculum will be piloted in May 2018, and then evaluated and adopted for the upcoming municipal election.



Members of Diverse Voices for Change recognized at the Province House for their work on gender equity, March 2018

Outcome Mapping

FCM organized a full day workshop with Indigenous and racialized women as well as municipal staff and partners to complete the Outcome Mapping for the project. The main objective of the outcome mapping is to leave HRM with a road map on gender+ analysis designed to address HRM' specific needs and context.



Outcome Mapping Session, March 2018

Campaign School

The Campaign School in May 2018, witnessed unprecedented interest from women in general with increased interest from Indigenous and racialized women. Approximately 200 women were interested in the school, of which 170 registered and 115 attended the school. It is worthy of noting that approximately 40% were Indigenous and racialized women. Indigenous and racialized women participated at all levels of the school not only as participants but as facilitators, panelists and mentors.



Diverse Voices for Change Panel at the Campaign School, May 2018



Members of Diverse Voices for Change at the Campaign School, May 2018

Diverse Voices for Change Project Highlights

- 51 Indigenous and racialized women participated in the focus groups
- 38 attended the FCM sessions

- 10 attended the Status of Women’s 40th anniversary celebration
- Approximately 60 Indigenous and racialized women in addition to over 40 HRM employees and external partners attended Sen. Bernard’s session
- Over 10 external partners worked with HRM on this project
- IWD focused on Indigenous and racialized women’s leadership, attended by over 100 audience
- 25 women attended the outcome mapping session
- 200 women were interested in the Campaign School
- Registration for the Campaign School was closed with 170 participants
- 115 attended the school, approximately 40% of whom are of diverse backgrounds

Project Conclusion

To conclude, HRM’s participation and enthusiasm on this project has been great. Evaluation from participants showed enormous satisfaction. Engagement of HRM Council and staff collaboration have been extraordinary. HRM Council, leadership and staff participated at all levels of the project. New grounds and solid partnerships were developed with the Status of Women, Nova Scotia and many community organizations. The project has been well planned and well executed, and positive feedback has been received from the participants. The final report from FCM will be finalized in collaboration with the NS Status of Women in 2019.

A Focus Group participant wrote:

“Being a Syrian refugee, arriving into a completely different country with all its wonderful hues of nationalities, ethnicities and backgrounds I knew I was going to be safe. I just did not know where to start and how to go about it, until I heard about the Immigrant Women in Leadership focus group. This was my very first event in Canada, and a very fortunate one! This meeting exposed me to so many wonderful women who were well-spoken and brimming with confidence. I made friends with women from different nationalities and expanded my network in just one day!”

A participant of the FCM workshop wrote:

“I want to thank everyone that made this project possible. Thanks too for making me feel that I have a place and a voice in this beautiful city that now I call home!”

Another FCM participant and an HRM employee wrote:

“I just wanted to thank you all for a wonderful couple of days. I learned so much, was touched deeply by your stories and words, and feel so much better equipped to champion women and particularly diverse women at HRM.”