

CHF Canada's Diversity Advisory Committee

2019 Annual Report

The Diversity Advisory Committee provides expertise, information, support, feedback and guidance to CHF Canada as needed related to engagement, education, strategies and resources on initiatives or issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion and human rights.

Committee membership

The Committee has six (6) members with professional or lived experience in a range of equity, diversity or human rights topics in education, training, law, community development, non-profit or co-operative housing sectors. Members are appointed by CHF Canada's Board of Directors. The term of each appointment is three years.

The Committee's members are:

- Tina Stevens (Board liaison, Chair, ON)
- Holly Baines (ON)
- Farnaz Behrooz (ON)
- Lisa Forbes (MB)
- Mary Ho (ON)
- Catherine Denison (BC) (resigned in September 2019)

Overview of 2019 Work and Initiatives

In 2019, CHF Canada's work focused on the following key initiatives:

- Reconciliation
- Diversity Scholarship and Diversity Grant programs
- Educational workshops

Reconciliation

At the 2018 annual meeting, CHF Canada members passed a resolution to develop a reconciliation action plan and to encourage member housing co-ops to take action towards Reconciliation. In 2019, CHF Canada's Reconciliation Journey began. The journey involves much listening, learning and action. To support these efforts, CHF Canada engaged consultant Jackie Hogue who supported widespread consultation with members across the country, with staff, Board and Council. The Board and Council shared their thoughts, desires and learnings on the ten principles of Truth and Reconciliation at the annual Fall planning session.

The widespread consultations have informed the development of both a member tool kit with practical ways for members to begin their journey toward Reconciliation including learning truths; and guidelines in taking meaningful action toward its Reconciliation journey.

Throughout the year, stories, learnings and literature has been shared among CHF Canada staff and members. In June 2019, the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) was released and a group of CHF Canada staff formed a reading group to read and discuss the report. The report shows not only the extent of the violence First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA people face, but also how they're working to heal their communities. The report shares 231 calls for justice. Some of them are for specific sectors, like health care or education, but there is also a section of "Calls for All Canadians". This section tells us how each of us can help, regardless of who we are, where we live, or what kind of work we do. Reading the report challenged how CHF Canada staff thought about ourselves and about Canada.

Diversity Grants and Diversity Scholarship

CHF Canada offers grants to support projects that promote diversity and inclusion in co-op communities. Any CHF Canada member co-op or federation can apply for the grant. In 2019, we were pleased to support the following grants:

- **Vancouver East Housing Co-operative in East Vancouver, B.C.**, is developing a guide for inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity minority groups in housing co-ops across British Columbia. They plan to share their guide as a template for future projects in other provinces.
- **Garden Village Cooperative Homes in St. Catherine's ON**, is buying translation software so that they can correspond with members and provide important information in members' preferred languages.
- **Harbourside Housing Co-op in Toronto, ON**, received a grant to allow them to offer a KAIROS Blanket Exercise to members. The Blanket Exercise is a participatory history lesson designed help people understand the history of First Nations, Inuit and Métis treaty-making, colonization and resistance in Canada.
- **The Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto** received funding to support their Aging in Place committee, Living in Diversity award, Black History Month events, Century of Co-operation awards, and the Diane Frankling Youth Award.

The Diversity Scholarship recognizes young people living in co-ops who are actively promoting diversity in their community. Our goal is to financially support the emerging leaders of the co-op housing movement in their pursuit of post-secondary education.

In partnership with CHF Canada, scholarships are awarded in the Co-operative Housing Federation of British Columbia, Golden Horseshoe Co-operative Housing Federation, Central Ontario Co-operative Housing Federation, Peel-Halton Co-operative Housing Federation, Co-operative Housing Association of Eastern Ontario and in Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Southwestern Ontario. Since its inception, over 460 scholarships have been awarded.

In 2019, over \$170,000 was awarded to successful young member recipients. This year, CHF Canada was also successful in securing ongoing support from The Cooperators for \$60,000 over three years. This funding supports the program across Canada.

The Cooperative Housing Federation of Toronto (CHFT) is instrumental in maintaining the success of this program, through its administrative support to all federations, along with its tireless promotion among young members and sponsorship solicitation.

CHFT held it's an annual event to celebrate its scholarship recipients. CHF Canada was pleased to attend and present to deserving recipients.



CHFT Diversity Scholarship recipients, past and present, at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, June 26, 2019.

Educational Workshops

Each year at the annual meeting, workshops on diversity topics are included as part of the Member Education Forum (MEF) and Co-operative Management Conference (CMC). Annex A provides a list of workshops delivered in 2019 on varied topics such as age friendly co-ops, welcoming LGBT2SQ, Indigenous culture, gender equality, and reconciliation.

Appendix A: 2019 Member Education Forum Diversity Related Workshops List

1. Creating an age-friendly co-op

We know that co-op members are increasingly choosing to age in place in our co-op communities. Is your co-op ready? Back by popular demand, this workshop will cover issues related to the diverse and aging membership within the co-op sector. We'll discuss:

- current trends in aging
- how to communicate effectively with an aging membership
- health issues related to aging and their impact on the co-op

2. Indigenous culture and knowledge: past and present

An important part of the journey towards reconciliation with Indigenous communities is education, including learning about the rich history of Indigenous culture in Canada. Join us as we discover the history, traditions and languages of the First Nations communities in the London area. We'll also look at the history of democracy in Indigenous culture and how it mirrors the co-operative model and international co-operative principles of today.

3. Welcoming LGBT2SQ members at your co-op

Have you considered the barriers that LGBT2SQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Two-spirit, Queer) people may face when looking for a home and feeling safe living there? Hear from panelists who are part of LGBT2SQ communities as they share their experiences, and learn how to help include and welcome LGBT2SQ members at your co-op. We'll discuss:

- Recognizing and challenging homophobic and transphobic language and behavior
- Creating and fostering a safe environment for LGBT2SQ members
- CHF Canada's new resource, LGBT2SQ Inclusive Co-op Communities

4. KAIROS Blanket Exercise

In the KAIROS Blanket Exercise, you will explore the nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Blankets that represent the land are arranged on the floor, and participants are invited to physically step into the roles of First Nations, Inuit and later Métis peoples. In an interactive way, participants will learn about the impact that colonization of the land had on those who were here long before settlers arrived. The exercise engages minds and hearts in understanding why the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is often broken and how we can take action together.

5. Co-op stories of welcoming communities

Co-ops are amazing communities — each with its own character and manner of building relationships and welcoming new members. We'll learn about several different co-op initiatives that have supported individuals, families and groups as they integrated into their new co-op homes and communities. You will hear about the successes and rewards, but also about the challenges that were overcome and what was learned from these experiences

6. Co-op housing: A model for gender equality?

Is the co-op housing movement a best practice for gender equality? Are we doing everything we can to ensure women have access to well-designed co-op housing and are engaged in the sector through leadership and employment? How are we working towards eliminating gender-based violence? And how can our sector contribute to the National Housing Strategy in light of its “Gender-Based Analysis Plus” approach? We’ll learn about women’s leadership and gender-based violence initiatives in Quebec housing co-ops as well as a recent strategy on gender equality developed by Rooftops and the South African social housing sector. Through dialogue between sector leadership and participants, we’ll explore how these projects can provide insight into answering the challenging but critical questions that face our movement.

7. Discussions on reconciliation in the co-op housing sector

At the 2018 AGM, members passed a resolution calling on CHF Canada to develop a reconciliation action plan and encourage co-ops to take action towards reconciliation. Housing co-ops are ready and willing to take part, but you may be asking yourself, “Where do we start?” We’ll explore the meaning of reconciliation and the role that housing co-ops can play. We’ll learn from co-ops that are involved now and spend time building on ideas generated from previous sessions to help develop our reconciliation action plan.