

Intentionally Inclusive Main Streets

- ▶ Dr. Tapo Chimbanga, Future Black Female
- ▶ Natasha Bell, Black Owned 905
- ▶ Rachel Braithwaite, SCDA
- ▶ Katherine Dodge, SCDA





What is
Intentional
Inclusivity?

Dr. Tapo Chimblanda, RP

Future Black Female, Founding Executive Director



Founded Future Black Female in 2019

Completed masters in psychoanalytic psychotherapy

Published author – wrote The Classroom as Privileged Space in 2017; #blacklove 2019

Has lived on 3 continents, in 9 cities in 5 countries

Global social justice advocate

Natasha Bell

Black Owned 905, Founder

Matter of Black, Co-Founder



Founded Black Owned 905 and Matter of Black in 2020

Underground Railroad freedom seeker descendant

Brought Emancipation Day celebrations back to St. Catharines

Recipient of several awards for volunteerism, spirit, advocacy and impact in Niagara]

Hosted first ever BIPOC Market in Niagara

Future Black Female

- ▶ Pro-Black mental Health services
- ▶ Financial Well-being
- ▶ Career & Education Strategies
- ▶ Black-focused Events
- ▶ Marketplace Bootcamp



Black Owned 905

- ▶ Showcases Black Owned businesses in Niagara
- ▶ Hosts events and vendor shows to bring attention
- ▶ Works with community to partner on events
- ▶ Goal to bring more representation and inclusion to Niagara



FBF Marketplace

- ▶ Opened April 8, 2023
- ▶ Open to Black Females 18-25 with existing businesses
- ▶ Created because opportunity currently not available
- ▶ Bootcamp + storefront



Why Intentional Inclusivity?

More Diverse
Businesses
Want to Open

Attracts
Broader Target
Markets

More Offerings
for Diverse
Markets

More
Representation
on Downtown
Streets



Diversity in the Workplace

- ▶ More likely to outperform peers
- ▶ 2X likely to meet or exceed \$\$ goals
- ▶ 8X likely to achieve better outcomes



Leveraging diversity & inclusion leads to:

- ▶ Attracting best & brightest talent
- ▶ Diverse companies 70% more likely to capture new markets
- ▶ Increased employee satisfaction
- ▶ Promotes innovation resulting in 19% higher revenue

Entrepreneurs

- ▶ Women-owned businesses growing 3.9% annually
- ▶ BIPOC women-owned businesses growing 7% annually
- ▶ Black women-owned businesses represent highest rate of growth
- ▶ Cities with more diverse entrepreneurial population more likely to generate innovation
- ▶ More diverse regions have more entrepreneurs

Women of colour founders receive less than 1% of venture capital funds. (US)



What Downtown St.
Catharines is doing

Intentional Inclusivity

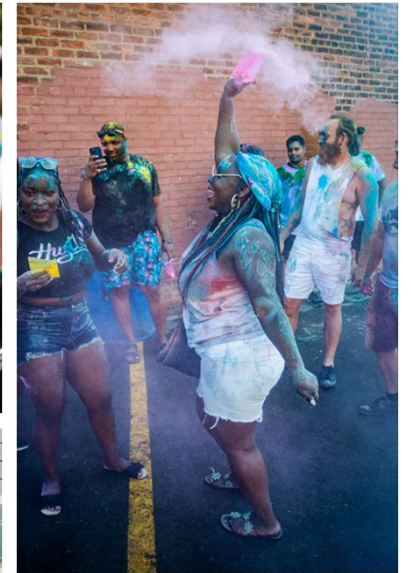
- ▶ Focus on relationships and building partnerships
- ▶ Mindful of consultation with community partners (ie pay and time)
- ▶ Diversify where possible - catering, venues, theme days, etc
- ▶ Using Canada Summer Job to bring diversity into team - great give & take
- ▶ Ok to be uncomfortable
- ▶ Take extra steps to provide assistance - excellent customer service for all members (including potential members)



Events

Increased # of cultural events Downtown

- ▶ Holi Festival of Colour
- ▶ Grape & Wine After Party
- ▶ Engage Every Age
- ▶ Added elements - BIPOC markets, Drag Storytimes, etc





“For the first time since
moving to Canada, I
finally felt at home”
-Attendee of Holi

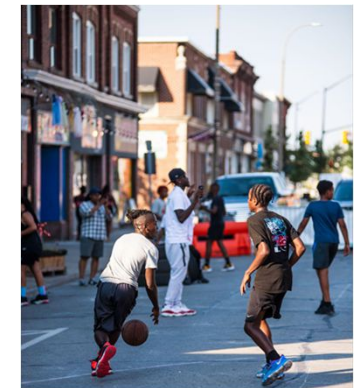


Red Dress Walk

- ▶ Open-minded to seeing how we can help
- ▶ Uplift and build awareness together
- ▶ On second year

Downtown Block Party

- ▶ Remained open to feedback
- ▶ 2nd year Intended to diversify stages to ensure event more inclusive
- ▶ Communication breakdown - stages not programmed as expected
- ▶ Re-visited and re-enforced vision
- ▶ On 3rd year - continuous learning



Marketing



- ▶ Use your voice
 - ▶ Be aware of messaging you use
 - ▶ Look to others for guidance, but use your own voice
 - ▶ Uplift & back-up community partners
 - ▶ Stay informed
 - ▶ Attend events
 - ▶ Read local newsletters
 - ▶ Watch council
- ▶ Intentional representation in media
- ▶ Work to reach various demographics
- ▶ Get to know & profile your businesses

Results

- ▶ 7 new BIPOC-owned business open in the last 6 months
- ▶ Higher diversity of volunteers wanting to be involved, help out
- ▶ Resident moved to are
- ▶ Growth in relationships
- ▶ Overwhelming positive feedback from community
- ▶ Strong sense of Downtown pride



Various Barriers

From a BIA standpoint

- ▶ Unconscious Bias
- ▶ Lack of training/awareness
- ▶ Communication
 - ▶ IE - Potential businesses might assume too expensive to be in the Downtown

Next Steps

Awareness	Know the data, conduct self-identification surveys, understand employee challenges, needs and barriers to success, and learn about leading practice
Action	Conduct a listening tour that includes 1-on-1 coffee chats with employees and/or focus group sessions. Ask intentional questions, be open to criticism, and provide multiple mediums for discussion such as in-person conversations as well as anonymous channels for communication.
Accountability	Review the collected data, promote transparency in sharing the current state results, ensure accountability by sharing the desired future state, ask employees to hold each other and leaders accountable, and set goals and metrics.
Again	Repeat the process and be open to iterations. Keep educating yourself and others, take courageous actions to challenge systemic barriers, and demonstrate humility throughout.



Examples

Awareness	▶ Evaluate what your BIA (and personally) is currently doing and identify opportunities ▶ Collect data - know who your members are
Action	▶ Diversify your committees ▶ Report data ▶ Partner with more community groups
Accountability	▶ Create event and marketing checklists ▶ Welcome feedback
Again	▶ Continue to learn



When and Where You Start?

Stage	1. Commitment	2. Communications	3. Conversation	4. Co-Creation	5. Continuous Feedback	6. Caring
Definition	Make a commitment to courageous (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) EDI goals that will transform your organization and are embedded in your strategic plan and policies.	Share your commitments with your employees, members, and other stakeholders to encourage transparency and build trust	Start the conversation to create a welcoming and safe atmosphere for members, volunteers and employees	Work with members, board and staff to ensure EDI commitments are tangible and resonate.	Create a structure to receive continuous feedback to ensure your EDI commitments lead to maximum impact and minimal harm.	Each component of this journey requires intention, care, and humility.
What does this look like?	Set your EDI goals and map them against your strategic plan with clearly defined metrics. Budget and plan to incorporate training and awareness for board or to hire an EDI advisor.	Showcase these goals through varying channels such as employee newsletters, website, and social media platforms. Go out of your way to reach people.	Support members who may have an interest in hosting different cultural events in BIA. Work with board to ensure their wording is safe.	Work with all to ensure full buy-in not just tokenism. Provide support to new business owners looking to lease space.	Provide avenues for anonymous and in person dialogue. Ensure there is continuous reviews of policies.	You need to do this because you believe in it. Share why you believe in it and why it is important to you with others.

Tips and tricks

- ▶ Follow groups on social media
- ▶ Attend diverse events
- ▶ Research what platforms different groups are using to reach them directly
- ▶ Build relationships
 - ▶ Show up, listen, support
- ▶ Be honest with yourself, ask what you could be doing better
- ▶ Step out of your comfort zone if needed
- ▶ Don't be afraid to talk about these issues or ask questions!!



50/30 Challenge

Gender parity (50% women and/or non-binary people) on Canadian boards and/or in senior management; and



30% representation on boards and/or senior management of members of other equity-deserving groups, including:

- ▶ those who identify as Racialized, Black, and/or People of colour ("Visible Minorities"),
- ▶ People with disabilities (including invisible and episodic disabilities),
- ▶ 2SLGBTQ+ and/or gender and sexually diverse individuals, and
- ▶ Aboriginal and/or Indigenous Peoples.

Q & A

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Thank you!

Useful Resources

Why your words matter and how the words you choose affect everyone:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3RRXoUnV3c>

Beyond Diversity: An LGBT Best Practice Guide for Employers

<https://prideatwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Beyond-Diversity-LGBT-Guide.pdf>

What is Privilege? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD5f8GuNuGQ&t=1s>

50/30 Challenge: <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/50-30-challenge-your-diversity-advantage>