

2023 Report on the Activities of the Human Rights and Diversity Committee

I am writing to provide an overview of the activities and initiatives undertaken by the Human Rights and Diversity Committee in the past year. The committee has been dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion within our organization, and we have made significant progress in this regard. One of our key achievements has been the launch of several caucuses that address the specific needs and concerns of underrepresented groups within our organization.

Disabilities Caucus: Chair Mary Lycett

The Disabilities Caucus was established to create a supportive and inclusive environment for employees with disabilities. This caucus discussed potential resolutions for the AGM to ensure our members' needs are met. Also planning awareness campaigns to promote accessibility, understanding, and equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It has also worked on advocating for workplace accommodations and improving physical accessibility.

June 6, 2023 – this was an initial meeting to discuss the caucus, explain the mandate and meet the members. This meeting was well attended by over 30 members. Members brought forward concerns they are facing in the workplace and a group discussion was held around what the Disability Caucus can do to assist.

October 23, 2023 – This meeting was to discuss resolution F-11 - Inclusive Accommodation of Members with Disabilities during AGMs being tabled at the 2023 PIPSC AGM to request an accessibility review of PIPSC events. Although only 5 members attended, the meeting was informative and provided positive feedback that the resolution was a constructive step in improving attendance at PIPSC events and awareness of the issues facing our disabled members.

It is my hope to hold a 3rd Disabilities Caucus meeting in December to discuss the PIPSC AGM, issues members faced and the decision on the resolution

Black Caucus: Chairs Jacquie Dixon, Din Kamaldin

The Black Caucus was created to address the unique challenges and experiences faced by Black employees.

The Black Caucus held initial meetings virtually with Black employees to engage in the existence of a Black Caucus in May 2023. Great start, but issues regarding what HRDC is going to do for them.

Results of the meeting was a Meet and Greet and hear lived stories and how PIPSC can help. Consensus was that PIPSC did not express concern of the plight of Black PIPSC members and how were we going to change this perception Response was to get in touch with reps and be more aware of what the Union events are in their region.

Members don't believe PIPSC is a safe space for them.

NCR hosted a Black History event February 2023 Included an array of entertainment and community advocates. An event well attended and sold out

Some members participated in the CLC Conference. Many got the experience as to what others unions were addressing and we got to participate in the People of Colour caucus.

HRDC held a webinar "Find your voice" for all Equity and Diversity members. In observance of Emancipation day NCR Region hosted a Jerk chicken cuisine cook off in the summer. Plenty of entertainment and informative sessions on activism, the event was at capacity as well.

HRDC BLACK Caucus participated in discussions with Black Employee Network in BC and the newly created National Network in CRA.

Participated in 2 webinars, one on the Black Class action lawsuit. Will have another in November to get feedback.

Also future scheduled discussions month of November on Black class action lawsuit

A Mental Health and Awareness Webinar by the Black caucus for all in December guest host Paige Gallette

LGBTQ2S+ Caucus: Chair Stacy McLaren

The LGBTQ2S+ Caucus has played a pivotal role in fostering an inclusive and accepting environment for LGBTQ2S+ employees. This caucus has organized Pride Month events including participation in parades across the country, and advocated for equal rights and benefits for LGBTQ2S+ individuals in our workplace.

The caucus met with discussions being held about the anti-trans protests that are being held around the country. Introduced the idea of a “flying squadron” group chat that is on Whatsapp for the CLC Solidarity and Pride network and the possibility of creating a PIPSC chat as well.

Future events I would love to plan for include holding virtual seminars on subjects that inspire inclusiveness and educate not only our LGBTQ2S+ members but others as well, and increasing participation all year for Pride and Solidarity across Canada.

Women’s Caucus 2023 Chair Farzana Merani

The first caucus meeting was held on May 20, 2023 with 10 attendees.

During this meeting, the group discussed issues within PIPSC, federal workplaces and the broader labour movement. The caucus also discussed their own experiences, insights. The following issues were identified:

- 1) Lack of support
- 2) Need mentorship opportunities so we as a committee can look to suggest mentorship.
- 3) Breaking the bullying culture
- 4) Women are not seen as professionals.
- 5) Diminishing women’s ideas can lead to negative project impacts.
- 6) We should consider building leadership opportunities.
- 7) Lack of inclusivity

The second meeting was a brainstorming session to see if the group could come up with ways to address the identified issues from the first meeting. This meeting was held on June 24, 2023 with 7 attendees. The main ideas focused on creating a peer-to-peer support group and creating connections or a network. Women have passive voices, so women are not being listened to or heard. The group discussed potentially creating a brochure that outlines the strengths that women bring to the table. Additionally, the group discussed how to ensure others were aware of their skills and expressing interest in leadership opportunities. A point came up that the employer/union focus has been on developing the young professionals that experienced non young employees are being overlooked. This is causing a feeling of ageism.

The caucus also set objectives and guiding principles.

As a caucus, we want to achieve the following:

- Supporting group
- A “you belong” culture.
- Communication
- Keeping each other informed
- Building momentum as we grow
- Guiding Principles for our group:
- Supporting each other
- Building trust and relationships
- Resolving disputes
- Confidentiality
- Respect each other and each voice
- Acknowledging our lived experiences, as each is different.
- Acknowledging our differences, while finding our commonalities.
- Looking for fairness in our workplaces.

The third caucus meeting was held on September 9, 2023 with 5 attendees and 3 regrets.

During this meeting, we explored the brochure in detail, including creation, target audience, dissemination and content. It was decided that this option(at the

moment) may not be as effective, given the effort required. Mentorship and learning to advocate for yourself was seen as a bigger priority. Hosting a workshop or panel discussion of how women have overcome obstacles will inspire other women. Women need to have the tools to advocate for themselves.

Next meeting is anticipated to be held in November.

Report on Workers of Colour Caucus 2023 – Chair Madeeah Chowdry

Mandate of Caucus

The purpose of the Workers of Colour caucus is to allow PIPSC members that belong to this equity- seeking group to discuss issues faced by workers of colours within the union and the workplace, as well as developing ideas and recommendations to improve inclusion. Discussions and recommendations are reported to the Human Rights and Diversity Committee for further discussion and action.

Meetings

For 2023, the goal was to hold four meetings over the course of the year. Meetings were held via Zoom.

May, June, September and a final meeting is planned for November. On average, roughly 12-16 people attended.

Discussion Highlights

This is not an exhaustive summary of all items discussed at caucus meetings, but a highlight of the issues and concerns brought up most frequently.

- Language – Language requirements disproportionately impede career progression and opportunities for workers of colours. English or French may be a 3rd or 4th language for immigrants.

Language policies seem to favour white counterparts since workers of colour tend to encounter more barriers when trying to access language training, and language testing doesn't allow for diverse accents

Selection processes – Interview panels are generally made up of white employees. There needs to be more diversity in the hiring process.

- Career progression – Workers of colour must prove themselves and their abilities at the next level prior to getting a promotion or acting opportunity, whereas white counterparts are given acting and non-advertised promotions and can “grow into” their roles
- Discrimination – Complaints of discrimination and racism are not taken seriously. Complainants are often gaslit and made to feel that their complaint has no merit. There seems to be a consensus that racists and racism are protected
- Union – Members have reported issues in trying to get help from the union. Often stewards are unfamiliar with the issues faced by workers of colour, are dismissive, or may be racist themselves. There needs to be more diversity training for stewards, or some way to identify stewards that members can turn to when facing discrimination or racism. It was suggested that discrimination complaints go to a central location within the union to improve consistency in complaint handling. This would also allow for data capture and reporting to determine the extent of the problems that are reported and systemic solutions

What went well

- Discussions were productive with a variety of views being shared by different participants
- People were open in sharing experiences and points of views
- Meetings were respectful and members felt safe sharing
- A lot of good ideas were generated

Challenges

- Participants voiced frustration that this caucus felt like another forum to vent but would not result in any real change
- It is unclear how some of the ideas that were generated can be implemented
- The chair had limited experience with the union and couldn't always provide the best guidance or advice on how to navigate certain issues

- HRDC may have different committee members next year, and therefore, may appoint different caucus chairs which will result in a delay for next year's meetings and stop the momentum. This year's caucus only started up in May since the HRDC had to be underway and chairs needed to be appointed first.

Lessons Learned

- Our very first meeting had few participants and as a result, little discussion so the meeting only lasted half an hour
- The following strategies helped to increase participation: Doodle poll to determine the best day and time for meetings; Reminder email the day of the meeting
- It was difficult for the chair to facilitate the discussion as well as take meeting minutes, so a volunteer from the caucus took meeting minutes in later meetings which was a big help
- Having a member that is more experienced with the inner workings of the union at the meetings would be helpful
- PIPSC should publicize these caucuses more since members were not aware of some of the other caucuses and were confused on how they were included as part of this one

In addition to the establishment of these caucuses, the Human Rights and Diversity Committee has worked on various other activities:

- Conducted diversity and inclusion training for all employees.
- Reviewed and updated our anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.
- Collaborated with other departments to ensure diverse hiring practices.
- Launched awareness campaigns on cultural and religious holidays.
- Established a feedback system to collect suggestions and concerns from employees regarding diversity and inclusion.

Our organization has seen positive changes as a result of these initiatives, with a more diverse and inclusive workplace culture. However, we acknowledge that

there is still work to be done, and the Human Rights and Diversity Committee is committed to continuing these efforts.

We appreciate the support of the organization's leadership and all employees in making these initiatives successful. Together, we can create a workplace that values and respects the contributions of every individual, regardless of their background or identity.

Sincerely,

Jennie Esnard (Chair) Stacy McLaren (Board Liaison)