



Organizational capacity building in equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility

IWH Connects

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New Frontiers in Research Fund
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IDEA

- IDEA is a knowledge-to-practice social innovation laboratory funded by the New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) Transformation Stream
- We focus on advancing the skills and capacities of workplace parties in the area of inclusive employment
- We aim to develop evidence-informed products that support inclusive workplaces
- We base most of our work on initiatives that are already successful in the workplace
- www.vraie-idea.ca

Advancing accessibility and disability inclusion in the workplace

Advancing accessibility and disability inclusion in the workplace, the “A” in equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA),...

- will help address Canada’s ongoing labour shortages
- ensure employers have the talent they need
- help reduce the poverty and marginalization of persons with disabilities
- make better workplaces and communities

Goals for today's session

- Learn about how accessibility and disability inclusion (the “A” in EDIA) can be part of workplace processes and systems
- Assess strengths and gaps in your own organization (or those you work with)
- Consider how you might incorporate more EDIA into your organization, to go beyond the legislation and to meet new standards
- An opportunity to influence our framework and future supporting tools



Key concept: Disability Confidence

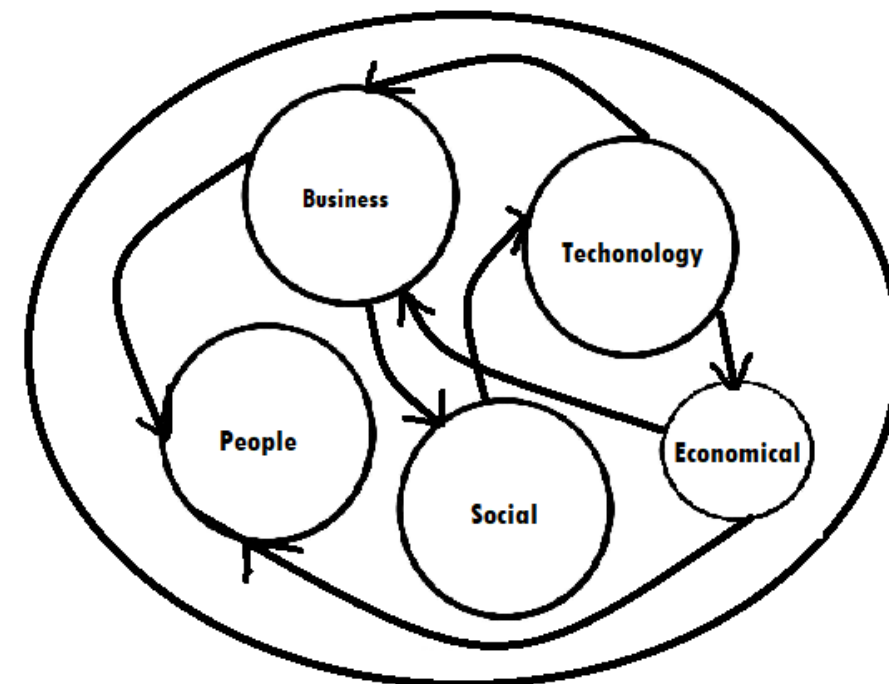
- In the disability justice realm, the term “disability confidence” is being used.
- This describes the confidence that workplace parties – employers and unions – have in their capacity to fully include persons with disabilities in the workplace.
- Sometimes the term “disability capacity” or “disability maturity” are used as well.
- A disability confident workplace puts policies into practice to ensure persons with disabilities are included, belong and do not have barriers to employment or promotion.

Key concept: Equity Diversity Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Maturity

- Like disability confidence but includes all equity deserving groups and the journey that an organization takes to become a leader
- Five stage model – 1) aware, 2) compliant, 3) tactical, 4) integrated, 5) sustainable
- EDIA maturity may vary in different aspects of an organization's areas of activity (e.g., human resources, procurement, communications, technology use, customer/client/community relations)
- Acknowledges the need to take an inclusivity lens in all aspects of an organization

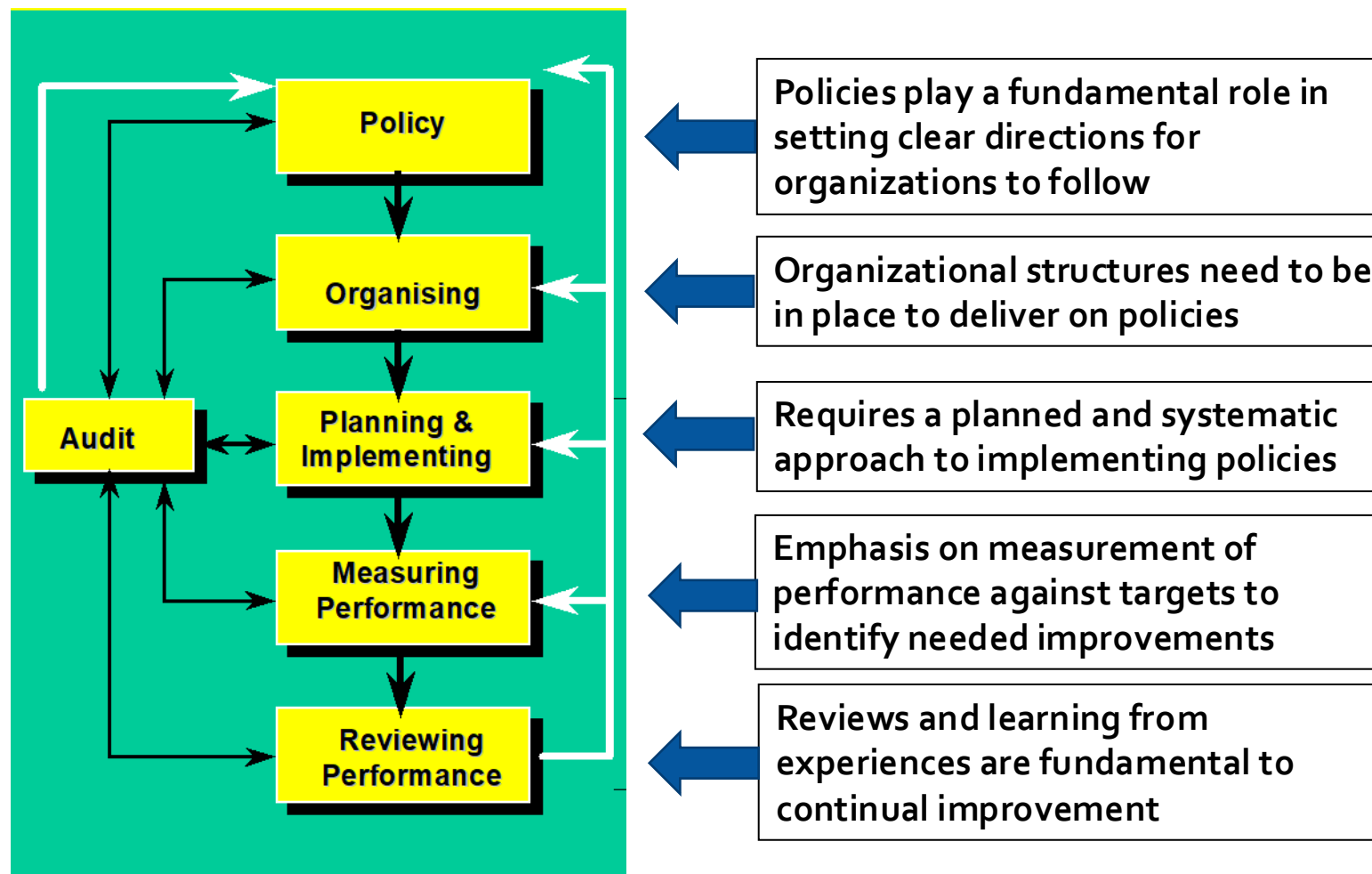
Key Concept: Systems Thinking

- A way to make sense of the complexity of the world by **looking at it in terms of wholes and relationships** rather than by splitting it down into its parts
- Used for exploring and **developing effective action in complex contexts**, enabling systems change
- A **holistic way to investigate factors and interactions** that contribute to outcome
- A **comprehensive approach to introducing organizational change** and development



Framework for Organizational Capacity Building

Combining Systems Thinking with Continual Improvement



About the domains

- The purpose of this framework is to identify domains within an organization relevant to advancing Disability Confidence/Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) maturity.
- Each domain within this framework identifies a system within an organization rather than a specific task, activity, or role.
- Aim: Each domain is reasonably exclusive from other domains
- Aim: All domains together cover core areas of organizational activities relevant to advancing disability confidence/EDIA maturity.
- **We created the draft framework to align with the AODA and ACA legislation and input from stakeholders involved in this project.**

Accessibility legislation

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

1. employment
2. the built environment
3. information and communications
4. customer service
5. transportation

Accessible Canada Act (ACA)

1. employment
2. the built environment
3. information and communication technologies
4. communication, other than information and communication technologies
5. the procurement of goods, services and facilities
6. the design and delivery of programs and services
7. transportation

Framework domains

1. Leadership [and Culture] System
2. Employment/Human Resources System
3. Built Environment System
4. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
5. Communications System
6. Operations System
7. Procurement System
8. Management/Workplace Information System (MIS) System
9. Social Responsibility System

1. Leadership [and Cultural] System

The Leadership System is the central organizing system that must deliver on all functions within the organization, including:

- creating cohesion
- driving vision, direction, strategy, culture
- ensuring alignment; and building accountability
- communicating; engaging
- developing and managing talent; succession planning
- resource allocation
- delivering results

2. Employment/Human Resources System

- This domain includes recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention and career advancement through accommodation, training, and mentorship.
- As a system it is distinct from the human resources departmental role that exists within some organizations.
- It goes beyond the activities of a single department within an organization.

Pulse Check Questionnaire

Pulse check questionnaire overview

- The pulse check questionnaire is designed around the nine-domain framework
- It serves to gauge the sentiments of workplace stakeholders on the level of disability confidence / EDIA maturity of the organization
- It also serves as a starting point to identify areas where the organization is doing well and areas that need attention
- Some areas may be more or less challenging for some workplace parties to assess
- Ideally, the questionnaire should be completed by both workers and managers
- An organizational average score would be identified through response from a number of people in the organization

Domain 1: Leadership System and Organizational Culture

1. Senior leadership in our organization champions the inclusion of persons with disabilities.
2. People managers in our organization are knowledgeable and responsive to disability inclusion.
3. The importance of disability inclusion is communicated effectively throughout our organization.

Domain 2: Employment/Human Resources System

1. Our organization is proactive in ensuring recruitment and hiring practices are inclusive of persons with disabilities.
2. Our organization is committed to the mentorship and advancement of persons with disabilities.
3. People in our organization feel comfortable disclosing their disability status and requesting accommodations.

Pulse Check outputs being planned

Where are you in your Disability Confidence/EDIA Journey?

- Summary score for domain Tips for things to consider to improve a score
- Audit tool to identify specific areas within a domain needing attention
- Best practice guidance
- Implementation guidance for best practices

Pulse Check output example

Domain	Q1	Q2	Q3	Score	Score (%)	Rank
1. Leadership	5	4	4	13/15	87%	Top3
2. Human Resources	4	2	3	9/15	60%	
3. Built Environment	2	2	3	7/15	47%	Bottom 3
4. ICT	4	3	3	10/15	67%	Top 3
5. Other Communications	3	2	2	7/15	47%	Bottom 3
6. Operations	3	4	3	10/15	67%	Top 3
7. Procurement	3	2	3	8/15	53%	Bottom 3
8. MIS	3	3	3	9/15	60%	
9. Social Responsibility	4	5	3	12/15	80%	Top 3
Total				85/135	63%	

Questions

Breakout Activity

What to look forward to

- New Employment standard being released – May 2025
- Standard implementation guidance and webinar – spring 2025
- Framework with Pulse Check Questionnaire – fall 2025
- Supporting tools – 2025 through 2026

THANK YOU!



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All domains and pulse check questions slides follow

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- communicating; engaging
- developing and managing talent; succession planning
- resource allocation
- delivering results

2. Employment/Human Resources System

- This domain includes recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention and career advancement through accommodation, training, and mentorship.
- As a system it is distinct from the human resources departmental role that exists within some organizations.
- It goes beyond the activities of a single department within an organization.

3. Built Environment System

- All environments used by workers should, ideally, be accessible by design.
- Current terminology is “inclusive by design” or “inclusive design.”
- The term is used broadly to describe methodologies to create products, services, operational systems and environments for people of all backgrounds and abilities, addressing the full range of human diversity.
- In this framework, it is used specifically in relation to the built environment.

4. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) System

- ICT is an extensional term for information technology (IT).
- ICT emphasizes the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals) and computers.
- It also includes enterprise software, middleware, storage and audiovisual, that enable users to access, store, transmit, understand and manipulate information, and communicate with each other.
- It includes a vast range of technologies from analytic and workstation software and hardware to telecommunications software and hardware.

5. Communications System other than ICT

- Communications System other than ICT refers to the ways people share and access information and the way they communicate with each other.
- It can include the choice of language used (messaging), use of interpreters, meeting formats, visual communications, and documents.
- It includes how workplace parties communicate with each other and beyond the organization, as well as how they engage in collaborative activities.
- It includes communication norms related to work tasks and activities at the individual and group/team levels.

6. Operations System

- Operations systems refers to the design and performance of the system within an organization that is central to the development and delivery of goods and services for customers/clients.
- It is sometimes called operational performance management (OPM).
- OPM is focused on the organization's ability to improve the responsiveness, throughput, quality, cost, and efficiency of production or service systems.

7. Procurement System

- The procurement system refers to activities related to the procurement of goods, services and facilities. It includes how the system is set up, its principles and how it is operationalized.
- It includes consideration of supplier diversity, and social responsibilities as they pertain to supply chain partners.
- The procurement system is included in this framework because of the importance of taking a disability inclusion lens with all procurement activities, whether they are human resources services, technologies, inputs for the production process, physical space, or office furniture.

8. Management/Workplace Information System (MIS)

- The MIS is a system that provides workplace parties with the necessary information to make decisions about an organization's operations.
- While organizations have different types of information systems, they all share one common goal: to provide workplace parties with the information they need to make better decisions.
- The MIS needs to include information that helps ensure the organization understands the implications of decisions and activities for accessibility, inclusion and belonging of workers.
- Information may include items relevant to all other domains of activity.

9. Social Responsibility System

- Social responsibility extends beyond the walls of the organization.
- It is sometimes referred to as Corporate Social Responsibilities, which is a management concept whereby organizations integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations.
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) is a framework that focuses on how an organization is managing risks and opportunities related to environmental, social, and governance criteria.
- ESG takes the holistic view that sustainability extends beyond just environmental issues.

Pulse check questions on next slides

Domain 1: Leadership System and Organizational Culture

1. Senior leadership in our organization champions the inclusion of persons with disabilities.
2. People managers in our organization are knowledgeable and responsive to disability inclusion.
3. The importance of disability inclusion is communicated effectively throughout our organization.

Answer scale:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree; ☐ Disagree; ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral);
- ☐ Agree; ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ I have no relevant experience to answer this question

Domain 2: Employment/Human Resources System

1. Our organization is proactive in ensuring recruitment and hiring practices are inclusive of persons with disabilities.
2. Our organization is committed to the mentorship and advancement of persons with disabilities.
3. People in our organization feel comfortable disclosing their disability status and requesting accommodations.

Answer scale:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree; ☐ Disagree; ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral);
- ☐ Agree; ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ I have no relevant experience to answer this question

Domain 3: Built Environment System

1. Our organization is proactive about identifying and removing barriers to accessibility in the built environment.
2. Persons with disabilities are actively engaged in the process of identifying and removing barriers in the built environment in our organization.
3. Our organization ensures its emergency preparedness policies are inclusive of person with disabilities.

Answer scale:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree; ☐ Disagree; ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral); ☐ Agree; ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ I have no relevant experience to answer this question

Domain 4: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) System

1. Our organization ensures ICTs conform to the latest accessibility standards.
2. Our organization provide appropriate resources for ICTs and related training to meet the needs of all workers, including persons with disabilities.
3. Persons with disability are regularly consulted to ensure our organization's ICTs meet their needs.

Answer scale for each question:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree; ☐ Disagree; ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral); ☐ Agree; ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ I have no relevant experience to answer this question

Domain 5: Communications System other than ICT

1. Our organization's internal communications, including at meetings, fully accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.
 2. Our organization promotes the use alternative forms of communication (interpreters, braille, visual communications, etc.) to support inclusive communications.
 3. Persons with disabilities are regularly consulted to ensure organizational communications meet their needs.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree; ☐ Disagree; ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral); ☐ Agree; ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ I have no relevant experience to answer this question

Domain 6: Operations System

1. Consideration of the diversity of needs and abilities are central to the development and delivery of our products/services.
 2. Our organization supports marketing its products/services to person with disabilities through inclusive marketing/advertising campaigns.
 3. Our organization takes pride in promoting its diverse workforce with clients/customers.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree; ☐ Disagree; ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral); ☐ Agree; ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ I have no relevant experience to answer this question

Domain 7: Procurement System

1. When our organization acquires goods and services, the needs of persons with disabilities are taken into consideration.
 2. Our organization promotes procurement of supplies and services from suppliers owned/managed by persons with disabilities.
 3. Our organization is committed to fostering diversity and inclusion throughout its supply chain.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree; ☐ Disagree; ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral); ☐ Agree; ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ I have no relevant experience to answer this question

Domain 8: Management/Workplace Information System (MIS)

1. Our organization promotes data and information systems about workforce experiences to inform and strengthen disability inclusion of its workforce.
 2. Our organization promotes data and information systems about products and services to inform disability and accessibility considerations of clients/customers.
 3. Our organization is committed to reporting on its progress in disability inclusion to its stakeholders.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree; ☐ Disagree; ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral); ☐ Agree; ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ I have no relevant experience to answer this question

Domain 9: Social Responsibility System

1. Our organization is proactive in fostering inclusion within the surrounding community.
 2. Our organization encourages partnerships with external disability organizations to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community.
 3. Our organization prioritizes equitable opportunities for marginalized populations over making money.
- ☐ Strongly Disagree; ☐ Disagree; ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral); ☐ Agree; ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ I have no relevant experience to answer this question

THANK YOU!



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