

In Good Company Collective

Community Leadership Group Case Studies

SME Workplace Inclusion - Barriers and Success Research

In Good Company Background

In Good Company envisions a world where diverse women and gender diverse people can lead in any field and experience a positive environment, free of harassment, and supported in their livelihood goals and career aspirations.

In Good Company (IGC) is a collaborative project funded by RBC Foundation that brings together four leading feminist organizations in Canada: Canadian Women's Foundation, Catalyst Canada, Plan International Canada, and YWCA Canada. IGC improves workplaces and employment opportunities for diverse women and gender diverse people in Canada through programs offered by each partner as well as our collaborative work.

After three years of partnership focused on amplifying our shared learnings on the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace, IGC is now turning its focus to supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to increase their DEI efforts. This will help diverse women and gender diverse people succeed in male-dominated industries and will help power an equitable economic recovery.

Research Context

A primary focus of In Good Company is the Community Leadership Group (CLG) of SME trailblazers across the country representing identified leaders in the thriving sectors of Canada's economy.

The research will mobilize their stories to catalyze positive change for employment and leadership opportunities for women and gender diverse people to succeed in traditionally male dominated sectors.

The research will highlight the opportunities, innovations and challenges related to resistance to change, policies that are inadequate or not applied, tokenism, diversity fatigue, to "map out" what could trigger action and threaten progress to identify critical action points for promising practices to make meaningful change for diverse women and gender-diverse people in high growth industries from which they have historically been excluded such as technology, engineering and the skilled trades.

The case studies provide a platform to share and learn current perspectives, trends, issues, gaps and prospects for women's leadership and workforce participation across Canada by learning from champions engaged in this work.

Research Purpose

This research with an intersectional gender-based analysis lens will be a deep dive into barriers to inclusion in SMEs (Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises) and highlighting solutions with case studies that focus on SMEs and showcase In Good Company Community Leadership Group (CLG) members.

This research will profile the work of the CLG members **to share their learning as the case studies will address specific questions about what has worked well in terms of workplace inclusion and what is holding progress back.**

Guiding Questions for Case Studies

ADVANCING GENDER EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Cases studies to answer the pressing need for change(s)

Introduction - Brief introduction to set the context by explaining the importance of gender equity in the workplace, the significance of DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) initiatives, and their relevance in the Canadian context.

Part 1 – After the DEI buzz, where are we at? Snapshot of current trends, issues, opportunities, and gaps in advancing gender equity in the workplace - 3 pages

- **Trends and issues:** Current mindset around DEI in Canada with apparent backlash and risks of pushbacks and regressions with data, statistics, and specific examples
- **Opportunities:** Promising/reassuring initiatives, results, and normalizations of efforts in STEM and trades from public, private, and not for profit sector with examples of programs and high-profile milestones, achievements (policies, public commitments etc.).
- **Gaps:** Persistent challenges and potential root causes for resistance to change financial, cultural, societal factors, inadequate policies or regulations not applied by businesses, insufficient fundings and/or irrelevant government programs.

Part 2 – How does change happen? Snapshot of lessons learned and new approaches in advancing gender equity in the workplace – 1 or 2 pages.

- **Lessons learned:** No hero approach to avoid DEI fatigue, no one shot meetings/trainings.
- **New approaches:** Wrap-around strategies including various aspects of the SME and complementary roles (Cf. Lily Zhen, Deconstructing DEI)

Part 3 - Cases studies to answer the pressing need for Change(s): The collaboration. Case study of 4 feminist trailblazer's collaboration for collective impact– 1 page per partner

- **Introduction:** Mission, objectives, and the overall work done related to gender equity and DEI
- **Context:** Why is there a pressing need for change within your organization?
- **History, gaps, and opportunities:** What was the main issue at hand? What opportunity for improvement did you/has been identified?
- **Decisions and actions:** How was it addressed/How did you contribute to the change? With examples like new policies, new initiatives, or advocating for change internally and/or externally
- **Roles:** Who was involved and how? Responsibilities and unique strengths
- **Success:** Any valuable knowledge, acquired capacities, or emerging resources to share with others within your sector?
- **What's next?**

Part 4 - Cases studies to answer the pressing need for Change(s): The private sector, moving beyond the large corporation. Case study of 6 trailblazer SMES, part of the 99.8% of businesses in Canada – 1 page per CLG member

- **Introduction:** Mission, objectives of the business, geography, demographic data – number of employees, and stats on diversity
- **Context:** Why is there a pressing need for change within your business/sector/industry?
- **History, gaps, and opportunities:** What was the main issue at hand? What opportunity for improvement did you/has been identified?

- **Decisions and actions:** How was it addressed/How did you contribute to the change? With examples like new policies, new initiatives, or advocating for change internally and/or externally.

- **Roles:** Who was involved and how? Responsibilities and unique strengths

- **Resources:** What is the investment - financial, human resource, and/or time invested in your DEI initiatives?

- **Success:** Any valuable knowledge, acquired capacities, or emerging resources to share with others within your industry/sector?

- **What's next?**

Part 4 – Conclusion et recommandations – To be discussed

Design of the pages- suggestions for a more engaging document:

- *Compelling quotes, relevant images, and informative infographics*
- *Highlighting their point of intervention: if awareness/ recruiting and hiring /retaining and belonging /growing and promoting / influencing*
- *Highlighting difficulty of implementation and speed of implementation*

Deliverables

Deliverables due by end of December 2023

- 1 case study profile per CLG and IGC member (~10 case studies)
- 1 overall summary document outlining key themes and recommendations to inform the work of the IGC partners and directions for the collective action of the CLG

Budget

\$10,000 (including HST)

Contact information

Please email info@igcompany.ca



Please include in the following in the proposal

Please respond to the RFP with:

- Team Bios
- Detailed work plan
- Timeline (deadline for deliverables end of December 2023)
- Budget

Response date

Please respond by:

Wednesday, August 23, 2023