

# FOCUS AND FRAME IT: UNLOCKING OUR INCLUSIVE CITIES

## The Focus:

We live in the most diverse region in the world, but senior leadership (e.g. in executive teams, boardrooms, and elected offices) still does not reflect that. What are the barriers preventing diverse populations from accessing senior leadership roles, and how might we remove these barriers to inclusion?

## The Frame:

### Why inclusion is an issue

The GTHA's population is very diverse...

- According to Statistics Canada, over half of the population belongs to a visible minority group.<sup>17</sup>
- Statistics Canada projects that by 2036, between 77% and 81% of the GTA's population will be an immigrant or the child of an immigrant.<sup>18</sup>
- Racialized people account for 78% of Markham's population, 73% of Brampton's population, and 57% of Mississauga's population.<sup>19</sup>

...but our leadership doesn't reflect this. Diversity hasn't meant inclusivity.

- Racialized employees remain concentrated in entry-level and middle-management positions.<sup>20</sup>
- A 2017 study by the Ryerson Diversity Institute revealed that in the GTA, racialized people accounted for just 17.2% of seats in agencies, boards, and commissions, 23.1% of professionals in education, 12.3% of people in the volunteer sector, 9% of public sector staff, and 29.8% of elected officials.<sup>21</sup>
- Racialized people make up only 3.3% of corporate boards and 9.2% of the private sector's senior management.<sup>22</sup>

There is a gender imbalance, particularly in the corporate sector.

- Women hold only 16.4% of all board seats in Canada and 28.4% of the board seats on S&P/TSX 60 companies.<sup>23</sup>
- There's a "leaky pipeline" problem for women across employment levels. A global study found that women are 60% less likely than men to advance from director to VP.



## Challenging the myths - The “Status Know”

**Myth:** “Senior leadership looks the way it does because the people there worked harder than others.”

**Reality:** Many companies hire and promote based on “cultural fit”. However, hiring for cultural fit has been shown to emphasize unconscious biases in hiring decisions, diminishing opportunities for racialized people to join and integrate into workplaces.<sup>24</sup>

**Myth:** “Conversations about diversity and inclusion are ‘fluffy’ – they’re nice to have, but not as pressing compared to other workplace priorities.”

**Reality:** Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians.<sup>25</sup>

**Reality:** Companies in the bottom quartile for gender and racial diversity are statistically less likely to achieve above-average financial returns than average companies (i.e. bottom-quartile companies are lagging rather than merely not leading).<sup>26</sup>

## Solution Spotlight:

onBoard Canada provides online, self-paced, accessible governance training to organizations across the country and also operates a matching program that connects non-profit and public sector boards with individuals from groups that have been historically excluded from governance positions.

### Discussion Questions

1. If you’re comfortable, share how you identify yourself. This could be in terms of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, age, educational status, immigration status, language, or other ways you think about your identity. How has your identify shaped your education or career?
2. What barriers to growth (specific to under-represented populations) have you witnessed or personally experienced in the workplaces? How do these barriers impact the employee, team, and organization as a whole?
3. What needs to be done to remove these barriers so that senior leadership in our region can better represent our population? What successful solutions have you seen in the past? What can we do as individuals to help remove barriers?

## Action:

To get involved in more thought-provoking dialogue about this and other issues, join the [Emerging Leaders Network](https://leadership.civicaaction.ca/ELN) (leadership.civicaaction.ca/ELN) It’s free to join! Through the ELN, you can attend events on city-building topics like inclusion, participate in skills-building workshops, network, and get to know fellow emerging leaders who are invested in building a better city for all.