

Phase II of the Equity Project Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. *What is the genesis and rationale of the Equity Project?*

The Equity Project was initiated by OLIP to respond to one of the priorities of the [Ottawa Immigration Strategy](#), launched in June 2011. This priority calls us all (the Ottawa Community) to help social service organizations to adapt to changes in their constituencies and client structures. Specifically, the priority urges us to create mechanisms, structures and relationships to help social service organizations to design programs, governance structures, and policies that are inclusive of immigrants and ethno-cultural minority communities. (See page 55 of the Ottawa Immigration Strategy). The rationale behind this priority is based on our collective recognition that:

- i. Our community is changing rapidly and significantly through sustained immigration.
- ii. On the other hand, institutional change is a slow process and requires attention, support, new knowledge, and supportive relationships.
- iii. Ottawa's growing immigrant and ethno-cultural minority communities experience isolation and exclusion from public service, opportunities, and decision making structures.
- iv. Many local institutions have experimented with ways of being more welcoming and inclusive of immigrants. The insights gained by these institutions can benefit more novice organizations that are interested and willing to be more welcoming to immigrants. On the other hand, even experienced organizations continue to experience challenges and would need assistance in validating successes and learning new approaches.

Based on OLIP Partners' collective recognition of the above, a few partners have worked together to pool their resources and design Ottawa's first ever Equity Project. See Question 4 for who are the initial partners.

2. *When did the Equity Project begin?*

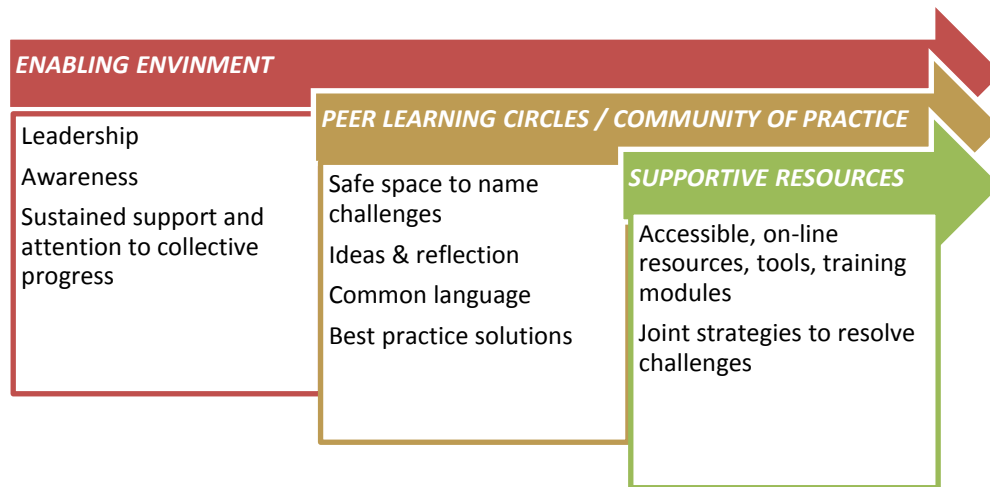
- The Equity Project was launched in April 2012.
- Phase I was completed in June 2013.

- Phase II has begun in August 2013, thanks to new, three-year funding by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

3. *What specific results are being pursued by the Equity Project?*

The aim of the Equity Project is to strengthen the capacity of social service organizations to establish and achieve goals related to equity and inclusion.

To achieve this goal, an asset-based, peer learning approach is combined with the promotion of collaborative leadership and the reach of technology to help sustain an enabling environment for organizations to adapt and innovate their practice and systems.



In Phase I of the equity project (April 2012 – June 2013), the following results were achieved:

- Partnership is developed;
- Partners’ trajectories towards inclusion are documented;
- Peer learning circles are established – these led to shared understanding on drivers, challenges, and tools;
- Academic seminar on “Building Sustained Capacity for Welcoming Organizations” is held in collaboration with University of Ottawa researchers;
- A summary report of the work of the Equity Project is launched on June 25, 2013. This report, entitled “[Better Together: Cultivating Equitable and Inclusive Organizations](#)” is on the OLIP Website: www.olip-plio.ca.

In Phase II, thanks to a three-year funding by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we will establish a **Community of Practice on Equity and Inclusion**. Our work in Phase II will build on the accomplishments of Phase I and introduce the use of technology to our methodology.

4. *Who is involved?*

The initial, lead partners were OLIP, Centretown Community Health Centre, and the University of Ottawa (Centre on Governance).

These founding partners then engaged selected local organizations from settlement, health, social, and education sectors, who were seen to have already done a lot of work in building

internal capacity for equity and inclusion. The project then launched with the following eleven partner organizations (listed in alphabetical order):

- Centretown Community Health Centre;
- Children's Aid Society
- City of Ottawa
- City for All Women Initiative
- OLIP
- Ottawa Carleton District School Board
- Ottawa Public Library
- Pinecrest- Queensway Community Health Centre
- University of Ottawa
- Vanier Community Services Centre
- Youth Services Bureau

5. Where does funding for the Equity Project come from?

Phase I (April 2012 – June 2013) is funded by resources pooled by the lead partners of the Equity Project: OLIP, Centretown Community Health Centre, and the University of Ottawa (Centre on Governance). Phase II (August 2013 – August 2016) is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

6. Can others join?

Yes. Any local, social service organization can benefit from the Equity Project, its learning circles and on-line resources and tools. For information on how to join, please contact Hindia Mohamoud, OLIP Director at hindia@olip-plio.ca.

7. What are the next steps?

The implementation of Phase II of the Equity Project is already underway. We are now creating an interdisciplinary Project Team, comprised of a project coordinator, an academic expert on equity and inclusion, a facilitator of adult learning dialogues and organizational change process, and a web technologist. Watch for our interim reports on progress.