Questioning through an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lens

Edmonton Chamber
of Voluntary Organizations

The purpose of these questions is to foreground equity, diversity, and inclusion into discussions and considerations as they relate to various ECVO policy and practice contexts. They are meant to highlight presences and absences or perspectives and groups of people, in this case those who have historically experienced marginalization and discrimination.[1] The application of an equity lens enables the board and staff of ECVO to interrupt taken-for-granted notions of 'best practices' and to highlight how these might be complicit in the reproduction of inequity.

These questions do not exhaust all possibilities nor do they specify what course of action to take. [2]

Questions for reflection and analysis	Example Questions			Examples of EDI Actions (Addressing individual behaviours, systemic issues, and discourses/norms)
	Diversify Our Leadership	Engage Our Community	Grow Our Organization	
What is the level of readiness? Are board and staff members: • developing their individual and collective awareness as it relates to inequity and existing social biases? • developing a clarity of purpose towards achieving greater equity, diversity, and inclusion at ECVO? • honing their critical thinking skills, that is cultivating that habit for noticing absences and gaps?	Do board members feel prepared to lead the organization's EDI work? How do board members openly demonstrate their understanding of and commitment to EDU goals	Is the organization willing to openly state its EDI values, goals and commitments to the community? Is the organization prepared to devote time and resources to building relationships with the community that are not simply transactional?	Are organizational leaders prepared to actively communicate their EDI vision to their staff and provide financial and human resource support for EDI initiatives? Are staff provided with the training and time they need to continuously learn and build their EDI skills?	Board and staff commit to ongoing education as it relates to EDI. Public statements of commitment to action with accountabilities and timelines. These should be realistic. Ongoing review of key policies and practices to ensure they align with EDI principles.
Considerations when decisions are being made? • What assumptions underpin current ways of doing things? ○ Who does this policy, practice, system benefit? Who does it exclude?	What is needed to ensure the Board has the most current information available from a variety of perspectives? How will Board recruitment practices be modified to ensure greater diversity?	How can you meaningfully include members of equity-seeking groups in framing and defining the decisions to be made?	Are opportunities to take on developmental projects offered equitably to staff? Do staff from equity-seeking groups have the opportunity to learn from assignments that stretch their skills or demonstrate their capacities?	Begin to gather baseline data relating to equity deserving groups. Develop a Board Recruitment Plan with short, medium, and long term goals to diversify the Board.

[1] BIPOC, disabled, and LGBTQ2S+ communities.

[2] Another rubric that can inform broader equity audits can be found in the Government of Canada's GBA+ framework. It includes another set of reflective questions that, while privileging gender, also includes various matrices for taking into consideration other marginalized communities.

What values guide current thinking (that is, what is considered to be most important)?
 	
  ○ "As long as 'this' works fr the majority."
 	
  ○ What kinds of outcomes have current practices/ policies resulted in?
	What will the Board do to ensure that the environment is equitable and inclusive to new members?		When were existing policies and practices developed and by whom?	Revisit hiring practices to ensure that position descriptions and recruitment processes follow current EDI practices.

How is the decision being made? • Is there a conscious effort made to ensure participatory decision-making and to mitigate relations of power?	How will the Board assess information from equity-seeking groups? How can the Board ensure that decisions don't discredit the experiences of equity-seeking groups, because they seem unfamiliar or unlike their own experience of the topic?	How can the community/ communities be brought into the decision-making process in a meaningful way?	How are staff included in decision-making? Is this power shared equally and are staff from equity-seeking groups included, but not overburdened with the emotional labour of representation? What is needed to consider EDI in organizational decisions?	For example: Provide pathways for feedback that are safe and confidential. Continuously scan for representational practices that reflect a range of diverse perspectives and experiences.
Who is making the decision? • Whose voices, experiences, and perspectives are absent but which are necessary to evaluate the possible effects of a decision? • How will you ensure meaningful, respectful input from BIPOC[3], disabled, and LGBTQ2S+ communities?	Does the board selection process include people with diverse backgrounds and experiences? Are they given tools and training to be able to assess how bias can affect the selection process?	What mechanisms exist for gathering input from the community? How can the community shape the organization's decisions?	Does the hiring board include diverse members? What steps can you take to ensure that applicants from equity-seeking groups are assessed fairly and equitably? What mechanisms exist for staff to contribute their ideas and perspectives?	For example: Develop and implement a plan to include members of the LGBTQ2S+, BIPOC communities to provide feedback, direction, etc. until great diversity is achieved within the board and staff. Board and staff learn about equitable and inclusive recruitment, retention, and advancement practices.

[3] Black, Indigenous, People of Colour.

What are the effects of this decision on equity? Inclusion? Diversity? Will this decision/action increase (or make way for an increase in) the numbers and/or influence if historically marginalized people at ECVO? • Will this enable the Board and staff to enact inclusivity? • Does this amend recruitment practices as they relate to the Board? Staff? • Will this result in greater membership diversity? How will this decision advance, centre, resource, and/or amplify historically marginalized communities as related to ECVO[4]? • Are resources being developed or modified that address communities currently not represented by or active in ECVO?	How/Does/Will the Board communicate a commitment to explicitly monitoring progress on EDI goals? How/Does/Will the Board communicate accountabilities relating to EDI?	Are there mechanisms in place to measure progress on EDI goals? How are leaders held accountable for achieving these goals?	What strategies might help to regularly measure and report on EDI goals?	For example: A decision/action is developed to increase representation of historically marginalized communities on the Board, staff, and/or membership. Decision makers will articulate how they intend for this decision to have a positive effect on equity and/or diversity and/or inclusion at ECVO. Decision makers will report on effects relating to inclusion and diversity, including unintended negative effects. Board and staff will support education and communication practices that shift organizational norms relating to the importance and fairness of rigorously attending to EDI.
Tensions Efficiency and EDI effectiveness may not always be co-terminus: when will equity take precedence over efficiency? What will be the rationale for making some decisions that are counter to the claims of efficiency?	If pressure is placed upon decision makers to move quickly or for the majority, how will decision makers justify proceeding in a way that privileges equity over expediency or efficiency?			For example: The organization clearly and publicly communicates its commitment to and prioritization of EDI. This could be part of its web presence, AGM presentation, etc.

[4] BIPOC, disabled, queer/LGBTQ2S+, and women.