



DiverseCity

THE GREATER TORONTO  
LEADERSHIP PROJECT

a partnership of Maytree and the  
Greater Toronto CivicAction Alliance



## DiverseCity Counts

Features research that measures the GTA's  
progress to diversify its leadership

[www.diversecitytoronto.ca/counts](http://www.diversecitytoronto.ca/counts)

# LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR: BABY STEPS, BIG STRIDES, AND BOLD STANCES

Research by Dr. Chris Fredette

in brief (5) June 2012

# Why Diversity in Leadership Matters

Leaders shape our society and the institutions that will guide us into the future. They make decisions which affect a significant number of people. Leaders also symbolize who belongs and who doesn't. With an inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to lead, we can truly realize our full potential.

Ratna Omidvar and John Tory  
Co-Chairs, DiverseCity:  
The Greater Toronto Leadership Project



## Past DiverseCity Counts Research

# A Snapshot of Diverse Leadership

This multi-year research project, undertaken by the Diversity Institute for DiverseCity Counts in 2009, 2010 and 2011, studies visible minority representation in leadership in the Greater Toronto Area in elected office, education, and in the public, corporate and voluntary sectors. In the spring of 2011, the research examined 3,330 leaders in Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Markham and Richmond Hill and found that 14.5% were visible minorities, compared with 49.5% of the population in the area studied.

## The Business Case

### \* Diverse leadership results in:

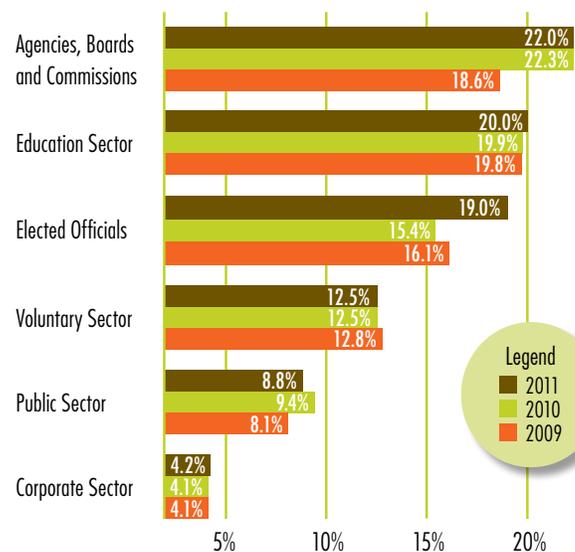
- Links to new global and domestic markets
- Increased innovation and creativity
- Better access to talent here and abroad
- Strengthened cohesion and social capital

\* *The Value of Diverse Leadership. Conference Board of Canada, 2008.*

## Diversity in the Nonprofit Sector

- improves decision-making
- helps organizations better serve diverse populations
- improves fundraising and increases membership
- improves the reputation of the organization
- is a reflection of the sector's values

## Visible Minority Representation Over Three Years By Sector



This research was prepared by Wendy Cukier, Margaret Yap, Kristen Aspevig and Lennie Lejasisaks at the Diversity Institute at Ryerson University.



# DiverseCity Counts Featured Report

## LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR: BABY STEPS, BIG STRIDES, AND BOLD STANCES

This research, conducted by Assistant Professor Chris Fredette at Carleton University, examines board diversity in the nonprofit sector, as well as the impact of this diversity.

This research finds that visible minorities continue to be underrepresented in nonprofit boards in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). While visible minorities make up 40% of the GTA's population, of the 4,254 board positions examined only 15.6% are held by visible minorities. The research also finds that all sub-groups of visible minorities are underrepresented.

The good news is that a large number of organizations appear to recognize the importance and value of diversity. Of the more than 420 organizations that responded to our surveys, 77.9% have at least one visible minority on their board. A full 43.8% report having a formal working definition of diversity, and of these, 83.6% include ethnicity, race and colour, 49.4% include country of origin, and 36.3% include immigrant and refugee status in their definition.

### More diversity equals better governance

Our survey asked organizations to describe the effects that diversity on boards can have on the board's performance. Overwhelmingly, respondents to the survey – who were primarily executive directors and board chairs – said that a diverse board contributes to overall board effectiveness by, for example, safeguarding and fulfilling the mission of the organization and enhancing fiduciary oversight. Board diversity also improves stakeholder relationships, increases the organization's responsiveness to the community and their clients, and brings fresh perspectives to decision-making.

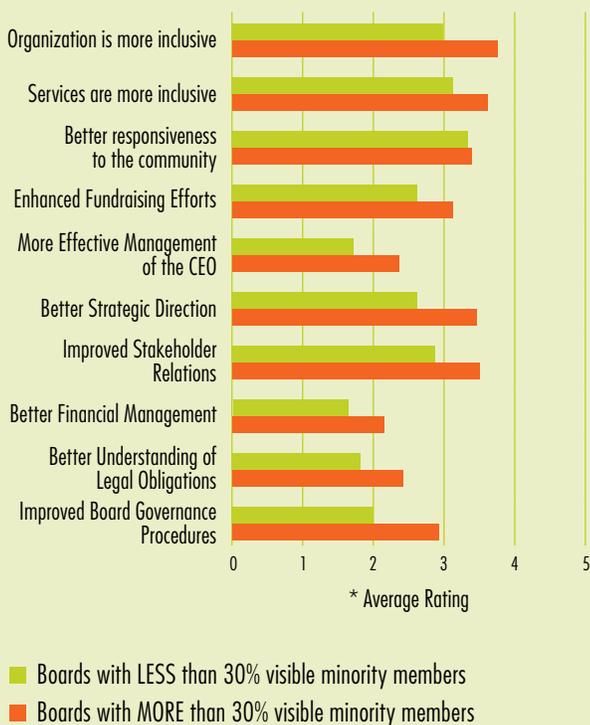
What's striking is that the more diverse an organization's board, the more likely they are to report benefits of diversity. This finding suggests there is strength in numbers. Once a critical mass of 30% is reached, there will be an increase in the benefits of diversity experienced by the organization.

### Practical recommendations for a more diverse and effective board

The full report includes a number of recommendations for organizations that wish to diversify their board. These include:

- Make diversity a strategic priority and set goals. Track these goals by asking current and potential board members about their ethnic and racial background. Use a third party, such as DiverseCity onBoard, to access new networks whenever possible.
- Align diversity efforts to the organization's mission and mandate to ensure buy-in from the board and senior staff. Understand and communicate the benefits of diversity in leadership both inside and outside of the organization.
- Diversity on boards does not require compromising on technical or other skills. Recruit from the large and talented pool of immigrants and visible minorities in the region.
- Support the full inclusion of new members through the board's policies and procedures. Organizations should ask new and diverse board members to sit on or lead special committees and projects that go beyond addressing diversity issues.
- Ensure a critical mass to reap the full benefits of diverse boards.

### Reported Benefits to Diversity on Boards



\* respondents were asked to rate the benefits of diversity on boards from 0 (No Impact) to 5 (Very Much).

# DiverseCity: The Greater Toronto Leadership Project

The Greater Toronto Area is the most ethnically and racially diverse region in Canada yet there is a striking lack of diversity at the top of our corporate, public and nonprofit organizations.

This is a missed opportunity.

DiverseCity is building a more prosperous region by changing the face of leadership through nine practical and measurable initiatives.

## We will:

### STRENGTHEN OUR INSTITUTIONS

**DiverseCity onBoard** connects highly qualified candidates from visible minority and under-represented immigrant communities with governance positions in agencies, boards, commissions and nonprofit organizations across the GTA.

**DiverseCity School4Civics** equips leaders to run for elected office or manage campaigns.

**DiverseCity BuildingBlocks** offers a civic literacy primer to help leaders in low-income communities make their neighbourhoods stronger.

**DiverseCity Voices** is an online database of subject matter experts from under-represented ethnic or racial groups that is enriching our newspapers, magazines, radio and television. More than 300 leaders are ready to speak to GTA media.

**DiverseCity Speakers** is an online database for event organizers looking for diverse spokespeople and presenters.

### EXPAND OUR NETWORKS

**DiverseCity Fellows** brings the next generation of city-builders together to become better collaborative leaders who can work across sectors to improve our region.

### ADVANCE OUR KNOWLEDGE

**DiverseCity Advantage** builds the body of knowledge on the economic and social benefits of diversity in leadership.

**DiverseCity Perspectives** promotes dialogue on leadership and diversity to catalyze shifts in how leaders are chosen, shaped, and imagined.

### TRACK OUR PROGRESS

**DiverseCity Counts** is a research initiative that highlights the GTA's progress toward building a more diverse leadership.

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For more on  
DiverseCity:  
The Greater Toronto  
Leadership Project go to:  
[diversecitytoronto.ca](http://diversecitytoronto.ca)



Maytree promotes equity and prosperity through leadership building.



Catalyzing collective leadership on tough issues and big opportunities facing the Greater Toronto region.



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