



ActionDignity: Equity in the 2019 Federal Election
October 19, 2019

Table of Contents

Keynote by Teresa Woo-Paw	2
Breakout Sessions Part 1	4
Inclusion of People with Disabilities	6
Ethnocultural Inclusion	9
Inclusion of Youth.....	11
Breakout Sessions Part 2	13
Indigenous Inclusion.....	13
2SLGBTQ Inclusion	15
Human Rights	16



Keynote:	Teresa Woo-Paw
Topics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of voting • The process of voting • The way to mobilize voters

Why is voting important?

- Freedom
- Democracy
- Accountability
- It's a right and a duty
- It's a privilege
- To have a voice
- It is action against inaction

Does voting impact change?

Candidates receive report of who voted and who didn't - but don't know who you voted for. This voting or not voting could impact which areas elected officials will pay more attention to.

Voting is a way to convey to candidates which issues we think are the most important.

Is it important to also be aware of the issues and groups that aren't being included in the campaign agenda. Examples of these in the 2019 Federal Election are:

- Indigenous
- Racism
- Senior
- Equity groups in general
- Politicians not discussing the issues and violence that Kashmiri people are experiencing



How can future voters become informed?

- Listening to news
- Lots of resources that use plain language to explain voting
- Constant community outreach
- Knowing how many parties are in the riding
 - Green
 - NDP
 - Peoples Party
 - Conservatives
 - Liberal
 - Marxist /Leninist Party

Some important information to note:

- You don't need to be registered to be able to vote
 - Registration in an election not much different from other types of registration that people have done before
 - If you don't have proper identification, you can use a utility bill.

What is the voting process? More information can be found on the Elections Canada website)

- Enter polling place (they will direct you to the correct table for you to vote at)
- Show proof of id and address
- Election workers will initial ballot and then hand it to you
- Vote behind the screen
 - You can only choose one option
 - Put an X in the circle
- Return ballot to workers
- Put the ballot in the box

People will more often vote for the party rather than for the candidate themselves.

What accommodation can the polling station provide?

- You can bring a piece of paper to the polling station - this can have information on who you plan to vote for.



What accommodation does the polling station not provide?

- No one else can go behind the polling screen to help someone vote on the ballot.
- Some of the ballots do not have braille on them.
- The ballots do not have symbols or colors on them.

It's important to mobilize because of the underrepresented communities that are living in poverty. People often don't have time to think about who they are going to vote for. We must help voters get to the polling places (e.g. bus tickets)

How do we mobilize voters?

- People need to know why they are voting. What is the purpose of voting?
- Making voting a personal thing that people feel connected to.
- Explaining how voting will impact immigrants and their children.
- Letting people know that they have a right to vote and that employers are required to allow them to have time to vote.

What are potential barriers to voting?

- Language
- Culture
- Transportation
- Some groups did not always have the right to vote.
 - In Canada, all Indigenous people were only given the right in 1960. This can cause people to take voting lightly because they were not taught about the importance of it
- People don't trust politicians
- Some people have a fear of voting

What is our role in community mobilization?

- Voting could help us to access elected officials
- We have an advantage/opportunity to reach people that are missed by traditional campaigns.
- As community members we have a role to play in getting people to vote.



- Platforms and policies are sometimes not community friendly/culturally appropriate even though those policies will have an impact on the community.
 - This is something that is important to challenge.

How do we get people to vote?

- Transportation to polls is very important
- Allowing people to have an opportunity to practice voting (Democratic Engagement Exchange has a vote popup station)
- Providing food
- Dinner and then voting
- Calling people
- Encouraging people to be involved in the formal political process
- Mobilization is also about influencing policies and change
- Our governments do not look like us - and therefore they need our input
- Voting is associated with many positive benefits
- Having campaigns in different languages
- We need to look at culturally specific strategies to get communities to engage in civic life
- We need to work collaboratively to mobilize communities
- Can use this to engage with elected officials more effectively

We need to look into voter suppression. A recent example of this is Elections Canada not providing enough ballots to Indigenous communities.



Breakout Session:	Brad Robertson
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of People with Disabilities

What issues would you like to discuss, regarding access to voting?

- Mobility
- Access
- C-train stations should have ramps, not all of them have them
- Should be more assistance for those who don't understand the process
- Trauma-informed facilitation
- Are the staff at elections equipped to help people with PTSD? Anxiety disorders, depression?

What would increase access to voting?

- Voting booths used to be in hospitals, for advanced voting. Elections Canada - went to the hospital and allowed people to vote
 - This would be beneficial to bring back
- Braille on the ballots
 - Were removed because they were given reading devices/technology (ie. Phones)
 - Why take away one thing when one thing is added?

Why don't some people vote?

- 9M Canadians failed to vote in the last election; 700,000 Albertans did not exercise their right to vote last election
 - Some people are indifferent to voting
- Interpreters aren't always provided
 - Voting can be inaccessible
 - Safety is an issue, regarding information being shared involuntarily with family members
- Personal safety is endangered by sharing personal information by Elections Canada; the Privacy Act should protect information
- Incompetency in front line at Elections
- No polling stations in remote areas



- A gap is when folks from remote areas move into urban cities get lost in the system, in process
- People with disabilities are a very vulnerable group, discriminated by stigma; not being thought of by government
- Not knowing rights
 - disability payments, child welfare, post-partum depression
- Lack of awareness about mental health as disability qualification can be very challenging
- Stereotyped for being on disability
- People do not want to complain

There is a duty to accommodate within the workplace, but many people do not know that they have this right.

Residential school - systemically racist institution

- Qualified, educated person is discriminated against due to Disability status
- Trusted, bondable, skilled people are discriminated against once they are on autistic spectrum
- Traumatized people are only given the same spaces with expectations of "normalcy"
- There is a duty to accommodate people with specific needs
- The government has no accountability
- The Human Rights Act does not enforce policies

Govt is looking at Disabilities as disability, but they need to look at THEIR abilities to make polling stations accessible

- Being slotted into labels
- What's worse? Being a number or being a label?

What are ways we, as a community, can contribute to being more inclusive?

- The government needs to ask "What needs to be at a polling station to be accessible?"
- Greed is a factor; as to why people aren't being picked up to be brought to polling stations

Certain parties are Coordinating rides



- Wheelchair accessible is still a challenge even on a nice day
- Rides should be available for all people
- Most of this is volunteer

What are the visible and invisible barriers to Elections?

- Schools rarely bring up the voting process



Breakout Session:	Teresa Woo-Paw
Topic:	• Ethnocultural Inclusion

Why don't people vote?

- Distrust in the system- people don't trust politician
 - When in power they just benefit themselves
- People are busy because of their jobs
- Location of polling places - not accessible
- Language barrier
 - Political information is often not translated to other languages
- Lack or low level of awareness - don't know why voting is important
 - Need to educate communities on this
 - Deal with issues, perceptions and beliefs
 - Connected historically to their home countries
- Low literacy levels
- People are afraid of voting (for example, people in Afghanistan have lost fingers just for voting)
- Some women were denied right to vote in their home countries - need to be aware of the importance of voting in Canada
- People feel isolated, helpless
- No Braille and colours on ballots
- Schools have no representation of voting or voting processes at institutions

What is the non-profits role in voting?

- Raise capabilities
- Education for civic engagement especially with multicultural communities
- Bringing communities together
- Action Dignity /non-profit organizations needs to be proactive and work with limited resources
- Spend time to listen to communities and to identify factors and to come up with a plan



How can we change this?

- Campaign sessions in other languages
- More political rallies and campaigns in community centres
- LEAD for change using broker's strategy, talk with brokers to talk to communities
- Color coding, symbols for different parties to help communities with language barriers
- Braille on ballots
- Mobilizing people to vote - tell them what is going to be changed if they will vote for a candidate
- Look at one important thing that each community is missing, they want to talk about
- Encouraging seniors to be part of the community, increasing engagement with them
- Online information available in English- how to translate and make available to communities
- Validating information for seniors, women, people with limited education
- Provide information to communities on how and why voting is important.
- Strategize before an election has even started
- Need year-round civic engagement
- Mobilizing seniors so that their families will vote
- Need to learn as voters how to engage with candidates and elected officials
- Present ideas in creative ways so that people are interested
- Come up with a strategy for increasing voter turnout and present it to Elections Canada
- Services should be provided according to communities' needs
- Providing opportunities for political figures to engage with communities about politics - rather than just inviting them to community celebrations
- Need to learn how to effectively lobby the government
- Engage with politicians at all levels
- We need to teach them about the issues that are affecting specific communities



Breakout Session:	Kim Chambers
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of youth

Suggestions/Issues

- All schools should have mock voting stations to pre-emptively prepare youth.
- Younger people don't value their own opinions sometimes; "adulating" is overwhelming and many young people feel intimidated by "starting" adult things - including voting. *"If you're exposed to voting at 18, you're exposed too late."*
- Many youth are informed, but apathetic.
 - We need to ask youth what will help to make them feel engaged
- We are in a digital age, people need to be more informed.
- One of the ways we can break that barrier of ignorance and apathy is incorporating politics in everyday life. *"We've separated politics and voting as an adult issue - and not a human one."*
- One of the best thing about giving politicians a personality is it's no longer facts and policy, it's likeability and youth often gravitate towards the charisma that a politician may exhibit; more personal."
- If we go out of our way as civically engaged youth to reach all young people, we can close the gateway between formal policy and the common young person who is eligible to vote.
- Having senior parents, I know that it's harder to learn English the older you are. Language accommodations are a necessity.
- Voting can be generational; the younger people in my family don't value voting because their parents didn't.
- What made me vote the first time was:
 - 2016 American election, my dad always talked about it.
 - My school emphasized the importance of voting, my friends were civically engaged. *"Us influencing our parents."* *Changing generational apathy
 - I was a history buff. Seeing the impacts of politics in history, I was more convinced then ever to vote for the future.

Why are we voting to maintain human rights?



- It's hard to see the power and influence of a vote, but we see it all the time in peaceful protest.
- We underestimate how much young people know. The voting age is arbitrary.
- Media literacy: youth have spent their whole lives with technology and that is a double-edged sword with many messages that may be harmful to youth, but in turn with the convenience of the whole world at your fingertips.

Approach the subject with compassion. Media literacy and lack thereof is apparent in the generational gap, be nice to your parents about computers.

- We need to change the way people are educated. A lot of campaigning is based in fear, but we need facts, policy. Etc.
- A lot of immigrant parents feel detached from politics because they come here to leave their children with the intention of returning to their home country after their kids are old enough.
- A lot of immigrant parents brought their children here to have a better life. A better life starts with representation, which starts with voting.



Breakout Session:	Michelle Robinson & Brenda Royale
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Inclusion

Why are you interested in this conversation?

- Care about inclusion of indigenous and other ethnocultural minorities
- Not enough of the indigenous population are included
- As an indigenous person, finds that not enough indigenous people are out voting because they may not be aware of the system, process, what campaign platforms offer; here to get more information
- Indigenous issues are One of the most important issues that don't get enough attention
- I don't know how to participate for people who murdered and killed and now used as a political tool
- Bridging the connection between Indigenous and immigrants
- As a parent, would like to be part of the solution and not having her children ask the same questions
- Interested in native history, as the real owners of this land; sad to know they are the ones to really have suffered & mistreated; the philosophies of the indigenous should be adopted, not ignored; the real owners of this country
- I want to understand more about indigenous culture; learn more as an individual and ActionDignity and how we can support the TRC
- Although indigenous inclusion is seen as the marginalized issue, this is the CORNERSTONE of all other issues
- Indigenous from Pakistan and facing similar issues; custodians of an ancient civilization; here to support the initiatives of self-determination, right to health, and good quality of life
- Tired of blanket statements of inclusion; would like to become agents of change, which begins with education and open lenses I am not aware of

Why don't some people vote?

- FNMI were ONLY given the vote in 1969
- The impacts of residential schools



- Immigrants & indigenous people have language barriers & lack a sense of belonging
- Before we had rights to vote THIS, sitting in this circle, sharing space would have been illegal
 - It was illegal for Indigenous people to gather in large groups - this impacts politics today
- Intergenerational trauma
 - Impacts of 60s scoop
 - Indigenous people disconnected from a sense of belonging
 - It takes time to recover, by sharing stories; by reaching out to other cultures
- Indigenous voices have been intentionally silenced

What would increase access to voting?

- More ballots on reserves
- Education on why voting is important
- Opportunities for people to heal
- Providing opportunities for Indigenous people to discuss the human rights abuses that they're experiencing

What are ways we, as a community, can contribute to being more inclusive?

- "Hollywood Indians" - getting invited to dance, I feel tokenized to dance or to see our art
 - Indigenous people need to be invited to events in a way that isn't tokenistic
 - We need to give Indigenous people a platform
- We can't have reconciliation if we can't have Truth
- If you're going to invite me out, you're going to be scared because I'm here to decolonize
- We need more opportunities to come together, learn, and be connected with each other
 - **Book Club: Chapters and Chat at 12CSI** that is free Monday nights, at Forest Lawn Library
 - Podcast: **Native Calgarian**
 - APTN has a series going to discuss Why We don't vote?
 - Michelle Robinson Email: michelle.yycdene@gmail.com



- ResidentialEd: Canadian Cultural Mosaic Foundation: did a project on cultural appropriation

To advertise on her website

We're trying to stop the cycles ourselves, testament to their strength, resilience

The launch of the website is next October 25, Friday, 6pm at the Penbrooke community association

There is also a healing circle

- Meditation circle really helped to bring us together as one race, to get the dignity back, because there are 7 generations,
- At the Baaht-mahan community centre



Breakout Session	Eva Legare-Tremblay
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2SLGBT Inclusion

Why don't people vote?

- Social isolation
- Harassment
- People sometimes can't medically transition because of their family's reaction
- There are politicians who are allies, but not many who include those rights in platforms and policy.
 - Some people may not feel that they have any party to vote for
- We need to have a concrete process for people who are changing their name or gender, one that doesn't require you to out yourself to an office or worker.
- Many trans people don't know how to go about name changes, pronoun acknowledgement etc.
- There are issues with voting before you even leave the house. Many people on the spectrum suffer with body dysmorphia, making voting an impossible task.
- There are also issues when you leave the house. Transphobia, homophobia, discrimination of any kind, this can be especially difficult for people at voting stations, where people of all views gather.
- *One of the things trans people can do is change their name, confirm their pronouns, etc.
- Trans people may be required to obtain or receive their old name or sex on any confirmation document etc. which can be difficult for people who are trying to forget an identity that they feel doesn't fit for them.

What would increase access to voting?

- There needs to be safe resources and systems in place that can help trans people with resiliency and coping.
- In Alberta, there are only 4 remaining people who will administer hormone therapy. There needs to be more resources in place for trans people who wish to go about this procedure.
 - This would potentially help people to feel comfortable leaving the house



Breakout Session:	Teresa Woo-Paw
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights

Why are human rights important?

- Understanding of human rights in community and how they support it
- Violations of human right as compromises their quality of life

What human rights issues would you like to discuss?

Women's issues

- Women rights are human rights - need to talk in the same way as human rights in general
- Women rights should be included in all policies

Healthcare

What is the issue?

- People don't know that they have the right to access their medical files
- Rights to say no in their medical care, they do not have to consent to every surgery
 - Consent forms to treatment, surgeries and research
 - Informed decision not possible without well informed consent
- Urgently needed surgeries are delayed

What is a potential solution?

- Having consent forms in different languages
- Interpreters to help people understand consent forms if language barrier is there Vancouver had multicultural health outcome center in 2000 to spread awareness regarding what rights patients should enjoy



- Look at other jurisdictions - what ways and methods they use to create awareness
- Vancouver had multicultural health outcome center in 2000 to spread awareness regarding what rights patients should enjoy
- Look at other jurisdictions - what ways and methods they use to create awareness

Workplace

What is the issue?

- People come here with dreams of having a better life but then stuck in survival mode because they cannot find well-paying jobs
 - Immigrants expectation and qualifications
 - Education not respected
- Lots of harassment at work
 - Workplaces need to demonstrate respect
- Lack of leadership roles

What is a potential solution?

- Anti-Racism trainings at workplaces
- Working to recognize foreign credentials
- Job opportunities for immigrants

Police

What is the issue?

- Issues with police and people not aware of their rights
- Language barriers
- Rights violated by police, but people were not aware
- Police misuse/overuse their rights -racial profiling



What is a potential solution?

- Police officers with racialized backgrounds
- More interaction between police and immigrant communities so they understand each other in a better way
- Training people on their rights
- Cross cultural understanding - need to work with police- used to invite communities to participate in multicultural understanding

Child and Family Services

What is the issue?

- Family violence
- Child apprehension
- Human rights violations
- Some families with kids, kids taken away because of miscommunication

What is a potential solution?

- Diversity training for child and family services
- More communication with families
- Cultural awareness training

What Actions can Non-profits take?

- Teach people their rights
- Conducting a People's human rights course/workshop- inviting a judge and having a mock session
- Training courses on anti-racism bystander responses
- We as a community need to know how to react when an incident occurs
- Advocate for policy change
- Awareness campaigns - presentations on various media platforms



- Take active action in order to be heard and challenge policy makers/organizations in a respectful way
- Help communities in navigating the legal process
- Holding workplaces accountable
- Increasing diversity in images

