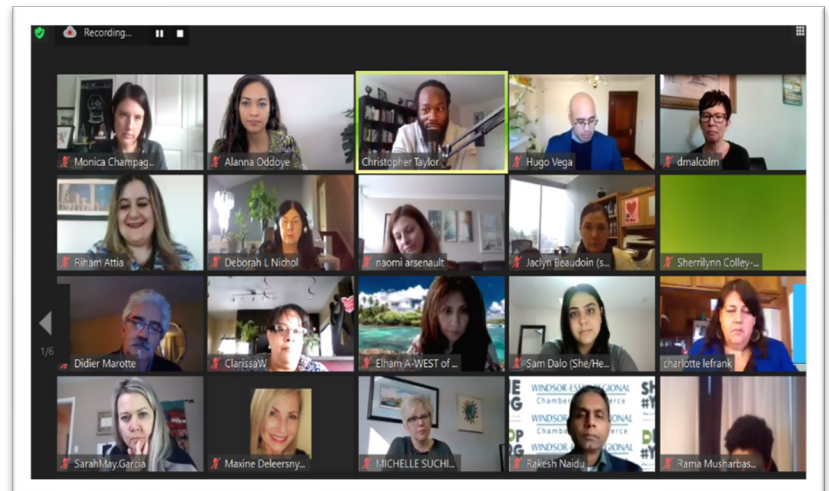


Each year, the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership hosts its Annual Community Forum. This year over 160 people attended the virtual event on February 2, 2021.

Hugo Vega, Regional Manager of Settlement & Integration Services of YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, and WE LIP Executive Chair, welcomed the attendees by reflecting on the collaborative work of the WE LIP Council over the last 12 years and described the WE LIP as a collective of individuals, organizations and institutions that has grown to be a formidable force that meets and collaborates at the intersection of all things immigration.

Hugo stressed the importance of this intersection being a part of our Canadian context and identity - an intersection that is often best understood through our personal and collective journeys and histories, whether we are newcomers or immigrants ourselves, or whether we trace back our roots to when our ancestors arrived here as immigrant, migrants, settlers or slaves.

Recognizing that this year has been unlike any other year and calls for a different kind of reflection, Hugo stated that the current pandemic has been a chapter in our journey that we are writing as we speak. One that is proving to be complex, layered, challenging, daunting and full of loss and tragedy. But it is also beautiful, heroic, and unifying. It is the great plotline twist, where all characters meet and reckon with their interconnectedness and interdependence. The realization that, the way the story ends, depends on how, or whether we see and understand each other.



As Hugo reflected on the rich history of WE LIP, he highlighted that much of what our Annual Community Forums really provides, is an opportunity and a place to tell our collective stories and histories - Something that is arguably becoming more important in our current environment. He stressed the importance as a community and as Canadians to not just tell our stories and histories, but to tell them with depth, with honesty, with clarity and with humility.

"For many of these stories are not yet completely written. And in the trajectory of history itself, we are but a page, a chapter at best, but in that, we would be wise to understand that, and look back just as much as we look forward." – Hugo Vega, WE LIP Chair

Charlotte LeFrank, WE LIP Executive Committee Member at Large introduced Keynote speaker, Dr. Christopher Stuart Taylor, PhD, Black Equity Strategist and Anti-Racism Advisor.

Dr. Taylor led an intimate conversation on equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism and opened the conversation by asking the question "What does contemporary Canada look like to you?"

Participants were given the opportunity to self-reflect on racialized and intersectional identities and were taken on a journey through the discussion to see how actions, bodies, histories, and identities impact perceptions of who we are as leaders in our organizations.

Dr. Taylor brought our attention to what many scholars are beginning to call black body acknowledgment, and the need to take a step back and really ask ourselves what are we trying to do particularly in this newcomer space and what are the particular outcomes that we are trying to achieve?



Dr. Christopher Stuart Taylor, PhD,
Black Equity Strategist and Anti-Racism Advisor. Twitter: @DrCSTaylor
[Click here for link to bio](#)

Dr. Taylor explained the traits of an inclusive leader and the three 'i's of inclusive leadership; introspection, intention, and integration or implementation.

"We need to start with ourselves - it is much easier if we begin that conversation with understanding who we are as individuals and who we are as what we call inclusive leaders. We all have spheres of influence and your words can have so much more power than any policy that was created." – Dr. Christopher Taylor, Black Equity Strategist and Anti-Racism Advisor


Black history and racial stereotypes were also discussed and leaders were encouraged to take responsibility, action, and accountability for their role in managing power imbalances and promoting an equitable work environment.

Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and were encouraged as next steps to tie these capacity building sessions and conversations to particular actions and outcomes.



Click here for Twitter Moment: <https://bit.ly/2MFtohw>

Mary Ellen Bernard, WE LIP Project Manager and Manager of Social Policy and Planning at the City of Windsor introduced Riham Attia, WE LIP Executive Committee Member at Large and City of Windsor Diversity Committee member as a key member supporting anti-racism work. Riham announced the launch of the WE LIP Inclusion and Anti-racism campaign in partnership with the City of Windsor's Diversity Committee.



Inclusion & Anti Racism Campaign


Mary Ellen Bernard
WE LIP Project Manager |
Manager Social Policy and Planning
City of Windsor

Riham Attia
WE LIP Executive Committee Member (at Large) | City of
Windsor Diversity Committee member

Monica Champagne, WE LIP Project Assistant followed up by providing updates on the Temporary Foreign Worker Action Plan; including outcomes, priorities and next steps of the work that has been done over the past five months engaging with temporary foreign worker communities. For more information on Migrant and Temporary Foreign Worker Initiatives [click here](#)

In closing, Michelle Suchiu, Community Connector, Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership and Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships, Workforce WindsorEssex provided remarks that set the table for future inclusion and anti-racism work and provided the opportunity for council members and other organizations to participate in future work on the topic of anti-racism. To view the forum, [click here](#).


A survey was circulated to attendees after the forum to gather feedback and help inform next steps for the work.



partenariat local d'immigration
windsor essex
local immigration partnership

2021 WE LIP
Annual Community Forum

February 2, 2021

 **@WindsorEssexLIP**
#WELIPForum2021

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