

# Cultivating a Sense of Belonging

## Ingenium's TREDIA Journey



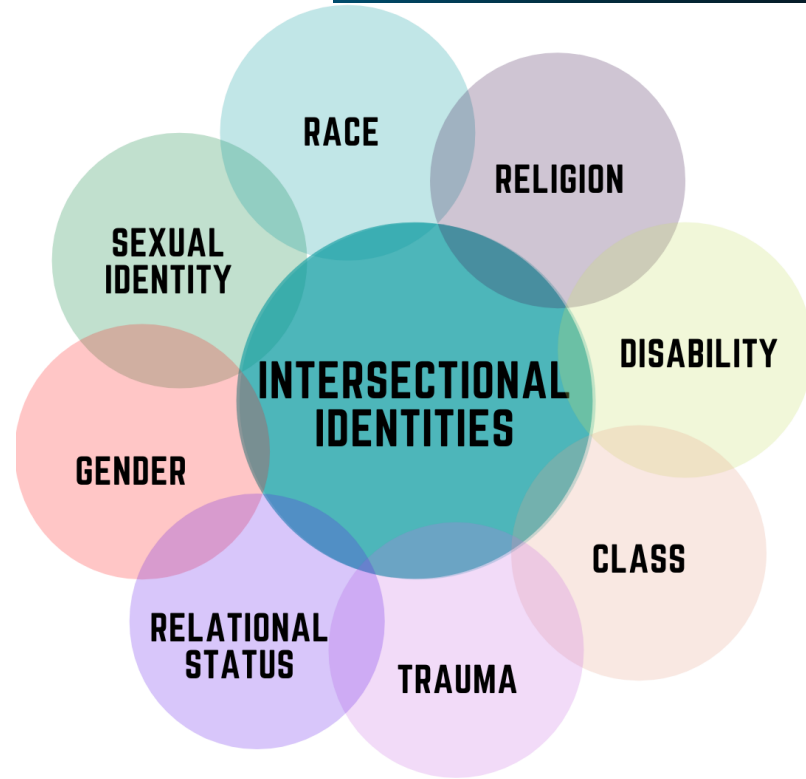
Samantha David, Director TREDIA  
Relationships and Initiatives

# Questions of Accountability...



# Intersectionality and Museums

- Visitor access is influenced by cultural and social factors which impact how welcome a guest may feel in certain spaces
- Museums have a loaded history, which was developed through the historical exploitation of marginalized communities
- Influenced by the social and cultural beliefs of its staff – collections and programming reflect historical perceptions of significance
- Barriers can be environmental, fiscal, attitudinal, communicative, cultural and more...



# The Compound Impact of Intersectionality

From the Senate Report, “Combating Hate: Islamophobia and its Impact on Muslims in Canada” (November 2, 2023):

**“Who do you go to that’s going to understand the fullness of your experience as Muslims, as queers or trans people and as racialized people? There’s no one to report to, no safe place to report where you will be held in your entirety”**

El-Farouk Khaki, Co-Founder, founder of Salaam Queer Muslim Community, cofounder of The Canadian Muslim Union, co-founder of the Muslim AIDS Project, founding member of the Muslim Lawyers’ Association, El-Tawhid Juma Circle



# Why the Separation?

- A mentality of scarcity between IDEA and Indigenous relations led to separation of resources
  - This does **not** reflect how these communities behave in activist spaces
- Indigenous relations are rights-based in ways that are constitutionally-linked and unique
- Concerns of amalgamation, identity loss
  - Rooted in historical precedence – responsibility of organization to change

## However:

- Working in IDEA needs to center Truth and Reconciliation
- Access for all can (and should) include cultural access
- Indigenous Peoples are intersectional too – and we can't support that in isolation!



# Ingenium's Journey into TREDIA

TREDIA = Truth, Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility



## Necessity

Renovation of the  
Canada Science and  
Technology Museum



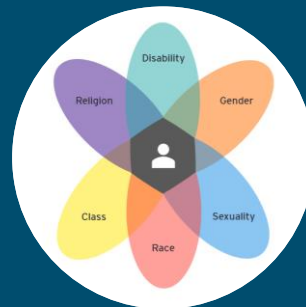
## Awareness

Black Lives Matter  
Kamloops Residential  
Schools



## Action

EDI Working Group  
Accessibility Working  
Group  
Indigenous Community  
Relations Working Group



## Integration

TREDIA Office  
established 2022  
TREDIA Learning and  
Sharing Circle  
launched 2024

# What We Do

01

Office dedicated to intersectionality

Located under the President and CEO

Director and Advisor with lived experiences across multiple identities

02

## People

Staff supports  
Workplace culture  
Recruitment, retention and advancement

## Processes

Communications  
Strategic planning  
Risk assessment

03

## Partnerships

Community-centric storytelling  
Programming  
Exhibition design and rollout  
Collections

# Who We Work With

## Internal

- Exhibitions
- Curatorial
- Policy and Evaluations
- Facility Management
- Human Resources
- Visitor Experiences

## Affiliates

- National museums
- Federal government
- Provincial government
- Sector-level organizations (CMA, CASC etc.)

## External

- Connect Project
- Realize Canada
- Kitigan Zibi Cultural Centre
- Accessible Arts Ottawa
- Canadian Accessibility Network
- Inclusive Experiences



# Case Study: Safekeeping Templates



- Designed to address complex colonial relationships between museums and Indigenous communities
- Stewardship model centres Indigenous protocols, agency over how ancestors are treated in collections or exhibitions
- Ingenium as the one accountable for upholding protocols

## Important to Know

- There is no 'one size fits all' – has to be a flexible approach
- Agreements also require relationship-building – which takes time and resources
- Could apply to other equity-denied communities

# Case Study: Emotional Access

- Museum collections hold complex histories – some of them harmful. This may include:
  - Racist imagery
  - Outdated terminology
  - Association with traumatic events (i.e. Residential schools, surgery)
- Cautionary labels indicating potential emotional or psychological harm enables access in a safe way

## Important to Know

- Community traumas can take different forms – consultation remains key
- Harm mitigation for both staff and those engaging with collections still need to be integrated with this approach



# Case Study: Rematriation



- Sometimes the best access is repatriation
  - Cultural artifacts or human remains
  - Artifacts which may tell stories of colonialism
  - Artifacts with questionable provenance
- Prioritizing the relationship requires a reestablishment of cultural boundaries
- Justice as a principle of both trust building and care

## Important to Know

- Communities may be at different stages when it comes to repatriation
- Costing needs to come from the institution – never the community to whom an artifact is being repatriated to

# Leadership in TREDIA

- TREDIA impacts all facets of an organization, and requires both an external and internal focus
- Recognition of TREDIA as a full-time occupation
  - Overreliance on employee networks can lead to burnout, reduced retention
  - Siloing of TREDIA in departments means consulting multiple times on the same topic
- TREDIA requires unpacking uncomfortable truths
  - i.e. 2SLGBTQIA+ Purge
- TREDIA work won't happen passively
  - Needs tangible action, accountability and reporting
  - i.e. Ingenium 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan



# Measures of Success

- Employee confidence in engaging TREDIA
- Expanding networks across TREDIA files and subjects
- Community engagements
- Project-based successes
- Development of trust
  - Re-engagement of former members
  - Consultation rates
  - References – internal and external

## Important to know

- Need to balance TREDIA role and role of unions and supervisors





Canada 