

From Integration to Inclusion

*Expanding the CIMII to Measure the Conditions that Enable Immigrant
Belonging, Participation, and Equity in Canada*

Executive Summary

The CIMII currently provides a strong measure of immigrant integration. It compares gaps between immigrants and the Canadian-born across key outcomes and experiences, including economic participation, health, social belonging, discrimination, and civic and democratic participation.

However, integration outcomes alone do not explain why gaps persist. Smaller gaps may suggest stronger integration, but they do not necessarily show whether institutions, systems, communities, and public attitudes are inclusive. Similarly, larger gaps do not identify which barriers are responsible.

This report proposes adding inclusion as a complementary second layer to CIMII. The existing CIMII would continue to measure integration as parity in outcomes, while a new inclusion component would assess the conditions that make parity possible, sustainable, and meaningful.

Integration and inclusion should be treated as related but distinct concepts. Integration asks whether immigrants are achieving outcomes comparable to the Canadian-born. Inclusion asks whether institutions, communities, policies, and public attitudes enable immigrants to belong, participate, access services, be represented, and be valued.

The proposed approach is a two-pillar model:

Pillar 1: Integration Outcomes Index would preserve the current CIMII methodology based on immigrant–Canadian-born gaps.

Pillar 2: Inclusion Conditions Index would measure institutional accessibility, equity and anti-discrimination, representation, social acceptance, civic and political inclusion, and intersectional equity.

The inclusion component should complement, not duplicate, existing CIMII indicators. CIMII already captures several lived-experience and participation indicators, such as belonging, discrimination, health access, social connections, volunteering, organizational involvement, and voting. The new inclusion component should therefore focus on what is not yet fully captured:

institutional accessibility, anti-discrimination infrastructure, public climate, representation, formal pathways to voice, and intersectional equity.

International and Canadian frameworks suggest that inclusion requires multiple types of evidence. Outcome-gap measures, policy and rights indices, local intercultural indices, perception and discrimination measures, and intersectional approaches all provide useful lessons. No single indicator can capture inclusion on its own.

The strongest candidate inclusion domains are: institutional accessibility; equity and anti-discrimination; representation; social acceptance and public climate; civic and political inclusion; and intersectional equity.

The strongest first indicators to explore include: representation in legislative, senior management, and management occupations; discrimination by setting; hate crimes motivated by race, ethnicity, or religion; settlement service availability; interpretation services; multilingual public information; ethnically diverse networks; trust in others; newcomer advisory councils; consultation mechanisms; and SGBA+ disaggregation across all feasible indicators.

The next phase should be a data feasibility exercise. Each candidate indicator should be assessed for conceptual fit, overlap with existing CIMII indicators, availability in Canadian data sources, provincial and/or census metropolitan area coverage, and potential for SGBA+ disaggregation.

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Core Argument for a Shift Towards Inclusion

The Canadian Index for Measuring Immigrant Integration (CIMII) is well-suited to measuring immigrant integration because it is a data-driven tool that examines and compares gaps between immigrants and the Canadian-born across four key dimensions of integration. It ranks provinces and metropolitan areas by the size of those gaps: the smaller the gap, the higher the level of integration. In this model, integration is understood as a process through which immigrants and non-immigrants move toward relative parity in areas such as economic participation, social engagement, civic and democratic participation, and health outcomes.

However, integration outcomes alone do not tell the full story. A province or metropolitan area may show relatively small gaps between immigrants and the Canadian-born in some domains, while immigrants may still experience discrimination, limited representation, weak institutional responsiveness, or barriers to accessing culturally appropriate services. Conversely, a community may have strong inclusion-oriented policies and services, but still show persistent outcome gaps because of broader structural barriers such as credential recognition, labour market segmentation, housing affordability, racism, or unequal access to social capital.

This is why inclusion should be added as a second layer of measurement. Inclusion asks whether institutions, communities, policies, and public attitudes create the conditions in which immigrants can belong, participate, be represented, and be valued. While integration focuses largely on immigrant outcomes compared with Canadian-born residents, inclusion focuses on the broader environment: systems, institutions, attitudes, representation, accessibility, and responsiveness.

The proposed shift toward inclusion should therefore not replace the CIMII integration model. Instead, it should complement it. CIMII currently measures integration as parity in outcomes; the next step is to measure inclusion as the conditions that enable parity. This would allow the CIMII to answer two related but distinct questions:

- 1. Are immigrants achieving equitable outcomes?*
- 2. Are Canadian communities and institutions inclusive enough to make those outcomes possible, sustainable, and meaningful?*

1. Introduction: Why Inclusion Matters After Integration

Canada has long assessed immigrant integration through measurable outcomes such as employment, income, education, housing, health, civic participation, and social belonging. These indicators are essential because they show whether immigrants are achieving outcomes comparable to the Canadian-born population. They also allow researchers, policymakers, and community organizations to identify where gaps are larger or smaller across provinces, metropolitan areas, and population groups. However, outcome gaps alone cannot explain why gaps persist. For example, a province may show strong labour market outcomes for immigrants but weak institutional representation, high reports of discrimination, limited culturally appropriate services, or low public trust toward newcomers. Similarly, a city may have strong newcomer-serving infrastructure but still show unequal outcomes because of systemic barriers, credential recognition issues, housing pressures, or racialized labour market disadvantage.

This is where inclusion becomes analytically important. Integration tells us whether immigrants are reaching parity. Inclusion tells us whether Canadian society is organized in ways that make parity achievable, sustainable, and equitable.

In other words, integration can be understood as an outcome-oriented concept, while inclusion is more strongly concerned with the social, institutional, and policy conditions that shape those outcomes.

2. Integration Versus Inclusion: A Conceptual Distinction

The distinction between integration and inclusion is central to the future development of the CIMII. Integration refers to the process and outcomes through which immigrants adapt to and participate in the host society. It is commonly measured through gaps between immigrants and the Canadian-born in domains such as employment, income, housing, health, civic participation, and belonging. Inclusion, by contrast, refers to the broader societal context that enables immigrants to participate fully and be recognized as valued members of society. It focuses on the accessibility, fairness, responsiveness, and openness of institutions, communities, and public attitudes.

The CIMII currently sits mainly in the integration row of Table 1. It measures integration by looking at outcome gaps. A future inclusion component would sit in the second row: measuring the conditions, structures, and perceptions that shape those outcomes.

Table 1. Integration vs. Inclusion

Concept	Main Topic	Unit of Analysis	Typical Indicators
Integration	Are immigrants achieving outcomes comparable to the Canadian-born?	Immigrants vs. non-immigrants	Employment, income, housing, health, civic participation, belonging
Inclusion	Are systems, institutions, and communities enabling immigrants to participate fully and be valued?	Host society, institutions, policies, public attitudes, local context	Representation, anti-discrimination protections, service accessibility, racism/discrimination, leadership diversity, institutional responsiveness

This distinction aligns with international work. The OECD/European Commission Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023 compares immigrant outcomes and characteristics across OECD and EU countries, including labour market and skills, living conditions, civic engagement, and social integration. MIPEX, by contrast, measures the policy environment by assessing whether laws and policies create opportunities for migrants to participate in society across areas such as labour market mobility, education, health, political participation, permanent residence, access to nationality, and anti-discrimination. Together, these models illustrate the difference between measuring outcomes and measuring enabling conditions.

3. Existing Approaches to Measuring Immigrant Inclusion

The literature and international practice suggest several approaches to measuring immigrant integration and inclusion. These approaches differ in what they treat as evidence of inclusion. Some focus on outcome gaps, some on policies and rights, some on local institutional capacity, some on perceptions and lived experience, and others on intersectional inequalities across immigrant groups.

For CIMII, the most useful lesson is that a single indicator cannot capture inclusion. A robust inclusion framework likely requires multiple forms of evidence: institutional, policy-based, representational, experiential, and intersectional.

A. Outcome-Gap Indices

Outcome-gap indices are the approach most similar to the current CIMII methodology. They measure differences between immigrants and the native-born or Canadian-born population. The underlying assumption is that smaller gaps indicate stronger integration. The main strength of this approach is that it is empirically clear, comparable across regions, and relatively easy to communicate. Outcome gaps are also useful for identifying where immigrants face the largest disadvantages and where policy attention may be needed.

The limitation is that outcome-gap indices treat inclusion indirectly. If outcomes improve, inclusion is often assumed to be stronger. But equal outcomes do not necessarily mean that systems are inclusive. For example, immigrants may achieve labour market parity despite facing discrimination, underemployment, or limited opportunities for advancement. Conversely, unequal outcomes do not always reveal which systems, institutions, or attitudes are producing the barriers.

The OECD/European Commission model is a key example of this outcome-oriented approach. Its 2023 report includes 83 indicators covering labour market and skills, living conditions, civic engagement, and social integration. For CIMII, this model reinforces the value of outcome measurement while highlighting the need to distinguish integration outcomes from the broader inclusion conditions that may shape them.

B. Policy and Rights Indices

Policy and rights indices measure the formal environment in which immigrants live. Rather than asking whether immigrants have achieved parity, they ask whether laws, policies, and institutional arrangements provide immigrants with rights, protections, and opportunities.

MIPEX is the leading example of this model. It evaluates and compares integration policies across countries and policy areas, including labour market mobility, family reunion, education, health, political participation, permanent residence, access to nationality, and anti-discrimination.

For CIMII, the lesson from MIPEX is that inclusion can be measured through institutional commitments, not only immigrant outcomes. A Canadian inclusion index could ask, for example: Do provinces and municipalities have anti-racism strategies? Are interpretation services available? Are foreign credentials recognized efficiently? Are immigrants represented in leadership? Are settlement services accessible outside major urban centers?

However, policy indicators also have limitations. A policy may exist on paper but not be implemented effectively. Similarly, formal rights may not translate into lived inclusion if immigrants face discrimination, lack information, or cannot access services in practice. For this reason, policy indicators should be combined with service, representation, perception, and outcome indicators.

C. Local Institutional and Intercultural Indices

A third approach focuses on local institutions and municipal inclusion. This is especially relevant for the CIMII because the index ranks not only provinces but also metropolitan areas. The Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Index is a useful example. It helps cities assess achievements and challenges in their intercultural diversity strategies, compare progress over time and across policy areas, and initiate conversations across local departments and services about what intercultural integration means in practice.

This model is useful for CIMII because inclusion often takes shape locally. Many inclusion-relevant conditions are experienced at the municipal or neighbourhood level: access to public services, local consultation, public libraries, recreation programs, transportation, housing supports, school systems, police relationships, community organizations, and local political representation.

A future CIMII inclusion module could therefore adapt this local lens by assessing municipal inclusion infrastructure, such as newcomer advisory councils, multilingual services, anti-racism strategies, representation in municipal leadership, inclusive public consultation, and culturally responsive public services.

D. Perception, Belonging, and Discrimination Measures

Inclusion is not only institutional; it is also experiential. Public attitudes, acceptance of diversity, trust, racism, discrimination, and sense of belonging are important inclusion indicators. These indicators capture whether immigrants feel recognized as full members of society and whether the broader public views immigration and diversity positively.

This dimension is important because outcome parity does not necessarily mean lived inclusion. An immigrant group may have high employment rates but still experience discrimination, lack leadership opportunities, or feel excluded from civic life. Similarly, immigrants may participate economically but feel weak social belonging or low trust in institutions.

For CIMII, perception-based indicators can help capture the lived experience of inclusion. However, several of these indicators are already included in the current CIMII, including belonging, close friends, discrimination, volunteering, organizational involvement, and voting. This means that a future inclusion component should not simply repeat them. Instead, it should add indicators that capture public climate, institutional response, and broader community receptivity.

E. Intersectional Inclusion Measures

A fifth approach focuses on intersectional inclusion. This means recognizing that immigrants are not a homogeneous group and that inclusion may vary significantly by gender, race, age, admission

category, generation status, disability, language, religion, time since immigration, and other identity markers.

Disaggregating immigrant and non-immigrant outcomes by sex and gender, age, racialized status, generation status, immigration category, disability, and other identity markers is necessary because inclusion may be strong for some groups and weak for others. For example, a province may show small overall immigrant-Canadian-born employment gaps, while racialized immigrant women, refugees, recent arrivals, or immigrants with disabilities continue to experience large barriers. An inclusion framework should therefore measure not only average gaps but also who is left out.

This is especially important for CIMII because a single aggregate score can obscure unequal experiences within immigrant populations. An intersectional inclusion approach would help identify whether certain groups are systematically excluded even in jurisdictions that appear to perform well overall.

Table 2. Existing Approaches to Measuring Immigrant Integration and Inclusion

Approach	What it Measures	Main Examples	Strengths	Limitations	Implications for CIMII
Outcome-Gap Indices	Differences in outcomes between immigrants and the native-born or Canadian-born population.	OECD/European Commission Indicators of Immigrant Integration; current CIMII methodology.	Clear, empirical, comparable across jurisdictions, and easy to communicate. Useful for identifying where immigrant outcomes differ from Canadian-born outcomes.	Treats inclusion indirectly. Smaller gaps do not necessarily mean systems are inclusive, and larger gaps do not explain which barriers or institutions are responsible.	CIMII already uses this approach. The inclusion component should not duplicate outcome-gap indicators, but should add measures that help explain why gaps persist.
Policy and Rights Indices	Whether laws, policies, and institutional arrangements provide immigrants with rights, protections, and opportunities.	MIPEX; anti-discrimination, political participation, health, education, labor market, and citizenship policy measures.	Captures institutional commitments and formal opportunity structures. Helps assess whether systems are designed to support inclusion.	Policies may exist on paper but not be implemented effectively. Formal rights may not translate into lived inclusion.	Useful for identifying inclusion-condition indicators such as anti-racism strategies, interpretation services, employment equity practices, and access to complaint mechanisms.

Local Institutional and Intercultural Indices	How municipalities and local institutions support inclusion, intercultural interaction, and access to services.	Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Index; municipal inclusion and intercultural governance frameworks.	Highly relevant for metropolitan-level analysis. Captures the local context where inclusion is often experienced directly.	Requires local policy scans and may be difficult to standardize across cities. Some indicators may measure the existence of initiatives rather than their quality or impact.	Relevant because CIMII ranks metropolitan areas. Could support indicators such as newcomer advisory councils, multilingual services, municipal anti-racism strategies, and inclusive consultation mechanisms.
Perception, Belonging, and Discrimination Measures	Lived experiences of inclusion, exclusion, belonging, trust, discrimination, and public attitudes toward immigration and diversity.	GSS; Canadian Social Survey; Statistics Canada social inclusion indicators; public-opinion surveys.	Captures dimensions of inclusion that administrative data and outcome indicators often miss. Reflects whether immigrants feel accepted, respected, and valued.	Some indicators are already included in CIMII, such as belonging, discrimination, social connections, volunteering, organizational involvement, and voting. Survey sample sizes may limit provincial, CMA, or intersectional analysis.	The new inclusion component should not simply repeat existing CIMII indicators. It could add public climate, trust, ethnically diverse networks, institutional confidence, and discrimination by setting.
Intersectional Inclusion Measures	How inclusion varies across immigrant groups by gender, racialized group, age, admission category, generation status, disability, time since immigration, and other identity markers.	SGBA+ frameworks; Census; IMDB; GSS/CSS where sample sizes allow.	Prevents aggregate scores from hiding unequal experiences. Helps identify which groups are most excluded even in jurisdictions that appear to perform well overall.	Requires sufficient sample sizes and careful interpretation. Some data sources may not allow detailed disaggregation at the CMA level.	Should be treated as both a domain and a cross-cutting lens. All feasible inclusion indicators should be disaggregated using SGBA+ where possible.

4. Implications of the Existing CIMII Indicators

CIMII already captures many outcome and experience indicators that are relevant to inclusion. Therefore, the new inclusion component should not be framed as if CIMII does not already measure belonging, discrimination, social connections, health access, volunteering, organizational involvement, or voting. Instead, the inclusion component should focus on what is not yet fully captured: institutional accessibility, anti-discrimination infrastructure, representation in leadership and decision-making, public climate, formal pathways to voice, and intersectional equity.

Table 3. Current CIMII Indicators and Their Relationship to Inclusion

CIMII Dimension	Existing CIMII Indicators	CIMII Indicators & Inclusion Framework
Economic	Wages Low-Income Cut-offs (LICOs) Labour force participation Unemployment rate Employment rate Full-time employment rate	Primarily integration outcome indicators. They show economic parity or gaps, but do not directly measure whether labour market institutions are inclusive.
	Non-official language at work	A possible bridge indicator. It may reflect linguistic diversity in workplaces, but its interpretation requires caution, as it is not inherently positive or negative.
Economic	Subsidized housing	Primarily an integration or material-conditions indicator. It may provide context on housing need or access to supports, but does not directly measure inclusion conditions.
Health	Has a regular medical doctor Self-perceived unmet healthcare needs	Health access indicators are useful bridge indicators because they reflect access to institutions.
	Self-perceived life stress Satisfaction with life	Life stress and life satisfaction are broader well-being outcomes.
Social	Number of close friends Number of close friends in the same city	These are strongly relevant to lived inclusion, but they are already captured in CIMII.
	S.B. - Local community S.B. - Province S.B. - Canada Victim of discrimination - past 5 years	A new inclusion component should add public climate, institutional response, and social-bridging indicators.
Civic & Democratic Participation	Unpaid volunteer work – past year Involvement in organizations - past year Voted in the last provincial election Voted in the last federal election	These capture participation outcomes. A new inclusion component should add opportunity structures, such as newcomer advisory councils, consultation mechanisms, and civic education or outreach.

The key implication is that the inclusion measure should be designed to complement CIMII, not duplicate it. The current CIMII asks whether immigrants experience parity with the Canadian-born. The inclusion component should ask whether Canadian institutions and communities are structured to make that parity possible.

5. Proposed Practical Definition of Inclusion

For a future CIMII inclusion component, immigrant inclusion can be defined as follows:

Immigrant inclusion refers to the extent to which institutions, communities, policies, and public attitudes create equitable conditions for immigrants and their descendants to belong, participate, be represented, access services, and shape Canada's economic, social, civic, cultural, and political life.

This definition complements the CIMII's current integration model. Integration is about outcomes; inclusion is about the environment that produces, enables, or constrains those outcomes. It also allows CIMII to move beyond the question of whether immigrants are achieving parity with the Canadian-born and toward a broader question: whether Canadian communities and institutions are structured in ways that make parity possible and meaningful.

6. Proposed Measurement Model

The recommended approach is to build a separate Inclusion Conditions Index alongside the existing integration gap index, rather than merging everything into one score immediately.

This is important for methodological clarity. If inclusion is folded directly into the existing integration index, the conceptual distinction between outcomes and conditions may become blurred. A two-part model would allow CIMII to preserve its current strengths while expanding its explanatory value.

Pillar 1: Integration Outcomes Index: This would preserve the current CIMII logic: smaller immigrant-Canadian-born gaps indicate stronger integration. Domains would include economic, social, civic and democratic participation, and health outcomes.

Pillar 2: Inclusion Conditions Index: This would measure whether provinces and metropolitan areas provide inclusive environments. More equitable, accessible, representative, and welcoming systems would indicate stronger inclusion.

6.1 Why a Two-Pillar Model Is Preferable

- First, it preserves the existing CIMII logic. The current index is clear and communicable because it ranks jurisdictions by immigrant-Canadian-born gaps. This should not be lost.
- Second, it avoids conceptual confusion. Integration and inclusion are related, but they are not the same. Integration is primarily about outcomes. Inclusion is about the conditions that enable immigrants to participate, belong, and be valued.
- Third, it creates stronger policy relevance. If a province has poor integration outcomes and weak inclusion conditions, this suggests deep structural barriers. If a province has strong inclusion conditions but persistent outcome gaps, this may suggest that policies exist but are not yet sufficient to overcome labor market, housing, or other structural challenges. If a province has

strong outcomes but weak inclusion conditions, this may indicate that immigrants are succeeding despite exclusionary environments.

- Fourth, it allows CIMII to explain variation more effectively. The existing index tells us where gaps exist. The inclusion component would help identify what kinds of environments may be associated with smaller or larger gaps

Table 4. Domains and Candidate Indicators for the Inclusion Conditions Index

Domain	What it measures	Potential Inclusion Indicators
Institutional Accessibility	Whether services and institutions are usable, responsive, and navigable for immigrants	Interpretation services; multilingual public information; settlement service availability relative to immigrant population; culturally appropriate health and social services; service navigation supports; confidence in institutions.
Equity & Anti-Discrimination	Whether systems prevent, address, and reduce discrimination and exclusion	Discrimination by setting; anti-racism strategies; employment equity practices; human rights complaint accessibility; hate crimes motivated by race, ethnicity, or religion.
Representation	Whether immigrants and racialized people are visible in leadership and decision-making	Legislative and senior management occupations; management occupations; public-sector leadership; public boards, agencies, and commissions; elected office; high-demand occupations.
Social Acceptance	Whether communities are welcoming and social networks bridge across groups	Trust in others; ethnically diverse networks of friends/acquaintances; public attitudes toward immigration/diversity; satisfaction with feeling part of the community; neighbourhood safety.
Civic and Political Inclusion	Whether immigrants have meaningful opportunities for voice and participation	Newcomer/immigrant advisory councils; consultation mechanisms; participation in political activities beyond voting; civic engagement by type of organization; citizenship rate among eligible immigrants; newcomer civic education.
Intersectional Equity	Whether inclusion varies across immigrant groups	SGBA+ disaggregation by gender, racialized group, age, admission category, generation status, disability, and time since immigration.

7. Candidate Indicator Scan by Domain

This section applies the “do not duplicate CIMII” principle to the six proposed inclusion domains. It identifies indicators that could add new information beyond the existing CIMII outcome-gap framework.

7.1 Institutional Accessibility

Core question:
Are public services and institutions accessible, navigable, and responsive to immigrants?

Table 5. Potential Indicators of Institutional Accessibility

Potential Indicator	Added Value beyond current CIMII	Possible Canadian Source	Initial Assessment
Availability of interpretation services in public services	Measures institutional accessibility, not just individual outcomes	Provincial/municipal service scans; health authority scans	Developmental
Availability of multilingual public information	Captures whether institutions communicate accessibility	Provincial/municipal website scans	Developmental
Settlement service availability relative to the immigrant population	Measures service infrastructure and capacity	IRCC settlement service data; iCARE if accessible; service directories	Strong Candidate / Developmental
Culturally appropriate health and social services	Captures institutional responsiveness	Policy/service scans; health authority documentation	Developmental
Public service navigation supports for newcomers	Captures whether newcomers can access systems effectively	Municipal/provincial scans; settlement-sector data	Developmental
Confidence in institutions	Captures trust in institutions and complements health-access outcomes already in CIMII	GSS / Canadian Social Survey	Strong Candidate

7.2 Equity and Anti-Discrimination

*Core question:
Are there systems in place to prevent, address, and reduce discrimination?*

Table 6. Potential Indicators of Equity and Anti-Discrimination

Potential Indicator	Added Value beyond current CIMII	Possible Canadian Source	Initial Assessment
Discrimination by setting, such as workplace, housing, services, police, or health care	Adds institutional detail beyond the existing overall discrimination indicator	Canadian Social Survey; GSS; SSPC depending on availability	Strong Candidate
Existence of provincial/municipal anti-racism strategy	Measures public commitment and policy infrastructure	Provincial/municipal policy scan	Strong Candidate / Developmental
Employment equity practices in public institutions	Captures whether institutions actively address inequity	Employment equity reports; public service reports	Strong Candidate / Developmental
Accessibility of human rights complaint mechanisms	Measures institutional protection, not just reported discrimination	Human rights commission websites/reports	Developmental
Hate crimes motivated by race, ethnicity, or religion	Captures broader exclusionary climate and community safety	Police-reported hate crime data; Statistics Canada indicators	Context / Strong Candidate

7.3 Representation

Core question:

Are immigrants and racialized people represented in leadership, decision-making, and influential institutions?

Table 7. Potential Indicators of Representation

Potential Indicator	Added Value beyond current CIMII	Possible Canadian Source	Initial Assessment
Immigrant/racialized representation in legislative and senior management occupations	Directly captures access to decision-making positions.	Census; Statistics Canada social inclusion indicators	Strong Candidate
Immigrant/racialized representation in management occupations	Measures access to leadership in the labour market.	Census	Strong Candidate
Representation in public-sector leadership	Captures institutional inclusion within public institutions.	Public service employment equity reports	Strong Candidate / Developmental
Representation on public boards, agencies, and commissions	Captures decision-making power.	Provincial/municipal appointment data; manual scan	Developmental
Representation in elected office	Captures political voice.	Candidate/elected official data; manual coding may be needed	Developmental
Representation in high-demand occupations	Captures access to opportunity sectors.	Census	Strong Candidate

7.4 Social Acceptance and Public Climate

*Core question:
Are immigrants socially accepted, trusted, and seen as part of the community?*

Table 8. Potential Indicators of Social Acceptance and Public Climate

Potential Indicator	Added Value beyond current CIMII	Possible Canadian Source	Initial Assessment
Public attitudes toward immigration	Measures host-society receptivity, not immigrant outcomes.	Environics, Canadian Election Study, other surveys	Strong Candidate / Context depending on geography
Public attitudes toward multiculturalism/diversity	Measures acceptance of diversity.	Environics, Canadian Election Study, GSS/CSS if available	Strong Candidate / Context
Trust in others	Captures social cohesion and acceptance beyond personal networks.	GSS / Canadian Social Survey	Strong Candidate
Ethnically diverse networks of friends and acquaintances	Measures bridging social capital, not just number of friends.	Statistics Canada social inclusion indicators / GSS	Strong Candidate
Satisfaction with feeling part of the community	Captures local community inclusion climate.	Statistics Canada social inclusion indicators	Strong Candidate
Feeling safe walking alone after dark	Captures local safety and belonging context.	Statistics Canada social inclusion indicators	Context / Strong Candidate

7.5 Civic and Political Inclusion

Core question:
Are immigrants able to participate meaningfully in public, civic, and political life?

Table 9. Potential Indicators of Civic and Political Inclusion

Potential Indicator	Added Value beyond current CIMII	Possible Canadian Source	Initial Assessment
Existence of newcomer/immigrant advisory councils	Measures formal opportunity for immigrant voice.	Municipal / Provincial policy scan	Strong Candidate / Developmental
Consultation mechanisms for immigrant or racialized communities	Captures institutionalized participation.	Municipal/provincial scans	Developmental
Participation in political activities beyond voting	Adds a broader civic voice beyond existing voting indicators.	GSS / Canadian Social Survey; Statistics Canada indicators	Strong Candidate
Civic engagement by type of group or organization	Adds detail beyond any organizational involvement.	GSS / Statistics Canada indicators	Strong Candidate
Citizenship rate among eligible immigrants	Captures a formal precondition for political inclusion.	Census / IRCC	Strong Candidate / Context
Voter outreach or civic education programs for newcomers	Measures institutional support for participation.	Elections agencies; settlement organizations; policy scan	Developmental

7.6 Intersectional Equity

*Core question:
Are inclusion conditions equitable across immigrant groups?*

Table 10. Potential Indicators of Intersectional Equity

Potential Indicator	Added Value beyond current CIMII	Possible Canadian Source	Initial Assessment
Disaggregation by gender	Essential for SGBA+ and for identifying gendered barriers.	Census, GSS, CCHS, CSS	Essential
Disaggregation by racialized group	Essential for inclusion and anti-racism analysis.	Census, GSS/CSS where possible	Essential
Disaggregation by age	Captures youth, seniors, and working-age differences.	Most sources	Essential
Disaggregation by admission category	Captures differences between refugees, economic immigrants, family class, and other groups.	Census / IMDB	Strong Candidate
Disaggregation by generation status	Captures immigrants and children of immigrants.	Census / GSS	Strong Candidate
Disaggregation by disability	Captures compounded barriers.	Census/disability surveys / other surveys	Strong if available
Disaggregation by time since immigration	Captures the settlement stage and duration in Canada.	Census / IMDB / surveys	Essential

8. Shortlist of Strongest Indicators to Explore First

Given the current CIMII indicator list, the strongest first candidates are those that are not already fully captured and that have clear conceptual value for measuring inclusion conditions.

Table 11. Candidate Inclusion Indicators – Tier 1

Inclusion Domain	Proposed Indicator	Why it should be prioritized
Representation	Immigrants/racialized people in legislative and senior management occupations	Canadian source; direct measure of decision-making representation.
Representation	Immigrants/racialized people in management occupations	Feasible with Census; captures leadership access.
Equity and Anti-Discrimination	Discrimination by setting: work, services, housing, police, health care	Adds detail beyond overall discrimination.
Equity and Anti-Discrimination	Hate crimes motivated by race, ethnicity, or religion	Captures broader exclusionary climate.
Institutional Accessibility	Settlement service availability relative to the immigrant population	Measures inclusion infrastructure.
Institutional Accessibility	Availability of interpretation services	Direct service-access condition.
Institutional Accessibility	Availability of multilingual public information	Direct institutional accessibility condition.
Social Acceptance	Ethnically diverse networks of friends/acquaintances	Goes beyond the number of friends; it measures bridging social capital.
Social Acceptance	Trust in others	Captures social cohesion and acceptance.
Civic and Political Inclusion	Newcomer or immigrant advisory councils	Captures formal voice and participation structures.
Civic and Political Inclusion	Consultation mechanisms for immigrant/racialized communities	Measures institutionalized participation.
Intersectional Equity	SGBA+ disaggregation across all feasible indicators	Essential to avoid hiding subgroup exclusion.

Table 12. Candidate Inclusion Indicators – Tier 2 (Requiring Further Development)

Inclusion Domain	Proposed Indicator	Main Challenge
Equity and Anti-Discrimination	Existence and quality of anti-racism strategies	Requires policy scan and scoring criteria.
Institutional Accessibility	Culturally appropriate health and social services	Hard to define consistently across jurisdictions.
Representation	Representation on public boards, agencies, and commissions	Data are fragmented and may require manual collection.
Representation	Representation in elected office	May require manual coding and careful methodology.
Social Acceptance	Public attitudes toward immigration	May not be available at the CMA level.
Civic and Political Inclusion	Newcomer civic education or voter outreach programs	Requires program scan.
Institutional Accessibility	Service navigation supports for newcomers	Requires policy and service inventory.

9. Methodological Considerations for CIMII

Developing an Inclusion Conditions Index would require careful methodological choices.

Unlike outcome gaps, inclusion indicators may come from different types of data sources, including surveys, administrative data, policy scans, institutional records, and possibly qualitative or mixed-method evidence. A useful way to organize the methodology is to distinguish between four types of indicators.

9.1 Policy and Institutional Indicators

These indicators measure whether formal structures are in place. Examples include anti-racism policies, interpretation services, multilingual information, culturally appropriate services, employment equity practices, newcomer advisory councils, and consultation mechanisms.

- Their advantage is that they capture institutional commitment.
- Their limitation is that they may measure the existence of a policy or service rather than its quality, accessibility, implementation, or impact.

9.2 Representation Indicators

These indicators measure whether immigrants and racialized people are visible in leadership and decision-making roles. This may include representation in management, public leadership, boards, politics, media, and high-demand occupations.

- Their advantage is that they capture power, visibility, and participation in influential spaces.
- Their limitation is that data availability may vary across sectors and geographies.

9.3 Perception and Experience Indicators

These indicators measure how immigrants experience inclusion and how the broader community views immigration and diversity. Examples include trust, public attitudes toward immigration, ethnically diverse networks, and satisfaction with feeling part of the community.

- Their advantage is that they capture lived experience and social climate.
- Their limitation is that survey sample sizes may not always support reliable estimates by province, CMA, immigrant status, and intersectional group.

9.4 Intersectional Equity Indicators

These indicators measure whether inclusion varies across groups. The SGBA+ lens is especially important here. It would allow the CIMII to identify whether barriers are concentrated among specific groups, such as immigrant women, racialized immigrants, refugees, recent arrivals, immigrants with disabilities, or second-generation populations.

- Their advantage is that they prevent the index from hiding inequalities behind averages.
- Their limitation is that intersectional analysis requires sufficient sample sizes and careful interpretation.

10. Proposed Next Steps

The next phase should be a practical data feasibility exercise.

For each candidate indicator, the team should assess whether the indicator is conceptually aligned with inclusion, whether it is already captured by CIMII, whether it is available in Canada, whether it can be measured at the provincial and/or CMA level, and whether it can be disaggregated using an SGBA+ lens.

A useful indicator matrix for the next stage could include the following points:

Conceptual Fit:

- Does the indicator measure inclusion conditions rather than only outcomes?

CIMII Overlap:

- Is the indicator already captured by CIMII?

Canadian Data Source:

- Is there a reliable Canadian equivalent or possible data source?

Geography:

- Can it be measured for provinces and/or CMAs?

Disaggregation Potential:

- Can it be disaggregated by gender, racialized group, age, admission category, generation status, disability, time since immigration?

Strengths

- What does the indicator add? Is it conceptually clear, policy-relevant, comparable, reliable, repeatable, and useful for explaining integration gaps?

Limitations

- Are there concerns about interpretation, sample size, geography, reporting bias, standardization, data availability, or whether it measures implementation rather than actual inclusion?

Recommendation:

- **Core Indicators:** Strong conceptual fit, reliable Canadian data source, reasonable geographic coverage, and good potential for comparison and disaggregation
- **Developmental Indicator:** Strong conceptual fit, but requires additional data work, policy scans, manual coding, or testing before it can be included in the index.
- **Context Indicator:** Useful for interpretation and discussion, but not ideal for ranking because of limited data, weak comparability, reporting bias, or conceptual ambiguity.

11. Conclusion

The move from integration to inclusion represents an important evolution in immigrant measurement in Canada. Integration indicators remain necessary because they show whether immigrants are achieving comparable outcomes to the Canadian-born population. However, they are not sufficient. Inclusion requires attention to the systems, institutions, public attitudes, representation, and power structures that shape immigrants' ability to belong and participate.

International models such as the OECD/European Commission indicators, MIPEx, and the Intercultural Cities Index show that immigrant measurement can combine outcome indicators, policy indicators, institutional indicators, local governance indicators, and perception-based measures.

Statistics Canada's Social Inclusion Framework for Ethnocultural Groups in Canada also provides a particularly useful Canadian reference point because it includes themes such as representation in decision-making, civic engagement, institutions and public services, social networks, local community, and discrimination and victimization.

For CIMII, the most promising path is to maintain the existing integration gap methodology while developing a complementary inclusion component focused on institutional accessibility, equity and anti-discrimination, representation, social acceptance, civic and political inclusion, and intersectional equity. Because CIMII already measures many important individual outcomes and experiences, the inclusion component should focus on the institutional and social conditions that help explain those outcomes. In short, the inclusion component should move CIMII from measuring whether immigrants experience parity to assessing whether Canadian institutions and communities are structured to make parity possible.

References and Sources Noted

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