FOREWORD

Pedro Barata, is Executive Director of the Future Skills Centre, a forward-thinking hub dedicated to researching, testing, evaluating and building innovative skills solutions to help job seekers and employers in Canada navigate labour market changes. Pedro's work and extensive volunteer activities in the non-profit sector span two decades, focused on impact strategies, public policy, community building and communications. His career path has traveled through United Way Greater Toronto, the Atkinson Foundation, Family Service Toronto, Social Planning Toronto and the City of Toronto. Pedro holds a Bachelor of Arts from York University and a Masters of Social Work from the University of Toronto.

In 2022, the Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University's Ted Rogers School of Management and research lead by the Future Skills Centre, partnered with *Canadian Diversity* in the writing of a special issue focusing on key factors influencing Canada's excellent record supporting newcomers from around the globe. In it, contributors discuss important debates around language acquisition and the ways trauma impacts learning and skills development. It focuses on employer-centered support strategies and proposes entrepreneurship as a pathway for integration while considering the lessons learned by Canadian nationals through the private sponsorship of refugees.

The current issue continues this partnership with the Diversity Institute in a move to further develop our understanding of the experiences of newcomers in Canada. In it, we outline the important role immigration plays in economic growth and in addressing skills and labour shortages. At the same time, we examine Canada's role in developing innovative approaches to address global humanitarian crises, including the private sponsorship of refugees and its impacts on both newcomers as well as sponsors. Next, we consider some of the barriers that newcomers face, including the assessment of international credentials in critical healthcare professions. We also consider the ways in which competency assessments can help address the mismatch between skills and employment but also the questions of how we define and assess competencies and ways we can do it better while acknowledging the challenges of bias. We also consider the ways in which training and wrap-around supports must consider newcomer needs and trauma-informed approaches. We close this edition of *Canadian Diversity* with a pair of articles that reflect on the experience of Syrian refugees. These pieces paint a picture of resilience and determination and speak of success as it is understood alongside trauma and loss.

As a series, the two volumes of *Canadian Diversity* provide an entry point into some of the Diversity Institute's work in support of the Future Skills Centre. They exemplify our commitment to research, exploring innovative, evidence-based solutions and connecting ideas to strengthen our inclusive skills and employment ecosystem.

Once again, the research shows that while there are opportunities to provide better support for the development of skills or newcomers, we need always to consider the ways to address bias and barriers in their pathways to employment. Newcomers are key to Canada's future prosperity, and we need to do better.