



What We Heard

M A R C H
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Anti-Racism Legislation
Community Engagement

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Executive Summary

Overview

In 2022, the Government of British Columbia (B.C.) took a significant step against systemic racism by introducing the Anti-Racism Data Act (ARDA). This enabled the provincial government to collect disaggregated race-based data to break down barriers for racialized people to access government programs and services. Building on this, the Province is now advancing broader anti-racism legislation to act on the findings by ARDA and other sources to address and dismantle systemic racism.

To ensure this legislation is effective and inclusive, the Province conducted extensive consultation and engagement processes in 2023. This included a public online questionnaire, targeted consultation and co-development with Indigenous partners and discussions with racialized communities led by community organizations across B.C. This co-creative approach reflected an intentional effort to develop legislation that recognizes and actively integrates a diversity of perspectives and experiences to address systemic racism.



Community organizations were instrumental in conducting inclusive engagements representative of the diverse experiences of racialized communities in B.C. The engagements covered a wide demographic, ensuring that voices from various racial, ethnic and social backgrounds were heard. This comprehensive approach resulted in over 225 events and 5,000 participants. It provided a rich and nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by Indigenous and racialized communities and potential solutions to combat systemic racism.

Engaging community organizations in B.C. acknowledged their pivotal role in addressing systemic racism and fostering multiculturalism and anti-racism. These organizations have grassroots connections and a deep understanding of local contexts, which render them indispensable in creating culturally sensitive interventions and advocating for policy change. They provide key platforms for cultural healing, support group-based healing approaches and facilitate awareness and inclusion initiatives. Additionally, they are critical to ensuring government accountability, promoting community engagement and advocating for a balanced implementation of multiculturalism and anti-racism in government policies and initiatives. Their efforts not only contributed to the immediate goal of shaping effective anti-racism legislation but also to the broader objective of building a more inclusive and equitable society in B.C.



Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian
Citizens' Association

Universal Themes

The community-led engagements revealed three universal themes. These themes expressed areas of focus interwoven across various sectors, including K-12 education, health care, law enforcement and employment.

1

Education and Awareness

2

Accountability

3

Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism

Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association



Education and Awareness

Central to the fight against systemic racism was the need for comprehensive educational frameworks, starting from the K-12 system. Participants stressed the importance of educating young people about Canada's history of racism and the need for public awareness campaigns to foster empathy and understanding. These initiatives were seen as foundational in bridging gaps between communities and enhancing the efficacy of multicultural and anti-racist practices. Furthermore, there was a call for mandatory anti-racism training and cultural competency workshops for professionals in public services, including teachers, health care workers and law enforcement officials.

Accountability

The discussions also highlighted the necessity of accountability mechanisms to address racial biases and discrimination across various sectors, including education and in the workplace. The establishment of clear accountability practices was seen as essential for acknowledging the harm caused by racism and preventing future occurrences. This included the need for transparent reporting, independent evaluation and consequences for violations of anti-racism policies.



Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism

The consultation process revealed that while multiculturalism and anti-racism are distinct concepts, they are interconnected and can be mutually reinforcing. Multiculturalism was celebrated for its focus on diversity and cultural exchange but also risked being seen as symbolic without the critical lens of anti-racism. Conversely, anti-racism was characterized by its proactive and systemic approach to addressing barriers but was also acknowledged to be often interpreted as provocative and confrontational. Participants viewed the integration of these approaches as crucial in building an inclusive and equitable society, recognizing it as a continuous effort and collective responsibility.



Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association

Thank you for your generosity!

These themes underscored the complexity of addressing systemic racism and the need for a multi-faceted approach. Education reform, particularly within the K-12 system, was seen as a cornerstone for long-term change. Health care, law enforcement and employment sectors were also identified as areas requiring significant reform to ensure equitable services and to address the systemic nature of racism. The engagement process thus set the stage for a comprehensive strategy that intertwines educational reform, accountability mechanisms and the integration of multiculturalism and anti-racism to effectively combat systemic racism.



Unique Themes

During the engagement process, it became evident that understanding the specific concerns of diverse communities was crucial to comprehending the multi-faceted nature of racism. The unique themes highlighted below exemplify the fact that different marginalized communities do not experience racism in the same way and emphasize the need for tailored and nuanced responses.

1**African Diaspora
and Black Canadians****2****Asian Diaspora****3****South and West
Asian Diaspora****4****Indigenous
Communities****5****Youth and
Young Adults****6****Rural Communities****7****Faith-Based Communities**

African Diaspora and Black Canadians

Communities of the African diaspora and Black Canadians emphasized the need for targeted anti-racism initiatives that recognize the distinct nature of anti-Black racism and its intersection with other forms of racial discrimination. Key areas of focus included culturally sensitive healing services, reparations and integrating Black history and culture into public life. The community called for direct government engagement and representation in decision-making, underscoring the importance of government accountability, especially in law enforcement interactions.



Asian Diaspora

The Asian diaspora highlighted language barriers and the rise in anti-Asian violence as major concerns. They expressed a need for support services in multiple languages and initiatives to counteract discrimination and dispel stereotypes. Psychological support tailored to the experiences of racialized immigrants and addressing the fear and self-censorship among new immigrants were also identified as crucial issues.



South and West Asian Diaspora

For South and West Asian communities, language barriers, recognition of foreign credentials and intergenerational support emerged as significant themes. The challenges of model minority stereotypes and internal biases within racialized communities were discussed, emphasizing the need for broader education to foster inter-community understanding and mutual respect.



Indigenous Communities

Indigenous communities focused on empowering Indigenous Nations to lead their own systems and ensuring accountability with tangible consequences for racism in sectors like health care and criminal justice. The importance of culturally sensitive health care and traditional healing practices, as well as reforms in the criminal justice system, also emerged as key elements.



Youth and Young Adults

School-aged youth in British Columbia strongly advocated for a K-12 curriculum that directly addresses racism and discrimination; they also called for specialized training in cultural sensitivity and anti-racism for educators. The importance of inclusive and diverse representation within the school system was highlighted, alongside the need for cultural exchange programs and equitable policies for immigrant children.

University-aged students, particularly international students, expressed concerns about racial biases in academic settings, including linguistic discrimination and the fear of retaliation for reporting racist incidents. They underscored the need for broader systemic support, including equitable tuition policies and improved mechanisms for addressing racism.



Rural Communities

In rural areas, transportation, infrastructure challenges, the role of local businesses and the presence of more overt racism were key issues. Improvements in public transportation, access to essential services and education on the history of colonization were identified as necessary steps to equity and inclusion.



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Faith-Based Communities

Faith-based communities faced multi-layered barriers due to the intersection of race, ethnicity and religion. They emphasized the need for inclusive religious policies, positive media representation and navigating societal norms. Discrimination against visible religious attire and the lack of positive representation of various religious practices also emerged as significant concerns.



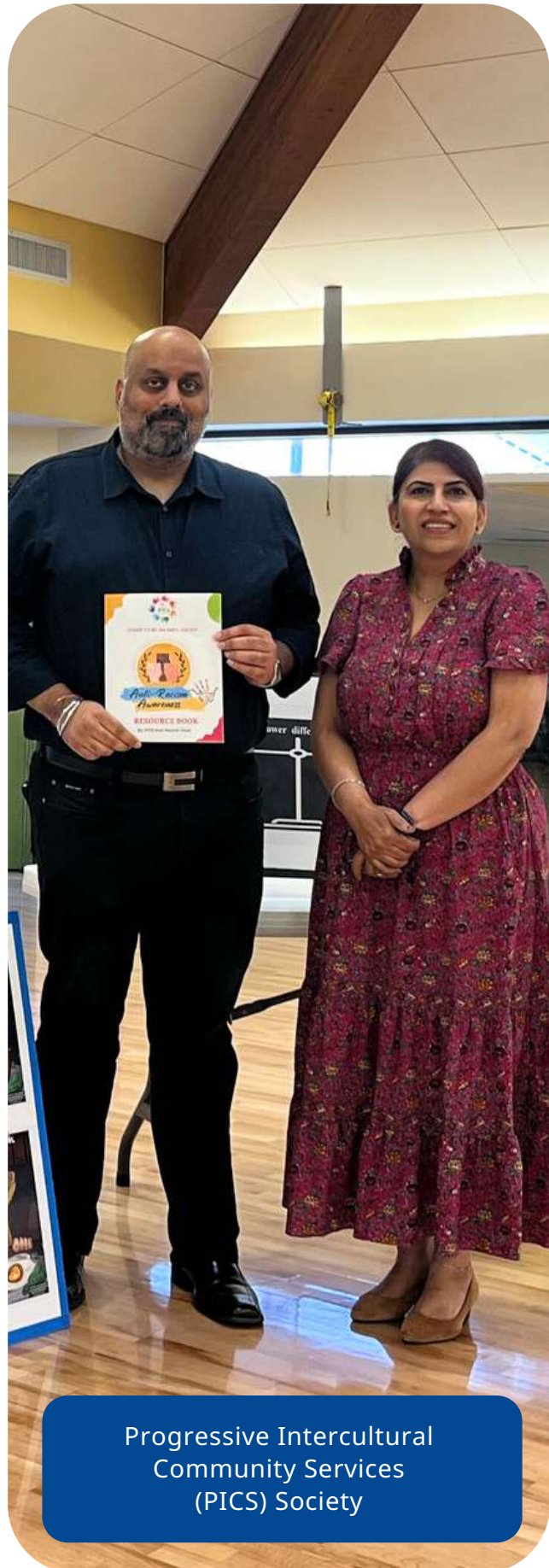
These diverse experiences highlight that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing racism. Each community's distinct encounters with racism call for specific, informed actions that recognize and address the varied forms of racial discrimination. This nuanced understanding is essential to developing effective anti-racism strategies and policies that are truly inclusive and responsive to the needs of Indigenous and racialized communities in British Columbia.



Conclusion



The community-led engagement process in British Columbia underscored the indispensable role of community organizations in shaping impactful anti-racism legislation. Their deep-rooted connections and comprehensive understanding of the unique and universal experiences of racism within various communities provided vital insights. By integrating these diverse perspectives, the process acknowledged the multi-faceted nature of systemic racism. It also ensured that the legislation could be tailored to address both the common and distinct challenges faced by different groups. This collaborative and inclusive approach set a precedent for creating responsive legislation that is representative of the needs of diverse communities to foster an equitable and inclusive province.



Progressive Intercultural
Community Services
(PICS) Society

Overview

Government of B.C. Anti-Racism Legislation

The Government of B.C. is committed to making the province a more equitable, inclusive and welcoming place for everyone. Systemic racism exists everywhere, including in government policies and programs and too many communities are facing barriers in their lives because of it. The Government of B.C. recognizes that this must change.

In 2022, the Government of B.C. passed the Anti-Racism Data Act (ARDA) to safely collect disaggregated race-based data that will be used to identify where people are not getting equitable services. The provincial government is now developing broader anti-racism legislation that will require the government to address systemic racism within its programs and services.

Public Consultation

Through the summer of 2023, the Government of B.C. engaged in a public consultation and engagement process to help inform the new anti-racism legislation. This consultation process was intended to help shape the Province's anti-racism legislation and its implementation.



There were three key streams of consultation:

**Online Questionnaire**

Open to the public from June 5 to October 3, 2023

**Indigenous Consultation and Co-Development**

First Nations, First Nations Leadership Council Policy and Technical Team, Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations, Métis Nation British Columbia, BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and urban/off-reserve populations

**Racialized Community Organizations-Led Engagement**

Open to the public through individual community organization events

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the key findings from the racialized community organizations-led engagements.

Racialized Community Engagement Synopsis

The B.C. anti-racism legislation community engagement initiative marked a significant stride in involving community voices in policy-making and was rooted in the Province's commitment to addressing systemic racism. This initiative was a timely response to the growing need for a more inclusive approach to legislation, one that acknowledged and addressed the diverse experiences of racial discrimination in British Columbia.

The scope of this project was expansive, involving grants provided to 68 community organizations, each with a unique role in representing and advocating for equity-seeking populations. These organizations embarked on a journey to gather insights, experiences and recommendations from those directly impacted by racial discrimination. The engagement spanned across a wide demographic, ensuring comprehensive and diverse representation. This included Asian, Black, Latin, South Asian and other intersectional communities, encompassing a variety of age groups, professions, languages, ethnic backgrounds, faiths and geographic regions within British Columbia.



Bangladesh Canada Cultural Association in Victoria

This initiative, through its extensive reach and depth, brought forth perspectives from over 225 events, engaging more than 5,000 participants between July 17 and September 30, 2023. It symbolized a concerted effort to weave together a multitude of voices, each contributing to a richer, more nuanced understanding of the challenges and potential solutions in the fight against systemic racism.



Centering Community Organizations

“

I really want to hear about the outcome from [community organizers] because I trust you. We don't all watch the news every night.

”

The community engagement initiative centers community organizations in the decision-making and policy development process. Community organizations serve as a bridge between the government and the communities they serve, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and represented in decision-making processes. They play a pivotal role in addressing systemic racism by facilitating awareness and inclusion initiatives, providing culturally sensitive healing and ensuring government accountability. Their grassroots connection and deep understanding of local contexts make them indispensable in the journey toward a more inclusive and equitable society.

Community organizations help address systemic racism through community-led initiatives and advocacy.

Community-Led Initiatives

Community organizations play a crucial role in addressing systemic racism. Their deep understanding of local challenges allows for effective, culturally sensitive interventions.

Advocacy and Policy Influence

These organizations are instrumental in advocating for policy changes that better support Indigenous and racialized peoples, particularly in areas affected by systemic racism like health care, education and employment.

They create safe, culturally sensitive spaces and foster inclusion programs, workshops and trainings that support community healing.

Cultural Healing and Support

Community organizations provide essential platforms for cultural healing and support, both for individuals affected by racist violence and for perpetrators. They offer safe spaces for sharing experiences and facilitate group-based healing approaches.

Awareness and Inclusion Initiatives

These organizations play a pivotal role in fostering awareness and inclusion through cultural exchange programs, anti-racism workshops and educational initiatives, which are critical to the healing process.

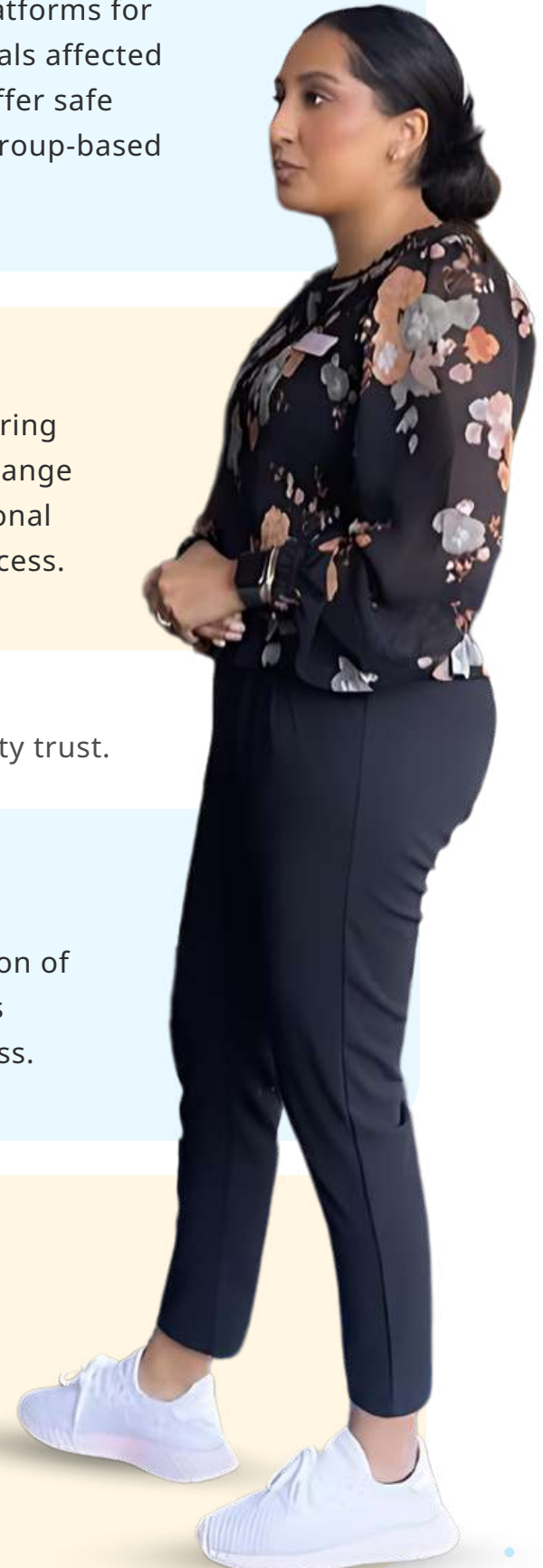
Community organizations are integral to ensuring government accountability and building community trust.

Ensuring Government Accountability

Community organizations are key to holding government accountable for the implementation of anti-racism legislation and policies. They act as watchdogs, ensuring transparency and progress.

Feedback and Community Engagement

They serve as a bridge between the community and government, providing platforms for feedback, community engagement and representation in decision-making processes.



They promote multiculturalism and anti-racism and a balanced implementation of policies and initiatives.

Promoting Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism

Community organizations are at the forefront of promoting both multiculturalism and anti-racism. They help contextualize these concepts within the community, educating people about the differences and demonstrating how these approaches can be synergistically applied.

Balanced Implementation

They advocate for a balanced implementation of multiculturalism and anti-racism in government policies and initiatives, ensuring that cultural diversity is celebrated and racial inequities are actively challenged.

The vital role of community organizations in shaping B.C.'s anti-racism legislation cannot be overstated.



Voices of Muslim Women Foundation

Universal Themes

Education and Awareness

One of the big things is people are uncomfortable talking about racism. Having education and training for young folks in high schools and elementary schools, starting at a young age to acknowledge the truth is critical. It helps them acknowledge the racism in Canada's history and then also just be able to be okay with giving up some privilege.

Throughout the engagement process, it became clear that participants believed that education and awareness were central to addressing systemic racism and fostering an anti-racist society. Participants underscored the crucial need for comprehensive educational frameworks, especially within the K-12 system, that delved into the complexities of racism and discrimination. The need for public awareness campaigns to foster empathy was also emphasized, suggesting that such initiatives could help bridge gaps between communities and enhance the efficacy of multicultural and anti-racist practices. Participants also recommended providing training for professionals to build a better understanding of how racism shows up in government services as well as in the corporate environment.



Middlepeace Clinical
Counselling Society

While discussing systemic racism, participants underscored the need for a common language, awareness of intersectionality and data collection as critical aspects of addressing systemic barriers faced by underserved communities.



Common Language

Education was seen as crucial to understanding and defining systemic racism. Participants discussed the need for clear definitions and concrete examples, such as disparities in criminal justice, health care and education.

Services (PICS) Society

Intersectionality Awareness

They emphasized the importance of recognizing intersectionality in the context of systemic racism and recommended educational initiatives that addressed how intersecting identities contribute to complex experiences of discrimination.



Data Collection

The need for comprehensive data collection was highlighted to inform evidence-based policy changes as well as to educate policy-makers and the public about key gaps.

The importance of creating spaces for cultural exchange and increasing awareness of racial trauma were identified by participants as integral to healing as a community.

Cultural Exchange and Dialogue

Creating spaces for communities to engage in dialogue and exchange cultural values, especially between racialized and non-racialized communities, was seen as crucial to building empathy, understanding and healing.





Public Awareness Campaigns

The role of public awareness campaigns in educating the broader population about systemic racism and its historical roots was emphasized. They were also seen as fundamental to building support for anti-racism initiatives.

Providing mandatory training and introducing a racially sensitive school curriculum were recommended as critical accountability measures.

Educational Curriculum

They expressed the need to evaluate and revise educational programs to ensure they communicate anti-racism and multicultural values from a young age. These perspectives were shared both by the youth groups who were engaged as well as adults. Ensuring that school and adult learning curricula integrated comprehensive facts and resources was identified as a critical aspect of building accountability.



Mandatory Training and Awareness

Participants highlighted the necessity of mandatory anti-racism training and cultural competency workshops for people in public services such as teachers, health care professionals and law enforcement officials to promote awareness and understanding of systemic racism.



Greater Vancouver Association of the Deaf

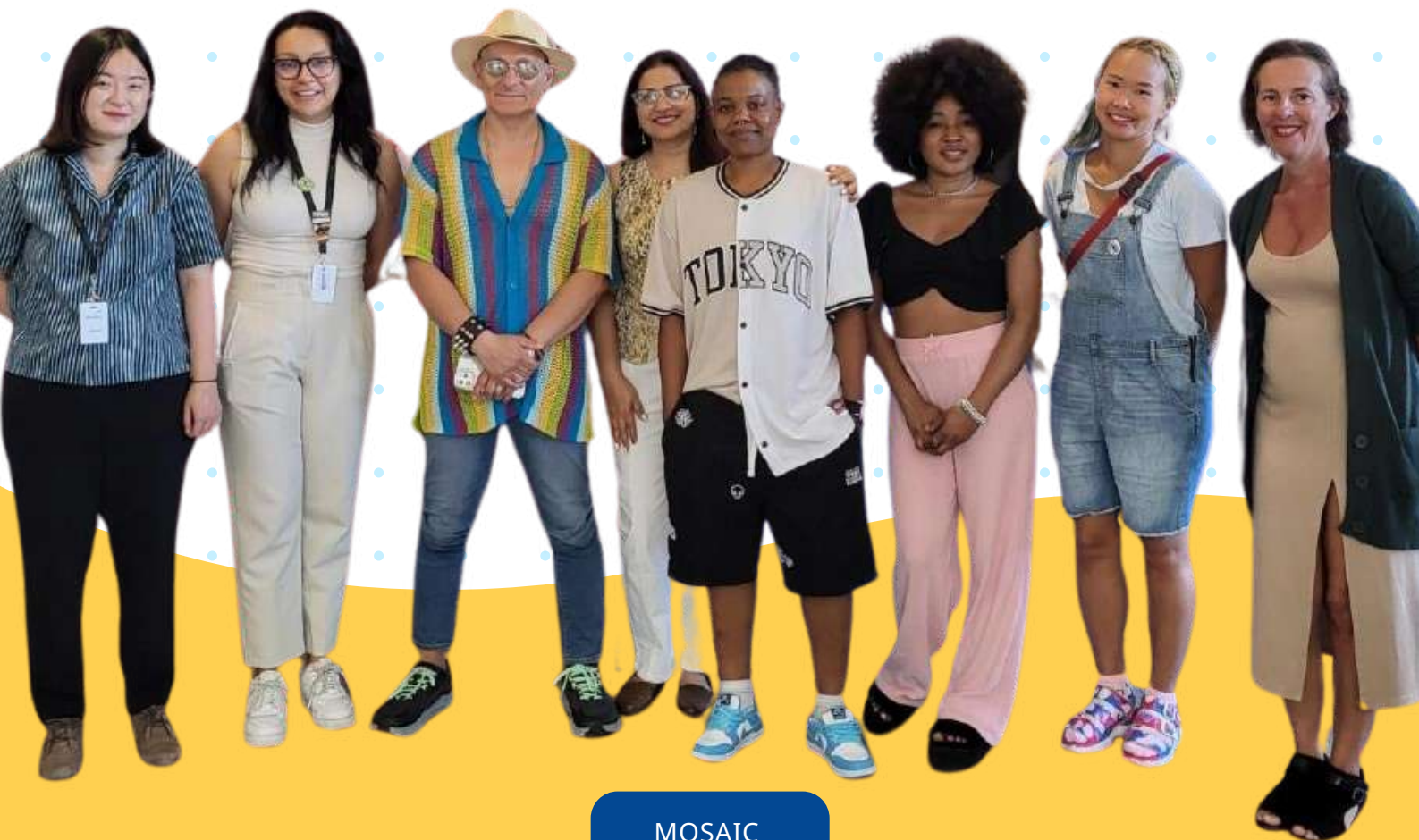
Participants discussed building awareness around the limitations of multiculturalism and providing resources to the public to better differentiate between multiculturalism and anti-racism.



Need for Comprehensive Understanding

Participants underscored the need for education and awareness to differentiate between multiculturalism and anti-racism. They suggested that these concepts should be understood in depth to effectively address diversity and discrimination.

These recommendations align with many organizations that reported that participants were unable to engage in a productive discussion around this topic because they did not clearly understand what these terms meant.



Accountability

“

Racism cannot be tackled in a day because it is thousands of years old. Regular and continuous engagement from various communities may offer long-term solutions for change.

”

The discussions around accountability pointed to the necessity of having mechanisms in place to hold individuals and institutions responsible for perpetuating racial biases and discrimination. There was a significant call for transparency in how racism is being addressed within various sectors, including the government, education and the workplace. There was also a compelling expectation of concrete actions following instances of racism. The establishment of clear accountability practices was seen as essential for healing, as it acknowledges the harm done and takes steps towards preventing future occurrences.



Middlepeace Clinical
Counselling Society

When discussing systemic racism, participants shared perspectives around government accountability and concrete consequences to racist incidents.



Government Accountability

The need for robust mechanisms to hold the government accountable in the implementation and enforcement of anti-racism legislation was a recurring theme. Participants sought transparency in how racism is being addressed within various sectors, including in government, education and the workplace.

Concrete Actions Following Incidents of Racism

Emphasis was placed on the need for concrete actions and clear accountability practices following instances of racism. This included acknowledging harm done and taking steps towards prevention.



Middlepeace Clinical Counselling Society

Accountability was perceived by many participants as a critical component of the journey of survivors of racist violence towards healing and the role of community-led initiatives that support accountability was highlighted.



Justice and Accountability in Healing Processes

Discussions on healing underscored the importance of justice and accountability. This includes holding perpetrators of racist violence accountable and addressing systemic issues that contribute to racial violence.

**Community-Led Initiatives**

The role of community-led initiatives in ensuring accountability was emphasized. They were seen as being more attuned to local challenges and providing effective, culturally sensitive interventions.

Participants proposed three key recommendations on accountability structures: transparent reporting, independent evaluation and consequences for violations.

Transparent Reporting and Communication

Regular, comprehensive reporting on the progress of anti-racism legislation was highlighted, along with transparent communication through various channels.

**Independent Evaluation and Oversight**

Establishing independent bodies to evaluate anti-racism programs and initiatives was suggested. This included regular audits and reviews to assess impact and effectiveness.

Consequences for Violations

The need for accountability measures, including consequences or penalization for violations of the legislation, was discussed.



The role of government accountability in implementing policies and practices that promote multiculturalism and anti-racism was discussed.

**Government Role and Policies**

The need for government policies that effectively integrate both multiculturalism and anti-racism approaches was proposed by holding government entities accountable for fostering both diversity in its institutions and actively combating systemic inequalities.

Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism

[Multiculturalism and anti-racism are] different because in a multicultural society, people might still be racist.



The engagement process revealed that multiculturalism and anti-racism, while distinct in their approaches, are inherently interconnected and can be mutually reinforcing. Multiculturalism, with its celebration of diversity and cultural exchange, provided a platform for building understanding and respect among different cultural groups. However, without the critical lens of anti-racism, multiculturalism risked being purely symbolic and failing to confront the systemic roots of racial inequality.

Conversely, anti-racism was seen as a proactive, action-oriented concept enriched by multiculturalism's focus on recognizing and valuing cultural diversity. Integrating both approaches in policies and practices was recommended for advancing towards a society where cultural diversity is celebrated and racial equity is realized.

Participants often perceived multiculturalism as a celebration of ethnic diversity through food, art and festivities. They felt that though it laid a good foundation for bridging cultural gaps, it was often insufficient by itself or was a symbolic gesture.



Celebration of Diversity

Multiculturalism was primarily seen as a positive framework that acknowledges and celebrates the coexistence of various cultures within society. It was viewed as focusing on pleasant aspects of diversity, like food, language, traditions and cultural exchange.

Multiculturalism as Symbolic

There was a perception that multiculturalism might sometimes serve more as a symbolic or performative gesture, which, while celebrating diversity, does not necessarily address deeper systemic issues of racial disparities. Many participants stated that multiculturalism can act as a facade that masks underlying issues of racism.



Foundation for Anti-Racism

Some participants saw multiculturalism as a stepping stone towards anti-racism. They suggested building connections and bridges between diverse communities through multicultural practices could lay the groundwork for more profound anti-racist actions.



Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association

Anti-racism was perceived as a systemic and necessary approach to addressing barriers with an inclusive and intersectional lens, though it might be also perceived as confrontational and requiring significant emotional labour.



Proactive and Systemic Approach

Anti-racism was perceived as a more dynamic and critical approach compared to multiculturalism. It was characterized by active efforts to identify and challenge systemic racism, racial bias and discrimination.

Action-Oriented and Confrontational

Participants viewed anti-racism as pragmatic and sometimes confrontational. It went beyond the surface-level celebration of cultural diversity to actively dismantle oppressive systems and structures.



Inclusivity and Intersectionality

Anti-racism was recognized for its emphasis on inclusivity and intersectionality. It was viewed to acknowledge the overlapping and intersecting identities and experiences related to gender, sexual orientation, disability and other forms of discrimination.

Emotional Impact

Participants shared the emotional cost of engaging in this work. Many found the work of navigating difficult conversations and confronting biases mentally exhausting and indicated the need to manage sadness, frustration and anger. They emphasized support structures as integral to sustaining this work.



Participants viewed integrating multiculturalism and anti-racism as providing maximum benefit to building an inclusive and equitable society. They also viewed it as a collective responsibility requiring continuous effort.



Integrating Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism

Despite the differences, many participants acknowledged that both multiculturalism and anti-racism were vital and could be mutually reinforcing. A combination of celebrating diversity and actively challenging systemic racism was suggested for a more inclusive and equitable society.

Continuous Effort and Collective Responsibility

A critical recommendation was to ensure that the path forward involved collective responsibility and continuous effort by all communities. The participants cautioned against the burden for education and advocacy being placed solely on those impacted and underscored the importance of allies in this work forward as well to ensure sustained change.



Canada Committee 100 Society

Community-Specific Themes

Communities of African Diaspora and Black Canadians

“

Even if our children are born here, they are not Canadians in the eyes of everyone.

”

Engagement with diverse community organizations underscored the unique challenges faced by Black communities in British Columbia, particularly regarding anti-Black racism. This form of racism, distinct from general racialized experiences, called for targeted anti-racism initiatives that consider the interactions between Black individuals and other racialized and Indigenous groups. Central to these discussions was the need for culturally sensitive healing services, recognizing the deep-seated impacts of racial trauma specific to the Black community. This included advocating for reparations and structured healing processes similar to Indigenous reconciliation efforts.



The diversity within the Black community itself was highlighted, underscoring the necessity for recognition and celebration of their varied cultural backgrounds, even within the same African countries. Issues such as systemic barriers in immigration, the need for more inclusive educational initiatives and the integration of Black history and culture into public life were identified as key areas of focus. Participants expressed a desire for direct government engagement and increased representation in decision-making, stressing the importance of understanding and addressing the unique challenges faced by Black communities.

Additionally, there was a call for comprehensive anti-racism strategies to provide safety and assurance, especially in interactions with law enforcement. The community voiced the need for structured government accountability, particularly in following up on promises and actions related to key reports (e.g. Black in B.C. report) and recommendations. These insights underscored the crucial steps necessary to foster a more equitable and inclusive society and emphasized the importance of recognizing and actively addressing the unique challenges and needs of Black communities in British Columbia.



Communities of Asian Diaspora

I often hear people in my community say that they have never experienced racism. With that mindset, it is even harder for them to recognize racial microaggressions. If you listen carefully to their stories, you may realize that structural racism was a cause of their hurtful experiences.

Discussions within the Asian diaspora community organizations in British Columbia highlighted several pressing issues impacting these communities. A significant challenge identified was the language barrier faced by immigrants, particularly those from smaller population groups. There was a strong call for support services and information on systemic racism to be available in multiple languages, including the provision of multilingual helplines with culturally sensitive support. This was critical to helping communities better understand and express their experiences and to seek support and accountability.





The rise in anti-Asian violence was a major concern, with communities seeking more active governmental efforts to address and counteract this discrimination. They expressed the need for campaigns and initiatives that dispel harmful stereotypes and provide support, particularly to groups like seniors and immigrant women. Healing from the psychological impacts of racism, especially microaggressions, was also emphasized, with a focus on providing adequate psychological support and counselling services, tailored to the experiences of racialized immigrants.

Another critical issue was the fear and self-censorship among new immigrants, particularly those seeking permanent residency or citizenship. Many in these communities felt compelled to maintain a low profile due to fears of government scrutiny, impacting their freedom of expression and their ability to report injustices. This fear contributed to a sense of exclusion and hindered their integration into Canadian society.

Communities of South and West Asian Diaspora

“

Multiculturalism is why butter chicken, samosas and Bollywood are accepted, but racism is why leaders such as Jagmeet Singh are called 'towel heads'.

”

Engagements with South and West Asian diaspora communities in British Columbia brought forward several key themes of particular significance. Language barriers were again identified to prominently affect access to services, workplace integration and health care. Communities called for more accessible information in multiple languages and inclusivity in public spaces for non-English speakers. This extended to the need for multilingual support systems, including accessible helplines and culturally sensitive health care communication. As one participant poignantly asked: *"Don't non-English speakers' lives hold equal value?"*

The challenge of recognizing foreign credentials was a recurrent issue, especially for skilled professionals immigrating to Canada. Many faced obstacles in utilizing their expertise due to credential recognition processes, pointing to a necessity for policy changes that ease workforce integration.

Intergenerational support was also emphasized, with the need for programs involving seniors and youth and resources available in various languages and formats. This included wellness programs, funding for ethno-linguistic agencies and support services that catered to diverse age groups within these communities.

Model minority stereotypes and their impact were discussed including the frustration that though certain aspects of identities and culture were welcome, it often resulted in a ceiling. This also limited accepted behaviours from an individual and collapsed individual actions and needs with those of the community.

Communities also showed awareness of internal biases and stereotypes within racialized communities themselves and that they had inadequate and incorrect knowledge of Indigenous history and challenges. These biases often led to prejudices between different racialized groups, highlighting a need for broader education and awareness to counter inter-community racism and foster mutual understanding.



Indigenous Communities

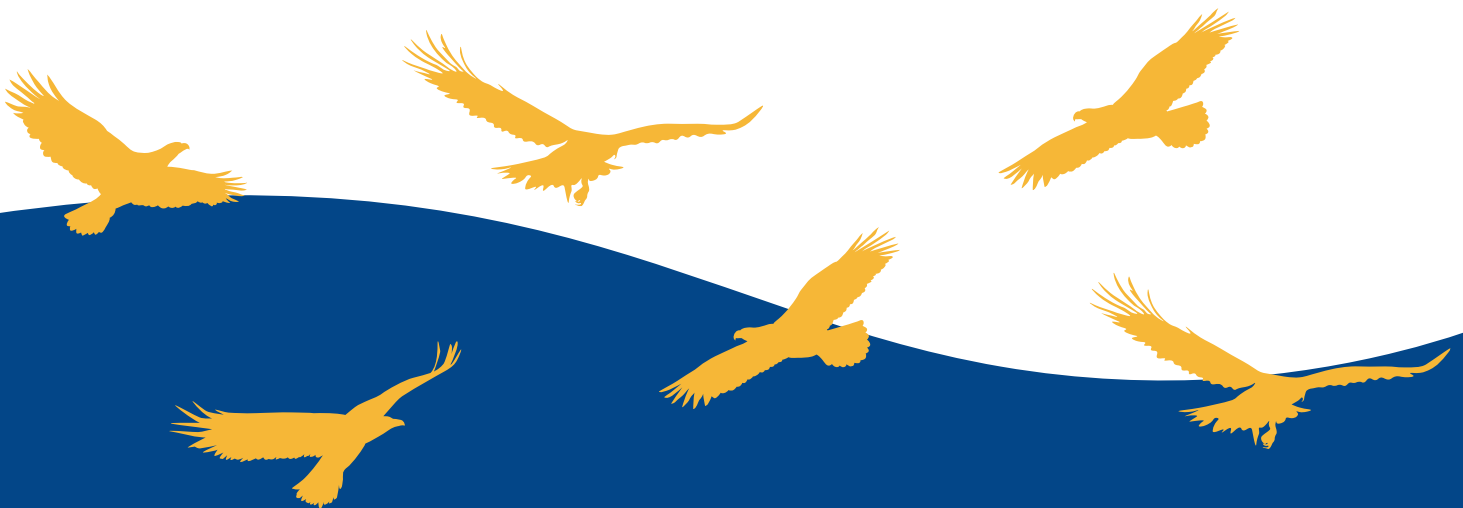
“

People lose hope in the system and lose their lives. Systemic racism costs lives. Before my sister passed away, she gave up on the system. The system took her kids for the third time and she just gave up. She went downtown and it took two years for the Downtown East Side to claim her life.

”

Though there was a separate Indigenous community consultation and co-development process to ensure Indigenous perspectives are embedded in the anti-racism legislation, several community organizations engaged Indigenous communities in B.C. as a part of their facilitation. Several themes were highlighted in these interactions.

A prominent focus is on the need for anti-racism legislation that empowers Indigenous Nations to create and lead their own systems independently and ensures accountability with tangible consequences for racism in various sectors, notably in health care and the criminal justice system.



Accountability emerged as a critical theme towards reconciliation, with the suggestion of third-party committees to monitor the provincial government's actions and legislation effectiveness. The discussions also touched on the need for a shared government system that respects Indigenous rights and land title, particularly in relation to immigration legislation.

Health care emerged as a significant area of concern, with calls for culturally sensitive training for health care professionals and the implementation of Indigenous liaisons in hospitals. Participants stressed the importance of creating a safe space for Indigenous patients, advocating for the integration of traditional healing practices within health care services. Substance use, recognized as a consequence of intergenerational trauma, led to proposals for increased funding for Indigenous healing centres and comprehensive mental health support. Additionally, the importance of culturally appropriate and nature-based healing resources was emphasized.



The criminal justice system was discussed extensively, particularly the high recidivism rate among Indigenous offenders and its linkage to colonialism. Recommendations included revising Gladue Report criteria, promoting restorative justice practices and considering substance use-related crime alternatives to incarceration.

In the realm of housing, the need for long-term commitment from employees in social housing to build trust with Indigenous tenants was highlighted, alongside the importance of tenant involvement in staff hiring processes.



Greater Vancouver Association
of the Deaf

Youth and Young Adults

The children all agree that nothing prepares them for finding racism in their immigration process. They agree, even if the term 'racism' is difficult to say, that it is absolutely necessary that they talk about it at school and that there must be subjects concerning this theme in primary and secondary schools.



Middlepeace Clinical
Counselling Society

Insights from school-aged youth in B.C. painted a picture of a generation acutely aware of the multi-faceted nature of racism and its impacts. Many already faced trauma from forced migrations and systemic racism abroad and discrimination and microaggressions in Canada. They spoke knowledgeably on systemic barriers in housing, food insecurity and healing from racial trauma. They called for systemic changes in education, cultural inclusivity and effective support mechanisms to combat racism and foster a more equitable and understanding society.

A key theme discussed was the urgent need to change the school curriculum to address racism more directly and comprehensively. Students advocated for the inclusion of subjects that discuss racism and discrimination from early education stages, aiming to equip them with a better understanding and tools to navigate and challenge these issues. They believed that such educational reforms can prepare them to face and counteract racism effectively in their daily lives.

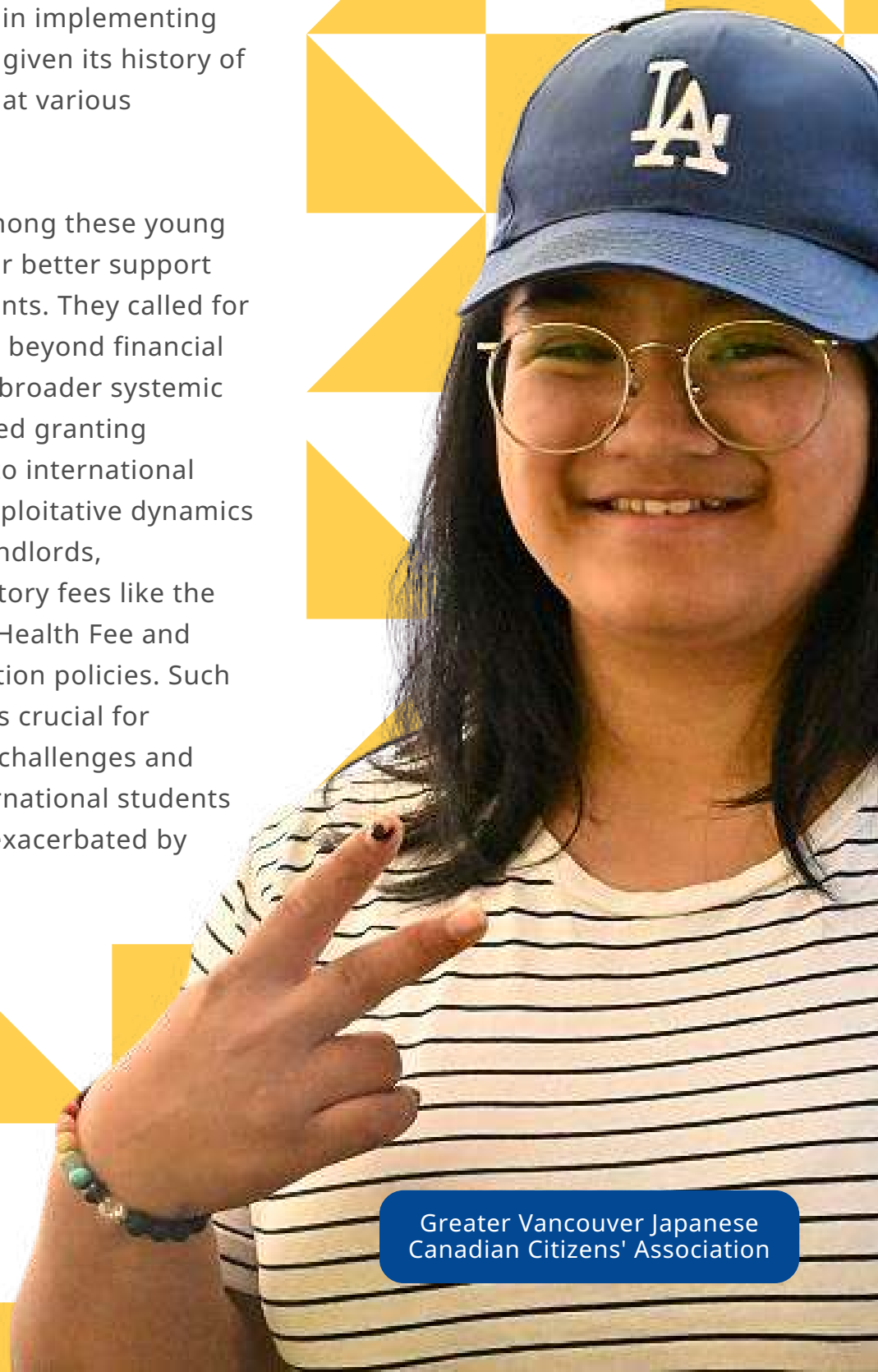
Another significant concern raised was the need for specialized training for school administrators and teachers in cultural sensitivity and anti-racism. This training was seen as crucial to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment and ensuring that educators were equipped to address incidents of racism effectively. Alongside this, there was a strong call for resources that empower students to stand up for themselves. These resources included educational materials, support systems like social justice clubs and counselling services that help students understand their rights, advocate for themselves and process the trauma resulting from racial violence. These youth underscored the importance of having accessible and effective mechanisms within schools to respond to and address racist incidents, ensuring accountability and support for affected students.

Cultural representation and inclusivity within the school system also emerged as vital themes. Students expressed the need for diverse representation in teaching staff and school administration, reflecting the multicultural reality of their communities. They suggested that integrating various cultural elements, such as language options and cultural celebrations, could foster an inclusive and respectful school environment. Additionally, they highlighted the value of cultural exchange programs that promote understanding and dialogue among students from different backgrounds. Addressing systemic barriers, such as the recognition of foreign schooling credentials and ensuring equitable policies for immigrant children, was also seen as crucial to creating a level playing field in education.



Racialized university-aged young adults in British Columbia voiced key concerns regarding racism, emphasizing the necessity for meaningful government action and enhanced support for international students. There was prevalent skepticism about the sincerity of government efforts in implementing anti-racism legislation given its history of inadequate responses at various governmental levels.

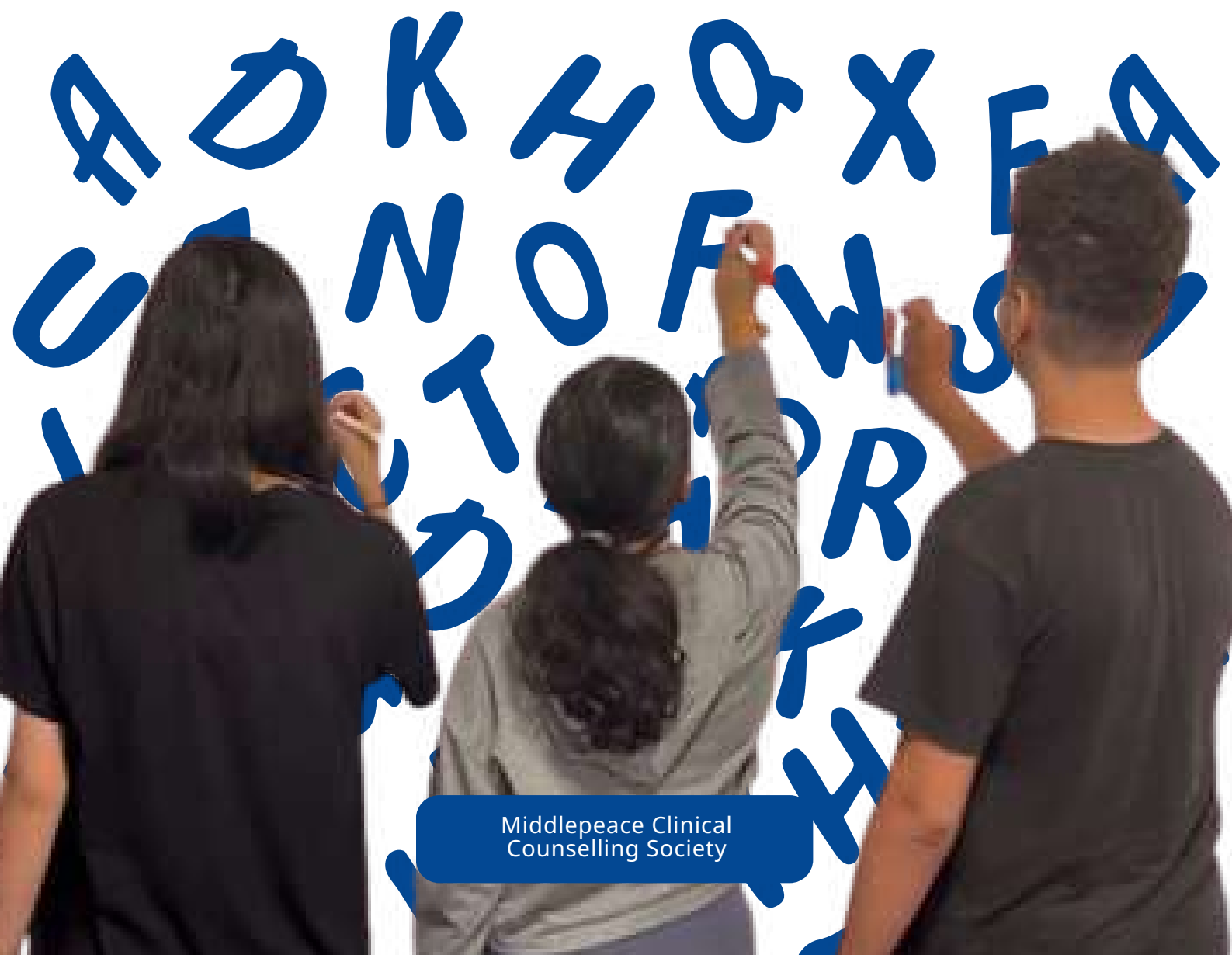
A significant theme among these young adults was the need for better support for international students. They called for reforms that extended beyond financial aid and encompassed broader systemic changes. These included granting permanent residency to international students to prevent exploitative dynamics with employers and landlords, eliminating discriminatory fees like the International Student Health Fee and ensuring equitable tuition policies. Such measures were seen as crucial for mitigating the unique challenges and financial burdens international students face, which are often exacerbated by racial biases.



Greater Vancouver Japanese
Canadian Citizens' Association

Discrimination within academic environments was a pressing concern. Students reported unfair treatment both inside and outside the classroom. This included linguistic discrimination, where students who speak English as a second language were treated as inferior and instructors did not respect students' names or resorted to unwanted nicknames. These experiences highlighted a culture of insensitivity and a lack of respect for cultural diversity within educational institutions.

Another critical issue raised was the fear of retaliation for reporting racist incidents. Many students preferred to rely on personal and community networks for support rather than official university channels, reflecting a lack of trust in the institution's ability to handle such reports effectively. This fear of retaliation and the emotional toll of the reporting process point to a need for safer, more supportive and responsive mechanisms for students to report and resolve incidents of racism outside of traditional university channels.



Rural Communities

With the police any complaint that is made will be investigated internally and in a [small] community there is mistrust on how this would work and if it is 'safe' to lodge a complaint.

In rural communities of British Columbia, perspectives on racism and its impacts brought to light several unique themes, notably around transportation, infrastructure, local business roles and the presence of more overt racism.

Transportation emerged as a significant barrier, especially in small communities lacking accessible public transit. This issue affected immigrants and international students profoundly, as they often relied on public transportation for essential activities like work, shopping and attending educational institutions. Participants called for improvements in public transportation services, including bystander training for transit staff and users and more inclusive scheduling that accommodated the needs of diverse community members.



Greater Vancouver Japanese
Canadian Citizens' Association

Infrastructure challenges, particularly the lack of essential services like sanitation and adequate housing, disproportionately impact racialized and marginalized groups. Access to basic amenities was highlighted as a human rights issue and called for the government to ensure these services cater to the needs of unhoused and vulnerable populations.

The role of local businesses was seen as crucial in combating racism. The need for training, incentives and funding to educate small businesses on anti-racism and inclusive hiring practices were suggested. Participants stressed the importance of creating safe and supportive environments in workplaces and acknowledging the mental toll and harm caused by racism and discrimination.

Overt racism in smaller communities was another significant concern. Participants shared personal experiences and observations of racial slurs and exclusion, indicating a gap between the ideals of multiculturalism and lived reality. They called for more education on the history of colonization and comprehensive resources for immigrants to better understand their rights and local histories. Public education efforts such as utilizing social media and websites were suggested as ways to raise awareness about racial discrimination and promote cultural understanding.



Faith-Based Communities

Winter break aligns with the Christmas holidays and there are also holidays during Easter but none during Diwali, Eid, or Passover.

Faith-based communities in British Columbia often face multi-layered barriers due to the intersection of their race, ethnicity and religious identity. These engagements highlighted the need for inclusive religious policies, positive media representation and navigating norms not aligned with personal religious beliefs.

One of the primary concerns raised by participants was the discrimination faced by individuals wearing visible religious attire, particularly in professional contexts. Muslim women, for instance, shared experiences of bias and exclusion during job interviews and in the workplace due to wearing hijabs. Additionally, participants expressed concerns about the increased surveillance and scrutiny experienced by non-Christian communities, particularly in public spaces and around religious institutions. This pervasive atmosphere of mistrust and heightened surveillance had a profound impact on the community's sense of safety and belonging.





Another significant issue discussed was the lack of positive representation and awareness regarding various religious practices and symbols. Participants noted the absence of comprehensive educational materials that cover the history and contributions of religious communities in Canada. This lack of awareness often led to misconceptions and biases, as identified by the participants. The need for regular workshops or seminars focusing on non-Christian cultures and practices was stressed, especially in schools and public institutions, to demystify common misconceptions and foster a more inclusive understanding.

The discussions also touched on the challenges of navigating spaces where individual religious practices intersect with broader societal norms, such as the inclusion of LGBTQA2S+ education in schools. This underscored the need for dialogue and respect for diverse viewpoints within the community and emphasized the multi-layered nature of identity in multicultural settings.

Conclusion

This report reflects the diverse voices and experiences of communities affected by racism in British Columbia and serves as a crucial step towards developing effective, inclusive and sustainable anti-racism policies. It encapsulates the collective voice of communities, unearthing crucial themes such as the need for education and awareness, accountability in various sectors and the nuanced distinction between multiculturalism and anti-racism. The insights gathered pave the way for actionable steps and long-term strategies to dismantle systemic racism and foster a culture of inclusivity and respect for all.

The engagement process underscored the necessity of education and awareness as foundational in addressing systemic racism. Participants emphasized the need for culturally relevant programming, inclusive educational curricula and public awareness campaigns to foster empathy and understanding. Accountability emerged as a central theme, with discussions focusing on government transparency, concrete actions following incidents of racism and community-led initiatives. The complex relationship between multiculturalism and anti-racism was explored, recognizing the need to integrate both approaches for a truly inclusive society.



Bangladesh Canada Cultural
Association in Victoria

Community-specific insights revealed the multi-faceted nature of racism and its impact across different groups. For instance, African diaspora communities highlighted the need for culturally sensitive healing services and distinct anti-Black racism initiatives. Asian communities focused on language barriers and the rise in anti-Asian violence. Indigenous communities called for empowerment through self-led systems and traditional healing practices. Youth emphasized educational reforms and the need for resources to combat racism in schools. Rural communities brought attention to transportation and infrastructure challenges, while faith-based communities discussed the importance of inclusive religious policies and positive media representation.

Enacting relevant and responsive anti-racism legislation serves as a testament to the provincial government's commitment to combatting systemic racism through inclusive policymaking. It underscores the importance of continuous engagement, empathy and collective responsibility in building a multicultural and just province, and is an essential step towards ensuring an inclusive and equitable future for everyone in B.C.



Yarrow Intergenerational
Society for Justice

Appendix

Community Organizations

Interior/Kootenays

- Kelowna Community Resources Society, Kelowna
- Kootenay Family Place Society for Children and Youth, Castlegar
- OCCA Communities Association, Kelowna
- Penticton & District Multicultural Society (PDMS) / South Okanagan Immigrant & Community Services (SOICS), Penticton
- Vernon and District Immigrant and Community Services Society, Vernon

Metro Vancouver/Fraser Valley

- Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies, Vancouver
- African Women Empowerment Society, Surrey
- Afrika21 Cultural Centre, Burnaby
- Afro-Canadian Positive Network of BC, Surrey
- BC Coalition of Experiential Communities Association, Vancouver
- BC Community Alliance, Vancouver
- Be the Change Earth Alliance Society, Vancouver
- British Columbia Federation of Labour, Burnaby
- Burnaby Family Life, Burnaby
- Canada Committee 100 Society, Burnaby
- Canadian Women and Art Society, Burnaby
- Capilano Students' Union Association, North Vancouver
- Centre for Family Equity Society, Vancouver
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Vancouver
- Culture Chats BC Association, Burnaby
- DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, Surrey
- Edo Friends of British Columbia Association, Surrey
- Engaged Communities Canada Society, Vancouver

Appendix

Metro Vancouver/Fraser Valley (Cont.)

- Family Education and Support Centre, Maple Ridge
- Folk Stars Arts Academy Society, Surrey
- Foundation for a Path Forward, Vancouver
- Great Lakes Networking Society of BC, Vancouver
- Great Light Healing Community Services Society, Surrey
- Greater Vancouver Association of the Deaf, Surrey
- Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association, Burnaby
- Historic Joy Kogawa House Society, Vancouver
- Hope Community Services, Hope
- Korean Evergreen Seniors Society of Canada, Burnaby
- Langley Community Services Society, Langley
- Latincouver Cultural and Business Society, Vancouver
- Long-term Inmates Now in the Community (L.I.N.C.), Mission
- Middlepeace Clinical Counselling Society, West Vancouver
- MOSAIC Multi-Lingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities, Vancouver
- Multicultural Helping House Society, Vancouver
- North Shore Multicultural Society, North Vancouver
- Pacific Canada Heritage Centre – Museum of Migration Society, Vancouver
- Pakistani Canadian Women's Society, Burnaby
- Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society, Surrey
- Richmond Jewish Day School Society of British Columbia, Richmond
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society), Vancouver
- South Asian Legal Clinic of British Columbia, Port Coquitlam
- Stop Anti-Asian Hate Crimes Advocacy Group Association of Canada, Richmond
- Swahili Vision International Association, Vancouver
- Synergy Executive and Boards Consulting Group Inc., Port Coquitlam

Appendix

Metro Vancouver/Fraser Valley (Cont.)

- The Board of Education of School District No. 36 (Mustang Justice), Surrey
- Third Bridge Foundation, Vancouver
- Unique Get Together Society, Vancouver
- Vancouver AIDS Society, Vancouver
- Vancouver Black Therapy and Advocacy Foundation, Vancouver
- Vancouver International Bhangra Celebration Society, Vancouver
- Voices of Muslim Women Foundation, Vancouver
- Whistler Multicultural Society, Whistler
- Women Transforming Cities, Vancouver
- World Sikh Organization of Canada, Surrey
- Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice, Vancouver
- Yoruba Social and Cultural Association of British Columbia, Surrey

North

- Northern Lights College, Fort St. John
- Skeena Diversity Society, Terrace

Vancouver Island

- 7 Generation Stewards Society, Campbell River
- African Art and Cultural Community Contributor CCC Inc., Victoria
- Bangladesh Canada Cultural Association in Victoria (BCCAV), Victoria
- Coastal Research, Education, and Advocacy Network (CREAN), Victoria
- Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria, Victoria