

International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD) Community Meetings Summary – Last updated Sept 9, 2021

Meeting 1: Recognizing IDPAD and addressing anti-Black racism in legislation and policy

Friday, May 28, 2021 - 3:00pm – 4:30pm (PDT) via Zoom

Meeting 2: Addressing anti-Black racism in education

Friday, June 18, 2021 - 9:00am – 10:30am (PDT) via Zoom

Meeting 3: Addressing anti-Black racism in justice and community safety

Wednesday, June 23, 2021 - 9:00am – 10:30am (PDT) via Zoom

Meeting 4: Addressing access to health and mental health services

Monday, July 12, 2021 - 3:00pm – 4:30pm (PDT) via Zoom

Meetings 5, 6, 7, and 8 notes to be added

Meeting 1: Recognizing IDPAD and addressing anti-Black racism in legislation and policy

Discussion Summary

Participants were asked the following questions:

1. Are you comfortable with this consultative approach for government to consider recommendations from these discussions to inform IDPAD recognition? Are there other themes we need to consider?
2. What will meaningful recognition look like for you? Once we conclude this series of discussions, what approach do we need to take with the recommendations and strategy we move forward when recognizing IDPAD?
3. What do we have to do to make sure that Black British Columbians are seen/visible and heard as we move forward with the consultations and development of race-based data collection legislation?

Community feedback on IDPAD Consultation Approach

- **Broad community participation** – Feedback should be considered alongside recommendations from other reports, and not in isolation. Participation should be facilitated through multiple avenues and needs to include young Black voices
 - Participants are encouraged to share additional thoughts via email to Ministry staff.
 - Broader community participation is being facilitated through the AACCCS survey currently circulating for Black communities.
- **Reciprocity and transparency** – It's important to build relationships with communities through this process. Participants should be reimbursed for their time and expertise. High level notes should be shared with participants.
- **Additional themes** – Other themes to consider for discussion include: democratic engagement, poverty and food security.

Community feedback on meaningful approach to IDPAD recognition

- **Language is important** – While recognition is important, the language needs to reflect the other IDPAD pillars of justice and development and include words such as: redress, action, or adoption.

- **Transformative change** – Any action needs to have a lasting impact on people’s lives – beyond a statement or anything performative.
- **Framework of principles** – The approach should consider including a consistent set of values and principles that underlie the work of IDPAD. This includes recognizing past harms, providing redress, and using an intergenerational approach for remedies.
- **Understanding harm** – There needs to be a deep understanding from government about the harm faced and experienced by Black communities as a result of a deep-rooted history of systemic racism (e.g. discriminatory immigration policies, etc.). Black communities are one of the two groups that are foundational to the “logic” behind white supremacy.
- **Coordinated action** – There needs to be a committee or working group to ensure that any decision or action by one Ministry doesn’t negatively impact another Ministry’s efforts. A siloed approach allows racism to exist.
- **Accountability** – Actions needs to be developed with key deliverables and an accountability framework with Black communities guiding the work.
- **Not without us** – The recognition and adoption should come with the establishment of a Commission or Provincial Advisory Committee on racial equality, equity, and the advancement of social justice for people of African descent by people of African descent.

On Consultations for Race-Based Data Collection

- **Purposeful** – The lack of data has impacted Black lives in a significant way but needs to be collected in a purposeful way with context.
- **Ownership of story** – There should be a way for the Black community to shape the data and the data collection, and to build on a community response to serve the community. “Our story can either lead to more liberation or more harm.”
- **Recognizing bias** – The stories that are told by the data should also focus not only on what it tells us about the disparities faced by racialized people, but also on what it tells us about the structures that lead to these disparities.
- **Process** – There should be different ways to engage people other than by Zoom, such as the Resilience BC Community Convener. Include Black community experts when developing questionnaires and consultative plans. Also, consultations with external stakeholders should be held in coordination with consultations with Black staff within Public Service.
- **Data usage** – When data is shared, it should be easy to access and navigate (i.e. at a 10th grade level)

Meeting 2: Addressing anti-Black racism in education

Discussion Summary

In this meeting, participants addressed the following questions:

1. What gaps and barriers do we need to address to respond to anti-Black racism in the education system, both in the K-12 sector and in post-secondary education?
2. What actions would you recommend we take? How can we work together to make this a reality?

Themes from conversation:

- **Representation in the system** – There needs to be improved efforts for the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black students, educators, counselling staff, administration, and school board trustees across the education system. Efforts could include better education on applying for [Special Programs](#) at BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, incentivizing hiring through cluster hire programs, and mentorship programs. Collect data on representation to measure and track progress.
 - **Curriculum** – Introduce Black history curriculum across districts and incentivise its use.
 - **Anti-Black racism and anti-racism training** – Use implementation days to bring training to school staff and support educators to feel more comfortable teaching the Black history curriculum.
 - **Reporting** – Some students are choosing not to use the ERASE program to report their experiences of racism. When reports are made, administrators may choose not to escalate the issue. Teachers are also experiencing racism and not feeling supported. There is a desire for a reporting process for students and teachers where BIPOC staff receive the reports and documents incidents.
 - **Mandated requirements** – There may be tools (e.g. funding requirements, contracts, and accountability frameworks with post-secondary institutions) that could be used to strengthen strategic planning and reporting on anti-racism initiatives. The Ministry can signal that anti-Black racism is a priority through these actions.
 - **Fear** – There is a lot of fear from people experiencing racism and from those who don’t know how to respond to it.
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Meeting 3: Addressing anti-Black racism in justice and community safety

Discussion Summary

In this meeting, participants address the following question:

1. What concrete actions do you recommend BC takes to respond to anti-Black racism in the policing and justice system, and to address community safety issues as we move forward with recognizing IDPAD?

Themes from conversation:

- **Public statements** – The Province’s stance on systemic racism and its presence in policing and the justice system needs to be communicated more broadly.
- **Access to justice** – There is low awareness of programs to improve or facilitate access to justice for Black persons in BC. There may be potential to improve access through the justice clinic model, or through the creation of a service by and for Black people – perhaps through advancing and building on services that are being developed by the Hogan’s Alley Society.
- **Police oversight and accountability** – Many feel that there is a lack of democratic oversight of the police, and also a lack of satisfaction with investigations into police violence and resulting penalties. There is an opportunity to improve on existing accountability measures by potentially giving non-police agencies access to the data.
- **Education and training** – There should be more anti-racism training for police. Ministers and staff should also get educated on issues impacting Black people in a substantial way.

- **Incident tracking** – Hate crimes and incidents should be better recorded. Many participants felt that there is an issue of some police officers not understanding the distinction between hate crimes and hate incidents.
 - **Mental health and poverty** – Funding needs to be reallocated towards mental health and safety – particularly for youth. Participants raised that the criminalization of poverty and mental health are leading to increased interaction with police. Community is finding that the most immediate way to get mental health support is by calling the police. This can further perpetuate criminalization.
 - **Community-based response** – Communities are feeling concerned or targeted when dealing with local police and RCMP. There may be value in exploring more social and community-based responses to needs. Black-led organizations experience barriers in accessing funding for work from sources like BC Community Gaming Grants that fund more established groups.
 - **Other themes** – The issues are all connected and need to be understood that way to appropriately address them. There needs to be an anti-racist approach throughout the system.
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Meeting 4: Addressing access to health and mental health services

Discussion Summary

In this meeting, participants address the following questions:

1. What are the long standing and emerging issues of anti-Black racism in accessing adequate health and mental health services? What are the gaps? What can we improve on?
2. What actions do you recommend to address health and mental health concerns of Black British Columbians as we move forward with recognizing IDPAD?

Themes from conversation:

- **Racism is a public health issue** – Social determinants of health need to be considered when considering mental and physical health.
- **Race is a barrier to accessing adequate healthcare** – Many participants said that anti-Black racism is pervasive across the healthcare system. Biases against Black people often lead to Black patients delaying care, therefore, putting their health at greater risk, or not receiving adequate care when they need it.
- **Shortage of Black healthcare providers** – Many Black patients cannot find health services from someone who can understand their experience from lived realities, especially outside the Lower Mainland. Searching for physicians by language and cultural competencies should be easier.
- **Equitable hiring** – Need an employment stream focused on recruiting Black healthcare professionals to address the lack of Black representation in the sector, and stronger legislation to prosecute discrimination against Black people in employment.
- **Training** – Med school curriculum needs to include teachings on dark skin in medicine and use dark-skinned mannequins. Explicit anti-Black racism training should be mandated for all healthcare providers. Any training should be co-developed with community and result in a certificate.
- **Recruitment and retention of Black medical students** – Need to collect data to understand gaps and barriers in recruitment and retention rates of Black medical students in BC Black students need a specific application stream and mentorship and scholarship programs for them. Also need increased representation of Black instructors and clinical supervisors.

- **Fund Black mental health** – Many Black mental health initiatives are currently being funded through crowdfunding. There is also a lack of Black registered counselors and therapists in BC.
 - **Reporting and response** – Need clarity on where to go to report racism in healthcare and how the incident will be responded to while protecting the victim.
 - **Data Collection** – There is a need for province-wide data-collection to understand the gaps in healthcare for Black people – including representation.
 - **Other themes** – Need easier access to grants in the sector. Improve recognition of foreign credentials. Address stigma attached to accessing mental health support. Create a centralized space for Black communities. Need to provide mental health resources and anti-racist expert support to Black staff.
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