

International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD) Community Meetings Summary – Last updated Oct 19, 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

Meeting 5: Addressing access to adequate housing

Wednesday, July 28, 2021 – 11:00am – 12:30pm (PDT) via Zoom

Meeting 6: Addressing Black ownership and generating Black wealth (Sub-theme: employment mobility)

Friday, September 3, 2021 – 9:00am – 10:30am (PDT) via Zoom

Meeting 7: Arts and culture and Black identity

Friday, October 1, 2021 – 8:00am – 9:30am (PDT) via Zoom

Meetings 8, 9 and 10 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)
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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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Meeting 5: Addressing adequate access to housing

Discussion Summary

In this meeting, participants address the following questions:

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

Themes from conversation:

- **Anti-Black racism in accessing housing** – Stronger mechanisms are needed to address discrimination by homeowners and landlords.
- **The issues impacting Black people are specific to Black people** - The explicit histories of racism need to be addressed through unique-to-Black-people interventions rather than broader BIPOC-focused initiatives.
- **Race-based data** – Need to collect information on racial identity (and other intersecting identities) for housing and homelessness so that resources can be better invested.
- **Housing for Black people by Black people** – Change procurement practices to support Black business owners and contractors to bid on government contracts. Incentivize transfer of knowledge between housing development companies and Black-led companies for housing

projects. Relax the zoning rules in municipalities with higher concentrations of Black people to increase access to affordable housing for Black people.

- **Access to affordable housing** – Provincially funded affordable housing projects should mandate minimum occupancy rates for Black communities and other marginalized people.
 - **Comprehensive solutions and services** – Mental health, safety and other wrap around services need to be provided with housing. Hogan’s Alley Society and Nora Hendrix place have models and lessons that can be expanded.
 - **Representation** – Need authentic representation of Black people in housing policy and program spaces. Need a table to provide ongoing recommendations as the landscape shifts.
 - **Youth** - Housing solutions are needed for youth and young adults, and for multigenerational and large families.
 - **Financial literacy and support programs** – Create programs similar to the Federal Rent-to-Own program or to the Habitat for Humanity’s Housing Supports for Black Canadian Families.
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Meeting 6: Addressing Black ownership, generating Black wealth (subtheme: employment mobility)

Discussion Summary

In this meeting, participants addressed the following questions:

1. The government is committed to addressing Black ownership, generating Black wealth and addressing employment mobility. What are the long standing and emerging issues of anti-Black racism in business, finance, and employment? What are the gaps? What can we improve on?
2. What actions do you recommend to address these concerns of Black British Columbians as we move forward with recognizing IDPAD??

Themes from conversation:

- **Representation** – A lack of representation in leadership is a bigger barrier to employment opportunity for Black communities than skill levels. Need representation broadly and a measurable target to increase Black representation within the Public Service.
- **Access to capital** – Need low interest loans, more accessible grants, and better access to investment advisors. Black communities face barriers to access grant funding, such as inaccessible eligibility criteria. Financing opportunities also require collateral that is not generally available to Black communities because of systemic marginalization.
- **Procurement** – Shift government procurement policy to buy from Black-owned businesses and require any contractors to also buy a specific amount of goods from Black-owned businesses.
- **Investing in ecosystems** – Need to support the ecosystems that Black businesses operate in. This includes a wholistic, Black-led approach supporting families, childcare, mentorship opportunities, trauma support, immigrant support, health services, environmental protection and moving forward with indigenous people.
- **Communication** – Government needs to improve its reach and explore non-traditional ways of sharing information (i.e. through community-based organizations) when communicating with Black communities. This may improve trust and access to information about services.

- **Support existing Black-led models** – Existing programming delivered by Black communities are successful but don't always get funded.
 - **Training programs** – Provide trainings on leadership, entrepreneurship, skills-building and financial literacy programs to create intergenerational wealth.
 - **Responding to racism** – Need to improve reporting mechanisms for racism in workplaces and have greater accountability for what happens after reports are filed.
 - **Youth** – Provide employment, mentorship, and training opportunities for teens and young adults.
 - **Immigrant support** – Credential recognition and high international student fees are barriers to managing wealth. Consider a Black entrepreneurship program that is tied to immigration.
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Meeting 7: Arts, Culture and Black Identity

Discussion Summary

Participants were asked the following questions:

1. The government is committed to addressing anti-Black racism in the arts, culture and creative industries. What are the long standing and emerging issues of anti-Black racism in these sectors? What are the gaps? What can we improve on?
2. What actions do you recommend to address these concerns of Black British Columbians as we move forward with recognizing IDPAD?

Themes from conversation:

- **Rich and diverse Black cultures** – There are hundreds of cultures in Black communities that are mischaracterized in BC as a single Black culture. These diversities of cultures should not be simplified, underrated, or seen as a commodity for entertainment.
- **Community infrastructure** – Spaces for Black cultures and art to be celebrated and shared. Support ongoing initiatives such as the [Issamba Centre](#), the [Black Arts Centre](#), or a new centre in Black Strathcona (also known as Hogan's Alley). [The Black Pledge](#) was also highlighted as a unique initiative advocating for spaces.
- **Media** – Challenge poor representation of Black communities in media by increasing grants and opportunities for Black journalists to tell their own stories about the communities. Appoint an advisor on Black cultures at the Ministry of Advanced Education or in post secondary institutions to support or develop media programs specifically for Black youth.
- **Representation** – Need to increase representation of Black communities in grant evaluation teams, peer jury review tables, at the program policy level, in the BC Arts Council Board, and on media editorial boards. Some expressed that “quota systems” in some Creative BC programs have not resulted in better coverage for Black communities. Provide funding to to establish advisory boards consisting of Black community members.
- **Equitable grant processes** – There is a need for continued, sustainable, and accessible funding. Grants should build opportunities for collaboration instead of competition. More support should be given to equity seeking groups in the grant application process, so they are not rejected over administrative or paperwork mistakes. Data is needed on how much funding and support is

going to Black communities, who is successful, to gain understanding of systemic barriers and why others are not getting grants.

- **Coordinate across government(s)** – Need to work across ministry silos and with local governments (ie. City of Vancouver’s [Culture|Shift](#)) to support Black communities. The work should take past reports into consideration such as the [Canadian Music Report](#) and the [Vancouver Music Strategy](#).
 - **Public education** - Ignorance plays a large part in undermining Black identity and feeding anti-Black racism. Educational opportunities that highlight models of Black innovation and success are needed for the public and the public service. Transformative education opportunities are also needed for perpetrators of anti-Black racism.
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