



The Students
Commission
Centre of Excellence for
Youth Engagement



YOUTH TAKE CHARGE

FEBRUARY 2018

The Addressing Structural Racism Theme team was comprised of those engaged in the Youth Take Charge Project. This is a national initiative to address structural racism. This project engages 5 communities across Canada (Surrey BC, Saskatoon SK, Toronto ON, Kingston ON and Halifax NS). Youth Take Charge supports these communities in leading community initiatives that address structural racism, through workshops, resources, youth groups and more. At the Canada We Want Conference, the addressing structural racism theme team was representative of those already engaged in the Youth Take Charge project in their community. The goal of the theme team group at the conference was to build relationships, study the issue further, make decisions and provided input into Canada's first national youth policy.



SUMMARY

Structural racism is an issue that is ever so very relevant amongst young people. This issue poses a threat for young Canadians of minority communities to grow, develop and prosper in a Canada that is safe and respects their basic presence as a human being. It is important that we discontinue viewing racism from a historical lens and acknowledge that it is critical issue in present society. These recommendations provided by youth at The Canada We Want Conference into Canada's national youth policy matter and should be respected as such.



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Acknowledgments

With representatives from First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities from across the country, we humbly gathered on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee, the Ojibway/Chippewas, the Anishinabek, and currently the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. We were also surrounded by Indigenous communities: To the North were the Chippewas of Georgina Island; to the East are the Mississaugas of Scugog Island; and to the West are the Chippewas of Kettle and Stoney Point. Through Indigenous led ceremony, acknowledgement and respect, we recognized the enduring presence of Indigenous Peoples on this land, and were very grateful to have the opportunity to use it as a meeting place, and a space for knowledge sharing.

Thank you to Cedar Glen YMCA, The Students Commission, Sharing the Stories, Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, The Royal Bank of Canada, UNICEF, the many other funders of the Canada We Want Conference 2018, and all of the organizers, elders, adult allies, facilitators, and most of all the wonderful youth participants.

Thank you to The Students Commission Conference Planning Committee for their hard work. Thank you to the federal government representatives and policymakers that attended the Conference and will continue to support the development of the youth policy. Thank you to all the youth participating and sharing their courageous stories and perspectives.

Executive Summary

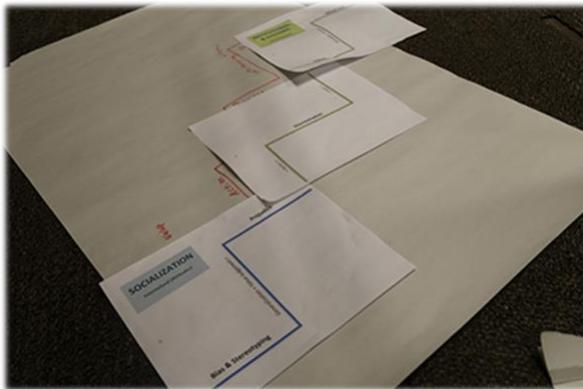
It is the responsibility of the Government of Canada to ensure that all groups of visible minorities live in Canada that ensures their safety, fundamental human rights, are provided equitable opportunities to thrive as well as protect them from a system that has been historically set up to destroy these communities. It is important to look where we've been to know where we are going. With that being said, it's also the responsibility of the Canadian Government to confront and acknowledge its history of racism and failure to citizens of minority communities and individuals.

In order to adequately address structural racism as a prominent issue in Canadian society, education must be a top priority. This includes educating current students on what racism, different players, factors and types of racism and how it plays out in current society rather than a historical viewpoint. Additionally, including racism education in education studies, ensuring future teachers are rid of racial biases in the classroom.

Our recommendations also include more representation of diverse individuals in systems of policy makers. It is important that voices at decision making tables fully represent what Canada looks like in order to effectively develop policy that equitably serves all Canadians.

There is huge value in the Canadian government addressing structural Racism. Canadian is a mosaic and is afforded the opportunity to call people from all over the world Canadian citizens, who are ready to contribute to the Canada They Want. Addressing these concerns and issues they face, will ensure that Canadian continues to thrive socially and economically.

“Communication is key to understanding different perspectives properly. If we want to make change, we need to listen to those who need the change.”



“The staircase is an amazing representation of the steps and qualifications of structural racism. People should be educated and understand the staircase to understand what leads to overall structural racism.”

#CANADA WE WANT

The change we want to see:

- Structural racism addressed in all facets of government institutions
- Canadians of all communities receive the same opportunities as everyone
- Diversity in schools with students and teachers
- Diversity voices consistently represented at policy decision making tables

The way we want to get there (Activities 1):

Workshops on Structural racism and power

Activity 2:

Research project engaging youth on power and class and Canada and how it contributes to racism

Activity 3:

School board wide youth conferences, allowing students to meet and work with one another

Activity 4:

Policy roundtables with government officials

What we need to get there (Resources):

- Funding from the Government and community organizations
- Centre of excellence for youth engagement, engaging research partners
- School board funding and support to lead youth conferences
- Community partnerships with local government officials to support funding for roundtable

The way we want to get there (Resources):

- Collaboration between all levels of government
- Local government to work with different service providers to help present tools and deliver workshops for youth
- Collaboration between different decision makers and communities to listen to youth voice and implement recommendations

What are the values and the principles to ground our recommendations?

Racism is constantly viewed as an issue of the past and taught in history classes. It's a very prominent issue amongst youth of today and education plays a key role in addressing it.

What are the values and the principles to ground our recommendations?

Lack of representation of diverse voices in policy making means that key voices in the Canadian mosaic is missing and certain groups are put at a disadvantage. Diverse representation ensures everyone is heard.

More funding and support for cultural ethnic and religious support needs

Government support and funding for the various cultural and ethnic populations in Canada. With a focus on providing support to expand and educate cultural practices.

Rationale: Cultural and religious groups in Canada feel left out in funding and government support in opportunities to expand, study and resource their cultural and religious practices and needs.

Approach: Canada will launch a national committee that focuses and the multiple minority cultural and religious groups in Canada. This ensures that minority groups in Canada are constantly heard and supported in budget and funding.

Racism education as a now issue

Teach Racism education in schools from the perspective of an issue that is current and happening now. Provided adequate education as to the different components of Racism and how it impacts society today.

Rationale: Racism education is usually taught from a historical lens and not an issue of now. When we learn about racism in school its usually taught from the perspective of slavery and the civil rights and the false ideology that we live in a post racial society.

Approach: Racism education in school taught as an issue that is happening now, the different factors associated with it and racial biases.

More grant opportunities for grassroots community level initiatives

Granting opportunities based on community needs and an easier, more accessible process for smaller community initiatives.

- Grants are funded based on community needs
- Granting process is easier for small community initiatives (unincorporated non-profits)

Rationale: Smaller community level initiatives feel left out in granting opportunities, where larger non-profits and charities are afforded the opportunity and infrastructure to be successful in granting applications.

Approach: More granting opportunities that are focused on granting grassroots initiatives, making the process easier and focused on incubating community advancing projects.

Educating Canadians about different races more appropriately.

A push to add teachings about both the negatives and positives of the different races and cultures in Canada.

Rationale: Racism education often comes and is associate with a negative history of the different races in Canada. (i.e. slavery, residential schools, Komogata Maru etc). Rather than trying to get Canadians to empathize with the struggles of different races, it's important to educate all around about different groups, so we have a complete understanding about how diverse Canada is. This goes a long way in addressing structural racism

Approach: The implementation of cultural education about the different races and ethnic groups in Canada across all school boards.

Conclusion

These recommendations provided by youth in serve as a voice that historically aren't heard nor sought after. This process, providing input into Canada's national youth policy has been refreshing and fulfilling. It is important that the Canadian Government takes these recommendations seriously and strive to implement them. With structural racism threatening the growth and development of young people in Canada, it is important to continue to seek youth voice surrounding these concerns and strive to not only address but end structural racism in Canada.