

Towards Racial Equity: Understanding Anti-Black Racism in Canada

Council Workshop
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NACCA
est.2018



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NEWMARKET AFRICAN CARIBBEAN CANADIAN ASSOCIATION

Opening Circle

Breathe

Sit with discomfort

Mistakes are inevitable on this journey

Working together to change systems

Set an intention for your participation today

The International decade for people of African descent, 2015-2024

The UN General Assembly proclaimed this decade by the Resolution (68/237) adopted on December 23, 2013 with the theme, "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development."

It formally acknowledges that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose rights must be promoted and protected.



How Racism Was Developed



What Racism Looks Like Today



The Historical Context

1628 - beginning of slavery in Canada as a system of bondage in both the French and later English Colonial regime

1834 - 1838 - Britain abolished slavery in two stages in its colonies

Segregation in education (until 1983), housing and social life

1867 Confederation - ban on Black migration (White only population policy)

1955 West Indian Domestic Scheme - single women only

1962 - race-based immigration policy ended

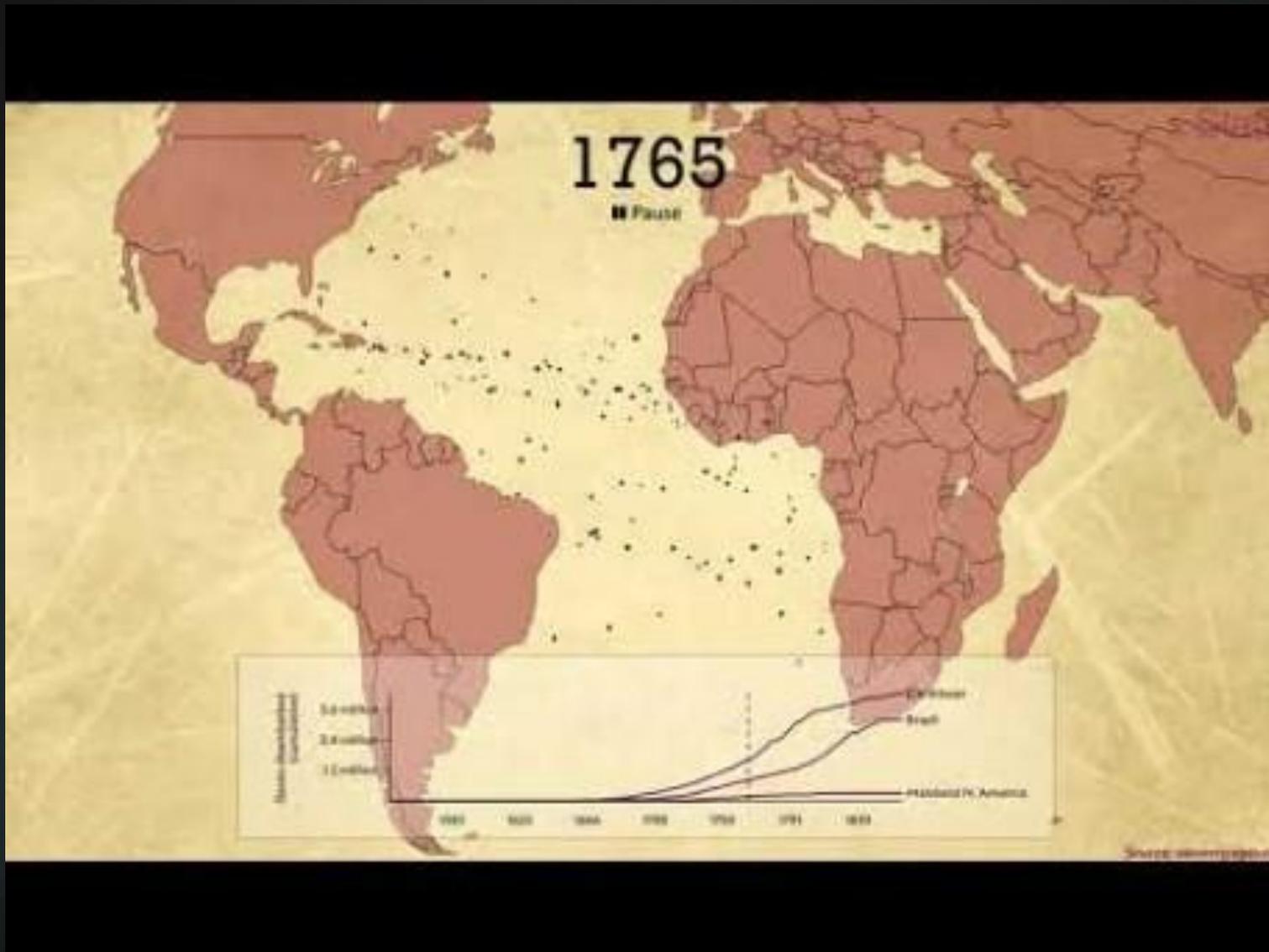
1967 - Point system for immigration began (skilled professionals; had to speak English or French)

Definition of Terms

- ▶ **ANTI-BLACK RACISM:** present-day institutional policies, structures, practices and behaviors that are specifically aimed at the people of African descent which are discriminatory and which comes out of our distinct historical experience of slavery and colonialism. These practices create attitudes and beliefs that are upheld to protect the power structure of institutions and often appear as invisible. The effect on the people of African descent encompasses a range of experiences of trauma, hardship and inequality that we experience on a daily basis.
- ▶ **RACIAL INEQUITY:** race can be used to predict life outcomes
- ▶ **SYSTEMIC BARRIER:** an obstacle that is embedded in an organization's structure whether in administration, decision making or culture that holds groups back but on the surface appears to be neutral
- ▶ **INTERSECTIONALITY:** the overlapping of social identities that create interconnected systems of discrimination
- ▶ **MICROAGGRESSION:** daily insults, remarks, questions & actions → POC

“ In the biggest deportation in known history, weapons and gunpowder from Europe were swapped for millions of [enslaved Africans] who were shipped across the Atlantic to the Americas. Ships returned to Europe with sugar, cotton and tobacco. Around 17 million African men, women and children were torn from their homes and shackled into one of the world’s most brutal globalized trades between the 15th and 19th centuries. Many died in merciless conditions. ”

REUTERS, AUGUST 23, 2019



Check-in

Take 2-3mins and
write down your
thoughts so far.



Would anyone like
to share their
thoughts/reaction?

History of Reparation Payments

2017	CANADA	\$750 Million	Indigenous survivors of the Sixties Scoop
1990	U.S.A.	\$1.6 Billion (or \$20,000 each)	JAPANESE AMERICAN
1990	AUSTRIA	\$25 Million to Holocaust Survivors	Jewish Claims of Austria
1988	CANADA	250,000 sq. miles of land	INDIAN & ESKIMOS
1988	CANADA	\$300 Million	JAPANESE CANADIANS
1986	U.S.A.	\$32 Million 1839 Treaty	OTTAWAS OF MICHIGAN
1985	U.S.A.	\$31 Million	CHIPPEWAS OF WISCONSIN
1985	U.S.A.	\$12.3 Million	SEMINOLES OF FLORIDA
1985	U.S.A.	\$105 Million	SIOUX OF SOUTH DAKOTA
1980	U.S.A.	\$81 Million	KLAMATHS OF OREGON
1971	U.S.A.	\$1 Billion + 44 Million Acres of Land	ALASKA NATIVES LAND SETTLEMENT
1952	GERMANY	\$822 Million to Holocaust Survivors	GERMAN JEWISH SETTLEMENT
1865	U.S.A.	\$0 Slavery & Jim Crow era	AFRICAN AMERICAN BLACK DESCENDANTS
1833	BRITAIN	\$0 Slavery & Emancipation era	(CARIBBEAN and CANADIAN) BLACK DESCENDANTS
1834 - 2015	BRITAIN	£20 Million (17 Billion in 2018 dollars)	(CARIBBEAN) PLANTATION OWNERS
1825 - 1947	HAITI (independence debt)	150 000 000F – later reduced, \$90m (\$24 B in 2004 dollars)	FRENCH GOVERNMENT

Reparation as (Self) Repair

- ▶ Reparation is also about reparative justice
- ▶ When we break down structures of Black exploitation and oppression, we begin the work of (self) repair → reparation
- ▶ Reparation can also be viewed as an instrument that breaks down structures that exclude and marginalize African descendant people

The Canadian Context

- ▶ Black loyalists – land grants promised were delayed, denied, dislocated (1783)
- ▶ First race riot in North America – Nova Scotia (1784)
- ▶ Sleeping Car Porters – linked servitude to skin colour – 1900s
- ▶ Queen's ban on admitting Black applicants to the medical program - 1918-1965
- ▶ Africville – Nova Scotia (1970)
- ▶ Home for Colored Children 1921-1978 – Nova Scotia
- ▶ Hogan's Alley – British Columbia
- ▶ legalized discrimination in education, housing, employment, justice - across Canada



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Activism

- ▶ 1969 – Sir George Williams University
- ▶ 1988 – Black Action Defence Committee
- ▶ 1992 – Yonge street uprising
- ▶ 2014 – BLM Toronto
- ▶ 2020 – Global uprising

The Legacies of Anti-Black Racism

- ▶ Low expectations, over streaming, over suspension of Black students
- ▶ Chronic disparities in poverty
- ▶ Health and wealth disparity
- ▶ Ghettoizing and displacement of Black people – the geography of where people live
- ▶ Disproportionalities in home ownership and access to credit
- ▶ Over-policing and over representation of Black and indigenous Canadians in the prison system



“

Incomes for racialized groups have not increased in 35 years and the income-gap between racialized and white groups has increased...For every dollar a white person in York earns, a racialized person in York earns 66 cents.

”

REBALANCING THE OPPORTUNITY EQUATION (2019) REPORT ON INCOME INEQUALITY IN THE GTA

Systems Level Thinking

EVENTS

What is happening? What evidence do we have that there is a problem?

PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR

What patterns of behaviour are impacting the work environment (who gets recruited, hired and promoted?)

SYSTEM STRUCTURE

What are the policies and practices that are reproducing these outcomes?

IDEOLOGY

What assumptions and beliefs shape the system that we operate in and inform those policies and practices?

The Myth of Meritocracy

- ▶ Meritocracy – individuals are rewarded based on their efforts and abilities
- ▶ False choice – sense that you have a range of options but you only have a few
- ▶ invisible limitations on possibilities and opportunities for Black kids
- ▶ Our society/systems are not neutral
- ▶ Economic and racial inequities impact outcome
- ▶ Leads to self-blame/self-doubt



Moving from Inclusive to Anti-racist

Towards racial equity

RACIAL EQUITY: race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcome for all groups are improved.

- A. Inclusion is about belonging
 - B. Equity is about access, opportunity, fairness, justice
 - C. Anti-Black racism is about removing systemic barriers
- ▶ Data collection – who is experiencing the highest case of marginalization?
 - ▶ “Visible minority” as a category – erases intersectionality and the Black experience



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Anti-racist Activist (Ally)

- ▶ Recognizes the specificity of Blackness; get Black bodies in spaces where they are absent
 - ▶ Understands that anti-Black racism is not an event, it is a journey
 - ▶ Extends learning to action
 - ▶ Explores Identity (self-awareness) – learns about what it means to be White today
 - ▶ Makes space to listen and acknowledge without being defensive
- ↓
- ▶ Conditional allyship – “I will only participate if/when...”
 - ▶ Performative allyship – wants to be seen as a good person but no real intention to disrupt, no long-term commitment
 - ▶ Genuine allyship – understand racism is bad for everyone, committed to the work for society as a whole, willing to learn more

Next Steps

- ▶ Interventions in recruiting, hiring, promoting and retaining Black Canadians, including youth
- ▶ Unconscious bias and sensitivity training for all
- ▶ Workplace equity – conduct an audit to see opportunity gaps
- ▶ Collect race-based data (along with intersecting identities) to measure the prevalence of discrimination
- ▶ Create measures that will support Black-Owned businesses
- ▶ Develop a mechanism to track progress (target, timelines, goals)
- ▶ Hire a Subject Matter Expert (SME)/advisor to help drive change

Other Municipalities

City of Markham

- ▶ Updated their Diversity Action Plan; anti-Black racism training for staff and council; will undertake an equity audit; anti-Black racism youth committee; anti-Black racism advisor; plans to collaborate across institutions

City of Vaughan

- ▶ Diversity and Inclusion officer role; inclusion charter approved by council June 2019; Staff Inclusion Charter Committee; Diversity and Citizen Engagement Task Force

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

- ▶ Launching an advisory committee on diversity and Inclusion; D&I Strategy 2021

Town of Aurora

- ▶ July 14, 2020 motion approved to create an anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force; Task Force will work to develop an anti-Black Racism strategy



If you think you are too small to
make a difference, you haven't
spent the night with a mosquito.
-African Proverb



Q&A

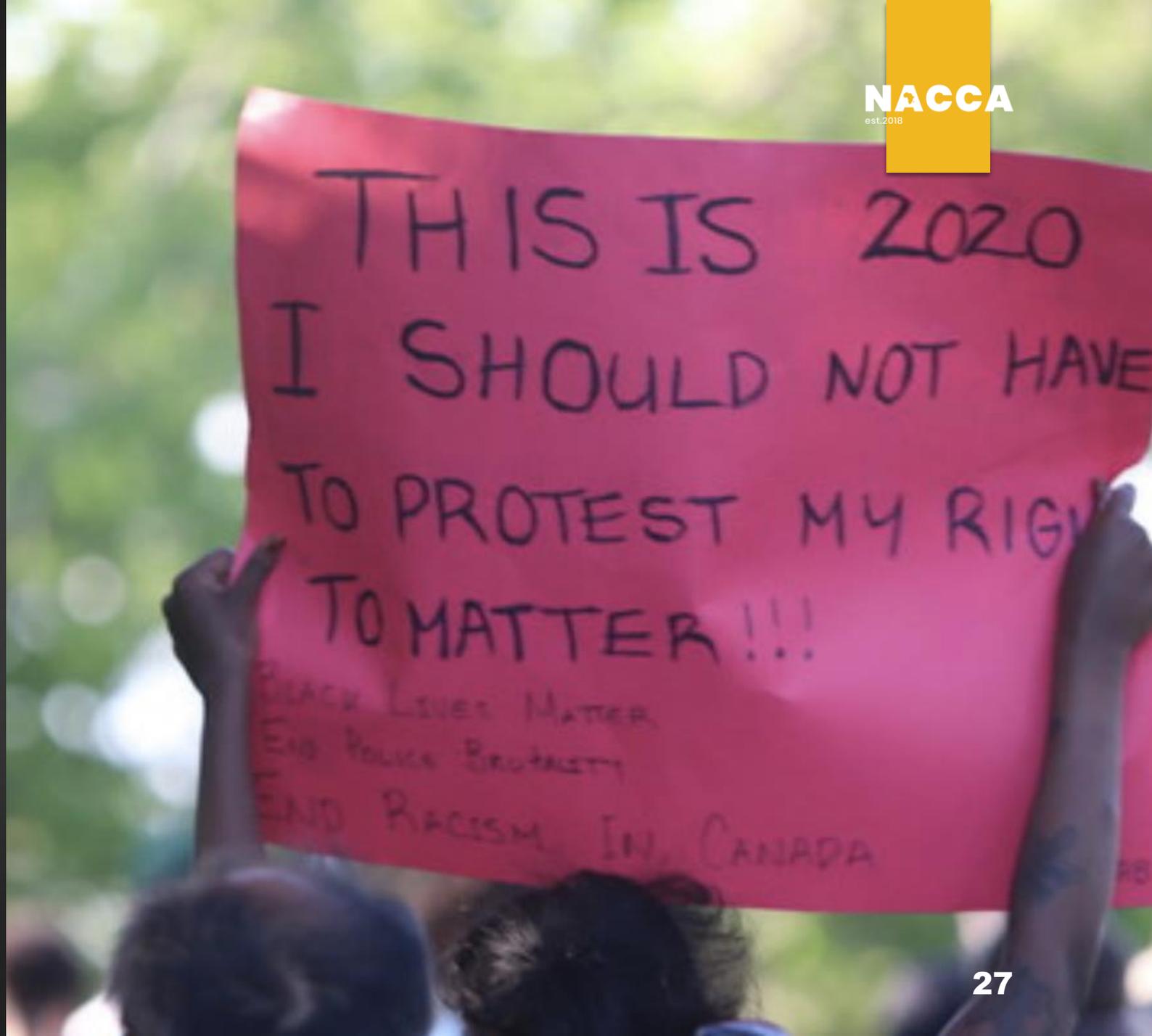
OPEN DISCUSSION

Closing Circle

Write down your commitment (s)

- ▶ Why is it important to dismantle systemic anti-Black racism?
- ▶ What steps will you take to combat anti-Black racism?
- ▶ How will you turn your learning into action?
- ▶ Who will be your accountability partner?
- ▶ When will you begin?

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Thank You!
Asante Sana!



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