

# FIGHTING AN UPHILL BATTLE

Report on the Consultations into the Well-Being of Black Youth in Peel Region

F.A.C.E.S. of Peel Collaborative | March 2, 2015



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Participating Organizations**

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# Executive Summary and Recommendations

## *Abstract*

This report is about the social well-being of Black youth in Peel Region and the supports they need in order to improve their quality of life and achieve their aspirations. It was commissioned in 2014 by Faces of Peel (Facilitating Access, Change and Equity in Systems) - a collective made up of organizations and individuals who strive to improve the state of equity and inclusion in Peel's human services sector, with a major emphasis on racialized and marginalized groups, especially Black youth. The information in the report – mostly qualitative and perception data - was collected from consultations with Black youth, adult Black residents, service providers and key informants in Peel Region (a total of 103 respondents). The findings and recommendations are based on the acknowledgment of systemic anti-Black racism in Canada and are focused on issues of equity and inclusion in the Peel community, with emphasis on the educational system, employment and poverty, the Police and community-based services in Peel Region. The main audiences for this report and its recommendations are service providers, funders of public and social services, Black youth, and community leaders in the Black community.

## BACKGROUND

### **The Problem of Systemic Anti-Black Racism and Its Impact on the Well-Being of Black Youth**

In 1992, the Government of Ontario commissioned a study of racism in Ontario. One of the major conclusions of its author, Stephen Lewis, was that outside of the historical racism against the indigenous peoples of Canada, the primary form of racism in Ontario and Canada as a whole is anti-Black racism. Lewis explained what he meant by “anti-Black” racism:

...what we are dealing with, at root, and fundamentally, is anti-Black racism. While it is obviously true that every visible minority community experiences the indignities and wounds of systemic discrimination throughout Southern Ontario, it is the Black community which is the focus. It is Blacks who are being shot; it is Black youth that is unemployed in excessive numbers; it is Black students who are being inappropriately streamed in schools; it is Black kids who are disproportionately dropping-out; it is housing communities with large concentrations of Black residents where the sense of vulnerability and disadvantage is most acute; it is Black employees, professional and non-professional, on whom the doors of upward equity slam shut. Just as the soothing balm of 'multiculturalism' cannot mask racism, so racism cannot mask its primary target (Lewis, 1992: 2).

In the 23 years since Lewis penned this statement about racism in Ontario, little has changed. The main indicators of this can be found in the high drop-out rates of Black high school students, the high levels of unemployment and poverty in the Black population relative to other groups, and the over-representation of Blacks in Canada’s prisons. In Ontario, the percentage of youth not graduating from high school is approximately 9%; for Blacks in Toronto, it is approximately 23% (Toronto District School Board, 2013). Blacks earn approximately 76 cents of every dollar earned by a White worker, and Blacks account for 10% of the prisoners in Canadian jails even though Blacks comprise 3% of the total Canadian population (Toronto Star, January 13, 2013). The short term impact of these negative social indicators is the impoverishment and social exclusion of Blacks in Canadian society. The long-term impact is the build up of rage and sadness in the psyche of the Black population and their feelings of alienation and estrangement from mainstream Canadian society.

## DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AND RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To document the social well-being of Black youth in Peel Region and to identify the supports needed to help them succeed - from the perspectives of Black youth, other members of the Black community, and service providers in Peel.

### **VALUES FRAMEWORK OF REPORT**

#### **Equity and Inclusion**

Public discussion of racialized and marginalized groups should be focused not on the deficits of those groups but on the rights of the latter to fair and equitable treatment in society and those factors (systemic, cultural and personal) that are barriers to fair and equitable treatment of those groups.

#### **Data Collection for Equity and Inclusion**

When equity and inclusion are core values of a society, then collection of data related to these values becomes a moral and political imperative. This means that data should be collected to show how different groups in society are being treated in different areas of society and the impact of that treatment on the well-being of the different groups and their right to fair and equitable treatment. For Black people, three major areas for equity-related data collection are the education system, employment, and Police services.

#### **Responsive and Proactive Public Policies and Services**

Services provided to citizens should be responsive to the needs of citizens as directed by those citizens. This implies that service providers should proactively engage and consult with citizens in order to plan and deliver services that are socially and culturally appropriate for them.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

*Primary Data:* Interviews with 20 key informants; On-line survey of 23 Black youth; Focus Groups with 30 Black residents in Peel; Interviews with 30 service providers.

*Secondary Data:* Summary of demographic and socio-economic data on the Black community; summary of the literature on Blacks in Peel and other North American jurisdictions.

It is important to note that aside from the information in the professional literature and the socio-economic data, the majority of the information provided in the report is “perception” data collected via consultation with members of the Black community and service providers.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### **Common Themes in the Findings**

A rapidly growing Black population in Peel; anti-Black racism; more racism towards Black males than females; negative stereotypes of Blacks in the media; under-representation and underemployment of Blacks in the workforce; services of public institutions, city governments and community agencies ill – equipped to address the needs and aspirations of the Black community, especially those of Black youth.

### **The Black Population in Peel (Census of Canada, 2011)**

There are 116,225 Black persons living in Peel Region. They comprise 9% of the total Peel population and represent 28% of the Black population in the Greater Toronto Area. The majority of the Black population in Peel lives in Brampton (60%), followed by 39% in Mississauga, and 1 % in Caledon. The Black population is not a culturally homogenous group. Many of them emigrated from the Caribbean (39%) and Africa (12%). Almost half of the Blacks in Peel are Canadian-born (43%). The Black population in Peel is increasing at a relatively high rate. Between 2001 and 2011 it grew by 64%, compared to a 31% growth rate for the Peel population as a whole.

### **The Black Youth Population (ages 15 -24)**

Children and youth make up 44 % of the Black population in Peel. The comparative figure for Peel as a whole is 35%. Youth between the ages of 15 and 24 make up 17% of the Black population in Peel. The comparative figure for the total Peel population is 14%. Similarly, 27% of the Black population is under age 15 compared to 21% of the Peel population as a whole.

### **Feelings of Social Inclusion and Belonging in Peel Region**

While some of the participants in the study expressed their satisfaction about living in Peel Region and being socially active in many aspects of community life, others reported that many Black youth feel unwanted, devalued and socially isolated in Peel Region. This is the case, they said, because racism against Blacks was a part of their everyday life. Several of the examples given of this pertained to Black youth's experience in schools and the negative stereotypes of Blacks in the media, especially negative stereotypes of young Black males. It was frequently mentioned that Black males were treated more harshly by the "system" than Black females. This was attributed in part to Black males being stereotyped as dangerous and Black females being stereotyped as promiscuous. Other factors cited as barriers to Black youth feeling a sense of belonging in Peel were:

- the high cost of public transportation which affected their ability to participate in local community programs and to apply for employment
- the lack of positive role models in their schools and in the community at large
- recreational facilities and activities that did not reflect the interests of Black youth (for example, more hockey centres and baseball diamonds than basketball courts)



- some neighbourhoods with a high concentration of poor black families and few social services
- racial profiling by Police; Police stopping Black youth for questioning with little or no justification

### **Education**

While there is no official data on high school drop-out rates for Blacks in Peel, the comparative figure for Blacks in nearby Toronto is 23% compared to 9% for Ontario (Rushowy, 2013). Black youth in Peel reported feelings of isolation and marginalization in the public education system. The following factors were mentioned as contributors to their feelings of exclusion:

- Teacher's low expectations of Black students (compared to their expectation of Asian and White students)
- The relative absence of Blacks and Black culture in the curriculum in a positive manner
- Relatively few Black teachers in schools
- More encouragement of Black students in sports than in academic studies (but not in some sports such as hockey and tennis)
- Streaming of Black students away from math, science and the academic track to university studies
- Differential discipline of students based on race, with Black students being disciplined more harshly than non-Black students
- The presence of Police in schools (often strikes fear and mistrust in Black students)

### **Employment and Poverty**

The unemployment rate for youth in Toronto aged 15 – 14 is 20% compared to 30% for Black youth in the same age group in Toronto (Civic Action, 2014). Black youth in Peel reported that they face difficulty in securing employment even after completing college or university. The high rate of unemployment among Black youth and the high level of poverty in the Black population serve to make them vulnerable to low self-esteem and other mental health issues (Connely et al., 2014). They also reduce the ability of Black youth to participate in recreational activities and the social life of the community. This situation is compounded by the fact that 18% of the Black population in Peel live on low incomes (compared to 15% of the Peel population) and that Blacks earn, on average, 76 cents for every dollar a White worker earns (Block and Galabuzi, 2011).

### **Police Services**

Black youth are over-represented in Canadian prisons even as the incarceration rates of young men have steadily declined since the introduction of the Youth Criminal Justice Act in 2003 (Rankin and Winsa, 2013). Black youth in Peel reported their distrust of Peel Police due in large part to racial profiling of Blacks by Police and the fact that Police tend to stop Blacks for questioning more than other groups. They also reported not feeling comfortable with Police in schools. One of the factors related to negative interaction between Black youth and the Police is the inaccessibility of safe recreational spaces for Black youth due to the fees charged for using those spaces or the cost of public transportation to get

to those spaces (McMurty and Curling, 2008). Instead of going to communal recreational spaces such as community centres, tennis clubs, and programs for youth, Black youth would often “hang out” in shopping malls or public parks which do not charge a fee for being on the premises. However, in a society characterized by anti-Black racism, such gatherings of young Black men is not valued and is seen as potentially dangerous and, thereby, cause for surveillance by the Police.

### **Community Services**

Service providers along with key informants indicated that there is a shortage of culturally appropriate and accessible programs and services needed to support Black youth in Peel. In this situation, investments need to be made for supporting mainstream organizations to better serve the Black community as well as supporting the development of Black human service organizations.

As of 2014, there were 17 community-based service organizations that provided services to the Black population in Peel (Social Planning Council of Peel, 2014). Fourteen (14) of these were Black-focused organizations; however, only 6 of them provided social services, and only 2 of them offered programs for Black youth. Some of the mainstream agencies that participated in the study reported that they were aware of the needs of the Black community and had taken steps to develop their capacity to serve the latter. Others reported that they lacked the capacity to serve the Black population due to shortage of staff, not enough funding, and their limited knowledge of the Black community.

Some respondents reported that there were few Black male social workers in Peel’s community service organizations and that this should be addressed because of the need to reach Black youth who feel isolated and marginalized and the need to provide services that are culturally appropriate for the diverse groups in the Black community.

Black youth reported that very often they were unaware of the services that were available in the community. They also pointed out that even in the organizations that were supposed to serve diverse groups – the settlement agencies or agencies serving immigrants - the staff were not very diverse, and hardly any Blacks were staff members or volunteers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are directed at three major groups of players in Peel’s human services sector:

- Public Institutions (Education, Police, Municipal Governments)
- Community Service Organizations
- Funders

In addition, the recommendations are focused on issues pertaining to equity and inclusion, data collection for equity purposes, and the use of a responsive and proactive approach to service planning and service delivery for the Black community, especially Black youth

### **PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS in PEEL REGION**

#### **1. The Public Education System in Peel**

- 1.1 Mandatory training of teachers about anti-Black racism, equity and the provision of educational services to Black students in order to mitigate the effects of workplace and worker bias against Black students.
- 1.2 Hiring of Black teachers
- 1.3 Consultation with the Black community on identifying best practices for creating curriculum that reflects and values the diverse student population
- 1.4 Addressing the school-to-prison pipeline for Black students: reviewing and addressing the high drop-out rate of Black students and the over-representation of Black youth in Canadian prisons.
- 1.5 Exploration/community discussion about the feasibility of having an Afro-Centric school in Peel
- 1.6 Data collection and public reporting of student achievement and student discipline by the characteristics of students (gender, age, race, disability, etc.)
- 1.7 Development of a systematic approach for consulting with the Black community on a regular and proactive basis: establishment of a “Cultural Consultation Team” for teachers, parents and community members. This team would provide guidance and support for improving outcomes specific to Black students and would address issues related to racism, mental health, poverty, etc.

## **2. Police Services in Peel**

2.1 Mandatory training of Police officers about the Black community and how to provide services to the latter in culturally appropriate ways

2.2 Hiring of Black Police Officers

2.3 Review and modification of the practice of having Police in schools and the impact on Black students. Focus on using Police as positive role models for Black youth and as a way of building trust and respectful relationships between the Police and Black youth

2.4 Data collection and public reporting on interaction between Police Officers and members of the community by characteristics of citizens (gender, race, age, disability, etc.) In particular, issues of racial profiling should be examined through the collection and analysis of police contact and arrest data by race and gender in Peel Region.

2.5 Development of a systematic approach for regular and proactive consultation with the Black community Peel Police to develop and implement a strategy for improving outreach to the Black community and recruitment of candidates for Police officer positions.

## **3. Municipal Governments in Peel**

3.1 Provision of subsidized tickets for public transportation to persons living on low incomes

3.2 Review of recreational centres and programs to assess their accessibility by Black youth and making the necessary changes

3.3 Hiring of Black workers

3.4 Collaboration with other service providers to create a “Community Hub” of services and supports for Black youth at the neighbourhood level. The hub would provide cultural, arts, and entertainment programs for Black youth in an accessible and affordable manner to minimize the level of isolation among Black youth.

3.5 It is recommended that the Region of Peel work with community partners (like the Regional Diversity Roundtable) to develop an anti-racism public education campaign to support the social inclusion of Blacks and all racialized residents within the Peel community to build a truly inclusive community.

3.6 Collection and public reporting of data on municipal employees, municipal services and users of municipal services in relation to the personal and ethnic characteristics of the employees and service users (gender, age, race, ethnicity, disability, etc.)

3.7 Development and implementation of a strategy for regular proactive consultations with members of the Black community. (For example, a Black Advisory Group for the City of Brampton.)

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES IN PEEL REGION**

### **4. Mainstream Agencies, Immigrant Serving Agencies, Black-Focused Agencies**

4.1 Review of their programs, services and client population to assess the extent which they are serving the needs of Peel's Black population. This should be followed by appropriate strategies to better address the gaps, including educating staff about the needs of the Black population in Peel, providing culturally relevant services, and conducting outreach to ensure that Blacks in Peel know about and can access these services.

4.2 Taking steps to ensure that their staff and decision-makers reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. As such, organizations should commit to and implement Employment Equity Programs and board diversity programs.

4.3 Staff Training: the Black community; how to provide services to the Black community in culturally appropriate ways

4.4 Hiring of Black Workers

4.5 Hiring of Black male workers

4.6 Provision of mentorship programs for Black youth

4.7 Provision of programs for Black youth that are focused on entrepreneurship

4.8 Development and implementation of an employment outreach plan for Black youth at the neighbourhood level. (To be done in collaboration with employers in the public and private sectors and with Black-focused agencies.)

4.9 Collection and public report of data on clients, services provided to clients, and client impact or outcomes by the characteristics of the clients (gender, race, age, ethnicity, area of residence, etc.)

4.10 Collaboration and sharing of resources among Black-focused agencies. (For example: establish a network of Black-focused agencies in Peel; establish a network of Black social workers in Peel;

- 4.11 Under the leadership of FACES of Peel Collaborative, organizations from all sectors be engaged to develop a strategic approach to assessing and addressing the issues facing vulnerable Black youth in Peel Region.
- 4.12 Development and implementation of a strategy for regular proactive consultations with members of the Black community. (For example, networking and collaborating with the Black Community Action Network for Peel /BCAN and with the Black Community Advisory Committee of the United Way of Peel.)

## **FUNDERS IN PEEL REGION**

- 5.1 Place equal emphasis on commitment to the values of equity and inclusion in addition to valuing commitments about service outcomes (in funding proposals, service management, organizational management). Ask organizations and agencies within Peel to place high priority on issues of race and marginalization as part of their agendas and/or strategic plans..
- 5.2 Documentation and review of the pattern of funding to different racial and ethnic groups in Peel to reveal the extent to which Black-focused agencies and programs focused on Blacks are funded compared to those for other racial and ethnic groups.
- 5.2 Increase in investments to strengthen Black human service organizations and build their capacity to better meet the needs of the Black community.
- 5.3 Increase in investments to strengthen the capacity of mainstream agencies and immigrant-serving agencies to meet the needs and aspirations of the Black community
- 5.4 Increase in investments in programs and services for Black youth
- 5.5 Provision of funding for the collection of equity data by agencies: on the use of services by individuals and families from different population groups and the impact of the services on those individuals and families
- 5.6 Collaboration among funders in the Peel Funders 'Consortium for the purpose of improving the quality of life for Black youth.
- 5.7 Development and Implementation of a strategy for regular and proactive consultation with members of the Black community in Peel.

## Preface

### by Dr. Grace-Edward Galabuzi

Peel Region is one of the most dynamic regions of the country. Its demographic make-up is being redefined by an influx of new immigrants from abroad but also from other parts of Canada and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). According to The Social Planning Council of Peel, the region's immigration growth rate, at 32% between 2001-2006, was one of the highest in the country. In the GTA, Peel now has the highest proportion of racialized group members in its population at 57% (2011 Census Data) up from 49% in 2006. The African Canadian population is the third largest population with 9% of the regional population.

This is why FACES of Peel Collaborative came together. To 'explore the social well-being of Black youth in Peel Region and identify how best to support their success'. This report represents the first steps in that process and identifies a number of key recommendations to that effect.

Peel Region is attractive because of its relatively low cost of living, its proximity to most of the GTA and employment opportunities. It also has a diverse population and is developing social infrastructure to support its burgeoning population. The African Canadian community has grown in size in Peel Region over the last decade, now numbering around 100,000, with 60% living in Brampton and 39% in Mississauga. Many members of the Black community in Peel are newcomers to the region and are only now beginning to develop their Peel experience. Already, the Black community has become a key part of the vibrant community in Peel Region, making major contributions to the social, economic and cultural life of the region. Black youth are a critical subset of that vibrancy and have helped define the region through their energy and potential. They represent the promise of a diverse community that can harness its ethnic, cultural and generational difference.

That is why this project and report are so important. It gives us a better understanding of the experience of this emerging community and the assets it brings to the development of the region. The study employs an equity framework while documenting the experiences of the youth and identifies the opportunities and challenges they face as well as the strategies to combat them at the various levels of decision making.

The project can help us better understand the extent to which Peel Region is ready to take advantage of the potential of its diversity. It raises some questions that are subject to on-going action. Can diversity in Peel Region be sustained and used to strengthen social cohesion? What does it mean for settlement and successful integration of the newcomers into Peel Region? Can we build a shared sense of belonging for all Peel's residents? These are key questions for a region experiencing change and new opportunities. Will these opportunities be shared equitably and lead to even more dynamism for all the residents of the region or might some be left behind because of structural barriers to resources and opportunities? Does the necessary social infrastructure exist to close the service gaps and provide the support necessary to address the concern around differential social development? This report explores some of these questions through a literature review and interviews of Black youth, key informants and service providers.

Canadian research shows that the threats to social cohesion relate to impediments to the equal participation of diverse communities as opposed to the existence of diversity in the society. In Canada's urban areas, the growing concentration of poverty or residential segregation is intensifying along racial

lines. The intersection of poverty and race in the Greater Toronto Area is of particular concern because of the changing demographic profile of the area. The experience of low income limits the ability to participate fully in society or develop a sense of belonging and community identity. The various dimensions of the experience of poverty interact in important ways to reproduce and reinforce social exclusion. But these conditions also provide opportunities to develop resilience. These are issues of interest and concern to young members of the African Canadian community. This report identifies key structural processes that undermine the academic success of Black children and youth, criminalize Black youth, limit their access to post-secondary education and jobs, and affect their long term economic and social well-being. These forces limit their potential, their ability to develop a sense of belonging, their self-esteem and their emotional well-being. And yet, as the report documents, these concerns are largely unacknowledged by the decision makers and those involved in designing services in the region. The report notes that the region has yet to create the conditions necessary to fully take advantage of the opportunities and confront the threats faced by Black youth today.

The report explores some key ideas that can make a difference in addressing the threats that face Black youth in Peel Region and to unleash their potential. It argues for a commitment to ensure a sense of belonging and inclusion. It argues for targeted focus on the most affected. That principle translates into the concept of 'Targeted Universality'. Secondly, there must be a commitment to youth engagement, manifested through the support of youth-led organizations in the community and youth structures in decision making institutions such as youth councils at region/city halls. Third is the enhancement of the commitment to community policing. Fourth is the focus on jobs for youth through youth employment programs as well as training and apprenticeships. A key part of should be a focus on local hiring. Some of the most exciting work in this regard has been done in jurisdictions such as Los Angeles and Baltimore through Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) on capital projects that are the purview of municipal government procurement. The City of Toronto is now experimenting with this approach around Metrolinks projects and the Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy has embraced the idea as a way of leveraging provincial and municipal projects for local employment and economic benefits.

Finally, regional leadership can create an environment that validates ethnic diversity by acknowledging the region's growing diversity and its commitment to anti-racism as a response to the recent stories in media about racist incidents and attitudes. It can also help change the face of the region through embracing diversity in appointments to Agencies, Boards and Commissions, and employment equity in its own hiring.



# 1. About the FACES of Peel Collaborative

The FACES of Peel Collaborative (Facilitating Access Change and Equity in Systems) is a collective made up of organizations and individuals that was formed to provide a greater understanding of the vulnerable population within Peel Region's Black community. The ultimate goal of FACES of Peel is to enhance the provision of inclusive and effective services and supports across the human services sector in Peel.

FACES of Peel works collaboratively with regional partners, community members and stakeholders to support three key priorities:

- Investigate the barriers faced by the most vulnerable population within the Black community in Peel Region
- Ensure an equity and diversity analysis in policy, program and service delivery
- Identify and compile data that will be used in the development of community indicators and subsequent actions and funding strategies.

Complementing the main goals, the FACES of Peel Collaborative also seeks to assist in developing networks and connections within Peel Region to champion the collective goals of evidence-based decision-making and the delivery of culturally responsive programs and services for Peel's diverse Black community.

The work of FACES of Peel is guided by the following pillars:



**Equity Framework** - A recurring theme identified by FACES of Peel is that the conversations taking place at various tables regarding marginalized and racialized<sup>1</sup> communities have often been anchored in a deficit perspective. That is, these conversations do not focus on the assets and/or strengths that individuals and communities possess. Such an approach is not holistic and leads to not fully appreciating or acknowledging the whole being.

This lack of balance can lead to further marginalization of communities and can limit effective engagement with these communities. As such, FACES of Peel Collaborative looks to influence how conversations and thinking about marginalized and racialized communities occur. An equity framework takes into account the historical and contemporary context and realities rooted in the assets of and challenges for marginalized and racialized communities. It promotes progressive growth for equitable societal and positive individual outcomes.

Marginalization occurs when social structures and social institutions are used to disadvantage those

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<sup>1</sup> In this report the term "racialized" is used to refer to "visible minorities" as defined by Statistics Canada, which are persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-White in colour.

who are not perceived as part of the dominant group. These individuals are often denied equitable access to resources and become vulnerable to further exploitation and social exclusion (Lopes, T. & Thomas, B. 2006). Racialized refers to anyone who experiences racism because of their race, skin colour, ethnic background, accent, culture or religion. Racialized people have different cultures, histories, religions, family norms, life experiences and are subject to different stereotypes. They are subject to racism and made to feel different because of their racial/ethnic background (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2005).

**Data Collection** - A consistent theme in the broader social service sector is the absence of data to "tell our story". Peel Region is no exception, as access to data to tell the story of marginalized communities is rare in this region. With a focus on the social determinants of health and their impact on the community, this collaborative is looking to provide the region with the tools to tell its story.

**Being Responsive and Proactive** - The FACES of Peel champions the notion that youth should be involved in decisions that affect them and that youth-generated ideas should be used to create solutions for issues affecting youth. FACES of Peel wishes to be proactive to meet the needs of youth by building and supporting the capacity of organizations within the region to work collaboratively to address challenges, and build assets. FACES of Peel wishes to see services and programs that are sufficiently grounded in an understanding of both the general and specific needs of marginalized and racialized youth populations.

As service providers in the region, members of the FACES of Peel Collaborative know that there are

some things that are being done well. They also recognize that there are areas for improvement, in particular agencies' ability to work with specific groups such as marginalized Black youth. It is from this awareness of service gaps in the region that FACES looks to build the skills, knowledge and competencies necessary to work with this population.

## 2. Background

Over the years there has been growing public concern about marginalized youth, particularly Black youth. That concern is piqued when crime by Black youth grabs public attention.

What has now been termed as the "Danzig Shootings," which occurred in Toronto in July 2012, prompted the then Minister of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), Dr. Eric Hoskins and Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Madeline Meilleur to host community meetings to understand the needs of youth, particularly marginalized and racialized youth. These meetings informed the Youth Action Plan.

In response, in August 2012, BCAC (Black Community Advisory Council) of United Way of Peel Region and BCAN (Black Community Action Network) held a joint meeting to discuss the related issues in Peel Region and how to advocate for support for marginalized Black youth in the region. The results of this meeting were provided to MCYS, which resulted in the allocation of 3.5 Youth Outreach Workers from the Youth Action Plan to Peel Region. In addition, the Jobs for Youth initiative provided funding for afterschool opportunities to youth during the school year.

The August 2012 meeting also identified the need for more discussions in order to secure the supports

needed for Peel Region, as this region has also been affected by issues related to gun violence and community safety.

In November 2012, stakeholders in Peel Region were invited to meet with then Special Advisor to the MCYS Minister, Dr. Alvin Curling, to provide an overview of at-risk youth and community violence issues within the region. Because there is very little research conducted in Peel Region, much of the information provided was anecdotal. MCYS committed to meeting with FACES again when more research had been conducted.

Further meetings were held with stakeholders in Peel, partners from Toronto-based organizations, and MCYS. The following observations were made from these discussions:

- Peel Region appears to be reactionary in its approach to community violence and there doesn't appear to be a sustained and consistent effort to address the issues facing marginalized Black youth and the community violence that comes out of this marginalization
- Organizations within Peel Region appear to hire very few Black male youth workers. This might reflect barriers in the hiring process or a reluctance to hire Black men
- There needs to be more consultation with residents and services users around issues affecting marginalized Black youth
- Strategies to engage the hardest to reach youth appear to be ineffective or non-existent
- Concerns were raised about the responsiveness of various programs, services, and organizations to the full diversity of Peel Region, and specifically to the Black community. This is particularly concerning as Peel Region has lost

many ethno-specific organizations over the years. As such, mainstream organizations need to increase their ability to serve the needs of Peel Region's diverse communities

- The Black community within Peel Region needs to get better at telling its own story as it is often overshadowed by organizations and issues within the City of Toronto.

These discussions with the stakeholders of Peel highlighted the need for organizations within Peel Region to get together to conduct research to help identify the issues and challenges faced by the Black community in Peel Region, particularly Black youth, and to help shape a strategy to address these issues.

This project has produced a series of reports:

**Report #1 - Socio-Economic Fact Sheets on the Black Population in Peel Neighbourhoods**

This report, produced by The Social Planning Council of Peel, provides select demographic and socio-economic data on the Black population in Peel Region.

**Report #2 - Fighting an Uphill Battle: Report on Consultations into the Well-being of Black Youth in Peel Region**

This report summarizes the findings from the consultations into the well-being of Black youth in Peel Region.

**Report #3 - An Inventory of Services for the Black Community in Peel: A Service Gap Analysis**

This report, produced by The Social Planning Council of Peel, provides a descriptive listing of agencies and groups that are focused specifically on providing services to the Black community in Peel.

This report summarizes some of the data provided in Report #1. It also summarizes what was heard from the consultations with Black youth, parents of Black youth, service providers, and others who live and work in Peel Region. This research seeks to assess the well-being of Black youth in Peel Region, and identify what can be done to address the identified issues.

### 3. Previous Research in Peel Region

Research has previously been conducted on Peel's Black community, much of it by The Social Planning Council of Peel. While this research is meant to further explore issues, it reflects what has already been identified by these other studies. Some of this research includes the following:

#### **A Social Profile of the Black Population in Peel Region, 1996 (2000)**

In 2000, The Social Planning Council of Peel analyzed the 1996 Census data to complete a profile of Peel's Black population. At that time, there were 55,835 Blacks in Peel, representing 7% of the total Peel population.

From this analysis the report noted a number of characteristics of the population, including the following:

- A large youth population
- Large Canadian-born and immigrant populations
- A relatively high proportion of lone-parent families
- A very high unemployment rate

- A population with relatively low income.

Based on the data, the report noted the need for:

- Coordination and collaboration among policy makers and human service agencies to develop effective social policies and programs for the Black population in Peel
- Goods and services for Blacks to be designed, marketed and delivered in culturally responsive ways
- Strategies to address not only issues of settlement and integration, but also of racism.

#### **Visible Minorities and Employment in Peel: Findings From Focus Group Discussions With Visible Minorities and Service Providers (2000)**

This study by The Social Planning Council of Peel investigated the employment and training needs of racialized people in Peel Region. Data was collected through 12 focus groups - 10 with adults from six specific racialized groups and two with service providers.

At that time, the racialized population made up 31% of the Peel population. They experienced an unemployment rate of 12%, double that of the White population. Racialized youth experienced an unemployment rate of 23% - four times that of the White population, and double that of White youth.

The focus groups identified various barriers to employment for racialized communities. Recommendations were made in the following areas: employment readiness and preparation; vocational training and practical experience; and improvement of employment and related services.

#### **Immigrants and Visible Minorities in Peel (2003)**

This report by The Social Planning Council of Peel analyzed the 2001 Census data and identified the service implications of cultural diversity in Peel. The report concluded that,

The challenge for the human service sector in Peel is to respond to this diversity in culturally appropriate ways and to do this from a social justice and human rights perspective. (p 10) It identifies a number of issues that the human service organizations in Peel have to address, including the increased need for:

- Culturally appropriate or culturally competent services
- Equal opportunity in all areas of Canadian society, especially in the labour market and the educational system
- Coordination between settlement agencies and mainstream human service agencies
- Cross-cultural training of human service workers
- Anti-racism education of human service workers and the community at large.

#### **The Black Community in Peel Region: An Exploratory Study (2007)**

In August 2007, United Way of Peel released *The Black Community in Peel Region: An Exploratory Study* which was conducted by The Social Planning Council of Peel. At that time, there were over 70,000 Black people living in Peel Region. The report analyzed census data, conducted a literature review, interviewed key informants, and held two focus group discussions with 30 people. A number of issues and challenges faced by the Black community in Peel Region were identified through this study. These included:

- Racism
- Intersecting oppressions
- Negative media stereotypes
- High proportion of female-led single parent families, which can lead to poverty and isolation
- Poor educational achievement of Black children and youth
- Isolated elderly
- Intergenerational conflict
- Unemployment and under-employment
- Landlord and tenant issues, including a lack of affordable housing
- Limited recreational facilities and programs for Black youth
- Immigrant and settlement issues
- Little time and money for civic engagement (participation in local politics, volunteering, etc.)
- Limited capacity of Black human service organizations to provide services.

#### **Awareness:**

- Limited understanding within mainstream service agencies of the Black community

#### **Effectiveness of Services**

- Limited understanding in mainstream organizations about how to provide culturally relevant services to the Black community, in the areas of clinical counselling, family counselling, youth and senior services, settlement services, services for Blacks with disabilities and HIV/AIDS

- Limited understanding of racism and its connection to family breakdown and mental health
- Relatively few Black staff and social workers employed by human service agencies in Peel
- Systemic racism within human service agencies in Peel
- Poor and inadequate language training and settlement services for Black newcomers
- Very few Black human service agencies in Peel
- Limited capacity of Black human service agencies to respond to the increasing demands for services to the Black community
- Pressure from funders on Black human service agencies to collaborate with mainstream organizations

#### **Accessibility of Services**

- Services are offered during the day, when most Black parents are at work
- Some agencies are not easily accessible by public transportation
- Recreational services are often too expensive
- Language and cultural barriers for both Blacks from the Caribbean and Africa

#### **Capacity of Black Human Service Organizations to Provide Services**

- There are few Black human services organizations in Peel, and they are small and underfunded
- These organizations experience challenges securing funding and recruiting and retaining Board members

The report notes that,

The above issues and challenges mentioned by the study participants point more to the prevalence of "structural" or "societal" factors than to individual or cultural factors as the influential forces and pressures in the lives of Black people. (p 7)

The report made recommendations to provide better services for the Black community, to build the capacity of Black human service organizations, and to build the capacity of mainstream human service organizations to deliver services to Peel's Black community.

#### **A Social Profile of the Black Population in Peel Region, 2006 (2009)**

In 2009, The Social Planning Council of Peel prepared this report for The Black Community Action Network.

This report noted that in 2006, the Black population in Peel had grown to 95,000. The analysis identified four themes that emerged from the data and identified the implications of these themes:

- **Growth** - The Black population is growing at a faster rate than the overall regional population. This growth signals an increase in the demand for human services and civic engagement opportunities. This might require establishing new organizations to serve the Black community and/or customizing existing human services and civic engagement opportunities to meet the needs of the Black community.
- **Diversity** - The Black population is very culturally and linguistically diverse. This means that service providers should be knowledgeable about and sensitive to this diversity.

- **Vulnerability** - The data shows that almost one out of every five Blacks in Peel lived on low incomes in 2005. Vulnerable populations made up a larger than average proportion of the Black community, including seniors, divorced persons, lone parents, persons living alone, those whose mother tongue is neither of the two official languages, and people living on low incomes. This suggests that Black families in Peel are experiencing great difficulty economically and personally.
- **Resilience and Social Capital** - Overall, Blacks in Peel are doing better economically than Blacks in Ontario or Canada as a whole. They have higher incomes, higher rates of home ownership, and a lower rate of poverty. As such, there appears to be a lot of social capital which can be accessed to support the development of services and to engage in civic opportunities.
- Lack of diversity among Boards, Councils, etc. in Peel
- Unequal distribution of funding in Peel means that mainstream organizations are receiving the bulk of the funding, and are not adequately servicing marginalized and racialized youth
- There is an over-representation of marginalized and racialized youth in the criminal justice system
- Organizations need to collect and share information on how and how well they are serving marginalized and racialized youth in Peel.

It was clear from the first report released by The Social Planning Council in 2000, when the Black population in Peel was 55,835, that there were structural or societal factors operating in Peel that marginalized segments of the Black population. The same issues were reflected in subsequent reports.

Since then the Black population has more than doubled. The increase in the size of the Black population, to over 116,000 means that these marginalizing structural and societal factors are now impacting more people. The persistence of these factors over time has likely contributed to the further marginalization of Blacks in Peel Region and to the increase in the size of the marginalized population.

Many key informants with whom we spoke stressed that it is past time that these issues be recognized and addressed in Peel. Some expressed skepticism that this research would lead to any real change in the lives of Black youth living in Peel Region. As one key informant noted,

### **Making Connections (2013)**

In 2013 the Making Connections Forum was organized to provide a networking and information sharing opportunity to allow agencies and organizations from across Peel Region, along with provincial ministries, to discuss how to support marginalized and racialized youth in Peel.

Various themes and issues were identified by participants. These include:

- Youth voices need to be sought out and listened to
- Equitable partnerships and collaborations are needed between organizations and agencies
- There is not enough culturally responsive services to meet the needs of marginalized and racialized youth in Peel

*I am aware that there have been several reports and surveys done in the past, but the problem lies in these reports sitting on the shelves and not being addressed. ~ Key informant*



## 4. Research Methodology

The data for this study were collected through a number of methods, including:

- **Census data** - In Report #1, The Social Planning Council of Peel analyzed demographic data to provide an overall picture of the Black community in Peel Region. This data is summarized in this report.
- **Literature review** - The Social Planning Council of Peel conducted a review of existing literature to provide the context for this research. This literature review provides insights into the major issues and challenges faced by Black youth, the overall well-being of Black youth, and the factors that contribute to the well-being of Black youth. This information is included throughout this report.
- **Youth interviews** - Youth researchers were hired to conduct one-on-one interviews with Black youth who live in Peel. Through these interviews we gathered their input and insights into issues affecting Black youth and their experiences living in Peel Region. Interviews were conducted with 23 youth between the ages of 15 and 24.
- **Youth focus groups** - Two focus groups were conducted with Black youth in which 5 youth participated.
- **Service provider focus groups** - One focus group was conducted with 12 youth workers in Peel Region.
- **Service provider surveys** - An online survey was designed and distributed to 50 service organizations within Peel Region. The survey was designed to help us understand which services are available in Peel that are focused

on serving Black youth and how the issues and challenges faced by vulnerable Black youth are being addressed. Fourteen agencies completed the survey. Appendix A includes the names of the agencies that completed the survey.

- **Survey of Blacks in Peel Region** - An online survey was designed to collect information from Blacks living in Peel Region. The survey was distributed to Blacks in Peel by various individuals and organizations. The survey was completed by 30 individuals.
- **Key informant interviews** - One-on-one interviews were conducted by the youth researchers with 20 key informants, including parents of Black children and others who live and/or work in Peel Region to further investigate the issues and challenges faced by Black youth in Peel Region.

This report relies on qualitative data to explore and describe the issues identified in earlier reports and provides a very broad perspective of the experiences of Blacks in Peel. The stories of the research participants illustrate the impact of systemic and societal factors identified in other studies conducted in Peel and other jurisdictions. Additional and larger research studies are needed to assess the extent to which these issues are of concern across Peel's Black population. This report is meant to build on previous research and support further research into the experience of Blacks in Peel in order to improve the conditions that marginalize Black youth. More importantly this report is meant to be a call to action.

The tone of this report was set by those who chose to be interviewed and share their experiences and insights. While an asset-based approach was taken to this research, participants wanted to share their experiences of marginalization and consequently

focused on the issues and challenges of living, working, and going to school in Peel. Although many were optimistic about their lives in Peel, they still wanted their experience of marginalization, their deep sense of alienation, and their frustration documented.

# SETTING THE CONTEXT: DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW



## 5. Setting the Context: Demographic Overview<sup>2</sup>

### 5.1 Peel Region's Racialized Population

The racialized population in Peel Region makes up the majority of the population - 57%. The racialized population in Peel Region makes up the largest proportion of any municipality in the GTA, and a significantly larger proportion than in the City of Toronto (49%).

Table 1 breaks down the composition of Peel's racialized population. As the data shows, South Asians are the largest racialized group in Peel Region, representing 28% of the region's population. Blacks make up the next largest group, making up 9% of Peel Region's population.

Statistics Canada projects that by 2031, the racialized population will make up 63% of the population in the Toronto CMA, increasing from 43% in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2010). This represents a doubling of the racialized population in the Toronto CMA, while the total population is expected to increase by only 8%.

While specific projections were not conducted for Peel Region, we can expect to see continued growth in Peel's racialized population that outpaces the overall population growth. This will significantly increase the size of the racialized population in Peel over the coming years.

Given the significant size of the racialized population in Peel Region, the future of the region

is intricately linked to the well-being of all the region's racialized communities.

<b>Racialized Group</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>% of Peel Region Population</b>
South Asian	356,430	28%
Black	116,265	9%
Chinese	58,645	5%
Filipino	58,025	5%
Latin American	27,360	2%
Southeast Asian	24,545	2%
Arab	29,100	2%
West Asian	11,630	1%
Korean	6,890	0.5%
Japanese	2,830	0.2%
Other Racialized	41,080	3%
<b>Total Racialized Population</b>	<b>732,805</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Total Peel Region Population</b>	<b>1,289,015</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2006; National Household Survey, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> This data is summarized from The Social Planning Council of Peel Region's report, *A Social Profile of the Black Population in Peel Region, 2011*. Readers are referred to that report for further data.

## 5.2 Black Population in the Greater Toronto Area

Table 2 compares the size of the Black population in Peel Region to the Black population within other GTA municipalities.

The data shows that, by number, Peel Region has the second largest Black population in the GTA. Half (52%) of the Black population in the GTA lives in the City of Toronto and 28% live in the Region of Peel.

While the Black population in Peel is almost half the size of the Black population in the City of Toronto, Blacks make up a slighter greater proportion of Peel Region than the City of Toronto (9% versus 8%).

As Table 2 shows the majority of Peel's Black population (60%) lives in Brampton, making up 13% of that city's population. In addition, 39% of Peel's Black population lives in Mississauga, making up 6% of that city's population. The remaining 1% of the population lives in Caledon, and represents 2% of that town's population.

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Municipal Population</b>	<b>Black Population</b>	<b>% of Municipal Population</b>	<b>% of all Blacks in the GTA</b>
Durham Region	601,605	41,890	7%	10%
York Region	1,024,225	25,870	3%	6%
City of Toronto	2,576,025	218,160	8%	52%
Halton Region	495,440	10,970	2%	3%
Peel Region	1,289,015	116,265	9%	28%
Mississauga	705,725	44,775	6%	11%
Brampton	521,315	70,290	13%	17%
Caledon	58,975	1,205	2%	0.3%
<b>Greater Toronto Area</b>	<b>5,986,301</b>	<b>413,155</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

### 5.3 Growth of Peel's Black Population

Table 3 compares the growth of Peel's Black and total populations.

In 2001, 70,695 Blacks lived in Peel Region. By 2006, this number had grown by 35% to 95,565. By 2011, the Black community had more than doubled, growing by 64% since 2001, to 116,265 individuals.

As the data shows, the Black population is growing at a faster rate than the Peel population overall. Between 2001 and 2011 the total population of Peel Region grew by 31% while the Black population grew at twice the rate (64%). With a faster growth

rate, the Black population is making up an increasingly larger proportion of the population of Peel Region. In 2001, Blacks made up 7% of Peel Region's population. In 2011, they represented 9% of Peel's population.

Immigration is a major source of growth, with 57% of Peel's Black population having been born outside Canada. This also means that a significant proportion of Peel's Black population - 43% - were born in Canada. This is the largest Canadian-born population of any racialized group - the 2011 National Household Survey found that 30% of the country's racialized population was born in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Year	Black Population			Peel Region	
	#	% of Peel Region	Rate of Growth Since 2001	#	Rate of Growth Since 2001
2001	70,695	7%	--	988,948	--
2006	95,565	8%	35%	1,154,070	16%
2011	116,265	9%	64%	1,296,814	31%

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2006, 2001; National Household Survey, 2011.

## 5.4 Black Population in Peel by Ethnicity

Table 4 breaks down Peel's Black population by African and Caribbean origins.

In Peel Region, Caribbean ethnic origins are the fourth most commonly reported ethnic origins overall. African ethnic origins are the fifth most commonly reported.

As the data shows the largest ethnicity within the Black population is Jamaican. The Jamaican population represents 4% of Peel's total population. The majority of the Jamaican population (62%) of Peel live in Brampton.

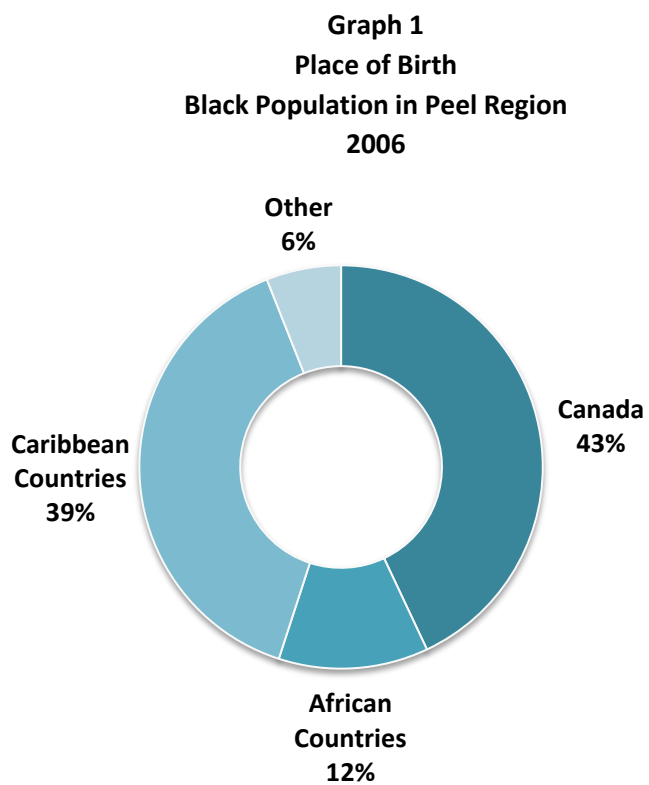
Table 4 Black Population by Selected Ethnic Origins Peel Region 2011		
Ethnicity (Single Responses)	Black Population	
	#	% of Peel Region
<b>African Origins</b>	<b>57,410</b>	<b>4%</b>
North African	12,020	0.8%
Southern and East African	8,550	0.6%
Central and West African	17,005	1%
Other African	20,705	1%
<b>Selected Caribbean Origins</b>	<b>70,575</b>	<b>5%</b>
Jamaican	61,175	4%
Barbadian	4,590	0.3%
Grenadian	2,345	0.2%
Other Caribbean Origins	2,465	0.2%
<b>Source:</b> Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2022		
Notes: North African origins include Algerian, Egyptian, Libyan, Sudanese Central and West African origins include Nigerian, Ghanaian, Cameroonian, Congolese Southern and East African origins include Ethiopian, Kenyan, Somali, Southern African Other African includes African origins not specified		

## 5.5 Place of Birth

Graph 1 shows the place of birth for Peel's Black population.

The data shows that 43% of Blacks in Peel are Canadian-born - this is the largest Canadian-born population of any racialized group.

Of the 57% born outside Canada, the majority are from the Caribbean (39%), 12% come from African countries, and 6% from other parts of the world.



**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2006.



## 5.6 Age Composition

Graph 2 compares the age composition of Peel's Black population with that of the total population.

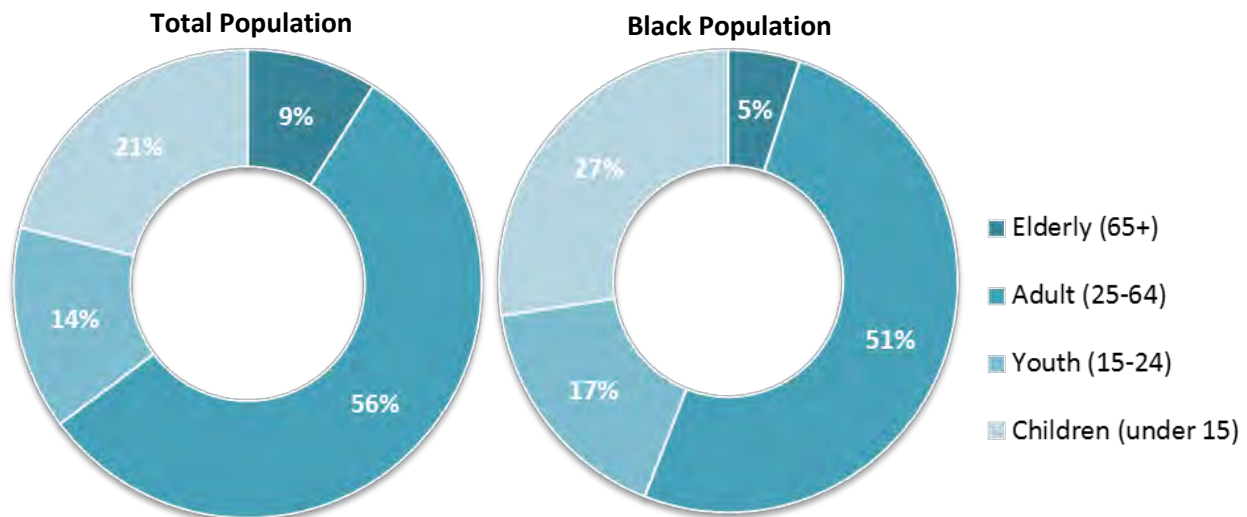
As the data shows, the age profile of the Black population in Peel is younger than the total population. A larger proportion of the Black population is in the younger age groups and a smaller proportion is in the older age groups.

While 21% of the total population is under age 15, 27% of the Black population is in this age group.

Similarly, while youth (ages 15 to 24) make up 14% of the total population, they make up 17% of the Black population. In total, youth and children make up 44% of the Black population and 35% of Peel Region's total population.

Conversely, a smaller proportion of the Black population are adults (51% versus 56%) or elder (9% versus 5%).

**Graph 2**  
**Age Distribution**  
**Black and Total Population**  
**Peel Region**  
**2006**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2006.

## 5.7 Economic Characteristics

Table 5 provides some additional economic characteristics of the Black population in Peel Region.

As the data shows, 18% of the Black population live on low income, while 8% of those aged 15 and over who are in the labour force are unemployed. In addition, 11% of Black families are single parent families, compared to 15% in the broader population.

A significant proportion of the population are homeowners - 73% - and 45% have at least some post-secondary education. The average employment income for the Black population in Peel is \$32,523.

Table 5 Economic Characteristics of the Black Population Peel Region 2006				
Indicator	Black Population		Total Population	
	#	%	#	%
Low income (before tax)	17,440	18%	--	15%
Lone parent families	10,250	11%	49,600	15%
Unemployed persons (Age 15+)	4,120	8%	41,930	6%
Homeowners	69,915	73%	280,465	78%
At least some post-secondary education	31,280	45%	416,820	46%

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2006.

# SOCIAL INCLUSION & BELONGING



## 6. Findings from the Consultations

### 6.1 Feelings of Social Inclusion and Belonging in Peel Region

#### a. Impact of Racism and Stereotypes

The literature suggests that racism is a significant barrier to Black youth feeling a sense of social inclusion and belonging and that systemic racism is at the core of most challenges Black youth encounter, including violence (McMurtry & Curling, 2008; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003; D’Oyley et al., 2001). Racism manifests in discriminatory practices, stereotyping, racial profiling, and consistently negative media portrayals.

Studies have also found that many second generation youth who have been subjected to racial discrimination struggle to achieve a strong sense of Canadian identity (Rajiva, 2005). The result is that second generation racialized Canadians are less likely than their White counterparts and even their first generation Canadian parents to feel a sense of belonging in Canada (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007).

#### Everyday Treatment

The reported experiences of the Black youth with whom we spoke reflect the picture conveyed in the literature. Black youth report being aware of race and racism as a dimension of everyday social interactions. They are aware of how racial stereotypes influence how they are treated, which affects not only their opportunities but also their emotional well-being.

In our discussions with Black youth, many told us they experienced unequal treatment based on race in various aspects of their lives, including their

experiences in schools, opportunities for employment, interactions with police, and even how they are treated in stores and by bus drivers. Both youth and key informants also noted these interactions negatively affect the self-esteem of young people and leave them feeling that they are not welcome within the community:

*I feel so out of place, everybody looks down on us. There is a bad connotation to being Black and being stereotyped often. ~ Youth*

*I feel angry and want to be away from it all. I don't want to interact with the world when I see this. I feel my ethnicity holds me back from travelling and being something positive in the world. Other races are told that Black people are evil. It makes me feel like a failure. I know not all White people are racist. Some say they aren't because they have Black friends....I have trust issues and feel people look at me like a peasant or charity case. ~ Youth*

#### Impact on Well-being

The literature notes that negative and positive stereotypes restrict Black youth and leave them psychologically vulnerable to low self-esteem and other mental health issues (Connely et al., 2014). Other literature note,

the connections between race and class, race and poverty, poverty and trauma. The stress of living in poverty creates trauma, as does the stress of being subjected to racism in all its many forms on a daily basis (York Centre for Education and Community, 2012).

This was reflected in our consultations as key informants reported that because of how they are treated in society, Black youth can suffer from depression, low self-esteem and a lack of motivation. They may also lower their aspirations to

reflect the limited expectations others have of them.

Key informants noted that being treated as unwanted and a nuisance in many places within ones' community also leads Black youth to use coping mechanisms to protect their sense of identity and self-esteem, behaviour that can be misinterpreted by others. As key informants noted:

*Black youth develop coping mechanisms that people perceive as behavioural problems. They can't say what they feel sometimes. They are often mislabelled as criminals and thugs. This affects their sense of self, confidence, educational performance. ~ Key informant*

*They think they are being looked at in a negative way [and that] builds up anger. ~ Key informant*

*They constantly feel like they have to keep a guard up and defend themselves. Young Black youth more times than not walk around with a chip on their shoulder. After a time they find it hard to decipher when they're in a safe place and can relax and feel comfortable. ~ Key informant*

*The racism makes them feel angry, depressed, and frustrated. There's a lot of mental health issues in the Black community because of it... The stigma is stifling. ~ Key informant*

### **Impact of the Media**

The persistent negative images in the media - from American entertainment to local news reports that overemphasizes crime by Blacks - create stereotypes of Black males as criminals and something to be feared. Black women are often over-sexualized and/or portrayed as single and ineffective mothers.

Black youth in Peel felt that stereotypes reinforce anti-Black racism, which has consequences for them. They expressed frustration that all Black youth get painted with the same brush and are mistreated based on these stereotypes. As one parent put it:

*To a large extent the marginalization of Black youth is influenced by the media... Black youth in Chicago are different than Black youth in Peel, yet they are treated relatively the same way. ~ Key informant*

There was real concern expressed that media portrayal of Blacks influence how Black youth are treated and that this treatment marginalizes them and limits their access to a good education and job opportunities. Their marginalization can then push them into anti-social behaviours or activities that are deemed criminal.

Participants in these consultations also noted that stereotypes about Black people help to perpetuate society's and educators' low expectations of Black youth, also limiting their opportunities and potential. As one key informant reported, the media tend to focus on the negative and ignore the positive:

*The media stereotype Black youth. There could be 10 Black youth doing something positive, and 10 youth doing something negative. The media always show the negative. It's very discouraging and disheartening. They are trying to homogenize us. ~Key informant*

Some respondents report that even the few "positive stereotypes" can work against Black youth and limit their educational opportunities. Some Black youth and key informants were concerned that they saw many Black students steered into athletics (based on the stereotype that Blacks are

good at athletics rather than intellectual pursuits) and not supported in their efforts to get a good academic education.

### **Treatment of Black Males and Females**

Key informants and the youth themselves also thought that Black male and Black female youth face different problems because of how they are stereotyped.

Males are thought to be associated with somewhat more negative stereotypes than Black females. Many participants felt that Black males face the stereotype that they are "part of criminal activity. Only good when it comes to sports." Black youth report that Black males are constantly seen through the lens of these stereotypes and are not treated as individuals. This is reflected in their everyday treatment, as well as how they are treated by the school system and by police.

Many key informants discussed the impact of this on young Black men:

*They are more likely to be suspended or expelled from schools. And boys are more likely to be diagnosed with ADD. ~ Key informant*

*I feel that Black males have always experience challenges more than Black females. Black males are targeted more and are more vulnerable. They experience more racism and discrimination. I feel that Black male youth face a lot more negative issues when it comes to accessing employment, belonging to groups, etc. ~ Key informant*

While there was some consensus that Black males get treated more harshly, there was also concern expressed about the treatment of Black females. Many key informants felt that Black females are perceived to "come from single parent homes, struggle in school, [and are] only interested in the

arts, not science." There was also concern about the over-sexualisation of Black females and the perception that they are promiscuous. As a result, as one person noted, if they do get pregnant this is used as evidence to confirm their perceived promiscuity. As such, young Black women with children are not seen as capable of any significant level of achievement and, as a result, little investment is made into supports for them to finish their education and get secure employment.

Key informants and the youth themselves noted that because of the different stereotypes of Black males and females, Black females don't get the attention from police that Black males do and are not criminalized to the same extent.

### **Lack of Interactions with Positive Role Models**

The literature shows that positive relationships involving adult role models from the community can help to remedy the alienation and isolation experienced by at-risk and racialized youth. The literature asserts that youth who build meaningful, positive relationships with adult role models benefit through healthy self-esteem, leadership skills, inclusion in the community, and feelings of safety. This results in strong, supportive relationships that can foster hope for the future (McMurtry & Curling, 2008; D'Oyley et al., 2001; Olawoye, n.d.).

Some key informants expressed concern that Black youth in Peel have little access to positive role models. They felt that the Toronto-based Black organizations and leadership are stronger and that more attention is paid to what happens in Toronto, both good and bad. This may reflect the investment in organizations and program based in the City of Toronto as opposed to those in the outer suburbs.

Given this Toronto focus, some key informants expressed concern that little attention is being paid

to the good work that some organizations are doing in Peel and to the needs of Black youth for positive role models. There was also concern that Black youth are not exposed to positive role models in their schools because of the small number of Black teachers and board staff hired by Peel's public school boards.

## **b. Living in Peel Region**

Some respondents identified many positive aspects of life in Peel Region. Others had difficulty identifying many positives. The difference in how one experiences life in Peel appears to reflect where one lives.

### **Positive Aspects of Life in Peel**

Some Black youth and key informants reported living in welcoming neighbourhoods where they feel comfortable and safe. These residents described being able to walk in their neighbourhood any time of day, without being bothered by fearful neighbours or by police.

Some reported that they live in communities in which people know and watch out for each other. For some residents, malls, schools, community centres, and police stations are close by, giving them access to activities and supports they need. These amenities and the interactions that they offer also help to build a strong sense of community among those who live in the neighbourhood.

Affordable and safe neighbourhoods and a strong Caribbean community were also identified by some as positives within the region.

The data shows that Peel has a relatively large and vibrant Black community. There are many who live in welcoming and safe communities, and have access to the services and activities that they need.

If the services and activities are not nearby, they have the resources to locate and travel to them.

### **Negative Aspects of Life in Peel**

There are others, however, who experience a very different life in Peel.

Others reported living in neighbourhoods that are unsafe and under-served. These residents appear to live in the "pockets" as described by one service provider:

*The pocketing of populations in Peel hides the profound needs of the community. There's a lack of focused funding for Black communities - especially in the pockets. ~ Service provider*

Some youth and residents reported a lack of access to activities and a lack of information about community services and activities. Some reported that they are concerned about crime and violence between young people in their communities.

There was also some concern that the activities available within Peel Region are not ones that Black youth are interested in - "There are so many baseball diamonds, but so few basketball courts." They suggested that the sports and other activities available through community centres and community organizations need to reflect the interests of Black youth in order to engage them.

### **Transportation**

Transportation throughout Peel is an especially important issue for youth. A lack of affordable public transportation limits the ability of youth to access programs and services. It also limits their ability to search for and secure meaningful employment, further isolating Black youth and limiting their opportunities. As one study noted, a lack of accessible mobility significantly isolates

impoverished communities from the rest of society (United Way of Greater Toronto and The Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004).

### **Living in Peel Compared to Toronto**

For many immigrants and children of immigrants, living in the suburbs is part of the Canadian dream. Key informants and youth thought that living in Peel has some advantages over living in Toronto. Peel is seen to have more affordable housing than Toronto, thereby allowing for greater access to homeownership. There was also a sense among some that youth employment, health care, and overall education are better in Peel Region than in the City of Toronto.

However, there was some concern expressed about the social infrastructure in Peel Region, which they thought is not as strong as that of Toronto. Some of those with whom we consulted reported that Toronto has more established community institutions and supports that offer more culturally relevant programs for Black seniors and youth. There was concern that more needs to be done to mobilize the Black community and invest in Black-focused organizations in Peel to provide the needed programs and services. Some also voiced the perception that the municipal government of Toronto invests more heavily in social programs than do the municipal governments in Peel Region. As such, it was thought that needs within Peel Region are not being addressed.





# EMPLOYMENT & POVERTY

## 6.2 Employment and Poverty

### a. Discrimination in Employment

Some key informants noted that while there is a great deal of diversity in Peel, this diversity is not reflected in the employment opportunities within the region, particularly in the public and non-profit sectors. They noted that even in organizations that serve the diverse communities of Peel, there appears to be a lack of diversity among staff.

This lack of diversity in Peel workplaces is consistent with what is found by various studies throughout Canada and the United States. These studies have identified discrimination in employment for racialized workers, specifically Blacks, as the cause of higher unemployment rates, underemployment, and lower incomes (James, 2010).

Lower incomes for the Black population have implications for Black children and youth who may grow up in poverty or in families with limited discretionary income. Parents who are underemployed or unemployed are unable to keep their children out of poverty and protect them from the negative impacts of poverty, such as limited access to recreational activities, healthy food, and safe housing. Parents who must work in the evening or work multiple jobs also have limited ability to monitor school work, engage with their children's school, and take their children to recreational and other activities.

Lower incomes for the Black population also limits their housing options and can result in them living in geographically isolated communities with limited amenities such as recreational activities and safe spaces, restaurants, and places of employment (United Way of Greater Toronto and The Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004).

When children grow up with well-educated parents who are underemployed or precariously employed, they may also see that there is little payoff for pursuing post-secondary education. This may then dampen their aspirations.

### b. Racialized Poverty

Linked to discrimination in employment is poverty, which is a prevalent theme in the literature pertaining to the challenges for the Black community. The racialization of poverty refers to the persistent high proportion of racialized and Aboriginal people who live in poverty. Racialized groups and Aboriginal people are two to three times more likely to be poor than other members of the community. In 2005, 20% of racialized families were poor compared to 6% of White families (Block and Galabuzi, 2011; Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives & The Wellesley Institute, 2011).

The issue of poverty for Black youth reflects the issue of poverty for their parents and the overall trend of higher unemployment rates, underemployment, and low wages for racialized workers, particularly Black workers. As such, strategies to support the removal of discriminatory practices in employment will increase the ability of Blacks to secure employment that reflects their education, skills, and abilities, thereby allowing them to pull their families out of poverty.

Systemic racism in employment limiting the ability of Black workers to secure jobs that reflect their education, skills and abilities. The report *Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market* notes the following:

- Black workers earn 76 cents for every dollar a White worker earns

- Blacks experience an unemployment rate of 11%, almost double the 6% experienced by White workers. (Block and Galabuzi, 2011)

Various studies also show that even when Blacks have the same education and qualifications as Whites, they are less likely to be hired.

Changes in the nature of the labour market are found to have contributed to the increasing proportion of racialized Canadians living in poverty. These changes include:

- An increase in precarious employment among racialized workers, e.g. contract and temporary work with low wages, limited job security and no benefits
- High rates of unemployment and under-employment among racialized workers.

*Portraits of Peel: A Community Left Behind, 2011*, identifies poverty as one of the main challenges experienced by the region (Peel Fair Share Task Force et al, 2011). The report notes:

- 33% of all recent immigrants in Peel live in poverty
- About 20% of the racialized population lives in poverty; double that of the White population.

### c. Youth Employment

Not only is access to employment important for families, it is important for youth to help them gain a good work ethic and support their access to jobs in the future.

According to the Province of Ontario's *Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development*, youth aged 13 to 19 are at a developmental stage when positive experiences like a supportive first job can

be a valuable force in their lives. The report also notes that certain segments of the youth population, including racialized youth, face barriers to finding work such as racism and structural discrimination. This is reflected in Statistics Canada's data which report the total unemployment rate in Toronto to be over 20% for youth aged 15-24, but for Black youth it is almost 30% (Civic Action, 2014).

Black youth and key informants echoed these research findings and noted that Black youth face difficulties gaining and keeping employment, even after completing college or university. Some report that only minimum wage and part-time jobs are available to them. Some of what we heard includes:

*I've personally seen it where youth of all races come for the same interview. Black youth rarely get picked despite having the same qualifications. ~ Key informant*

*Businesses and employers stereotype. I was fired once because I missed a day of work, meanwhile a co-worker who was White missed 5 days and was still employed. I see people from other backgrounds getting away with stuff and if I were to do it I would be fired. ~ Youth*



# EDUCATION

## 6.3 Education

Education is a valuable asset in today's society and is a strong indicator of life outcomes:

Education has become one of the clearest indicators of life outcomes such as employment, income and social status, and is a strong predictor of attitudes and well-being (Economic and Social Research Council, 2014).

Reports have also analyzed Statistics Canada data to assess the financial impact of higher education (Berger and Parkin, 2009). This study analyzed Statistics Canada data which shows, someone with a bachelor's degree will earn \$745,800 more than a high school graduate. Someone with a post-graduate degree will earn over \$1 million more.

Both school boards in Peel report high graduation rates - Peel District School Board reports an 89% graduation rate; Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board reports a graduation rate of 83% (Mississauga News, 2014). Neither school board collects demographic data to identify the graduation rates for Black students. The lack of data broken down by race hides the reality that not all students are doing equally well in school. Some respondents noted that for the most part racial disparities in educational outcomes are rarely discussed or acknowledged within Peel school boards. As a result, these racial disparities are allowed to persist and worsen.

In reality, anywhere data is collected by race in Canada, specifically Toronto and Nova Scotia, Black students fare worse than Whites in all measures of student success. The most recent data available for the Toronto District School Board reports a dropout rate for Black students of 23% (Rushowy, 2013).

This has serious economic and mental health consequences for Black families and communities.

So while overall graduation rates are rising, the data continues to show that Black students are not succeeding in Canadian schools to the same extent as their White peers. This racial stratification in educational outcomes is often seen as the result of poverty; culture; and the failure of poor Black, and often immigrant, parents to instil "a value of education" in their children or to understand and engage with the school system to support their child's education. Our consultations with Black youth, parents of Black children, and other key informants reflects the research into the education of Black children and youth which focuses the attention on the failure of the public school system to adequately educate Black children and youth - including children of Canadian-born, university educated, middle class parents.

The research in the United States and where it exists in Canada tells us that there are large disparities when it comes to Black student achievement. Although Statistics Canada (2006) data reveals just "slightly lower levels of education among the Black community as a whole compared to other Canadians" the numbers are skewed by the number of Black immigrants with foreign university degrees (Connely et al., 2014). Data on second generation Canadians show that they do not achieve the high levels of education that their immigrant parents have - even though they have spent their entire lives in the Canadian education system (Hansen and Kucera, 2004).

In addition, third and subsequent generations have lower levels of education than do second generation Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2011). In addition, as one source states, youth who have a parent without a university degree are much less

likely to pursue post-secondary education (Beckles et al., n.d.).

As discussed in *The Roots of Youth Violence* (2008) poor academic performance and low achievement facilitates a domino effect beginning with limited access to employment and snowballing into physical and mental health issues related to hopelessness and alienation and the establishment of racialized poverty. Other studies have shown a major correlation between not graduating from secondary school and involvement in crime (Olawoye, n.d.).

Given the consequences of low educational achievement on current and future generations, the success of Black children and youth in Peel schools should be of significant concern not only to their parents but to the broader society.

### **a. Feelings of Inclusion in Peel Schools**

Studies that gained youth-specific insights such as the *Black Experience Project* (Connely et al., 2014) and *Jane-Finch Black Youth Perspectives of Africentric Schooling in Toronto* (Sharma, 2010), revealed the extent to which Black youth experience and perceive inclusion within the school setting and educational system. Their feelings of inclusion are compounded by consistently negative portrayals of the Black community and of Black young males in the media, by the lack of positive role models, and by the exclusion of Blacks from the curriculum. These factors contribute to feelings of alienation, isolation, and hopelessness that can foster youth criminality as outlined in *The Review of the Roots of Youth Violence* (McMurtry & Curling, 2008). Some literature finds that this alienation from their school experience can also be reflected in acts of rebellion by youth in the form of deliberately ignoring classroom instruction and not completing homework (Davis, 2008; Codjoe, 2001).

Punishment for these behaviours can cause further alienation from the school environment.

In our discussions with Black youth, some reported feeling stereotyped or unwelcome on school trips and in extra-curricular activities:

*In school trips and special activities, the teachers will ask us to join them but when we come along they ask us questions to deter us from coming. Makes me feel unwanted. ~ Youth*

*I am visibly unwanted at places such as the museum when I go on trips for school. Older people of other races like to oversee what I'm doing because of what they expect of a young Black man ... [they can] turn small things into a big deal when everyone gets blamed for one person which is unfair because not all Black people are the same. ~ Youth*

There was also some concern expressed over having police in schools. Given the racial profiling that Black youth report experiencing by Peel police, having police officers in schools is seen by some as further criminalizing Black youth. We were told that the concern of some Black parents was so high that they removed their children from the school when officers were placed in that school. They felt that as targets of police attention, their children were safer in the school without police than in a school with police.

### **b. Academic Expectations and Streaming**

Some students told us that they are doing well in school and expressed positive experiences in their schools.

However, many key informants and youth reported that teachers and principals have low expectations of Black students.

*I think we have to fight an uphill battle in almost everything we do, especially school. I've had teachers tell me straight up that they don't believe my group of people could do certain things. ~ Youth*

They reported that Black youth are streamed away from academic courses and towards vocational training. They were also concerned that Black youth are steered away from subjects such as math and science, towards the arts and sports.

*Schools don't take Black kids seriously. Teachers just think we are there to just chill and we are not serious. ~ Youth*

*Students are pigeon-holed due to their cultural difference and then end up in IEP or ESL programs. ~ Youth*

*I am deterred from going to certain schools with academic programs that I am interested in because the population is different from me. ~ Youth*

*Black students are doing worse than other students. Because of systemic racism they are not doing well in the school systems. As an educator for 34 years and a parent I know the racism in the school. The racism is just off the charts. Most Black youth don't have parent support due to cultural differences. They are lucky to have help from teachers and to have role models. They're dropping out, they are so underserved. ~ Key informant*

*If males miss a day of school then [the stereotype is that] they're automatically not interested in having an education and are probably out*

*looking for trouble. ... [The stereotype is that] Black girls only come to school for friends and not to learn. ... [that] Black girls only want certain jobs such as nursing or hairstyling. There is a lot of stereotyping from society for both when it comes to their experiences. ~ Youth*

Some key informants noted that from their perspective this was not a socio-economic issue as Black students from middle class families are not doing significantly better than Black students from poor or working-class families.

There was concern expressed about the lack of Black students in math and sciences as this impacts their ability to thrive in the 21st century economy, which will require math and sciences. They noted that society has become so accustomed to not seeing Black students in these courses, that it is now seen as normal. They question why no one is questioning why Black students are not in these classes.

A few parents spoke about the challenges of having Black children who are testing at higher grade levels. They report that even when their children are doing well, they have difficulty getting the supports they need.

*Even when Black students are advanced, they are held back. Teachers are suspicious of their abilities. Their abilities are always questioned - always questioned and not supported! ~ Key informant*

*White and South Asian students are overrepresented in gifted programs. It's like the door is closed to Black students. ~ Key informant*

These parents also report that it is much more challenging for a Black male to succeed in Peel schools than a Black female. Consider the contrast

between the reports of two parents who were interviewed. One parent has a girl and the other, a boy. Both tested as gifted. The girl was given in-class enrichment while the boy wasn't. The mother of the boy decided to home-school her son. When she called the principal to inform him of her decision, the principal supported her decision and said, "We can't do much for him here."

*Do you believe a public board is telling her to home school him? There are board resources that they have access to. They just don't want to allocate those resources to a Black boy.*

*The boy can write, he writes well and likes to write. The teacher told him to stop writing. She wouldn't even support him to do that. ~ Key informant*

Many key informants were concerned that while the school boards touted their high graduation rates, there is no attention placed on understanding who is not graduating and why. The concern is that while a large number of Black students are not graduating from high school, without the data to quantify the issue, the issue will never be identified or addressed by the school boards.

*We need the collection of data by race so we can understand who is failing - this is the biggest issue the Black community faces. It is the only way that we can hold these board's publicly accountable. If you can't identify the problem, you can't address it. ~ Key informant*

*We have a number for everything else that happens in the board. Why can't we put a face on who is under-achieving? ~Key informant*

## c. Sports

Some key informants also expressed concern that Black students are sold a "pipe dream" by being encouraged to focus on sports as an avenue to post-secondary education, rather than focusing on academics. They note that Black students are overrepresented on sports teams, and some are allowed to play on a team while failing academically and even while not attending classes. They are concerned that either there is no policy that students must meet an academic standard in order to be eligible to play on sport teams or that if there is one, it is ignored.

*These schools need to get out of the sport business and get into the academic business. Why is someone who is not attending classes able to be on the football team? ~ Key informant*

*In school, the teachers place importance on my playing sports like football and basketball and less on my academics. Blacks are associated with failure. Teachers pay more attention to other races. ~ Youth*

In addition, Black youth with whom we spoke reported that they are not encouraged to play certain sports like tennis and hockey but are pushed towards basketball and football.

## d. Unequal Discipline

In the mid-1990s, Ontario school boards began implementing a zero tolerance approach to discipline. In 2001, the provincial government's amendments to the *Education Act*, which gave principals and teachers throughout the province more authority to suspend and expel students, came into effect. This approach was criticized for suspending students for minor incidents, and for dealing more harshly with Black students than with White students. It was also criticized for pushing



Black students out of schools and into the hands of gangs (Puxley, 2007).

In 2005, the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Ontario Ministry of Education finalized a settlement of a human rights complaint initiated by the Commission that removed the concept of zero tolerance from the *Education Act* (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.). Although the changes to discipline policies have taken effect, racial disparities continue to be evident in discipline. This is reflected both in the data<sup>3</sup> and in the stories from Black students and their parents.

TDSB data shows that Black students are suspended at three times the rate of White students (Rushowy, 2013). In addition numerous studies in the United States have focused on racial disparities in discipline and the impact this has on Black student achievement. In 2003, the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the University of California, Los Angeles Civil Right Project, released two reports that document the gap between suspension rates of Black and White students (Civil Rights Project, 2013). The first report, *Out of School & Off Track: The Overuse of Suspensions in American Middle and High Schools*, shows that in the 2009-2010 school year, 24% of Black middle and high school students were suspended, compared with 7% of White students. The report also found that most suspensions were not in response to violent behaviour, but were for minor issues such as dress code violations or lateness.

The research found that suspensions interfere with a student's learning and classwork, ultimately impacting whether they graduate. The data shows

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<sup>3</sup> TDSB data is used as a proxy for what is occurring in schools in Peel which does not collect race-based data

that students suspended once in grade nine had a dropout rate of 32%, double the rate of those students who receive no suspensions.

The second report, *Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice*, describes the reasons for the racial gap and how reducing unfair suspensions can help improve graduation rates, achievement scores, and life outcomes.

The reports challenge the assumption that Black students are being suspended because they are behaving badly and place the focus on the strong role that school practices play in creating and maintaining racial disparities in discipline. These reports suggest that schools have the ability to reduce suspensions of Black students, thereby improving their academic achievement and graduation rates.

The absence of data makes it impossible to assess the impact of discipline on Black students in Peel. However, the data from other jurisdictions, coupled with the anecdotal evidence from research participants, suggest that despite the changes to the *Education Act*, Black students continue to be disciplined for behaviours their White counterparts are not disciplined for and disciplined more harshly for similar behaviours.

Despite the lack of data for Peel schools, we can look to the Toronto District School Board data to get a picture of the experience of Black students in Peel schools. TDSB data for the 2011-12 school year show that racial disparities in discipline continue to occur between Black and White students (Toronto District School Board, 2012). The data also suggest that racial disparities in GTA schools are similar to racial disparities experienced in American schools. In the United States Black students are suspended at three times the rate of their White counterparts.

Black TDSB students are also suspended at three times the rate of their White counterparts at all levels: JK-Grade 6 (1.5% versus 0.5%); Grade 7-8 (7.6% versus 2.4%); Grade 9-12 (8.6%-2.9%).

Both youth and key informants supported these research findings as they felt that Black students in Peel schools are disciplined more often and more harshly than their peers. Our discussions also suggest that when Black students receive punishment that they interpret as more severe than that given to an equally blameworthy White student, they lose confidence in the school system as a whole.

Some youth interpret harsher discipline as signals that they are not wanted in schools, or that teachers have an anti-Black bias. This can further marginalize Black children and youth in Peel schools.

*If something is going wrong, you get involved for no reason. For example, when there was a fight and I was standing close by watching, someone will say I was involved when I wasn't and I'll get into trouble for doing nothing. I feel like teachers are not there to help and protect me. ~ Youth*

*When I was in grade 5 I remember playing Beyblades with my White friend. My friend's toy broke when I tried to retrieve my Beyblade and he spat in my face and tried taking it, then ran. I chased him. The teachers stopped both of us and we both got in trouble. He got a 2-day in-school suspension and I got 21 days out of school suspension - which is the most days they penalize you for without expelling. ~ Youth*

This disparity in discipline can have significant negative consequences for Black students who are out of school for long periods of time, and therefore more likely to fall behind academically. Being out of

school also leaves them vulnerable to occupying their time with activities that can get them into further trouble or increase their contact with police.

## e. Curriculum

The literature concludes that curriculum that does not reflect the reality of Black youth and that do not include people who look like them is a significant contributor to academic disengagement of Black youth (Wiredu, 2013; Sharma, 2010). This can result in negative consequences to the development of their identity (McMurtry & Curling, 2008; Wiredu, 2013). Those in favour of Africentric curriculum argue that Black youth disengagement from school can be partially remedied by a curriculum that reflects Blacks in Canadian history and society, and includes more African-influenced lesson plans, homework, role models, and relevant extra-curricular activities.

Although Africentric schools are not a new idea, in the 21st century they are being proposed again as a way to satisfy the academic needs of at-risk Black youth. However, Black youth also expressed fear of being stigmatized by the community and post-secondary institutions if they attended an africentric institution. Some therefore highly favour adjusting the current curriculum to incorporate topics of study that are relevant and reflective of the GTA's cultural and ethnic diversity (D'Oyley et al., 2001; McMurtry & Curling, 2008; Sharma, 2010). Literature dating back to the 1970s strongly advocates for the inclusion of diverse cultures in lesson plans, especially in schools with high enrolment of racialized and immigrant students (Brown, 2004; Davis, 2008; Ferenc, 2013; Wiredu, 2013; Codjoe, 2001).

Despite the evidence that lays out the benefits of having Black students (and indeed all students)

seeing themselves reflected in the curriculum, Black children continue to not see themselves reflected in the curriculum throughout the year. Some key informants raised concerns that many schools don't even celebrate Black History Month. So while some schools relegate any mention of Blacks in their teaching materials to Black History Month, some don't even use that opportunity to include any mention of Black people. One key informant who sits on a parent council noted that when they asked for a few hundred dollars to put on a Black History Month event, they were told that the school had not allocated any money toward recognizing Black History Month.

## f. Black Teachers

The case for racial diversity among teachers and school staff is not new. For many years, academics and communities have discussed the need for school boards to increase the number of teachers of colour (National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004). The call for more teachers of colour is supported by the evidence that suggests that students of colour do better academically, socially, and emotionally with teachers of colour (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Despite the call for more diversity among teaching staff, one study found that,

...in Canada the number of elementary and secondary teachers and school counsellors of colour have not kept pace with the phenomenal growth in the number of citizens of colour, and by extension, the number of students of colour. In fact, despite the increase in the number of teachers of colour over the years, the ratio of racialized teachers to the racialized Canadian population is falling, and in some instances, dramatically so (Ryan, Pollock, Antonelli, 2009).

This study examined Statistics Canada data to compare the racialized population to teachers of colour in the Toronto CMA. It found a large diversity gap in the classroom - in 2006 42% of the population was racialized, while only 19% of all teachers were racialized (Ryan, Pollock, Antonelli, 2009).

Key informants reported that even with the diversity of Peel Region - which the data shows is arguably more diverse than the City of Toronto - Peel school boards have made little attempt to diversify their teaching population<sup>4</sup>.

Key informants were concerned that the hiring practices of Peel boards mean that there is a lack of Black teachers who can be positive role models for Black students. They also noted that not only is it good for Black students to have Black teachers, it is important for students of all backgrounds to be exposed to Black people in all roles, including teaching positions and positions of leadership within the board.

*It is of paramount importance to have Black teachers in the schools. Not only for Black kids but for all kids. They all need to see Black people in positions of authority. If you have a Black teacher and gain respect for them, you may not*

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board has had an Employment Equity Policy since 2007. However, it does not survey its workforce or publicly report on the implementation or success of this policy in diversifying its workforce.

In 2013, the Peel District School Board released a review of its hiring and promotion policies and practices and an action plan to create a more equitable hiring process. It is currently planning to conduct a Diversity Census of its workforce in the fall of 2015.

*question the intellectual abilities of all Black people. ~ Key informant*

One parent told us of how excited her young daughter was to find out that she finally got a Black teacher:

*My husband was dropping my daughter off for her first day of school. He told her that when he was registering her that he saw multicultural teachers including some Black teachers. She was asking him if he thought she would have a Black teacher because she's never had a teacher that looked like her. He told her that he didn't know. As he was walking her to her class, they realized that she was going to have a Black teacher. My daughter was so excited to have a teacher that looks like her. It has made a difference - she is so much more engaged in school now! ~ Key informant*

As another key informant noted, many students could graduate from a Peel school board without ever having a Black teacher.

## **g. Cultural Competency**

In education, preliminary research suggests that teachers need training to increase their awareness of possible racial bias and its effect on student success (Staats, 2013).

Other research suggests that the impact of a lack of cultural competency along with systemic racism in the education system negatively impacts students' mental health and cognitive development (D'Oyley et al., 2001).

Key informants also identified a need for greater efforts by school boards to eradicate racism from the educational experience of Black youth:

*The educational system has taken up the banner for issues of LGBT youth and bullying prevention. They need to do the same for racism. They need to address this issue with the same intensity and the same campaigning. It is unfair to say that one oppression supersedes the other. If they don't take this up as a cause, we'll still be here 10 years from now talking about the same thing. ~ Key informant*

Some key informants also noted the importance of having teachers who know how to effectively engage with and manage Black students. Some noted that in some cases teachers are intimidated by the behaviours of Black students or see their behaviours as problematic. The students see this and may then take advantage of the teacher's fear.

Teachers who are not competent in dealing with Black students may then problematize the behaviours of Black students, further marginalizing them and imposing harsher discipline.

## **h. Impact of Home Life**

Some key informants were concerned that although difficulties in the home lives of Black students affect the ability of Black students to focus on their education, little attention is paid to the home lives of Black students and to helping them find the supports that they need so that they can get a good education. Some report that in certain schools in Peel, there are a large number of Black students from low-income families, in foster care, or living on their own. But extra supports are not offered through the schools to help these students.

*Teachers need to be educated about the students' personal lives and how it affects their education. If their home life is difficult and they're not functioning, how can they do well in*

*school when you're not acknowledging that? ~  
Key informant*

While a number of the experiences in the school system shared through the consultations were negative, there were also some positive stories. One youth with whom we spoke told us that at one point he was having difficulty with school because he was homeless. He told us of the help and support he received from a teacher in finding a shelter and accessing social services.

## **i. Parental Involvement**

Some key informants also expressed concern about the lack of involvement of Black parents in their children's education.

This lack of involvement was attributed to various factors, including parents having a great deal of trust in the educational system to educate their children; apathy; and parental work situations (e.g. working multiple jobs, working evenings). There were also suggestions that some Black parents placed a great deal of responsibility for their education on their children (particularly when in high school).

Regardless of the perceptions about the lack of involvement and the reasons why, most key informants agreed on the need for Black parents to be involved in their children's education.

*Racism in the school system is not going to die an easy death. Parents must get involved in all aspects of their children's education. But I see a lack of commitment by many Black parents to their kids' education. Black parents need to be called out for their lack of involvement. The Black community needs to come to grips with this. Where do we take responsibility for our children's success? ~ Key informant*

There was concern that too often the relationship between Black parents and the school is adversarial because some parents tend to get involved when there is an issue, rather than developing an ongoing relationship with the school and their children's teachers.



# POLICING & VIOLENCE

## 6.4 Policing and Violence

### a. Policing Contacts and Racial Profiling

Many people identified policing and racial profiling as an issue in Peel Region. They expressed the need to examine issues of racial profiling and ways that police services can better serve and reflect the community.

Initiatives to forge meaningful, trusting relationships between police and at-risk and racialized youth can incrementally reduce the negativity of the perceptions that Black youth have developed in response to racial profiling and the abundant presence of police in their neighbourhoods (Peel Regional Police, n.d.; Region of Peel, 2011; McMurtry & Curling, 2008; D'Oyley et al., 2001). Forging trusting, respectful relationships between police and at-risk youth can help change the perception of discrimination and improve Black youth and community perceptions of gross discriminatory practices such as racial profiling (Region of Peel, 2011; McMurtry & Curling, 2008).

The overrepresentation of young Black males engaging in violence is a concerning theme that emerges in the literature. Of note is the fact that the prison population and the rate of incarceration of Black males continues to rise, even as crime rates decline (Brosnahan, 2013).

Data also shows that Black youth are also over-represented among the prison population, even as incarceration rates of young men have steadily declined since the introduction of the Youth Criminal Justice Act in 2003 (Rankin and Winsa, 2013). Various research studies attribute this to a factors, including racism; poverty; social isolation;

unemployment; violence in neighbourhoods; racial profiling by police; being held before trials; pressure to plead guilty; and more conditions at release time, which leads to more chance of breaching them (Rankin and Winsa, 2013).

In 2011, Howard Sapers, the Correctional Investigator of Canada, noted that there was a 52% increase in the number of Black men in federal jails over the previous 10 years. When he tabled his annual report in 2013 he noted that, "The growth in the custody population appears to be policy, not crime driven" (Brosnahan, 2013).

Mental health issues and the lack of access to treatment have also been identified as increasing operational costs for the police and substantially increasing the prison population. Data compiled by the Canadian Institute for Health Information found that youth in custody in Toronto were much more likely than the general Canadian youth population to suffer from conduct disorders; abuse alcohol and drugs; be diagnosed with depression; or have schizophrenia or fetal alcohol syndrome (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2008). the impact on those incarcerated can be significant. As one news article noted,

And when they are convicted of crimes - often non-violent ones, at least the first time - people with mental illness are overwhelming Canada's prison system. They serve their sentences without adequate treatment, spend time in segregation that's proven to make their condition worse and often leave prison more dangerous than when they entered (Mehler, 2014).

Professionals from health, law, and education have also noted the increasing number of school-age youth in conflict with the law who are struggling

with low literacy, numeracy, and life skills. An inter-professional dialogue was hosted by the York Centre for Education and Community (YCEC) to explore the challenges and opportunities for collaboration between the educational, mental health, and criminal justice systems (York Centre for Education and Community, 2011). The issues and challenges identified by these professionals include:

- Making every effort to keep youth within the school system to minimize the likelihood that they end up in the criminal justice system
- Equipping schools to identify and address early warning signs indicating that a young person may become a serious, violent offender
- Coordinating the efforts of government agencies and the education, mental health, and justice systems to develop more effective ways of sharing information.

In 2005, Toronto experienced a surge in youth violence, particularly among young Black males (Carter, 2011; Gee, 2013). The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, reported that in 2005, 52 of Toronto's 78 homicides were committed with guns and the vast majority of victims and assailants were young males. Furthermore, Statistics Canada (2008) cites that racialized individuals born in Canada are three times more likely to be a victim of a violent crime than those who are foreign-born. After the violent 2005 trend, cultural programming was implemented and violence decreased (Carter, 2011).

The literature notes that violence is often the reaction to desperate socio-economic circumstances resulting from systemic racism in addition to ill-mental health (McMurtry & Curling, 2008; Khenti, 2013; D'Oyley et al., 2001).

Violence and crime can also affect the community by causing it to rapidly deteriorate, scaring off businesses, decaying safe spaces in the community, and diminishing the mental health of a whole community (United Way of Greater Toronto and The Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004; McMurtry & Curling, 2008). Media portrayals of the Black community propagate negative stereotypes, especially of young Black males as violent criminals (DiManno, 2008; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003; Khenti, 2013).

In *The Roots of Youth Violence Review* (2008) racism and poverty were identified as the most influential factors for at-risk youth to engage in criminal behaviour and violence. The effects of racism and poverty cause alienation, isolation, hopelessness, and desperation as it filters through many facets of a person's life such as education, employment, housing, and social services. These effects can burden future generations of Black youth (McMurtry & Curling, 2008; United Way of Greater Toronto and The Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004; Government of Ontario, 2013).

The traumatizing effects of racism underlie many challenges the Black community continues to face. Because the effects of racism spread throughout the various aspects of one's life, Black youth face greater barriers than Whites and other racialized groups. This can unleash feelings of alienation and hopelessness that can motivate desperate youth to engage in rebellious, deviant, and violent acts.

The limited safe space for recreational and social activities for youth makes them particularly vulnerable and susceptible to gangs, drugs, and other criminal behaviour (McMurtry & Curling, 2008). In addition, youth from single parent households and impoverished communities may not



be regularly or closely supervised, and may be more susceptible to negative influences.

The evidence shows that the marginalization of Black youth and their involvement in criminal activities is for the most part a societal creation, and as such, needs a societal solution. Health and justice advocates, such as CAMH and the Honorable Roy McMurtry, have strongly advocated for the root causes of violence to be addressed instead of continuing the failing "tough on crime" mentality (McMurtry & Curling, 2008; CAMH, 2006). As CAMH believes,

... youth violence is not any one community's problem, but is a public health issue. We have a shared responsibility to solve the problem of youth violence (CAMH, 2006).

## b. Data Collection

A debate has surfaced in GTA-specific literature around the collection of race-based statistics in order to quantify contact with police by race. Proponents of collecting race-based statistics argue that the data could reveal the full extent of the racial profiling experienced by racialized communities and the involvement in criminal activity within particular communities. This would help efficiently allocate resources. Those that challenge race-based statistics fear that the data will be used to support racist theories of crime and oppressive responses that can further criminalize youth ( DiManno, 2008; Connely et al., 2014).

An analysis conducted by the Toronto Star on the carding practices of the Toronto Police Service showed race, age, and gender are factors in determining who is stopped by police (Rankin, 2010). The data shows that Blacks are three times

more likely to be stopped by police than Whites. Racial profiling and the over policing of Black people can lead to higher rates of incarceration and criminalization.

While similar data is not available for stops by Peel Regional Police Service, the youth with whom we consulted identified racial profiling within Peel Region as a daily and ongoing issue for them. They raised concerns of police stops when they are not doing anything delinquent or suspicious and talked of the defensiveness and alienation that racial profiling creates among Black youth.

*In Peel, you're already a target if you're Black. If you live in a certain area or if you wear certain clothing you are a target of police. If something goes wrong you're automatically a suspect. ~ Youth*

There is no doubt that interactions with police are seen by youth as racially motivated and excessive.

*Every time I walk down the side walk police usually stop me but this doesn't happen when White people do things. ~ Youth*

The fear of police and of racial profiling was also evident in our discussions with some youth.

*I feel fearful and I am destined to fail. As Black youth no matter how hard I work I may be arrested and go to jail for 10 years for something I did not commit. ~ Youth*

Youth believe that police operate under the assumption that Black youth are always involved in delinquency and crime. They report that Black bystanders are more likely than White bystanders to be questioned about incidents that occur at or near their schools.

The omnipresent assumption of delinquency and criminality can leave youth in anguish.

*There is no place in this world where we are safe. Everywhere we go, we are a target. I want freedom. Before I came here, I was in Africa and I was told Canada was a place I could be free. But it is not that at all. An incident happened at school where all kinds of kids were involved. I only saw the police handcuffing the Black students, and many of those students were not even involved. Anytime there is violence, it is assumed us Black youth have committed it. ~ Youth*

Some youth reported feeling the need to reassure others that they are not threatening and that others do not have to be suspicious of them.

*Law enforcement also stereotypes us and assumes because we are Black we all partake in drugs etc. They also assume that all Black youth live in poverty and are struggling which is not true. People in the stores assume I am going to steal which is not true. I go out of my way to try not to look suspect. People are always staring at me thinking I am a thief. ~ Youth*

Community service providers also felt that there is an over-representation of Black youth in the criminal justice system and identified this as a significant issue that needs to be addressed.



# SOCIAL SERVICES

## 6.5 Social Services

### A Collaborative Approach

*Stepping Up: A strategic framework to help Ontario's youth succeed* is a collaborative framework that proposes twenty necessary priority outcomes structured by seven essential themes that support positive youth development (Government of Ontario, 2013). When Black youth experience and have access to health and wellness; strong, supportive friends and families; education, training and apprenticeships; employment and entrepreneurship; diversity, social inclusion and safety; civic engagement and youth leadership; and coordinated and youth friendly communities they can be successful, healthy, happy individuals (Government of Ontario, 2013).

Most of the literature highly recommends collaboration and partnerships among all three tiers of government and among community and non-profit organizations, schools, and employers to reduce competition for funding that ultimately weakens the beneficial impact of programs and services (Olawoye & Tewelde, n.d.; Government of Ontario, 2013; McMurtry & Curling, 2008; The Learning Partnership, 2006).

Offering programs and services for vulnerable Black youth, specifically those with low income, those in foster care, and those living on their own, was seen as critical. Offering those programs through community hubs embedded within schools was seen as a way of ensuring that youth in need know about the services, while also supporting their engagement in school.

### Pockets of Poverty

Poverty in Peel may be hidden in pockets within more affluent communities. This can cause difficulties identifying needs and delivering much

needed services. Participants in this research thought that more could be done to ensure adequate services are provided to those who live in these pockets of poverty.

*Toronto seems to have more concentrated areas of poverty. The challenges receive much more media attention. In Peel, it is spread in pockets throughout the region and sometimes hidden by postal code. ~ Service provider*

*[There should be a] commitment by funders to address needs in pockets vs. only needs that present across a large demographic area. Poverty and racialization happens in small pockets, like ours. We need adequate supports and funding to ensure we can mobilize the supports the community needs and deserves. ~ Key informant*

### Knowledge of Programs and Culturally-Specific Programs

*An Inventory of Agencies that Serve the Black Community and Youth in Peel Region, 2014* identified the following organizations in Peel that specialize in serving the Black population:

- 14 Black-focused organizations, with only 6 offering social services, and two offering programs for youth
- 3 mainstream agencies that offer specific services for the Black community
- 4 agencies in Toronto that serve the Black population in Peel.

The results of these consultations indicate that available social services are not widely known to Peel's Black youth or to their parents. One agency that responded to our survey indicated that more of their clients come from Toronto than from Peel, suggesting that there is a need to educate Peel

residents about the services available to them in their communities.

Concern was also expressed that the development of the community infrastructure in Peel has not kept pace with the growth of the Black community. As such Black residents of Peel have less access to culturally-relevant programs and services.

Some expressed concern that there is a lack of culturally-relevant programs and services in Peel, particularly for Black youth. There was also concern expressed that both non-profits and public sector organizations have made little effort to hire Black staff, further widening the gap between the services offered and the needs of the Black community.

A few of the service organizations that responded to the survey for this project indicated that they have made changes in their programs and services to better serve the needs of their Black service users. These changes include recruiting staff and volunteers from the Black community, offering training to staff, and conducting outreach to Black communities. Many did suggest that more needs to be done to better serve the needs of the Black community.

Survey also asked service provider about the top weaknesses or challenges that they face with respect to providing effective services to the Black community in Peel. Their responses include:

- We do not have staff from that community
- Funding to sustain or expand programs
- Funding to provide consistent, culturally responsive programs
- Lack of knowledge about the community, specific cultural expertise
- Lack of resources specific to the Black community that clients / callers can be referred to
- The need exceeds the agency's capacity.

Various supports, resources or information were identified to improve organizations' capacity to provide services to the Black community, including:

- Partnering with organizations who specifically focus on this population
- Hiring more staff from the Black community
- Community-wide diversity training
- A commitment by funders to address needs of specific pockets and communities.

#### **Investment into Social Services**

Activities that utilize youth leadership and mentoring strengthen the overall civic engagement of the community, reduce the amount of unsupervised youth, and give youth the opportunity to develop better social skills (The Learning Partnership, 2006; McMurtry & Curling, 2008; D'Oyley et al., 2001).

in addition, creating community hubs that will provide neighbourhoods with a space for alternative activities to gang membership and other deviant behaviours (Bonnell & Zizys, 2005; The Learning Partnership, 2006).

In the area of service design, preliminary research suggests that more culturally focused support services for Black youth are needed, such as after school programs and drop-in centres. Key informants suggest that these programs should hire or provide volunteer and leadership opportunities for Black youth. This will also help to create safe spaces for Black youth.

*I want access to helpful resources such as playing certain sports and being more involved in the community without being judged. ~ Youth*

They also expressed the need for accessible, constant, and sustained funding for programs that can establish themselves as community resources.

*Make good on commitment to prioritize the needs of youth, especially Black youth, in funding. Partial funding by provincial bodies cripples small agencies like ours. Major funding like the Youth Opportunity Fund is inaccessible to small agencies like ours as they require nuanced, large agencies. Healthy agencies in Peel serving youth are generally sustained NOT by youth-focused funding but by funding focused on healthcare or other such services. ~Service provider*

*There needs to be consistent funding to support existing youth programs and to expand those programs. The programs that have been successful have had a long term investment in the youth providing them with caring adult role models. Transportation and safety have been identified as barrier to participation in programs. ~Service provider*

Programs must be designed with participation costs and use of public transportation in mind.

Transportation is an acknowledged barrier for youth participation at the regional, provincial, and national levels (Peel Children and Youth Initiative, 2013; Bonnell & Zizys, 2005). Therefore, it is imperative for programs and activities to be located in spaces accessible for all youth, but particularly at-risk youth (Bonnell & Zizys, 2005; The Learning Partnership, 2006).

A study on Peel Region youth titled *Voices* (2013), which surveyed 2,187 students in secondary schools

across Peel found that children from single-parent households have slightly lower participation rates than children from two-parent households due to limited time and resources (Peel Children and Youth Initiative, 2013).

Bonnell & Zizys (2005) report that children from single-parent households that regularly engage in structured, recreational activities are less likely to require social assistance when they are adults. In addition, recreational activities for youth are most beneficial when they are structured, supervised, and geographically and financially accessible, especially for at-risk youth (McMurtry & Curling, 2008, Peel Children and Youth Initiative, 2013; Youth Challenge Fund, 2013; Collaborative Community Health Research Centre, 2002).

One service provider reported how these programs can be structured:

*We provide program opportunities to youth in the communities where they live. The relationship is long term as many of the youth begin as youngsters and grow up attending the program. The children in the program become the youth participants. They gain leadership skills and eventually become staff and volunteers. The program encourages healthy choices and civic engagement so that youth become leaders within their communities. ~ Service provider*

Those with whom we spoke expressed concerns over what they see as a lack of investment into social services in Peel Region generally. From their perspective, they don't see that the municipalities within Peel Region make the same investments into social services that the City of Toronto makes, despite the growing need. One person who completed the service provider survey noted many gaps in programs and services in Peel:

*Invest in programs that will be beneficial, perhaps life skill training workshops with incentives. Starting up afterschool programs again to build confidence, and encouragement to motivate youth who are vulnerable or at risk. Making recreational programs more affordable. Setting time limits on youth who are on OW and investing more time in job training requirements or incentives for continuing academic growth. Free long term counselling for vulnerable or at risk Black youth who have experienced trauma. ~ Service provider*

When service providers were asked about what they thought the various levels of government could do to improve outcomes for vulnerable or at-risk Black youth, increased and ongoing investment into relevant programs was identified as key.

### **Mental Health Services**

Multiple sources cite the severe stigma that exists within the Black community regarding mental illness as well as the connection between violence and mental illness (Sharma, 2010; Connely et al., 2014; Social Planning Council of Peel, 2007).

Geographical and psychological alienation, isolation, and hopelessness is seen as affecting the mental health of Black youth and the community as a whole. Moreover, youth violence, especially among Black youth, has been gaining ground as a public health issue. However more has to be done to improve trust levels between service providers and the Black community (Khenti, 2013; Olawoye, n.d.; Social Planning Council of Peel, 2007).

One community service provider did report on one culturally-focused unit in an in-house mental health program.

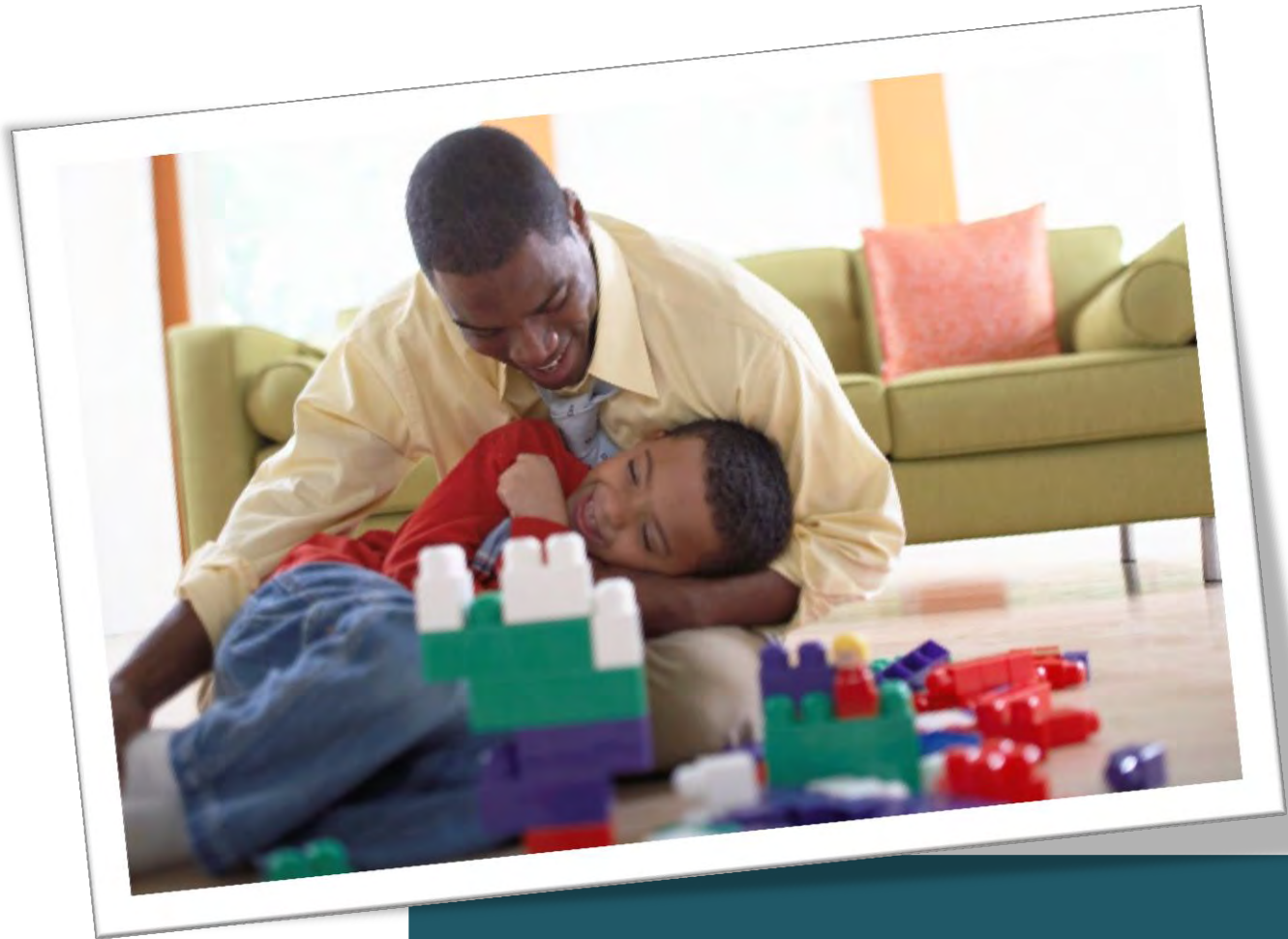
*In our mental health awareness program we have one whole training [section] for the Black community, demographics, and surveys about the program. ~ Service provider*

There was however, a general sense that there is a lack of culturally-responsive mental health resources and a lack of knowledge in Peel's Black community of available mental health resources. This is especially worrisome as the culmination of social injustices grounded in racism and poverty - including all the disadvantages that snowball thereafter may present a challenge to the mental health of Black youth. As the literature points out, the cruelty of racism, poverty, academic underachievement, and the lack of positive role models for Black youth to identify with burden the mental wellbeing of Black youth and can have generational impacts (Brown, 2004; Connely et al., 2014; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003).

### **Perception of Issues Facing Peel's Black Community**

The survey of service providers asked them to identify the top social issues or problems experienced by Black youth in Peel. While the responses reflect the particular perspective of the organizations that responded to the survey, they provide insights into the challenges that those who access these services face. Survey respondents identified the following as key issues faced by Black youth in Peel:

- Family income and poverty
- Lack of available culturally responsive community programs and services
- Racism and marginalization
- Over-representation in the correctional system.



# CONCLUSION



## 7. Conclusion

The experiences of Black youth in schools, in society, and their treatment by police tell of a group that is growing up with much difficulties. As noted throughout this report, the issues raised through the consultations with youth and key informants and the input provided by residents and service providers highlights one important fact—the challenges faced by Black youth in Peel Region are no different than those faced by Black youth in the City of Toronto. Life in the suburbs has not insulated Black youth from the challenges facing their counterparts in Toronto.

What is different might be the extent to which the municipalities, school boards, and police service are willing to name the issues, collect the data needed to monitor change and hold themselves accountable, and their willingness to implement focused, funded, and lasting solutions.

Without the needed leadership and courage to tackle the issues head-on, the systemic and societal forces will continue to marginalize and to marginalize many more Black youth. As such, the situation might even become worse than those presently facing Toronto.

# Appendix A

## Survey Respondents - Service Providers

Our Place Peel  
MIAG Center for Diverse Women and Families  
India Rainbow Community Services of Peel  
Boys and Girls Club of Peel  
Catholic Family Services of Peel-Dufferin  
Centre for Education and Training  
Seva Foodbank  
Spectra Community Support Services  
Victim Services of Peel  
Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel-Halton  
YMCA of Greater Toronto  
John Howard Society of Peel  
Yee Hong Centre of Geriatric Care  
Kerry's Place Autism Services  
African Community Services of Peel  
Erin Mills Youth Centre  
Caledon-Dufferin Victims Services

## Appendix B

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# Appendix C

## Notes on the Data

The data in Section 5 of this report reflect the data from Report #1 of this project - A Socio-Economic Profile of the Black Population in Peel, 2006 & 2011, prepared by The Social Planning Council of Peel.

The limitations of the data, as noted in that report are repeated here:

This report includes information from both the 2006 mandatory long-form census and the 2011 National Household Survey. Because of changes in the data collection process, the 2011 statistics may be subject to quality issues and the two sets of data may not be completely comparable. In addition, due to limited availability of data, there is no information on health or crime, and few recent statistics specific to the Black population. Finally, while much of the 2006 data is very rich and while the information by FSA may provide very useful for planning, the reader must keep in mind that this data is 8 years old and therefore must be used with caution as demographics may have shifted within this time period.

The reader is referred to the Appendix D of that report for further details on these limitations.