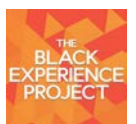


THE BLACK EXPERIENCE PROJECT IN THE GTA

Overview Report

July 2017



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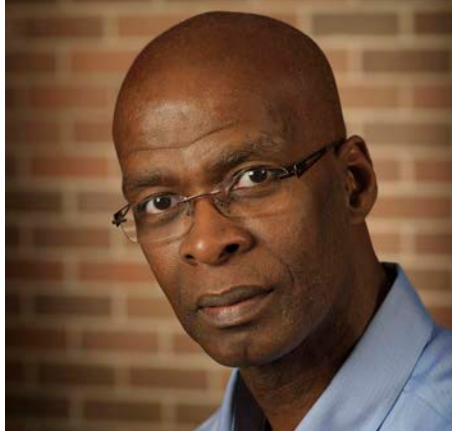
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Foreword

Growing the Evidence about the Experiences of Black People in the GTA

In Canada, there tends to be a reluctance to employ race as a demographic identifier. When racial data is collected, Black and other racialized groups tend to be grouped as “visible minority” – obscuring the characteristics, issues and concerns that are unique to each racial group. Therefore, research focused on racialized groups is always appreciated as they offer valuable insights complementing information presented by census data.

The Black Experience Project (BEP) is an important and timely research, contributing to the awareness about the lives and experiences of Black people in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It builds on earlier research on our “presence” (Head, 1975), “well-being” (James, Este, Thomas-Bernard, Benjamin, Lloyd & Turner, 2010) and life as Black residents in the GTA.

Head’s study for the Ontario Human Rights Commission reported on Black people’s experiences with racism and discrimination in the early 1970s when the Black population increased significantly. He found that despite the racist and discriminatory incidents – difficulties in finding housing and employment, being placed in vocational classes in schools, etc. – his respondents were undeterred and confident that their abilities, efforts and determination would enable them to attain their ambitions.

Twenty-five years later, Thomas Bernard of Dalhousie University, Halifax initiated a comparative study on the well-being of Black/African Canadians in Halifax, Toronto and Calgary. The study also reported on the many generations within the community in these cities. The findings shed light on how the violence of racism took a toll on the physical, psychological, and spiritual health of Black Canadians. Nevertheless, the research participants held on to hope which ultimately inspired them to address the entrenched problems of racism.

The BEP research was initiated and led by Environics Institute in partnership with the United Way of Toronto and York Region, the YMCA of Greater Toronto, the Diversity Institute of Ryerson University, and the Jean Augustine Chair at York University in an effort to provide a current profile of Black Canadians. Participants include residents in the suburban areas of Peel, York, Durham and Halton regions to which Black families, just like other racialized families, have moved seeking a better life, free from problems of the city. But findings demonstrate that racism and discrimination are equally prevalent in these suburbs.

It is important for a study like this to acknowledge the historical examination, interpretation and narration of the lived experiences of Black people – cognizant of how race relates to gender, class, sexuality, citizenship, and other identities. Such studies need to also recognize the strategies individuals employ in their struggles against white supremacy and related white universally-presumed norms, values and behaviours. In essence, an anti-Black racism approach to research studies necessarily involve understanding how the community is envisaged and engaged, the methodology used, the individuals sampled, the interviewers deployed, the advisors consulted, and the messages conveyed. And as this research shows, we will come to find out about the undeniable reality and the specificity of the racism faced by Black community members.

In a concise report like this, it wasn’t possible to examine all the contributing factors of the experiences of the 1504 research respondents. For instance, a comprehensive analysis of the gender and sexual identification data is not presented in this report. However, the Jean Augustine Chair at York University will soon establish a BEP Working Group which will delve into such details in the analyses and dissemination of additional reports. Also, researchers and others affiliated to agencies and institutions will be able to access the data through requests to the Working Group using research protocol.

This research project benefitted substantially from the contributions of concerned community members who reviewed and commented on drafts of the report and provided input at various stages. They brought their insights of and commitment to the community to the writing process which served to enrich the report and meaningfully address the community’s concerns.

We look forward to project partners, funding agencies and others affiliated with this project using this report to ensure their existing and / or newly created policies, programs and practices are culturally relevant and responsive to the needs, concerns, interests and expectations of members of the Black communities. Doing so will certainly lead to real change in the lives of Black community members.

Carl E. James

Jean Augustine Chair in Education,
Community and Diaspora
Faculty of Education, York University





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Black Experience Project began with a central question “What does it mean to be Black in the GTA?” From there, the study embarked on a journey of answering this question in an authentic and respectful way. Launched in 2010, the Black Experience Project (BEP) is a research study that examines the lived experiences of individuals who self-identify as Black and/or of African heritage living in the Greater Toronto Area, or GTA (the City of Toronto, and the Regions of York, Durham, Peel and Halton). This study was led by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with the United Way of Toronto and York Region, the YMCA of the Greater Toronto Area, Ryerson’s Diversity Institute, and the Jean Augustine Chair in Education, Community and Diaspora at York University. This research aims to provide a better understanding of the lives of Black individuals within the GTA, including the factors leading to their successes and challenges.

The results are intended to provide valuable insight and direction in identifying policies and other initiatives that will contribute to the health and vibrancy of the Black community, and by doing so, the health and vibrancy of the entire GTA and beyond. Project results are expected to provide a focal point for the Black community to better harness its assets and expand its successes throughout the entire community. These results will also help the broader community (e.g., community leaders, decision-makers, policy makers, general public) understand and appreciate the diversity and vibrancy of the Black community within their vicinity.

People of African descent (regardless of where they were born) have had a long-standing history in Canada and Toronto. Their stories and footprints can be traced back to Canada’s early colonial period – including the time of slavery. But in recent years, that history has been shaped by successive waves of immigration. Canada’s own history of anti-Black racism, segregation and exploitation is well studied. At the same time, the long-standing contributions of the Black community to the development of the country in the face of structural and institutional racism are clear. In particular, its persistent activism and advocacy for civil liberties and human rights, while often missing from textbooks, is well documented.

Today, the GTA is home to more than 400,000 individuals who self-identify as “Black,” comprising seven percent of the region’s population, and almost half of Canada’s total Black population. Diversity within the Black population is not only related to country of origin, but also to language, religion, socioeconomic status, and time of migration – all of which become evident in cultural variation.

The Black community in the GTA has made substantial contributions to the growth and success of the country and the region, but it has experienced economic, educational, social, and political disparities that continue to this day, much of which are rooted in anti-Black racism. There continues to be longstanding challenges facing the community, some of which are not similarly experienced by other racialized and ethnic communities in the GTA. It is well documented that Black individuals, compared with the non-Black population, earn lower income, have higher rates of unemployment, experience higher rates of incarceration, suffer poorer health outcomes, and are more likely to be victims of violence. The historic foundations of colonialism and anti-Black racism have stood as systemic barriers to collective and individual success. While in some cases the survey questions and participants’ answers did not explicitly use terms such as “racism” or “anti-Black racism”, the study interpreted descriptions, for example, of “unfair treatment because of race” as anti-Black racism.

The BEP study

The Black Experience Project set out to answer the question “What does it mean to be Black in the GTA?” through a lens of “asset-based” research, and drawing on critical race theory which acknowledges historical and structural sources of inequality. This project provides the opportunity to build on positive narratives about the GTA’s Black community, effectively portraying its rich diversity, successes, and contributions; and creating a better understanding of obstacles and challenges that the community faces.

The project consists of three phases:

PHASE 1 – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (May 2011 – March 2014). A fundamental premise of the project is to ensure the research focuses on issues and questions of greatest relevance to the Black community, in order to meaningfully contribute to strengthening its capacity. Phase 1 activities included extensive outreach, including group discussion sessions with community leaders (referred to as “Trailblazers” and “Champions”) and individuals across the GTA.

PHASE 2 – RESEARCH DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND ANALYSIS (April 2014 – July 2017). The rich information captured through the community engagement process guided the design of the research in Phase 2, which consisted of in-depth interviews with 1504 Black individuals across the GTA (The results of the survey are presented in this report).

PHASE 3 – POST-STUDY DISSEMINATION AND ENGAGEMENT (July 2017 and beyond). Once the research has been publicly released, the findings will be broadly disseminated through the media, and in active partnership with project partners, community organizations, governments and the Black community, with the goal of: a) widely sharing the research findings with the community and with all sectors; b) prompting further analysis and discussion of the research and its implications; and c) working toward meaningful next steps in strengthening the community.

The study employed established survey research methods to capture and document the lived experiences of individuals recruited from the Black population across the GTA, through in-depth, in-person interviews. This type of in-depth interviewing made it possible to cover a broad range of topics and issues, well beyond what is normally covered in public opinion or social surveys.

The target population was defined as individuals between the ages of 16 years and older living in the Greater Toronto Area, who self-identify as either Black or of African heritage. The study sample was designed to provide representation of this population, to the extent possible, across a number of relevant demographic and ethnic characteristics; these include geographic location of residence (region and local municipality), age, gender, household income, and ethnic or cultural background. Participants were selected according to pre-set criteria or quotas to help ensure that the characteristics of the sample approximated, as much as possible, the characteristics of the target population. Individuals were recruited for participation using a “quota sampling” approach based on matching the most current population data published by Statistics Canada.

Individuals were recruited for participation through extensive outreach across the GTA to build awareness and interest in the study. This important work was conducted by a dedicated team of individuals (mostly youth) from the Black community working on a full or part time basis. The outreach and interviewing period took place between February and December 2015.

Key Conclusions

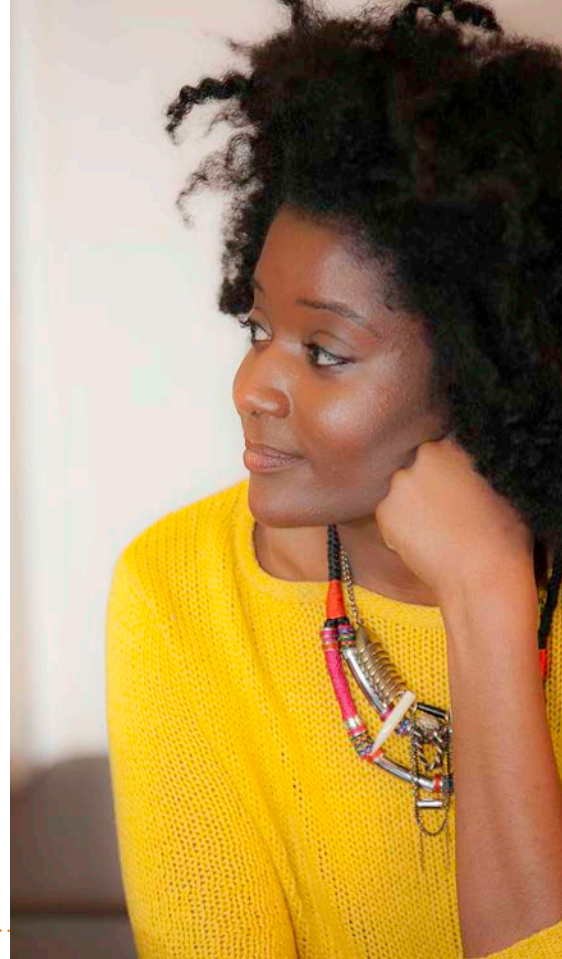
The following are the key conclusions and insights from the BEP study.

Identity: Shared experiences of Black identity in spite of diversity

There is a remarkable degree of consensus on a number of key questions relating to race and racism. BEP participants are nearly unanimous in their agreement that being Black is important to their identity and their social relationships. They also share the conviction that Black people in the GTA are treated unfairly because of their race. This commonality of attitudes about the importance of race and the pervasiveness of racism, however, co-exists with a diversity of identities. BEP participants are diverse in terms of both their ethno-cultural backgrounds and the terms they use to express their racial identity. While some ethno-cultural or racial identities are chosen more frequently than others, Black identity predominates. This ethnic and racial diversity is accompanied by other forms of diversity, such as differences in socio-economic status, country of origin, religion, gender and sexual orientation.

Community strength and engagement

BEP participants are active in, and engaged with, their communities – in some cases, more so than Canadians in general – with comparatively high rates of volunteering and of membership in clubs or organizations (some of which specifically address the interests of the Black community). They have been most actively engaged in religious organizations (historically safe sites for education and advocacy). On average, more frequent experiences of anti-Black racism coincide with higher levels of community engagement, suggesting that discrimination sparks activism more often than alienation. BEP participants are aware and proud of the ways in which Black individuals and communities persevere in the face of discrimination. They consider this perseverance to be one of the Black community's strengths, and many say they respond to experiences of unfair treatment and anti-Black racism by resolving to overcome them in various ways.



Institutional and interpersonal racism

Direct experience with racism is a common experience among BEP participants. Two thirds say they frequently or occasionally experience racism and discrimination because they are Black. Eight in ten report experiencing one of several forms of day-to-day micro-aggressions, such as having others expect their work to be inferior or being treated in a condescending or superficial way.

While participants from all backgrounds are affected by these experiences, in many cases those with lower incomes are affected more intensely. In other instances, however, Black individuals face racial prejudice and experience effects regardless of income. Black individuals with higher socio-economic status are just as likely as those with lower socio-economic status to be arbitrarily stopped in public by the police. It may be the case, then, that the disadvantages of lower income often compound experiences of anti-Black racism. But this does not mean that Black individuals with higher incomes are insulated from experiences of unfair treatment based on race. Racism affects all BEP participants, regardless of their socio-economic background.

Racism also poses challenges in education for Black students. Almost half indicate they felt that being Black presented challenges not faced by other students. While many participants have had positive experiences in high school, about four in ten say they felt accepted by their teacher “only sometimes” or “never.” This may signal widespread institutionalized problems with the education system, described in other research.

In the workplace, one-third identify challenges linked to being Black, whether it involves explicit racism or discrimination, or an uncomfortable workplace culture in which they do not feel they are treated professionally or accepted. BEP participants are much more likely to mention negative, rather than positive ways in which being Black has made a difference in their work experience. The most common experiences involve having their competency questioned, dealing with racism and stereotypes, and having their qualifications overlooked or not recognized.

While specific experiences of racism differ, so too do the ways in which, BEP participants report being affected by them: some are more bothered by these experiences than others. While some experience a loss of self-esteem or an increase in self-doubt, others say that these experiences have in fact made them stronger or reinforced their drive to succeed or bring about change.

Relations with police services: a special case

Experience with police services stand out as much more negative than those with other public institutions. Negative experiences with the police services are common. For instance, participants are more likely to be stopped in public than to be helped by the police, and younger Black males are particularly likely to experience police harassment. Not surprisingly, BEP participants almost unanimously condemn the way in which Black people are treated by the local police. Participants, however, are precise in their criticism of the police: they combine generally positive support for the police in their broad role in protecting community safety with a sharply focused criticism of the police’s racial bias.





Black youth and young adults: the unfulfilled promise of being Canadian

The majority of today's generation of young Black adults is Canadian-born. And unlike their mostly immigrant parents and grandparents, they are also more diverse in terms of their identities and the racial composition of their friendship networks. They also have higher levels of educational attainment than their older counterparts. It is notable, then, that they seem more, rather than less, affected by racism. Young Black Canadian-born adults are more likely to identify racism as an obstacle they face; more likely to say they experience some forms of unfair treatment because they are Black; and more likely to be adversely affected by these experiences. It appears, therefore, that young Black adults are more impatient with the failure of Canadian society to deliver on the country's promise of equality.

Worlds apart: perceptions of the Black community

There is a world of difference between the attributes that BEP participants ascribe to the Black community, and those they believe non-Black people ascribe to them. Participants take great pride in the strengths of the Black community in terms of its perseverance and resilience in the face of anti-Black racism, which has persisted over generations. At the same time, participants are proud of their contributions to the social, political and cultural advances that have made the GTA a better place to live. However, participants believe that many non-Black people cling to stereotypes, are in denial about anti-Black racism, and lack knowledge and awareness of the strengths and contributions of the Black community. In fact, when asked what they believe are the most common beliefs that non-Black people hold about Black people, all the examples mentioned are negative ones, such as beliefs relating to criminal behaviour, violence, gangs or drugs, as well as the belief that Blacks are uneducated, lazy and lack ambition.

Next Steps

The BEP results and insights reinforce findings over the last 50 years but provide new empirical evidence to help inform action. The study points to aspects of success and contributions that should be acknowledged and celebrated, as well as to the undeniable reality of anti-Black racism, and the obstacles and challenges it presents. These challenges require thoughtful attention and effective solutions.

A research study such as the Black Experience Project cannot on its own fully capture the strength and contributions of the GTA Black community, nor can it address the persistent challenges and systemic inequalities in society. What it does provide is an empirically based understanding of what it is like to be Black in the GTA. This can help create new conversations that lead to transformational change, by providing an honest and constructive focal point for discussion, and a way forward.





INTRODUCTION

Launched in 2010, the Black Experience Project (BEP) is a research study which examines the lived experiences of individuals who self-identify as Black and/or of African heritage living in the Greater Toronto Area, or GTA (the City of Toronto, and the Regions of York, Durham, Peel and Halton). This study was led by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with the United Way of Toronto and York Region, the YMCA of the Greater Toronto Area, Ryerson's Diversity Institute, and the Jean Augustine Chair in Education, Community and Diaspora at York University. This research aims to provide a better understanding of the lives of Black individuals within the GTA, including the factors leading to their successes and challenges.

The results are intended to provide valuable insight and direction in identifying policies and other initiatives that will strengthen the health and vibrancy of the Black community, and by doing so, the health and vibrancy of the entire GTA and beyond. This report provides a high-level overview of findings, and provides a rich foundation for further research to examine specific issues in greater depth than is covered here.

Impetus – Why Now?

People of African descent (regardless of where they were born) have had a long-standing history in Canada and Toronto. Their stories and footprints can be traced back to Canada's early colonial period and the history of slavery, but in recent years has been shaped by successive waves of immigration. Canada's own history of anti-Black racism, segregation and exploitation is well documented if not widely known. At the same time, the long-standing contributions of the Black community to the development of the country in the face of structural and institutional racism are clear. In particular, the persistent activism and advocacy for civil liberties and human rights, while often missing from textbooks, is well documented.¹

Today, the GTA is home to more than 400,000 individuals who self-identify as "Black," comprising seven percent of the region's population and more than half of Canada's total Black population. Diversity within the Black population is not only related to country of origin, but also to language, religion, socioeconomic status, and time of migration – all of which become evident in cultural variation.

The Black community in the GTA has made substantial contributions to the growth and success of the country and the region – where they have also experienced economic, educational, social, and political disparities that continue to this day. There continues to be longstanding challenges facing the community, some of which are not similarly experienced by other racialized and ethnic communities in the GTA. It is well documented that Black individuals, compared with the non-Black population, earn less income, have higher rates of unemployment, experience higher rates of incarceration, suffer poorer health outcomes, and are more likely to be victims of violence². The history of colonialism and anti-Black racism has stood as a systemic barrier to collective and individual success.

A long list of reports has illuminated the root causes of these challenges. For example, The Review of the Roots of Youth Violence report published in 2008 by the Honourable Roy McMurtry and Dr. Alvin Curling speaks to racism in the opening pages of the Executive Summary, noting that it is both “serious” and “deeply entrenched” across Ontario:

*The very serious problems being encountered in neighbourhoods characterized by severe, concentrated and growing disadvantage are not being addressed because Ontario has not placed an adequate focus on these concentrations of disadvantage despite the very serious threat they pose to the province’s social fabric. **Racism is becoming a more serious and entrenched problem than it was in the past because Ontario is not dealing with it.** The significant new investments in education are not reaching many of the children who need the most help because long-identified barriers to learning are not being addressed. Ontario’s youth justice system is harming some youth because it has no overall coordination, remains punitive in ways that are not strategic and permits increasingly problematic police-community relations.³*

Contributing to this challenge is the reality of media representations of the Black community presenting distorted and stereotypical images focused primarily on the disadvantages experienced by the community. Consequently, many have argued that today the Black community is largely defined by its challenges and deficits. Notwithstanding recent recognition of Viola Desmond on the new Canadian \$10 bill, little is known about the trailblazing achievements and contributions of the Black community in such areas as politics, law, business, research, social justice and public policy advocacy, and education, despite official acknowledgements of these contributions.⁴

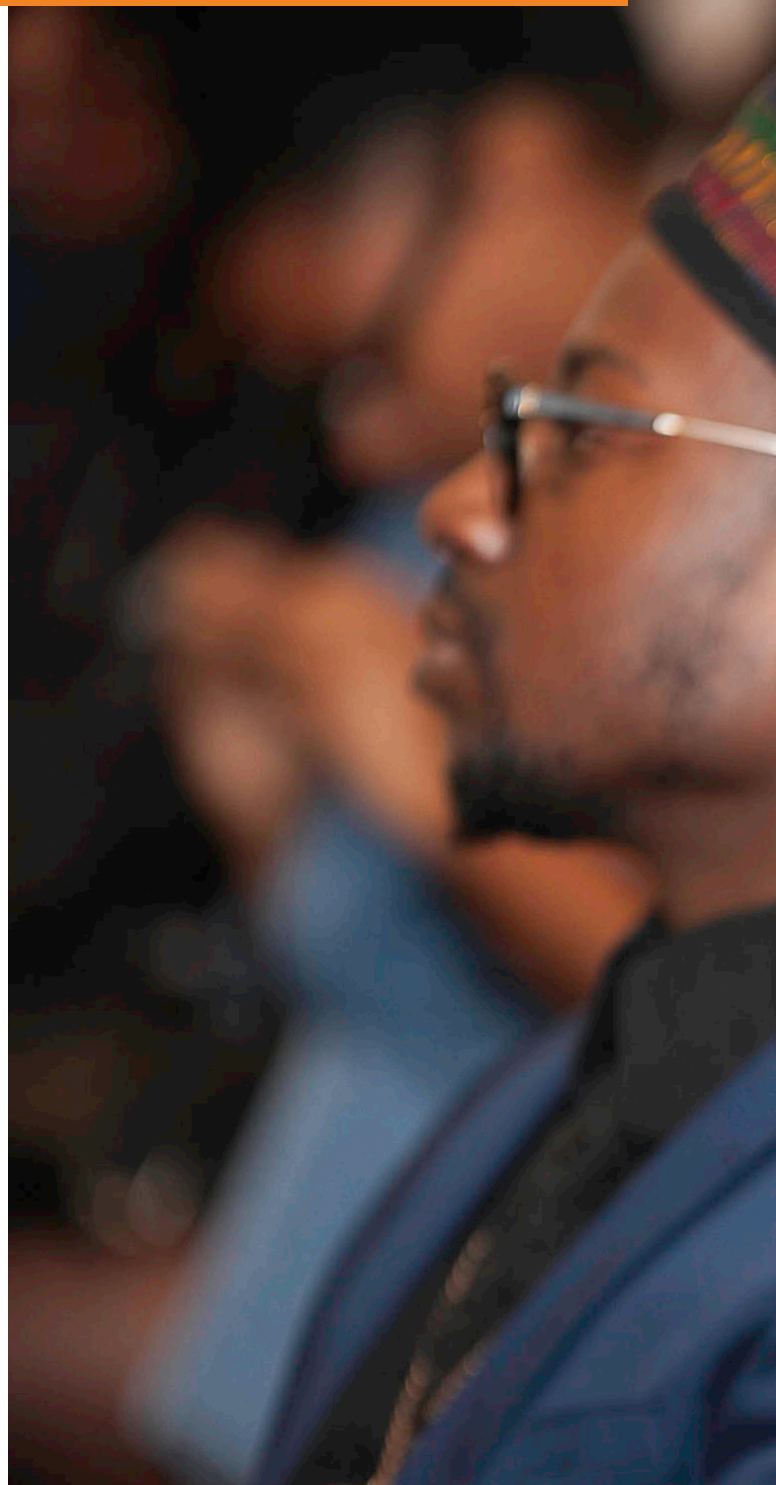
The launch of the BEP in 2011 preceded the current climate of tragic police-involved deaths across North America, the most recent controversies over racial profiling, the emergence of Black Lives Matter, and the creation of the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate. These recent developments underscore the significance of the Black Experience Project and the need for a greater understanding of the depths of persistent anti-Black racism and associated challenges.

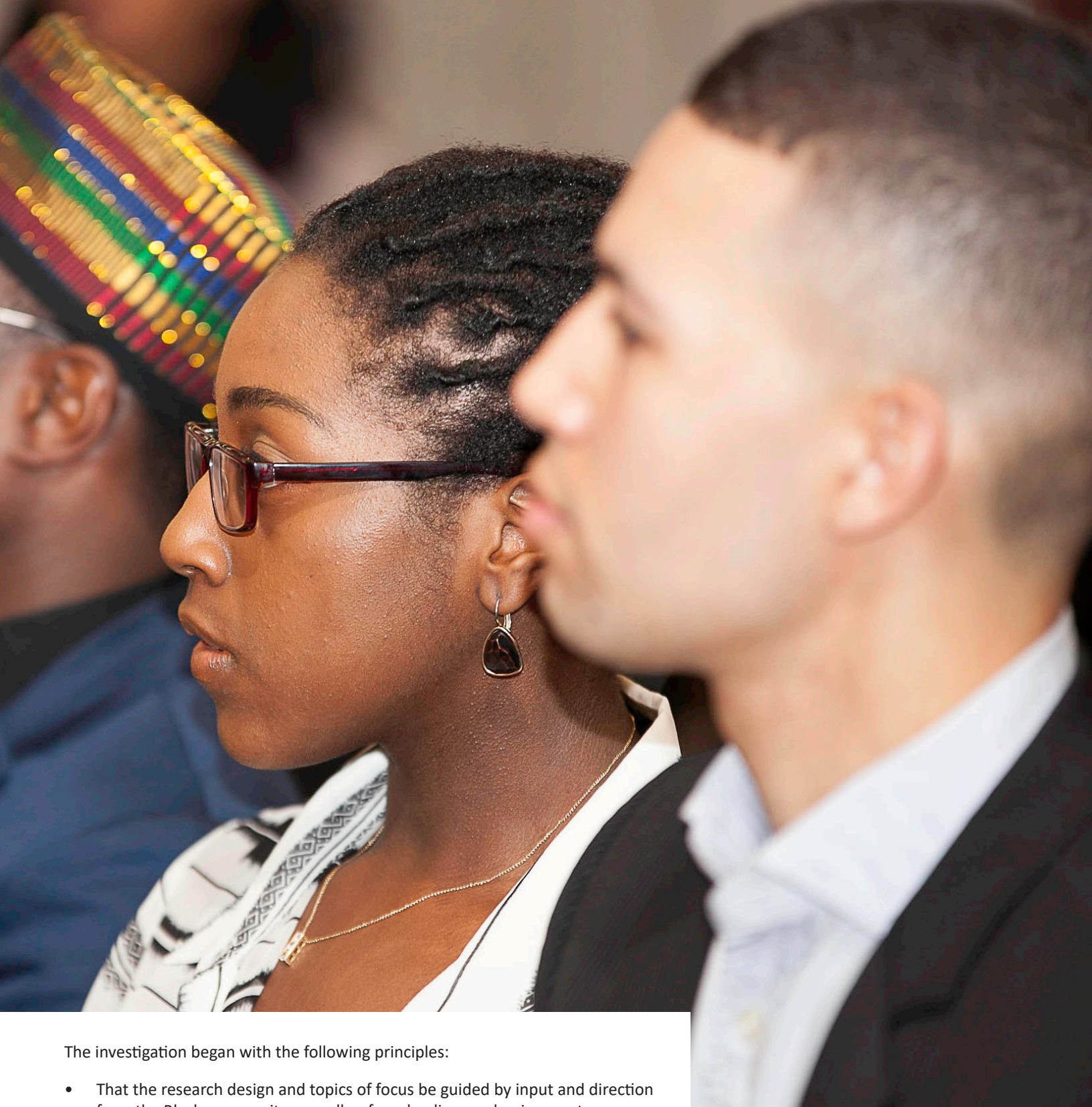
BEP Goals and Objectives

The Black Experience Project began with a central question “What does it mean to be Black in the GTA?” The study embarked on a journey of answering this question in a respectful way using an “asset-based” research lens, which proposes that “difference” can be a source of strength as well as a challenge.⁵ The project also draws on critical race theory’s acknowledgment of deep historical and structural barriers that operate to disenfranchise or disadvantage groups in relation to their particular identities. For example, critical race theory would articulate the specificity of the Black experience in regard to racism and anti-Black racism.⁶ Together these provide a theoretical framework, which is both constructive and realistic. The purpose of the study is to better understand the nature of the strengths and contributions as

well as challenges and opportunities faced by the Black community. It explores the lived experiences of individuals within this community (or communities), and the factors leading to their success or challenges.

Project results are expected to provide a focal point for the Black community to better harness its assets and expand its successes throughout the entire community, as well as help the broader community (e.g., community leaders, decision-makers, policy makers, general public) understand and appreciate the lived experiences of the Black community.





The investigation began with the following principles:

- That the research design and topics of focus be guided by input and direction from the Black community, as well as from leading academic experts;
- That the collection of data be done in a respectful way that provides individuals with the opportunity to tell their own story, in their own words;
- The study sample be sufficiently representative and comprehensive to provide for meaningful analysis of important subgroups of the population (e.g., age, gender, income, ethnicity); and
- The study should draw upon the resources of the local community (especially emerging young leaders) and give priority to building capacity.

The project consists of three phases:

PHASE 1 – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (May 2011 – March 2014). A fundamental premise of the project is to ensure that the research focuses on issues and questions of greatest relevance to the Black community, in order to meaningfully contribute to strengthening its capacity. Phase 1 activities included extensive outreach, including group discussion sessions with community leaders (referred to as “Trailblazers” and “Champions”) and individuals across the GTA. The results of this process are documented in a separate published report (Phase 1 Community Engagement Final Report, January 2014).

PHASE 2 – RESEARCH DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND ANALYSIS (April 2014 – July 2017). The rich information captured through the community engagement process guided the design of the research in Phase 2, which consisted of in-depth interviews with a broad sample of 1504 Black individuals across the GTA (The results of the survey are presented in this report). Throughout this Phase, a Research Advisory Group comprised of local scholars from the Black community and others with relevant research backgrounds provided meaningful guidance to the project (see Appendix A).

PHASE 3 – POST-STUDY DISSEMINATION AND ENGAGEMENT (July 2017 and beyond). Once the research has been completed and publicly released, the findings will be broadly disseminated through the media and in active partnership with project partners, community organizations, governments and the Black community generally. The goal of Phase 3 is to: a) widely share the research findings with the community and with all sectors; b) prompt further analysis and discussion of the research and its implications; and c) initiate activities that lead to meaningful next steps in strengthening the community.

The BEP research will be made publicly available to community organizations, researchers, government agencies and others to conduct further, more in-depth analysis of the data in specific areas of relevance (e.g., health, education, criminal justice). The rich data set, which will be available through the Jean Augustine Chair (JAC) in Education, Community and Diaspora at York University, offers opportunities for further research to delve into specific issues not addressed in this report.

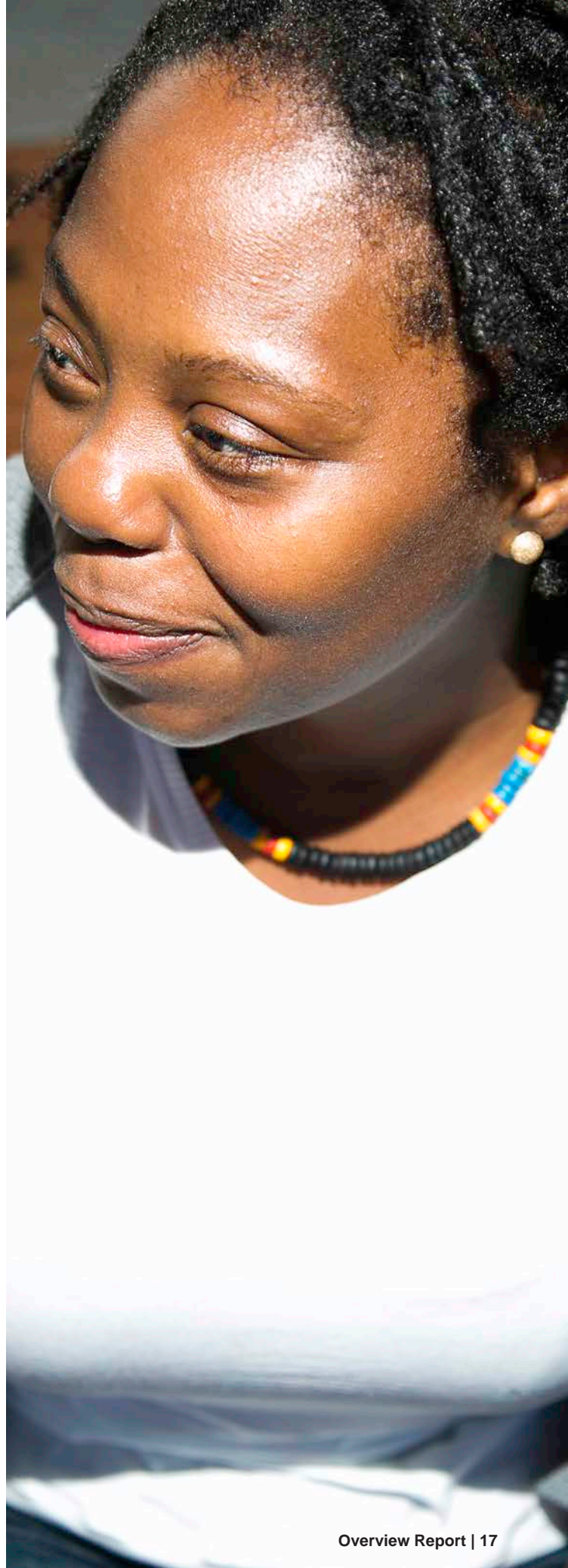


Research Focus

The BEP utilized an asset-based approach to the research, which places value on the strengths, contributions, resources and skills of the community, rather than reinforcing its challenges. This approach was intended to allow survey participants an entry point into the conversation about their personal lived experience and also the community's contribution and strengths.

The themes and topics to be addressed in this study were developed based on previous work (Phase 1 engagement with the Black community, literature review) and in consultation with the Research Advisory Group. Out of this process the following 10 themes related to the lived experience of Black individuals in the GTA were selected for inclusion in the study.

1. **Identity.** How do individuals define and experience their Black identity?
2. **Experience with the Black community.** How do individuals perceive and engage with the Black community?
3. **Personal aspirations and future goals.** What are the personal aspirations and apprehensions of Black individuals for themselves and their community?
4. **Education and learning.** What are Black individuals' experiences with the education system, and with other sources of learning? How do these experiences relate to outcomes in other areas of life?
5. **Experience with institutions.** How do Black individuals interact with, and experience, public institutions in their community? How is this experience influenced by one's Black identity?
6. **Treatment and representation by the broader community.** How are individuals in the Black community treated by the broader community? How do they see the Black community portrayed by the broader population?
7. **Employment and the workplace.** What are the employment and workplace experiences of individuals in the Black community?
8. **Health and well-being.** What is the relationship between being Black and individuals' health and well-being?
9. **Neighbourhood.** To what extent do Black individuals feel positive about, connected to and secure within, their neighbourhood of residence?
10. **Connectedness and belonging to the broader community.** To what extent and in what ways do Black individuals feel connected to the broader community?



How the Survey was Conducted

Research Approach. The study employed established survey research methods. In order to capture and document the lived experience of individuals recruited from the Black population across the GTA, through in-depth, in-person interviews. This type of in-depth interviewing made it possible to cover a broad range of topics and issues, well beyond what is normally covered in public opinion or social surveys. The approach is based on a previous Environics Institute study conducted in 2008-09 with the urban Aboriginal population in the country’s largest 11 cities⁸ (see Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study, 2010).

Survey Questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed through an extensive process, guided by the Phase 1 input, an extensive literature review, and direction provided by the Research Advisory Group. The survey included both structured questions (e.g., with response scales) and open-ended questions to capture a greater depth of experience through participants’ own words. Prior to being finalized, the survey was pilot-tested twice with small numbers of individuals from the Black community to evaluate the questions and the overall interview experience. The final version was vetted and approved through the research ethics process at Ryerson University, as well as by the Durham District School Board and Lakeridge Health (two of the locations at which survey participants were recruited).

Sample design and participant recruitment. The target population for this study was defined as individuals 16 years and older living in the Greater Toronto area who self-identify as Black or of African heritage. The study was designed to provide representation of this population to the extent possible across a number of relevant characteristics, including location of residence (region and local municipality), age, gender, household income and ethnic background.

The sampling plan was based on the development of a population profile that identified how the Black population is distributed across each of the characteristics described above. For instance, the plan looked at how many males aged 16 to 24 of African heritage live in the Peel Region with household incomes between \$60,000 and \$80,000. This information was used to create a sample matrix to determine how many individuals with each unique combination of characteristics should be interviewed for the study in order to attain a sample that adequately reflects the Black population.⁹

Table 1: Distribution of Study Sample across GTA regions		
Region	Black Population*	Sample Distribution
City of Toronto	218,160 (53%)	734 (49%)
Peel Region	116,265 (28%)	373 (25%)
Durham Region	41,890 (10%)	189 (13%)
York Region	25,870 (6%)	175 (12%)
Halton Region	10,970 (3%)	33 (2%)
Total	413,155 (100%)	1,504 (100%)

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



Individuals were recruited to participate in the survey through extensive outreach across the GTA to build awareness and interest in the study. This included advertising through conventional and social media, attendance at community events, tapping into existing social and community networks, and reaching out to Black community organizations and Collaborating Partners. Individuals expressing interest in participation were contacted by telephone to screen for eligibility based on the sample matrix for their Region. Those who qualified were then scheduled for an in-person interview at a time and place of their convenience. This important work was conducted by a dedicated team of individuals (mostly youth) from the Black community working on a full or part time basis from February to December 2015.

Study sample. A total of 1,504 interviews were completed with individuals across the GTA who self-identified as Black or of African heritage. The following table presents how this sample is distributed across regions of the GTA, in comparison with the GTA Black population.

The sampling approach was successful in completing interviews with individuals in every combination of demographic characteristics included in the sample profile for each GTA

region. In some cases, however, several groups are not represented in the same proportion as in the population; in particular the sample under-represents those who have no more than a high school education, those 55 years of age or older, and males despite considerable efforts to recruit more individuals matching these characteristics. The following table presents a profile of the study sample across a number of demographic and personal characteristics.

The final data set used for the analysis and reporting were weighted to match the composition of the Black population across the demographic characteristics outlined above, so that each group is represented in the total sample in proportion to its actual size (including those under-represented in the sample). Because the sampling approach was not based on probability sampling (i.e. each individual in the population having an equal chance of being selected) the final sample cannot be considered statistically representative of the GTA Black population, and caution should be used in generalizing the survey results to this population. However, the study included participation from across most socio-demographic segments of the GTA Black population, and is large to provide for valid insights for many of these groups within this population. Further details on the research methodology are available in a separate report.¹⁰

Table 2: Distribution of Study Sample across demographic groups			
		GTA Black Population* %	Study Sample (before weighting) %
Gender	Female	56%	64%
	Male	44%	36%
Age	16-24	11%	15%
	25-34	16%	16%
	35-44	24%	27%
	45-54	19%	20%
	55+	30%	23%
Ethnicity	Caribbean	55%	64%
	African	31%	19%
	Caribbean + African	4%	3%
	Other	9%	13%
Household income	< 20K	11%	15%
	20K - 40K	16%	16%
	40K - 70K	24%	27%
	70K - 100K	19%	20%
	100K plus	30%	22%
Education level	< HS	17%	4%
	HS Grad	29%	18%
	Trade / Community	33%	25%
	University Grad	17%	36%
	Post-Graduate	4%	15%
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	N/A	94%
	LGBTQ/Other	N/A	6%

*Source: Statistics Canada: 2011 National Household Survey

About This Report

This report presents an overview of the main findings from the Black Experience Project research, organized around a number of central themes that together provide a coherent narrative. The intention is to provide a broad picture of the experiences of being Black in the GTA, as recorded through the interviews with participants, rather than a comprehensive analysis of the full range of research findings.

The report presents selected results from the survey to illustrate the main findings. This includes both quantitative (numerical) results and comments provided by participants in response to open-ended questions (these comments, as recorded in note form by interviewers during the interviews, are shown in circles throughout the report). While in some cases the survey questions and participants' answers did not explicitly use terms such as "racism" or "anti-Black racism", the study interpreted descriptions, for example, of "unfair treatment because of race" as anti-Black racism. Unless otherwise noted, all results are presented as percentages.

More detailed information about the Black Experience Project and the complete research findings will be available through the BEP website and the Lead Partners. The Jean Augustine Chair at York University will house the study data. Community organizations, scholars and others interested in further analysis are invited to explore the data and to delve more deeply into questions of interest to the community.

Limitations of the research. This type of community-based research presents inherent challenges with respect to surveying a highly diverse population, and completing interviews with a sample that approximates this population across important characteristics such as gender, ethnic background, age, sexuality, income and education. Some groups within the population were especially difficult to recruit for the study. For example, special efforts were taken to identify and recruit people with lower levels of education and homeless segments of the population, with limited success. Because the sample is not statistically representative of the Black population in the GTA, caution should be exercised when attempting to generalize these findings to the population as a whole.

The data for this research was collected from February to December 2015 and reflects participants' experiences at that time. Central to the study's success was the recruitment and training of a dedicated team of individuals from the community (mostly youth) to coordinate and handle all aspects of the process, and building this team from the ground up took time. For these reasons, completion of the survey fieldwork took considerably longer than anticipated, entailed higher costs, and resulted in the completion of fewer interviews than the original target of 2,000. The richness of the data from the more than 1,500 personal interviews also required considerably more time invested in the analysis and reporting of findings than had been anticipated at the outset.

The BEP data provide a rich basis for further exploration of specific segments of the population and issue areas that are not covered in-depth in this high level report. For example, gender identity and sexual orientation are of particular importance, as are issues such as health, education and policing. This initial report provides an overall understanding of the findings and leaves room for further analyses for upcoming studies using the data to better understand the perspectives and experiences of these populations.





Acknowledgements

To realize the BEP vision, the project has been guided by the concept of “being about the community, conducted by the community, and for the benefit of the community.” From the outset, a wide range of individuals and organizations that worked tirelessly to fulfil this vision has supported the project. This includes the BEP Lead Partners, the many Collaborating Partners across the GTA (listed below), community Trailblazers and Champions, the Research Advisory Group (listed in Appendix B), and the many volunteers (most of whom are youth) who contributed their energy and commitment to seeing this project through to completion. A thank you also goes to others who provided valuable advice on the draft report

Essential to the success of the Black Experience Project were its sponsors without whose support the project would have not happened, and in particular our principal sponsor TD Bank (a full list of project sponsors is presented on page 4 of this report). The lion’s share of the work was done by the BEP Project Team, including a core staff of more than a dozen, supported by a large team of more than 60 other individuals who played key roles as outreach workers, researchers, interviewers and administrative support (see the full list of Project team members in Appendix A).

Finally, and most important, the Black Experience Project owes its ultimate success to the 1,504 individuals who courageously shared their experiences. Collectively their stories tell the tale of what it means to be “Black” in the GTA in the second decade of the 21st century.

Collaborating Partners

A special thanks goes to the following organizations who helped to promote the study, by hosting community engagement, providing volunteers and venue space, and in other ways.

- African Canadian Development Council
- African Canadian Legal Clinic
- Atkinson Charitable Foundation
- Black Artists Network in Dialogue (BAND)
- Black Business Professional Association
- Black Leadership Health Network
- City of Toronto
- Heritage Toronto
- Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA)
- Midanyta Community Services
- Macauley Child Development Services “More than a Haircut” Project
- Region of Peel
- Redemption and Reintegration Services
- TAIBU Community Health Centre
- Toronto Police Service
- Tropicana Community Services
- United Way Peel
- United Black Students Conference
- York Centre for Education and Community
- York Regional Police
- Youth Challenge Fund

Note on Terminology

Anti-Black racism. The Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate, employing the African Canadian Legal Clinic's language, provides the following definition: "The Anti-Black racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement. Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, such that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger white society. Anti-Black racism is manifested in the legacy of the current social, economic, and political marginalization of African Canadians in society such as the lack of opportunities, lower socio-economic status, higher unemployment, significant poverty rates and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system".¹¹

Asset-Based Approach. This is an alternative approach to what has been termed "deficit discourse" concerning specific segments of the population, which highlights disadvantage and barriers. An "asset-based approach" does not ignore the realities of discrimination and exclusion, and further examines the role of identity. For example, it looks at how identity is an advantage and source of strength; the contributions made by diverse identity communities; and how diverse identities should be valued.¹² Assets may include several forms of community capital: physical, human, social, financial, environmental, political, and cultural. [...]. Similarly, Tara Yosso lists six forms of cultural capital – social, familial, linguistic, aspirational, navigational, and resistance – that constitute "community cultural wealth" which represents the talents, strengths and experiences that students of colour bring to their schooling and education.¹³

Black. The term Black refers to individuals of African heritage who may also self-identify as Black, African or Caribbean. In addition, the

Ontario Human Rights Commission defines Black as: "A social construct referring to people who have dark skin colour and/or other related racialized characteristics. The term has become less of an indicator of skin colour and more of racialized characteristics. Diverse societies apply different criteria to determine who is Black."¹⁴

Community. Throughout this report the term "community" is used to describe the groupings of individuals constructed as Black. This comes with the understanding that there is substantial diversity within the Black population, and use of this term is not intended to imply that Black individuals are all alike or can be represented by a single group.

To underline this point, in the lead-in to the survey questions about the Black community, BEP participants were read the following statement: "We recognize that there is a great deal of diversity within the Black community, and that some people see it as many communities rather than a single Black community. When we use the term "Black community" we are referring to the broader Black population." The term "Black community" is used throughout the report because it most accurately reflects the wording of the questions that BEP participants responded to.

Critical race theory. Critical race theorists assert that "the majority of racism remains hidden beneath a veneer of normality and it is only the more crude and obvious forms of racism that are seen as problematic by most people." CRT gives attention to intersectionality – a concept that recognizes the fact that perceived group membership can make people vulnerable to various forms of bias, yet because individuals are simultaneously members of many groups, their complex identities operate to shape the specific ways individuals experience that bias.¹⁵

Identity. To understand the extent to which race is a factor in the lived experiences of Black individuals, it is important to examine and embrace the complexity of identity and its intersection with life outcomes. For the purpose of displaying how race and identity intersect in the lived experience, the study considered three components of identity:

- “Cultural identity” – a shared culture, a collective with a shared history and ancestry.
- Personal identity – the features of an individual that forms their value proposition, their dignity and self-image, as well as their self-respect and/or distinct personality.
- Socially constructed identity – an identity that is ‘imposed’ based on having shared characteristic features to which particular values are also ascribed. This identity reflects how society views and treats particular individuals based on such factors as race, gender and sexual orientation.

Intersectionality. The Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate provides the following definition: “Acknowledges the ways in which people’s lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group, for example, creating additional barriers or opportunities. In the context of race, this means recognizing the ways in which people’s experiences of racism or privilege, including within any one racialized group, may differ and vary depending on the individual’s or group’s additional overlapping (or “intersecting”) social identities, such as ethnicity, Indigenous identification, experiences with colonialism, religion, gender, citizenship, socio-economic status or sexual orientation.”¹⁶

Race. A socially constructed classification of human beings based on identified or perceived characteristics such as colour of skin and informed by historical and geographic context. It is not a biological classification. It is often the basis upon which groups are formed, agency is attained, social roles are assigned, and status conferred.¹⁷

Racialization. The process by which personality traits, behaviours, and social characteristics are ascribed to minoritized people because of their race, and are seen as permanent and inalterable.¹⁸

Racism. This term is defined as follows:

- **Individual racism** is “an ideology or set of ideas and beliefs that frames individuals’ negative attitudes towards others and are usually reflected in the willful, conscious or unconscious, direct or indirect, and reflexive actions, words, and opinions of individuals.”
- **Institutional racism** “exists when a set of established rules, policies, and regulations of institutions, businesses and agencies, etc. systemically reflect and produce differential treatment of various groups and individuals based on race.”²⁰

Structural racism. This term refers to as systemic or societal racism, refers to the laws, legislations, rules, and ideology upon which the state operates and which tends to privilege the dominant group members of society and prevent minoritized group members from fully participating in society. This racism is difficult to overcome as it can be hard to identify and is often seen as the norm. Systemic discrimination as a product of the racism is often hidden within the seemingly objective, democratic and meritocratic systems.²⁰

White supremacy. White supremacy is a system of privilege, oppression and exploitation perpetrated by white peoples (i.e., of European background) to maintain their wealth and power over Black, Indigenous and other racialized people. White privilege does not always require its beneficiaries to be obviously or openly racist. Instead, dominant social institutions function to perpetuate white supremacy.²⁰



DEMOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN THE GTA

Overview

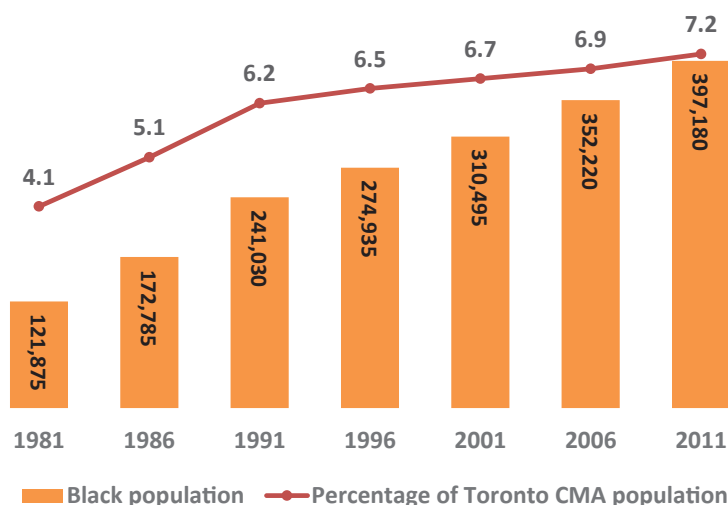
Before presenting the results of the survey, it is important to establish the demographic composition of the Black population in the GTA. Statistical information about the size and growth of the Black population and its demographic characteristics provides background and context to the rich information collected through the BEP survey.

This Chapter provides an introductory portrait of the Black population in the Greater Toronto Area, through a review of data collected by Statistics Canada through the 2011 National Household Survey (the most current population statistics available). It should be noted that the scope of the BEP was the Greater Toronto Area, but most of the population statistics presented in this chapter cover the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), which has a slightly different geography and slightly smaller percentage of the Black population size.

Population Profile

The Black population in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) is growing in size and diversity. Close to 400,000 self-identified Black individuals currently live in the Toronto CMA, representing a little over 7 percent of the area's population. The population has been growing, and has more than tripled in number over the past 30 years (see Figure 1).

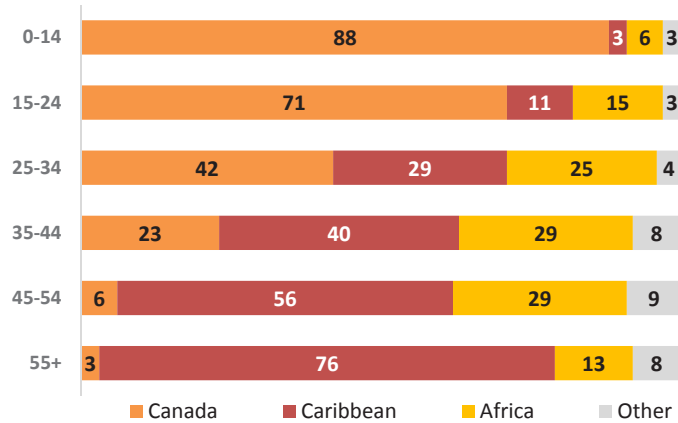
(1) Black population in Toronto CMA



Over time, there has been a dramatic generational shift in the origins of the area's Black population over time. Overall, the proportion of the population born in the Caribbean has been decreasing, while the proportion born in Africa and (especially) in Canada has been growing. While the older population is overwhelmingly Caribbean-born, younger generations have a greater mix of Caribbean, African and Canadian origins (see Figure 2).



(2) Black population (by place of birth)



As recently as 1996, young Black adults (those aged 18 to 34) living in the GTA were much more likely to be born in the Caribbean than in Canada, but this is no longer the case. In 2011, Black people in this age cohort were twice as likely to be born in Canada as in the Caribbean. The 2011 National Household survey reported that, for the first time, young Black adults in the GTA were in majority Canadian-born.

In socio-economic terms, the situation of Black individuals is not on par with the rest of the Toronto CMA's population. Compared with the non-Black population, the Black population in the Toronto CMA has lower incomes. Black individuals are also slightly less likely to be employed and a bit less likely to be in the labour force (which includes those currently categorized as unemployed) (see Figure 3).

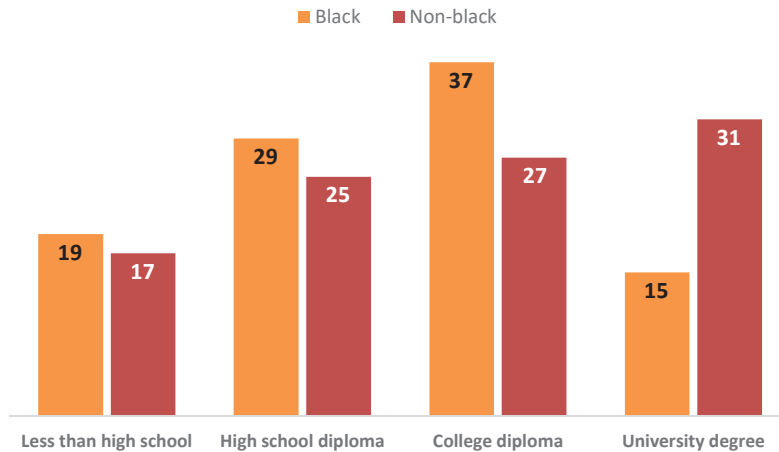
(3) Individual Income - 2011 - Toronto CMA (by ethnic/racial groups)								
Individual Income	Black	Latin America	Arab	Southeast Asian	West Asian	Korean	Non-Visible Minority	TOTAL POPULATION
Median Employment Income	\$43,090	\$41,299	\$46,897	\$ 41,105	\$ 44,015	\$40,170	\$ 56,543	\$ 50,787
Median Income	\$25,718	\$23,913	\$20,706	\$ 23,050	\$ 17,704	\$17,374	\$ 35,588	\$ 29,593
Median After-Tax Income	\$24,422	\$22,805	\$20,068	\$ 21,925	\$ 17,383	\$17,814	\$ 32,111	\$ 27,390
Prevalence of low Income	25%	21%	28%	18%	33%	33%	11%	15%

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

In comparison with the non-Black population, the Black population in the region is just as likely to have completed high school. The Black population is also almost as likely as the non-Black population to have a postsecondary education, but this is more likely to be at the trades or college level and less likely to be at the university level. This may confirm recently published research that has suggested a tendency to “stream” Black students into non-academic programs that limit future opportunities for education and career advancement (see Figure 4).²¹

Moreover, the extent of this gap in educational attainment at the university level between the Black and the non-Black population in the Toronto CMA is growing. The university attainment of non-Blacks is improving at a faster rate than that of Blacks, which is a cause for concern.

(4) Educational attainment: Black and non-Black



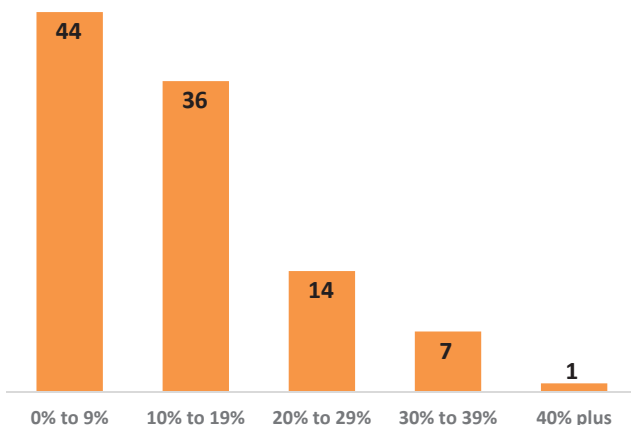
Overall, within the Black population, men are more likely to have a university degree than women. This situation, however, appears to be changing. Among those 35 and older, men are somewhat more likely than women to hold a university degree (19% for men, versus 16% for women), but the pattern is reversed for those younger than age 35 (35% among women versus 27% among men).²²

Finally, the majority of Black individuals in the Toronto CMA live in neighbourhoods where Black people are in the minority. According to the 2006 census, 18 percent of the Black population in the GTA lives within census tracts where the Black population is less than five percent of the total population, and 44 percent live in tracts where less than 10 percent of households are Black. Only eight percent live within census tracts where the Black population is more than 30 percent or more of the total, and in no census tract within the GTA does the proportion of the population that is Black surpass 44 percent (see Figure 5).

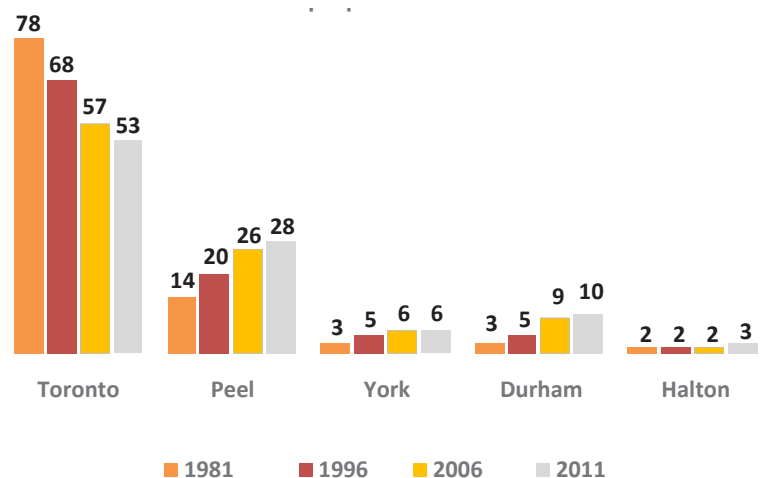
This pattern varies substantially across the GTA. Almost all Black people in York and Halton Regions live within census tracts where the Black population is less than ten percent of the total population. This compares with 45 percent of the Black population in both Peel and Durham Regions, and with 36 percent of the Black population in the City of Toronto. In the City of Toronto, close to one in three Black persons live in census tracts that are between 20 and 40 percent Black.

The distribution of the Black population living in the GTA has also changed over time. Whereas in 1981 the City of Toronto included 78 percent of the GTA's total Black population, this proportion had fallen to 57 percent by 2011.²⁴ This change reflects a shift in the settlement patterns of the Black residents over time. With the exception of Halton, the Black population in the other four GTA regions has been growing at a faster pace than in the City of Toronto (see Figure 6).

(5) Distribution of Black population by proportion in census tract that is Black GTA



(6) 1981 - 2006 Regional share of GTA Black population





SURVEY RESULTS

1. IDENTITY

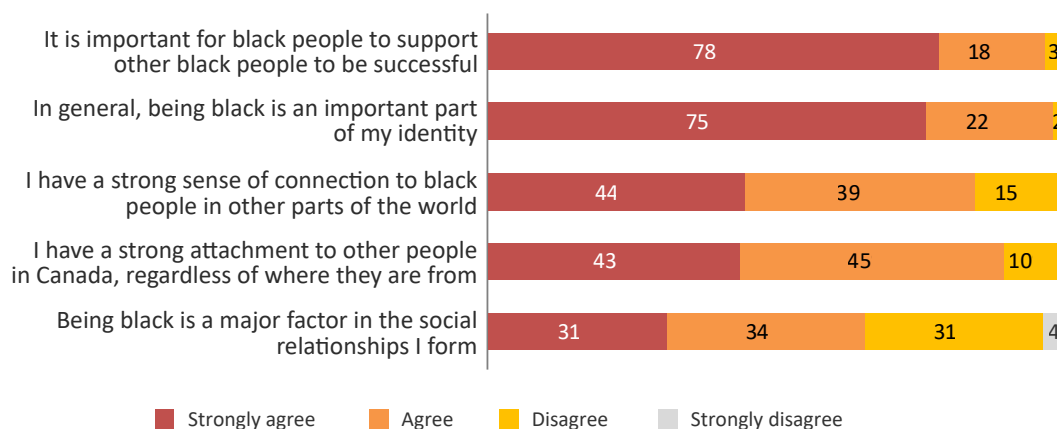
Overview

A central concept behind the Black Experience Project is that of identity and how it relates to the lived experience of Black individuals. While all those recruited to participate in the BEP survey self-identify either as Black or of African heritage, participants may nevertheless describe their identities in multiple and often overlapping ways.

Identity is complex, fluid and multi-faceted. It is formed through multiple processes and influences, relating to one's race, ethnicity, culture, or country of origin. Many other expressed identities may reflect religion, gender, sexual orientation, profession or even the neighbourhood in which a person lives. These different facets of identity are not mutually exclusive; in most cases, they are interwoven. In the case of the Black population in the GTA, identity is particularly complex because of the population's diversity – its different histories, origins and cultural backgrounds, as well as differences within the population in terms of levels of education, employment situations, and so on.

This Chapter addresses the shared identity stemming from the experience of being Black. It is framed in part through the experience of anti-Black racism, as well as through the diverse identities with the Black community in the GTA.

(7) Importance of Black identity



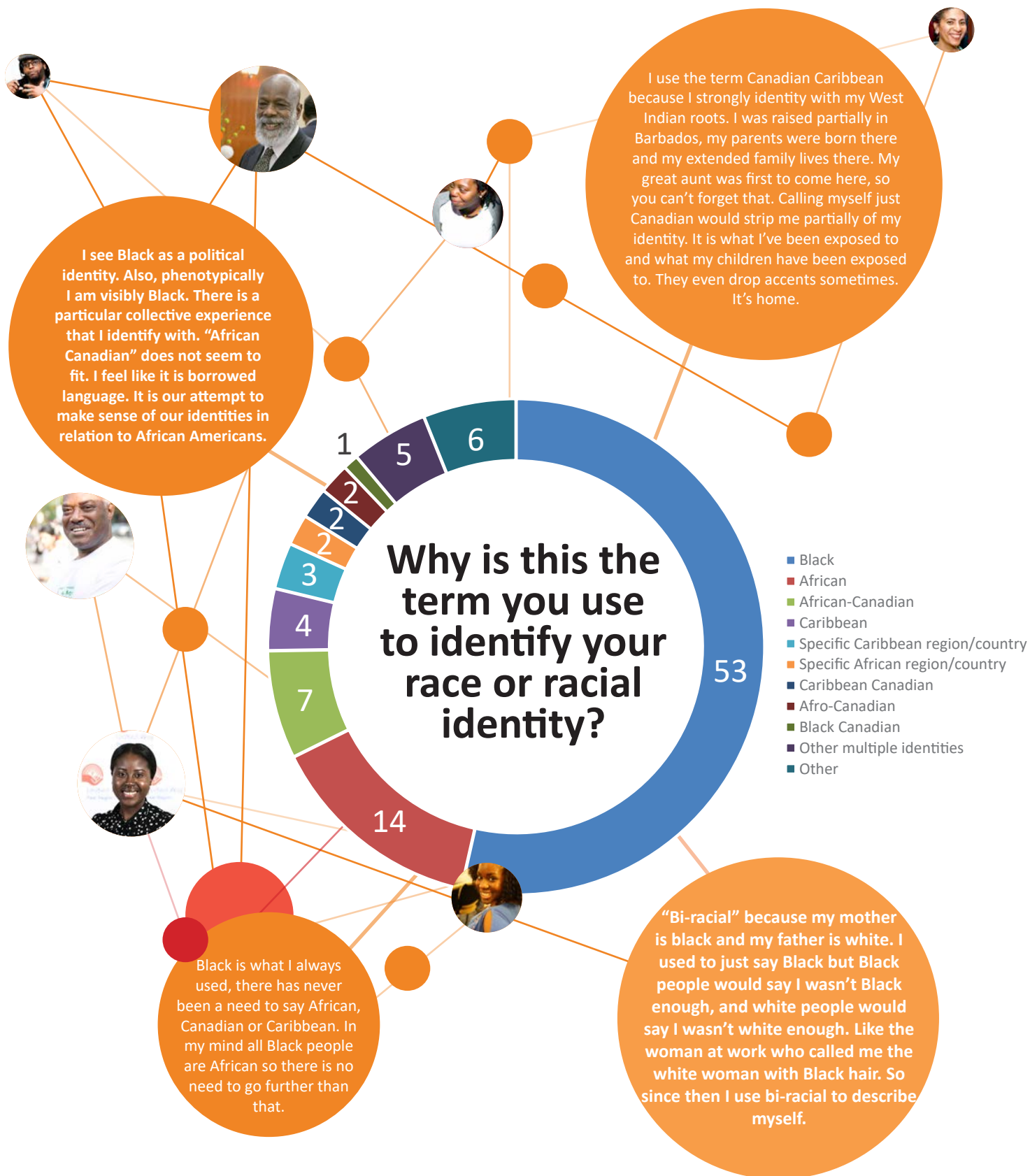
Black Experience Project participants express a strong sense of a shared Black identity and solidarity with other Black people. Participants are almost unanimous in agreeing that being Black is an important part of their identity – and most strongly agree that this is the case. More than four in five participants also agree that they feel a strong sense of connection to Black people in other parts of Canada and the world (see Figure 7).

There is also a striking commonality of perspective when it comes to the extent to which Black people are treated unfairly because of their race (a theme explored in greater depth in Chapter 4). For instance, BEP participants agree almost unanimously that people in the GTA experience unfair treatment because they are Black.

The consensus about the importance of being Black to one's identity, and the extent of unfair treatment due to race is evident across BEP participants regardless of the diversity of their racial, ethno-cultural and other identities.

The survey confirms the complexity and diversity of identities within the Black community in the GTA. Noting that people use different terms to refer to themselves, the survey asked participants what term they use to identify their racial identity.

The term "Black" predominates, and it is used by just over half of BEP participants; almost one in two prefers one of a number of other terms, including "African" (see Figure 8). Black is the predominant identity for participants in the study including a majority of those born in Canada or the Caribbean. In contrast, only 30 percent of those born in Africa identify their race as Black – just over half as many as those born in other parts of the world.



Moreover, participants choose the term they use to identify themselves racially for different reasons. Some say it represents their heritage or cultural background (55%), while others say it represents their personal identity (40%), or that it corresponds with how others view them (25%). Some indicate it includes or expresses solidarity with all Black people (20%). A substantial proportion participants give multiple reasons for how they define their racial identity. Not surprisingly, among those who identify racially as African, most say they choose this term because it reflects their heritage or cultural background. Among those who identify as Black, however, the reasons given are more varied, with no one reason noticeably outweighing the others.

Race is only one dimension of identity. Participants also express a variety of ethnic or cultural identities, including Caribbean- and African-based identities. Specifically, close to half of participants say their most important ethnic or cultural identity is Caribbean (either in general or in terms of a specific Caribbean country). The next most common identity (for about one in four participants) is African (in general or in terms of a specific country or region), while one in ten identify their most important ethnic or cultural identity as Canadian (see Figure 9).

These results also highlight the way in which the make-up of the Black community differs across the generations. When it comes to ethno-cultural identity, the oldest generation (those ages 55 and over) is largely homogenous, with a majority identifying as Caribbean (see Figure 10).

In contrast, the younger generation (under 35) is more diverse, and in particular more likely to identify as African. This pattern mirrors the generational shift relating to country of origin presented in Chapter 1 and may also reflect the politics of the younger generation, who, regardless of their origin choose to identify in this way.

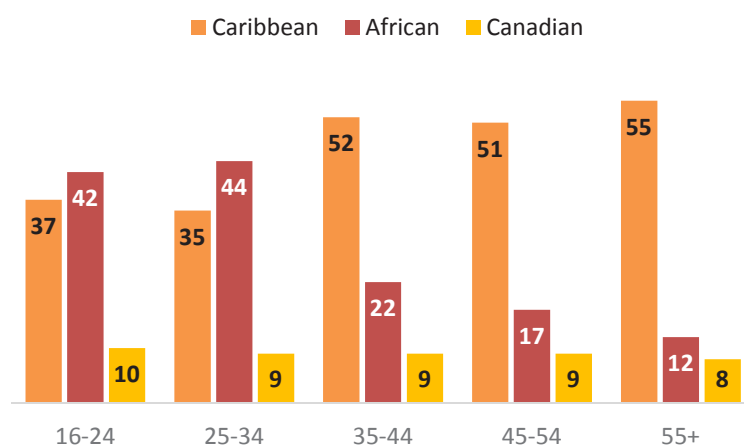
All but a handful of BEP participants mentioned at least one identity other than race or ethnicity, and most named more than one. The two aspects of identity most widely indicated are gender or sexual identity (40%; e.g., being a women/man, heterosexual, LGBT) and religion (40%; primarily Christian). In both cases, these identities are more prominent among women than men, especially in the case of gender/sexuality (59% of women versus 29% among men). Among participants who self-identified as LGBT (5% of all participants),

more than eight in ten (84%) named some aspect of gender or sexuality as part of their identity (principally being part of this community – 61%). One-third (34%) of this group also mentioned religion as part of who they are.

(9) Most important ethnic/cultural identity	
	%
CARIBBEAN*	46
Jamaican	28
Caribbean/West Indian	7
Trinidadian and Tobagonian	4
Other Caribbean	7
WEST AFRICAN	12
Ghanian	7
Nigerian	4
Other West African	2
EAST AFRICAN	7
Somali	3
Other East African	4
AFRICAN - OTHER	8
CANADIAN	9
Canadian	6
Other (e.g., Nova Scotian)	3
BLACK	5
OTHER	9
Tribes / Language / People	4
Other	5

*Main categories represent net percentage of secondary categories

(10) Most important ethnic/cultural identity (by age group)





2. COMMUNITY STRENGTH AND ENGAGEMENT

Overview

This chapter focuses on engagement as defined in several ways. In the first instance, the Chapter considers the ways in which Black people in the GTA engage with different social, cultural and political communities, including through membership in clubs and community groups, volunteering, and voting. It also looks at engagement as a form of advocacy or mobilization, more specifically as a means of resisting racism. Finally, it examines how engagement, in the form of perseverance and a determination to bring about change, can be viewed as an attribute and asset of the Black community itself.

It should be noted that in this Chapter -- as throughout this report -- the term “community” can take on different meanings. In some cases, a community refers to a neighbourhood, the location in which a person lives or works. In other cases, a community is a group of people with similar interests or backgrounds, independent of location, such as a religious or cultural community. And in the case of BEP participants specifically, “community” can also refer to a racial (e.g., Black) or ethnic community that is local, regional or even international. These different types of communities tend to overlap. In this Chapter, “community” can be understood in any or all of these different contexts.

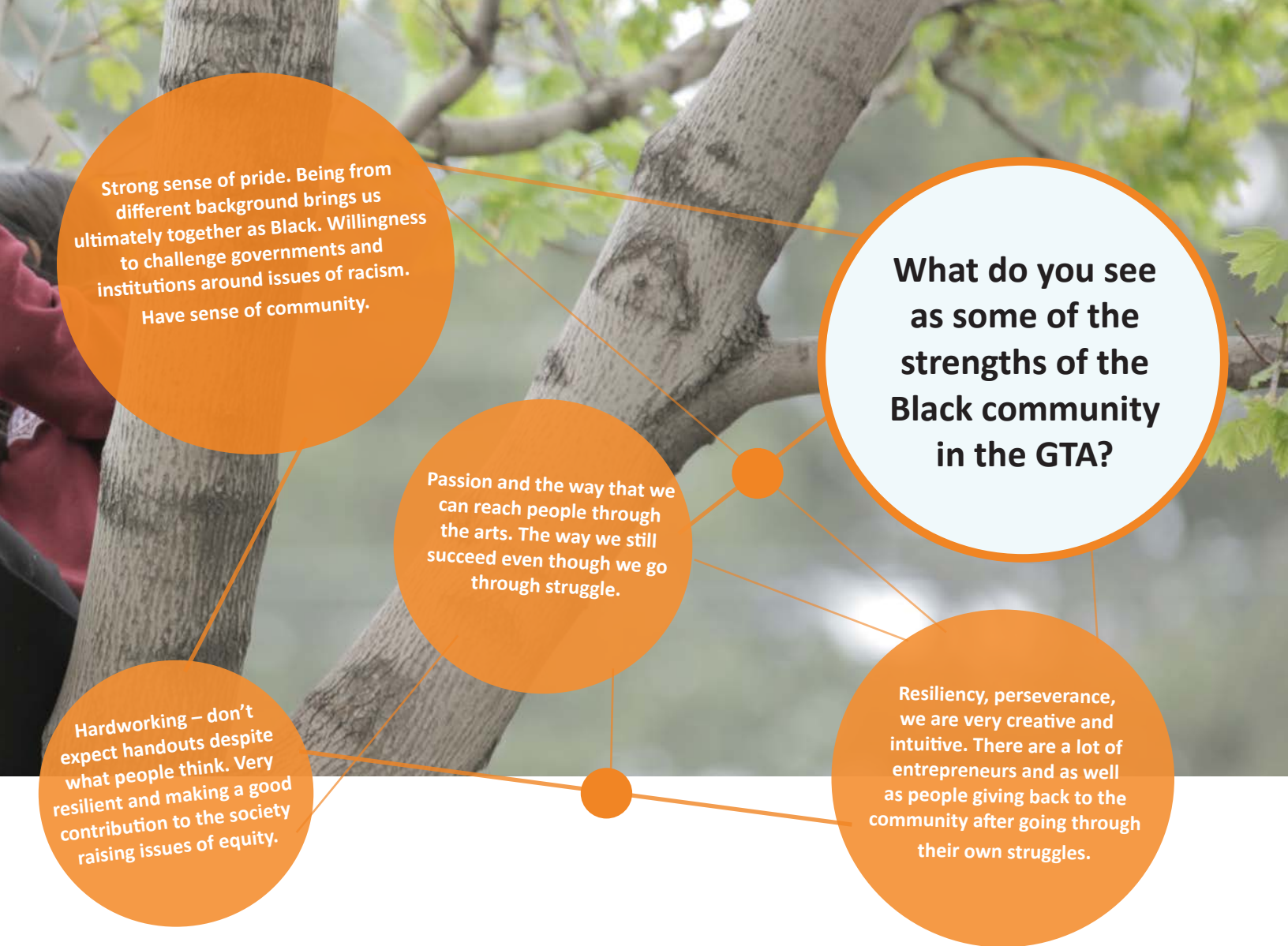
Key Findings

BEP participants are active in their communities, and in some cases are more active than are Canadians on average. Most participants belong to one or more clubs or community groups, volunteer, follow politics and vote.

Four in five BEP participants belong to at least one type of club or community group, a proportion that is higher than that of Canadians on average.²⁵ BEP participants are most likely to belong to religious organizations or places of worship and local community organizations.²⁶ One in two also belongs to, or participates in, organizations or informal social groups that specifically address the interests of the Black community (see Figure 11).

Two in three BEP participants say they have volunteered at least some of their time during the past 12 months. Participants are more likely to volunteer than the national average, and those who volunteer tend to give more of their time than do Canadian volunteers on average.²⁷

Religion and spirituality also constitute an important form of engagement for BEP participants. As mentioned previously, religious organizations are among those in which BEP participants are most likely to be active, with one in two currently belonging to this type of organization, and three in



Strong sense of pride. Being from different background brings us ultimately together as Black. Willingness to challenge governments and institutions around issues of racism. Have sense of community.

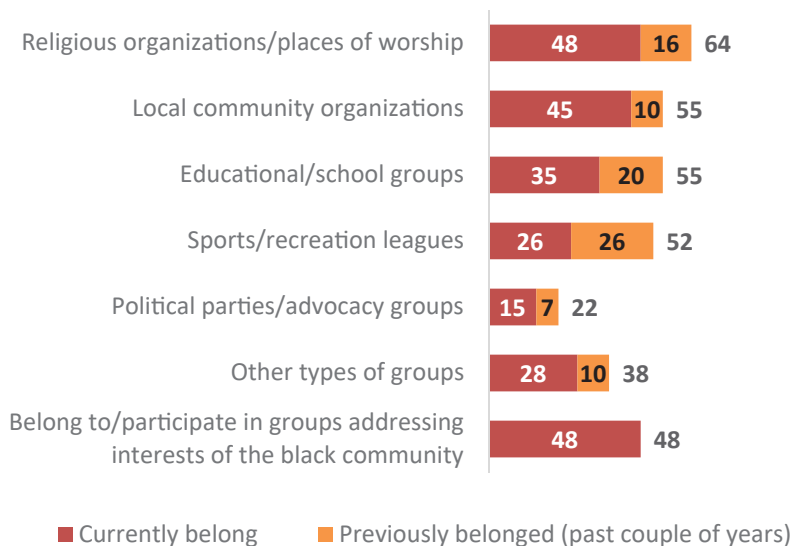
What do you see as some of the strengths of the Black community in the GTA?

Passion and the way that we can reach people through the arts. The way we still succeed even though we go through struggle.

Hardworking – don't expect handouts despite what people think. Very resilient and making a good contribution to the society raising issues of equity.

Resiliency, perseverance, we are very creative and intuitive. There are a lot of entrepreneurs and as well as people giving back to the community after going through their own struggles.

(11) Participation in organizations and groups

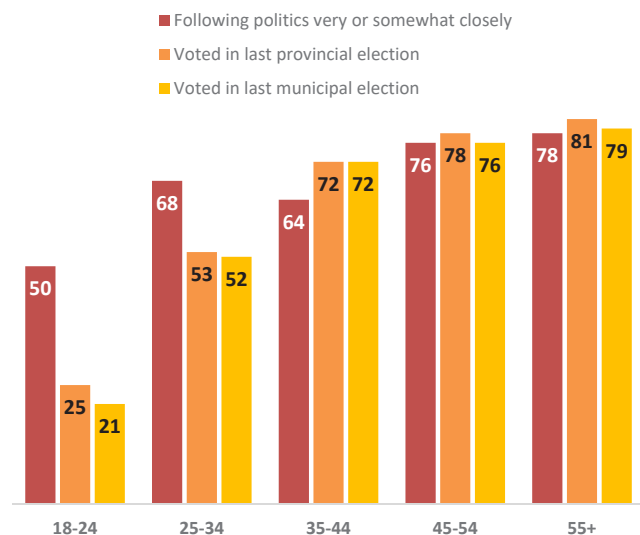


five having belonged in recent years. Beyond membership in a religious organization, BEP participants are very likely to say that spiritual values play an important role in their lives – nine in ten participants say that this is the case. Data from a national population survey (the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey) confirms that those indicating African or Caribbean heritage are much more likely than other Canadians to indicate that spiritual values play an important role in their lives.²⁸

Historically, members of the Black community have used places of worship as a space of education, community building and resistance. Oftentimes, this was the only place to educate young Black people because the state would not provide education (or quality education) even when Black community members were allowed to enter schools. Intense levels of anti-Black racism politicized these spaces. Preachers and pastors became political organizers and community protectors.²⁹

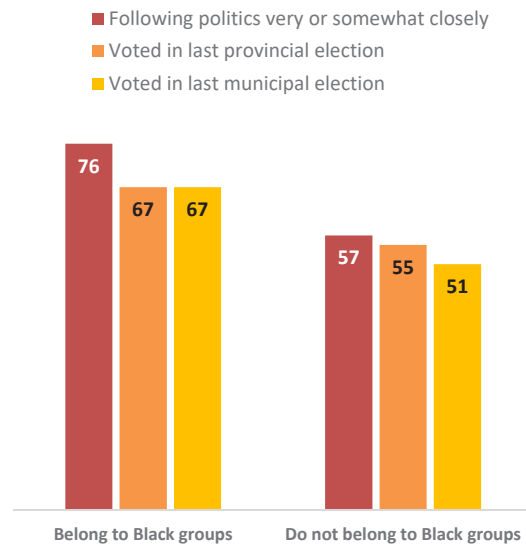
Community and political engagement is strongly related to both age and educational attainment. Compared with younger individuals, older participants volunteer more hours and are more likely to belong to groups that specifically address the interests of the Black community, to follow politics closely, and to vote in elections (see Figure 12). Compared with those whose highest level of education is a high school diploma or less, those who have a university degree are more likely to belong to political or community organizations, to belong to groups that specifically address the interests of the Black community, to volunteer, to follow politics, and to vote in elections.

(12) Political engagement (by age group)



BEP participants who are engaged with community organizations primarily serving the Black community tend to also have higher than average involvement in the political life of the broader community. This suggests that engagement with the Black community and with the broader community are complementary rather than alternative activities, and that progress in resisting racism involves, among other things, engagement with mainstream political institutions and processes (see Figure 13).

(13) Political engagement by membership in Black groups



For some BEP participants, community and political

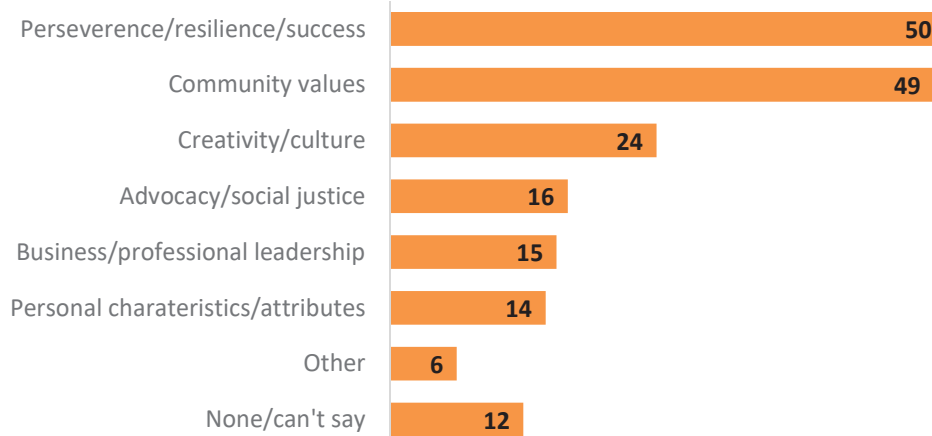
engagement are linked directly to experiences of dealing with racism. When asked what they have found to be useful as ways to deal with their experiences with unfair treatment because of being Black, about three in ten report trying to deal with these experiences on their own or to ignore them. Just as many, however, say they overcome or deal with these experiences by advocating against them or challenging them, while one in five say they share these experiences or talk about them with family, friends or the community.

Some of the other strategies that BEP participants use to deal with unfair treatment could also be considered forms of engagement. These consist of working hard to prove those who perpetuate racism are wrong, educating themselves (for example, about anti-racism) or educating others about their behaviour, or expressing themselves through writing or art.

In this context, it is notable that experiences of discrimination are associated with more (and not less) political and community engagement – again suggesting that for a many BEP participants, engagement and activism is one form of response to anti-Black racism.



(14) Strengths of the Black community



Participants who say they have experienced discrimination are also more critical of public and political institutions, but do not turn their backs on political participation. For instance, they tend to follow politics more closely, to vote in elections either as much or more than average. They have a tendency to join political parties or advocacy groups, local community organizations, and groups that specifically address the interests of the Black community. Most notably, they are more likely to express the view that people like them can have a big impact on making their community a better place to live. Individuals who are more likely to say they have experienced discrimination also articulate a stronger sense of Black identity (see Figure 13).

Finally, community and political engagement emerges as a one of the characteristics of the Black community that BEP participants value and admire the most.

When asked about the strengths of the Black community in the GTA, about the community's most important contributions to making the GTA a better place to live, and about what makes it unique or distinct from the many diverse groups that make up the Greater Toronto Area, BEP participants point to a variety of attributes.

Perseverance, resilience, success and community values are some of the main attributes BEP participants mention as strengths of the Black community (50%). Community values were also mentioned by almost half of the participants and Creativity/culture was referenced by nearly one quarter (see Figure 14).

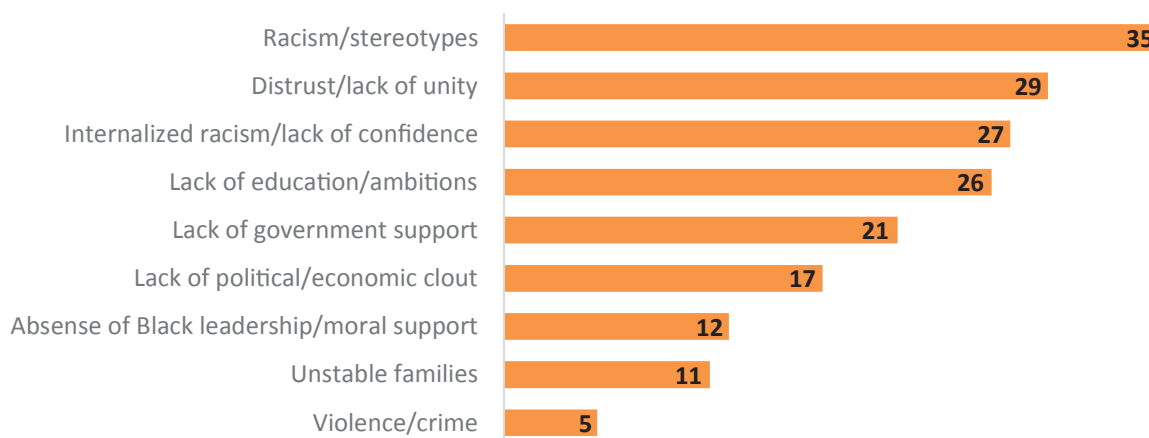
(15) Hopes for the Black Community	
MAJOR THEMES	%
Build a stronger community / culture (unity, support, inclusiveness)	61
More political advocacy / social consciousness (equal opportunity)	35
Stronger education system / success	30
Less crime/violence / better policing	25
Stronger leadership / role models	21
Better media representation	20
Support for youth / future generations	19
More career development / employment opportunities	16
Better quality of life / standard of living	15
Stronger family / friend relationships	9
Stronger identity / sense of self	8
Improved community / government services	7
Better health care for Black community	4

Many BEP participants define their hopes for the black community in terms of building stronger communities/culture (61%) as well as for more political advocacy/social consciousness (35%) along with a stronger education system/success (30%). Other things identified as hopes include education (e.g., greater success in education for Black people) and improvements in the criminal justice system and relations with police (see Figure 15).

BEP participants are most likely to ground their hopes and confidence in the community's ability to achieve these goals in its determination, awareness of obstacles, commitment to change, optimism and strength.

This focus on determination and perseverance – the ability to meet challenges and overcome adversity – is consistent with the emphasis that many participants place on racism and the perpetuation of stereotypes when asked to identify the biggest challenges for the Black community in achieving its goals. Across the GTA, it is women aged 35 to 54 who are most likely to emphasize this challenge (55%, versus only 14% of men in this age group), along with those born in Canada (46%), and those whose primary racial identity is other than Black, African Canadian or Caribbean (53%) (see Figure 16).

(16) Greatest challenges facing the Black community





Intense divides among black people and self-interest. It is very easy to turn a Black person against another [Black] person. We have a lack of vision.

Being silenced, and not controlling the narrative. All too often we have other people telling our stories. We need to tell our own stories.

Systemic racism. Not enough from community, government. Lack of cultural practices and benchmark behaviours that unifies us. No sense of self and identity. Historical traumas and beliefs keep many black people trapped in certain mindsets. It's hard to break the cycle. No mental or emotional support in our communities or families.

What do you see as the biggest challenges for the Black community in achieving its goals?

Access to information...
lack of good examples of role models/leaderships...
losing patience, too focused on short-term pleasures...
lack of non-music, sports, success stories.

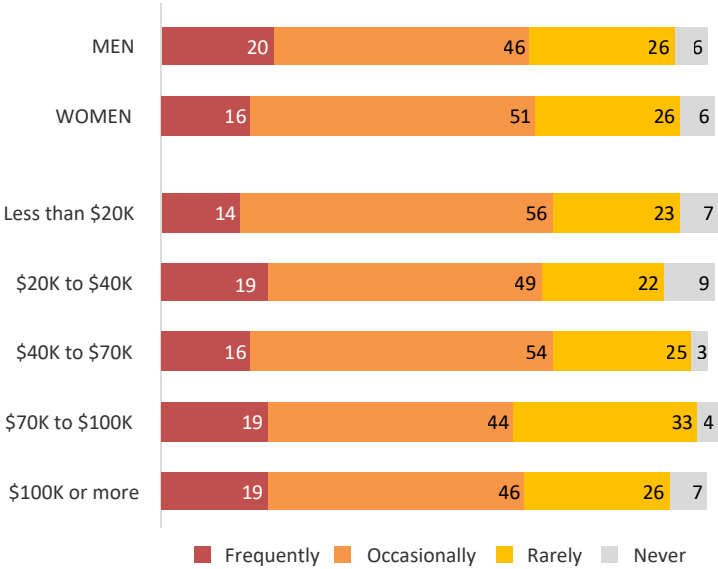


3. INSTITUTIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL RACISM IN DAILY LIFE

Overview

This Chapter examines in more detail how participants’ experiences have been affected by race and racism. It addresses participants’ perceptions of discrimination toward Black people generally, as well as their own direct experiences of unfair treatment and anti-Black racism, including in specific situations such as in school or in the workplace. It also considers day-to-day experiences of more subtle, but no less serious, forms of unfair treatment that can occur in the public sphere. The Chapter also addresses the issue of how anti-Black racism impacts Black people in the GTA, and how they respond to their experiences of unfair treatment. Finally, the participants were asked about their perception of the Canadian versus the United States context.

(17) Experiencing unfair treatment because you are Black
(by gender and household income)



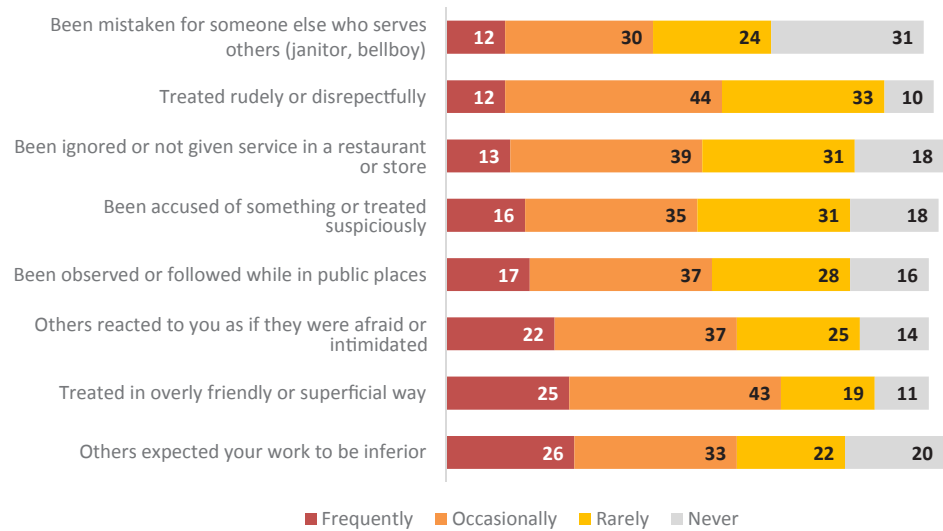


Key Findings

Notwithstanding the diversity of the Black population in the GTA in terms of identities and life experiences, there is a striking commonality of experience when it comes to being treated unfairly because of their race. Two-thirds of BEP participants say they themselves frequently (18%) or occasionally (49%) experience unfair treatment because they are Black, and this is true regardless of background. A majority of BEP participants reports having been treated unfairly because they are Black, regardless of their age, gender, income, educational attainment or country of birth (see Figure 17).

The survey also asked BEP participants about their experience of racism in more subtle ways. Four in five participants experience unfair treatment based on race in one or more forms of micro-aggressions on a common basis. This includes experiences such as having others expect their work to be inferior, being treated in a condescending way, and having frequently had others react to them as if they were afraid or intimidated, in each case because of their race (see Figure 18).

(18) Day-to-day personal experiences because of your race



Although majorities of both men and women say they frequently or occasionally have been treated unfairly because they are Black, their particular experiences differ. Compared with Black women, Black men are more likely to report being treated with suspicion and to mention an experience related to negative interactions with a public institution, notably the police. Compared with Black men, Black women are more likely to mention an experience related to being treated unfairly or being ignored or given poorer service in retail spaces, or to experiencing harassment, exclusion or being undervalued in the workplace.

While most BEP participants say they experience unfair treatment because they are Black, experiences with specific institutions or in specific settings vary.

EDUCATION EXPERIENCES. Only half of participants who attended high school in Canada say that they always or often had positive experiences in high school, such as feeling accepted by teachers (50%) or other students at school (60%), or feeling that school was a welcoming and friendly place (50%) (see Figure 19).³¹



Half (49%) indicate they felt that being Black presented challenges not faced by other students. A large proportion of participants say they “only sometimes” or “never” had these positive high school experiences, and that they also faced challenges at school that others did not because they were Black. Specifically, about four in ten say they either sometimes or never felt accepted by their teachers (37%) or that school was a welcoming place (41%).

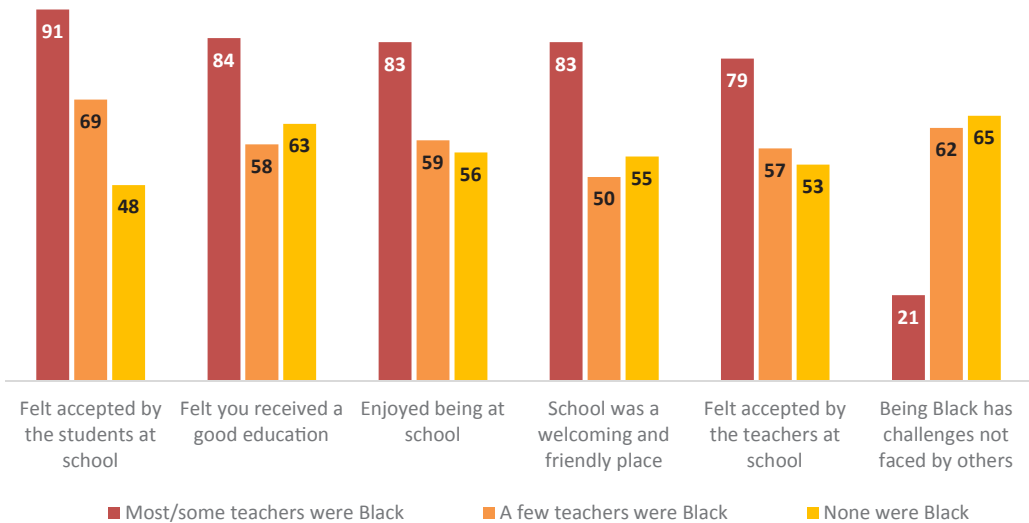
Male and female participants differ somewhat in their experiences with respect to education. Most men, regardless of age, tend to report their schools and teachers provided important support to them. In the case of women, however, age matters: younger women are much more likely than older women to say they felt supported by schools and teachers.

The survey results also show that Black students benefit from the presence of Black peers and teachers. The more Black students are in the minority in their neighbourhoods, the less accepted by their fellow students they feel, and the more they experience challenges at school related to race.

The proportion of teachers in a school who are Black is also associated with more positive school experiences. The presence of Black teachers appears to play a key role in helping Black students feel supported in general and manage issues related to race and racism in school in particular. But the reality is that most (four in five) BEP participants were educated in high schools where either a few or none of the teachers were Black, again pointing to systemic issues.

At the postsecondary level, few BEP participants who are currently students anticipate having to overcome challenges relating to racism in order to complete their college diploma or university degree. At the same time, one in five college or university graduates says having Black role models or examples would have made it easier for him or her to achieve post-secondary educational goals.

(19) High school experience by proportion of Black teachers



WORK PLACE EXPERIENCES. BEP participants were also asked about their experiences in the work place. The responses indicate that while individuals report being happy with their co-workers, they also report experiencing racism at work and believe that anti-black racism is relevant.

BEP participants report being happy with their work colleagues (92% strongly agree or agree), Approximately three quarters report that they are happy in their workplace (74%), find their work environment to be supportive (77%), and feel supported and respected by those they report to (74%). Fewer are satisfied with the progress they have made toward meeting their career goals (63%) or their goals for the development of new skills (68%).

While this study provided no comparators, other research shows that racialized minorities, particularly those who identify as Black are less satisfied with the workplace compared to others and report experiencing discrimination.³² Fully one-third of participants identify challenges linked to being Black and to navigating anti-Black racism in the workplace, whether it involves explicit racism and discrimination or an uncomfortable workplace culture in which they do not feel they are treated professionally or accepted (see Figure 20).

Men and women are equally likely to express satisfaction with their work environment, and with how their current job aligns with their income and education. At the same time, a notable exception to the general pattern is the work experiences of participants who self-identify as LGBTQ. They are much less likely than heterosexual participants to say they are happy in their workplace, find their work environment supportive, and feel supported and respected

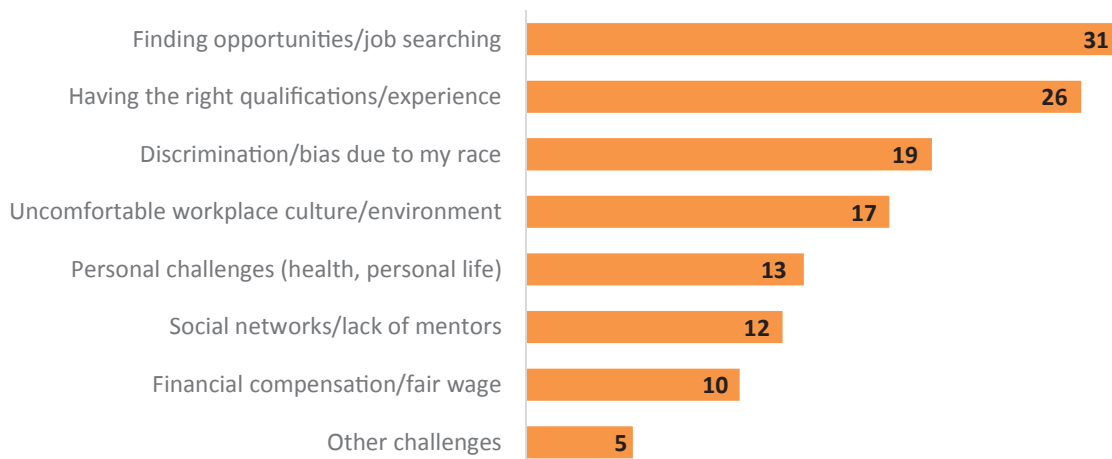
by others working at the same level. They are also most apt to report being over-qualified and under-paid.

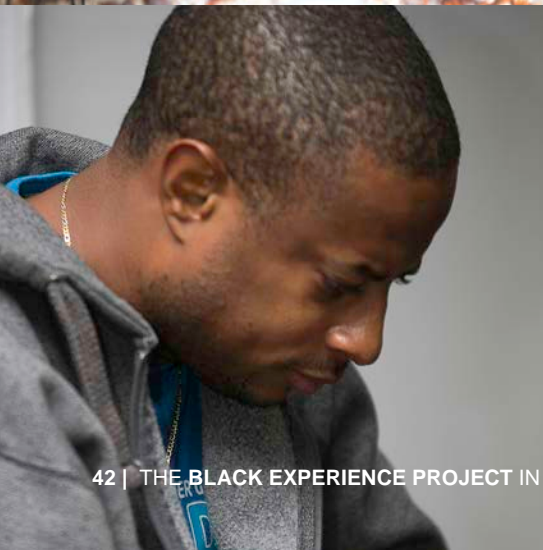
When it comes to finding meaningful employment or satisfying work, the challenge mentioned most frequently – particularly by younger participants – is that of searching for employment, including finding the right job opportunities, finding a job in a preferred field, and dealing with a weak economy.

When asked how being Black has made a difference in their work experience, BEP participants are most likely to cite negative experiences, such as having their level of competency questioned, dealing with racism and stereotypes, and having their qualifications overlooked or not recognized. Some participants also mention more positive ways in which being Black has made a difference, such as having more resilience, being able to work in multicultural settings, being able to use work to support the Black community, and being able to challenge racism.

Whatever their own personal experiences within the school system and workplace, most BEP participants believe Black people experience anti-Black racism in these sectors. About seven in ten (68%) participants say that Black people in the GTA are frequently treated unfairly because they are Black when seeking employment or work. An additional 28 percent say unfair treatment occasionally happens in this situation (versus only 2% who say this rarely or never happens). Similarly, four in ten (39%) believe that unfair treatment happens frequently to those attending school or university and a similar proportion say this takes place occasionally.

(20) Biggest challenges in finding meaningful employment

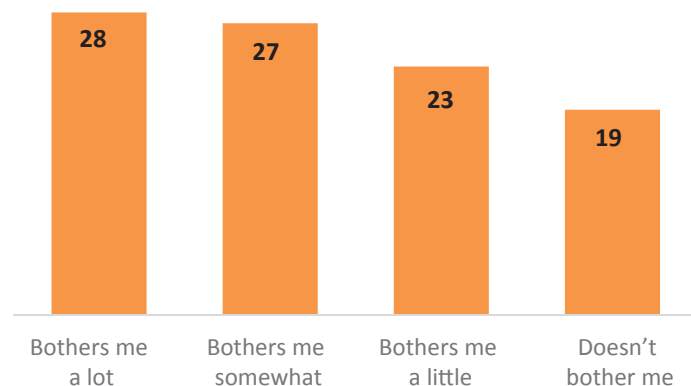




IMPACT OF ANTI-BLACK RACISM. The BEP survey findings also address issues that shed light on how anti-Black racism impacts Black people in the GTA, and how they respond to their experiences. BEP participants are affected in different ways by their experiences of discrimination and unfair treatment related to their race.

Some say they are bothered a lot by these experiences, in terms of a loss of self-esteem or self-confidence in the face of these experiences, and feel the need to consciously downplay being a Black person, especially at work or in public spaces. Others say they are less bothered by such treatment, and say their feelings about themselves are unaffected. And some maintain these experiences make them stronger or more aware, or reinforce their drive to succeed or bring about change (see Figure 21).

(21) How does your day-to-day experience with discrimination bother you?



The personal impact of experiencing day-to-day racism varies somewhat across the population, based on age, gender and sexual orientation. Younger participants and women are more apt to say they are bothered than are older participants and men. The group that stands out most, however, are those who self-identify as LGBTQ (a group that tends to be both younger and female). Half (52%) of participants in this group say such experiences bother them a lot, compared with only about half as many as those who identify as heterosexual (28%).

Overall, two-thirds of BEP participants either say they rarely or never downplay being Black (30%) or do not name a specific situation (i.e. say they don't know or provide no answer; 37%). Still, a substantial proportion do name situations in which they consciously downplay being a Black person, including one in four (23%) who does so in employment situations (at work, in job interviews), and one in five (18%) who does so in public spaces or in social situations.

In addition, almost all participants named at least one situation in which they were consciously aware of being a Black person; only three percent say this rarely or never happens. One in two (52%) says he or she is consciously aware of being Black in public spaces, including in their neighbourhood or at school, or when travelling or moving about (e.g., when driving or on public transit). Almost as many (47%) report being consciously aware of being a Black person in employment-related situations, such as being at work or interviewing for a job.

BEP participants employ different strategies for coping with anti-Black racism (see Chapter 3). Some focus on dealing with racism on their own, while others say they overcome or deal with these experiences by advocating against them. Some also share these experiences or talk about them with family, friends or the community. Experiences of anti-Black racism are linked to participants' personal well-being.

For instance, other research confirms that the experience of being treated unfairly because of one’s race is correlated with poorer health and mental health, and there is a strong relationship between being bothered by experiences of anti-Black racism and life satisfaction, health, mental health and feelings of stress (Figure 22 shows the relationship between the frequency of day-to-day discrimination across all types (from frequently to occasional) and overall life satisfaction).*

As reported in Chapter 3, experiences of discrimination are associated with more political and community engagement. BEP participants who are more likely to experience unfair treatment based on race are also more critical of public and political institutions, but do not turn their backs on political participation.

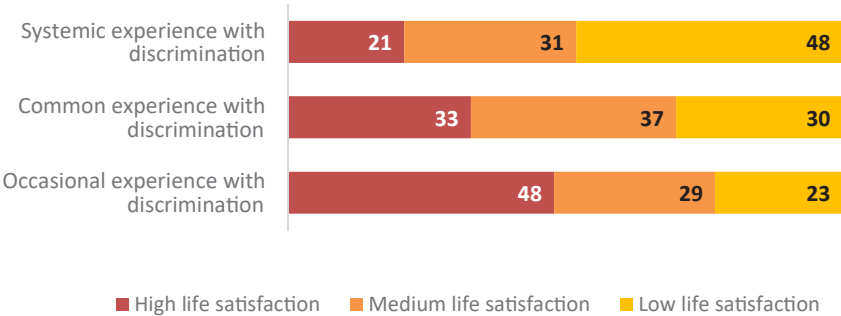
The survey also asked participants to compare the experiences of Black people in Canada and the USA. Coverage of issues relating to race in the US are prominent in the media and popular culture, and there are many untested assumptions about how experiences in the two countries compare. Many Canadians define their identities in contrast to Americans. The notion of Canadian exceptionalism extends to the belief that Canada is a diverse, multicultural, and inclusive society exempt from the issue of anti-Black racism south of the border.

Results from this research suggest that not all Black people in Canada see things the same way. Only a thin majority (55%) of BEP participants believe that Blacks are better off in Canada than the US. The most frequently cited ways in which Blacks are better off in Canada include racism being less overt, better relations with police, greater diversity in the population, and better health care (see Figure 23).

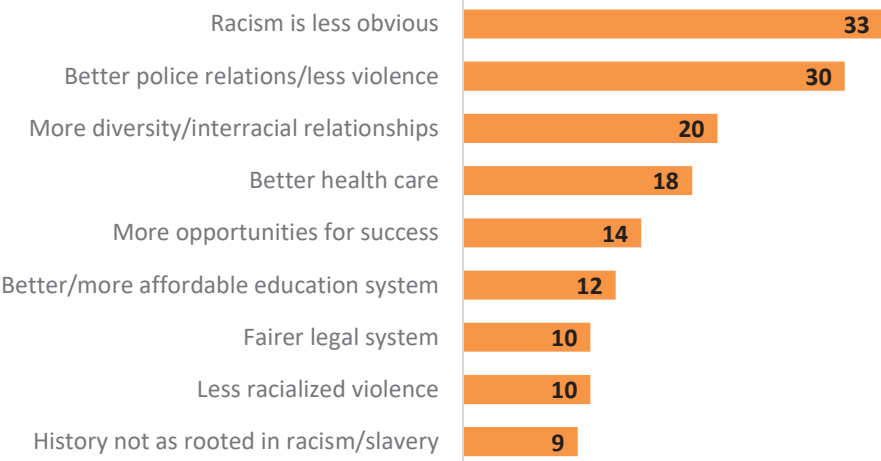
*Frequency of discrimination is measured in an index created that incorporates the results from all eight types of micro aggression experience measured in the survey, which captures both the number and frequency of such experiences reported. These data are then categorized into three groups according to frequency: systemic, common and occasional.

But while non-Black Canadians might assume that racial minorities such as Black people are better off north of the border, not all BEP participants are convinced. One third (33%) of BEP participants say that the situation of Blacks in the two countries is about the same, while close to one in ten (8%) say that Blacks are worse off in Canada than in the USA. This latter group is most likely to say Blacks have it worse in Canada because of the way racism manifests itself. They report that it is either more covert, or that diversity is a “guise” that masks the reality of anti-Black racism, as has been documented in other studies.³³

(22) Frequency of day-to-day discrimination by overall life satisfaction



(23) In what ways are Blacks better off in Canada than in the USA?

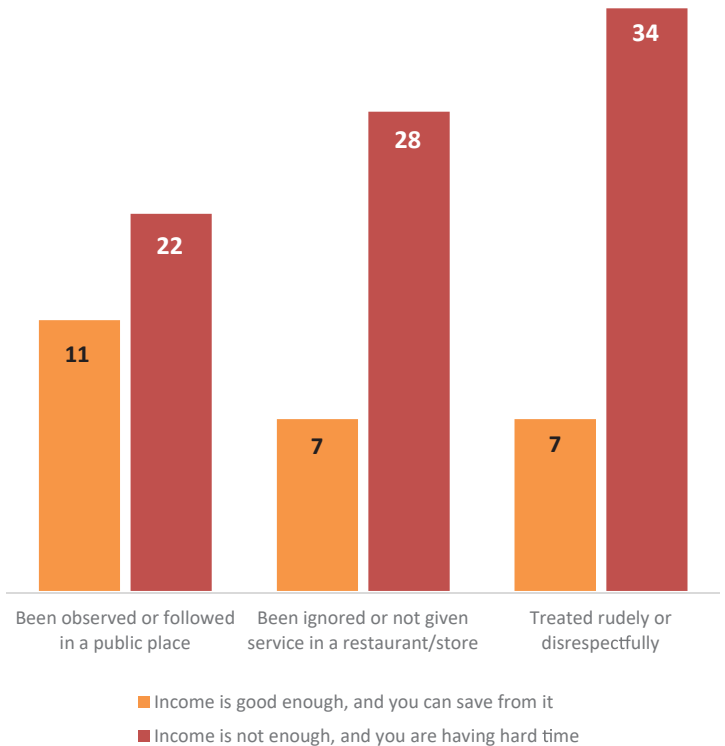




SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF RACISM.

In some cases, anti-Black racism is felt more acutely by BEP participants with lower incomes. For instance, those with inadequate incomes (those who report it is not enough and are having a hard time), are more likely than those with adequate incomes to have frequently experienced one or more of the eight micro-aggressions. These include being ignored, overlooked or not given service in a restaurant or store, being treated rudely or disrespectfully, being accused of something, and being observed or followed while in public places. As well, participants who are having a hard time making ends meet are also more likely to say that the lives of the Black people close to them (including family and friends) have been affected to a great extent because of their race (see Figure 24).

(24) Frequent personal experiences because of race (by adequacy of income)



In considering these patterns, it is important to note that the difference between those with higher or lower incomes is not that one group experiences anti-Black racism and the other does not – rather, the frequency of these experiences is what differs, and such differences do not appear in all situations (see next Chapter as it relates to experiences with police services). This suggests that the disadvantages of lower income compound experiences of racial discrimination for some individuals. But this does not mean that Black individuals with higher incomes are insulated from experiences of unfair treatment and anti-Black racism.





4. EXPERIENCE WITH POLICE SERVICES AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Overview

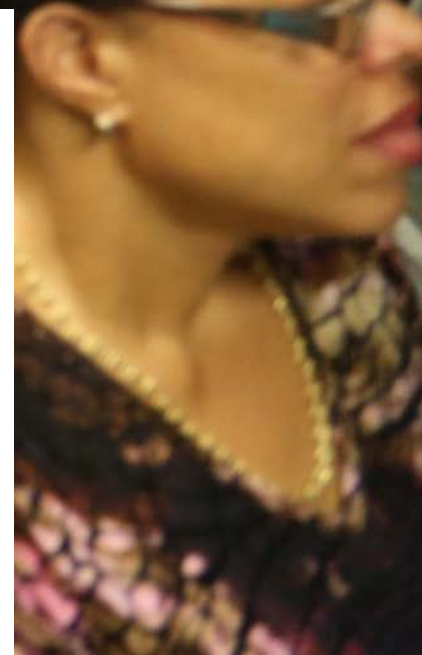
Most Canadians are able to take for granted the roles that the police and the criminal justice system play in upholding peace, order and good government, and in protecting their rights to safety and security. These institutions are counted on to provide: a) security by protecting both people and property from wrongdoing; b) justice by holding wrongdoers accountable for their actions while supporting the innocent; and c) equity by acting impartially and without prejudice, ensuring that, unlike citizens in many other countries, Canadians are not subject to the arbitrary or excessive exercise of state power.

Both historically and currently, Black people in Canada (along with other racialized groups and Indigenous Peoples) have not been able to take these things for granted. Their ability to experience security, justice and equity has been compromised by a much more troubled relationship with the police and the criminal justice system than that experienced by most other Canadians. While up-to-date data relating to racial bias within the criminal justice system is not available specifically for the GTA, the federal government's Office of the Correctional Investigator reports that, for the country as a whole, "the federal incarceration rate for Blacks is three times their representation rate in general society."³⁴ In Ontario, the issue

of policing came to a head after community protests leading to a review of Ontario's three civilian police oversight bodies. This review resulted in the release of a report chaired by the Honourable Michael H. Tulloch which noted that "[w]ithin Black communities, there is a prevailing perception that they have always been over-policed and targeted as criminals."³⁵

Ontario has seen a long and troubled relationship between the police and the Black community, particularly in the GTA. Issues of excessive police surveillance and police presence in largely Black neighborhoods, police brutality, carding, stops, search and seizures, numerous police killings of young unarmed Black men, and extra judicial and illegal drug raids are part of an important historical context. Numerous reports have concluded that racial profiling, systemic police bias and anti Black racism are key drivers for this systemic reality.³⁶

In this context, the BEP survey investigated the relationship between Black people in the GTA and the region's police forces and criminal justice system. It did so by focussing on two areas: a) the direct experiences (be they positive, negative or neutral) of BEP participants with the police and criminal justice system; and b) attitudes toward these institutions' performance in terms of protecting citizens and treating Black people fairly.



(25) Personal experience with police in community or GTA

Have you ever had an experience of ...?	Total %	Men aged 25 to 44 (%)
Getting stopped in public places by police	55	79
Socializing with police at social, cultural or official functions	53	64
Being helped by the police	44	39
Requiring police assistance	42	35
Being harassed or treated rudely by police	38	60
Being interviewed by police as a witness to an incident	36	44
Police not responding promptly when you need them	18	23
Being arrested	15	31
Police using force against you	11	24



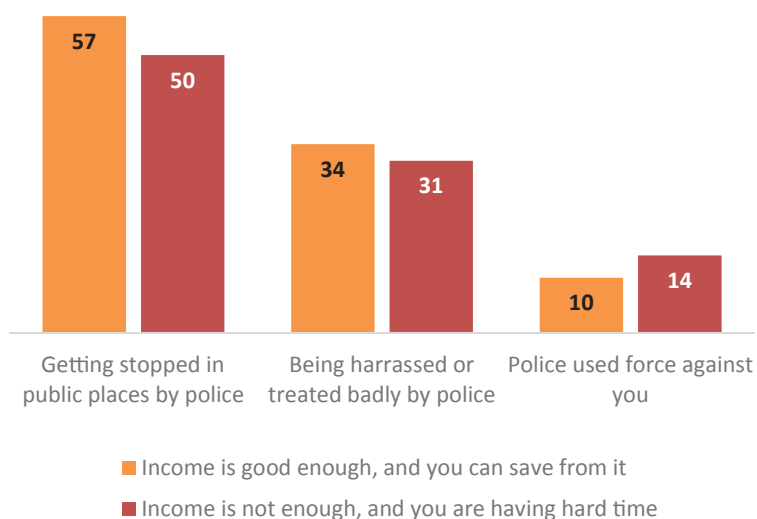
Key Findings

EXPERIENCE WITH POLICE SERVICES: A majority of BEP participants have had negative experiences with the police services in their community. In fact, BEP participants are more likely to have been stopped in public than they are to have been helped by the police. These negative encounters with police services – including ones involving harassment and the use of force – are irrespective of levels of education, income adequacy, or employment (see also Chapter 4).

More than half of BEP participants report having been stopped in a public place by the police, and almost four in ten say they have been harassed or treated rudely by police. One in two has also had the experience of socializing with the police at a social, cultural, or official function. Sizeable minorities report having required help from the police or receiving help from the police, although about one in five says he or she has had the experience of the police not responding promptly when they were needed (see Figure 25).

Men between the ages of 25 and 44 are especially likely to report negative experiences with the police; among this group four in five have been stopped in a public place by the police, three in five have been harassed or treated rudely by police, one in four has had the experience of the police using force against him or her, and one in five has been arrested. Only 16 percent of men between the ages of 25 and 44 say they have not had any of these four negative experiences with the police. The experiences of women ages 25 to 44 are quite different. They are much less likely than men in this age group to report having been stopped in public or harassed by the police, and are more likely to report having required police assistance and being helped by the police.

(26) Personal experiences with police by adequacy of income





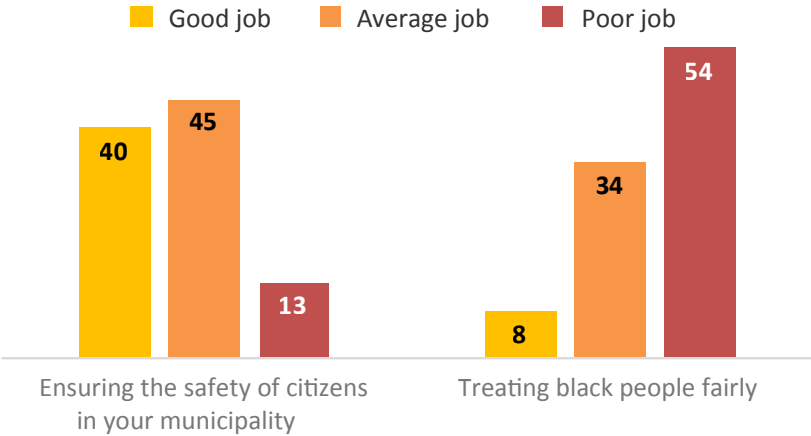
At the same time, as reported in Chapter 4, negative experiences with the police (with the notable exception of being arrested) do not vary much by socio-economic status. Black individuals who are more economically advantaged are just as likely to have such encounters as those who are more economically disadvantaged. Those with higher incomes and levels of education, for instance, are not noticeably less likely than average to have been stopped by the police in public, to have been harassed or treated rudely by the police, or to have had the police use force against them (see Figure 26).

In addition, the Black population is not neatly divided between those who have had only positive experiences and those who have had only negative ones. In fact, those who have had at least one positive experience are more likely to have had at least one negative one, and vice versa, suggesting that many Black people in the GTA experience a mixture of various types of interactions with the police.

A majority say their local police either does a good job (40%) or an average job (45%) of “ensuring the safety of citizens in your municipality.” However, more than half (54%) of participants say that they do a poor job of “treating black people fairly.” Fewer than one in ten (8%) says his or her local police force treats Black people fairly (see Figure 27).

This is consistent with the results of another question on the survey concerning the extent to which Black people in the GTA experience unfair treatment in dealings with the police because they are Black. There is a striking degree of consensus on this question, with almost nine in ten (87%) saying this unfair treatment happens frequently, and an additional one in ten (11%) saying it happens occasionally. Only one percent of participants say Black people in the GTA rarely or never experience unfair treatment in dealings with the police because they are Black. Given this extent of negative experiences, it may not be surprising that BEP participants have less confidence in the police than other citizens in Ontario.³⁷

(27) Performance of local police force



EXPERIENCE WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM. More than half (56%) of BEP participants have had some form of personal involvement in the Canadian criminal justice system in the last 10 years. This is most likely to be as someone visiting people who are in prison or jail, as someone attending a public information or consultation session relating to the criminal justice system, as a witness to a crime, or as a victim of a crime.

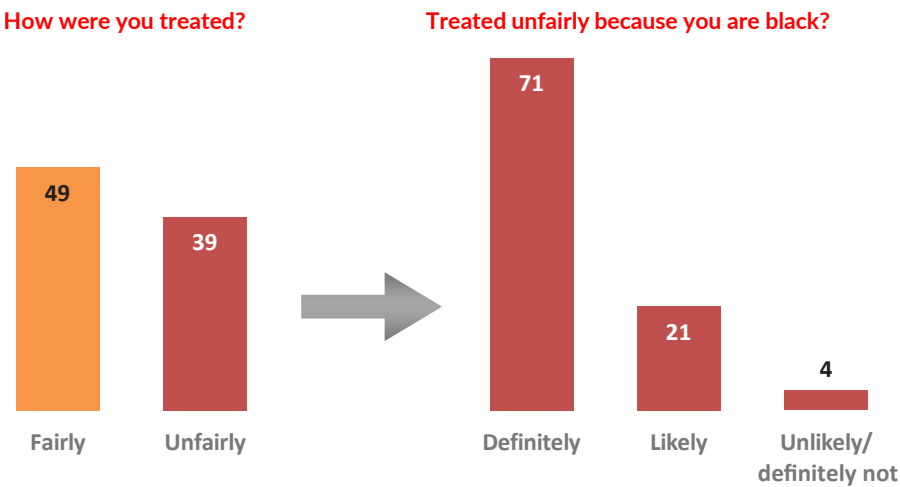
One in ten BEP participants reports involvement with the criminal justice system as someone accused of wrongdoing in the past 10 years. This proportion is notably higher among Black men age 25 to 44, with one in four in this group reporting having been arrested, one in five saying they have charged with a crime, and one in ten having been imprisoned over this time period (see Figure 28).³⁸



(28) Personal involvement with criminal justice system		
Personal involvemnt in the Canadian criminal justice system in past 10 years	Total %	Men aged 25 to 44 (%)
Through public information or consultation session	26	34
By visiting people in jail	19	30
As a witness to a crime	16	21
As a victim of a crime	16	18
Working in a justice system yourself	10	8
Being charged with a crime	8	21
As a juror	4	2
Being in prison or incarcerated	4	11

Many BEP participants are critical of the criminal justice system’s treatment of Black people. Of those who have had contact with the criminal justice system (either as a witness to, or victim of a crime, or who had been arrested, charged with a crime or been imprisoned), only half (49%) say they had been treated fairly. And of those who say they had been treated unfairly (39%), most (71%) believe the unfair treatment was definitely because they are Black (see Figure 29).

(29) Treatment by the criminal justice system
(those with personal involvement in past 10 years)





More focus needs to be put on positive interactions with the community... it feels like the police exert excessive force. Multiple police cars show up to simple traffic stops, etc. I often find that officers are unfriendly and menacing. They rarely smile or say "good afternoon." They only come around for negative reasons. Even at festivals and events they remain unfriendly. I don't feel comfortable when they are around even if I haven't done anything wrong. I feel like they make no effort to understanding cultural difference.

Partner more with Black community and come out and join us in the community. Not just on paper. Let's build a better relationship by getting to know us.

If given the opportunity, what one piece of advice or comment would you personally like to give to the Chief of Police in your Region?

Be aware of the different communities that you serve in your municipality. Require ongoing training for yourself and staff to form relationships with people outside their communities so they have an understanding on a personal level. Also understanding people of colour in general and review policing strategies and how they affect them.

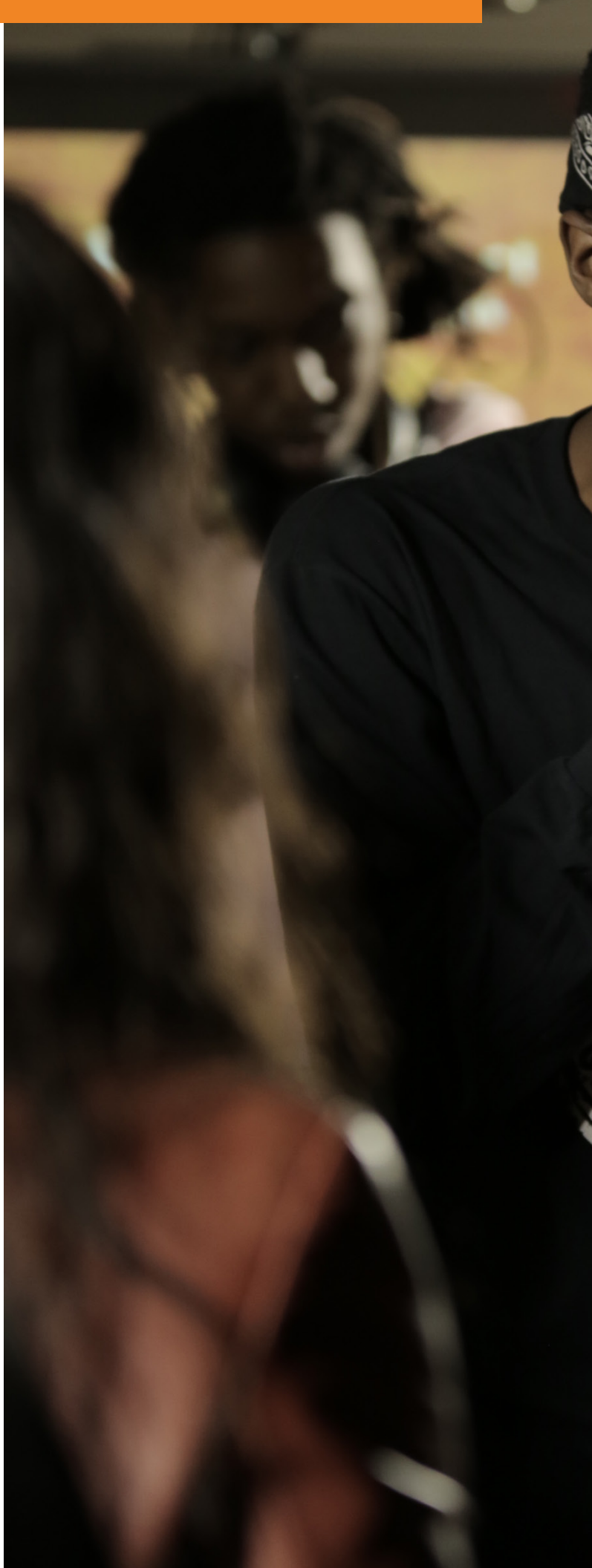
Learn to see us as people and not hide behind the institution of the police... not everyone is to be treated suspiciously... something in their training that causes them to treat us with such lack of respect, dehumanizing ways.

5. PERSPECTIVES ON BLACK YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Overview

As the Black community in the GTA looks to the future, it naturally focuses on the situation and prospects of its youth and young adults. The discussions that took place as part of the community engagement phase of this project (Phase 1) highlighted a number of hopes and concerns for Black youth, as they pertain to education and employment, identity and engagement, health and well-being, and security and safety. Older participants in these discussions often expressed concerns about how Black youth in the GTA were faring (in terms of, for instance, barriers to education and employment), while younger participants focused on the opportunities and challenges facing their generation.

This Chapter examines the situation and perspectives of younger BEP participants in more detail (this is defined as participants aged 16 to 24, or in some cases 16 to 34). The Chapter highlights some of the generational differences revealed through the BEP survey. Younger BEP participants do not necessarily have a different perspective than their parents' or grandparents' generation on every issue; on a number of questions asked in the survey -- such as the question of how often participants say they are treated unfairly because they are Black -- the responses of participants across age cohorts are virtually identical. On other questions, however, differences are more apparent.





Key Findings

As outlined in the demographic portrait in Chapter 1, the Black population in the Greater Toronto Area has become more diverse over time. The older population is overwhelmingly Caribbean-born, while the younger population has a more diverse mixture of Caribbean, African and Canadian origins. As of 2011 (and for the first time), young Black adults in the GTA have been majority Canadian-born. This shift is reflected in the results to the BEP survey questions about identity, reported in Chapter 2. In terms of ethno-cultural identity, for instance, younger BEP participants are more ethnically diverse, compared with their parents and grandparents, among whom the Caribbean ethnicity is predominant.

To this portrait can be added information relating to the composition of social networks. The composition of the friendship networks of younger BEP participants is much more racially mixed compared with that of older participants (see Figure 30).

Younger participants are less likely to say that most of their close friends are Black or from their own ethnic identity group, and more likely to say that at least some of their close friends are non-Black. Fewer than half (44%) of participants under the age of 35 have friendship networks that are predominantly Black, compared to almost two-thirds (64%) of those age 55 and over.

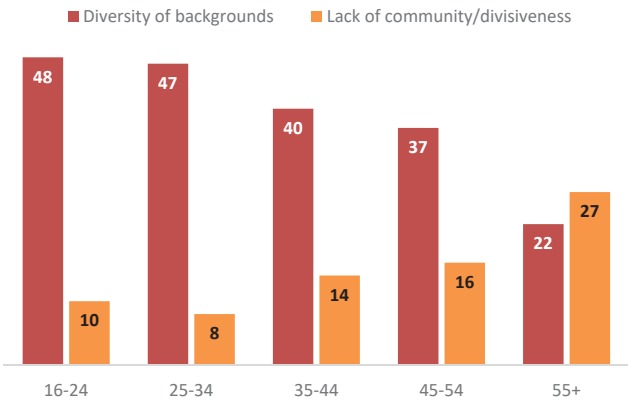
BEP participants who self-identify as LGBTQ tend to be younger, but apart from this demographic characteristic these individuals are most likely to say that most of their friends are non-Black (versus Black or from their ethnic identity group).

(30) Racial mix of friendships

Racial mix of friendships	Total %	Age 16-34 %	Age 35-54 %	Age 55+ %
Predominantly Black Most or some close friends Black + a few or no close friends non-Black	53	44	58	64
Mix of Black and non-Black Most or some close friends Black + most or some close friends non-Black	38	44	36	29
Predominantly non-Black A few or no close friends Black + most or some close friends non-Black	6	9	5	2
Other combination A few or no close friends Black + a few or no close friends non-Black	2	3	1	4

Younger BEP participants are twice as likely as their older counterparts to single out diversity within the Black community as one of its most distinctive features. Almost half of those under the age of 35 specifically mention diversity as something that makes the Black community unique, compared with fewer than one in four participants who are 55 and over (see Figure 31). Younger women are particularly likely to mention diversity as one of the Black community’s unique characteristics.

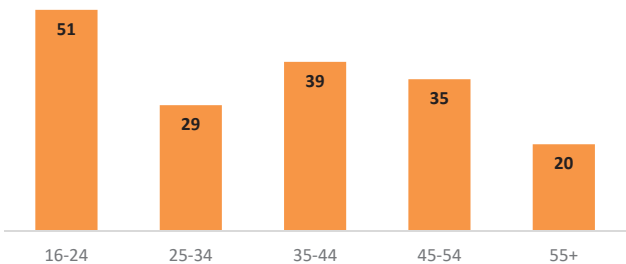
(31) Unique attributes of GTA Black community (by age group)



Two other themes stand out in terms of youth perspectives on the opportunities and challenges facing the Black community and Black people in the GTA. One of these is the importance of education – although in this case, the views of younger participants are shared by their older counterparts. Both younger and older participants identify the opportunities provided through education as among the most important ones for Black youth in the GTA, in terms of growing up and preparing to be part of today’s society (Figure 32).

The other prominent theme is that of racism. For instance, when considering the biggest challenges the Black community faces in achieving its goals, the youngest cohort of BEP participants – those between the ages of 16 and 24 – are somewhat more likely than others to identify challenges relating to racism and the perpetuation of stereotypes; one in two young participants cite racism as the biggest challenges for the Black community. And racism is identified by younger BEP participants (age 16 to 24) as one of the main challenges facing Black youth in the GTA (see Figure 33).

(33) Racism/stereotypes as greatest challenge facing Black community (by age group)

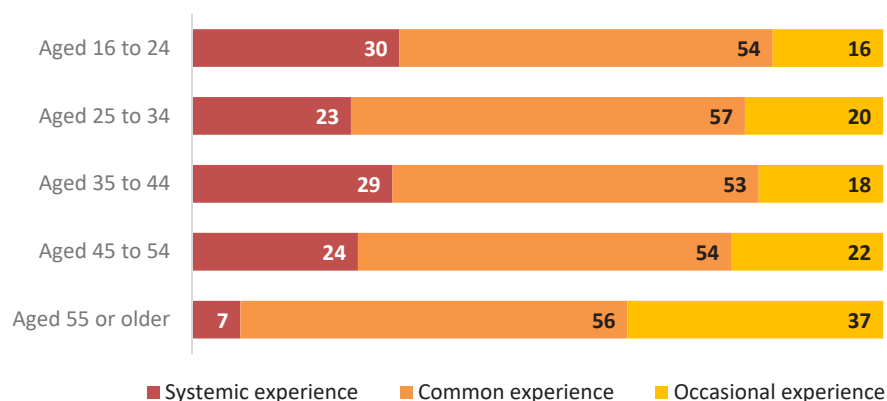


These findings have relevance in the context of experiences of discrimination and relations with the police and criminal justice system (as presented in Chapter 5). As noted, people under 45 years of age, and men in particular, are especially likely to have had negative experiences with the police and to report involvement with the criminal justice system as someone accused of wrongdoing.

Also relevant in this context are the experiences of younger BEP participants with the day-to-day experiences of inter-personal forms of racism (discussed in Chapter 4) described as “micro-aggressions.” In general, the proportion of participants who say they frequently experience these forms of day-to-day discrimination is higher among younger participants, in comparison with those 55 years and older (see Figure 34).

(32) Biggest opportunities for Black youth today (by age group)		
Biggest opportunities for youth	Age 16-24	Age 25+
	%	%
Education system (access/affordability)	77	65
Community programs/resources (employment)	53	66
Leadership / mentor support	30	16
Technology / social media	19	10
Diversity/Inclusiveness in the GTA	13	6
Sports leagues	11	4
Potential of youth themselves (strength/creativity)	10	24
Other opportunities	20	18

(34) Frequency of day-to-day discrimination (by age group)

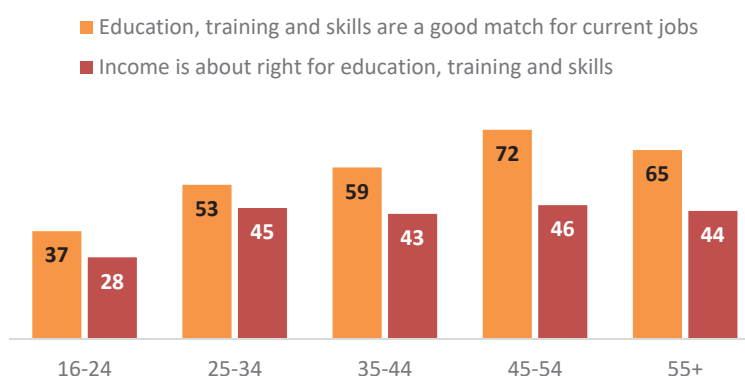


Younger BEP participants also differ from their older BEP counterparts in terms of their patterns of community and political engagement. As may be the case across Canadian society as a whole, community and political engagement among BEP participants is strongly related to both age and educational attainment. Compared with younger individuals, older participants volunteer more hours and are more likely to belong to groups that specifically address the interests of the Black community, to follow politics closely, and to vote in elections.

This, however, does not mean that Black youth are “disengaged.” Young BEP participants between the ages of 16 and 24, for instance, are more likely than those in other age groups to belong to educational or school groups, to sports and recreational leagues, and to environmental or conservation groups. About four in ten younger participants belong to religious organizations, to local community organizations, and to groups that specifically address the interests of the Black community – a level of participation that is only slightly below the average for all age groups (41%, versus 48% for all participants).

In the area of employment, the BEP survey results suggest that some Black youth, especially those without a postsecondary education, are facing challenges transitioning into the labour force. Among BEP participants across all age groups who are currently employed or self-employed, more than half say their education, training and skills are a good match for their current job. They also mention that their income is either about right for their education training and skills, or even higher than what they would expect. A sizeable minority, however, do not find themselves in this positive situation. For example, younger workers are among those who are more likely to say they feel overqualified for the job they currently have, and that their income is below expectations (see Figure 35).³⁹

(35) Alignment of jobs, skills and income employed (by age groups)



Of note, however, is the fact that satisfaction with workplace experiences and job alignment with qualifications improve noticeably with age, educational attainment and work experience. The BEP survey also indicates this improvement is much more likely for those youth who attain a postsecondary education.

Among BEP participant aged 16 to 24, who are in the labour force, the unemployment rate is 12 percent. But the rate is only five percent among those who have a college or university education, compared with 24 percent for those who have no more than a high school diploma. Research suggests this can be partly attributed to the practice of ‘streaming’. While this is no longer a policy, there is recently-published evidence that students continue to be grouped into vocational, college-bound or university-bound levels based on perceptions of ability, which are often tainted.⁴⁰

As a young person, what do you see as the biggest opportunities and challenges for Black people your age in the GTA, in terms of growing up and preparing themselves to be part of today's society?

"Racism and discrimination has an effect on youth. I grew up in a country that is Black, there are Black doctors, lawyers: here in Canada there aren't many Black role models. Black people are representing lower income brackets. A lot of us are immigrants, our cultures are often different from the culture in Toronto, so we have to navigate having Haitian parents living in a Canadian society."



There is more room for participation in education, politics and communities in comparison to the past. Today, there are more ways for black youth to be successful in these areas. Because of GTA diversity, often times it's easy to ignore the struggles in race and the accessibility gap present within the city. Making it not only hard for Black youths to gain access to certain opportunities, but hard to even acknowledge that there is struggle in the first place.

People making assumptions because you are Black, for example that you're lazy, unmotivated, media negative portrayal... to be honest there are individuals that have given up and the way that the few have carried themselves is being reflected on the entire group of youth. A lot of youth are lacking identity in terms of cultural roots (i.e. Jamaica doesn't accept Canadian-raised Jamaican youth): not knowing yourself and your place in the GTA.



6. WORLDS APART: PERCEPTIONS OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Overview

This chapter addresses how BEP participants view the Black community, as well as their views about how the Black community is perceived by non-Black people in the GTA.

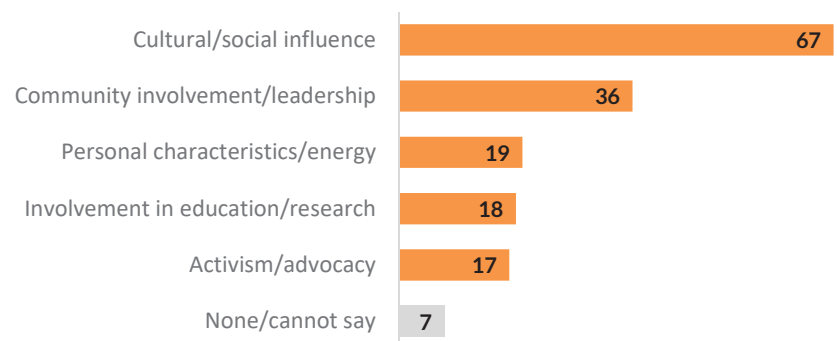
The survey asked BEP participants what they think makes the Black community in the GTA unique or distinct, to identify its greatest strengths and the contributions it makes to the GTA, and to say what gives them confidence about the community's ability to achieve its goals. The research did not gauge directly how non-Black people in the GTA view their Black counterparts, but rather asked participants about how they believe they are perceived by the broader society around them. This included asking whether they think non-Black people's impressions of Black people are positive or negative, how these may have changed over the past decade, and what they believe to be the most commonly held beliefs about Black people. Given the importance of the mainstream media in shaping beliefs and attitudes, BEP participants were asked to evaluate media portrayals of Black people in terms of the amount and the accuracy of the coverage that Black people receive.

Taken together, the results show that the qualities that BEP participants associate with the Black community -- qualities relating to the community's culture, diversity and heritage of the Black community, as well as the strength and perseverance of community members -- are strikingly different from the negative qualities that they believe others in the GTA associate with their community.

Key Findings

As reported in Chapter 3, BEP participants take great pride in the strength, resilience and achievement of the Black community. There is widespread agreement that the Black community has had important cultural or social influence in making the GTA a better place to live. Another main theme to emerge from participants' reflections on the uniqueness and strengths of the Black community is that of perseverance, hard work and the ability to meet challenges and overcome adversity (see Figure 36).

(36) Black community's most important contributions to the GTA



(37) Basis of hope and confidence in achieving community goals

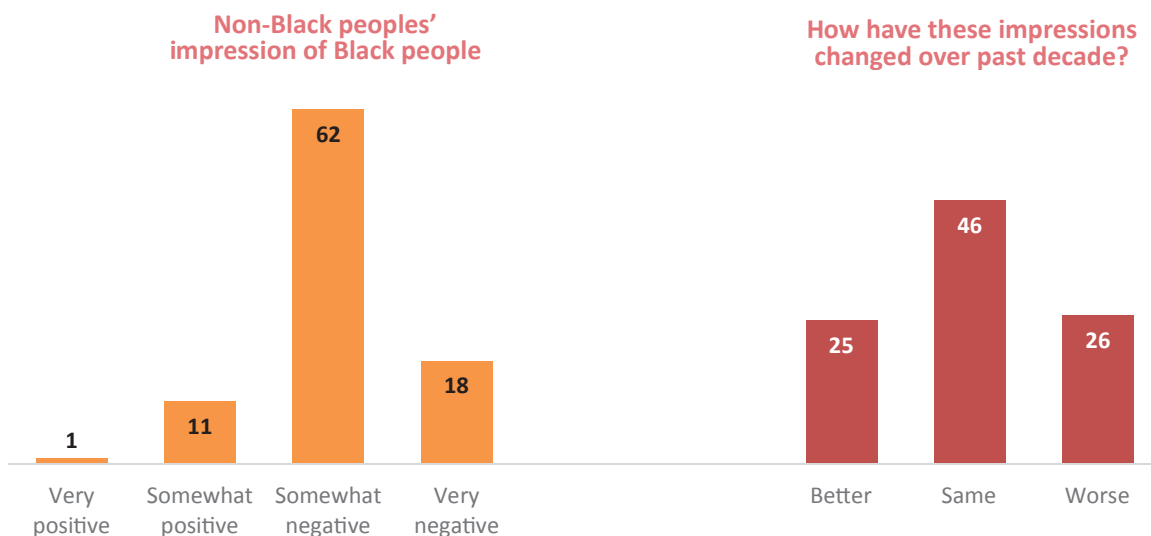


And BEP participants are most likely to ground their hopes and confidence in the community's ability to achieve these goals in its determination, optimism and strength. Along with perseverance, many also mention solidarity (the sense of community and the support the community provides to its members) as one of the Black community's greatest strengths in the GTA (see Figure 37).

In stark contrast to the positive attributes that BEP participants associate with the Black community, most – four in five – believe that non-Black people in the GTA hold negative impressions of them as Black people. And relatively few – only one in four – say these impressions have gotten better over the past ten years (see Figure 38).

When asked what they believe are the most common beliefs that non-Black people hold about Black people, all of the examples cited are negative ones. Three in four participants mention beliefs relating to criminal behaviour, violence, gangs or drugs. More than one in two mentions the belief that Blacks are uneducated and inferior, and a similar proportion identify the belief that Black people are lazy and lack ambition. The two most frequently mentioned answers by younger participants were the belief that Blacks are involved in crime, violence, gangs, or drugs, and that they are uneducated or unintelligent. This suggests that these are the most pervasive beliefs about Black people that Black youth confront today.

(38) How non-Black people in the GTA view Black people

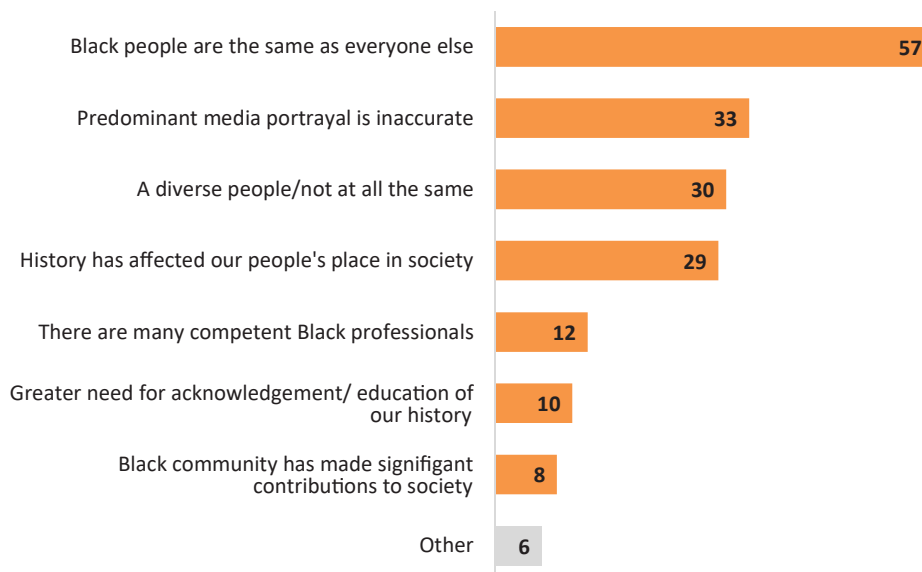




These stereotypes are the same ones that BEP participants see perpetuated by the mainstream media. Most (two in three) participants say there is too little portrayal of Black people or groups in the mainstream media, whether it is newspapers (66%), radio (66%) or television (63%), with most of the existing portrayals being predominantly negative.

When asked what they most wished the broader society understood about Black people, BEP participants say they are like everyone else, that the media portrayal is inaccurate, that they are a diverse community, and how the historical legacy of racism and discrimination has contributed to the challenges they currently face (see Figure 39).

(39) What broader society should understand about Black people



Participants were also asked about the ways in which Black people are portrayed accurately and inaccurately in the media they see. When asked specifically about the ways in which Black people are portrayed accurately, the most common response is the insistence that Black people are not in fact portrayed accurately in the media – 25 percent of participants take this view (see Figure 40).

The accurate portrayals that are mentioned include coverage of live events in the arts, entertainment or sports, in some programs or types of reporting (e.g., on certain TV shows, news programs or documentaries, or when Black people are involved in production). Less commonly mentioned are accurate portrayals of Black as leaders or individual success stories, or portrayals of cultural or historical events such as Black History Month events and Caribbean festivals.

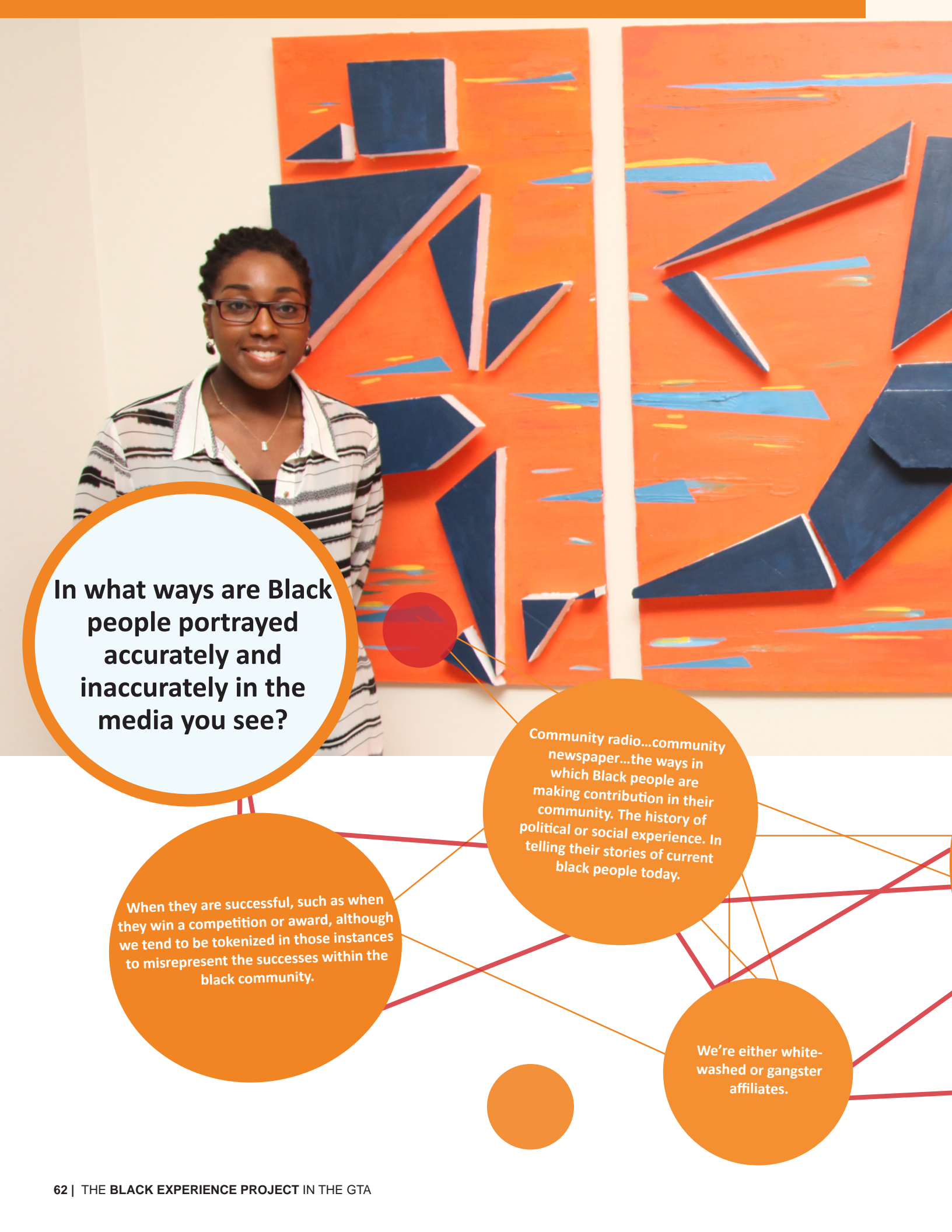
There is comparatively more agreement among participants about the ways in which Black people are portrayed inaccurately. One in two says that Black people are portrayed inaccurately in terms of an exaggerated extent of their involvement in criminal activities or drugs. About one in four points to inaccurate portrayals of Black people as uneducated, lazy, lacking ambition or dependent on welfare. Others cite portrayals that rely on general stereotypes and misrepresentations, such as those that emphasize aspects of Black communities or depict Black people solely as athletes and entertainers.

What do you think makes the Black community unique or distinctive from the many diverse groups that make up the Greater Toronto Area?

I think the heterogeneous nature of the community. Also that it is distinguished by colour, no other community is labeled like that. Shared history, legacy connects us. No other community is labeled by the skin colour and lumped into one. This is probably based on our shared history. Europeans named us and we reclaimed that. This has really set us apart, showcases our resilience.

(40) Portrayal of Black people in the media			
In what ways are Black people portrayed accurately in the media you see?	%	In what ways are Black people portrayed inaccurately in the media you see?	%
Not in fact portrayed accurately	25	Exaggeration of criminal activities	50
Live events (arts, entertainment and sports)	21	Uneducated, lazy or lack of ambition	27
TV, radio, web (e.g., specific TV shows, documentaries)	17	Stereotypes or general misrepresentation	26
Portrayals of leaders or individual success stories	8	Negative character attributes (e.g., loud, confrontational, hypersexual)	21
Positive individual traits/efforts	6	Caricatures on TV or in movies	19
Cultural or historic events	4	Negative portrayal of families and family relationships	11
Portrayals of community engagement or activism	4	Negative or monolithic portrayal of Black community or Black youth	9
Positive portrayal of family life	2	Misrepresentation of Black culture	7
Don't know/no answer	33	Don't know/no answer	24





In what ways are Black people portrayed accurately and inaccurately in the media you see?

Community radio...community newspaper...the ways in which Black people are making contribution in their community. The history of political or social experience. In telling their stories of current black people today.

When they are successful, such as when they win a competition or award, although we tend to be tokenized in those instances to misrepresent the successes within the black community.

We're either white-washed or gangster affiliates.



GISELLE
TYRRELL
Forward Thinking

We are either portrayed as the lowest of people or as extreme over-achievers who have distanced themselves from 'perceived Blackness'. We are often portrayed as over sexualized, violent, lawless, immoral people with no integrity or honesty. Any crime committed by a Black person receives an undue amount of media coverage focusing on dehumanizing the perpetrator. While Black victims are often cast in a negative light, with reports often insinuating that the victim was largely responsible for their problem. We are not seen as innocent or weak. We are portrayed as always guilty.

Just simply the storytelling. Various dominant ideals restrict portrayals of black peoples in media. Characters are restricted to limited narration and lack complexity. Blacks are represented one dimensionally as very gendered, able-bodied peoples in specific roles. With Blacks having certain dialects that require translation (though its English). Media makes it appear that there is a lack of complexity in Black peoples and their experiences. The perspective is not inclusive.



NEXT STEPS

This report provides an overview of the central themes that emerged from the Black Experience Project results, bringing to life important dimensions of the life experiences of individuals identifying as Black or of African Heritage with respect to identity, community and interactions with broader society. This document is by no means a comprehensive or complete analysis of the material captured through the extensive interviews with the study's 1,504 participants (such an analysis would require several hundred pages to properly document).

Rather, this report provides a foundation for further exploration, discussion and action. It is intended as a call to action to the many organizations, institutions and individuals in the Greater Toronto Area (and beyond) who have an interest and a role in the success of the Black community, and the well-being of all communities and individuals in society. This includes:

- Organizations and individuals within the GTA's diverse Black communities, who will be informed by the research to better appreciate the rich diversity of their communities, and can use the study data and insights to strengthen their assets and community resources;
- Governments and public institutions (e.g., education, police services, social services) at all levels, that can make effective use of the data to better reflect and serve the aspirations of the Black population, and help remove institutional barriers to success;
- Educators and researchers who can use the research to explore the data in greater detail, and incorporate new insights into educational programs;
- Community-based organizations, which can improve their programs, services and supports through the insights provided by this study;
- The business sector, which can make use of the study in strengthening human resource practices and creating new employment opportunities for racialized populations; and
- The media, in how they can improve their coverage and stories about the Black community. The data in this study support deeper understanding, alternative framing and more focus on successes and contributions of the Black community.

The BEP results and insights provide a new and compelling focal point around which diverse stakeholders can gain greater insight in advancing their missions. This encourages stakeholders to come together to constructively discuss what the research has revealed and how it points to a meaningful way forward. The results point to aspects of success and contributions that should be acknowledged and celebrated, as well as to obstacles and challenges that require thoughtful attention and effective solutions.

As the project moves into Phase 3, next steps cover three broad areas:

1. Further exploration of the data. Along with the public release of this report, the BEP survey data will be made available to community researchers, scholars, and organizations in all sectors. They will be encouraged to conduct further in-depth study on issues of most relevance (such as life aspirations, health and mental health, experiences with institutions, and comparisons between urban and suburban experiences). This report touches on only a portion of the extensive data collected through the survey, which encompassed more than 250 survey questions, and includes more than 60,000 qualitative responses to open-ended questions.

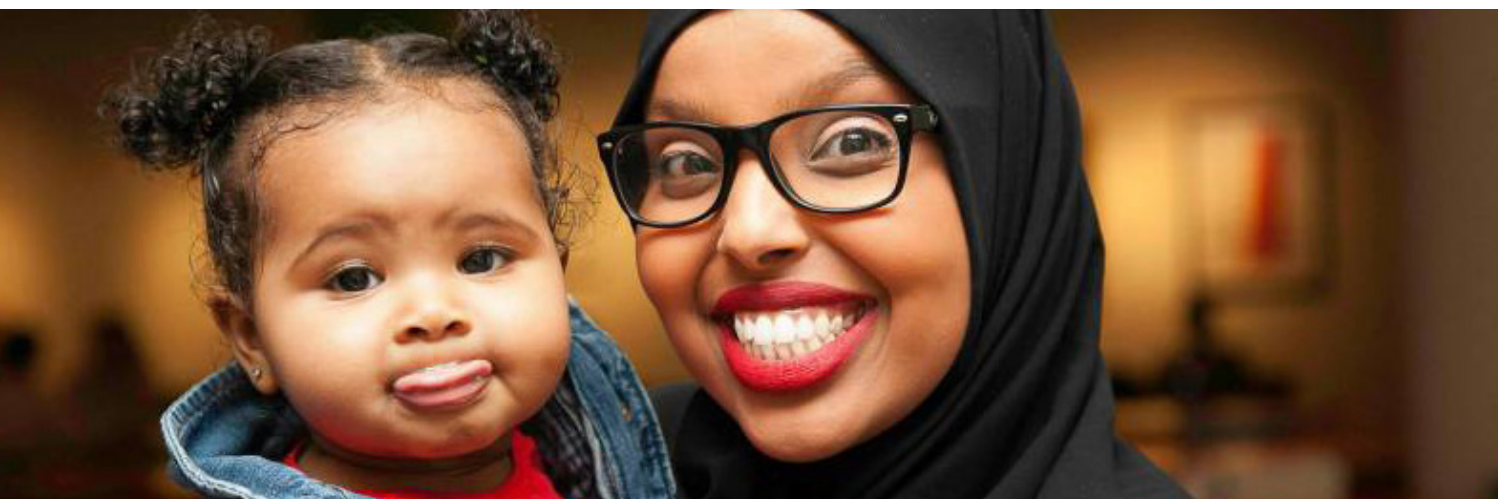
The Jean Augustine Chair (JAC) in Education, Community and Diaspora at York University will become the permanent home of the Black Experience Project, and serve as the primary access point for further research with the data. The JAC is also developing plans for additional programming initiatives around the study results.

It is hoped that the Black Experience Project will inspire further research studies initiated by the Black community (and others) that focus on particular issues of need. One of the primary objectives of the BEP is to strengthen the capacity within this community for effective community-based research. As well, the BEP may prove to be a valuable model for racialized communities in other Canadian cities (and other countries) that see the value of harnessing the power of social research to document their experience in a way that can lead to meaningful change.

2. Community and public discussions. The results from the Black Experience Project are intended to provide a strong impetus for initiating meaningful discussions about what the findings reveal and how they may be leveraged to identify opportunities and priorities for strengthening the health and capacities of the Black community. Organizations in all sectors will be encouraged to develop programming (e.g., internal discussions, public events, educational initiatives) based on the BEP study findings. The goal of the research is to serve as a catalyst; bringing diverse stakeholders together to work toward a common understanding of the issues and devise strategies for effective pathways forward.

3. Providing a more balanced and honest public narrative. The Black Experience Project provides the media with a strong empirical basis for improving its coverage of the Black community generally, as well as the stories of Black individuals. This is an important opportunity and responsibility, as most non-Blacks have a limited and often stereotypical view of their Black neighbours. At the same time, it is increasingly important to confront the reality of anti-Black racism in the GTA and its pervasiveness regardless of ethnic background, socio-economic status or gender identity. There is much to learn from the study results.

A research study such as the Black Experience Project cannot on its own fully capture the strength and contributions of the GTA Black community, nor can it address the persistent challenges and systemic inequalities in society. What it does provide is an empirically-based understanding of what it is like to be Black in the GTA. This can help create new conversations that lead to transformational change, by providing a more realistic and constructive focal point for discussion and a way forward.



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- ²⁴ This data is provided courtesy of the Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto (Statistics Canada, Census Profile Series 1996, 2006 and Census 1981 Custom Tabulation EO2228). Although the visible minority question was not asked in the 1981 Census, Statistics Canada has derived comparable estimates based on birth place, language and ethnic origin responses as part of the custom tabulation.
- ²⁵ General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (GVP) as reported in Martin Turcotte, *Volunteering and Charitable Giving in Canada*, Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2015; <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2015001-eng.pdf>, (accessed on 26 June 2017).
- ²⁶ Churches have also nurtured the civil rights movement, and many of its leaders were clergy (such as Dr. Martin Luther King).
- ²⁷ Survey question about voting were asked only to BEP participants who were Canadian citizens, 16 and older, and therefore eligible to vote, which is important in interpreting results for the 16 to 24 group.
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- ³⁷ General Social Survey 2012, Statistics Canada.
- ³⁸ Note that the survey asked two separate questions about being arrested, one in the context of experiences with the police, and the other in the context of contact with the criminal justice system. The responses to the two questions are slightly different.
- ³⁹ The *National Council of Welfare Reports: Poverty Profile Special Edition, 2012*, provides national statistics but nothing specific for the GTA or for Black youth.
- ⁴⁰ James, C.E. & Turner, T. (2017). "Towards Race Equity in Education: The Schooling of Black Students in the Greater Toronto Area". Toronto, Ontario, Canada: York University, <http://edu.yorku.ca/files/2017/04/Towards-Race-Equity-in-Education-April-2017.pdf>, (accessed on 12 July 2017).

Appendix A

BEP Project Team

The following individuals played key roles in the design and implementation of the Black Experience Project during Phase 2.

CORE PROJECT TEAM

Keith Neuman, Project Director
Marva Wisdom, Director, Outreach and Engagement
Fowzia Duale Virtue, Project Coordinator
Joseph Smith, Project Coordinator
Samantha Kemp-Jackson, Public Relations/Communications Lead

DESIGN, CODING, ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Stephen Amoah	Duaa Mohamed
Michael Antwi	John Otoo
Kenneth Asante	Andrew Parkin
Selom Chapman-Nyaho	Trisha Scantlebury
Chevy Eugene	Rohit Shah
Malaika Hill	Tana Turner
Suelyn Knight	Chris Williams
David Lewis-Peart	Hannibal Yonathan
Laura Mae Lindo	

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT *(including participant recruitment and interviewing)*

Theophilus Adjei	Bashiyr Douglas	Jesse Murray
Olivier Adrien	Chevy Eugene	Tana Nbo
Sarah-Bella Akande	Toni Goree	Tania N’bonguele
Nadia Ali	Carissa Gravelle	Amanda Parris
Mikayla Allen	Dena Henry	Michael Paul
Jordanne Amos	Sanfoka Jaba	Marquez Ramsay
Rose-Ann Bailey	Kerwin Jackson	Sophia Ramsay
Lisa Brown	Femi James	Nadine Ruby
Shaniqua Brown	Francis Jeffers	Danavan Samuels
Tana Brown	Suelyn Knight	Kofi Sankofa
Chantelle Campbell	Cynthia Kuassi	Chantelle Selkridge
Pita Garth Case	David Lewis-Peart	Keneisha Stone
Tynelle Chase	Stephen Linton	Samia Tecle Shea
J’bral Celestine	Thomas-Malcolm	Alison Thompson
Krysta Celestine	Nicole May	Nicole Veira
Oneal Chin	Faith Ann Mendez	Jordan Williams
C. J. Cromwell	Desmond Miller	Hannibal Yonathan
Paulette Currie	Arnold Minors	
Maame Debrah	Duaa Mohamed	

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

Ryan Singh, Ryan Singh Enterprises
Chris Strikes, Callowgrove Entertainment



EDITING & PUBLICATION DESIGN

Emilie-Andrée Jabouin
Karina Mohammed
Jacky Au Duong



Appendix B

Research Advisory Group

The following individuals served in a volunteer capacity as research advisors to the Black Experience Project during Phase 2.

Dr. Uzo Anucha - York University
Mr. Mohamed Elmi – Ryerson’s Diversity Institute
Dr. Gervan Fearon (emeritus) – Ryerson University/Brandon University
Dr. Grace-Edward Galabuzi – Ryerson University
Dr. Michael Hall – YMCA of the Greater Toronto Area
Dr. Carl James (Chair) – York University/Jean Augustine Chair
Ms. Michelynn Lafleche – United Way Toronto & York Regions
Dr. Kwame McKenzie – Wellesley Institute
Dr. Lance McCready – Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto
Dr. Jeffrey Reitz – University of Toronto
Dr. Dominique Riviere – Studio Y, MaRS Discovery District
Dr. Miriam Rossi (emeritus) – University of Toronto
Ms. Marva Wisdom – Wisdom Consulting/EnviroNics Institute





It isn't often that a community gets to conduct a SWOT analysis of itself but a keen reading of the BEP report will reveal our community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. How we use this information is our challenge to address. There is no question that the findings of the BEP can help our community find solutions to its challenges and to play a stronger role in the Canadian narrative. I know these findings can help students envision their future and I'm confident it will do the same for the wider community.

Trevor Massey

Chair, Lifelong Leadership Institute

The data contained in this report provides current experiential evidence of how systematic racism continues to negatively impact the black community which will assist in making informed decisions going forward. There has been progress, but there is so much more work to do and it starts with using the voices of those who contributed to this report to pave a path towards tearing down the walls of Anti-Black Racism. As woman of colour and senior leader at the Region of Peel I am very proud of this report and look forward to incorporating our learnings into making Peel the kind of community where everyone can thrive, regardless of their colour, race, faith, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, age or socio-economic status. This is a very important step, but now the hard work begins.

Juliet Jackson

Director, Culture & Inclusion, Region of Peel

I believe the Black Experience Project will greatly benefit my community and endure as a foundational and groundbreaking survey research on who the Black people of the five regions of the Greater Toronto Area are and were in the window of 2010 to 2017. This is why I earnestly and irrevocably support the Black Experience Project.

Mahad Yusuf

Executive Director, Midaynta Community Services

The Black Experience Project provided the opportunity to engage directly with the Black community to identify systemic and institutional restorative measures that will positively contribute to their experience and well-being. The Durham Regional Police Service intends to proactively incorporate the relevant insights from the study throughout our organization to enhance transparency, accountability, and respectful engagement.

Paul Martin

Chief of Police, Durham Regional Police Service

For more information, visit:
theblackexperienceproject.ca