



Caribbean  
Women Network

EDMONTON  
SAFESPACES  
WHITESUPREMACY  
POLICEBRUTALITY  
BROWN  
CARIBBEANWOMEN  
RESISTANCE  
WOMENOFCOLOUR  
ANTI-RACISM  
SOMETHINGISWRONG  
SUBTLERACISM  
BLACKLIVESMATTER  
BIAS  
CHANGE  
MINORITIES  
THEREISNORACISMINCANADA  
MICROAGGRESSION  
DISCRIMINATION  
BLACKWOMEN  
PREJUDICE  
WHITEPRIVILEGE  
WHITELIVEDMATTER  
SOCIALINCLUSION  
RACISM  
BIPOC  
SYSTEMICRACISM

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## Foreword

As members of the Caribbean Women Network's Anti-Racism Committee we have put together this report **Something Is Wrong** as a perspective on the lived experiences of racism by people in our community. These experiences were shared with us through the stories and comments made at in person group meetings; one-on-one conversations; on-line surveys; and zoom meetings held during the months of June, July, and August 2020. The title of the report was taken from a monologue by one participant telling the story of her arrival in Canada.

During these summer conversations or "Let's Talk" sessions, we heard from **61 people** about the overt and subtle nature of racism experienced or observed, and the upsetting impact on people's mental and physical well-being, and their sense of belonging to this country.

This report makes an effort to pay tribute to what we heard, and to strengthen our collective voice. The things we were told were not new. For decades in Canada people from the Caribbean have been saying the same things- from the George Pullman Porters to Sir George Williams University Students- as they fought racism and discrimination.

And although listening to it took an emotional toll, what we heard affirmed for us that as racialized persons living in Canada, we are often perceived as the "other" or of "not belonging." We discussed some of Canada's history of past policies of keeping people of colour out of Canada, and of workplace structures and practices that present systemic barriers to education, employment and social standing in our society.

There are other stories out there. It was during Covid 19 and everyone who wished to participate could not do so. We also know there are people who wouldn't share their stories because they worry about speaking up, or feel they won't get supported by others. But we also feel hopeful about things as there appears to be a momentum for change. Many ideas about trying to work with indigenous groups and others were put forward as a way of strengthening our voices, and CWN was commended for organizing the meetings.

But, as said before, there was hopefulness about making our community what we aspire it to be. The feeling of positivity was inspiring. It is in this spirit of optimism we present this report, **Something Is Wrong** as part of CWN's continuing "action" on the struggle to end racism.

*"It is an important exercise to listen to the experiences of people, to provide opportunity to discuss aloud, to express themselves freely and respond to each other"*

*Listening Moments Participant*

*".....as Edmontonians are open and accepting of the joyous cultural contribution of CARIWEST to the city of Edmonton, so too, we hope that they are open and accepting of our experiences of racism in our city, and of this small contribution to the fight to end to racial discrimination."*

Pearl Bennett, Executive Director,  
Caribbean Women Network

## Background

***On May 25, George Floyd, a black man, died after a white police officer in Minneapolis pressed a knee into his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. George Floyd could be heard in a video tape pleading for air, saying, "I can't breathe" until he stopped moving. His death prompted a wave of outrage.***

***"anti black racism is real in the U.S. but also in Canada, and we have work to do in our system as well."***

***Prime Minister of Canada  
Justin Trudeau  
May 29, 2020***

People across the world took to the streets in protest including in every major city in Canada. Reacting in shock and horror, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urged us all *"as a society to stand together, stand up against discrimination, be there for each other...."*

**May 29, 2020**

In Edmonton close to 15,000 people marched in protest at the Legislature Grounds, and Mayor Don Iveson said this: *"Racism is still a problem and we must continue to combat it here in Edmonton and I am supportive of the work that many*

*Edmontonians and organizations are doing to fight injustices and create a more equitable society,"*

**June 5, 2020**

**Rachel Notley**, Leader of the Official opposition in the Alberta Legislature was quoted as saying in the **June 30, 2020** edition of the paper: *"We as politicians, and as a society must act with intention to fight racism and end racism."*

It was against this backdrop of the traumatic Lloyd Floyd killing, the reactions by governments and people around the world and here at home, that CWN became motivated to take time to reflect, become better informed, and plan actions we could take. In the moment of racial tension and racial violence, we simply could not just say or do nothing.

The first of our **Let's Talk** discussions was held on June 5 at CWN's Annual General Meeting at which 16 people participated. At this meeting, people spoke of:

- their personal experiences with racism;
- their worry for their children and grand-children;
- how sometimes we devalue ourselves (internalized racism); and
- how racism affects us as women

We struggled with the meanings of "ingrained" racism, institutional or "systemic" racism, and also spoke of how to begin building relationships with indigenous groups and individuals. After about an hour long discussion a committee was established to further the work CWN would do.

### **Mandate of the Committee**

At the first committee meeting, a statement of purpose for the initiative was established:

***"In response to the current focus on anti-racism, and based on our lived experiences, CWN will explore ways and means to contribute to needed change."***

We would focus on:

- Time To Talk - In-person listening and self-exploratory Sessions
- Conversations with allies, women's groups, others
- Identifying strategies and direct actions such as letter writing, seminars, or make approaches to influential people and Govt's. etc.
- Research and collect information on efforts to combat racism or reports on racism
- A report on the initiative will be produced and shared as decided.

## Inputs

As indicated earlier, this start-up initiative took place from June to August 2020. The information we gathered through the activities form the basis of this report. What we eventually included were (1) notes from the listening sessions; (2) exact words spoken during a video-taped self-exploratory session;(3) written submissions from a survey sent out to members; and (4) information researched by members of the committee on other initiatives and reports on racism.

### Let's Talk - Open Listening Group Sessions

It is to be remembered that these sessions were organized during Covid 19 and it was established we would accommodate no more than 20 or so people in the room for any one meeting as we observed the public health Covid19 directives. Information on meeting dates and times were sent out through the network's membership and friends via newsletters and reminder e-mails. People were invited to join in and share their observations and experiences with racism in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and elsewhere.

Four of these sessions were held in June and July. A total of forty- one **(41)** people participated. Each session was facilitated in 3 steps that included: listening moments, focused self-exploratory exercises or targeted discussion points; and Next Steps or ideas to pursue. The latter always allotted time for sharing thoughts on what CWN could do to make Edmonton a better, more respectful or inclusive place to be.

***“ They just don't see us. I can't tell you the number of times I have approached a make-up counter, bakery, or food cashier, and the person at the counter would pretend she didn't see me, and say “Next!” Most often the person behind me would have to say “She was here before me.”***

***Listening Moments participant***

### One-On-One Interviews and Conversations

These were both formal and informal and several of them **(10)** were recorded contemporaneously during the course of the project. They were purposeful discussions on race relations, racism and other forms of discrimination- gender biases, and biases against newcomers.

### E-mail Survey

A short survey was developed and sent out to members of the Association. Although only a few people **(7)** returned the completed survey, their comments and answers were included as part of this report.

### Researched Information

Information was assembled from media websites - Global News, CTV News, Edmonton Journal. scholarly and community reports and surveys as cited in appendices.

What emerged from the process is highlighted below. These unique insights come from the experiences and observations of members and friends of the Caribbean Women Network – a predominantly racialized community in Edmonton. We heard **“whether we are black, indigenous or people of colour - we feel the racism”**. Sometimes it is overt- at the individual and interpersonal level, and other times it is at societal level (bias in hiring, racial profiling, carding, over-policing), and most times it is subtle but pervasive in the indignities we put up with. A grand-mother at one of the meetings said **“ My grand-daughter is mixed. She used to get teased at school and come home crying and upset. I would say to her ‘not to worry.’ Now I wish I had gone to the school and complained. And at work I ignored the subtle racism as a way of coping.”**

## General Matters

### **Black Lives Matter (BLM): A special effort to address anti-Black racism**

One participant told the story of an argument with a family member who didn't seem to understand that saying “All lives Matter” was racist. Not because all lives don't matter or that black lives matter more, but because there is a long history in the US (and yes in Canada) of Blacks being treated with deadly force far more often than white people. **BLM** is a call for justice and a recognition that black lives are more at risk when it comes to police brutality.

“Some of us in this room- we have sons and we know the worry and anxieties when they are not home on time. We would often tell our boys to “back down” if they have an encounter with racism”

Listening Moments, Black Mother

### **And Black Women Matter Very Much**

Because it's a lot for black women to carry. Just watching the videos on television is a major source of stress. Black women are often seen as “resilient” and “strong” but centuries of racism has had accumulative negative effect on the way we live our lives. It seems like you always have to be on guard. When you have to teach your children how to deal with the N – word, just having to talk about race with them is not an easy task for black mothers. **Fighting against “structures”** like the Education system or the health system has an impact on our mental and physical health. One participant described her persistent **“journey of “resistance”** after she left her home-land - of **“picketing against racism with Filipino nurses in Detroit”** (they were being blamed for the deaths of patients); of **“picketing with Palestinians for self-determination”** and how **“these experiences transformed her.”**

“The thing with racism is that you feel it even when it didn't happen to you. I will never forget how I felt when I saw the television footage of the Rodney King beating. I know I likely lost a job partially because I did not publicly condemn the burning and looting in the aftermath of that incident.

Listening Moments Female Participant

### **Our Words Matter: But how open should we be?**

It is a struggle to know how open one should be as a woman of color – talking about things in the hope of bringing about change. One woman said **“I've been called a trouble-maker,”** and another commented, **“although we feel it and know it- the experience of being at the receiving end of put-downs and feeling discarded, we are not sure how to re-act-so, we let things roll off like water off a duck's back.”** A male member offered this: “ I've always felt that success is the best way **to show people....how...** “ BUT, someone interjected, “been there done that. ..when we first came here, we began arming ourselves with “papers. The first one, then the second one and so on, just to ‘show them’ that we are as well

Educated as them, and deserve the jobs....” **The silent treatment does not work. By saying nothing, we are accepting and promoting racism.** Because as one “successful” person in the room put it: “despite the privileges I have enjoyed because of my job and education, despite the good life ....we have had many challenges and we must be cognizant of the work to be done collectively to address these challenges.”

## Something is Wrong

“On arriving in Toronto- I had my first exposure to racism-. I began to realize “something is wrong.”- I had difficulty accessing housing as a student, kept failing in school courses- both me and my friends. Things erupted into Black power movement- people from the Caribbean started becoming “activists” and “rebels” and turning into something they never intended to – all due to the experiences they were having- not being treated as equals. When you confront racism all the time; you become transformed.”

Listening Moments Participant

### Racism is complicated

**It shakes you up and leads to frustration, anger, and mistrust**

The thing with racism is that it comes in many forms. It can be overt and ugly – “highly visible racism (for example racist slurs being yelled from a car)” or it can be “subtle”, like a neighbour who refuses to acknowledge your presence. One participant sent me an e-mail saying: “ **In over 25 years of living across from each other, one of my neighbours has never waved, said hello, or acknowledged me in any way. This person would just look away if we are approaching.**”

The impact though is the same- it shakes you up, and can lead to frustration, anger, and mistrust. Members pointed out their experiences when they first came to Canada – of problems finding housing, of issues in the educational system today, and of recent encounters of their sons looking for work.

### It is systemic

One woman worried about employment opportunities for her sons. In a **one on-one conversation** with her she was very frustrated that her son’s friends had all received calls from the City of Edmonton for better paying summer jobs related to working in parks or on the roads but that her son didn’t. “**I am convinced,**” she said, “**it has to do with his last name – they can tell by his name that he is not white, so they wouldn’t even give him a chance.**” And she ‘s right.

According to the **National Bureau of Economic Research**, people with non-white sounding names find it more difficult to get responses to their job applications. In Canada, people with Indian, Pakistani, and Chinese names were 28% less likely to get called for an interview than their white counterparts. In the UK, a person named Adam was offered 3 times more interviews than someone named Mohammed.

**Impact:** According to a recent Canadian report: **Inclusive cities and the experiences of racialized youth**, “ this can have long-term negative impacts on their health, well-being and ability to achieve to their potential.”

Canadian Employment trends: Youths aged 15 to 24 who are not racialized have an unemployment rate of 16%. Youths who are racialized have a much tougher time finding jobs, with an unemployment rate of 23% On top of that, racialized people are disproportionately likely to be working in low wage jobs

“Among my family and friends, we have had difficulty with employment; In Canada, people are very polite so it’s difficult to know where you stand with people, what a person may be think of you.”

Listening Moments Participant

### Sometimes it is difficult to prove

When you get an interview sometimes, you are often politely told, “we’ve found a better fit.” One then begins to mistrust that politeness. What could it mean but you are seen as an “outsider” with differences in colour, accent, ethnicity or some reading of your personality, that you could never become ‘one of them.” This “**right fit**” assessment was noted as a barrier in a Treasury Board of Canada Survey of Gov’t. employees. **73% noted bias** as a barrier to achieving diversity and inclusion in their workplace.

## Racism is hard to challenge

This story invoked some visceral reactions. One participant immediately cried out: **“That is harassment. We should speak up when we hear bad things being said about others. Too much harassment is going on.”**

When we live and work in predominantly “white spaces” we realize some people don’t even know they hold racist beliefs, or their beliefs are cloaked in dislikes of people’s foods, or their hostility towards new immigrants who can’t speak good English. The fact remains that this East Indian immigrant family was experiencing racism and discrimination in relation to their food and their language. The seemingly flattering words, “you are not like them, you speak good English,” can mean at least one thing- they think he’s closer to their whiteness, - is more like them- and so they reward him for this by making him an “insider,” while keeping others like the immigrant family out.

“One time there was a conflict in the community- a person complained about a neighbour saying ‘I just don’t like the smell of their food.’ Is that racist? The Community League had to get involved, and I was asked to talk to the people concerned..... but you know I have heard them making negative comments about East Indians when I am with them, and when I remind them that I too am one, they say, ‘Oh no, you are not like them, you speak good English’.”

Listening Moments Male Participant

## It can be internalized by those who experience it

One member at our first meeting suggested we come to better grips with internalized racism. She explains what she thinks happened to her, how she internalized the experiences she had with racism.

“When I first came to Alberta, I had already taught at a University in my home country. I went to the U of A and did my Master’s degree in Education, but I was unable to find a good teaching job. After a while I started applying for other jobs- like at the Human Rights Commission. The job I interviewed for there was given to a white woman with an English accent but someone who had no experience with human rights activities. These experience made me start to think ‘they must be more deserving than me, they must be more superior to me’. This is the worst ramification of racism- **it’s like a kick in the belly**. And so I became angry and turned into a ferocious activist, taking on Ministers and others anywhere and everywhere.”

Female Senior Member, who participated in both meetings and one-on-one discussions.

**We begin to feel “we have to be the best at what we do”** That in itself, according to one participant is indicative of racial or other existing biases in our society.

“the privilege you enjoy because of your profession or of your education buffers you from the experience of racism. People won’t come outright and say something to you. But you say you tell your children and grandchildren “you have to be the best” ..... that is saying you don’t want them to experience what others do.”

Female participant responding to someone who said he felt “privileged.”



## There is Racism in Edmonton's Workplace

Racist attitudes by employers result in being passed over for promotions. You are often reluctant to raise the issue, as you may be told "you are playing the race card." Incidents like the story here, are painful, and difficult to forget, and affect employees' productivity.

"...Once I applied for a managerial position since I was the only one in the department who was extremely knowledgeable about that position. I was bypassed for a woman whom I had hired as temporary help. She was asked to apply for the job behind my back and she did and was given the job. A few months later when she couldn't handle the job and got extremely stressed out she just quit and my boss then came to me and apologized and said I could have the job. The only reason I was bypassed was because I was the wrong colour!!

Woman of colour via e-mail survey

## Sometimes, some of us "pass for white"

"I have heard my co-workers refer to people from the middle east as "sand n...ers"

City of Edmonton Employee

In certain white dominated industries such as construction, there is racism, but I believe it is getting better as the years go by."

Male participant, via e-mail

Two grown mixed race men who work in male dominated areas of employment told us that because they "pass for white" they hear very overt racist remarks. At other times, co-workers won't even be bothered to learn the names of their colleagues and for example, have referred to a person as "one of the Vinders." Many Sikh male names end in "Vinder." When told it is blatantly disrespectful and racist, the employee replied "I am not racist, I have these people in my family." "These people" is just another racist epithet. Not learning peoples' names, or mispronouncing names are just other ways of invalidating people of colour and making their names appear alien. Getting people's names right is a sign of respect.

## It seems pervasive

"I still see racism in my work environment. We have many foreign trained doctors and health care staff that move here and do EXTRA work to prove they are just as qualified and knowledgeable as Canadian trained workers. And even given the extra hurdles they have to jump to work here, I hear the commentary from my Caucasian colleagues about accents and not understanding them, about different cultural traditions, about why are we getting so many foreign trained people? I have seen examples of different disciplinary action that is different when it's an immigrant vs a local Canadian."

Female Health Care Worker

## Racism takes an emotional toll

And as one participant said "**We cannot change the colour of our skin**". Nor do we want to of course.. Our race is part of who we are. One female participant said "I am proud of the cultural and social influences of my African and Trinidadian heritage." We just don't want to be mistreated because of it.

**"Building inclusive, equitable, anti-racist communities come with resistance and we need to prepare ourselves for the emotions that come with it."** Self Exploratory Workshop Facilitator

## Close the Gaps

### On Data Collection

“There are gaps in Data Collection which make it easier for moderates to say ‘ **there is no racism in Canada.**’ ” Our workshop Facilitator suggested therefore, that we support initiatives to collect data on racist acts in Canada and on its impact on women and youths too, as very little currently exists. This was echoed by many people: an email that came in said, “**we don't really know how bad things are....documentation of police involved deaths by race will give transparency and much needed data that can support change.**” And another participant stated,“**racism is well and alive in Alberta...** and that we need to show the trend, that “it’s just not isolated incidents.” Two stories in recent editions of the Edmonton journal were cited:

1. A July 3,2020 story which told of a 2016 incident of a white South African surgeon who had hung a noose for a black Nigerian born surgical assistant, and (2) the *durag* (headwear) incident where an 11-year old was asked to remove the headwear and was suspended for not doing so.

**The on-line petition to support the collection of police involved deaths was sent to CWN members.**

“Racism is very much underground in Canada because of this lack of data.....what we do might be ‘small change’ but it will have ripple effect”  
Self-exploratory Workshop Facilitator

### In the Education System

Support Black History in the Alberta School Curriculum

**A Global News article of July 17,2020**, quoted Gabrielle Lindstrom, a Kainaiwa First Nations member and professor of Indigenous studies at Mount Royal U. Calgary: “**the gaps in the current curriculum are “profound.”** She continued that the “inclusion and Diversity” part of the curriculum “falls short of getting to the heart of the issue.”

CWN supported **Daniel Alfoulabi’s petition** for more black History taught in Canadian Schools as a means of addressing the gap written about in the Global article. (Daniel Alfoulabi was a student and soccer team member in Okotoks Alberta when a player on the opposing team refused to shake his hand, because he was black.

“...reading the book “**They call Me George**” made me feel like our system of education failed me and other Canadians like me, because it didn't teach us about Canada's racist past –it's white supremacist policies of keeping it a white man's country. I am fairly well educated and had never heard of the Black Porters' Union and now I have learnt about them, I consider them Canadian heroes. We never learnt about **Stanley Grizzle**, who started the Porters' Union. **Something is deeply wrong** about us not learning of our own history. I think this book will be a great addition to our High School Curriculum”  
**Caucasian Female CWN Member in a one on one Interview**

### In our Knowledge Base

**Become Better Informed about Canada’s History of Racism**

A few incident in Canada’s History that came up but we need to become familiar with:

- Komagata Maru and continuous voyage policy
- Internment camps for Japanese, Ukrainians, other
- **The Chinese Head Tax**
- Sir George Williams University Affair
- Amber Valley Black History
- Viola Davis and what she represents
- Indigenous issues –Residential Schools and other acts of racism towards them

Even after the War Canada continued with favouring immigrants from the UK, and Western Europe, and excluded people from countries like Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. It wasn't until 1976 that a fairer immigration policy was put in place,  
This legacy of racism in Canada has left its imprint on our systems, and it must be acknowledged that the communities who experienced it continue to be at the lowest rung of the social and economic ladder of our society. We should organize learning sessions on these themes and others.

## Become more conversant with all the new words and terminologies

It was stressed during a workshop, how important it is that we continue to learn and become more familiar with the new words and phrases we hear with respect to the discussions on racism- words like *power*, *white privilege*, *marginalization*. In any discussion for example, of our migration stories, such words are used, so it's necessary to understand them. Some of these terminologies have been used in this report with scant clarifications, and some were not: **Brown; BIPOC; racialized minorities; visible minorities; BLM; social inclusion; internalized racism; micro aggressions;; social change; police brutality; systemic racism ; institutionalized racism; racism; subtle and over racism; being an anti-racist; white supremacy.** These are only some of the words and terms we should hold learning sessions on.

"In Trinidad we never used the term 'brown' people- it was "black" and we all identified with that, especially during the "Black Power Movement" there.... the work on getting locals to work at Banks for example was for all not just those now identified as Blacks."

Male Trinidadian participant

"racism goes on and on and on like a generational curse."

" We need to align ourselves with an institution like the U of A for example - that has power; use our allies like the Jamaican Association and others..." **Workshop Facilitator**

We have to get the numbers- if each of us try to connect with 50 people- that 600 people; it will be very effective. We need to begin with the people we know- our families, friends co-workers "

## Build alliances for collective power

During this segment of the discussion, the facilitator also said that "**racism goes on and on and on like a generational curse**" The suggestion of using our collective power recognizes the need to build alliances, because to get rid of systemic racism we need to be part of those "spheres of influence" as one participant put it. Those who have benefitted the racist structures, are all part of the problem and they must also become emotional involved and feel the necessity to join in. But groups like ours need to be enabled to lead and participate fully for social change to happen.

"We have to come together to educate ourselves, **to explore how racism impacts us.** We need a safe space like this to do so. A lot of the time we put on a mask and walk through our daily lives; we feel diminished, but we don't stop to think of how it's impacting us. We also need to explore times when we feel privileged (like one person in the room just said).

Workshop Facilitator

## Maintain Safe spaces like CWN And brave spaces too!

It was emphasized that, in order for communities of color like CWN to think, act and talk about racial justice, there is a need for spaces like ours to be maintained. But there has to be financial and moral supports for minority community spaces and programs. The discussion prompted one participant to say that we should be alert "**as to who may get funds coming out of all the discussions around racism. Is it the organizations that represent the people?**" she asked.

## Develop a Project to explore this impact

**Micro-aggressions** is a new term being used to describe the subtle forms of dishonoring people of colour. When you are essentially erased as a person at the make-up counter; or when your contribution to a discussion is invalidated in a meeting, but applauded when a white colleague down the circle steals your ideas and your words. While we can support the issue related to police violence, it is also important to really address how this seemingly innocuous type of racism affects our energies, our well-being and how it works to makes us angry over time.

When I was in the workforce, any coloured person that came to the counter, my co-workers would say, 'I think there's someone here to see you.'"

Female Survey Participant, via e-mail

## *Other Things to Think About-As we engage on racism*

### **Work on our own biases and prejudices**

There is a need for us as Caribbean people to explore the impact of colonialism; how one group was pitted against the other and the legacy of those experiences on us today. Racial epithets like “c...ies” or “old n...rs” that were used so cavalierly in Trinidad in the old days, are still being thrown around even today. These conversations may be uncomfortable to have, but a level of discomfort is often necessary to bring about changes in ourselves.

### **And if we have never experienced racism?**

Some of us may feel more privileged than others because we may never have experienced racism ourselves, but if we are a part of the community, we have to make sure we are not just bystanders. It's important to become allies to those who have experienced it. To be an anti-racist you don't have to be free of racism or pretend to be free of racism, **we just have to commit to fight it wherever we find it, even in ourselves.**

“I have come to listen to the experiences some of you may have had. I have never experienced discrimination in my work place, but I know that others were not hired or promoted and so I'm aware that racism exists.”

Female Listening Moments Participant

“...[I am] concerned about the open hate being generated against minorities when it is given approval by people who hold significant influence (for example Trump).

Asian female youth via e-mail

“I told my brother- he just can't stand up against racism on social media. He should also be willing to call out his friends when they say something that is racist; he has to be genuine and he must also act.”

Young woman of colour in her mid-twenties

### **Help younger people in their struggle to fight racism**

We contacted **five young people between the ages of 19-25**. (one caucasian and 4 persons of color) via e-mail, and one-on-one discussions. They all agreed that racism exists in Alberta/Canada and have experienced it or as in the case of the Caucasian youth, know people who have.

One person did not like the term BIPOC. “I would be offended if someone called me **POC**”. Another person used the term “brown” frequently in the conversation saying things like “*that was so brown.*” Brown is a fairly new term, and it appears that younger people of South Asian descent in Canada may be using it more, but there is a need to explore what it means.

Another suggested via e-mail that we look at **Timoro Mohamed's** Workshop/Video: Empowering Black Girls - Let's Talk About It, Anti-Black Racism, as reported in the Edmonton Journal **30/06/20**,

### **The Issue of CWN's limited Access to funding**

The need to maintain CWN was mentioned already. To do so more reliable funding is necessary. This year with COVID 19, our Casino funding that pays for the space was reduced. Racialized communities in general face barriers to resources provided by government funding programs. Often times the capacity of organizations are cited as the reason for not funding a program, but without funding smaller groups can't build their capacities. CWN is constantly searching for, and applying for funding, most of which is project based. It makes us as an organization very fragile. Reports indicate that Government funding favours organizations that are larger with many employees. Lack of funding to organizations like ours deepens inequalities.

# Something Is Wrong

## Conclusion

As we end this report, we return to the incident that made us feel the urgency to want to join with others to address the blatant racism in the killing of George Floyd on May 25 2020. It was an incident of anti-black racism, steeped in the racist history of the US that began with slavery.

But, from what we heard and learnt during the course of our meetings and discussions, it is clear that racism exists in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada too. And it is evident at different levels. Sometimes it is at the individual level, and in the interactions between people that is not easy to discern. Very importantly it is at the societal level through policies and long-standing biases or "normal ways of doing things" within institutions and even Government. This is referred to as systemic racism and it is unwittingly directed at people from black, indigenous and other people of colour.

Canada is known around the world for its diverse population and standing up for human rights. Yet as our comments and stories show, **something is wrong**. There is a need for us as a people to address racism seriously. The consequences of racism - "losing a job;" of "not getting promoted;" of "youths with non English names not getting called for interviews; of blacks being followed in stores, or stopped by the police for no reason; of saying the call for Black History or the history of Residential Schools in the Alberta Curriculum are fads; are all very serious matters. They should not be treated as "isolated incidents" or because of "a few rotten apples" in the system. This is denying it exists and to truly make change, we must first acknowledge its existence, **and come together** to eradicate its perniciousness. Because as **Rosemary Brown, the first black woman to be elected to a provincial Legislature**, said in 1972:

**"Until all of us have made it, none of us have made it."**

**"Unresolved issues never go away... four hundred years of [subjugation]....Slavery has become the root of evils that black people face today...[like] the murder of George Floyd.....When Justice is denied and patience runs out [there is a] resurgence of protests, black folks joined by many others demand equal justice for all.**  
**Etty Cameron, Retired teacher in Alberta and member of the Black community wrote in Alberta Prime Times 01/07/20**

**The Caribbean Women Network thanks:**

**Committee Members:** Antoinette Alleyne –Committee Lead; Ulrich Birbal, Tony Montrose, Donna Coombs - Montrose, and Michael Phair - members.

**All participants** –who attended the group sessions, who took part in interviews & conversations; and those who sent in the surveys.

**Volunteers:** Karen Chin Aleong Brooks, Jessica Naidoo, Rehana Bennett, Harpreet Kaur

**CWN Board:** for supporting the Initiative

**Staff:** Pearl Bennett



*creating community  
where  
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There comes a time when silence is betrayal  
Martin Luther King

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Resist and Persist

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Black History Matters

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