



Launch of Policy Recommendations to Address Anti-Black Racism in Schools

February 24, 2021, Ottawa, ON – Today, the [Global Centre for Pluralism](#) in partnership with the [Canadian Commission for UNESCO](#) (CCUNESCO) launched *From Reflection to Action: Addressing Anti-Black Racism in Canadian Schools*, a policy paper that recommends concrete actions for education leaders.

In the summer of 2020, the murder of George Floyd in the United States pushed to the forefront demands to end racism in policing and justice systems in Canada and around the world. At the same time, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were exacerbating underlying social and economic inequalities that have disproportionately affected Black communities. These difficult conversations were taking place across Canada, including among students. Educators were fielding students' questions while not feeling adequately equipped to do so. In response, the Global Centre for Pluralism and the CCUNESCO collaborated to offer a series of virtual anti-Black racism webinars for high school teachers.

Over 500 teachers and administrators from across Canada attended small-group and webinar sessions facilitated by anti-racism and inclusion consultant Destine Lord in English and civic engagement consultant Elsa Mondésir Villefort in French. These discussions and subsequent feedback from participants have informed five key recommendations in the policy paper.

To education leaders:

1. Make anti-Black racism a core component of teacher education
2. Ensure representation and inclusion in all courses across the curriculum
3. Have school boards participate in and provide anti-Black racism professional development
4. Address anti-Black racism in schools through strategic planning and professional development with community and family involvement
5. Include and involve students

“This new policy paper offers practical ways that schools can become incubators for truly pluralistic societies. Through these actions, efforts to end anti-Black racism could be supported across the whole school community and lead to lasting change,” said Meredith Preston McGhie, Secretary General of the Global Centre for Pluralism.

“To build a better future for all, we need to mobilize all the actors within the education sector in order to address racism within our schools. This sector has the unmatched possibility to raise awareness, develop the critical thinking skills of young people and

serve as a powerful lever for changing behaviours,” says David Schimpky, Director of Secretariat, Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

“I think there should be anti-racism training required for everyone involved in the education system. [...] There needs to be a cultural shift if we are going to really address and get rid of systemic racism,” said a humanities teacher from Nova Scotia in the confidential survey.

A bilingual virtual discussion presenting the policy paper’s recommendations to education policymakers will be held on March 31, 2021. For more information, please contact: education@pluralism.ca. Simultaneous translation will be available.

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About the Global Centre for Pluralism

The Global Centre for Pluralism is an independent, charitable organization founded by His Highness the Aga Khan and the Government of Canada. The Centre works with policy leaders, educators and community builders around the world to amplify and implement the transformative power of pluralism.

The Centre’s [Educating for Pluralism](#) program supports high school educators to advance pluralism within the classroom as well as throughout educational systems and institutions. For more information, visit www.pluralism.ca

About the Canadian Commission for UNESCO

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO) serves as a bridge between Canadians and the vital work of UNESCO—the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Through its networks and partners, the Commission promotes UNESCO values, priorities and programs in Canada and brings the voices of Canadian experts to the international stage. The Commission facilitates cooperation and knowledge mobilization in the fields of education, sciences, culture, communication and information to address some of the most complex challenges facing humanity. Its activities are guided by the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other UNESCO priorities. CCUNESCO operates under the authority of the Canada Council for the Arts.