



Acting together in Canadian Churches: the UN International Decade for People of African Descent

A glimpse of the IDPAD initiatives in Canadian Churches (June 2021)

This is not a comprehensive list, but rather some of the initiatives known at the time of compiling.

1) Denomination and Organization initiatives

The denominations and organizations participating the "IDPAD Ecumenical Conversation highlight a number of initiatives:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

- National: Task Force addressing Racism, White Supremacy and Racial Justice (2019 continuing)
- Regional: Racial Justice Advisory Committee of the Eastern Synod (regional work)
<https://rjaceastern.wixsite.com/home>
- Local: Black History Month activities

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

- National: Canadian Friends Service Committee
- Local: ad hoc Anti-Racism Working Groups (Toronto; Niagara Region)

United Church of Canada

- Joint commitment with United Church of Christ (USA)
- Young Black Scholars Program: research Learning Community on Black experiences in Canadian churches
- Upcoming study guide on Afrophobia and anti-Black racism, with video
- Daily prayers
- Black Clergy Network
- UCCan office of Anti-racism and Equity: Common Table

The Canadian Council of Churches

In November 2020, the Governing Board of the Canadian Council of Churches approved UNIPAD in principle, and mandated the Chairs of Commissions, Reference and Working Groups, and the Management Committee of Project Ploughshares to integrate the goals of the Decade, recognition, justice and development, in program priorities, with anti-racism and anti-Black Racism as priorities for 2021-2024 Triennium. As result, several of the tables of The Canadian Council of Churches have adopted priorities related to IDPAD for their work:

- Commission on Faith and Witness: Finding hope in disruptive times and catastrophic situations, with emphasis on racism.
- Commission on Justice and Peace: Ending Racism including Indigenous/non-Indigenous Reconciliation.
- Commission on Justice and Peace: Healing Poverty (will include a lens of role of racism in poverty)
- Sexual Exploitation Working Group: Furthering analysis of and commitment to systemic nature of racism in the sex industry
- Christian Interfaith Reference Group: The sin of racism: Diverse religious, theological and spiritual responses
- Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network (CEARN): Naming and addressing anti-Black racism in Canadian Churches and Canadian Society <https://www.councilofchurches.ca/>

Canadian Council of Churches Resources

- From Chains to Freedom: Journeying towards Reconciliation
<https://www.interculturalleadership.ca/news/from-chains-to-freedom-journeying-towards-reconciliation>
- Cracking open White Identity towards Transformation: White Identity, Power and Privilege
<https://www.councilofchurches.ca/product/cracking-open-white-identity-towards-transformation-white-identity-power-and-privilege/>
- Resources for UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
<https://www.interculturalleadership.ca/news/resources-for-march-21-un-international-day-for-the-elimination-of-racial-discrimination>
- Bibliography: resources for Ending Anti-Black Racism in Canada
<https://www.interculturalleadership.ca/news/resources-for-ending-anti-black-racism-in-canada>
- The Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL): 5 day learning program: Engage Difference: Deepening Understanding of Intercultural Ministry
<https://www.interculturalleadership.ca/duim>

2) Local, congregational, regional, and national grassroots initiatives

June 22, the IDPAD Ecumenical Conversation hosted a conversational online event. On the registration form and in the event breakout rooms participants named a number of initiatives:

- Providing resources for churches to mark the first National Emancipation Day (August 1)
- Toronto Monthly Meeting (TMM) of the Quaker community has an ad-hoc anti-racism group made up of TMM members and attenders. The group is hosting an online event on August 1, 2021 at 1pm following Quaker Meeting for Worship. The event will feature viewing and responding to the keynote address Dr. Afua Cooper gave at the CCC's national IDPAD conversation in November 2020. This event is not only to commemorate Emancipation Day in Canada, but also to mark and engage with the themes of the UN IDPAD.
- Montreal Anglican for Racial Justice and Equity
- A joint commitment with the United Church of Christ (USA)
- Young Black Scholars Program (a research Learning Community on Black experiences in Canadian churches)
- Upcoming study guide on Afrophobia and anti-Black racism, with video
- Daily prayers
- United Church of Canada's Black Clergy network is working on an event to visit a place of significance related to the history of Black peoples in Canada.
- The creation of the Common Table from United Church of Canada's office of Anti-racism and Equity (which is headed by Adele Halliday) was a result of the United Church's BLM commitment. It acted as the catalyst to the UCCan's commitment to becoming an anti-racist denomination.

- Currently, it is not an initiative, however, The Downsview Youth Covenant who serves children and youth of African Descent delivers a Culture and Arts Program; as well as instilling in the children and youth their heritage, and history.
- Dismantling Racism Task Force (Anglican Church of Canada)
- Black Anglicans of Canada <https://blackanglicans.ca/>
- A variety of secular initiatives
- Tracing Gete-Onigaming Routes [Tasting Davenport Routes], an intergenerational storytelling initiative involving food, clay, art and film that tells the stories of the people that made their way and are living and are part of Davenport.
- The Canadian Council of Churches is committed to prioritizing the Decade during the 2021-24 Triennium and we need guidance on how to make that meaningful and productive.
- An 18 point letter to the bishop of Toronto.
- incorporating the African rite into the liturgy
- Congregational Race Relations Cttee
- Racial Equity Audit:: census of Clergy and Staff across the country
- Plan to visit a church where the majority of congregants are of African descent, learn
- a “Virtual Platform” to connect with Evangelical Churches, Schools and Inter-faith groups to raise awareness of systemic racism.
- Atlantic Canadian Baptists are developing training and awareness programs for pastors and youth leaders.
- Workshops with school staff