Perception of Racism & Hate

Activities Among Youth in Calgary:

Effects on the Lived Experience

2002 Summer

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the agencies that expressed interest in this project and provided access to youth groups.

- Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth
- Calgary Immigrant Women's Association – Youth Programme Coordinator
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary
- University of Calgary – Cultural Diversity Institute
- Committee for Race Relations and Cross-Cultural Understanding
- Calgary Multicultural Centre – Youth Voices

We would also like to thank other members of the community whose expertise in these issues was invaluable to the project. They are:

- Calgary Police Service – Hate/Bias Crime Coordinator
- Calgary Immigrant Aid Society and Calgary Regional Health Authority - Multicultural Health Programme
- Peter Lougheed Centre – Coordinator, Multicultural Awareness program
- Calgary Board of Education and Committee for Anti-Racist Education (CARE) - Joint Committee on Anti-Racism and Equity

Our deepest appreciation and thanks go to the many young people who shared with us their experiences and stories. While our participants can't be named, we can publicly acknowledge the youths who served as research assistants and interviewers. Their enthusiasm, energy and keen insights into youth culture, along with their professionalism, made this project meaningful.

Anila Umar – Research Assistant
**Mina Moussavi** – Youth Interviewer
Roxanne Martin – Youth Interviewer

And finally, a word of thanks to our funders, without whom this project would not have been possible.

- City of Calgary, Community Vitality and Protection, Community Strategies, Policy and Planning Division
- Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration
- Canadian Heritage
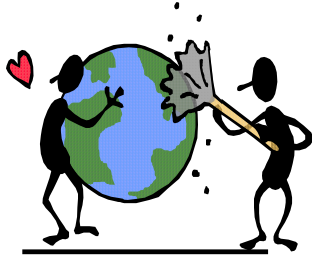
Executive Summary

It's very subtle. It's not like some person beating up someone else. People need to be more aware of subtlety like racial slurs. You don't see people getting beat up but you hear that they don't know how to drive a car, or I won't go to that pizza place because they're not Italian... all of them are East Indian... they stink, they smell like curry. People don't take these things seriously.
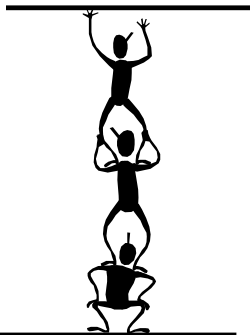
Until we moved out of (the neighborhood), people egged our house, threw ketchup on our house, wrote "P…'s" live here" with street chalk. "We'll kill this "P…". These were our neighbour's kids. What were they learning within their family?

The international convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, adopted by the UN General Assembly 1969 January 4, states that "the doctrine of superiority based on racial differences is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination in theory or in practice, anywhere."

And yet, these individual acts of discrimination continue. Racism is embedded in Canada's policies, societal practices and ideologies. It is ingrained and reinforced in a myriad of ways through the major and minor institutions of our society. The reality of our nation is that white people benefit from the privilege bestowed upon them by racism.

In Canada, sections of the Criminal Code make it illegal for people to promote genocide against identifiable groups or to willfully promote hatred against these groups in public. Harsher sentences are allowed for those convicted of criminal acts where it can be demonstrated that they are motivated by hate. In 2001, there were 122 hate/bias crimes reported in Calgary. This was a slight drop from the year before (133) but there has been a steady rise since 1997.

In Canada, while there has been some public awareness and distaste around racism, heterosexism[1] remains fairly widely accepted and tolerated. Another group commonly targeted for hate activity is gay, lesbian and bisexual people. Gay bashing is often extremely brutal and violent and it comes not only from strangers, but from family, caregivers and school mates.

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[1] Heterosexism is prejudice or discrimination in favour of heterosexual or 'straight' individuals and discrimination against homosexuals (Agger-Gupta, 1997).

Given this climate of individual and systemic racism, discrimination and hate activity, what can communities do to become more inclusive?

Numerous reports in Calgary have identified racism as a pervasive factor in the lives of members of non-dominant ethnocultural groups be it in employment, health, social service, justice, or education systems. This theme consistently arises when talking with young Calgarians and Canadians. In Calgary, 18% of youth are visible minority youth. Recent reports have shown that racism may play a huge role in young people's lives, affecting health, education, and employment outcomes (see References).

In this study, we wanted to hear about the experiences of racism and discrimination on young people in Calgary. and their effects. How do they affect their education, job opportunities and health outcomes? In a series of interviews, we explored these issues with young people, aged 12-24 years. We talked to them about their definitions of racism and hate crimes or activities. We asked them about their experiences and how these affected their lives. We also anticipated that the data would help to develop policy recommendations to encourage the reporting of hate crimes, and to develop *youth-driven* strategies to address racism and discrimination experienced by young people.

Implications for Policy and Community Action

It is evident from this study and others, that many Calgary youth experience racial discrimination and heterosexism, and live with their effects daily. And it may affect all youth, regardless of colour, ethnicity, religion or language.

We found that very few youth had not seen or personally experienced discrimination, and even newcomers to Canada for whom the term "racism" was unfamiliar, could describe incidents of racial discrimination they have experienced.

While very few of the youth could define hate crime or activity, many were able to give examples of these. There was a perceived lack of safety evident in their comments suggesting a need for mechanisms of support be that intervention from school staff, or a safe place to document these incidents, (e.g., a hate activity reporting web-site).
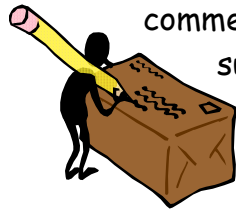
A number of policy implications arise from this study for a variety of sectors including education, employment, health, justice, and community. These include:

- providing more support for anti-racism/anti-heterosexism education in schools
- addressing ESL issues that result in elevated drop-out rates
- developing appropriate intervention skills for students, parents and teachers
- creating safety in the school environment for homosexual youth
- addressing issues of disparities in wages, employment rates and drop-out rates for racialized youth
- increasing access to employment opportunities through mentoring programmes and networking opportunities
- developing culturally appropriate performance indicators
- exploring the link between racism, heterosexism and health outcomes for youth
- continuing to develop an integrated and systemic anti-racism and anti-heterosexism model in justice systems including police services

- working with young people to develop youth created and directed solutions
- working together across sectors to mentor and support racialized and marginalized youth.

Conclusion

Research has shown that racism, heterosexism and other forms of oppression are a daily fact in the lives of many of Calgary's youths. It is up to youth, parents, caregivers, educators, health care providers, employers, police and justice system workers, the municipal government, youth service providers, and concerned community members to work together to eradicate these forms of discrimination from our children's lives. The time to start is now.

Gathering information on youths' experiences with and understanding of racism and hate activities was only the beginning. We will use this data as a foundation for further discussion and community development.

Next Steps

We will be hosting community information sessions to overview the research report, recommendations and elicit suggestions and support for community action. Young people will become involved in and direct much of this process so that solutions or actions taken will be youth-derived and youth driven. This was a key intent of the project: To provide youth with the knowledge, capacity, and skills to work with other members of the community to combat racism and discrimination in their lives.

> If you would like more information, please call Valerie Pruegger at 268-5126 or
>
> (e-mail Valerie Pruegger@gov.calgary.ab.ca)

Perceptions of Racism and Hate Activities Among Youth in Calgary: Effects on the Lived Experience

Racism and acts of discrimination are not new in Canada nor in Calgary as the following incidents attest:

> *The definition of a hate group is that they actually hate a group!*

1990 Blinded – Keith Rutherford a retired Edmonton radio broadcaster

1991 Murdered – Tony Le a Vietnamese student in Toronto

1992 Beaten and Paralyzed – Sivarajah Vinasithamby a Sri Lankan immigrant in Toronto

1993 Murdered – Nirmal Singh Gill a Sikh caretaker in Surrey, B.C.

2001 Terrorized - A Muslim woman in a Calgary grocery store was carrying her 3 year old child when a man began to use racial slurs and knocked her to the floor. He continued to verbally abuse her while she was down.

2001 Attacked - events of 9/11 lead to an increased targeting of people perceived to be "Muslim" or "Middle Eastern" in Calgary. Reported hate activity to the Calgary Police Service against these groups doubles in September 2001.

These are all acts spurred by racism or heterosexism[2] perpetrated by self-proclaimed members of white supremacy groups, other hate groups, or just ordinary citizens who commit hate acts ranging from verbal to physical. Wherever they occur, publicized incidents such as these, create a climate of fear for all members of the targeted group regardless of where they live.

This report provides an overview of the nature of racism and hate activities in Canada and Calgary. The first part sets the context for a discussion of these issues. The report then focusses on a study exploring these issues with young people in Calgary (see page 12).

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[2] Heterosexism is prejudice or discrimination in favour of heterosexual or 'straight' individuals and discrimination against homosexuals (Agger-Gupta, 1997).

Setting the Context

The United Nations has declared that:

> Discrimination between human beings on the grounds of race, colour, or ethnic origin is an offence to human dignity and shall be condemned as a denial of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among nations, and as a fact capable of disturbing peace and security among peoples (see http://www.unhchr.ch.html/racism /home.htm).

The international convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination adopted by the UN General Assembly 1969 January 4 states that:

> the doctrine of superiority based on racial differences is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination in theory or in practice, anywhere.

I can honestly say that until I was 15 years old, I was in a fight at least once a week. And I had to fight… because the area I was in, if you were weak, you were dead…

And yet, individual acts of discrimination continue. We can not take solace in the notion that these are isolated acts performed by a few misguided people. As we will see later, hate crimes and hate activities are on the rise in Canada and in Calgary. With the advent of the Internet, hate groups proliferate spreading their message of intolerance to an increasingly larger audience, especially targeting youth. In 1999, 1400 international hate sites were identified on the web (Hate, 1998).

Nor can we ignore that individuals and hate groups are only one end of a continuum of racism, spanning individual acts to systemic discrimination. Racism is embedded in Canada's policies, societal practices and ideologies. It is ingrained and reinforced in a myriad of ways through the major and minor institutions of our society.

We have only to look to the treatment of Aboriginal people in this country, immigration policies, and media portrayals of non-white Canadians to see this reflection.And this is only the tip of the iceberg. Institutional policies have limited the citizenship rights of Aboriginal people, people of colour, religious minorities, and gays and lesbians. As part of Canada's history of hate and racism, members of these groups have been barred from certain jobs, voting, receiving public education, buying property or even entering Canada. The reality of our nation is that white people continue to benefit from the privilege bestowed upon them by racism.

> Before we as a society can liberate ourselves from the grip of racism, we have to acknowledge that it exists, and that it is not something which has been blown out of proportion, neither is it the figment of some people's imagination (Shadd, 1991, p. 5).

Racism

I think it means that people hate you, they don't like you, don't like to hang around with you, and bug you. I don't know who the KKK is.

Racism has been defined in many ways. Three common forms identified are individual racism, systemic racism, and cultural racism.

Individual racism refers to a person's attitudes and behaviours and is usually the focus as it is easiest to identify and does not challenge us to look to society for answers.

Systemic racism is more insidious. It resides consciously or unconsciously in the policies and practices of organizations, which serve to sustain the advantages of a certain group of people.

Cultural racism reflects the value system embedded in society which supports the manifestation of both the individual and systemic forms of racism, and justifies the oppression or marginalization of people based on their "social race".[3]

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3   The term social race is used to underscore that the concept of race is socially constructed and many scientist believe there is little basis in biology for discrete racial categories [for a discussion see 1994, November <u>Discover</u> for articles by Stephen Jay Gould and James Shreeve. Available at: <u>http://www.discover.com/archive/index.html</u> and <u>http://www.discover.com/archive/ index.html</u>.

Numerous examples of cultural racism exist in Canada from head taxes, internment camps, and First Nations' reservations, to media portrayals of racialized people.

Hate Groups and Hate Activity

Hate groups are not new to Canada. In the 1830s, a pro-British, anti-Catholic secret society called *The Grand Lodge of Orangemen of British North America* was founded. And in the late 1870s, anti-Asian organizations sprang up to protest immigration from China and Japan. Canada has been home to white supremacist groups since the *Ku Klux Klan* took root here during the 1920s. The "*Kanadian Klan*" targeted Asians, French-Canadians and Catholics in addition to the traditional minority group targets in the U.S. Today, groups like the *Heritage Front* and *Aryan Nations* continue to terrorize minority groups across Canada, including Calgary, with virtual impunity. These groups cultivate hate and pursue their goals thorough the use of intimidation and violence.

Before we as a society can liberate ourselves from the grip of racism, we have to acknowledge that it exists. (Shadd, 1991, p.5).

Even more alarming, is the rise of hate sites on the Internet from 1 in 1995 to over 2000 by the turn of the century (Kinsella, 2000).[4] In fact, the Internet has been cited as one of the main causes in the rise of hate and hate crimes globally.

Canadians spend more time on the Internet than people in any other country with youth spending an average of 9 hours per week surfing the web (Kinsella, 2000). There are no laws or regulatory framework in place to enforce standards on the Internet and police do not have the resources to monitor Internet crime.

It is tempting to dismiss members of hate groups as uneducated, ignorant bullies; lunatic sociopaths on the fringe. But the reality is that 62% of ninety-three radical right leaders studied by Kinsella for his 1994 book *Web of Hate,* had attended university, college or technical school (Gray, 1994).

[4] This is an increase in number, but it is unknown if it represents an increase in percentage of web-sites given the proliferation of the Internet as a whole

Many of these leaders teach in high schools and universities influencing new generations of Canadians (Racism, 1992). They quickly realized the potential of utilizing new technology (i.e., the Internet) as a means by which to spread their messages. It is cheap, it is easy, and it has the potential to reach millions.

Legal Considerations

Hate-motivated activities are those behaviours that create a climate of hate toward an identifiable group or those known to support those groups. The fact that hate-motivated activities are legislated in Canada's Criminal Code, reflects the idea that these "wrongs … are sufficiently serious and repugnant to community standards to be considered 'crimes'" (Jeffery, 1998, p. 4). Indeed, the destructive effect of these criminal offenses on individuals and families cannot be underestimated. Research done by the U.S. National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence notes that

> …many individuals and families became isolated, withdrawn and paranoid out of fear, others were overcome by anger and revenge fantasies, others fought to stymie feelings of hatred for their attackers, and others experienced sadness and a feeling of powerlessness (in Jeffery, 1998, p.2).

They [the cops] assume because you're Native and you're driving a nice vehicle that you might have stolen it

Devastation caused by hate-motivated activities is not limited to those harmed. Everyone connected to the victim(s) suffers.

> Harms caused by hate-motivated activity are more repugnant than other types of criminal injuries because they cause secondary victimization of other members of the targeted group by injuring the group dignity or by evoking fear of future recurrences of the harmful activity directed at other group members (Jeffery, 1998, p. 6).

Definitions of what constitutes "hate-motivated activity" vary. What's more, non-comprehensive definitions exclude certain groups (e.g., youth, gay and lesbians) resulting in the under-reporting of offences and, thus, the failure to correct these injustices. Accordingly, effective legal remedies "flow from legal

proceedings involving 'hate-motivated activities' broadly defined" and yield compensation for victims and/or punishments for perpetrators (Jeffery, 1998, p. 11).

Unless victims report these crimes, little can be done to correct the damage. Potential victims need to know and understand the range of legal options available to them.

> There was vandalism to my house too on several occasions and to our cars.

In 1996, the Criminal Code was amended to include a new sentencing section, 718.2.[5] With the addition of this amendment, judges are now required to take bias, prejudice or hate motivations into consideration when deciding sentences.

Also relevant to commonly reported incidents of hate-motivated activities are Criminal Code provisions that address violence, damage to reputation and harassment, and dangerous offender status. A summary of the features of the Criminal Code related to hate-motivated activities is provided in Appendix 1.

The Calgary Police Service has been tracking hate/bias crimes since 1997 following the passing of Bill C-41 in 1996 which compels judges to consider hatred, bias and prejudice as key factors in determining appropriate sentences. Hate/bias crimes in Calgary are defined as:

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[5] Section 718.2 of the Criminal Code states (in Jeffery, 1998, p. 52)
OTHER SENTENCING PRINCIPLES
718.2 A court that imposes a sentence shall also take into consideration the following principles:

a) a sentence should be increased or reduced to account for any relevant aggravating or mitigating circumstances relating to the offence of the offender, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing,
   (i) evidence that the offence was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar factor,
   (ii) evidence that the offender, in committing the offence, abused the offender's spouse or child,
   (iii) evidence that the offender, in committing the offence, abused a position of trust or authority in relation to the victim, or
   (iv) evidence that the offence was committed for the benefit of, at the direction of or in association with a criminal organization.

> Crimes against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by prejudice or hate, based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, gender, age, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation (Cultural Resources Unit, 1998).

Victims in Calgary are encouraged to report hate crimes and there has been a Hate/Bias Crime Coordinator in the Calgary Police Service since 1997. A pamphlet *Report Hate Crimes* has been created and Calgary police officers are trained to recognize the signs of hate/bias crime and their impact on the community (Police Advisor, 2000).

When hate/bias motivation is suspected, the Hate/Bias Crime Coordinator works with the Office of the Crown Prosecutor to ensure that 718.2 of the Criminal Code is considered in sentencing. In 2001, only 16 of the 122 reported crimes were charged. In 2000, 15 charges were laid. These statistics demonstrate the difficulty of prosecuting hate crimes because it is usually very difficult to identify the perpetrators.

Comparative analysis of hate crimes across Canada is difficult due to different definitions used by different police services. Furthermore, hate activities or crimes are greatly under-reported concealing the magnitude of the problem. It is estimated that only 10% of hate crimes are reported to a police authority in Calgary (personal communication, Hate/Bias Coordinator, Calgary Police Service). In 2001, there were 122 hate/bias crimes reported in Calgary. The majority were based on race (51%) or sexual orientation (14%), and were mainly classified as assault (53%), mischief (22%), and threats (16%) (Calgary Police Service, 2002).[6]

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[6] While the terms "hate crimes" and "hate activities" are used throughout this report, they do reflect narrow political and legal definitions. The term "ethnoviolence" is a social term and much broader. Ethnoviolence is an act or an attempted act which is motivated by group prejudice and intended to cause physical or psychological injury. These violent acts include intimidation, harassment, group insults, property defacement or destruction, and physical attacks. The targets of these acts involve persons identified because of their race or skin color, gender, nationality or national origin, religion, or other physical or social characteristic of groups such as sexual orientation.

This represents a rising trend from 85 reported in 1997 to 122 in 2001. Crimes based on race, sexual orientation and religion have consistently held the top three spots respectively across the years.

At a 2000 February roundtable held in Ottawa, it was recommended that the Department of the Solicitor General encourage the development of anti-hate initiatives in police services across Canada; that a reliable complaint system be developed; and that the Criminal Intelligence Service of Canada make monitoring of hate groups a national priority (Government of Canada, 2000). The Calgary Police Service as a participant in this initiative has incorporated many of the recommendations arising from the roundtable including developing a state of the art hate report data base which may serve as a national template.

Feeling Safe

An attack on one member of a community affects the feeling of safety for the entire community. Acts of discrimination and hate are effective because they not only target an individual, but they intimidate other members of the target group creating a climate of fear. Victims of racism and hate activities are often unwilling or unable to report the incident out of fear that they may not be taken seriously by the authorities, fear of reprisal from the perpetrator, and mistrust of the criminal justice system.

Racial Profiling

If you are black in Canadian society and you have done something wrong, your chances of getting caught and arrested are much greater than if you are white and doing the same thing (criminology professor Scot Wortley, 2000).

Studies have shown that Black and other non-white Canadians are routinely treated more harshly by police and the criminal justice system (for example see Commission on Systemic Racism, 1995).

This summer, I was driving and I got pulled over three times in an hour an a half! (youth of colour)

Blacks and other minorities, particularly Aboriginal people, are more likely to be stopped, questioned and searched by police and are over-represented in the criminal justice system and in prisons. Police services are reluctant to talk about racial profiling or even deny that it occurs because "they treat everyone the same". But this is not the experience of minority communities and, even in Calgary, members of Black, Aboriginal, Chinese and Latin communities have complained of unfair treatment (for example see Pruegger & Manyguns, 2000; Summerfield, 2001).

Accusations of racial profiling are not limited to police services. In 1998, the African Canadian Legal Clinic and the legal firm Hinkson and Sachak, found that Canadian Customs officials were eight times more likely to search the luggage of passengers of African descent than they were that of white passengers (see Royson). Meanwhile, politicians across the globe, including in Canada, have used and continue to use anti-immigration rhetoric and scape-goating of minorities with little repercussion. [7]

Why Can't They Just be Canadians?

The cry "Why can't they just be Canadians" is often heard and used to justify the discrimination against minority groups. It ignores the reality that Canadians come in all sizes, shapes, colours and religious backgrounds. It ignores that many people of colour who would like to "just be Canadian" are constantly asked "where did you come from?" despite being Canadian born and having lived in Canada for many generations.

Meanwhile, 95% of Canadians, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds believe that you can be proud of being Canadian and proud of your ancestry at the same time (Angus Reid, 1991).

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[7] From the anti-immigration policies of Australia and Holland among others, to Canadian politicians' public stands on a variety of issues, it is clear that discriminatory rhetoric is alive and well in the world and Canada. Some examples: Parti Quebecois' Yves Michaud's comments re Jews; Jacques Parizeau's comments re non-French ethnic minorities; Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman comments re Africans; Art Hangar's anti-immigration rhetoric in the Alberta house; Ralph Klein's and Stockwell Day's stands against equality for homosexual Albertans.

Research has shown that ethnic identity offers greater self-confidence and pride which, in turn, leads to greater tolerance and an increase in the person's identification with Canada (Berry & Kalin, 1990).

Prior to 1961, 91% of immigrants to Canada were from Europe. In the past ten years, 60% have been from Asia (China, India and the Philippines). In Calgary, 20% of new immigrants are children who are unlikely to speak English and who face the challenge of learning a new language and culture (United Way, 2000). These children speak of being pulled between two worlds. Often serving as cultural brokers between the dominant society and their parents, they want to fit in with their Canadian peers while their parents wish them to respect the values and behaviours of their home cultures. In addition to these pressures, they face inadequate funding for English as a Second Language programming in schools, discrimination and bullying in the school yard, and condemnation of immigrants in the media (United Way, 2000).

Gay Bashing

> *It would have an emotional impact on anybody. Whether it's personal or you just see it happening.*

Another group commonly targeted for hate activity is gay, lesbian and bisexual people. While there has been some public awareness and distaste around racism, heterosexism remains fairly widely accepted and tolerated. Heterosexism is:

> Prejudice or discrimination in favour of heterosexual or 'straight individuals' versus homosexual individuals and often arises from a fear of homosexuals and homosexuality called homophobia (Agger-Gupta, 1997).

A current study being conducted in London, Ontario looking at violence against gay, lesbian and bisexual people, ages 14-25 years, has found that 83% of the 48 people interviewed to date reported being the target of physical, sexual or verbal abuse (Beaubien, 2000).

Gay bashing is often extremely brutal and violent and it comes not only from strangers, but also from family, caregivers and schoolmates. For example:

> A teen lesbian was held down by three boys at school and repeatedly burned with cigarettes (Beaubien, 2000).
>
> A father told his daughter he'd kill any child of his who "turned out queer" (Beaubien, 2000).
>
> Two gay men in Calgary were targeted in a park by gay bashers and beaten (personal communication, Hate/Bias Crime Coordinator, Calgary Police Service, 2001).
>
> In Wyoming, Matthew Shepard was tied to a fence with a rope, pistol-whipped and left in the bitter cold. He later died in hospital (Lopez, 1998).
>
> In a Calgary bookstore, 30-40 books with gay or lesbian themes have been torn apart per week since 1997 prompting the bookstore to create a display alerting customers to these acts of violence (Harris, 2000).

Hate crimes are crimes against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by prejudice or hate, based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, gender, age, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation (Cultural Resources Unit, 1998).

While not all of these incidents occurred in Calgary, their wide-spread publication and the anti-gay rhetoric that inevitably followed creates a climate of fear for homosexuals everywhere. Homosexuals may often be less likely to report a crime due to feared re-victimization by homophobic police officers and unwillingness to have their sexual orientation known to friends, family and employers. The people interviewed in the London study say they live with constant fear of being targeted at home, on the street, or in school (Beaubien, 2000). These fears echo those heard in discussions of violence against women.

In Alberta, the Conservative government has consistently acted against equal rights for homosexual Albertans, e.g., the Vriend case, marriage rights for gay and lesbian Albertans, resistance to the inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected category under the Alberta Individual Rights and Freedoms Act.

Given this climate of individual and systemic racism, discrimination and hate activity, what can communities do to become more inclusive?

Community Action

A symposium held in Vancouver in 1992, noted that we need strong community organizations united to fight racism as well as anti-racism education throughout the school curriculum. We need a social movement which addresses racism in as a "social disease" (Racism, 1992). The common wisdom is that ignoring racists will cause them to desist, but, in reality, exposure is necessary. Ignoring the problem gives these people tacit license to practice hate and sends a message that Canadians are not concerned with the victims of racism and hate.

In Calgary, many groups have worked for a number of years to fight racism in our city. Among these is the Committee for Anti-Racism Education (CARE), the Committee for Cross-Cultural Understanding and Race Relations, and most recently *Diversity Calgary*, a inter-sectoral partnership of community, public, private and not-for profit organizations working together to create an inclusive community.

In order to expose racism in all its forms, we need an understanding of how it affects the lives of our children. This study begins that dialogue.

The Study

In this study, we wanted to hear about the experiences of racism and discrimination by young people in Calgary, and the effects of these experiences on their education, job opportunities and health outcomes. In a series of interviews, we explored these issues with 106 young people, aged 12-24 years. We talked to them about their definitions of racism and hate crimes or activities. We asked them about their experiences and how these affected their lives. Here are their stories.

Methodology and Methods

I've been in Calgary for 3 months. I don't like it here.

The research was based on an Action Research model, an empirical and reflective approach which engages community people as active participants in the research process. Its goal (and ultimate measure of its success in achieving its objectives) is a practical outcome or tool for solving problems experienced by various groups in the community.

Action research provides the conditions for continuing action through community development, empowerment, partnering and the formation of a sense of community.

A major principle of this framework is to derive explanations from the ordinary understandings and everyday behaviours and social processes of the people involved; in this context, youth. By extending our understanding of their experiences and definitions of racism and hate crimes, we begin to develop a model for enacting local, action-oriented approaches to change.

To do this, action research engages involved people as equal partners in the research project and acts in socially and culturally appropriate ways. For this project, respect was paid to the community in question (i.e., youth) by engaging youth in the research process and by speaking to young people in settings where they felt safe, were in the majority, and had power.

We worked in conjunction with community groups, youth organizations, and service providers, to ensure that the research was conducted in a culturally appropriate and respectful manner, both in terms of ethnocultural diversity as well as diversity within the youth 'culture'. For example, we provided options for language interpretation and talked to youth in their own spaces and hang-outs.

Policy makers and service providers are being held increasingly accountable for solutions to problems that are highly complex. But, there has been a shift from dictating specific actions and procedures through direct services, to providing the resources to enable appropriate action to be taken through community development. In this project, by involving youth, and in particular racialized or marginalized youth, as participants and co-researchers, we hoped to provide the skills and shared sense of community to result in youth-driven and youth-executed understandings and solutions.

Conducting the Study

Youth were identified to participate through word of mouth, existing youth groups in participating agencies, and as participants of convenience in youth clubs and meeting areas. Group interviews of 1-2 hours were conducted by a research assistant and a youth researcher (See Appendix 2 for Interview Schedule). Youths were told about the purpose of the study, given information about their rights to informed consent, and provided the chance to continue working with the project should they wish (see Appendix 3 for Informed Consent Form).

Data Analysis

Interview data were transcribed and coded and compared with data from other sources in the literature to identify common themes and gaps in knowledge. The data were also analyzed for policy implications and recommendations for community-based action (e.g., web-sites, in-school conflict mediation programmes, etc.).

Participants

Participants were 106 youth ages 12-24 years from a range of backgrounds and experiences including immigrant youth, Canadian born youth from non-dominant ethnocultural backgrounds, and white Canadian born youth of Northern European descent (see Table 1). We talked to youth in various socioeconomic classes, as well as youth at various levels of school performance. It was important to interview a diverse range of youth as racism and hate crimes differentially impact youth from diverse backgrounds.

This involved a social mapping process [8] which helped to identify all groups and subgroups affected by the issue at hand (see Appendix 4). We talked to youth who differed on age, sex, socio-economic status, school performance, ancestry, and religion. While this sample was not representative of the youth population in Calgary, thus restricting generalizability of the results, it was a good cross-section of the variables of interest.

It takes away your energy, you get low self-esteem.

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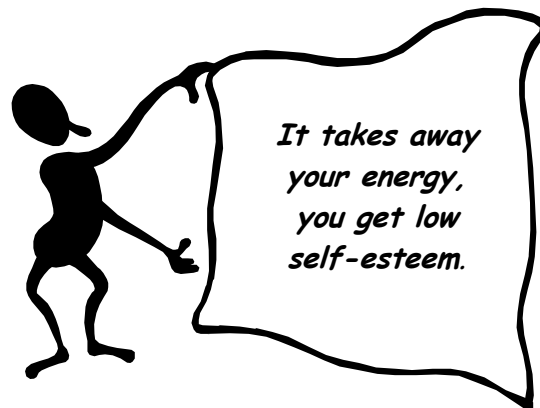
[8]   A grid is created which looks at various stakeholder groups by target variables to ensure that coverage of all salient variables of interest is achieved.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (Self-Report) N=106

Variable	N	Total Responses
Age		106
12-15 years	58	
16-18 years	20	
19-21 years	15	
22-24	13	
Sex		106
Male	53	
Female	53	
Socioeconomic Status (SES)		100
Low	11	
Medium	85	
High	4	
School Performance (SP)		104
Poor	1	
Average	66	
Above average	37	
Ancestry		102
Asian	33	
South Asian	18	
Northern European (white)	20	
Middle Eastern	13	
African / Caribbean	8	
Eastern European	5	
Pacific Islander	2	
Latin American	1	
Aboriginal	2	
Religion		92
Islam/Muslin	30	
Protestant	19	
Buddhist	5	
Hindu	5	
Catholic	5	
Other (includes Sikh, no religion, other)	28	

Table 1 shows the demographic breakdown. As socioeconomic status (SES) and School Performance (SP) were self-report, it is not surprising that there was not much variation in these variables. These young people attended a number of junior and senior high schools in Calgary, as well as the University of Calgary.

What We Heard: Youth Voices

Many youth we talked to are newcomers to Canada and are unfamiliar with the language of race and racism. As such, when asked to define racism or hate activity, they were unable to do so. However, they were able to describe incidents that would be defined as racial discrimination in the Canadian context. In fact, all the youth we spoke with could describe incidents of discrimination they either experienced directly or witnessed. All felt that these experiences had negatively impacted them.

Definitions of Racism and Experiences with Racial Discrimination

Definitions of racism included phrases such as "not their kind, you are alien", "differences between people"; examples of being treated differently by teachers; being made fun of; put downs; racial slurs; and physical incidents of fighting, spitting and swearing. Some youth included judging people by their religion or language as well as skin colour as indicative of racism. A group of youth active in anti-racism work talked about prejudging people, non-acceptance of other people, feelings of superiority of one race over another and blaming an entire race for the actions of one person. It was clear that while all age groups struggled to define the term, most were able to describe incidents of discrimination ranging from racial slurs to physical aggression:

> In Grade 6, someone called me a n.....[9]

> I couldn't speak much English at the time so people made fun of me.

> One time at school… someone blocked my way and called me a bad word and told me to go back to my own country [a Canadian born youth].

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[9] In this paper, racial slurs will not be repeated as it is the researchers' contention that doing so validates these words, is hurtful and perpetuates racial discrimination.

When we first go to Canada, there was a psycho on the bus who pulled my mom's scarf (hijab) down. He asked her why she was wearing it, she was in Canada now and then someone else came and made him stop. We couldn't do anything. We didn't know the English to respond back. My mom was crying and very embarrassed.

My music teacher didn't let me in the band because of who I am. She's nice to everyone else. Even though I'm nice to her.

An old white lady once told me to go back to my own country while I was walking down the street. I told her I was in my own country. She just stared swearing at me so I walked away (an Asian-Canadian youth).

Last year… a guy came off the bus and said "oh shut-up Blackie" and spit in his hair.

It's very subtle. It's not like some person beating up someone else. People need to be more aware of subtlety like racial slurs. You don't see people getting beat up but your hear that they don't know how to drive a car, or I won't go to that pizza place because they're not Italian… all of them are East Indian… they stink, they smell like curry. People don't take these things seriously.

One young person talked about being harassed on the street, being called racial names and having a kid threaten to beat him up. A passer-by, a white man intervened on his behalf.

And it wasn't just white people that youth talked about. They had experienced discrimination from a number of groups.

I can honestly say that until I was 15 years old, I was in a fight at least once a week. And I had to fight… because the area I was in, if you were weak, you were dead. If you didn't defend yourself, you'd get jumped. You had to make people scared of you… This just wasn't with white people, but with Vietnamese, Cambodian, Korean. In Junior High I fought Natives like everyday.

The thing is, like, White people are the kind of people that once you beat them up, they want to be your friend. And then with Vietnamese, once you beat them up, they want to kill you. And with the Natives, once you beat them up they want to have a drink with you. So you deal with them in different ways.

Until we moved out of [the neighbourhood], people egged our house, threw ketchup on our house, wrote "P…'s" live here" with street chalk. "We'll kill this "P…". These were my neighbour's kids. What were they learning within their family?
There was vandalism to my house too on several occasions and to our cars.

Someone lit my grass on fire once.

Someone tried to burn down my house. B-B guns at our windows. These were white people. White people didn't mess with the Asians because they'd get cut up. They messed with us because we were the only East Indian family in our school. I had a turban back then. They would call me names and try to pull my turban off. They had no respect.

> *I get mad. It affects our education*

Another common theme in the youths' narratives, was the perpetuation of discrimination by teachers and the schools. These statements support findings from the report, *Beyond the three r's: Race relations in the Calgary school system* (DePass, et.al., 1992). One youth talked about racism in the curriculum in which "bad stuff happens in those *other* countries". Other comments:

I've dealt with a lot of racism, especially in Junior High. I was constantly called a "P…", other derogatory comments about me and my culture. I finally lost it and I beat up somebody in front of the office, in front of the principal. I had no regard for authority at that point, not saying that I was the best student, but I was an Honours student. He thought I needed some serious help or something.

I told him… that I'm trying to send a message out there, the only thing I can think of, because I did go on many occasions to the administration in my Junior High and say in a mature manner, "Look, so and so has been calling me this and that, can you do something about it?" And they did nothing. So I said forget them. So after Junior High my solution was to forget hanging out with white people and hang out with brown people.

Gets you upset, no one's backing you up. I didn't know what racism was until I cried home every day.

Our science teacher discriminated against our whole ESL class. She treated us as if we were unintelligent. I couldn't do anything about it before because I did not know enough English. Now, I have increased my level of English and she treats me a lot better. She is still the same with students that don't speak English well.

At [high school in Calgary] my brother wanted a room to pray in, and they wouldn't let him. It was for after school and they still said no. The assistant principal said it was a waste of school time. So the English teacher lets them pray in that room.

I don't like my humanities teacher because she doesn't talk to me. When I ask her for help, she tells me to go talk to my ESL teacher because she doesn't have time to explain things to me.

My music teacher didn't let me in the band because of who I am. She's nice to everyone else. Even though I'm nice to her.

Experiences with Hate Activity and Hate Groups

Again, many youth were not familiar with what would constitute hate activity and only had a superficial knowledge of hate groups. This was especially true of newcomers to North America. Most had heard about hate groups from TV or in school. None had been actively recruited by a hate group.

I think it means that people hate you, they don't like you, don't like to hang around with you, and bug you.

The Nazis in Germany followed Hitler.

Entire class doesn't want to stay with us because we are from different countries by yelling "Go back to ESL".

> *I've heard of the Nazis and the KKK. They killed Black and Chinese people.*

The definition of a hate group is that they actually hate a group!

There's this girl at my school. She always makes up lies. She says she's from a White Supremacist group. She shoves Pakistani and Black people into lockers … As we passed my black friend, she shoved her into a locker.

Aryan Nations… They used to have this club house. They were not only Nazis but devil worshippers… I've been chased by them. When I was six years old, they drowned a kid in Carburn Park. He was a Filipino kid. He was four years old. They held his head under the water. They got convicted, but there were a lot more that didn't. Four years ago, the club house got shut down.

Well, there are hate groups on campus (University of Calgary). A Nazi party. A formal club. They preach hate music, etc.

There were a number of misconceptions about hate groups or limitations in knowledge:

I've heard of them from newspapers only. There aren't many of them and they stone houses.

I've heard of the Nazis and the KKK. They killed Black and Chinese people.

KKK, heard of them on Jerry Springer. Only treat Blacks differently.

Effects of Racism on Health and Well-Being

For many youths, experiences with racial discrimination had lasting emotional effects. Youth felt isolated, afraid, angry, frustrated. Some were afraid to go out of the house or to sleep.

You feel bad. You want to be with friends, otherwise you're alone. In gym, no one stayed with me or would be my partner so I had to pair up with the teacher. Because of where you're from, people make fun of you…

I don't think it'll effect my education or jobs because I'm going to speak English really good and then I'll have more chances. I'll be no different than anyone else and I'll even be better!

I've been in Calgary for 3 months. I don't like it here.

Yes, it affects my well being. I get sad and angry.

I get mad. It affects our education.

It really bothers me. I get really angry and upset. I'm more educated than lots of people that talk down to me. I'm equal in every way but people don't see that.

I don't feel confident. I want to participate at school, but don't know how. I want to do research with a professor but am scared to ask. And I want to join clubs too. I don't know where to go.

I get frustrated. Especially when people don't care and when there's a direct incident and I have to react to it. I get intimidated and then I feel sick because I didn't know what to do. It has to do with personal issues and self-esteem.

Gets you upset, no one's backing you up. I didn't know what racism was until I cried home every day.

I lost a lot of sleep in Junior High. Up until about five or six years ago, I was scared of sleeping in the house because people would yell things at me and my parents.

My health, being in fights and stuff. Affected my athletic career. I was a wicked athlete. In high school they wouldn't let me play for awhile. I had scholarships to University but once they met me, they dropped the option. I had a lot of coaches that were racist.

It would have an emotional impact on anybody. Whether it's personal or you just see it happening. Didn't bug me education wise. Wouldn't stop me from doing my work. It can affect you though if you're scared to go to school. You miss a lot.

It takes away your energy, you get low self-esteem.

It decreased your self-esteem. You're always worried and you put other people down.

You feel bad, you're always fighting.

Can't get good marks 'cause you're always worried and you put yourself down.

"It can affect you though if you're scared to go to school, and you miss a lot."

And while some saw racism as "being denied a job due to race", for others, there was a sense of optimism, a refusal to believe that they are living in a racist society, and a belief in the merit principle:

Canada is generally not racist.

Yes, it affects my well being. I get sad and angry. But I won't have any problems with a job.

Maybe at first we'll have problems with jobs, but people get used to you.

We will get more chances so there won't be any difference. As long as you work hard, you'll do well.

If people don't help you with your English, you'll get terrible jobs. Canadians hate us, but some like us.

I don't think we'll have any problems getting jobs in the future. I don't think my education is affected by racism at all.

I don't think it'll effect my education or jobs because I'm going to speak English really good and then I'll have more chances. I'll be no different than anyone else and I'll even be better!

Wanting To Help and Supports Needed

We asked youth if there were any times when they witnessed a situation involving racial discrimination or hate activities and they wanted to help. We wanted to know if they knew how to intervene, and, if not, what supports, information or skills they would require to do so.

"People laugh at you and then say they're not laughing when you ask them. But they are."

I worked with my friend from the Philippines at a Subway and a customer refused to be served by him. I think she was discriminating against him because he was a man. I wish I could have said something, but I don't know what. If I could get training in these situations about what to do, I'd feel better, I wouldn't be caught off-guard. Also, I want the other person not to get angry, but learn from what I've said so they don't feel that way anymore.

Call the teacher, but they don't stop it and you get in trouble.

In elementary school, at recess everyone was playing soccer and they wouldn't let an Oriental boy play, so I became his friend.

My friends were on one side of the C-train and there was an old Sikh guy on the other side. A bunch of kids were doing stuff to try and push his turban off. My friends started yelling, but they were on the other side and couldn't do anything. But this old guy took his stick and swiped at them so they ran.

I always help even if they're not brown. I always look out for the person who gets picked on.

In class, when we were reading, someone pronounced "sheet", "shit" and everyone started laughing. That person started crying. I wanted to help but couldn't because my English was not so good either and they'd make fun of me too.

I know how to help. I don't need help. I say "stop, get away". I learned from protecting myself, through experience. I get a big group of bodyguards around me. Lots of boys, so no one bugs me.

Some youth talked about "getting mad" and "feeling frustrated". They find it very upsetting to feel helpless.

I get frustrated. Especially when people don't care and when there's a direct incident and I have to react to it. I get intimidated and then I feel sick because I didn't know what to do.

A number of youths, particularly boys, saw no other recourse than to fight, or "beat them up" as witnessed by this exchange:

(Youth 1) I think fighting would help.

(Youth 2) Fighting is the best solution.

(Youth 3) No, I think talking to the person is the best way.

(Youth 1) Sometimes talking doesn't help and fighting is the only way. In order to survive, one must fight or he will be weak.

My brother has a big problem at [a Calgary high school] with guys staring him down and he can't back down. One time he got cut up and when my older brother saw, he got angry and left the house. My mother was so worried. She just kept saying that we never came to this country to fight.

But if someone said they wanted to beat up my brother, I would kill them too. That makes me so angry. When I saw my brother, his shirt was soaked with blood.

In terms of supports needed, many youths talked about the need for education and more discussion of white privilege. They felt that teachers and police officers needed to be more aware and supportive. In some cases, they were thankful for white allies who intervened.

Creating a "Racism-Free" Zone

We asked participants if they could create a "racism-free" zone, what would it look like? Youth liked this question and talked about the absence of negative behaviours, living in peace and happiness, everyone being free and accepted, and making racism illegal.
For some, it was another place, a lonely island, another planet, heaven, or like it was back home where racism wasn't an issue.
Many saw it as a return to childhood, or a simpler, less complicated time:

I'd educate everybody at a really early age about other people's cultures so they'd grow up understanding.

It would look like a science fiction world. Everyone would have the same skin colour to avoid problems. It would be like a sandbox.

It would be like a playground, can interact and have fun.

It would be like the crayon commercial and you'd be able to make a rainbow.

Most youth talked about it "being peaceful", a place where "you wouldn't have to be afraid of anybody", where "other people would help you", and where "there would be no fighting", "no violence ever". Everyone would be one big family and "everyone would greet each other with peace".

Some saw education as being important to creating this zone.

> I'd educate everybody at a really early age about other people's cultures so they'd grow up understanding.
>
> All street signs would be in every language. The cafeterias would serve every kind of food. Every textbook would be in every language and every language would be offered in every school. It would be a big university or school! Unfortunately, not everyone can be taught.

Many talked about it being a place where "you'd get support from your teacher", or "teachers would help you with your work".

And there would be laws. One youth wanted a place where "you'd be punished for being racist"; another suggested that "there would be laws to protect you. If you broke them, you'd have to leave the country." Another argued for "signs saying anyone caught saying racist things will be punished severely".

Conversations with Gay & Lesbian Youth

We wanted to talk to gay and lesbian youth about their experiences with hate crimes or hate activities, because, like racism, heterosexism is a growing concern for youth. This is compounded for youth of colour who are homosexual.

These youth defined hate activities as verbal violence, verbal threats, and hate literature. One talked about how "hate crime" can be institutionalized:

> I don't know if it's a crime, but like, oppression of someone who's a minority. For example, like school. Like excluding you or expelling you for being gay.

They wondered if thoughts could be hate crimes, and what were the limitations to free speech such as religious leaders "promoting hate" by preaching against homosexuality.

Many had experienced hate crimes or activities or knew someone who had, and this was not limited to gay-bashing:

> In Toronto, there was a Goth night at a local gay bar and my friends were jumped and beat up quite severely. It was brought to police and no charges were laid.

> When I was 17, I worked for a clothing store and I was dating a guy at the time. I wrote a letter to my boyfriend to let him know I was a lesbian. Later on, I couldn't find the letter. When I went back the next day, the place was spotless. A month later I was fired. There was no justification for it. Basically they told me I missed doing something around the store, but I had left a note saying I couldn't do it. So she told me, "Yeah, I heard about your notes."… Since then I've had a similar situation.

> I told them I was a lesbian, but someone else was hired to take care of a woman's daughter because she "could never forgive herself if something happened to her daughter".

> I was doing a research paper at the University, and all of the books on Natives [had] white supremacist group pamphlets in them. I told the library, but they can't trace it. I can't believe how much time they take, and that it's so rampant.

If your religion keeps telling you're wrong, it affects your whole self-esteem.

When asked how their health and well-being may be impacted by hate activities, they talked about its effects on education, family, and work:

> If I'm a school, [I hear] "Hey f…". I don't say anything because they're bigger. But I do feel bad. It affects my school performance for the rest of the day. It affects everything.

> If your religion keeps telling you're wrong, it affects your whole self-esteem.

Can't get good marks 'cause you're always worried and you put yourself down.

If anyone's ever had a partner, holding hands is a potential for hate crimes. That affects your life. When we're on a dark bridge and there are men approaching, we drop our hands [everyone nods in agreement].

I came out to my parents two months ago. My father was okay, but my mother wasn't. She was planning on coming for a visit, but decided to send my father instead to persuade me. She thinks I can be cured. This made me overall not nice to be around. It affected my job performance.

When they witnessed hate activities they were often unable to help and many talked about how teachers and principals were ineffective because "some teachers feel the same way". However, in one school, the principal did intervene. This was seen as unusual. In their experiences, the victim, the gay kids always got blamed:

Two boys were kissing in the cafeteria and someone poured chocolate milk on them. The next day in the announcements it was said that we're here to do our work. Don't make a scene for yourself. Pretty much, keep it in the closet. The chocolate milk kids got suspended, but they gave part of the blame to the gay kids.

The victim always gets blamed. Gays get blamed for social irresponsibility. My mom's cousin did his nails at school and was expelled.

It's acceptable because they're gay. Like they provoked it.

These youth did not think they could get any support from the school due to teachers who were homophobic and a school system reluctant to educate others on these issues. There was a lot of animosity in the room.

For them, a hate-free zone would be a place where they could put up posters displaying acceptance of others and pride in themselves.

For one, religious propaganda would not be allowed as it promotes hate crime. Conversely, another did not believe that a hate-free area could be created.

The victim always gets blamed. Gays get blamed for social irresponsibility. My mom's cousin did his nails at school and was expelled.

Implications for Policy and Community Action

It is evident from this study, that youth experience racial discrimination and heterosexism, and live with their effects daily. From the everyday or individual racism of racial or homophobic slurs, physical aggression, and bullying, to more systemic forms in the school system and employment, our children have to deal with these forms of violence day in and day out. And it affects youth, regardless of colour, ethnicity, religion or language. We found that very few youth had not seen or personally experienced discrimination, and even newcomers to Canada for whom the term "racism" was unfamiliar, could describe incidents of racial discrimination they have experienced. This echoes a number of studies that have asked young people about their experiences with racism and discrimination (for example see DePass et.al., 1993; Kunz & Hanvey, 2000; Griffith & Labercane, 1993; NAARR, 2001).

While very few of the youth could define hate crime or activity, many were able to give examples of these. There was a perceived lack of safety evident in their comments suggesting a need for mechanisms of support be they intervention from school staff, or a safe place to document these incidents, such as a hate activity reporting web-site. The *National Planning Meeting on Hate Crime and Bias Activity* in April 1997 noted young people as a priority for countering hate/bias activity as they are the targets of recruitment, and the majority of perpetrators and victims (Khanna, 1999). It was found that 14% of elementary school children are bullied because of their race and youth are particularly reluctant to report these incidents.

A number of policy implications or course of future action arise from this study for a variety of sectors including education, employment, health, justice, and community. These are outlined below.

Education

> Children learn to hate themselves in school, especially in the city, because nobody is teaching according to Aboriginal culture and values. There are not enough Aboriginal teachers and role models (Aboriginal Health Unit, 1995, p. 22).

Confirming other studies, the education system was seen as lacking in providing support and anti-racism/anti-heterosexism education in the schools. In Calgary, the members of non-racialized and racialized communities and the Calgary Board of Education worked together to produce an *Anti-Racism and Equity Policy* in 1999 which has yet to be operationalized and implemented. While some Calgary schools are working hard on these issues, e.g., Forest Lawn, Terry Fox, there is not an integrated, holistic policy to guide school programmes in these matters.

One time at school... someone blocked my way and called me a bad word and told me to go back to my own country [a Canadian born youth].

One area of systemic discrimination was highlighted in a study which examined the experiences of English as a Second Language students in the school system (Watt, Roessingh & Bosetti, 1996). These showed that ESL students dropped out or were pushed out of school at a rate of 2 to 2.5 times that of their English language majority peers. They felt marginalized and alienated even if academically competent. A recent report demonstrates that the issue of ESL students continues to be inadequately addressed in the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) and the problem is growing (see Coalition for Equal Access to Education, 2001). The CBE struck an ESL Task Force in 2000, but has failed to implement many of its recommendations. And despite the identification by the Board of Trustees of ESL support as a service priority in its 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 budgets, the administration has thus far failed to respond to this recommendation (Coalition for Equal Access To Education, 2001).

In another study, youth have talked about internalized oppression where they think of themselves as less than human because of their experiences of trying to fit in with peers and not being accepted because they looked different (Pruegger, 1995).

They also discussed teachers assuming they would not perform well academically due to their colour, and treating them accordingly.

School Boards in Calgary need to work with community to ensure that schools are safe and affirming places for all students. Systematic programmes and policies need to be designed and implemented to assist youth, parents and teachers in the development of appropriate intervention skills.

There also need to be greater attempts to speak to the reality of homosexuality and the effects of homophobia in the school environment. Homosexual youth need to feel safe regardless of how public their sexual orientation may be.

Employment

Despite noting the impact of racial discrimination and homophobia on school performance and self-esteem, many of these youths were optimistic about their opportunities in the job market, especially once they learned "good English". However, recent reports on employment opportunities for members of racialized groups do not support this optimism (for example see Kunz, Milan & Schetagne, 2000).

The Kunz et.al. report notes that, despite Canadian- born visible minority and foreign-born minority members having a higher proportion of university graduates than non-racialized groups, they continue to face discrimination at school and in the job market. They also experience a wage disadvantage compared to whites that cannot be explained by individual differences. Li (1999) suggests that:

> ...economic disparities according to racial origins help to maintain the social reality of race by giving a discounted market value to certain racial groups. In turn, the low social value given to certain racial origins creates obstacles which further limit the market outcomes for people being racialized (pp 128-129).

Given the same level of education, non-racialized groups, whether born in Canada or not, are more likely than Aboriginal and visible minorities, including Canadian-born, to be in the top 20% income distribution (Kunz, et.al., 2000).

When asked why these disparities exist, members of racialized groups cited such things as not fitting in to the existing work/corporate culture; and subtle forms of racism such as being passed over for promotion, being the first to be laid-off, being consistently assigned the most unpleasant work tasks; and being stereotyped.

When we look at the employment picture for youth, we find that unemployment rates for young people are 50% or higher than those for the labour force as a whole, and those in lower-income families and immigrant youth are less likely to be employed (Canadian Council, 1998). For the latter, these patterns seem to be related to lack of prior work experience in Canada (twice that of teens born in Canada), lack of family contacts in business, struggles to learn English or French, responsibilities at home, or family expectations to focus on school work (Canadian Council, 1998).

Unemployment rates for youth of certain racialized groups may be even higher given their greater risk for dropping out of school. For dropouts and immigrant youth too old for regular high school, mentoring programmes or other forms of support are needed to encourage them to continue their education.

In the Listening Circle consultation, Aboriginal youth were concerned with lack of information on and access to the hidden job market (Pruegger & ManyGuns, 2000). They felt that they are often taken advantage of in the work place either not being paid at all, or being underpaid.

> I'm a university student for eight months of the year, but for four months, I usually count myself lucky to get a "popcorn" job because on my résumé, it says "graduate of Plains Indian Cultural Survival School". I know I'm not a drunkard or a criminal.

> But this is the common stereotype of Native people so I'm not even short-listed (Aboriginal youth, Pruegger, 1995).

Aycan and Berry (1996) have identified lack of employment opportunities as one of the biggest predictors of poor mental health for immigrants. But very little research has explored these issues from the perspective of immigrant youth and other marginalized youth groups.

That the youth in this study did not see systemic racism in employment as a problem may be more than lack of experience in the work force. It may be that the rhetoric of the "merit" principle promoted in schools and society serves to foster internalized oppression wherein members of marginalized groups believe their inability to get ahead is based on individual failings rather than systemic inequities.

Employers need to work to ensure that their hiring, promotion and performance evaluation practices are bias-free. They need to encourage mentoring programmes and develop culturally competent and sustainable performance indicators at all levels in the organization and to which all employees are held accountable.

Health

It is apparent that racial discrimination and heterosexism not only affect education and employment, but also health outcomes. As with the U.S. *National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence* (1986) study and the *Health Canada* (1999) study, youth talked about feeling sad, frustrated, and angry. They also talked about low self-esteem and lack of confidence. This affected their sleep and energy levels. These effects, coupled with a general lack of support and coping or intervention skills, can lead to learned helplessness and continually elevated stress levels.

Clark, et.al. (1999) have found racism to be a significant stressor for African Americans resulting in a number of physical ailments from increased risk of stroke to heart disease.

Studies have shown that homophobia and heterosexism create an environment of increased risk for health problems such as depression, attempted suicide, and substance abuse (O'Hanlan, 1995). This is attributed to chronic stress from societal hatred and the associated frequent loss of family support systems. "Individuals who carry multiple socially marginalized statuses, e.g., race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, may carry an even higher risk of depressive distress" (O'Hanlan, 1995, p. 6).

Education and health systems need to work together to address these issues through the development of cultural competencies, anti-racism training, public awareness campaigns, and more effective mental health interventions which view these issues as systemic rather than individual.

Justice

Youth talked about being harassed by the police, being pulled over more often and targeted because of their skin colour. This echoes similar information obtained from Aboriginal youth in the *Listening Circle* research (Pruegger & Manyguns, 2000), and information from participants in the Kunz, et.al. (2000) study. Two examples from the latter report give a flavour of the comments:

> This summer, I was driving and I got pulled over three times in an hour and a half!

> They [the cops] assume because you're Native and you're driving a nice vehicle that you might have stolen it.

While the Calgary Police Service does provide diversity education for recruits, has an eight-team Cultural Resources Unit, and a Hate/Bias Crime Coordinator, it still needs to dedicate more resources to anti-racism education at all levels of the service and to hate/bias crime investigations. Furthermore, the issues of heterosexism and homophobia in police services need to be continually addressed. The Calgary Police Service has taken the first step by having a Cultural Resources officer assigned to the Gay/Lesbian/ Transgender "community".

Regardless of best efforts by police services to recognize, document and charge alleged infractions under Sections 318-320 and 718.2, without support from Crown Prosecutors, additional penalties afforded by these sections will not be enforced. There is a need for more resources and supports to both police officers and Crown Prosecutors to pursue these charges more aggressively.

Community

The level of support youth receive from peer groups and youth service providers is very good. These groups need to share their expertise with other sectors of the community in order to create solutions that work for youth.

In Canada, we have a solid set of laws and individuals committed to combating racism and hate. What we need is to work together to develop cohesive action plans for responding to these issues be they individual or systemic. Community action is difficult. People working on the frontlines are often demoralized, frustrated, helpless and exhausted. How much more so are visible minority youth and parents? Many working in the anti-racism movement are aging and we need to begin mentoring and passing knowledge on to a younger generation to continue the fight. Communities must find meaningful ways for youth to participate fully and have a sense of belonging leaving them less vulnerable to hate propaganda.

Conclusion

Racism, heterosexism and other forms of oppression are a daily fact in the lives of many of Calgary's youths.

It is up to youth, parents, educators, health care providers, employers, police and justice system workers, the municipal government, youth service providers, and concerned community members to work together to eradicate these forms of violence from our children's lives. **The time to start is now.**

Next Steps

Gathering information on youths' experiences with and understanding of racism and hate activities was only the beginning. We will use this data as a foundation for further discussion and community development.

We will be hosting community information sessions to overview the research report and recommendations, and to elicit suggestions and support for community action. Young people will be involved in and direct much of this process so that solutions or actions taken will be youth-derived and youth-driven. This fulfills a key intent of the project: To provide youth with the knowledge, capacity, and skills to work with other members of the community to combat racism and discrimination in their lives.
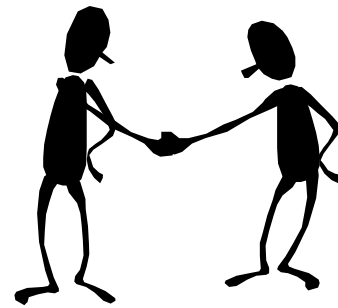
Resources

The Media Awareness Network provides resources to parents and teachers to help young people deal with on-line hate. www.media-awareness.ca

www.bullying.org This site was created by students in Bragg Creek and offers a number of resources, tools and tips around the issues of bullying,

B'nai Brith League for Human Rights publishes a pamphlet "Is your child a target" which provides guidelines for parents and teachers on the dangers of hate group recruitment in Canada. It can be obtained by phoning (in Calgary) 253-8600 or on their website at http://www.bnaibrith.ca/publications/publicn.htm along with many other resources to target hate activity.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has a number of on-line resources to counter racism and hate including a poster "Stop the Hatred" which has a quiz and a game geared to anti-racist education. www.chrc-ccdp.ca

The Alberta Human Rights Commission has a number of resources for teachers and students around protected groups. www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca

Antiracist.com is an excellent source with tips on how to deal with racial violence and other anti-racism strategies. www.antiracist.com

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Appendix 1

Summary of Criminal Code Features Related to Hate Motivated Activities

Violence

- Uttering Threats (Section 264.1 (1)
  This section makes it an offense, punishable by up to five years imprisonment, to knowingly threaten
  (directly or indirectly) to cause death or bodily harm to any person. Burning, destroying or damaging property, and killing or injuring an animal belonging to any person is subject to up to two years imprisonment.

- Assault (Sections 265-268)
  These sections state that physical contact is not a requirement of proof of assault (265); the maximum penalty for "assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm" is ten years (267); and the maximum penalty for aggravated assault is fourteen years.

- Torture (Section 269.1)
  This provides a penalty of up to fourteen years in prison for anyone acting under the authority of a public official to torture another person.

- Advocating Genocide (Section 318)
  Advocating or promoting genocide of an identifiable group distinguished by colour, race, religion or ethnic origin is punishable by up to five years imprisonment.

- Intimidation (Section 423)
  It is punishable by six months imprisonment to try to compel another person to do or abstain from doing anything by threats or acts of violence against that person, his/her family or property or by interfering with his/her travel, business or home life.

Damage to Reputation and Harassment

- Criminal Harassment (Section 264)
  Persistently following, communicating, watching or threatening any person or anyone known to that person when the perpetrator knows or ought to know that the other person might reasonably fear for their own safety or the safety of anyone know to the victim, is subject to a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment.

- Defamatory Libel (Section 298)
  Publication of words or other symbols that are likely to have the effect of insulting or injuring the reputation of any person by exposing him/her to hatred, contempt or ridicule is subject to up to two years imprisonment. If the publisher knows the defamatory libel is false, imprisonment increases to five years.

- Public Incitement of Hatred (Section 319)
  Public incitement of hatred where incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace is punishable by up to two years imprisonment.

- False Messages and Harassing Telephone Calls (Section 372)
  Communication activities designed to harass individuals are punishable by fines and imprisonment from six months to two years depending on the offence.

- Damage to Property – Mischief (Section 430)
  Willful destruction, damage or interference with the use of property is subject to life imprisonment if there is actual danger to life, ten years imprisonment for damage over $5000, and two years imprisonment otherwise.

Dangerous Offender Status (Section 753)[10]

> Some perpetrators of hate-motivated activities can pose long-term threats to public safety because of persistent, generalized hatred. If application for dangerous offender status is approved for these individuals they are subject to indeterminate prison terms. (Jeffery, 1998, pp. 20-27)

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[10]   Section 753 of the *Criminal Code* states (in Jeffery, 1998, pp. 52-53):
DANGEROUS OFFENDERS
753 - Where, on an application made under this Part following the conviction of a person for an offence but before the offender is sentenced therefore, it is established to the satisfaction of the court

a)   that the offence for which the offender has been convicted is a serious personal injury offence described in paragraph (a) of the definition of that expression in section 752 and the offender constitutes a threat to the life, safety or physical or mental well-being of other persons on the basis of evidence establishing

    i)   a pattern of repetitive behaviour by the offender, of which the offence for which he has been convicted forms a part, showing a failure to restrain his behaviour and a likelihood of his causing death or injury to other persons, or inflicting severe psychological damage on other persons, through failure in the future to restrain his behaviour,

    ii)   a pattern of persistent aggressive behaviour by the offender, of which the offence for which he has been convicted forms a part, showing a substantial degree of indifference on the part of the offender respecting the reasonably foreseeable consequence to other persons of his behaviour, or

    iii)   any behaviour by the offender, associated with the offence for which he has been convicted, that is such a brutal nature as to compel the conclusion that his behaviour in the future is unlikely to be inhibited by normal standards of behavioural restraint, or

b)   that the offence for which the offender has been convicted is a serious personal injury offence described in paragraph (b) of the definition of that expression in section 752 and the offender, by his conduct in any sexual matter including that involved in the commission of the offence for which he has been convicted, has shown a failure to control his sexual impulses and a likelihood of his causing injury, pain or other evil to other persons through failure in the future to control his sexual impulses, the court may find the offender to be a dangerous offender and may thereupon impose a sentence of detention in a penitentiary for an indeterminate period, in lieu of any other sentence that might be imposed for the offence for which the offender has been convicted.

Appendix 2
Interview Schedule
Read and explain the informed consent form. Have them sign.

Introduction: The City of Calgary, in conjunction with a variety of youth-serving organizations, want to talk to young people about their definitions of and experience with racism and/or hate activities. Youth across Canada have identified these as having significant impact on their lives and we are hoping to get your perspective on these issues. The goal is to identify the issues, and have young people come together with people in various sectors such as health, justice, education, etc., to create youth-driven solutions. Today, we are just hoping to have an informal discussion about some of your experiences. Are there any questions?

1. How would you define racism?
   - hate crimes or activities?

2. Describe a time when you or someone you know has experienced racism.
   - hate crimes or activities
   - in what setting did this occur (e.g., home, work, school, etc.)?
   - what did you or this person do, if anything?
   - thinking back on this experience, what do you wish you had done? (if personal experience related)
   - what kinds of things would have helped you or your friend to respond more effectively?

3. Describe any experiences you or someone you know has had with a hate group (e.g., Aryan Nations, the White Brotherhood, others?) or gang.

4. How do you think your health or well-being has been impacted by racism or hate activities, if at all?
   - education (substitute for "health" in above question)
   - employment opportunities (substitute for "health" in above question)
   - Are there any other areas that have been affected that you would like to talk about?

5. Have you ever witnessed a situation involving racism or hate activities where you've wanted to help but did not know how? What kinds of support, information, skills, etc. would you need to be able to intervene more effectively?

6. If you could create a "racism-free" zone, what would it look like?

7. Is there anything else you want to tell us? Any last thoughts on these issues that you don't want to miss?

8. Would you like to continue to participate in this research, e.g., review your transcript for accuracy, receive a copy of the report, participate in community forums to identify youth-defined and youth-driven solutions? (If so, have the individual fill out the contact-information sheet).

Appendix 3
Informed Consent Form

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully.

I am agreeing to participate in a research project which will examine my understandings of and experiences with racism and hate activities. The goal of the research is to explore how people my age feel about these issues and ask what solutions we may have.

I understand that I will be asked to participate with a group of youth in a discussion and that this discussion will be audio-taped and notes will be taken. This information will be used for publication and reports to various agencies, but in no way will I be identifiable in these. The discussion will be no longer than one hour, but any member of the group can leave it at any time.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and I can choose to withdraw at any time without penalty. I also understand that my identity will be completely anonymous, that I do not have to give my name or any other identifying information to the interviewer or the researchers.

_____   _____
DATE   **SIGNATURE of Participant**

_____   _____
DATE   **SIGNATURE of Researcher**

>>

If you would like to remain involved with this project, please provide the following information and a member of the research team will contact you in a few days!

Name: *(please print clearly):* _____

Phone Number: _____   Age (Optional): _____

Email address (if applicable): _____

Appendix 4
Variable Matrix – Perceptions of Racism and Hate Crimes in Calgary

Categories	Variables				
	Age	**Sex**	**SES***	**SP****	**Ancestry**
12-15 years					
16-18 years					
19-21 years					
22-24 years					
Male					
Female					
Low					
Middle					
High					
Poor					
Average					
Above Aver.					
African/ Caribbean					
N. European (white)					
E. European					
Pacific Islander					
Asian					
Latin American					
South Asian					
Middle Eastern					
Aboriginal					

* SES = Socio-economic status   ** SP = School Performance _____

Religion (check one)   Interviewer   _____
Protestant   ☐   Location   _____
Catholic   ☐
Islam/Muslim   ☐   Date   00/   _____
Buddhist   ☐   month / day
Hindu   ☐
Other   ☐