

EFFECTIVE ANTI-RACISM/DISCRIMINATION STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study provides the perspectives of young people on how applied communication strategies can be used more effectively to address racism and discrimination in their lives. Interviews and focus groups were conducted with 25 youth from four communities: Pitt Meadows, Surrey, Vancouver and Vernon. The general research questions explored were: youth's experiences with racism and discrimination, the type of methods and messages that appeal to them and what would lead them to take action against racism and discrimination. The data gathered were analyzed and interpreted using aspects of a grounded theory approach. The data were coded and categorized to develop general themes and patterns. The study concludes with recommendations on how racism and discrimination can be addressed in our schools.

The results indicate that racism and discrimination are serious problems impacting the lives of young people that require immediate intervention. All the participants had experienced or witnessed racism or discrimination. Some participants considered suicide, dropped out of school or used drugs and alcohol as coping strategies. The research has important implications for the education system. Most participants did not find school staff were responsive to or understood their experiences. Students need to feel safer in school environments and know that there are support systems they can turn to for help.

The youth varied in the type of strategies they found effective. It is recommended that a multi-media communication campaign should be developed to address racism and discrimination incorporating the use of television and popular culture. Youth involvement in the development and implementation of campaigns is critical in successfully reaching other youth. Parents, communities and government agencies also have a responsibility in working with and supporting youth to prevent racism and discrimination.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Ted Ghag.

His love, patience and support made this venture possible.

Thank you for everything you've done.

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PREFACE

Students say racism found in schools

A total of 86.5 per cent of students in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith school district believe there is at least some racism in their school, according to a survey...conducted by the district's race relations committee (Barron, 2001, p. A3).

Verbal bullying a reality, but race not a big factor

Racism not widespread in school: Report. Surrey high school students say racism is not a major issue in their schools. However they say racism manifests itself in the broader context of verbal bullying and name calling that tends to permeate teen culture (Reynolds, 2001, p. A11).

Moms: Teen deaths won't be in vain

Parents search for solution to problem of teen bullying,

The forum,...planned by Mission mom Cindy Wesley and Surrey mom Nasima Nastoh, focused on bringing more attention to the problem, and brainstorming ways to approach the issue of bullying in schools. Wesley's 14-year old daughter, Dawn Marie...committed suicide...to escape bullying at school. Nastoh's son, Hamed, 14, jumped from the Pattullo bridge... after the bullying became too much to handle (Abbotsford News, 2001, p. A6).

Former student says school failed to stop harassment

A young man who says he was roughed-up and taunted by fellow students while attending a North Vancouver high school has been granted an unprecedented hearing before a B.C. human rights tribunal. Azmi Jubran will ask a tribunal to find that the district discriminated against him because it didn't stop the harassment...Jubran, now 20 says he was called 'faggot' and queer by students who mistakenly thought he was gay. His tormentors also kicked him, punched him and one lit his shirt on fire (Steffenhagen, 2000, p. B1, B6).

Racism infesting youth

Unite the white? It is with a heavy heart and dispirited sigh that one reads that 17-year-old white supremacists are lobbying for their freedom to hate, in Prince George...The teens feel the City of Prince George does not have the right to quell their freedom of speech - to speak on the superiority of the white 'race' and subsequent inferiority of all other races... "There will be a racial holy war one day," said 17-year-old Krista Whyman. "I've been a racist all my life. It's a way of life, it's like a religion...it's about uniting the race as one" (Interior News, 2000, p. A4).

Theatre group tackles racism

A local youth theatre group is trying to tackle the evil of racism through three short plays it is staging around Vernon this summer...[They] usually perform in conjunction with other events. The reason is that audiences are not usually attracted to the topic as entertainment (Mercier, 2000, p. 24).

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

These news stories highlight that racism is not only a reality in Canadian society but a pervasive and ugly part of the lives of BC youth. Despite this reality, it is alarming that racism continues to be denied in our society and schools (Fleras, 2001, Henry, Tator, Mattis & Rees, 1995, Bolaria, 2000). This denial occurs even though a national survey of 3500 young people found that one out of two youth or 50 per cent felt that racial discrimination is an extremely serious problem and ranked it as the third most serious social problem facing Canada after crime and the economy (Bibby, 2001).

The deaths of young people show the tragic consequences of racism and discrimination. Incidents such as those described in the preceding news stories brought to the forefront the urgent need for intervention to address such injustices. Having worked in the field of anti-racism¹ and human rights for the last eight years with the BC government, I am familiar with the efforts that were undertaken by governmental organizations, schools and community groups to address racism and discrimination.² Rightly so, youth were identified as a priority and increasingly were the targets of information campaigns on issues such as bullying, diversity and violence prevention. Schools developed policies. Posters were created. Youth action committees were initiated. These are just a few of the strategies employed.

I was concerned about the impact of such efforts on youth. Were we reaching youth? Were we understanding their reality? Was help available to youth facing racism? Were we supporting youth activists concerned about racism and taking action against it? Were we motivating others to become involved? Or were youth just becoming

¹ “A process of identifying, isolating and challenging racism in all its forms through direct action at individual and institutional levels” (Fleras & Elliott, 2002, p. 263).

² Racism will be defined in chapter one. A definition of discrimination is provided on page 9.

desensitized to all the messages in a world of information saturation? My concerns were based on observations from participating in and developing many communication campaigns. I noticed the strategies used by government and community groups often have limited reach among diverse youth; in particular marginalized youth who are often deeply affected by social injustices or those who are the perpetrators. The programs tend to attract the same types of youth, those already aware of the issues or currently active in their schools and communities, often referred to as the 'converted'.

I also observed campaigns that I saw as just missing the mark. They were developed with no input from youth and treated youth as consumers of the messages. One particular anti-racism campaign comes to mind in which the slogan 'Racism is Dumb' was developed by a communications firm to reach youth. Accompanying this campaign was a public service ad jingle called 'Growing Stronger Together' showing images of happy, smiley children of various cultural backgrounds. Informal consultations with youth confirmed that the campaign was ineffective at reaching youth. In contrast, I was involved in developing campaigns such as the Racism Leaves Scars posters series while working for the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism. We developed this campaign with direct input from youth. The messages and images showed actual situations of racism. The reality based posters received positive feedback from students. However, some school administrators found the posters to be too negative and dark and refused to hang them in their schools. From these experiences, I learned how necessary it is to turn to the youth themselves about their perspectives on how to best reach them.

This research was undertaken to learn from youth and to develop the communications and education efforts of the BC Human Rights Commission where I

worked for three years as the Senior Communications Officer. The focus of my work was educating young people about discrimination and encouraging them to take action to prevent discrimination. While working at the Commission, we recognized the need to work with and hear directly from youth about their perspectives on addressing discrimination. However, in the midst of this research, the new BC Liberal government came into power in British Columbia. At the time, this neo-liberal government conveyed that human rights, in particular human rights education, were not a high priority in their mandate. The education and communications program at the Commission was cut. In March 2003, the Commission was eliminated, leaving only the BC Human Rights Tribunal, an adjudicative body to administer human rights complaints.

These government cuts impacted me not only on a personal level causing me to lose my job but also on a broader level. I have great concern that the most vulnerable in our society are left with little protection. The Human Rights Commission played a vital role in advocating for the rights of all British Columbians to live a life free from discrimination. It also played a large role in not just responding to complaints but working towards the prevention of discrimination through education and communication efforts. The elimination of the Commission also impacted my research. The intent of the research was to use the findings to develop future Commission initiatives and to continue to work with the youth who participated in the study. Several of the youth participants were excited about the opportunity to see their ideas being implemented. However, there is still a need for this research. As a project of applied communications, this research will provide insight into youth's experiences and ideas and make a valuable contribution

towards the development of future strategies addressing social issues, such as racism and discrimination.

Objectives

The purpose of this study was to find out from youth the types of strategies they think are effective in addressing racism and discrimination in their lives. The objectives were to identify and examine:

- Youth's understanding and awareness of issues of racism and discrimination.
- Youth's personal experiences with racism and discrimination and the steps they took or support systems they accessed to deal with these situations.
- The type of methods or messages that appeal to youth and would lead them to take action against racism. I was particularly interested in finding out how to reach the more difficult youth such as the perpetrators or youth seen as apathetic.
- How applied communication methods can be used more effectively to reach youth and how to address racism and discrimination in our schools and communities.
- The role the media and popular culture play in educating and influencing youth and in combating social problems such as racism and discrimination.

Popular culture and the media were a particular focus of my research because of the powerful impact that communication campaigns using mass media have on youth, such as those from the tobacco, fashion or alcohol industries. These messages often attract youth through popular media, such as magazines, music and television (Laba, Kline, Murray & Richards, 1993, Young, 1989). From my experience of working with government and community, I often found reluctance to use these popular media because of the perceived higher costs associated with them. However, these methods have been used in campaigns such as the Canadian Heritage's Racism – Stop It commercials and the BC Ministry of Health anti-tobacco programs. Through this research, I would like to gain

an understanding of youth's perspectives about the effectiveness of using mass media as well as other strategies that are used, such as posters, conferences, theatre presentations and youth committees.

The guiding principle and priority of this research is to present the voices and experiences of youth. It is important to point out that this study does not claim that the findings represent all youth, that the participants' ideas will necessarily work, or that these are the best ways to reach youth. The objective is to hear the perspectives of some youth whose voices are often not heard. As Weis and Fine (1993) point out youth voices:

once marginalized need to be heard and centred – if we are serious about schools as a democratic public sphere, if we are sincere in our commitment to multicultural and feminist education and if we want to understand and interrupt the perversions and pleasures of power, privilege and marginalization in public schooling (p. 2).

The need for and importance of presenting youth opinions is evident in the gap I have found in research and academic literature that documents youth perspectives on racism and discrimination. I found several resources and studies documenting the causes, manifestation and processes for elimination of racism in the education system and on youth citizenship and empowerment. However, most of the material is presented by academics or practitioners who are viewed as experts. This gap is also identified by Barron (2000) in her study on youth violence. She found extensive literature detailing the causes, trends and strategies associated with youth violence. Most of the information was constructed from expert opinion and “conspicuously absent were the voices of young offenders themselves and their own experience-based ways of knowing” (p. 8). This gap in research is also outlined by Moy (1996) in her thesis. She states that the absence of literature reflecting students' points of view is startling and this omission gives the

impression that students do not care about anti-racism or that student centred race relations activities are not recognized or deemed worthy by schools or researchers (p. 41).

Barron and Moy both address this gap by presenting youth voices in their work. Moy's research looks at the influence of ten student activists in developing anti-racism initiatives in their schools and documents their views on what limits action within schools. Barron identifies that young offenders' understanding of their reality differs from the experts. She argues for the importance of presenting youth voices:

We must fully understand the experience of youth before we can know what they need in treatment. The importance of listening to the voice of youths is increasingly being recognized. Not only is it deemed significant in better understanding their perspective but perhaps more importantly it also makes young people feel that they are valued and contributing members of society (p. 44).

My research is not only aimed at presenting youth voices, but also recognizes that youth must actively be involved in leading our efforts to address social problems, such as racism, discrimination or violence. Barron emphasizes the importance of youth-centred approaches which allow children to have a direct voice and participate "in the production of sociological data and be active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live" (James and Prout, 1990, cited in Barron, p. 43). This study will directly present the voices and ideas of youth who participated in this research as much as possible. It is critical we involve and hear directly from youth to ensure the strategies that are developed capture their realities and appeal to them to take action.

Definition of Youth

I recognize that youth are a diverse group of people and their views and experiences are varied. By using the term youth to describe the young people who

participated in this study, I want to be careful not to objectify or categorize youth as an “empty category inhabited by desires, fantasies and interests of adult world” (Giroux, 1998, p. 46). I also want to be careful not to represent youth as different, the Other, strange, exotic and transitory as often done by adults in academic literature (Said cited in Griffin, 1993, p. 25). Theorists such as Hall identify that the concept of youth is an artificial construction as it does not make empirical sense (cited in Marshland, 1993, p. 239). However, as Wyn and White (1997) argue, while youth do not exist as a single category there are some commonalities experienced by young people such as their formal schooling (p. 3). Youth as an age category, for institutional and policy purposes in advanced industrial societies, usually starts at age thirteen and continues until age twenty-five (Ibid, p. 1). It is important to distinguish, as stated in the United Nations definition of youth, between teenagers (13-19) and young adults (20-24), since the sociological and psychological problems they face may vary.

For the purposes of this research I am focusing on teenaged youth, between the ages thirteen and eighteen. Most of my work at the Commission focussed on this age group. This demographic can be more difficult but important to reach as it is seen as the final stage of attitude crystallization in children’s development of racial awareness (Katz, 1981, cited in Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). During this stage a young person also comes to terms with his or her racial attitudes and will probably not rethink them unless placed in a situation that requires it or unless his or her social environment changes. While I have chosen to focus my research given that the experiences, issues and strategies with other age groups would vary, I do not want to negate or diminish the importance of working with youth at other developmental stages.

Theoretical Framework

While the focus of this research is on racism, I will be connecting racism to other forms of discrimination,³ such as sexism, homophobia and ageism. The theoretical framework guiding this approach is the concept of integrative⁴ anti-racism as presented by Dei (1996). He defines integrative anti-racism⁵ as the “study of how the dynamics of social difference (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, language and religion) are mediated in people’s daily experiences” (p. 55). Integrative anti-racism acknowledges youth’s multiple, shifting and often contradictory identities and subject positions (Dei, 1996, p. 55). It is based on the principle that the various forms of oppression are interlocked because individual identities are constituted differently by the relations of race, class, gender, age, disability or sexuality to name a few (p. 57).

For example, Rezai-Rashti (1995a) argues that based on her work with female minority students, it is important to connect racism with sexism. She found that these students not only deal with racism in the school system and in society, but also sometimes with sexist practices within their own communities and in racialization of gender issues at school (p. 89). McCarthy (1995) adds that “one cannot understand race by looking at race alone. One must look at the dynamics of class, ethnicity and gender...[that] operate in contradictory and discontinuous ways in the institutional setting” (p. 246). Dei further explains the importance of connecting racism with other

³ Unequal or biased treatment, actions, policies or practices whether intentional or unintentional that have an adverse effect of excluding or denying someone because of their race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, social condition, family or marital status (Fleras & Elliott, 2002, p. 267, *BC Human Rights Code*).

⁴ It is important to distinguish that Dei’s notion of integration from traditional understandings in which differences are merged to create a new culture or assimilated into the dominant culture (Fleras & Elliott, 2003, p. 15).

⁵ I have chosen this framework over others such as liberal pluralism that argues we should not focus on our differences but treat everyone the same because our similarities are more important. I have also not turned to neo-Marxists approaches which subsume issues of race using traditional class analysis (Henry et al., 1995, p.36). The problem with these approaches as Henry et al. argue is that they do not apply to all situations and do not address racism and other social divisions. It is not the purpose of this thesis to provide an in-depth explanation of these other theories of racism.

forms of oppression as one of the key objectives of anti-racism is to deal with human injustice and prevent a hierarchy of oppressions. He states:

We can't transform society by removing only one form of oppression. There is a common link between all oppressions in the material production of society...It is also destructive to fight one form of oppression while using another to do so. An understanding of how race, class, gender and sexuality are interconnected in our lives will work against the construction of hierarchies of social oppression (p. 56).

This approach also recognizes our changing roles as oppressor and oppressed depending on our position in society, (p. 57) which is important when looking at discrimination. I also wanted to see whether connecting racism to other forms of discrimination may be a way for youth, who have not faced racism but have faced other forms of discrimination, to better understand racism.

The other reason why I have chosen integrative anti-racism as the framework guiding my research is because it recognizes the saliency of race. This approach ensures that race is the main point of entry through which varied forms of oppression are understood. The objective is not to hierarchize or privilege race over other forms of oppression, but recognizes that we can not explore all forms of discrimination with the same intensity and vigour but can examine how they intersect (Dei, p. 65). This thesis will thus focus on racism while relating it to other forms of discrimination.

Putting race at the forefront is also important because race issues historically have been pushed to the background as people are afraid to talk about or simply have ignored racism (Dei, p. 67). This is crucial for this study as racism is often ignored under the umbrella of diversity, discrimination and bullying. I particularly see this tendency in schools choosing to address bullying rather than address racism and discrimination because they are seen as the same. This conflation of racism and discrimination is

reflected in the report of students' surveys conducted by the Surrey School District on Racism in Secondary Schools (2001). The report, written and interpreted by the school district, concludes that racism is not a major issue but manifests as general verbal bullying and name-calling. My concern is that by focusing on bullying, school districts can avoid fully addressing issues of racism and discrimination, such as root causes, systemic barriers and student and staff experiences. This omission is also apparent in the recent Safe Schools Task Force report (2003) which while identifying that racism and homophobia are major concerns in BC, does not make recommendations on how to address them but rather focuses on anti-bullying strategies. It is crucial that in the struggle for change, race as an issue is not submerged by bullying (Dei, p. 66) and the full scope and reality of youth's experiences are captured.

Organization of Thesis

This thesis is organized into three parts. The first part includes the literature review that provides an explanation and justification of the issues explored. Chapters one to three review:

- Definitions of and the forms and manifestations of racism in Canadian society.
- Various theoretical perspectives that explain racist ideologies and discourse.
- How children and youth learn racist ideology and how it is a part of their socialization through the media and school system.
- Various responses to addressing racism in the lives of youth and the importance of youth participation.

Chapter four outlines the methodology used to implement the study. In the second section, chapters five and six present an analysis and interpretation of the findings of my research. In the final section, chapter seven concludes with recommendations and a communications plan to address racism and discrimination in the lives of youth.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW – BACKGROUND

Manifestations of Racism

Racism in Canadian Society

The difficulty in identifying and defining racism is rooted in the rather elusive, expansive and variable meaning of the term (Fleras, 2001, p. 81, Henry et al., 1995, p. 14). For some, racism can be as subtle as a glance, for others it needs to be overt as racist graffiti or physical violence (Ibid.). As Fleras and Kunz (2001) point out contemporary Canadian racism is often depicted as polite, subdued, implicit and disguised in coded language of concern about fairness which can make it difficult to identify and address (p. 37). That is why Fleras (2001) stresses that a definition of racism must be comprehensive enough to capture its various aspects. Henry et al. (1995) define racism as the assumptions, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of individuals and the institutional policies, processes and practices based on the ideology of the inherent superiority of one racial group over others.⁶ This ideology is reflected in the belief systems of the dominant culture and is part of the laws, language and norms of Canadian society which often result in denying or excluding minorities (Henry et al., 1995, Fleras & Kunz, 2001, p.33).

Racism takes many forms in Canadian society, ranging from individual, systemic and institutional to cultural and ideological (Henry et al., 1995, Fleras, 2001). Individual racism involves the attitudes, beliefs or opinions that one's own racial group is superior and the behaviour caused by these attitudes (Henry et al., 1995, p.45). Institutional racism is manifested in policies, practices and procedures of institutions, which may directly or

⁶ This ideology is based on the socially constructed phenomenon of race, which is the erroneous assumption that physical differences such as skin colour, hair colour and facial features are related to intellectual, moral or cultural superiority. The concept has no basis in biological reality or scientific validity. However, race is important to recognize because it has and continues to be used to divide and classify people and justify unequal power distribution (Dei, 1996, p.41, Henry et al., 1995, p. 4).

indirectly, consciously or unconsciously promote, sustain or entrench differential advantage or privilege for people of certain races; such as individuals of a particular racial background not being hired or trained for management positions (Ibid., p. 48). Systemic racism refers more broadly to the laws, rules and norms of a social system that result in unequal distribution of economic, political and social resources and rewards for some racial groups. It denies racial minorities equal access to and full participation in services like education, housing and employment (Henry et al., Fleras, 2001, p. 89).

Cultural racism is one of the most invisible forms of racism and it is deeply embedded in the belief and value system of the dominant culture that encourages and justifies discriminatory practices. It is reflected in everyday language, media images, arts, ideologies or religious doctrines (Henry et al., 1995 p. 328). Ideological racism organizes, preserves and perpetuates the power structures in a society and is communicated and reproduced through agencies of socialization and cultural transmission, such as the mass media, schools, universities and literature (Henry & Tator, 2001, p. 30). Cultural and ideological racism form what is called 'new racism' which manifests itself through indirect and subtle ways, using coded language (Van Dijk, 1998 in Henry & Tator, 2001, p. 35, Gilroy in Henry et al., 1995). Henry et al. (1995) use the term democratic racism to describe a form of this new racism and explain how and why racism continues in Canada:

Democratic racism permits and sustains people's abilities to maintain two apparently conflicting set of values. One set is a commitment to liberal, democratic society motivated by egalitarian values of fairness, justice and equality. Conflicting with these values are attitudes and behaviours that include negative feelings about people of colour that lead to differential treatment of them or discrimination against them (p. 21).

All these forms of racism interrelate in a dynamic way to form racism in Canadian society (Ibid.).

It is critical that we examine the ideology and discourse of racism to understand how the more invisible forms of racism operate beneath the individual and collective consciousness of the dominant culture (Henry & Tator, 2000). For the purposes of this study, ideology is defined according to Henry and Tator's (2000) use of the term as a set of beliefs, perceptions, assumptions and values that provide people with an understanding and explanation of their world and a framework for organizing, maintaining and transforming relations of power in society. Ideas of race, class, ethnicity, gender are produced, preserved and promoted within everyday ideological constructs (p. 15). Youth at a 1997 anti-racism forum in Vernon also alluded to this nature of racism. While they did not use the term ideology, they identified that racism can be encouraged consciously and unconsciously through teachers and textbooks and that schools and media create subliminal discrimination. The youth expressed that discreet racism can be found in the media when they focus on the negative aspect of communities, perpetuate differences, and spread racist ideas through reporters and editors' biases. The youth's insights help shed light to how racist ideology is manifested through the media.

Racism in the Media

As contemporary life is inseparable from the media, the mainstream media are one of the key vehicles through which racist ideology is disseminated in Canadian society (Fleras, 2001). Mainstream media are ideological because they not only construct realities by shaping people's perceptions of the outside world, but they also construct reality with specific agendas and biases based on professional and personal ideologies (Van Dijk, Fiske in Henry & Tator, 2000, p. 2). As Henry and Tator (2000) state, "the media represent one of the most powerful institutions in a democratic society and media

discourse is one of the most important vehicles for reproducing the collective belief system and the core values of dominant society” (p. 1). This media ideology reflects a dominant discourse that frames reality from a mainstream white Eurocentric perspective as normal and superior, while oppositional values and views tend to be dismissed or stereotyped as inferior, problematic or irrelevant (Fleras & Kunz, 2001, p. 52).

Racism and the Socialization of Youth

A variety of studies show that this racist ideology also plays a role in shaping racism in children’s lives. Van Ausdale and Feagin’s (2001) one year field observations of children aged three to six, discovered that the real images available to children in the world around them through the media and in interactions with adults and children, play a key role in contributing to children’s understandings of racial and ethnic concepts. They conclude that since racism exists at all levels of society, it is virtually impossible for children to miss or ignore it. They found that children emulate the language, racial identities and roles they observe in larger society in their own interactions with other children. Troyna and Hatcher (1992) in their study of children in predominantly white primary schools make similar conclusions. They found that while racism is a significant part of children’s relationships and understanding of society, race does not work in isolation. It is interfused with other ideologies and social processes in children’s lives. They explain that racist ideologies provide children answers to the problems of everyday life and with meaningful ways of understanding and acting in daily life (p. 118).

Rizvi (1993) also emphasizes the role that popular racism (the broader discourses and practices that express racism in society) play in children’s development of ideas of race (Hall, 1986; Gilroy, 1987 in Rizvi). She found that children at age of five have

already been exposed to racially constructed images of social relations and already engage in certain ideological practices of popular racism which inform their learning tasks (p. 131). She observed this in a grade one art class in which students were asked to draw about crime. Most of the students constructed robbers as Blacks, while police and victims were not. The children lived in a middle class area where few ever had direct social relations with a Black person. Rizvi concludes the children's racial imagery had been developed mostly through television and other media and popular communication.

Although popular culture is generally ignored in school curricula, it is a significant force in shaping how students view themselves and their own relations (Giroux & Simon, 1989, p. 238). Steinberg and Kincheloe (1997) point out that most of the education today occurs through popular culture sites, including television, movies, video games, toys and advertisement. While it provides youth with sources of pleasure and fun, it also plays a powerful role in shaping their identities, their knowledge, their values and authorizes their experiences and voices (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997; Giroux & Simon, 1989). Popular culture also plays a critical role in shaping attitudes around race and identity (Dei, 1996). Steinberg and Kincheloe argue that this media saturation and information explosion has created a reality for youth that is often based on manipulative, racist, sexist and class-based entertainment for children. Graves (1999) explains that television is a key socializing agent in race relations because it is seen as a vehicle for providing children and youth with experiences and information which otherwise would not be available to them, their families and communities.

Graves (1999) argues that televised role portrayals and interracial interactions contribute to the development of prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination among

children (p. 2). Portrayals of visible racial groups, she maintains, are relevant to television's capacity to create, maintain or modify stereotypes in children and youth. Furthermore, television provides information of social groups through exclusion and inclusion. When diverse groups are included, examples of physical, psychological, economic, social and cultural characteristics are provided. When excluded, it implies that the missing groups are unimportant, inconsequential and powerless. Both practices, Graves suggests, can contribute to the development, maintenance and modification of children's feelings, thoughts and actions towards racial groups.

It is important to point out though that it is difficult to show a direct causal relationship between media and its effects on behaviour. Most research about media effects argues a correlation nature, rather than causal nature of media and the relationship is often seen as transactional (Fleras & Kunz, 2001, Macbeth, 1996). MacBeth proposes that an interactive model of media influence is a better way of understanding the effects of television on children. The characteristics of the viewer and the context both contribute to the effects. Huston and Wright (1996) add that children are also influenced by other factors, like their social class, family, school and social environment.

Racism in the School System

The school system is the other key socialization vehicle in which dominant ideologies of racism are transmitted to youth. Several critical/radical educational theorists like Giroux (1983), Apple (1986) and McCarthy (1990) provide an understanding of how schools function to reproduce the dominant ideologies of society (cited in Dei, 1996). Giroux (1994) explains that schools are ideological spheres as the dominant culture attempts to produce knowledge consistent with its own interests (p. 141). Sleeter and

McLaren (1995) add that mainstream schooling mirrors the larger culture as “teachers and students willingly and unwittingly situate themselves within a highly politicized field of power relations that partake of unjust race, class and gender affiliations” (p. 6).

Dei (1996) further explains that this racist ideology is transmitted within schools as recognition and validation is given to the experience and knowledge of some groups, while denying others (Giroux, 1984 cited in Dei, p. 21). Dei adds that “through curriculum, educators and students are provided with academic definitions of what counts as valid knowledge and how such knowledge should be produced and disseminated” (p.21). Fleras and Elliott (2003) point out that the school system screens out information by projecting certain types of knowledge as legitimate, necessary and normal. Other forms of knowledge that are seen as inappropriate are ignored (p. 335). This hidden curriculum functions to legitimize the dominant social, political, economic and cultural ideas of society and perpetuate existing power relations (Mukherjee in Ibid.).

The challenge, as Giroux (1994) argues, is that schools then refuse to recognize or take seriously the diverse voices, cultures and literacies of groups. The dominant pedagogy refuses to deal with difference and any attempt to incorporate more diversity into the curriculum is often seen as a threat. Therefore students who are not a part of the mainstream are seen as the ‘Other’ and are placed at a pedagogical and institutional disadvantage because of their differences (p. 159). Giroux further states that ideologies are then developed which blame these students for the prejudices they suffer in schools. The students whose identities are not part of the dominant culture quickly learn their histories and voices are not part of the school culture (Ibid.). Through the omission of diverse knowledge, there are unequal opportunities and differential outcomes for

students, according to race and ethnicity (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993 cited in Dei, 1996, p. 20).

Racism is manifested in the education system at various levels and has been documented in various studies and reports (Henry et al., 1995 p. 174). Such racism has been found in the attitudes of teachers and administrators, the teaching practices, the Eurocentric curriculum, the occurrence of racial incidents and harassment, and in the school environment (Ibid.). Alladin (1996) points out, racial minorities, particularly Blacks and Natives, have not fared well in Canadian schools. In addition to harsh statistics indicating profound racial differences in achievement scores and drop-out rates, research also shows minorities face severe problems of marginalization and alienation in schools (p. 18). He also notes that schools have been slow to recognize that there are institutionalized practices that see immigrant children as inferior. Alladin cites Li (1988) in concluding that “despite the widely shared ideology of equality...the school system reproduces class and ethnic inequality by preparing those from privileged background for higher education and sorting out and channelling others from deprived backgrounds to lower class positions” (p. 15).

This manifestation of racism is highly prevalent in the experiences and treatment of Aboriginal students in the Canadian school system (Henry et al., p. 174, Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CCRF), p. 7). Pauls (1996) outlines the history of racism faced by Aboriginals in the Canadian education system. Aboriginal students were taken from their families and communities and put in residential schools in order to adopt European values and education. They were forced to give up their own culture and language and taught the European way of life is superior (p. 29). Kirkness (1992) adds

that “residential schools have left a legacy of cultural conflict, alienation, poor self-concept and lack of preparation for independence, for jobs and for life in general” (cited in Alladin, 1996, p. 31).

The 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples found that the majority of Aboriginal youth do not complete high school. The report documents that Aboriginal students continue to face regular encounters with racism in the school system, “not only in interpersonal exchanges but also through the denial of Aboriginal values, perspectives and cultures in the curriculum and the life of the institution” (cited in CCRF, p. 7). Furthermore, recent surveys by the Ministry of Education found that, in BC, 38 per cent of Aboriginal students graduated from grade 12, while 77 per cent of non-Aboriginal students graduated in the same period (BC Human Rights Commission, 2002, p. 5). These low graduation rates are attributable to the barriers within the education system rather than the incapacities of Aboriginal youth (Dei, 1996).

Various reports and studies also demonstrate how other racial minority children experience racism in the school system. The 1998 report from Ontario’s Royal Commission summarizes the racism faced by minority children, in particular Black children. Some of the experiences include: differential treatment, stereotyping, bias in testing, streaming, monocultural curriculum, unfair and unusual discipline and low expectations (in CRRF, p. 8). In a 2000 research report from the Canadian Council on Social Development, almost all of the 50 youth who participated in the focus group discussions experienced racism in Canada. They reported experiencing racism from the police, teachers, other students and in finding employment.

As shown in the news stories in the introduction and the literature reviewed in this chapter, racism continues to be reality in the lives of Canadian youth. Given the injustices, tragedies and poisoned environment caused by racism, it is imperative we work towards eliminating racism in the lives of youth. In Canada, we have made commitments to creating a society that is equal, just and fair for everyone. We recognize the importance of focusing our efforts on eradicating racism in the lives of young people as they are the future generation. A number policies and initiatives have been implemented to achieve these goals, some with a particular focus on the education system. The next chapter will review these responses.

CHAPTER 3 – LITERATURE REVIEW – ADDRESSING RACISM

Responses to Racism

This chapter now turns to a body of literature that is concerned with addressing and ameliorating racism in our society and in the lives of youth. I will provide a brief overview of legislative responses to addressing racism.⁷ I will then discuss how the approaches of critical pedagogy, multicultural and anti-racist education propose to restructure the education system in order to address racism. Next, I will examine how the model of social issues communication can be applied to addressing racism and discrimination. I will conclude by discussing the importance and roles of youth in addressing racism.

Legislative Responses

Although the previous chapter has demonstrated that racism is pervasive in Canada, we have made significant strides towards combating racism and discrimination by enacting protective legislation such as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* and provincial multiculturalism and human rights legislation (Henry et al., 1995, p. 259). Canada is also signatory to several international declarations that protect human rights, such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Declaration*. While these international declarations are not legally binding, they do provide global standards that Canada is expected to meet (Ibid, p. 260).

⁷ This review will be brief given that legislative responses to racism is a comprehensive subject that is not the focus of this thesis. Further information on these legislations can be found in Fleras & Elliott, 2003 and Henry et al., 1995.

Human Rights Legislation and Commissions

Human rights legislation provide quasi-constitutional codes of conduct that prohibit discrimination (Ibid., p. 262). The grounds and areas protected from discrimination vary in each province. The *BC Human Rights Code* prohibits discrimination based on race, ancestry, colour, place of origin, sex, mental and physical disability, family and marital status, age, religion, sexual orientation, source of income and political belief in areas such as public services, employment, publication, property, tenancy and unions and associations.⁸ The federal government and each province have human rights legislation and a human rights commission to administer their laws with the exception of British Columbia (Ibid.). BC is now the only province without an independent watchdog agency to oversee our fundamental rights to live without discrimination and advocate for human rights protection for marginalized groups (Mahil, 2002).⁹

Multiculturalism Policy and Legislation

Multiculturalism policies also work towards creating a society free from discrimination. The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* preserves and enhances the multicultural identity and heritage of Canadians and works to achieve equality of all Canadians (Henry et al., 1995, p. 265). Most provinces have policies on multiculturalism. The *BC Multiculturalism Act*, like the federal act, works towards building a society free from racism by promoting racial harmony, cross-cultural understanding and ensuring

⁸ BC Human Rights Commission 2001/02 Annual Report.

⁹ The BC Human Rights Tribunal does exist in BC. The concern is that the Tribunal's role is limited to adjudicating complaints. There is no longer a public body that provides human rights advocacy, public education or undertakes systemic discrimination cases through the public interest program of the Commission. The government has promised that the public education role will be fulfilled through a community clinic. These directions are contrary to the United Nations Paris Principles which require a state human right agency to remain independent and arms length from government to act as a watchdog over our fundamental human rights (Ibid., p.3).

there are no barriers to the full and free participation of all British Columbians in the social, political, economic and cultural life.

While multiculturalism is seen as one of Canada's greatest strengths, it also has faced many challenges and critiques (Fleras & Elliott, 2003). Multiculturalism is often seen as being for minorities only, too costly and ineffective, a political tool to get ethnic votes, eroding national unity, dividing and ghettoizing minorities and trivializing minority cultures by focusing on the celebration of cultural differences rather than addressing prejudice and systemic barriers (Ibid). The problem with many of these critiques is that they are often based on misconceptions of multiculturalism and on the way multiculturalism is often incorrectly implemented. As an ideology and policy, multiculturalism aims to build an inclusive society that fosters social equality, cultural diversity and national interests (Ibid.). The education system has been one of the key institutions in which multiculturalism has been put to work through the approaches of multicultural and anti-racist education. This next section will explore how the education of youth may be restructured to be more equitable for all youth. I will start by first examining the principles of critical pedagogy.

Restructuring the Education System

Critical Pedagogy

As the literature in the previous chapter demonstrated, children learn from sources outside of the formal curricula. Therefore it is important that the education of youth include sources outside of the formal school system, such as popular culture and the media (Giroux, 1994, Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997, Weis & Fine, 1993, Dei, 1996). The importance of examining the role of the media and popular culture in shaping racism is

outlined by Giroux (1994). He states that by ignoring how representations are constructed, taught, learned and appropriated in the media and popular culture, we risk reproducing a politics that is silent in achieving goals of social justice (p. 45).

Giroux (1994), McLaren (1989) and Steinberg and Kincheloe (1997) advocate that critical pedagogy works to counter this silence. They argue that students must be provided with the analytical tools to critically analyze and deconstruct the ethnocentric ideologies, discourses and images presented to them through popular culture as reality and challenge those representations that produce racism, sexism and colonialism. A critical understanding of media culture requires students to understand the ways they consume and affectively invest in media and realize how it impacts their decisions (McLaren cited in Steinberg & Kincheloe, p. 9).

Giroux and McLaren (1989) argue the problem is that schools often refuse to acknowledge popular culture as a significant basis of knowledge, thereby devaluing students by not linking schooling to their every day lives. Rivera and Poplin (1995) also identify that almost all the students who participated in their research found school to be boring and begged to have teachers raise important social issues (p. 232). Giroux and McLaren (1989) propose that schools need to be reconstructed around a critical pedagogy that includes students' histories, languages, social relations, traditions and engages the views and problems that deeply concern them. Therefore, schools must be given resources to address social, political, cultural and economic problems facing youth like drugs, pregnancy, illiteracy and racism (Giroux & McLaren, 1989).

Critical pedagogy does more than just provide youth with knowledge, it is action oriented. It aims to empower youth by awakening their moral, political and civic

responsibilities and stresses that schools must view students as active agents working in the wider cultural and political context (Giroux, 1994, p. 150). Critical pedagogy aims to provide students with the critical skills to challenge racist assertions and practices because it not only shows how power operates in the interests of the socially dominant, but how existing relations can be challenged and transformed (Giroux, 1984, cited in Fleras & Elliott, 2002, p. 201, Rizvi, 1993, cited in Henry et al., p. 177). Students need to acquire skills and knowledge to transform and be part of a broader struggle to create a more egalitarian and just society (Giroux & McLaren, 1989). Students for Cultural and Linguistic Democracy (SCaLD) (1996) also stress that critical pedagogy empowers students by creating critical thinking individuals who with their newly found voices and knowledge and through collective action, can transform their communities and challenge the oppressive educational institutions (p. 143).

However, Rezai-Rashti (1995) points out the difficulty with critical pedagogy is that the language can be abstract, theoretical and complex to understand. Therefore it is often implemented incorrectly or misused. She also states that it is good at outlining the changes that are required in our education system, but not practical in stating how the goals can be achieved (p. 17). Gay (1995) also adds the difference is that critical pedagogy is more general when talking about education programs, whereas multicultural education focuses on the implementation of specific programs. Despite these reservations both Rezai-Rashti and Gay state that critical pedagogy can make significant contributions to anti-racist and multicultural education. Rezai-Rashti suggests that critical pedagogy practitioners and theorists need to work more closely with front line workers such as teachers in making the goals more practical. Gay (1995) and Sleeter and McLaren (1995)

propose that the principles of critical pedagogy be combined with the goals of multicultural and anti-racist education in addressing racism in the lives of youth.

Multicultural/Anti-Racist Education

Sleeter and McLaren (1995) point out that multicultural education and critical pedagogy are complementary approaches that critique the effects of global capitalism and its production of race and gender injustices in schools (p. 8). Critical pedagogy came out of liberation struggles in Latin America and is often associated with Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire (p. 14). Multicultural education was developed during the civil rights movement in the struggle for freedom, political power and economic integration (Banks, 1993). Sleeter and McLaren add that some of the reasons the term multicultural was used instead of anti-racism or multiethnic was so that white educators would listen, and it was seen as more inclusive of other cultures and oppressed groups (p. 12).

However, like multiculturalism, multicultural education has been taken to task. It is seen that many educators have pulled it away from its initial critique of racism in education and redefined it to mean the celebration of ethnic foods and festival (Mattai, 1992 in Sleeter and McLaren, p. 12, Henry et al, 1995). As a result of the critiques of multicultural education, practitioners such as Ghosh (1996) have stressed a redefined approach to multicultural education to focus on equality, power and privilege or have adopted the term anti-racism education. Before I continue making the connection between anti-racist education, multicultural education and critical pedagogy, it is important to define and examine the differences between multicultural education and anti-racist education.

Banks and Banks (1997) explain that multicultural education works to redesign the education system to ensure the inclusion of all minority students (Fleras and Elliott,

2002, p. 204). The aim of multicultural education is seen as largely attitudinal as it based on the philosophy of celebrating differences to improve knowledge about cultural differences and to incorporate cultural diversity in the planning, implementation and evaluation of educational programs, policies and procedures (Gay, 1995, p. 159, Fleras and Elliott, 2003, p. 337). Fleras and Elliott (2003) point out that multicultural education ranges from moderate approaches which aim to increase students' knowledge about cultural differences and race relations to radical approaches which aim to empower minority students by creating safe school environments. The problem with the more moderate approaches is they often inadvertently trivialize and stereotype minority cultures by focusing on the more exotic and surface levels of cultures rather than deal with the more substantive issues such as history, values and beliefs (Henry et al., 2000 in Fleras & Elliott, p. 336). In addition, there is an assumption that sensitization and celebration of difference can counteract biases and prejudices (Rezai-Rashti, 1995, p. 7) without proof of behavioural changes (Fleras & Elliott, 2003, p. 337).

In contrast, anti-racist education moves beyond the appreciation of cultural differences to understanding inequality in social and political relations (Moodley, 1995, in Moy, 1996, p. 13). Anti-racist education examines and identifies the ways in which racism originates and then challenges, resists and transforms racism through direct action (Fleras & Elliott, 2003). Central to anti-racist education is changing institutional and organization policies and practices that discriminate and individual attitudes and behaviours that create racial bias and inequality (Henry et al., 1995, p. 188). Anti-racism differs from multicultural education by questioning and challenging the foundational principles and framework of education and knowledge (Fleras & Elliott, 2003, p. 340).

Similar to critical pedagogy, anti-racist education advocates political education by teaching students how to critically analyze how racism is transmitted, reproduced and resisted within societies (Rezai-Rashti, 1995, Foster, 1990 in Moy, 1996).

As Moy (1996) found, to define and differentiate between multicultural and anti-racism education is difficult because the literature is “extensive, complex and sometimes contradictory” (p. 16). Fleras and Elliott add that the other difficulty is that the terms are used interchangeably by practitioners and they vary in their implementation. Similar to Moy, the focus of my thesis is not to critique or advocate one approach. In addition, integrative anti-racism is the framework guiding this research. I recognize many practitioners such as Rezai-Rashti and Henry et al. (1995) stress that anti-racist and multicultural education must be distinguished. For the purposes of this research, I see both in theory aim to build equitable school environments for all youth but these approaches may not be implemented in such a way to achieve these outcomes. More importantly, my objective is to examine how linking multicultural and anti-racist education to the framework of critical pedagogy, can address racism in our school system.

As Gay (1995) outlines the underpinnings of critical pedagogy are similar to multicultural education in that it advocates reforming schools to achieve greater equity and excellence. She states, “while multicultural education gives priority to reforming curriculum content and classroom instruction, the centrepiece of critical pedagogy is how the institutional ideology and cultural ethos of schools reflect and perpetuate the oppressive practices of society” (p. 162). Rezai-Rashti (1995) also points out that critical pedagogy can contribute in the two most important aspects of anti-racist education. First,

critical pedagogy reveals the ideology underlying a hegemonic curriculum, its hierarchical bodies of knowledge, and the way the curriculum marginalizes or disqualifies knowledge about women and minorities (Giroux, 1993 in Rezai-Rashti, p.17). Furthermore, critical pedagogy teaches how to relate to students' experiences and how to take their needs and problems as the starting point. It also instructs how to re-train teachers to educate students in the language of possibility and critique, and empower students to help bring about a more democratic and just society.

Combining the goals of critical pedagogy, multicultural and anti-racist education can lead to creating more equitable education for all students as well as addressing racism. It is also important, as Banks (1993) states, in order to transform schools to bring about educational equality; all the major components must be changed. Implementing an anti-racism policy or setting up a multicultural committee will not implement the goals of multicultural/anti-racist education and critical pedagogy. Rather, the school environment, school policy and politics, power relations, curriculum, teaching practices and training, student and community involvement and extra-curricular activities all must be examined and restructured. We must also look at addressing racism outside of the formal education system by reaching youth in their daily lives through popular culture and the media environment using applied communication as a model.

Social Issues Communication

Laba et al. (1993) outline the importance of using the commercial media environment in communicating social issues because literature on mass media communication provides overwhelming evidence that audiences, in particular young people, are influenced by messages in the commercial media environment above all other

messages. Laba et al. propose that social issues communication or applied communication is a model that can be used to address social issues such as racism in youth's lives as it is founded on the nature of communication in the media environment. Social issues communication is the application of communication and media analysis to the design, strategy and implementation of communication plans and campaigns. It is a model of social marketing for addressing social issues such as multiculturalism, health and education. Social issues communication is informed by social marketing and in many ways is an elaboration of social marketing methodology (p. 10).

Social marketing was originally conceptualized by Kotler and Zaltman (1971) as the application of marketing analysis, planning and control to problems of social change (cited in Mintz, 1988/89, Laba 1993). Young (1988/89) adds that social marketing pushes ideas and promotes social change using the same kinds of techniques companies use to sell products and services, such as research, targeting, positioning, message design and testing. It has been mostly used in the field of health promotion using educational and mass media approaches to encourage people to adopt healthy behaviour (Ibid.). Tanguay (1988/89) outlines that social marketing is based on consumer needs, desires and interests, corporate goals and social welfare.

Laba (1998, 2001) however identifies fundamental differences between social marketing and social issues communication. In social marketing, the target is the individual and is treated as a consumer of the message. In applied communication, the target is the community and people are approached as citizens. Citizenship is a key distinguishing factor because it involves and engages the whole community; not just targeting people as consumers. In social marketing, the intention is changing behaviours.

In applied communication, the focus is prevention, social transformation and broader social change through advocacy and mobilizing the community by building people's capacity for change. Finnegan, Bracht and Viswaneth (1989) also stress the importance of community mobilization as individuals are more likely to change when they have adequate networks of social support (p. 78).

Wallack, Dorfman, Jernigan and Themba (1993) also identify that the limitations of social marketing are that it tends to reduce serious problems to individual risk factors, ignores the social and economic environment, and promotes single solutions to complex problems. Wallack et al. argue that social marketing fails to consider individual change is achieved through social change, which requires addressing the power inequity that contributes to the problem. Rather, social marketing assumes that individuals can gain power over the problem by getting greater control over their social and political environment while neglecting to focus on the systems within which decisions are made. The reason for this, as Salmon (1989) outlines, is that most social marketing efforts are undertaken by groups possessing social power and resources and are typically aimed at middle class audiences (Laba, 1998). Social marketers often define the cause of the social problem in the public and rationalize their persuasive efforts in terms of public interest. Whereas socially disadvantaged groups are more likely to define the location of the same social problem in the system itself (Salmon, p. 47). This is particularly problematic in addressing racism, as outlined earlier; racism is embedded in our social structures, practices and ideologies.

While there are criticisms of social marketing, Laba et al. point out that social issues communication evolved from social marketing. Social marketing principles and

methodology can be used in addressing social issues, keeping the broader pedagogical goals of applied communication in mind. Laba et al. identify that both social issues and social marketing face similar challenges. A major problem for social issues communication campaigns is that they are often intended to change attitudes and behaviours that represent established patterns of consumer behaviour. These behaviours have been influenced by commercial promotion and peer pressure and are reinforced in the media environment. Social issues communication and social marketing are often sending messages in this difficult environment to a target group that is often not receptive to or concerned with the message. An additional challenge for countering racism is that images and messages that perpetuate racism are often entrenched in the media environment (p. 4).

Furthermore, Laba et al. identify that there are other challenges for applied communication. Audiences have responded to message density and clutter in the media environment by rapid scanning of messages. Commercial advertisers have perfected techniques of concentrated communication (i.e. through jingles and slogans) that have set standards for the way audiences respond to messages. Yet, concentrated communication is difficult for complex social issues. Young (1989) also outlines an additional challenge is that commercial advertising is a powerful industry with lots of money that has changed the way we relate to communication. For example, Ladouceur (1991) identifies that for the federal government's Really Me anti-drug campaign, the main constraint was competing with the annual marketing budget for Canadian alcohol companies which was approximately \$300 million. In comparison, the annual marketing budget for the Really Me campaign was a little over \$5 million.

Despite these challenges, Laba et al. stress the importance of using the media environment to communicate social issues such as multiculturalism. They state that to effectively communicate the messages, it is important to understand the nature of the media environment. While the content of the issue may be complex, the message must be constructed in a format that captures intent and content in a quick, appealing, effective message (p. 5). Mintz (1988/89) adds that while social marketing has to be sophisticated in its delivery of messages it does not mean that it has to be glitzy or imitate fashionable advertisements, rock videos or computer games. It does have to stand apart and gain and hold its audience's attention in a very competitive communications environment.

The key is that social issues communication and social marketing can not rely on just the media environment (Laba et al., 1993, Young, 1988/89, Salmon, 1989). A number of different methods must be used. Laba et al. (1993) recommend that the most effective approach for achieving the greatest reach within segmented audiences is through a strategic media mix – a co-ordinated and well-positioned use of a variety media forms, such as newspapers, magazines, brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, posters, billboards, special events and radio. Social marketers also point out that social marketing can facilitate individual and social change when coordinated and integrated with other strategies such as targeted research, education and training, community support and funding and legislative action (Mintz, 1991). Young (1989) states there is no magic formula for social change. Social marketing strategies are based on real-life situations and real interests, needs and problems of the very real people they work to assist.

While social marketing and social issues communication face similar challenges, as identified earlier they exhibit many differences. The key distinguishing aspect that

makes applied communication more relevant to this study's focus on youth participation is its emphasis on community involvement and advocacy. Wallack et al. identify advocacy as one of the most important tools in building healthier communities. It motivates community participation, understanding, involvement and action to create social change. Like critical pedagogy, advocacy provides groups with skills to communicate their own stories and increase their power to define their problems and solutions (Laba, 1998; Wallack et al., 1993). Laba (1998) adds that advocacy is political in nature as it deals with inequitable power relations in society by helping communities to achieve their own power. The goal is to increase the capacity of the community to develop and implement strategies that best address its issues (Wallack et al., 1993).

Role of Youth

Capacity building leads into examining the role that advocacy can play in empowering young people to be part of the solution in addressing racism. When combining the goals of multicultural/anti-racist education, critical pedagogy and social issues communication, a common objective is that it is not just about providing youth the opportunity to voice their concerns, but involving and making them a part of the process for change. The objective is not to just reach and target youth through campaigns, but to involve them in identifying the problems and solutions.

It is critical to treat youth as more than recipients of knowledge. Youth are also producers, educators and active players in social change (Freire cited in Moy, 1996, Dei 1996). Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child speaks to the importance of the youth's right to participate:

Children have the right to participate in decision-making processes that may be relevant in their lives and to influence decisions taken in their

regard...A process of dialogue and exchange needs to be encouraged in which children assume increasing responsibilities and become active, tolerant and democratic (UNICEF Website).

Similarly, Hart (1997) emphasizes the importance of youth participation. He states, “only through direct participation can children develop a genuine appreciation of democracy and a sense of their own competence and responsibility to participate” (p. 3).

Moy (1996) discovered, the power that students have to influence anti-racist and multicultural initiatives is often overlooked in academic literature (p. 30). Rather, as Giroux (1997) points out “youth are demonized and trivialized and portrayed as a social problem, of leading the country into moral decline, of social disorder, laziness, menace and aberrant promiscuity.” Griffin (1997) states that this is problematic because young people are blamed for the social problems leading to social welfare and practices that result in the surveillance, control or protection of young people (p. 25). It is seen that problems, such as the unemployment of young Black males, can be improved if they changed their attitude or behaviour rather than address the racism they face (p. 21).

Hackett (1997) also points out that youth’s lack of political participation is often attributed to apathy rather than to exclusionary public policies and practices. These practices are often developed without any input from young people. Furthermore, Hackett states the culture of young people’s participation is not well developed. The lack of structure for participation creates major barriers for youth (p.87). Moy found that students who have attempted leadership in their schools often feel alienated and powerless:

As students we see the majority of our peers uninvolved and disempowered; they feel unable to make a difference. This is not a new phenomenon, and it is clearly related to the structure of the schools themselves...High school students are often shunted through their schools as if they are on an assembly line. (Polakow-Suransky & Ulaby, 1990, cited in Moy, p. 27).

Students who participated in Moy's study also expressed similar barriers in their efforts to implement anti-racism/multicultural activities in their school. The students felt their activities were marginalized, not recognized, or not seen as important as other school activities by school authorities. Other barriers the students identified included the homogeneity and conservatism of the school environment, disinterest or apathy of students and staff, competition between programs, segregation of students and bureaucratic school approval processes. These barriers create an environment where students are unable to or feel unable to take action on their own.

However, as Hackett states, a more positive and inclusive approach would take a critical look at how public policy has problematized young people and how to redress the problem by direct engagement with young people (p. 83). Therefore we need to rethink youth and acknowledge and respect the many positive contributions young people can and do make to their communities (Roche & Tucker, 1997, p. 1). We need to view young people as active participants in our society with contributions to make if opportunities are given to them (Hackett, 1997, p. 81). But how do we work towards recognizing and achieving this role for youth in society?

Freire's (1998) answer to this question for oppressed groups was through "the pedagogy of the oppressed, a pedagogy forged with not for the oppressed...By confronting reality critically, simultaneously objectifying and acting upon that reality, the oppressed can begin transformation from objects to subjects" (p. 34, cited in Williams). Giroux (1998) also stresses this means providing the institutional, economic, spiritual and cultural conditions that allow youth to see themselves as citizens and what it means to fight for important social and political issues. Researchers who advocate that student

power is crucial to anti-racist practice argue that students need to see themselves as the centre, to feel that their interests are being acted on, and that they have control, responsibility and a genuine voice in identifying issues (Allingham, 1992; Crozier, 1994; Kelly, 1993 cited in Moy, 1996, p. 27).

Despite the perception of youth as apathetic, there are many youth who want to be and are involved in social change in their schools and communities. As Rivera and Poplin (1995) found from their research of high school students:

Students...are acutely aware of the problems in the world and want adults to lead them to discuss the causes and solutions of these problems within the context of instruction. Students are attentive observers and markers of injustice...Students want to be part of the solution (p. 236).

Hackett (1997) points out there are many examples of young people's willingness to be involved with social issues when they are given the opportunities. Locally there are committed youth across British Columbia who are active in fighting social injustices. For example, the Student Action Team at Pitt Meadows Secondary School provides workshops to other students and staff on the impact of derogatory language. In Vancouver, students at Templeton Secondary School developed anti-discrimination commercials in their film studies class. There are youth working on combating hate on the Internet with groups like the Canadian Anti-Racism and Education Research Society.

Marshland emphasizes young people always have a crucial role in relation to social change and have played a leading role in radical social change in many movements around the world, such as the communist revolutions in China and Cuba. There are mutual advantages of youth participation to both youth and their communities. Marshland (1993) argues that community involvement offers young people better opportunities to contribute to, influence and change the communities in which they live; as well, such

involvement can help to combat young people's feelings of isolation and despair. Instead of being treated as a problem, young people can identify and tackle problems faced by them and their communities. Young people are also given the opportunities to exercise their rights and responsibilities in real situations and develop important skills and knowledge (pp. 148-153). Hart (1997) also points out that community participation is valuable as children learn to deal with the political system, so that as tomorrow's adult citizens they are able to create and manage sustainable communities (p. 141, 192). Marshland adds that communities benefit from the involvement and contributions of young people through the personal attention and practical help that the community gets from young people and the recognition that young people are an important section of the community as a whole.

This above section has identified the value and importance of youth involvement, which provides an understanding of the approach I have taken in my research. It is appropriate to conclude this section with the words of Stephen Lewis, former Executive Director of UNICEF. He (1999) captures a sense of the consequences of not involving youth when speaking about the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*:

The most powerful change wrought by the Convention is the way in which children have become visible. Politicians, media, NGOs and broader civil society feel a clear obligation to include children in their respective public domains, interventions, dialogues, debates, mandates. You can't ignore children any longer and get away with it. The Convention has raised consciousness in dramatic fashion" – (UNICEF Website).

As youth participation is a key guiding principle of this research, I used qualitative methods to undertake the study. The next chapter details why this method was well suited to this inquiry.

CHAPTER 4 – METHODOLOGY

Chapter four begins with a review of literature on qualitative and grounded theory methods. This will be followed by a presentation of the methodology used in this study. There will be a discussion of researcher's experiences, limitations and biases and how these issues were addressed in the research. Finally, the research questions used in the interviews and focus groups will be presented.

Qualitative Research

This study uses qualitative research methodology to learn about young people's experiences with racism and discrimination and their views on effective ways of addressing racism and discrimination. The use of qualitative research is most appropriate given its emphasis on exploring and understanding a social problem or participants' lives in their natural setting and in their own language (Janesick, 1998, p. 38, Creswell, 2002, p. 62). Qualitative researchers do not take on the role of the expert as they attempt to learn about a social context from the experts, who are the individuals dealing with the issues under investigation (Clarke, 1996, p. 29, Creswell, 2002, p. 49). This approach addresses one of my greatest concerns with some of the existing research on racism in which the voices of youth are often neglected and represented by scholars in the field.

Qualitative methodology is also valuable because it structures the research process as participatory, interactive, collaborative and a dialogue between the researcher and participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, Creswell, 2002, p. 49). From a qualitative perspective, the researcher's own experiences are important. The researcher is not assumed to be objective, authoritative or politically neutral. The research is understood to be shaped by the researcher's personal history, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 4). Qualitative research

calls for self-reflection by the researchers to report their personal biases, values and assumptions, (Creswell, 2002, p. 57, Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) which I will later discuss. In addition to providing well-grounded and detailed information, qualitative data often leads to unexpected findings that go beyond the researcher's initial preconceptions or theoretical frameworks (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 15). Rather than solely basing my ideas on my professional experience, I was exposed to alternative viewpoints directly coming from the youth.

However, I am also aware that in attempting to present the 'voices' of students, I run the risk of 'othering' their voices (Fine, 1998, p. 70). As Fine points out, "when we look, get involved, demur, analyze, interpret, probe, speak, remain silent, walk away, organize for outrage, or sanitize our stories, and when we construct our texts in or on their words, we decide how to nuance our relations with/for despite those who have been deemed Others" (p. 74). This is one of the dilemmas I faced in analyzing the data in determining what to report. I recognize that I have selected what I feel represents the youth's ideas and experiences. I aimed to work against 'othering' the students' voices by listening to their plural and varying voices (Weis & Fine, 1993, p. 75) and being sensitive to my own biases and interpretations.

It is also important to recognize additional limitations and critiques of qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) argue qualitative research is often seen as unscientific, exploratory, personal and that the researcher's bias impacts the findings (p.7). LeCompte and Goetz (1982) state a common criticism of qualitative research is that it fails to adhere to scientific research standards of generalizability, reliability and validity often associated with quantitative research which ensure the quality and accuracy of

research (p. 31).¹⁰ Qualitative researchers do not dismiss these standards. They propose alternative standards be applied for judging the quality and credibility of qualitative research rather than those used by the quantitative approach (Creswell, 1998).¹¹

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest using the standards of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 197). To establish credibility, they propose prolonged engagement in the field and triangulation (uses multiple sources, methods and theories to provide corroborating evidence). To make sure the findings are transferable, they suggest providing a thick description detailing the participants or the setting, so information can be transferred to other settings. Rather than reliability, they suggest using dependability because replicating the results of the research is challenging given that human behaviour is subject to change and instability (Creswell, 1998 p. 198, LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 35). I will ensure the credibility and quality of this study by triangulating my data by using multiple methods of data collection and providing a thick description of the participants and their observations.

While I recognize there are limitations to qualitative research, the objective of this study is not to follow along the goals of positivist sciences to get to the objective and “value- free” truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 7). Qualitative research recognizes that objective reality can never be captured. My findings will be a representation of the youth’s reality as they present it to me (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 5). As Creswell (1998) states, qualitative research is a legitimate form of inquiry and should not apologize

¹⁰ Validity is whether the given explanation is credible, whether it fits the given description. Generalizability is whether the same results can be generated in another social setting. Reliability is whether the results from the study can be replicated (Janesick, 1998, p.50-51).

¹¹ Quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationship between variables and are supposed to be within a value-free framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.8).

for its differences from quantitative research. To overcome some of these critiques, I will clearly outline the systemic process used to collect and analyze the data to demonstrate the rigour, difficulty and time taken to develop the findings (p. 9).

Grounded theory is an approach that assists in doing this. Grounded theory was first developed to demonstrate that qualitative research was capable of adequate verification of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 162). I am using aspects of grounded theory approach because it allows for interpretation of data and an emphasis is placed on including the perspectives and multiple voices of the people studied rather than imposing explanations or theories. The theory is developed from the data rather than using the data to prove a theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 172). The theory is also grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed (p. 158). Grounded theory helps the researcher avoid becoming immobilized in the large amounts of data collected and helps create a way to organize and interpret the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 in Charmaz, 2000, p. 521).

Creswell (1998) outlines that grounded theory uses a constant comparative method of data analysis (p. 150) which begins during data collection. Grounded theorists analyze the data by coding, identifying and connecting categories or themes. The researcher goes back and forth to the field to gather more information until the categories developed are saturated or no new data will provide further insight (Creswell, 2002, p.450). New participants are also often selected during the data collection process using theoretical sampling, the intentional and focused selection of data and participants. The purpose of theoretical sampling is to develop theory that is conceptually dense (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The theory that is developed is able to specify consequences, the related

conditions and patterns of interaction between the various categories. The theorist can then predict that elsewhere in similar conditions; similar outcomes should occur (p. 169).

However, this process of data collection, analysis and saturation did not work for my research, which is why I am only using aspects of grounded theory. I was not able to go back and forth from analysis to the participants for several reasons. First, I was interviewing youth from various communities, including Vernon. Logistically it was not possible for me to revisit them so the data could be saturated. I was also concerned about the youth losing interest and tiring from the research. After the focus groups, a few of the youth expressed that they now wanted to participate in an actual anti-racism event and not just conduct research. Furthermore, Conrad and Riessman (1990) suggest that fracturing the data during coding and categorizing might limit portrayal of subjects' experience in its fullness (cited in Charmaz, 2000, p. 521). I was careful not to lose the authenticity of participants' experiences and insights while coding and categorizing their words. Therefore, my findings may not result in such a conceptually dense theory, as the purpose is not to predict or prove outcomes for similar conditions.

Method - Data Collection – Interviews and Focus Group

The two main methods I used to collect my data were interviews and focus groups. I corroborated my findings with review of and comparison to other studies conducted on racism and participant observations during the focus group and in my work developing anti-discrimination strategies with young people.

Participants

Twenty five youth from four communities: Pitt Meadows, Surrey, Vancouver and Vernon participated in the research. I wanted representation from the various communities to ascertain whether there were regional differences in the youth's experiences and perspectives. These four communities were selected because of their varying demographics. In Pitt Meadows, the population is predominantly White.¹² South Asians are the largest visible minorities,¹³ followed by Chinese. Vernon's population is predominantly White as well, while Aboriginals are the largest minority group followed by South Asians. Almost half the populations in Surrey and Vancouver are of visible minority status. In Surrey, the largest ethnic groups are South Asians, followed by Chinese. In Vancouver, the largest ethnic group is Chinese followed by South Asians.¹⁴

I gained access to the youth through various contacts, such as teachers, community organizations, friends, family and youth participants. Making the initial contact in each community was challenging. However, I found that after the first two were selected, interest increased and often I was getting more youth contacts than I needed. This occurred in Vancouver. A number of students signed up for the research project through my teacher contact and as I did not want to refuse any of the youth, given their interest level, I increased my sample size from 20 to 25 participants. A particular effort was made in getting participation from First Nations youth as there would be a major void if these experiences were not included in a study of racism. Contacting First

¹² I am using the term White to reference people who are part of the dominant, majority culture of Anglo-American or European ancestry to recognize that White is also a racial identity and that racial identities are not only Black, Latino, Asian or Native American (Haymes, 1995, p.108).

¹³ The official term that distinguishes non-White, non-Aboriginal, non-Caucasian racial minorities in Canada regardless of birth. Acknowledges the common problems faced because of their visibility (Fleras & Elliott, 2002, p.279).

¹⁴ Community demographics obtained from Statistics Canada 2001 Census results.

Nations youth and youth who are seen as uninvolved through public school contacts was challenging, as there was an inclination to select youth who were seen as leaders.

Personal and community contacts were used instead.

An attempt was made to select youth from diverse backgrounds, including age (13-18), racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds, gender, region and socio-economic status. Twelve females and thirteen males participated. Thirteen youth were of visible minority background, nine were from majority White background and three were of mixed heritages. The ages of the youth also varied. One student was in grade eight and her insight was valuable as she connected many of her experiences to elementary school. While I will be referring to the youth as a White male or First Nations female, I recognize there are additional aspects to their identities. A complete description of participants' characteristics is provided in Appendix # 1. Participants are identified by pseudonyms.

I was also interested in finding students with varying levels of involvement in school activities, ranging from those who are active in diversity issues and school activities to those that do not get involved and those that are seen as apathetic or trouble makers. Although, I am particularly interested in hearing from this last group as their perspectives are often not heard, it is also important to hear from activists as it is these youth who are instrumental in furthering social justice issues in their schools and communities and in reaching other youth. I also included youth from alternative education programs, outside the public education system, such as an academic program for street involved Aboriginal youth, an environmental education program and a private school. The list of the schools is provided in Appendix # 2. The interviews and focus groups took place from September to December 2001.

Interviews

Interviews were used because it is one of the most powerful ways of obtaining in-depth information about people and developing a relationship between the researcher and participant (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, Fontana & Frey, 2000). Interviews allowed me to talk to young people on a one to one basis and gave them a chance to share their personal stories in a safe space. This is important because youth are often not given the chance to talk about their experiences in a formal environment (Clarke, 1996, p. 31). Interviews can also be empowering for youth because they are being turned to as the experts.

Prior to the interviews, the participants were provided with an informed consent form and information sheet about the research for their parent's or guardian's permission. I advised the students that the results would be anonymous, confidential and they could stop the interview at any time if they were uncomfortable. I explained that the interviews would be tape recorded for transcribing purposes and later destroyed. The interviews ranged from one to two hours in length and were semi-structured, with a framework of questions that guided the discussion, provided in Appendix # 3.

I wanted to address the power imbalance between myself as the researcher and the students by establishing rapport and trust. Crucial to doing this was treating the conversation as a dialogue rather than a confession by the students (Ibanez, 1998, p. 119, Fontana & Frey, p. 658). When possible, I shared my own experiences and thoughts with the students. My intention was not to ask the questions in a set order but let the flow of conversation guide me. I also did not want to restrict the youth to only the topics outlined in the guide but let them discuss issues that were relevant to their lives. I gained valuable insight when the youth shared personal experiences that may not have been directly related to the topic or considered. This was the case with one youth who spoke

extensively about the death of his mother who was HIV positive and he connected the mistreatment his mother faced from her community to racism.

On the other hand, the interview could not be completely informal or unstructured because my objective was to learn specific information from the youth. Furthermore, tape recording and the interview guide contributed to the dialogue being somewhat unnatural. I found that in each interview, it was when I put the questions away or turned the tape recorder off that our conversation became more natural and interactive. As Ibanez (1998) stresses, it is important to consider that the dialogue between researcher and participant occurs at various levels and is not restricted to the tape recorded interviews (p. 199). Our conversations became more natural often at the end of the interview when the students asked me questions about my experiences and background. Crucial information about the students' experiences was also often revealed during this time.

I found scheduling and maintaining meeting times was challenging with youth and requires time, persistence and liaison. Each youth was given reminder phone calls the night before the interview. I had to reschedule only two of the interviews due to the participants cancelling or not attending the interview. Fewer youth participated in the focus group as it required travel and more of a time commitment. The highest level of participation occurred in Vernon because not only did all the youth who were interviewed participate in the focus group but four additional youth attended. In addition to offering transportation or bus fare to each of the participants, I also provided them with a small gift in appreciation of their efforts.

Focus Groups

Following the interview, a focus group was then held in each community bringing together the youth who had been interviewed. Focus groups, the questioning of a group of people simultaneously in a formal or informal setting, are useful for triangulation and gathering of data in conjunction with other methods (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 651). The focus groups gave me the chance to observe the interaction between the youth and how they communicated the issues to each other. I found the youth to be much more candid and direct than in my professional work with adults. Focus groups also produce rich data and insights that are less accessible in interviews (Morgan, 1988, p. 12) as the interaction between participants is more active and dynamic as they dialogue, share ideas, opinions and experiences or support or challenge each other (Madriz, 2000, p. 841).

Focus groups were also valuable because they provided youth with a safe environment to share their experiences with other young people. Madriz (2000) suggests that focus groups are preferred for conducting research with members of marginalized communities, such as women of colour, because they validate their experiences and raise awareness that their problems are shared by other women (p. 836). I also found the focus groups useful in educating the participants about others' experiences. For example, some of the students at one Vancouver school did not see racism to be an overt problem. Therefore, several of them were surprised to hear about the overt experiences of a First Nation student who had previously attended their school.

Focus groups can also be a valuable tool in furthering social change and social justice because participants are treated as constructors of knowledge rather than just being given a voice (Fine, p. 75 cited in Madriz, p. 842). This can also be empowering to youth because it conveys that their ideas are legitimate and valid and conveys the

message of working together. Madriz (2000) outlines another advantage is that focus groups aim at creating a more equitable process and addressing the power imbalance between the researcher and participants. The researcher is not treated as the authority voice as the dialogue is a shared process and the participants' opinions start to determine the flow of the discussion. I found that as the focus groups progressed, the participants carried the conversations amongst themselves rather than directing their comments at me.

The challenge with focus groups can include the facilitator trying to find the right balance between letting the conversation flow in the direction of participants' interest and in meeting the research objectives. This was not a significant problem as the focus groups were structured so the students kept to the topic or activity. In addition, while there were one or two students who were more active, no one dominated and all students participated at some level. I also found the size of the group impacted the dynamics in the group. Four to eight youth participated in each focus group. I found that with four participants the discussion progressed more slowly in contrast with eight participants when the discussion was more dynamic. I found eight participants to be an optimum number as any larger than this may have led to not everyone participating.

Focus Group Outline

The focus group was structured more like a workshop to make it interactive and participatory for the youth while at the same time allowing for information to be gathered. The full outline is attached in Appendix # 4. I started the focus groups with an ice breaker activity and an overview of human rights and responsibilities. The group was then divided in half to work on a case study of discrimination to initiate discussion on incidents of discrimination and appropriate responses. Most of the youth connected the case studies to their own personal experiences or ones they had witnessed. After the case

studies, examples of existing campaigns on social issues, such as posters, brochures, stickers and resource guides were displayed and we watched public service announcements. The campaigns addressed issues such as violence, hate, multiculturalism, racism, sexism, homophobia, disabilities and tobacco. The messages ranged from celebratory, sentimental, hard-hitting, shocking to fear. The samples were used to discuss the types of messages and methods that capture their interest and have a greater impact. Descriptions of the campaigns are provided in Appendix # 5.

Following the feedback, I divided the youth into two groups to develop an idea for an anti-racism/discrimination campaign in their school or community, which was then shared with the whole group. The activity provided the youth with a chance to work together. I observed the youth brainstorming, debating, supporting and developing each other's ideas. Several focus groups resulted in students coming up with ways of how they can work together to overcome challenges in their schools to implement their ideas. We ended the sessions by debriefing and summarizing the issues discussed. The youth were advised to contact me if they needed to further discuss any of the issues.

Setting

The interviews were held in various settings such as the students' home, community centres, libraries or my family's home. All the interviews were held in a private place so the youth felt they could be open and honest. I tried making the interviews as much like a natural conversation as possible by holding the interviews in an environment as close to 'real life' and comfortable for the youth (Cole, Hood & McDermott, 1997, p. 45). However, I found that the interview process itself often limited this. Issues of ecological validity came into play here. Although the home of a student is fairly close to a natural setting for the student, the interview format was not typical.

While the home setting often led to distractions such as interruptions from parents, siblings or pets, it allowed me to observe the student behaviours in their home.

The focus groups were held at a community centre that was accessible and convenient for the youth. The setting of the focus group did impact the group interaction. For instance, in one community centre, although the set-up was informal as there were couches rather than chairs and a table, the room was very large and the participants were more spaced out making the conversation not as intimate. I found that in settings where the participants were in a round table setting, the discussion was easier to facilitate and more dynamic. Several of the youth, such as Michelle, commented that they liked the focus groups because it was relaxing as they were “sitting around in a room, talking, relaxing, where you don’t feel pressure...[it’s] comfortable.”

Personal Reflections

Researcher’s Experiences

As qualitative research recognizes that the researcher’s personal experiences, identity and biases impact the research, it is important I acknowledge and discuss how my experiences and identity shape this research. hooks (1994) outlines the importance of personal experiences in shaping and influencing our theories. She states:

Theory emerges from the concrete, from my efforts to make sense of everyday life experiences, from my efforts to intervene critically in my life and the lives of others...Personal testimony, personal experience, is such fertile ground for the production of liberatory feminist theory because it usually forms the base of our theory making (cited in Clarke, 1996 p. 43).

My interest in this research comes from personal experiences with racism and discrimination growing up as a second generation Indo-Canadian female in Pitt Meadows. The racist taunting on the school field, the feelings of not belonging because my culture was not represented and the leering from the store clerk are memories I carry

with me. Unfortunately, while encounters with racism are less frequent now, they do continue to surface in my life. I was reminded of this during a recent trip to Whistler with a group of Indo-Canadian friends in which we were being denied access to a local service and were later referred to as rowdy. It left me wondering whether it was our skin colour that led to this stereotype and label as our behaviour was no different than other patrons. Rather than let these experiences discourage me, I have been able to channel my passion into a commitment to addressing racism in our society through my professional and personal work. It is important for me to identify that these are the perceptual filters through which I view racism and may impact my research and interaction with the youth.

Researcher's Biases and Limitations

It is also important I state my preference for anti-racism/discrimination strategies that are more radical, hard hitting and directly tackle racism to achieve equality and fairness. I often struggled with colleagues and school and community partners that wanted to avoid using the word racism and advocated for more moderate approaches using celebratory messages and multicultural images of cute children, food, clothing and music to show we all are getting along. I do not want to completely discount the value of such activities as they can be a useful entry point of addressing issues of multiculturalism and racism. However, I find it frustrating that after over 20 years of multiculturalism policies and practices in Canada,¹⁵ we have not evolved from addressing these issues at a surface level to countering the deeper and enduring social barriers that continue to allow racism and discrimination to flourish. Although this is my preferred approach, I made an

¹⁵ This frustration and critique of multiculturalism has also been identified by Henry et al. (1995) and Fleras & Elliott (2003). While the purpose of this thesis is not to defend or critique multiculturalism, it is important to state that often these limitations of multiculturalism are not because these are the goals of the policies or ideology. Rather multiculturalism is often misunderstood, or implemented inconsistently from the purpose of the policy, or there is an unwillingness to address the root causes of racism and make the changes required to create a truly equitable society.

effort not to encourage students to identify such strategies as more effective or to devalue their ideas when they spoke about the value of such activities in their schools.

I also recognize that as the researcher, I am not transparent and that my race, gender, age and social status shape my relations with the students (Weis & Fine, 1993, p. 76). It is possible that the students may have responded to the questions in a way that they assumed fit with my experiences on racism and may have identified it as a major problem given that it was the focus of my research. My racial background may have also impacted my interaction with the students as studies have found that race can influence the research process. It usually leads to increased rapport and willingness to respond by members of the same race or other minorities as there are feelings of shared experiences (Madriz, 2000, p. 845). I found this to be the case with Rani, an Indo-Canadian female, in her responses she often stated 'oh you know what it's like' and Chand who referenced me as being an *apna*, or 'one of our own'. My racial background may have had a reverse effect on participants of non-minority background in that they may have felt guarded to express their views. I found this with Brian when he was talking about affirmative action as reverse discrimination against Whites. He was cautious and hesitant in fully expressing himself even though I had informed the students to be as open as possible with their opinions and not worry about my approval or disapproval.

The participants' racial background may have impacted my interpretation of their views. This was particularly the case when racist stereotypes, assumptions or comments were being made. I found I was more sensitive when such remarks were being made by White students. Several White students referred to South Asian males as gang members, disapproved of Asians speaking only Chinese and hanging out with only other Asians. I

saw their comments as derogatory and offensive. In contrast, when comments were being made about White people by visible minorities, I associated them with their oppression and experiences with racism rather than derogatory remarks.

The difficulty for me when such racist assumptions or comments were being made was not being able to challenge the students. I made a conscious attempt not to do so as I did not want to stifle the students from fully expressing themselves. I saw the impact of this in my first interview when I questioned Carl about his justification of the anti-Muslim sentiments and the American response after the September 11th, 2001 bombing. I found he started to retract some of his statements. I then decided to let youth express their feelings without challenging them unless I felt that their intention was to be deliberately hurtful and hateful, which I did not find to be the case.

The other issue I faced is that no matter how casual and informal I was with the students or told them that I am not the expert or authority, there were still age and power imbalances between us. A few students expressed nervousness about doing the interview and it was not until the end that they realized it wasn't that bad. My position with the Human Rights Commission also may have had an impact as the students may have seen me as an authority figure. On the other hand, this also led to some students feeling more comfortable. James expressed he was more comfortable talking to me than school staff because "[you work] with the government, [you are] a human rights person, [you] just know how things go."

Despite these possible limitations and biases, overall I had a good rapport with all of the youth. There was a great deal of openness and trust between us as the students shared personal stories, concerns and their ideas often in directions I had not requested. I

am confident that an acknowledgment and awareness of my possible biases and limitations assisted in producing findings that accurately describe and explain the youth's perspectives. Providing verbatim quotes from the youth also assisted in ensuring accuracy and appropriate explanations.

Research Questions

The general research question of this study was: what types of strategies do youth see as effective in addressing racism and discrimination in their lives? Before addressing this topic, I wanted to get a sense of their awareness and understanding of issues of discrimination. I wanted to learn from the youth:

- Did they perceive racism and discrimination to be a problem?
- Who did they see as being targets of discrimination?
- Had they personally experienced racism or discrimination? Did this impact their awareness or interest in anti-racism activities?
- How they felt about existing responses to incidents of racism and discrimination and what should occur? What types of coping strategies and steps they took to deal with these experiences? Who they turned to for support?

Specifically in relation to effective strategies, I wanted to discover:

- What types of methods or messages appeal to young people?
- What impacts their attitude or behaviour when it comes to social issues campaigns, including the role of popular culture and the media?
- What would motivate them to get involved to take action against racism and discrimination?
- What they think about existing school, community and media based strategies?
- What type of campaign ideas would the participants come up with?
- How to reach and involve youth that seemed uninterested in the issues, the perpetrators or marginalized youth?
- What role did youth play in addressing racism and discrimination?

Additionally, some general variables I wanted to explore were whether:

- The youth's gender and racial background influenced their responses or involvement in anti-discrimination activities.
- There were regional differences or patterns in the youth's responses.
- Youth who were actively involved in anti-racism/discrimination activities had a greater understanding of the issues.

Pilot Study

To test my interview questions, format and process, I conducted a pilot study in the fall of 2000 during my Research Methods course by interviewing five students, four from Pitt Meadows and one from Vancouver. The students ranged in age (14-17), gender (two females and three males) and racial background which they self-identified. The students also varied in their level of involvement in school activities, from high involvement to none. The focus of the pilot study was broader than the existing study as it looked at the youth's understanding and experiences with discrimination and their ideas on effective anti-discrimination strategies for youth and was not specific to racism.

Part of what I was testing was my construct validity and internal validity to see if the concepts had mutual meanings for myself and the participants (LeCompte & Goetz, 1981, p. 43, Lather, 1986, p. 271). I found most of the youth understood discrimination and identified it to be based on grounds such as race, sex, sexual orientation and weight. However, I found the youth had a harder time understanding and relating to the concept of anti-discrimination strategies. Many of them were not able to identify activities in their schools as addressing discrimination. For example, one student did not identify the anti-racism club in his school as being a strategy. I had to ask questions about specific forms of discrimination for the youth to be able to conceptualize the strategies. This may have been because discrimination was too broad a topic for them to identify or associate specific activities.

Similarly, in preparing the research results for the pilot study, I found exploring discrimination was too complex and challenging to provide a theoretical understanding of the various forms of discrimination. This is part of the reason why I narrowed the current study to focus on racism and then make connections to other forms of discrimination.

Given the volume and scope of data I was dealing with, the findings from the pilot study were not analyzed as part of this thesis.

The pilot study also assisted in developing and refining the interview questions in regards to language, clarity and ordering. The pilot test showed which questions the youth had greater knowledge and interest in and the ones they found challenging. Most participants had a difficult time coming up with ideas for ways of reaching other youth. The questions were revised accordingly. The pilot study also highlighted that the interactions with the students will vary depending on the student, the setting and our rapport. I learned that building trust takes time and I can not expect it right away. I also learned to consider the discussion outside of the formal interview questions as this information provides contextual meaning. The greatest strength of the pilot study was that it confirmed interviewing was the appropriate method to use for my research purposes because I had gained valuable data. I found the youth's stories, ideas and opinions refreshing and appreciated their willingness to be trusting and open with me.

Data Analysis

The tools I used to analyze the data included a coding system of key themes and patterns which were summarized into tables. The interviews and focus groups were tape recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Each transcribed interview and focus group was approximately 25-30 pages in length. As a result I was dealing with approximately 800 pages of raw data. A coding system helped make the volume of data more manageable. After each interview and focus group, notes were recorded about the participants, such as their interest level, level of awareness, characteristics (age, gender, school, ethnicity/culture) and any issues during the interview such as, setting and interaction.

I started my data analysis by reading through each transcribed interview a few times. During the second reading, I started making notes and memos in the margins on key phrases, ideas, concepts and relationships. I then selected a few of the lengthy interviews to start the coding process. I started with open coding; by breaking down and conceptualizing the data by labelling key concepts using code words (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 62). I then made a list of all the code words. I looked for redundancy, made comparisons between these concepts and then grouped them into categories based on similarities. Subcategories were developed for each based on the various properties and dimensions. I then used axial coding to look at relationships between categories and compared participant responses within each category by looking for similarities, differences and anomalies to develop key themes and patterns (Creswell, 2002). I then summarized the major findings of the study as they related to my core category, effective anti-racism/discrimination strategies for youth. I concluded with a set of recommendations of how racism and discrimination can be addressed in the lives of youth.

Themes and Patterns

The themes and patterns that I have identified and their subcategories are:

Racial Identity of Participants

Understanding of Issues

- Definition of racism and discrimination
- Awareness of human rights laws/anti-racism policies
- Causes of racism identified

Manifestation of Racism

- Racism in society and our communities
- Regional differences
- Racism in the media
- Racism in schools

Personal Experiences with Discrimination

- Experience
- Impact

Responses to Incidents

- Personal responses
- Coping strategies
- Support networks
- School staff
- Student bystanders

Role of Youth

- Role and responsibilities of youth
- Reasons youth do and do not get involved

Existing Strategies

Effective Strategies

- Suggestions from youth about effective strategies and messaging for reaching youth
- Reaching hard to reach
- Campaign ideas
- Challenges to addressing discrimination

Effective Methods

In chapters five and six I present my findings within these themes. Chapter 7 includes a discussion summarizing the major findings.

CHAPTER 5 – DATA ANALYSIS – EXPERIENCES

Racism in the Lives of Youth

After providing a description of the participants' racial identities, this chapter will outline the participants' understanding of racism and discrimination and their causes. I then present their perspectives on how they see racism exists in society, the media and their schools. This is followed by a discussion of the participant's personal experiences with discrimination and their responses to incidents, their coping strategies and who they turned to for help. This section is quite detailed as a key principle of this study is to provide the direct voices of youth as much as possible rather than to summarize their experiences and insights. Secondary sources will be referenced throughout this section.

Racial Identity

The purpose of having the participants identify their racial backgrounds was to determine whether they felt like they belonged or were treated favourably or unfairly because of the racial background in their schools and communities. I also wanted to ascertain how they perceived others in relation to their racial background. I felt it was important to look at racial identity because it might help explain students' feelings of recognition, belonging, alienation, powerlessness or if they were at an advantage within their schools or community (Fleras & Elliott, 2003, p. 28, Giroux, 1994, p. 74). Issues of race, identity and representation are also significant in shaping and understanding power and race relations in society (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993). The purpose of this section is not to provide explanations of the participants' racial identity development because this is a topic on its own and was not the objective of this study. The purpose of this section is

to present some of the major themes or patterns that emerged in relation to the above considerations.

A major finding was that some of the White youth were uncertain about their racial identity. This was most prevalent in Pitt Meadows. Three White youth identified their racial identity as North American, nothing or unknown as reflected in Michelle's response who stated, "Like I don't know just it's not really anything, we celebrate Christmas and things like that." Theorists such as Omi and Winant (1992) have also found that most White individuals do not experience their ethnicity as a part of their identity (cited in McCarthy & Crichtlow, 1993). The reasons some Whites often have difficulty talking about themselves in racial terms include the denial of their power, the failure to reflect on their dominance and the lack of recognition of historical and political relations (hooks, 1992, Giroux, 1997, Dei, 1998, Sleeter, 1993, McIntosh, 1995, Roman, 1993, cited in James, 1999, p. 24). Fleras and Elliott (2003) argue that this lack of definitive identity leads to Whites seeing themselves as the colourless norm from which they evaluate other races or see them as the Other (p. 34).

This evaluation of other races occurred by several participants. For example, Brian partly attributed the lack of participation of Asian parents in his school to Asian children not having as open of a relationship with their parents as do people of his cultural background. He stated, "I have discussions with my parents a lot. I know some, of like Asian culture, I guess has less of a connection between students and parents." Similarly, Asian students were seen as perfectionists fitting in with the common stereotype of Asian being smart and studious (James, 1999, p. 151) when Carrie

described them as: "They're so totally perfectionist, like everything is just completely to the tee and they're so precise about what they do, they're meticulous."

Another pattern that emerged is that more of the White youth identified themselves as Canadian, such as Brian, who proudly claimed, "I'm Canadian, really firmly Canadian." Fleras and Elliott (2003) point out the association of White to Canadian also reflects the privilege of whiteness. For example, James (1999) found that in his class one of the White participants insisted he was Canadian and did not need to discuss his racial identity (p. 42). In contrast, I found Brian recognized his privilege of being part of the dominant group although he may be a minority at his school:

It's still at least perceived that White kids make up the biggest portion of the predominant society that we live in....For me at least being Caucasian, I don't feel like I'm a minority at the school. Even though technically I'm I guess. I mean we live in Canada, North America so there are a lot of us; it's basically a Caucasian society.

I found that Brian and Carrie, who were more aware of their White racial identity, identified that they were able to connect with issues of racism and discrimination although they had not faced racism. Carrie stated that this is because she knows what it is to feel like a minority as she was teased because she has Diabetes. Brian expressed the stereotypes he faces because of his age are not as bad as racism because age changes.

All the visible minorities were quickly able to identify their racial or ethnic identity. Suzuki (1994) discovered that many students of colour, especially African-American students, had the most knowledge of their family histories whereas the White students had the least knowledge reflecting whiteness as above ethnicity, history or privilege (cited in Giroux, 1994, p. 91). This was the case with two First Nations students, Jason and Shannon, who attended a First Nations alternate school in Vancouver.

They had a very strong awareness of their identity and an in-depth understanding of racism and the history and oppression of First Nations people. Dei (1996) explains that group and self definitions allows students to recognize their cultural heritage and ancestry as powerful sources of knowledge. In contrast, Mia, who grew up in Vernon, distanced herself from other First Nations by referencing them as 'they' or 'them' when talking about First Nations programs:

It's like good that they want it, but I don't know just. They just really separate from everybody else...It's like this First Nations where you went and did all these special little things...I don't have very many Native friends cause... a lot of the Native kids just hang out with the Native kids.

The difference may be the result of the First Nations program reinforcing and teaching the students about their culture and histories, which may not be the case in mainstream schools. Similarly, Dei (1996) points out that African-centred schools deal with the disengagement, alienation and isolation of students of African descent in mainstream school systems by promoting Black/African history, experiences and culture (p. 107).

Three students who were new immigrants spoke about the challenges, language barriers and cultural clashes they face living in Canada. Sam, a Korean exchange student, expressed feelings of not belonging in Canada and stated this is not his country and understood the fear Canadians have of Asians when he stated:

I feel bad about it cause but, I still understand why they do that cause it's their country and all the Asians coming in they might scared sort of from appearance. I understand they don't like Asians and other countries. It's their land, like their place.

The Canadian Council on Social Development study (2000) also found that most young immigrants did not feel Canadian as they thought that meant to be a White person of

Anglo-Saxon decent. A possible explanation of these feelings is that minorities have grown up with a politics of representation that casts them as the others (Giroux, 1994).

However, many of the visible minority youth also stated or understood the preference for hanging out with other members of their ethnic community because they find a sense of belonging and share similarities. Tara explained, "People sort of find comfort with, like, being with people that are their own race because they sort of like almost feel like they understand each other better almost." Clarke (1996) points out voluntary segregation by racial minority students may be a way of self-affirmation, a coping strategy, a cultural survival technique or a support system as these students often do not see their identity reflected in their school culture (p. 158). In contrast, a few of the White youth associated this segregation to negative stereotypes of minority groups.

Alisha reflected:

I don't know if you could really call them a gang cause there's a group of older guys that are East Indian¹⁶...They tend to like pick a lot of fights...and they all have the really nice sports cars and everything...also looking for trouble and just hanging out.

The participants' insights into the racial identity of themselves and others helps set the context for understanding race relations within their school and community environments and how youth may see their roles in relation to issues of racism and diversity.

Understanding of Issues

Definition of Racism

The majority of youth had a strong understanding of racism. They defined it as: hate, dislike, prejudging, teasing, put-downs or discrimination based on skin colour,

¹⁶ East Indian was the term commonly used by the youth to describe South Asians. However, I find the term problematic given it derives from colonial links to the British East India Company (Basham, 1967, p.481).

culture, background, religion or food. Several youth, such as Carrie expressed, these are characteristics that can not be changed, "You can't avoid the colour of your skin, the way you talk or the way you look." Rani had a hard time distinguishing racism from sexism but associated both with human rights. Brian identified racism with the belief of superiority of your own racial group, "Thinking...they are less than you...because of their race."

Although school administrators often treat racism and discrimination as similar to bullying, many of the youth distinguished racism from bullying. Bullying was seen as more general teasing and impacting all students. Brian suggested that because of the differences between discrimination and bullying, they should be addressed separately:

I mean bullying and discrimination, I guess, are kind of the same thing sometimes so but I don't think you can get rid of them both just by focusing on one of them. You have to worry about them at the same time because you know you can be discriminatory without being a bully....And I mean you can be discriminatory by just kind of, you know, even if you don't say it to anybody, you just think it to yourself, something about that person, this way cause they're Asian or whatever.

Racism was identified as one of the key problems facing youth today along with smoking, peer pressure, drugs, alcohol, bullying and violence. All the participants were against racism and felt that it should not exist and must be addressed as Carrie expressed:

It bites the big one. We are all people okay. There shouldn't be racism. We are all the same in one way or another. You know, maybe I don't have dark skin or don't speak Chinese...They are people, they have feelings, they do breathe, they do walk. You know, I mean, it should be non-existent. Why can't we all just get along?

Definition and Forms of Discrimination

In contrast the strong and specific articulations of racism, the understanding of discrimination was more general. Most of the youth defined discrimination as: excluding, singling out, categorizing, prejudging, teasing or put-downs or hate because of personal

characteristics. Only a few students such as Chand recognized that discrimination includes unequal or differential treatment that can be hidden or indirect. He stated, "When somebody else doesn't like you cause of your colour like maybe they're not showing it negatively but they're not, they're cutting you from team." Many defined discrimination as racism. Others disagreed and felt discrimination is broader than just racism and that anyone can be a target. While several youth could not provide a definition, they were familiar with the concept when I explained the definition.

The major grounds of discrimination identified were race, appearance, clothing, sexual orientation, sex and age. More of the female participants identified sexism or the use of sexist terms such as bitch or slut as a problem. Other grounds identified were personal beliefs, religion, popularity, social condition, region, academic achievement, violence against women, disabilities, language and teenage popularity. Several students indicated that anyone that was seen as different could be a target of discrimination as people are afraid of change and differences. Natasha felt it was wrong that differences were seen as a negative thing when she expressed, "If you wanna be different, it should be celebrated rather than clones walking in just everybody blond hair, blue eyes, you know Nikes on their feet, whatever, right...a lot of people are I guess afraid of difference." This finding is consistent with the Kids Help Phone Pilot Study (2003) which found that bullies often target children who are different in some way (p. 4).

It was also disturbing that several participants identified that students with disabilities were not just teased, but physically harassed as Rani described:

Mostly the one who are a little handicapped, they got bugged from the peoples...Picking them up and just like throwing down, just for saying stupid words to them, that's all. It's pretty much for handicapped kids, it's hard.

Several students also felt it was unfair that students with disabilities are segregated into separate schools or have special rooms.

The youth varied in how they compared racism to other forms of discrimination. Some felt that the use of racist terms is often ignored but should be taken seriously because they are so commonly used in the media that people accept them as normal. Others such as Carrie felt that people are more aware of racism as there has been a lot of focus on it in schools but it still continues, "I think racism is sort of a word talked about now so people don't really listen to it.... it's like a normal topic now. I think they're aware of it but I don't know... people aren't aware that they're being racist." Several students such as Shannon, felt that schools ignore racism:

They weren't concerned about racism in schools or anything or nothing. They weren't concerned about how people were treated. They were just more concerned about education and like the resources, that's what they're more concerned than the kids and how we're treated and stuff.

Others, such as James, indicated that it is not just racism that is a problem but that broader discrimination and bullying are also problems.

Homophobia was seen as a major problem by almost all the youth. Carrie contended that homophobia is accepted and not taken seriously because "People are homophobic big time....People are just like oh, don't touch me. It's like it's a disease, right."

Cindy expressed concern about how homosexuality is viewed negatively:

I haven't seen a lot of racism. I've seen a lot of homophobia. Homophobia is like the big thing right now. And not as much as last year but people keep saying that's so gay, this is so gay, blah, blah, blah and I have like several gay friends and I know it's really hard for them and you know some of them are out...Homophobia is definitely is the big one.

Brian compared homophobia to the way racism was treated in the past. "Like maybe fifty years ago people would have thought that White people are superior to everyone else. But

now it seems that gay people are really looked down upon." Teroy felt schools tolerated homophobia because the targets are not as easy to identify:

I don't really think that you'd get into too much trouble for calling somebody faggot.... They just don't take it seriously. Like if you if somebody like a teacher heard you call somebody a faggot or homo, they'd think you were joking....But then if they called somebody a nigger in their class, then it's in pretty serious trouble probably.... But then you don't really know who all the gay people are in your school. It's not something that you can identify so I don't know how you'd treat to be the same.

Several students also spoke about how unsafe it is for gay students to come out without being harassed. There was high consensus among the participants from each community that the most common derogatory terms used were homophobic. James described how the word faggot is used as a put down: "Like gay, fag, you're queer, everything like steer towards. So instead of using, they're weird, they're dumb, say you're gay." Brian agreed that the phrase that's so gay is associated with negativity. Presenters to the Safe School Task Force (2003) also expressed concern about the frequent use of homophobic language in schools for describing a negative event or an insult to make students who are, or are perceived to be gay, uncomfortable (p. 15).

Several students felt that social class leads to discrimination. The most common example was that students who could not afford trendy clothes are teased. However, two First Nations students connected race and class in the mistreatment of Natives. Jason explained that social condition plays a role in how Natives are treated differently by administration in comparison to other ethnic groups, such as Asians:

There was some, a group of Natives, First Nations people that were picked on, racist people that were hurting them....And then there was a group of Asian people that were being picked on and hurt...Some of the Asian people went right to the school system and told them and they listened. And then we tried it and they're like yeah, okay, sure whatever....It's always after just money...Okay we'll be nice to them to keep them in the school. They'll pay. Um

but when it's us, oh they can't really pay that much. A lot of it's loans...Everyone thinks Natives are poor so it's kind of a financial and nation thing.

Jason's insights are supported by Dei's (1996) call for understanding that race and social class are intertwined and that the roots of racial oppression lie in access to power, property and privilege (p. 58).

Several of the students identified that perpetrators could be anyone. As Natasha stated, "It can be the rich kid, it could be the poor kid, and it could be the smart kid or the dumb kid so it could be anybody." Several students saw perpetrators to be students that were respected, powerful and had high influence in the school. Brian stated:

Generally speaking or at least I think Caucasian guys are most overtly doing it I suppose or maybe sports people...I don't think it's because they're involved in sports, it's that personality type that does that....Just that people who are outgoing and overt and very sociable and have lots of friends already. So they can look down on these people because they're different or they think they're better than them.

Others felt that perpetrators have their own insecurities or problems and they tease others to make themselves feel better.

Awareness of Human Rights Laws/Anti-Racism Policies

It is concerning that the youth did not have a strong understanding of their human rights or laws that may protect them from racism and discrimination. While some of the participants knew that there were laws in Canada that protected them from racism, discrimination and hate, they did not know the names of the laws, how they were protected or actions they could take. There was little understanding of the grounds and areas protected under the *BC Human Rights Code*. The activist youth had the greatest understanding of the laws against discrimination as some of these students were involved in giving presentations or workshops on diversity issues. Some students were surprised

they are protected in public places, like restaurants. Several students felt it was unfair stores can have signs prohibiting more than one student in at a time. Such age discrimination was often raised by youth advocacy groups to the BC Human Rights Commission. However, overcoming this barrier is challenging as age is not a grounds for protection in the provision of services under the *BC Human Rights Code*.

In addition, most youth were not aware if their school had a policy on racism or discrimination. Only two students knew their school had a policy on zero tolerance for harassment which was communicated to them in a school assembly. A few students knew that their school had a general school code of conduct with rules about respecting others written in their school agendas. A few youth were aware of laws around hate crimes and discrimination. Most participants felt that such laws were important and necessary because they reduced the impact of discrimination. However, Amy disagreed:

You can't force them cause you made a law oh you can't be racist or anything like that...You're still not gonna help your cause and then there goes like freedom of speech, even if there's not good freedom of speech, you know you're still be free.

This argument that anti-hate laws infringe on individual rights to freedom of speech is often put forward in the debate about combating hate without consideration that the Canadian Constitution balances and limits freedom of expression with the freedom to live without hate (BC Human Rights Commission, 2000).

Causes of Discrimination

The key causes of discrimination identified were upbringing and the attitudes of family and parents. Discrimination was seen to be a learned behaviour that is taught to children at an early age as Shannon explained:

My nephew was playing with this White person and the mother would come up running and grab him, like come on, come on, right we gotta go now. And

they wouldn't let them play or anything like sometimes, because having, if you look like you're really poor they think that you're gonna try to jack them.

As friends and siblings were identified as the key sources of youth influences, peer pressure, impressing friends and fitting in were seen as the other key reasons youth discriminate. Other youth attributed racism to our history and ancestors. Other causes identified were: power, money and jealousy. Another common cause was feeling threatened that new immigrants are taking over the country and imposing their cultures as Carrie expressed, "They see it as invading us; they're taking over and trying them to make us like them." Huang attributed racism to jealousy that minorities have achieved more. "The Caucasian think that they just come here but they got more than us."

The media and popular culture were also seen as key forces in contributing to racism in Canadian society and a major source of influencing youth by many participants. Television was described as causing cultural racism through the everyday images presented in the media as Carrie expressed:

Big time, big time, even on TV and racism pops up and you don't even know that you're being racist...you see the same commercial like over and over again. And people don't realize that that's actually sinking into their brain...cause if there's a lot of racial stuff in there, then you're not even getting it until you start to say it.

Many youth identified that television normalizes the use of racist slurs and makes their use tolerable. Teroy explained:

There's a lot of Asians I've met that think that I'd say nigger and I say Black, a Black person--that I think it's the same thing. I'm like are you stupid?...Because they see it on TV like they say hey what's up nigger, it's all Black people they're calling each other nigger and stuff so there must not be anything wrong with it.

Brian felt that popular culture and television permit racism and stated, "Popular culture basically does make, or at least it allows for racism and you can still be basically you can still

be cool and racist." Given the strong role that the youth felt the media plays in contributing to racism in Canadian society, it is crucial that we provide youth with the skills to challenge racism in the media. This will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

Manifestations of Racism

In our Society and Communities

Almost all the youth saw racism existing in Canadian society. Most, such as Carrie, described it as subliminal racism, that is indirect, subtle and in people's attitudes and stereotypes, "Just little things, people not talking to someone because I don't know they're different. No one right out says they're racist...But I've seen racist jokes." Carl noted that Canadians often do not acknowledge racism exists "Cause we're like the quiet country tucked in the mountain and that we're so friendly and outgoing to everyone...That doesn't make us more racist, but we're just as susceptible to racism as any other country." Carl's observations are supported by Fleras (2001) who states that although Canada is seen as best country to live in, racism in Canada is chronically and historically embedded (p. 72). Others, such as Natasha, saw racism to be "Everywhere, like you can't really avoid it." Most participants felt racism in Canada was not as bad as in the United States and other countries. Some attributed this difference to multiculturalism, our proximity to Asia, and our laws that protect against discrimination.

The systemic nature of racism was passionately discussed by two of the First Nations youth in relation to Aboriginal issues. Jason pointed out:

There's land claims and stuff, there's treaty...and it just kind of violates everything. There's like fishing laws that you know our people rely on it so they have to do as much fishing as they legally can...They don't have jobs really and don't pay out a whole lot.

Fleras and Elliott (2003) also note that 400 years of misguided and deliberate government programs and policies to strip Aboriginal people of their land, culture and tribal authority have left Aboriginal people with the lowest socio-economic status in Canada (p. 175).

Jason also made reference to environmental racism by expressing anger over how the Aboriginal lands have been treated, "You know, they have no right to our land really. It's ours...they knew we had it and they just wanted it cause we had a lot of trees, lumber areas. They're cutting down the mountains and poisoning the rivers." Shannon from Vancouver spoke about her mistrust and mistreatment by what she referred to as the 'system', which includes the government, police and schools:

I think it's just a whole bunch of bullshit. I don't like the system and how they deal with you because sometimes they don't look at everything right and they just judge you again by your background....There's a whole file that they put on you...they use all that information wrong.

These feelings of injustice and mistrust by Jason and Shannon were not as strongly shared by the other youth, other than Chand. I also found Jason and Shannon much more vigilant in wanting to stop the oppression that has plagued the Aboriginal community.

In contrast, two White males felt equality laws discriminate against Whites. This pattern is consistent with Dei's (1996) argument that those with the highest vested interest in maintaining material advantage, in particular White males, are most likely to feel threatened by changes, such as employment equity policies, because they have more to lose (p. 71). We see this fear of change as Brian critiques affirmative action policies:

Sometimes it goes too far saying you have to hire him because he's Black or where the university have, you know, a quota of Black students or something that they have to take every year...That in itself, I think, is kind of discriminatory towards like White people.

Henry et al. (1995) identify that such assumptions or myths that see equality laws as reverse racism are commonly articulated in Canada and reflect democratic racism.

Despite these misperceptions, visible minorities continue to face unequal access to jobs and wages (Fleras & Elliott, 2003, p. 119). Dean suggested First Nations people should be stripped of their inherent rights if we want to create equality:

The laws towards Natives and stuff, like they want to be equal, so let's make them equal. Like make sure they pay taxes like everybody else if they wanna be equal...They have to have fishing licenses and hunting licenses cause they keep on saying they wanna be equal but they still want to have all these pleasures.

Dean is not alone in these sentiments. Fleras and Elliott (2003) point out many Canadians are reluctant to recognize that Aboriginal peoples have inherent rights that set them apart from the mainstream which act as a barrier in building positive relations (p. 170).

Several of the youth also identified examples of racism in Canada's history through Chinese labour camps, Japanese internment, disenfranchisement and the mistreatment of First Nations people. I found there was a higher level of awareness of the history of racism than in past studies I have conducted with youth on racism. Most students indicated learning about this history in school. It is possible that this increased awareness may have to do with curriculum changes, or increased focus by some teachers. However, I will later outline that several students felt the curriculum still omits the histories and cultures of marginalized communities.

I found that the First Nations and South Asian males were highly aware about the history of racism towards their communities which they reported learning about from their families. Jason discussed the experiences of his grandparents in residential schools.

There were some that actually killed themselves in my family that were my great grandparents and stuff when the boarding schools first open they

were brought there...And there wasn't a second that they wouldn't think about it themselves. But they kept going...The priest beat them up, sexual abuse, everything.

He also referred to the colonization of First Nations people, "The White people will move in. They'll give you a gift of alcohol, which is crap, it's stupid...And they'll say hey they're drunks. Let's get them off their land, they're not using it for nothing, they'll just drink it."

Chand spoke about how the situation has improved for his generation:

It's better...we don't have to walk around with guns in our backs and stuff like that. My chacha [uncle] and them did because they're always getting beat up and stuff like that.... Before we didn't have respect. People thought we were just as low as dirt...Now we're considered equals, not like back then, they weren't considered equals. They were considered outlaws.

Several of the youth also spoke about the impact of September 11th, 2001. I found that interest or awareness decreased as time passed. For example, I interviewed youth in Pitt Meadows during the week following the September 11th bombing. Almost all the youth spoke about it. A month later, the number decreased to a few students in the other communities. This decrease may indicate the need for issues to be topical in order for youth to be engaged and interested. The most common impact was an increase in anti-Muslim attitudes and sentiments and fear and suspicion of Muslims as Carrie stated:

Everybody's pointing at Afghanistan and stuff. And oh, everybody's getting the attitude, just bomb them, just bomb, take them out. That is so totally unfair. They're not all behind this. They are totally innocent people and you're gonna kill an innocent race.

Another student reported that a Muslim student at her friend's school in Coquitlam was beat up following the bombings. Raman, a South Asian female in Vernon, was angry that she was targeted by a man who leered at her in the grocery store:

I walked into Overwaita like just two days after this happened and some guy was looking at me. Like looking at me really bad, and I'm like hey you

know what, I don't think it was me that was there that bombed the place. I don't think you should be looking at me like that right?

Regional Differences

There were some regional differences in who was identified as the targets of discrimination and the predominant issues in each community. In Pitt Meadows, the key targets were Asians and exchange students. Sam explained, "I think it's more than other schools, more serious in our school cause there's the Asians are minority for Canadians." Asians were also identified as targets by some of the Vancouver students, but the discrimination was seen as two-way. In Surrey, the key targets identified were students who spoke English as a second language, as Rani stated. "The ESL they treated the way they talk because sometimes like they couldn't say right away to, whatever it is. So they started oh...why are you going to school? Stuff like that."

In Vancouver and Vernon, Aboriginal issues were much more prevalent. Some Vancouver youth spoke about the stereotypes that exist of First Nations people as drunks and addicts in association with the east downtown community. Several of the Vernon youth spoke about issues around land claims and protesting ski resorts. Dean stated intergenerational differences as it is mostly his parents and grandparents that express anti-Native sentiments. Jason described regional differences in the manifestation of racism towards First Nations in the North where it is more overt versus the Lower Mainland where it is more indirect.

Racism in the Media

As outlined in the literature review, Fleras and Kunz (2001), Henry and Tator (2000) and Graves (1999) demonstrate that the media is a major vehicle through which racism is maintained and perpetuated in Canadian society through the exclusion and

misrepresentation of minorities. Several youth, such as Arun, recognized the role television plays in negatively portraying minorities. "Simpsons is an example...where there's the Quickie Mart owner, name's Aboo. Basically they're trying to say that Indians own all the convenience stores." Natasha observed that this portrayal perpetuates the use of stereotypes by youth:

Then you get a group of Black kids that are in a gang. And then you're just thinking well that's stereotyping, that's why some kids stereotype because some people are grown up on TV...They're like okay, all Black people are like that, all Chinese people are smart, all Spanish are in gangs, stuff like that.

Fleras and Kunz (2001), Henry and Tator (2000) found that while there is an increased portrayal, minorities continue to be misrepresented and portrayed negatively in the media. Arun noted that television shows like the Hughleys, which is about a Black family, try to address racism towards Black people. However, they often contradict themselves by making jokes about other racial groups such as Whites or Asians.

Negative news coverage of minorities was also seen to increase hatred of certain groups. Arun and Parm expressed anger that the media's portrayal of Arabs after September 11th increased hatred and attacks on Arabs and Sikhs. Dean added how biased and imbalanced news reporting can polarize groups:

Every once in a while you'll hear it in the news; the Natives have blocked the road. They show like the White people and they're all angry at them and mad at them and yelling at them....It's probably kind of bias cause...like they all show the ones that are all negative towards it but they don't show positive one...they all can't be like that.

Dean's insights speak to the cumulative effect that such stereotyping and misrepresentation has. It can lead to a polarization between the White majority group and people of colour who are often misrepresented as monolithic groups that create social problems (Henry & Tator, 2000, p. 59, Fleras, 2000).

Racism in Schools

The other area that all the participants identified where racism manifests is in their schools. While the participants did not identify the school system as one of the causes of racism, most of their examples and personal experiences occurred in schools. This section will look at racism in the school environment, student relations, the staff level and within the curriculum.

School Environment

Racism was seen as a problem in their overall school environments by most youth. They identified there was little cross-cultural interaction and students were racially divided. Most of the problems occurred outside of class time, such as in the hallways, school yards or community during breaks or after school. The participants identified that there are fewer problems during class because there were greater opportunities to interact with other students or the incidents were more subtle. The Report by the Safe Schools Task Force (2003) also found that most bullying occurred outside class time when students are not under the supervision of teachers.

The students described that one problem is that minority students are often singled out and excluded. Students in Pitt Meadows, such as Carrie, spoke about how racism is such a major problem in their school that Asian students eat lunch in a special classroom:

I think it is pretty bad. You know you walk down the hallway...And all the Chinese people were sitting in the room and eating their lunches. And you know they're there because they have no where else to go. That shouldn't be that. They have just as much right to be in our hallways as we do...They have the right to belong. You know and we're taking that away from them by intimidating against them.... It's there...And it's big.

In Vancouver and Vernon, students, such as Natasha, identified that certain sections of schools are labelled based on the racial group that congregates there:

There's a long hallway in front of the hall, the one side, they call it the Asian Avenue, because that's where all the Asian people have their lockers and the other side there's a few Asian people here and there right.

Mia from Vernon pointed out that there was a section of her school called the Brown corner where all the South Asians hung out. While she did not see any problems with the South Asian students hanging out in one corner, her school administration stopped them from congregating there. Dei (1996a) also found in his study that Black students felt that White teachers are suspicious and intimidated by them hanging out in the hallways because "We're Black they think we're doing something bad." Similarly, Black students in Clarke's (1996) study expressed anger that administrators dissuade groups of students of Black or South Asian background from socializing together during their free time but do not treat groups of White students in the same manner (p. 66).

In Vancouver, some students felt that the racism was not as overt as Brian noted: "I mean I don't see it as there are fights often, you know, just cause this guy's Asian, let's beat him up or something like that.... I think it used to be worse." Increased vigilance by staff and students was seen to make a difference as Natasha explained, "There is racism there.... They don't really express openly because I think that if they did, a lot of people would turn around and say hey stop it... there's more zero tolerance among the students." Schools that had undertaken proactive measures, such as school presentations or classroom discussions to address bullying, discrimination and harassment, were seen by the students as having a positive impact in creating more tolerant school environments.

Racism was not seen as a major problem in some schools. This was particularly the case with the students in Surrey although some of them reported having experienced or witnessed racism. Several students were from the school of Ray Wilson, who had been

killed in a hit and run caused by racial conflict. Another student attended the school of Hamed Nastoh, who committed suicide. I found that these students were restrained and protective of their school environments. My perception was validated in a conversation I had with Alisha outside of the formal interview. She informed me that she had been instructed by a peer counsellor at her school not to speak to me about the suicide because the media's reporting of Hamed's suicide blamed the school and students.

Two First Nations students in Vancouver identified experiencing overt racism. Shannon expressed that she does not feel safe in the public school environment, which is racially diverse in comparison to the First Nations school:

At Brit you don't really feel safe in terms of there's so many different diversities, there's so many different groups of people around, you'll get beat up by a different group....here you know you're safe all the time, no matter where you go, you know everybody here...I think it's really great because when I came here I was harsh drinker and now I like never drink....we come to school practically every day, perfect attendance.

Jason described the difference as "Well in this school you get beat up for being an idiot. But in the regular you get beat up for being Native. And if you say something about, they'll beat you up again or something." Jason added that he felt much safer and comfortable in communities where there are more First Nations:

Prince George there's an example, there's a whole high school there that is just First Nations and then there's a smaller group of Chinese and White people instead of the other way around....and it's just it was comfortable in one sense like to be with other First Nations and not be the smaller group that has to run.

The majority of Black students in Clarke's study (1996) also felt a greater sense of comfort, acceptance and belonging in their school environment after increased interaction with other Black peers (p. 134).

Two visible minority students in Vernon felt that a more racially dissonant environment contributed to there being less racism. Whereas when their schools are predominantly White, they feel singled out as Raman expressed:

There's only like a few East Indians, some Natives, you know, and barely any Chinese people like maybe three or something. So it makes you feel like, I don't know I don't feel odd, it's just like, you know it's like sometimes if it's I'm the only East Indian out of that whole class and when we're talking, when we're like talking history, when we talk about like Black people and stuff, they you know, they kind of just look at you. It makes you feel kind of odd, like not in the right place.

Chand identified facing systemic barriers as he was denied access to sports teams, which made him change schools. Brian recognized systemic barriers for Asian parents in participating in school decision making because of language and cultural barriers:

It does affect things. Parents have a lot to do with the way a school goes. I think people from Asian cultures....Some of them don't speak English. And they come from a different cultural background. They usually have different ideas and opinions of what should happen in school versus say my parents do...So a lot of times it seems like the people like me or from my cultural background have more to say about what their parents think about things than say people from other cultures do...I guess it might be perceived that kind of people of my culture or heritage are kind of running things.

Dei et al. (2000) argue that such language and cultural barriers must be addressed because it creates disadvantages for minority students and their families. Whereas students from communities of privilege enjoy the benefits that facilitate school success as their parents understand the workings of the system (p. 147).

Although most of the examples provided by the students describe the problems of racism given the focus of this study; overall, diversity was seen as having a positive impact in schools by a majority of the students. The main positive impact was the chance to learn, share and be exposed to diverse languages, friends and cultures. Several students in Vancouver stated they did not understand how diversity could be negative as it was

something they were accustomed to and had grown up with. Many also felt a more diverse school environment leads to feelings of belonging.

Student Relations

Most discrimination between students occurred as verbal teasing, name-calling and stereotypes rather than physical forms of discrimination. The Kids Help Phone study (2003) also found that verbal abuse is the most common form of bullying. Carl described, "Just like walking down the hall, people are like you're a Hindu, hey Chug...It's not really big things like people beating different people because they're Black. It's just saying stuff." Arun, stated that the teasing is often done or seen as a joke. "There's one kid that's Chinese and we say jokingly...So some of my friends just come up and say chee, chung, chow, yow, yow, and we just make fun of him and stuff." Raman added most see their teasing as part of their friendship and not as racism:

When I'm sitting down beside that Muslim guy...He everyday I just hear one of his friends come up to him and call him a Paki like all the time. And I don't see, like maybe they're not trying to be racist, but I mean that's the way other people will obviously see it if you're sitting there calling the guy a Paki to his face like ten times.

While not as common, some students spoke about violence and graffiti. Carrie, described fights as two-way that often start as general teasing but lead to racism:

Last year there were two or three Asian people that were kind of like a gang that really got kind of mouthy when they could... And the White people got all their Black friends to come in...They just basically went up to them and said look you're the immigrants here. This is our country. Get out. Being the type of in the mind frame that they were, the Asians were just like well screw you guys too. You know you want to fight about.

In contrast, Chand felt fights started with racial name-calling and described it as "Just people saying stuff, like oh you stupid Paki, you should go back to Pakistan, stuff like that. East Indians don't take that lightly. So they retaliate." Several of the students in Surrey

also discussed the racial conflict between students that led to a student, Ray Wilson, getting killed when he was accidentally hit by a car. Rani described the incident:

It was few guys, they fought with each other and then it's the Brown people and White people and it was Black person too. The one who died it was the Black person. And I don't know like they didn't really mean to kill him, but by a mistake....They're assuming they fought because of their cultures.

Staff level

Many students did not identify racism at the administration level as a major problem. Most students seemed reluctant to speak about their school administrators. Two students identified the lack of cultural diversity of the staff. Brian, a White male, felt that it did not have to do so much with racism but the diversity of the working population:

The staff, the administration and stuff at school, I guess would mostly be Caucasian people. I don't see that as being because of a racist thing. I just think it's because their generation is mostly Caucasian I suppose because a lot of um families, immigrant families have come during my generation of things."

In contrast, Jason identified the lack of First Nations teachers contributes to lack of understanding of student experiences by teachers. "Because there's not very many First Nations teachers so they have no idea what we're going through. But I know there's some of the Asian, Asian teacher, they kind of understand cause they get a lot of that themselves." Jason's observations point to the need of having a culturally diverse staff, which is crucial for creating an inclusive environment that provides role models for students, enhances education about diverse histories and cultures and promotes and validates differences for all students (Dei et al., 2000, p. 185).

Racism from administrators was experienced by two First Nations students. Shannon stated, "Like the principal was married to a Native man...but I think she was racist right. Like they're very, they'd look at your background and they judged you on your

background rather than who you were." Jason maintained that First Nations students are denied admission to schools and streamed into alternate classes:

I had a friend who was also First Nations ...they didn't let him in because he was just a Native boy...they wouldn't let some other First Nations and some other Métis people and stuff over there...Any First Nations, they were just sent straight to the alternates... cause you know they give like in regular school, they'll give us like reduced work or easy stuff, you know things we can do that they think is our level. But it's usually not.

Studies have shown that one of the greatest barriers to educational equity for racial minority students is the racially biased assessment and streaming into lower level academic programs (Henry et al., 1995, p. 182).

The students' opinions varied more when they talked about racism and their teachers. Some teachers were seen as treating all students equally. Several students such as Shaun stated that teachers are role models for students and should not overtly show their racist feelings, "I guess it's their job that comes along with being a teacher that you have to set a good role model." Other students expressed that some teachers do not care about racism and are invisible to it. A few participants, such as Cindy, spoke about a teacher openly making racist or derogatory remarks:

Actually my drama teacher in grade 8 really ticked me off one day. He was, there was this guy who didn't speak English really well and we were playing...the telephone game...And he's like oh Johnny can't play today because he doesn't speak properly...And I was like whoa, that's not really right.

Direct racism and differential treatment from teachers was experienced by a majority of visible minority students, such as not being allowed to use the washroom during class, while White students are permitted. Teroy described differences in grading, "There's been, there was a teacher at Britannia but I haven't it seemed like she made things hard for all the, those students but the White students. I don't know it's weird." Black

students in Dei's study (1996a) also expressed differential treatment and low expectations from teachers (p. 47). Shannon described not getting support from teachers led to her feeling incompetent and not wanting to continue school:

The teachers were really, really bitchy and they just, they made us do the work. They didn't care if we didn't understand. And if like if we didn't understand, they'd come and sit right next to us. And they'll explain it really, really slow like you're totally stupid and didn't understand....And then when the White kids ask, they put their hands up, our Socials teacher, I forget his name, but he'd like go up to the White kids, he'd sit with them and explain it to them and help them out...It made us feel we didn't need to do the work because we weren't getting the help we needed.

Shannon's experiences have been expressed by other Aboriginal youth. Studies have shown that the lack of support Aboriginal students receive in schools contributes to their high drop-out rates (BC Human Rights Commission, 2001, p. 11).

Curriculum

Some students saw racism exist in their school curriculum and learning resources while others did not. This was not an area of high interest for most of the students. A few participants felt that the curriculum promoted and reflected the diversity in their school and that they learned about the history of racism and First Nations people. In contrast, others were critical of the curriculum. Chand expressed that the curriculum was Eurocentric, Americanized and did not reflect diversity, "They talk about Europeans and stuff like that but if they, like they won all these battles, but they don't talk about any other country except like America. I think they should talk more about other places." Carrie also felt that the curriculum needs to better reflect the multicultural reality. "I think in our curriculum, we should take like maybe a week and do different events....Or teach Japanese art or teach Dutch in the school system, languages, differences."

Personal Experiences with Discrimination

Almost all the 25 participants reported experiencing discrimination due to some personal characteristic, such as their racial background, their actual or perceived sexual orientation, academic achievement, illness, language, accent, religion, disability or age. The three students who did not experience discrimination had witnessed, or knew of, a family member or friend that had. The discrimination ranged from name-calling, stereotypes, differential treatment, harassment, hate graffiti, violence, intimidation and systemic barriers.

Racial discrimination based on skin colour, language, religion or culture was the more predominant experience for the visible minority youth. Raman described that most of the racism, which took the form of name-calling or teasing had a strong impact. "He used to call me a stupid little Hindu all the time and that, you know, hurt my feelings. I used, I cried." For others, such as Sam, a Korean student, it involved intimidation:

One time they throw snow at us...They throw stuff at us and make fun of our language...Like yesterday or today I was walking down the hallway and there was a juice box on the ground. I just ignored and walked away. And juice box was kicked to me, I don't know it's to me or not, but it was kicked, it hit my boot, my feet. I was like. But I didn't even turn around cause I was like, what would they say?...I just walk away.

For a few of the males, such as Jason, the racism involved physical assault:

Well, it was, it sucked. There was some Spanish people and then there was us and that was it. There was just a split group and we were in an alternate class so they figure it was okay to pick on us. And when we fought back, they came back and just beat us all up, White people.

Several youth were also targeted based on more than one ground. Rani, a Sikh student, talked about facing sexism within her family and at school, she was teased

because of her religion and not being able to speak fluent English. Jason identified experiencing discrimination because of his age and race:

When you're in grade eight and you walk where the grade twelve lockers are and you got pushed and you hit the locker...they blatantly said it out loud. Like little innuendos things, like you want some beer or what's up chug and stuff like that.

Teroy expressed that it is unfair that local storeowners' suspect he is stealing from them because he is Black. Carrie was teased from the age of seven to her teenage years because the way she dressed and because she has Diabetes. Age discrimination was another common experience. Brian was frustrated that stereotypes of young people lead to barriers such as being denied jobs, "Trying to get a job is sometimes hard because a lot of people perceive me to be the stereotypical adolescent; rebellious against society....It is hard sometimes when people think that you are a certain way when you're not."

Three male students experienced discrimination because they were perceived to be gay. For two of the males it was name-calling and they were able to shrug it off. However, with James it was more extreme as his locker was repeatedly spray painted with homophobic graffiti:

There's been graffiti on my locker on quite a lot of locker....Just writing, just plain writing, you're gay, you're a faggot, you're this, that.... eggs were being thrown and I saw it, I guess you'd say I ratted and someone hit me with an egg.

James did not directly identify himself as being gay, but spoke about friends who were and issues of sexuality. His silence indicates the challenge that gay youth face when choosing to disclose their sexual orientation for fear of harassment (Rainbow BC, 2000)

Impact

Most youth identified that they were severely impacted by the discrimination they experienced. Carrie expressed being emotionally scarred for life and her past experiences

trigger how she responds to present situations. Other participants identified feeling hurt, afraid, angry, incompetent, uncomfortable and suicidal, which lowered their self-esteem. The Kids Help Phone study (2003) concludes that the mental impact of bullying can lead to more serious emotional and maladaptive behaviour (p. 13). Racism can also be internalized as Jason explained.

It's painful cause I went through it a lot as a kid and I didn't know what it meant and um people call me like a stupid Indian and you know a chug and stuff. I was like okay; I didn't know what it meant. So I just said alright, I guess I am.

Several youth, such as Shaun, recognized that these psychological impacts lead to greater social problems which perpetuate a cycle of oppression and poverty:

People perceive that lots of Black people live in ghettos and that they're really poor....Like people forced them to believe that they're poor and that they're worthless. And if people tell you things enough about yourself or about anything and then you will start believing it cause you have nothing else to believe.

Fleras and Elliott (2003) suggest that powerlessness and internalization of racism is often transferred into self-hatred (p. 176). Jason also spoke about how the legacy of past mistreatment of Aboriginal peoples has led to creating social problems, such as alcoholism and lack of progress:

You know it takes seven generations to change the whole thing now and that whole boarding school stuff....Cause my grandfather is really into drinking and bingo, that's his life. He gets his cheque, he has bingo and he has drinking....Cause there they haven't seen progress....If you're Native, you're poor. You get welfare. You're White, you're rich.

Responses to Incidents

Personal

The most common response to handling discrimination by the participants was to do nothing or ignore the situation. Most youth did not seek help. Some blamed

themselves for the situation. For several participants, such as Rani, the response varied according to the type of perpetrator. She was more comfortable confronting younger children in the community that teased her than peers in her school.

There were marked gender differences in how the students responded. It is concerning that fighting and retaliating were seen as normal and an effective responses by most of the males as Jason noted:

A lot of times it's the only way people will listen to you and you know sometimes you get respect out of it from enemy. If you just sit there and take the hits, they'll just like oh you're just a prawn, we'll keep beating you up. But sometimes if you fight back and you know you're not gonna take this anymore. They'll be like wow, he's um, he'll stand up for himself and let's leave him alone, he's a good guy.

This was also the pattern in research on anti-racism strategies that I had undertaken in 1995 in which most males felt their only option to address their problems was through violence. In contrast, several females, such as Natasha indicated that fighting and retaliating were not effective ways of handling the situation:

I myself think that there's always an answer. Like you really don't need to turn to violence like if you really are having that much trouble, there's always somebody that will listen. Like even if you have to go down to the police and file a complaint...You need to take it as far as possible before you turn to violence.

In the Vancouver focus group, participants identified that while there are gender differences, it does not necessarily mean females will not turn to violence. Natasha expressed that she herself would not turn to violence, but she felt that violence among younger girls had increased. "They're prone to it; they've been introduced to it at a very young age through either television or older siblings or like influences and stuff like that."

Only a few youth sought help or reported their experiences to a teacher, parent or school administrator because the situations would have to have been serious for youth to

report them. Activist youth were not more likely to report incidents. While several participants recognized that retaliating, swearing and ignoring were inappropriate and students should report incidents, it was difficult to report their own situations. Raman explained, "I never told anybody about it cause I didn't want it to be a big issue even though I knew it was something that was supposed to be stopped."

The most common reason youth do not report incidents is fear of being seen as ratting, as Brian stated, "That can sometimes get you into worse trouble than you were before because will make fun of you for telling on them. I mean that sounds so immature but that still happens." Chand added retaliation is another common reason, "But if you ratted on them, then you get picked on even worse because, yeah, you told on them." Incidents were also not reported because the students felt that school staff ignored or did not treat the situation as serious. Similarly, the Safe Schools Task Force (2003) found that some school administrators do not recognize bullying at their schools and are perceived by students as ignoring or rationalizing the bullying (p. 16). James stated, "There's no point telling kids to go to a teacher or adult because they don't really care." Carrie added that the administration discourages reporting by treating the complainant as weak:

I don't feel that they would do anything about it because I've had dealings with them before...So I don't trust those people....administration is kind of like, oh well, if they do it again, come back. Well by the time you do it again, you have nothing left...And that's the way victims feel. I'm not even gonna bother coming...I'm not gonna be waiting. I'm not going to set myself up for that.

Other reasons for not reporting included students feeling that they were a minority and helpless and would not get support from a teacher. Sam, a Korean exchange student indicated that he felt that it is the victim's responsibility to solve their own problem and

not the teachers, parents or administrators. Sam's attitude is consistent with the fear faced by first generation immigrants of calling attention to race issues (Moy, 1996, p. 59).

Several students shared that previous negative responses discouraged them from reporting. James was disappointed by the response of his school counselor and principal when he reported homophobic graffiti on his locker. Not only did the school administration not respond; but they made him clean the graffiti. James described:

I went to go talk to the counsellor. She comes and checks it out....She saw it, she goes oh, just like go get some paper towel from the boys' washroom, get some water, scrub it off, and go to class and you'll be fine...And she did say one time she'll take it to the principal and I guess she didn't get to it. So I guess I wasn't important enough...every time I'd ask and she'd be like oh yeah, I didn't get it to yet...I did tell him that all this stuff is happening to me. He came to me and talked to me about the situation and I don't know if he did anything with that student.

However, unlike the typical student, Jason and other students with the support of First Nations counsellors approached the school board to address the lack of response from the school principal to the violence against First Nations students:

We went right into a Board and mentioned it. We almost got her fired. But then she said that she would expel them.... It felt like our own little battle. We were pretty happy afterwards...A lot of people stood up after that. Um they didn't take racism, cause some teachers over there were like that...We just kind of tackled it and she finally noticed we were serious. We weren't gonna stop at anything.

Confidentiality was another key reason incidents are not reported as it was felt that counsellors reveal information to the administration. Most students were dissatisfied with their counsellors because they were often identified in front of the perpetrators or other classmates as having reported the incident. Shannon, expressed: "Nobody really went to them because the counsellors told the principals everything and they weren't really that confidential, you can't really confide in them." Confidentiality was particularly important to

James, who was perceived to be gay. We discussed options and resources available to him outside of the school system and spoke about the case of Azmi Jubran, because it was similar to his situation in the lack of response from his school:

I'm very comfortable talking to someone even though I don't know you, like you're just this person who's researching that I got told about. But I'm telling you this. It's good that I'm telling people about it. But I wouldn't want it to turn into some kind of public thing. I wouldn't want everybody to have to deal with this. And I guess, it's just respect. I don't mind losing respect but, it's still, I'd kind of want to keep this from happening in the public. That's what is scaring me that everyone that I do like and care about, they'd be like this is happening to me.

Coping Strategies

The most common coping strategy for the students was to ignore the situation. More White students expressed that they were not bothered by the teasing they faced because they had good self-esteem or just brushed it off. Brian expressed that it is more difficult to cope with racism because racial background can not be changed, "It is a little bit easier with age than it is with something like race because you can't really change the fact that you're Chinese or even Korean or Spanish." Several students reported that they ignored the teasing as a survival mechanism. Natasha expressed, "If you took every single word [bitch] like that, you'd never survive." Teroy added he does not want to satisfy his perpetrators by reacting, "I don't really pay attention to it anymore because...they're just trying to provoke my anger...If somebody calls me a nigger, I know that they're just trying to get me mad." Clarke (1996) found that some Black youth cope with racism by developing resilience so the negative experiences will not impact them (p. 149).

Some youth had negative ways of coping. Two First Nations youth reported turning to drugs, smoking, alcohol and violence and dropping out of school because they had no support. Shannon expressed, "I'd just go all the drugs, smoke it to myself, go get

some beer and like sit by myself and be all depressed." Jason added that many First Nations deal with it physically because "That's how they've been dealt with....you know when they were younger and they didn't know, they got beat up." James reported that he had considered suicide as a way of retaliating against his perpetrators:

I was at a point I wasn't major suicidal anymore but I did think about it, it was in my mind....And I would hurt so many people but I was like if I do that I bet you if I did that, if I was suicidal, would they care?....but at that school...nobody cared about me and how it was being done. They'd be like whippity do we'd get a day off to go a funeral.

James and I had a lengthy discussion about his situation. He confirmed that he had considered suicide in the past and after talking to a close friend and from volunteering with the Attorney General's Together Against Violence Program, he recognized suicide was not the right thing to do. We discussed options available to him outside of his school system, including filing a complaint with the Human Rights Commission. I referred James to some community groups that he could turn to for support. James was one of the students keen to continue working with the Commission after the research was completed. I continued to maintain a relationship with James and recommended him to attend a national conference on racism sponsored by Canadian Heritage.

A few participants took positive actions to deal with the situation. Carrie joined a youth action team to share her experiences with discrimination, "And then I got involved on the action committee and that's basically how I really dealt with it, was to tell other people my story. Look you're hurting people." Some increased their self-esteem, gained confidence and stood up to their perpetrators.

Support Networks

Friends were the first people most of the participants turn to for help. Carl stated "It's important to have a good friend, you need a good friend." Friends were also important as back-up in fights, as Carrie explained, "It's like the more back-up you get, the better social status you have." Some turned to their parents for help and support. Several students, such as Chand, indicated that they would turn to family and siblings for support:

I'd probably turn to my chacha [uncle] because I know that, my chacha and my dad... They've been through it already once...I think East Indians got a lot of reputation in the school because of our uncles and our, most of the people, guys that went to these school and stuck up for themselves against White people and racism...It's better because they stuck up for themselves which we do now but we don't have to do it as much as they did....like we don't have to walk around with guns in our backs and stuff like that.

Parents, family and peers provided the greatest support to Black youth in Clarke's (1996) study as well (p. 148). However, some participants reported they would not turn to their parents because they did not want them to find out in case they were overly protective. A few students indicated that they would turn to a teacher they trusted or a school counsellor. Several students recommended that youth need to have a place they can turn to for support, such as a counsellor or youth support group.

Responses from School Staff

Teacher responses to situations ranged from immediate intervention as Dean stated, "There are a couple of teachers...they'll say I never want hear that again or you're suspended," to those where teachers "are really scared and then there's ones that practically do it themselves." Many, such as James, felt that most teachers ignore the situation and turn a blind eye to it.

I think the way I see it is that just right now they don't care about the students as much as they should.... I know people do graffiti on the wall,

saying you're gay, teachers would just go oh, I can't believe some student did that, oh well, walk away.

Participants felt that teachers did not respond because they were afraid or did not know how. This perception of students is supported by teacher reports to the Safe Schools Task Force (2003) which states that teachers often feel uncomfortable addressing incidents of homophobia because they do not know how to respond effectively (p. 19). Other students indicated teachers assess the seriousness of a situation before intervening.

The most effective response by teachers was direct, immediate intervention that conveyed zero tolerance for discrimination. Shaun noted, "What usually happens is that they just tell them to stop...or they just ignore it....What I think should happen is that that shouldn't like got tolerated at all. There shouldn't be like one chance for them." Rani added that it is a teacher's responsibility to be more proactive in preventing situations:

In class, it's like some peoples are Black and some peoples are White and they like they hate each other and that way they started fighting after school...If teachers can see that right away then they could, she could solve right away what happens to them right?....It's teacher's responsibility to do that.

Students had less to say about responses from their administrators. Many, such as Carrie, suggested that administrators do not address incidents and refer students to the counsellor or teachers:

The office administration, like the vice-principal or principals have no clue whatsoever because they throw them out there. They expect the teachers to, you know, take over....I would say honestly if someone did go to the office and be I'm getting bullied because of my race...I think what they would do is be like well go to the counsellor and talk to them about it.

The participants felt that it is important for administrators to implement and enforce policies and to be proactive in identifying and addressing violence and harassment, which they felt has a positive impact in their schools.

Counsellors were seen as an important resource for youth to turn to. Brian noted: "There has to be a place like the school counsellor somebody that they... I think that it's important that these people who don't have their parents to talk to have somebody else that they feel just as safe talking to." However, most participants such as James felt their counsellors were ineffective in handling their situations:

She made some suggestion that did not work. She just kept going use the 'I sentences' which we thought were very stupid. And one time someone just like said something that I thought, I was very very mad about what they said. So I go 'you know what I feel this' and they just started cracking and laughing at me. And I felt so embarrassed that the guy was laughing.

Several students in the Surrey focus group concurred this was similar to their experience with counsellors. It is important for counsellors to recognize that suggestions such as using 'I statements' to express impact may work well in theory or in adult settings. Based on the students' responses, it is evident such suggestions are not as effective and appropriate in youth's lives and lead to further harassment.

Student Bystanders

The participants identified the role of student bystanders as being significant in incidents of discrimination. As Brian noted, when incidents occur, most students ignore the situation, "People usually just walk by cause they don't really want to get involved in something like that." However, many participants recognized the student bystanders played a crucial role in encouraging incidents by watching them as Jas stated it, "Gives the person doing it more confidence to do it to get a laugh for it." Some students were seen to only intervene if the target is a friend or of the same race. A few activists youth, such as Natasha, expressed that both her and her friends would intervene.

My friends care about a lot. They think it's very wrong. They don't like it at all when they see it, they're like the racism patrol; they go around telling

people not to do that. They're the discrimination patrol. They don't like any discrimination whatsoever.

The main reasons students do not intervene are because they fear retaliation and will also be targeted or beat up nor do they want the stress of dealing with other's problems. The Safe School Task Force (2003) referred to this fear of retribution as the code of silence among students, which is an unwritten form of discipline that every student understands (p. 22). Nevertheless, the participants felt that support and intervention by students is crucial in addressing problems. Alisha stated, "That would help a lot more too if the rest of the kids around just stopped and said don't do that." Carrie added, "One day we're all going to be in a situation where we need help and we need a hand."

The participants felt that everyone was responsible for addressing racism and discrimination, including youth, school staff, administration, government, police and community leaders. Shannon spoke passionately about government responses:

They're the government, they're in charge of people and they should be taking responsible for everything...they have to look at every problem that Canada has....And break it down into what is causing the problems in society.

James identified the need for an agency with power to stop the discrimination and a safe place for youth to turn to:

But I feel in my personal in my feeling that I want to talk to someone... It's not more like talking about, getting it out, just having fun. I think those kind of groups it's just making you feel welcome and respect, as for talking about somebody stopping... Someone like you yes, but not someone like my counsellor...I think we should have people that do go by the law being teacher and have a board that stop it. Someone from human rights should be at a school every day and stop what's going on.

The responses from the participants clearly convey that direct and immediate intervention is needed in situations of discrimination. It is of great concern that most students do not feel that there are adequate support networks within their schools and

communities to help them deal with their situations. The students' frustrations with responses also indicate that students are often just looking for some understanding and validation of their experiences. While, it is clear that students see the role of counselors, teachers and administrators as important to turn to for support, they do not feel that they will provide an effective response. Youth either turn to their friends or parents for support or will most likely ignore the situation. This indicates a need for increased school staff training of how to respond to situations. There is also a clear call for other students to be more responsive in situations. The next chapter looks at the student's perspectives on how they felt youth can be reached more effectively in addressing racism and discrimination.

CHAPTER 6 – DATA ANALYSIS – STRATEGIES

Strategies to Address Racism and Discrimination

This chapter starts by looking at what the participants identified their schools and communities were already doing to address racism and discrimination. This leads into a discussion of the role of youth and an explanation of why all youth do not get involved in school and communities activities. A summary of the participant's suggestions for effective strategies and campaign ideas to effectively reach youth is then presented. I conclude by providing students' perspectives on specific communication methods often used to reach youth.

Existing Efforts by Schools and Communities

While for the most part the students felt their schools were not doing enough to address racism and discrimination, several students provided examples of successful programs their schools had implemented to work towards creating safer school environments. For example, in Pitt Meadows, the students spoke about how presentations from their Student Action Team in their English classes have made students more aware of the derogatory language they use. In Vancouver, students at Templeton Secondary School spoke highly about a play called 'Beat Me Up Please' which used comedy and satire to educate students about the behaviour of bullies and the impact of their actions on their victims. In Vernon, students spoke about their community based RAD (Reaching Across Difference) youth group, which tours elementary schools and community centres to increase awareness of racism and other forms of discrimination. Several students also commended the efforts of certain teachers in their school for their constant vigilance and

recognized the challenges they face when they do not get support from their colleagues and students.

However, the problem was that there was no consistency across communities or within school districts in the efforts being undertaken to work towards preventing racism and discrimination. Students at one school within a school district felt that for the most part their school was trying, whereas students at another school felt their school was not doing enough. Students who saw their schools as taking proactive measures to address the problem felt the efforts had had the impact of conveying the message that racism and discrimination are not tolerated. In contrast, students who did not see their schools taking steps to address the problem were more frustrated and critical of their staff and administration.

Several students felt that previous high-profile tragic incidents of suicide or racial violence led to their schools becoming more proactive in addressing issues of discrimination and bullying as Natasha expressed.

I think they got more involved. They had to especially when the not so you know the murders and suicides started happening the kids that were being teased and stuff like that....So teachers started you know being more vocal...teaching more acceptance.

Brian agreed that his schools efforts of holding educational sessions helped increase awareness of the issues for students like him.

All the time in assemblies and things that we have, there are anti-bullying comments and people come in and if you're being bullied call this number...I think it's really had a positive impact and it's gone down....It raised awareness of it if nothing else. I mean, I was, I guess I've led a bit of a charmed life. I mean, until a few years ago, I always thought that racism was something that happened somewhere else like in the States or not here...But now of course I think that it does happen.

Many students felt that their school needed to be doing more as Carl emphasized, "It needs to be addressed better, lots of people; everyone needs to know what's going on. Everyone has to care." Several younger students also felt that their elementary schools did more than their secondary schools to promote multiculturalism and acceptance. The most common activity students reported being implemented in schools were assemblies at the start of the school year on zero tolerance to harassment and violence, guest speakers, posters, plays, youth lead presentations and multicultural celebrations.

Some students, such as Jas, felt that while their schools were trying to address the problems, they were not using the right strategies to reach youth:

It's not getting to the people, they're, all they just get is people to do it, dances or whatever and that's not really doing anything. And they just hand out pins saying stop racism. They're not actually telling what to do or how its, what's going on with it.

Cindy also noted that schools use of the same strategies has desensitized students to the message. She urged schools to address the issues on an ongoing basis:

We get the same talk every year...And people are just after a while it's just routine to hear it and people don't, I don't think it actually sinks. They're just like oh yeah whatever, we won't be racist and that....We've been hearing it especially in Vancouver...all our lives...People don't address the daily issues...They need to be addressed.

Other than the few students who were involved in activities within their community, such as volunteering for the Attorney General's Taking a Stand Program Against Violence or the Vernon youth group, none of the other students were aware of anti-racism/discrimination activities within their communities. This lack of awareness indicates a gap in the connection between community organizations and schools whereas I am familiar with several efforts undertaken by agencies within these communities to address racism and discrimination.

Role of Youth

All the participants felt that it was important for youth to be involved in addressing racism because young people have a greater impact in reaching their peers whereas adults were seen as authorizing youth. Meghan stated, "No one's going to listen to adults like if it's peers...It's like they're the cool older kids, they're gonna listen." Youth were also seen as important for shaping the future as Natasha expressed:

Children are going to be here for a while longer. So if you teach racism to us, once the adults are gone, we're going to be the adults and we're gonna keep passing racism along. But if you eliminate racism as children as we're older you're never gonna teach it to your children.

Shaun spoke about the need to challenge stereotypes of youth being racist, violent and apathetic. Jason stated youth have a greater impact because they are direct and honest:

Everybody listens to youth...99 per cent it's for real, we're all really talking, you know it's us, not what people want to hear, it's the cold hard truth. And the other one per cent has to be what everyone wants to hear otherwise the bigger people won't listen.

Brian suggested that the main role youth can play is to take a stand against discrimination and discuss the issues with their friends and siblings:

Well I mean even if you take it with you to your little circle of friends and if you ever see racism, just kind of say hey, that's not good....And if you can do it like that, just get rid of it in little social groups like that, it'll slowly start to die off.

Shaun called for making discrimination unacceptable within teen peer groups. Other roles for youth included: becoming involved in multicultural and anti-racism activities, supporting and helping victims and finding out about resources that are available to determine how to respond to and report incidents.

Reasons Youth Do Not Get Involved

The reasons the participants identified that young people do not get involved in activities are because: they are lazy, see it as a waste of their time, do not care or do not want to put in the effort. Some students also felt that youth want to fit in and are concerned about what their peers think and want to be seen as cool. Others felt that youth do not get involved because they are afraid of letting people know about their issues or retaliation from their perpetrators if as Shaun stated "what other people will think and what their attackers or bullies will do like if they try and, if they try and stop them." Teroy expressed that he does not get involved because he does not feel responsible:

I should probably do some stuff like that but I don't really have time. I probably could make time to do stuff but I'm not really that kind. Like I'm not a bully and I'm not being bully. So I don't really need to do anything about it.

These reasons provided by the participants are similar to those expressed by student activists in Moy's study (1996) who were frustrated when they met with opposition, lack of concern and apathy about racism from the larger student population. A few students attributed the lack of involvement to family background and lack of parental involvement in youth's lives. Natasha stated that not all youth are committed to the same issues, "They don't feel passionately about [racism] so they may feel passionate about saving the rainforests right." Participants also felt that youth do not get involved because they have never experienced discrimination and do not understand it.

Reasons for Youth Involvement

In contrast, Raman felt people who have experienced racism are more likely to get involved or take interest, "Some that do participate obviously know the feeling you know." Three of the five participants who were highly active in diversity activities got involved

because of their personal experiences with discrimination. Carrie explained she got involved as a way of coping and wanted to reach others about her experiences, "I got tired of putting up with people treating me like crap, like I, my, younger my childhood's like, you know, everyone always made fun of me." Carl got involved because of the impact on him of high profile tragedies associated with bullying:

It's like that little boy that killed himself, jumped off the bridge and stuff like that...I hate seeing people that are getting made fun of...I hate seeing people kill themselves. I hate seeing this bad stuff all over the news...We need to change it.

Jason got involved to change his personal coping strategy from being violent to taking political action:

I'm a big guy so I used to just beat them up. But I found that I kind of got, kind of my own reputation so I was like the drunken crazy Native. And that didn't work with me so I kinda went political for a while. And, I just I fought it like in the office, on paper, anything I could....I went to racist marches and stuff. Like on walks against racism.

Past personal experiences with racism were also the motivating factors for involvement in multicultural/anti-racist activities for all the students in Moy's (1996) study. Other youth participants got involved in activities for incentives or personal benefits, such as course credits or gaining work experience or expressing their voices and ideas. I found that gender did not play a significant role in the level of involvement although in my professional experience I have found that more females tend to be involved in volunteer activities. In activities addressing discrimination, more visible minorities were involved at a high level. However it is hard to determine whether racial background played a role as there were more visible minorities who participated in the research and almost an equal number of Whites and non-Whites involved at a mid level.

Suggestions for Effective Strategies

Throughout the interviews a number of strategies were identified that were seen as effective in reaching youth. Several participants stressed that while discrimination can not be prevented, it was still important to educate people and that there has to be consequences. Brian emphasized the importance of preventing discrimination:

I think prevention is better than cure. So if you can stop it from happening in the first place. You don't have to worry how you're gonna deal with it once it starts. So I would focus on trying to make people more aware.

I have presented the youth's suggestions in order of the responses they received:

- Reach youth with impact of discrimination

There was overwhelming consensus among the participants that the most effective way of reaching youth was to educate or increase their understanding about the impact or consequences of discrimination. Carl emphasized shocking the students into realizing the impact of their actions, "Be like talked to by a person that you also by suicide patients... That would probably wake them up...Does it take somebody to die to deal with this?"

The majority of existing campaigns that showed the impact or consequences of the social problem received positive feedback from youth and led to in-depth discussions in the focus groups about the messages and images. Examples of such campaigns¹⁷ were the sexual exploitation posters developed by the Provincial Prostitution Unit, which show black and white images of teenagers lured into the sex trade industry with the message 'Sex is Being Bought from a Child Right Now, It's Child Abuse'. The participants felt that the posters were powerful because they are realistic and made them think about the teen's situations. The other campaigns that the youth identified as being strong in conveying impact were the Anti-Violence poster series developed by the Maple Ridge

¹⁷ Full descriptions of these campaigns are provided in Appendix # 5.

School District, the Racism Leaves Scars posters series and the Critics Choice anti-tobacco commercials. The poster that received the greatest consensus from the youth as being powerful was the ‘Poster Child’ anti-tobacco poster (shown below) because it did not glamourize the consequences of smoking.

Figure 1 – Poster Child

TOBACCO INDUSTRY'S Poster Child

**EIGHTY-FIVE PER CENT OF SMOKERS START BEFORE THEIR 16TH BIRTHDAY.
DON'T BECOME A TOBACCO INDUSTRY POSTER CHILD.**

ADDICTION
Nicotine is addictive. It's a powerful drug that can be as addictive as heroin and alters how you think and feel.

WRINKLES
Smoking increases blood flow to the skin (the "flush" in "flushing" looking nice, and increased wrinkling).

CATARACTS
The more you smoke, the greater your chance of cataracts – an eye condition that can cause blindness. You have a 25% greater risk of cataracts if you smoke 10 or more cigarettes a day.

MOUTH CANCERS
Smoking is the main cause of oral cancer. It's also a major cause of throat cancer. Smoking causes a bad taste in your mouth, a hoarse voice, and a higher chance of gum disease – and it's cancer-causing.

SKIN DAMAGE
The more you smoke, the more your skin will wrinkle and age prematurely.

THROAT CANCER
Four out of every five cases of cancer of the larynx and pharynx are caused by smoking. The risk of throat cancer is 10 times higher for smokers than for non-smokers.

PSORIASIS
Smoking can lead to psoriasis, an autoimmune disease that causes red, itchy patches on your skin.

HEART DISEASE
Smoking is a major cause of heart disease. It's a leading cause of stroke. Smoking causes a 25% increase in heart disease risk. Smoking also causes a 25% increase in heart disease risk. Smoking also causes a 25% increase in heart disease risk.

LUNG DISEASE
If you smoke, you're at least 10 times more likely to die of lung cancer. Smoking causes 85% of lung cancer. Smoking also causes a 25% increase in lung cancer risk. Smoking also causes a 25% increase in lung cancer risk.

STOMACH ULCERS
Smoking can lead to stomach ulcers. You don't feel as bad as you think, and there's even blood in your stool. There's also a higher chance of stomach cancer if you smoke.

ADDICTION
Nicotine is addictive. It's a powerful drug that can be as addictive as heroin and alters how you think and feel.

WRINKLES
Smoking increases blood flow to the skin (the "flush" in "flushing" looking nice, and increased wrinkling).

CATARACTS
The more you smoke, the greater your chance of cataracts – an eye condition that can cause blindness. You have a 25% greater risk of cataracts if you smoke 10 or more cigarettes a day.

MOUTH CANCERS
Smoking is the main cause of oral cancer. It's also a major cause of throat cancer. Smoking causes a bad taste in your mouth, a hoarse voice, and a higher chance of gum disease – and it's cancer-causing.

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LUNG DISEASE
If you smoke, you're at least 10 times more likely to die of lung cancer. Smoking causes 85% of lung cancer. Smoking also causes a 25% increase in lung cancer risk. Smoking also causes a 25% increase in lung cancer risk.

STOMACH ULCERS
Smoking can lead to stomach ulcers. You don't feel as bad as you think, and there's even blood in your stool. There's also a higher chance of stomach cancer if you smoke.

www.tobaccofacts.org

Students found this poster to be powerful because it shows the graphic consequences of smoking. Developed by the BC Ministry of Health. Used with permission of the BC Intellectual Property Branch.

- Make it Experiential

Presenting youth with real situations of discrimination was identified as a powerful way to make youth experience what the victim feels. This was most common message in the youth's campaign ideas. Carl's suggestion was to present the impact on people and the tragedies caused by discrimination:

Make them want to change themselves....I'd go give a 100 per cent like the whole way through and then like everything has to be powerful....You know, don't soften it for people...Just don't be like racism is bad...Be like racism is a big part of our life. People are dying cause of it... I mean make it, put them in the shoes of the person's family.

Many participants, such as Sam, agreed that putting people in the victim's shoes works, "Put them into minority go to China or let them know what the racism is so they won't...Just all like Black hair, yellow, he's the only White guy." Several students related this suggestion to the Live Violence Free commercial on racism which they felt was effective because it made them personalize the message and feel the victim's pain as Cindy explained:

The one where there's sort of like a person walking through and they're just yelling at the end saying go away blah, blah, blah. And then they're like this is seven seconds of racism, imagine what your whole life would be like. I really liked that one....Because you actually got to be the person being yelled; um you weren't just watching it.

- Start Early and Get Parental involvement

Reaching youth at a young age before they shape their views and behaviour was seen as crucial by many youth, as Brian explained:

I think when people are really young, that's when that's when they can, their opinions and things can be influenced the most. And even once you reach my age, it's almost too late for you to start changing. I mean you can always change the way you think. But you can once you're programmed to think a certain way, you're not going to change so much.

Brian also stressed reaching children through their parents, as upbringing was seen as one of the key causes of discrimination. Carrie agreed that educating parents is also necessary

because racism was learned behaviour, "You can deal with the kids, but the parents are the one that are gonna make a difference. They're teaching the children." The importance of parental involvement was also stressed as it is hard for teachers to change children's beliefs that are taught in the home.

- Youth Led and Involved

As outlined earlier, the participants felt it was crucial for messages to come directly from youth as Tara described there is greater impact.

I think it really has to come from your peer group, like people who you like trust....If you discuss things and you say your point of view...And you like share them with your friends...They sort of listen a bit more....people respect their friends' views a lot more than they do if their teachers did it.

The participants also felt it was important for activities to involve youth, such as youth led interactive workshops or theatre presentations.

- Zero Tolerance and Discipline

The youth varied on how effective discipline was. Several youth felt that having severe consequences or discipline was important in communicating zero tolerance of discrimination as Mia stated, "Telling them, reminding them constantly that it's not accepted and bringing down really, really hard consequences if you do it." Several participants strongly stressed that with perpetrators the only way to reach them or make them stop was through discipline and zero tolerance. Arun explained, "Basically I think the only thing they can do in my school for racism is that if you're caught, you're expelled."

However the majority of students felt that discipline such as detention is not effective because there are no consequences for the perpetrator as Carl stressed, "They'll get suspended; maybe they'd get a detention. But that's not a big deal. You get garbage duty for 15 minutes." Carrie added that suspensions are ineffective because they do not teach

the perpetrator what they did was wrong and are sometimes seen positively because the perpetrator gets the day off school. Instead, she felt perpetrators need consequences, such as taking away their privileges. She proposed working with the perpetrators to make them understand the impact of their actions and to understand their issues. Many students, parents and teachers also identified to the Safe School Task Force that zero tolerance and discipline were not effective measures as they ignore the potential to modify behaviours.

- **Mandatory Programs**

Several youth recommended that anti-racism education should be mandatory, either through curriculum or through programs like CAPP (Career and Personal Planning). Chand proposed, "Setting up like a class, an actual course, that you have to take it mandatory, as in CAPP....Because how are people going to know if they're not told or taught about stuff like that." Alisha agreed the information must be part of the curriculum:

Kids don't really have an understanding cause from the beginning of time when you start school, the first things you're taught are Math, the globe, things like that. Nobody's taught, where all these people come from, how all these people are wonderful people, how some people like the same sex and how different things like that happen. And those things aren't taught, nobody teaches you to love, like how to be all this one person.

Jas recommended volunteering in anti-discrimination activities as a graduation prerequisite. In their campaign ideas, several youth stated that for their ideas to work they must be made mandatory and integrated into school programs such as CAPP, which many saw as important and helpful. This is contrary to recent changes by the BC Ministry of Education in which the CAPP program was cut because it was seen to not be working by recent graduates (Blais, 2002, p. 3).

Other suggestions provided by the youth for effective strategies included:

- Presenting messages indirectly through fun and youth appealing activities, such as dances, sports activities or as subliminal messages in commercials. Youth can also be attracted by getting their friends to attend.
- Making messages a part of a long-term, ongoing strategy and not just a one shot approach as Dean stressed:

Those little 30 seconds messages on helping...If they're not brought up with, like with racism all their life, they're not going to change in 45 minutes, you'd have to do like another 20 years of something else to get them to change their lives...It'd have to be progressive, you couldn't just do it right away."

- Using celebrities, such as athletes, actors or musicians as a way of attracting some teenagers. However, other participants, such as Natasha, disagreed and felt that messages from celebrities can be "fake" and "hypocritical."
- Using new and innovative ideas so that youth do not become desensitized or bored as Brian stated, "People are like it's just another poster, it's just another assembly. You kind of have to keep it new; you have to have new things."
- Using images that are clear and realistic to portray situations of racism. Several participants felt that the racism is not clear in one of the Racism Leaves Scars posters in which a Native student is being ostracized by a group of students of various racial backgrounds, including some who look Native. The students recommended that the perpetrators should be of a racial background different from the target for youth to see the problem.
- Sending the messages through the use of simple symbols and images such as the Racism Stop It hand symbol and the BC Human Rights Commission's Together for Equality hand poster, pictured on the next page.

Figure 2 – Together for Equality Poster



*Youth liked this poster because the image and message were strong, simple and clear.
Source: Created by the BC Human Rights Commission (2000).
Copyright unknown, according to BC Intellectual Property Branch (July 23, 2003).*

Suggestions for Effective Messaging

Positive vs. Negative Messaging

In the focus group, the youth were shown samples of different messaging, ranging from positive to negative messages. Some youth felt that positive, celebratory messages of people happy and getting along work better for young children. Others noted that using positive images of cute children is effective because everyone connects to children. The participants also indicated multicultural images of children demonstrate that children do not care about racism and that racism is learned behaviour. A few participants felt it was important to use positive messages to counter the negativity youth are exposed to.

However, most of the participants felt positive messages do not work for youth in grade six and above. Some youth, such as Cindy, indicated that positive happy messages do not impact them. "If they're too smiley and happy, they don't have an effect on me

personally." Many also felt that positive messages do not work because they mask the problem rather than addressing racism.

Negative, hard hitting and shocking messages were seen as more effective because they capture the reality of the situation and show the impact on a person. The youth felt negative messages make people empathize with the victim and want to take action. In particular many connected to a poster on violence developed by Maple Ridge youth that shows impact of put-downs on a student. Cindy noted, "I think they're really powerful because they sort of show the person in pain so you sympathize with that person and you don't want that kind of thing to happen." Others, such as Amy, felt that anti-discrimination messages should use fear tactics like the Critics Choice anti-smoking commercials to "show how it really is." Alisha stated it is important to make people aware of the negative impact because "people already know the positive sides but some people don't really know the negative sides."

The youth also identified the following types of messages that work in reaching youth, presented in order of the support they received:

- Make it Realistic, Direct, Use Shock

The messaging must be realistic and show the most serious situations as the students in the Pitt Meadows focus group expressed. "The message has to be real. Tell me exactly what you're thinking. It's like saying racism is not that bad, but it is bad. Look, racism is a problem. We have to do something about it." The message should be direct, open and honest, Shaun explained "not necessarily being unshy but just like saying what's on your mind, and not hiding anything." Natasha added the importance of showing the reality "makes [youth] have to think about it." The use of shock and real language were

also seen as powerful. This was the case with one of the Live Violence Free anti-racism commercials which ends with a man swearing at the other driver and saying, 'can't you people drive.' Chand's reaction was "That was awesome. Yeah, I love when he swears. That was pretty messed up...Yeah, it gets kids hyped up, like that guy swore on TV."

However, it is important to point out that the youth did not take well to the use of all shock and derogatory language. This was the case of the poster developed by the Equal Opportunity Commission in Victoria, Australia with the message, 'There Should be a Law To Deal With All You Dykes and Faggots. There is: It Protects You From this Kind of Attitude.' While many of the youth thought the message was realistic, powerful and catchy, they felt that it would not work because students would not read the latter part of the message, but use the message to harass students. Many also thought the poster was offensive and hurtful towards people who are gay or perceived to be gay.

- Use of Humour

Most youth suggested using humour to attract youth because as Brian stated, "humour sells," and people remember funny commercials. However, Natasha identified that the challenge with using humour is making people realize what is "supposed to be funny and this is what isn't supposed to be funny....people are going think it's all funny." The youth also conveyed that the humour has to be appropriate and something they connect with. For example, I showed them a poster on sexual harassment that shows the chest of a woman in a business suit with the message 'Know Someone Who Thinks This is Eye Contact.' Several of the youth said that the message was more appropriate for older people as it involved workplace situations.

- Don't Be Fake and Don't Be Cheesy

Several participants used the term 'cheese' to describe some campaigns, which Natasha defined as messages that were too simple and fake:

Cheese. I hate after school specials, they really bother me because they really think that we're gonna sit there and say wow that really got to me...they're just like, don't discriminate...some people like that, some people don't. I don't like cheese.

Others identified that they did not like it when images or messages seem fake or contrived. They related this to the Together Today campaign in which a student with disabilities is high fiving a skateboarder. However, participants that had worked with people with disabilities disagreed and felt the poster was accurate in conveying their behaviour. The Living in Harmony TV commercials with images of multicultural children and an endorsement from then BC Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism received the strongest negative reaction from the students. The students saw the poster as being fake and politically motivated. Their reaction strongly indicated the importance of being direct with youth about the objectives of a campaign because they see through hidden agendas.

Other suggestions for effective messages included:

- Don't preach. Young people do not like to be told what to do. Carrie stated it is better to present youth with a choice that makes them feel it was their decision and makes them feel empowered and rewarded.
- Slogans should also be strong, catchy, clear and easy to remember. Carrie gave the example of the BC Human Rights Commission's YOUth Act Now Against Discrimination campaign.

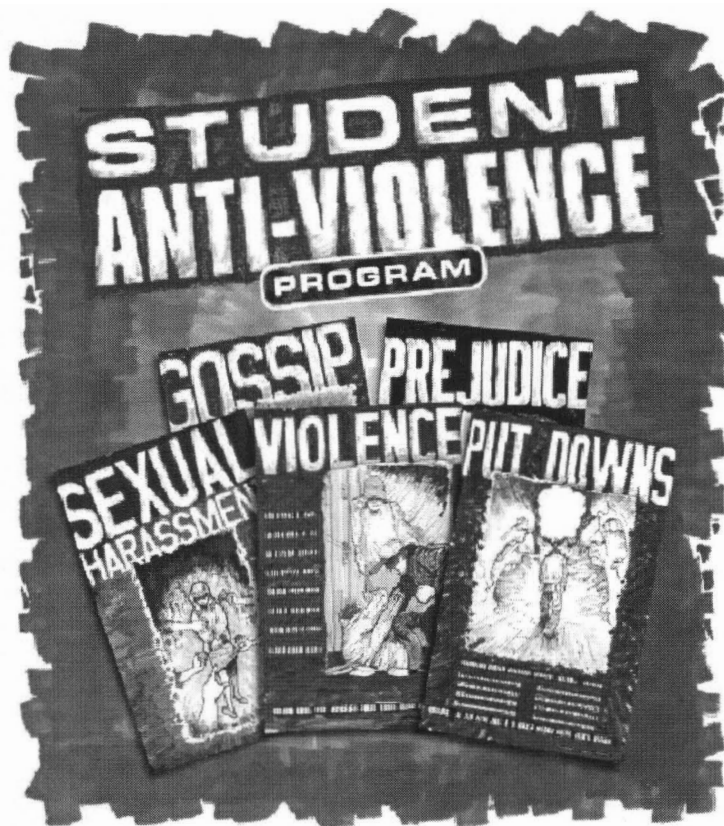
Like YOUth in Action with the big YOU, that it kind of stands out for people ...People still see it as youth but it makes them feel like they're taking a part of them and doing it themselves...And catchy lines like that make people understand, make people realize that you know, I can make a difference ...it makes them feel like they have power.

The use of statistics was also seen as powerful in presenting youth with the reasons why racism should be stopped as Carl pointed out:

Probably statistics, of how many people were killed each year because of racism and stuff like that...Racism needs to be stopped...It's just that the little facts that's always said. We need to come up with new things. We need to lay the facts down.

Include a message of prevention because it is important to provide youth with ideas on how to address the situation, as Natasha stated, "Teenagers need to see things they can do so they want to help....If you bring it out to them that they could change something, they probably would." The participants related their feedback to the poster series on violence, shown on the following page, which includes an image followed by words like Put Downs, Prejudice or Violence. The youth felt a weakness was that the posters left them unaware of what actions they could take.

Figure 3 – Student Anti-Violence Posters



These posters were seen as powerful but needed a message of prevention. Used with permission of School District # 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows).

Reaching the Hard to Reach

Most participants recognized that it is not possible to reach all youth, in particular the perpetrators. Carl stated, "You can't really reach some people. You can try, but you can't really." Brian added that reaching the perpetrators is the hardest because they are not willing to change or receptive to the message:

That's gonna be the hard part, is actually reaching the ones who are the biggest problem...People with that kind of personality are usually not responsive to being talked to somebody in an assembly or even other youth...They don't usually want to change because that's the way they are.

Natasha stated that the challenge is that you cannot force people to not be racist. Jason identified that there is a percentage of the population that can not be reached:

Well about 30 per cent of the people will take some time, but you can talk to them and they will stop after a while. But there's some people that won't let listen at all. It's just violence is the only way they'll listen...Those people they're going to have to learn themselves....not unless they're dead.

The youth identified important principles in social issues communication referred to as targeting and segmentation, in which diverse audiences are divided into segments for targeted and concentrated communication (Laba et al., 1993, p. 14).

All the participants had a hard time identifying strategies for youth that are difficult to reach. I found that the activist youth had more insight into this being a problem. Brian identified the importance of reaching the perpetrators:

Reaching the actual people who are most responsible is going to be the hardest thing to do because it's easy to reach the people who have already been reached that's because they're willing to accept...It's important to change those people because those are the ones who are the most discriminatory and are the worst cause of the problems. So it's kind of a big paradox thing.

Making perpetrators feel the impact and putting them in the victim's shoes was seen as the most powerful way of reaching perpetrators. As Carl stated, "The best way to reach

those kind of people is telling them, like go put them in the shoes of parents of people that kill themselves, stuff like that, you know." Teroy added that "Seeing the results of what they do to people...cause they don't think anything's wrong with it." Others, such as Jas, thought the only way of reaching these youth was through mandatory class projects or giving incentives like course credit or money.

Campaign Ideas

While it was challenging for youth to come up with ideas on the spot, I was impressed with their ideas. The most common idea was portraying real life situations using role plays or public service announcements. I found the activists' ideas more detailed, developed and often already being implemented. An example is the idea presented by activist Carrie, which is similar to the Student Action Team she is a part of:

I would organize something in the classroom, something directly where like homeroom presentation because it's a smaller and concentrated group of people that are the same age and that are really they have to listen. They don't have the choice to listen. But it also it has to be fun in a homeroom class...Something where they get very interactive and maybe some role-play definitely because there's when people have to act out what they do, they realize more because they're reading it, they're saying it and they're going but I don't, but actually I do say that. And it reaches them deeper.

In contrast I found the ideas of those who were not involved often more basic, direct and innovative. For example, Tara presented a similar idea to Carrie, but it is to the point:

Maybe like a skit or something like that...Just an everyday situation that anyone could relate to and sort of incorporate your point of view into it and show them what they're doing is sort of affecting someone.

Developing public service announcements was the most common idea the participants presented. Their ideas were thoughtful, reflected their reality and showed the impact of discrimination as demonstrated by the youth in the Vernon focus group:

We want to do a TV commercial, set in a high school where this kid is walking down the hallway...You know how you can't walk five feet without hearing a derogatory term or anything like that. So we wanted to do it like slow motion and be like this is 30 seconds or one minute of racial name-calling....And then it shows this kid on the outside looking in at all these different groups and all these different scenarios that are happening and this is just like in a small time frame. And you show the afterthought and how after that person felt and after seeing their faces and seeing how they feel.

Several males, such as Huang, used sport scenarios because they are realistic and simple:

We can make the PSA...like two Caucasian guy playing hockey in tennis court...There's one Chinese guy and one Black guy walk by. They were playing hockey right and this guy was asking for 'can I play,' right. And this hockey players 'you guys not in your sport because this is our sport, Canadian sport.' And then when they walk by this White guy see these people, these two guys like playing soccer or whatever and see that's they're very good, invited them....It real, yeah it's realistic, pretty simple too. Good message.

A common theme is these ideas use personal narratives to show the impact of racism and discrimination.

The Pitt Meadows focus group suggested implementing activities that promote cross cultural interaction during CAPP class as a way of ensuring everyone participates:

Like ESL. It's just straight ESL class. Like how the Asians are always like a minority. Like we should mix it up a bit, with the majority. Have a class like that and like play a game and like do something fun that makes everyone, like interact together.

Other ideas included: organizing a youth support group, an anti-racism dance, research projects, a First Nations clothing line, an anti-racism week, diversity training for teachers, petitions and marches.

Challenges to Addressing Discrimination

Some of the more active youth identified challenges in addressing discrimination in their schools. Carrie pointed out a key challenge is getting youth participation because only the converted or those already active get involved:

The problem is that there are so many people, you can only get the willing...There's like six, seven per cent of the population that would actually show up and get something out of it. You know there are so many people that don't have the time or don't want to.

Another challenge Carrie identified is that youth who do presentation in front of their peers open themselves to be targeted. "You know how hard it is to go and do a class of your peers and say like what you're doing is wrong. It's like, I hope they don't make fun of me tomorrow. But you kind of take that risk, right." Michelle and Carrie also identified getting teacher commitment is tough as they felt "[teachers] only do it if they have to do as 'it's taking out of their prep time."

A Vernon youth who was involved in an anti-discrimination youth group identified that her school, school board and some parents put up barriers to addressing issues such as homosexuality:

In our school you're not allowed...they won't let people talk about AIDS prevention because it promotes sex or homosexuality or something...But it's also mostly parents, maybe one or two parents instead of four or five. So it's one of those areas that considered controversial and...It's not just the school, it's like the school board, we'd have to and fight with the school board and the safe school people and the student voice. We would have to go through many people.

Student activists in Moy's study (1996) also expressed that one of their greatest frustrations was going through bureaucratic and hierarchical approval processes for permission to implement their ideas. Several Vernon youth also identified that some of their teachers are not allowed to address 'controversial' issues such as homosexuality. This barrier was also identified by teachers who reported to the Safe School Task Force (2003) that they face resistance from the school board, other staff, parents and student when they try to address issues of homophobia.

Methods

This section presents the youth's perspectives on commonly used methods to address racism and discrimination. The youth varied on the methods that they found effective or weak. There were few methods that all the youth were strongly against or in favour of. Most youth indicated that the use of television and commercials was effective, while assemblies were not.

- Use of Television/Commercials (PSA's)

Television commercials and public service announcements (PSAs) were seen as one of the most effective ways of reaching youth because television is one of the key influences on their lives. Brian stated, "Everybody at my school watches TV at some point. So it's probably one of the biggest ways to reach people." Commercials were also seen as effective because the message gets repeated, resonates over time and is indirect, visual and entertaining. Arun suggested that while television is the best way of addressing racism, anti-racism messages should be incorporated into popular TV shows themselves rather than as commercials because people ignore commercials or on shows on community channels which youth do not watch. "Like they have shows that address racism like on channel five and community channels...Nobody watches really, so it doesn't really draw people to it." Brian stated shows, such as Sesame Street, have a positive impact by increasing awareness of diversity, "Shows like that for little kids are good for that. They talk about everything and you see people of different races on the shows."

Others felt that TV commercials are not effective because they are easy to ignore as peer pressure has greater influence. Cindy added that some try too hard to be like youth, "A lot of the anti-racist commercials that they do with youth sometimes we sort of think that they're trying too hard like they're trying too hard to be cool and reach out." It is

also important that television shows are seen as realistic by their youth audiences.

Natasha expressed her dissatisfaction with television's efforts to address racism:

Like *Saved by the Bell*, Zach and Kelly sitting there and going 'Lisa got made fun of because she's Black, it's so awful.' And then they're sitting there after the show on stage now kids if you ever get discriminated against call this number 1-800 blah, blah, right...Kids now they're deeper thinkers."

She added that television needs to be stronger and show the reality of racism rather than "trying to make everything look so perfect."

Most of the youth recommended that anti-discrimination commercials should be developed which are similar to the anti-tobacco commercials used in the Critics Choice video contest. They found these extremely effective because they were graphic and showed the physical and emotional impact of smoking such as the young boy who lost his dad to cancer. Commercials that were scary and gross, such as the woman who smokes from her trachea after losing her voice box, were seen as powerful because they make youth realize the consequences. Shannon discussed the personal impact of the new commercials in making her quit in comparison to old commercials:

The ones that show lungs taking out all that stuff and like that, the one with the little girl, losing her mom...that stuff does than the ones that they used to have, like say no...it's just like no, don't smoke, don't do drugs, you just say no. They don't say why or anything. They just kind of, it's really funny...The ones now are more realistic like they show the real side effects and everything. It doesn't just tell you not to smoke. Like it says it's your choice, if you smoke if you want and this is what can happen.

- Role Plays and Theatre Presentations

Plays were seen as powerful because they are entertaining and let the youth experience the situation directly which works in reaching perpetrators. Teroy explained:

The dramatic effect like it kind of makes you witness it first hand so you know exactly what it likes even though it's not a real situation, it's acting...Then you can experience what it's like...If you're kind of a person

that does bully or does discriminate you kind of think about it, is this what I'm doing.

Several participants suggested that the actors and facilitators need to be secondary school aged youth for the plays to seem realistic and youth should also be involved in the development and writing of the script. Cindy, who was involved in a theatre group called Harmony, stressed that the ideas and script should come from youth otherwise, the messages comes across preachy and "it just seems someone wrote the script and we're like it for the adults." Many, such as Arun, suggested incorporating role plays into classrooms as a fun activity. Whereas others did not like role plays because they were shy and felt that students do not take them seriously.

- Posters

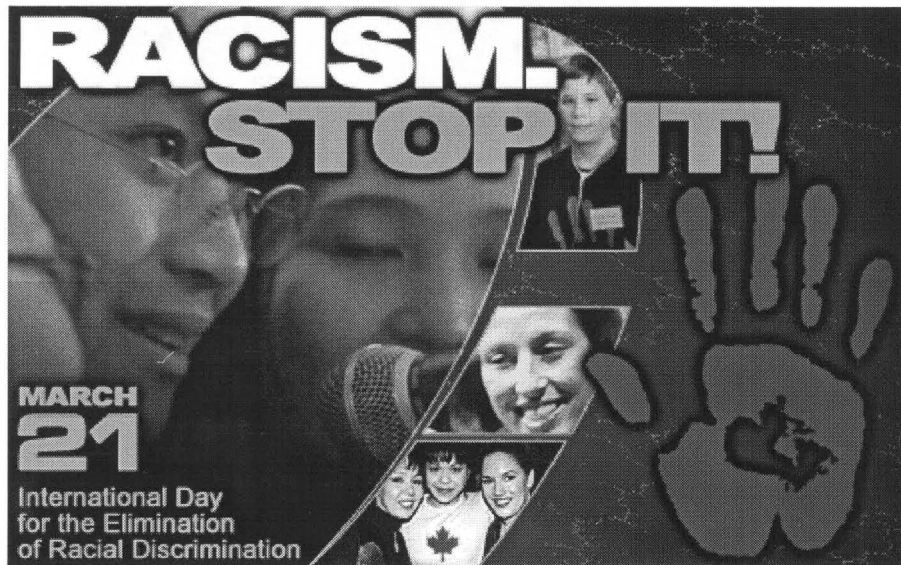
Posters were not seen as effective by most of the participants because they did not have a major impact on students. Teroy stated that most students, in particular perpetrators, ignore posters. "Like say you're a racist individual and you see a poster on a wall, you're not gonna, it's not gonna mean anything to you....They don't really stand there and look at it and ponder." Others felt that posters only reach the converted. Some, such as Brian, felt posters get ignored because there is over stimulation as there are too many up in schools.

Others saw posters as effective because they increase awareness of issues and provide information. The participants recommended that posters be eye-catching, bold, strong, original and intriguing to get students' attention and provoke them to think and talk about the message. Some youth suggested using headlines like SEX to grab their attention and then present the social message. Many, such as Teroy, felt that posters have

to show real situations and the impact of discrimination and not "just throw stuff up there for you to imagine."

Examples of posters that the students liked were the Anti-Violence poster series developed by youth in Maple Ridge, the No Means No campaign against date rape and the Poster Child Anti-Tobacco poster. The youth's opinions varied on the Stop Racism posters developed by Canadian Heritage with the hand symbol. Some thought these posters were good because they are everywhere and the message is clear and direct. Several stated that they see the hand as the anti-racism logo, similar to the Nike swoosh. In contrast, several students, such as Raman, felt that the Racism – Stop It campaign provides no message. "Like usually if there is a poster of racism, it's just like a hand print on it, and that, what is that supposed to mean. That doesn't get through anybody else's head...Those don't mean nothing." Sam further supported this, "I know there's always poster Stop Racism, No bullying.... It really doesn't help cause nobody's gonna look at it and oh yeah, I should just stop this racism." The students' comments suggest that it is important that messages and images do not preach to youth but make them realize the importance and feel the impact.

Figure 4 – Racism – Stop It campaign



Some students felt that slogans such as Stop Racism are not effective at moving youth because they do not show the consequences of racism. Source and used with permission of Canadian Heritage

- Policies/Laws

Policies were seen as critical in preventing discrimination and maintaining control. Many students stated they are used to being governed by rules, such as smoking laws and general school policies. Brian noted that policies are also important so the victim knows what support is available to them and perpetrators know the consequences:

That is definitely important especially policies dealing with how to deal with racism, if somebody's racist, here's what you do. I think it's important for people who choose to do things like bully or things like that. I think it's really important that there are definitely, there has to be consequences or rules for people.

Policies were also seen as important in acknowledging racism and creating a safer school environment.

On the other hand, existing school policies were seen as ineffective because there were no consequences for the perpetrators and enforcement is needed. Carl commented, "Rules, don't have them. Rules don't have any power unless you enforce them." Teroy added

policies do not work because "Youth hate is to be told what to do. You can't really tell them what to do. They won't listen. They'll rebel." Jason supported this view, stating that some youth deliberately break rules. Several felt that in order for policies to work, they must be flexible and give youth choice and options. Natasha expressed.

You have to make it so that the rule is bending cause if you get every single kid that uses the word fag, one day you're going to have everybody kicked out of school right. So to a degree they're okay but if you're really hurting somebody to a point where the person is really upset and they do something to harm themselves or others, then yes, of course you need something there....But you can't abolish it by saying don't do that but you can't say get out of school we don't want you here.

- Multicultural Days

Multicultural days were seen as useful in recognizing the diversity in schools.

Teroy stated that they should teach students about other cultures and their histories to challenge their own stereotypes and fears:

That's a good idea if say there's a fair with all the different races of people, like it shows all our history, ancestry and stuff like that. And then different races can learn about another race. Cause I think people fear what they don't know that's probably why they're scared. It's a lack of information.

Others, such as Rani, expressed multicultural days are effective because minority cultures are valued and she felt empowered when staff and students treated her as an expert:

It's pretty much good they always, some peoples came like I'm in a dance too in a Bhangra dance and they're always like oh you were so awesome. You did this...and then some students came to me to teach it like can you teach us. I was like I will try if you want to learn. And then even some teachers learn it from us.

Brian added they also recognize the committed, who he called the "multiculturalists."

However, Brian and others, also indicated the problem with multicultural days is that they do not reach the perpetrators. "So again same old; same old, cause people who go to them are usually people who support multiculturalism...people who are racist wouldn't go to

that obviously." Others, such as Jason, felt that multicultural celebrations do not address racism and are seen as an excuse for entertainment.

- Internet

The Internet was not seen as an effective way of addressing discrimination by most participants. The key reason was they felt most youth will not visit anti-discrimination sites because most youth use the Internet for fun, chat lines, video games, e-mail and downloading music. Many, such as Natasha, thought that the Internet was not useful because there is too much negative and hate material available:

The Internet can be a very bad place if you find the right sites. I think the Internet needs to be used wisely. It can't be just oh, let's just type in racism, you're gonna come in with a 101 pages. A hundred of them are gonna be racism pages, oh we hate Blacks, we hate this, we hate that. And you'll just have one that's like don't be racist, right.

She suggested the negative material be filtered to make the anti-racism Web sites easy to find. Some indicated that not everyone has access to a computer like TV. Others, like Dean, felt that there already are too many ads on the Internet and they are ignored.

The Internet was seen as useful in providing victims support and resources. Shannon stated, "Now kids are scared to go into group therapy or whatever, so maybe the Internet would be one thing, like a Web site for racism, for people who feel like that." Several thought it was good for researching information on discrimination. Cindy suggested placing information on music and teen sites and using facts about celebrities to get their attention, "Maybe you put an ad or something on music sites that people go to so cause they're constantly there. I don't think they'd deliberately go to an anti-racism site."

The following list is a summary of the youth's perspectives about other commonly used methods.

- **Conferences** were seen as more effective for activists youth to provide them with resources, an opportunity to strategize, develop ideas and meet other committed youth. The youth who were not involved, felt that conferences are not an effective way of reaching youth like themselves because they would not attend and find them boring. Conferences were seen as an indirect way of attracting the general student population by giving them the incentive of getting out of school for the day.
- **Youth Groups** were also seen as more effective for the committed to provide them with support, strength and a chance to express their voice. Several youth recognized the important role that youth activists play in bringing about change in their schools and in the lives of friends and families by acting as role models. Youth groups were not seen as effective at reaching the general student population because they preach to the converted and require too much time commitment. Student led presentations were seen as excellent ways to reach the general student population.
- **Videos** were seen as effective in reaching students if they were entertaining, innovative or included personal narratives about the impact of discrimination. It was recommended that there needs to be a follow up discussion after the video to ensure students pay attention.
- **Class discussions and presentations** were seen as effective because there is a captive audience that hears the message; even if everyone does not participate. A few participants, such as Mia, expressed that students like herself get bored if there is too much discussion on one topic. "We did that for the Afghanistan thing...I listened to some of it the first day, I was like ohh, but then it got old and I just started writing notes." The students recommended the discussion should be in a safe and respectful environment, interactive and personal experiences be shared.
- **Music** was not seen as effective because positive messaging through music was not something the youth felt was common. They suggested that in order for music to work, it would have to be developed by popular artists. Chand and Jason provided examples of music on racism and freedom developed by alternative South Asian and First Nations artists that had a strong impact in capturing their experiences.
- **Brochures and Resources Guides** were also seen as more effective in reaching the converted youth to provide them with resources and information about racism and discrimination. Several of the activists' youth expressed that the Choose Dignity booklet on hate activity is an excellent resource. The participants recognized that the general student population would not read these books unless it was part of a class

work. The students suggested making brochures eye-catching, bright and using provocative messages such as 'No Means No' to get youth's attention.

- **Assemblies** were not seen as effective in reaching youth because they find them boring and youth do not pay attention. A few participants stated assemblies are effective in sending the message to the whole school and conveyed the importance of the issue when it comes from the principal. They suggested having assemblies that are interactive, provide personal stories, use role play and humour.

This chapter has provided a detailed account of what the participants feel works in reaching youth in addressing social issues such as racism. The concerns the youth raised about existing strategies and the suggestions they made provide valuable information on how future strategies can be shaped. The last two chapters have demonstrated how much we can learn and gain from youth when we give them a chance to speak and be involved in the process.

The youth were not just quick to identify their frustrations, but were forthcoming with ideas and suggestions on what needed to be done. Some were eager and willing to be part of the solution. Their passion and commitment challenge stereotypes of youth being apathetic, disinterested or uncaring. I have been energized and motivated by their care, eagerness and innovation to make their schools and communities better places. In the final chapter, I make recommendations on how the youth's concerns and voices can be applied in addressing racism and discrimination.

CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION

In this concluding chapter, I will first summarize the major findings of the research I conducted. The focus will be on detailing a plan for communicating to youth about issues of racism and discrimination based on the ideas and perspectives of the participants. I will use social issues communication as a model for developing this communications plan. I conclude with a set of recommendations for addressing racism and discrimination in the educational system. I am focusing on the education system rather than the role of the media, government, community or parents because most of the participants' experiences with racism and discrimination occurred in schools.

The overall objective of this research was to identify the types of strategies and messaging youth see as effective in addressing racism and discrimination in their lives. Twenty-five youth from various racial backgrounds, gender, ages and communities (Pitt Meadows, Surrey, Vancouver and Vernon) participated in interviews and focus groups. The intent of this study was not to state that these participants spoke for all youth and that their experiences are representative of all youth. Rather I have tried to give insight into how youth coming from diverse backgrounds and circumstances perceive racism and discrimination and what they feel needs to be done.

The purpose of this conclusion is to identify possible steps and future directions for how some of the issues can be addressed. This research also provides insight into how we as adults in our various roles can work with and support youth in creating safer and equitable schools and communities. It urges parents, schools, students, policymakers and community, as a collective, to become more proactive in developing and implementing effective solutions for eradicating racism and discrimination. At the same time, I do not want to be too prescriptive as responses must be developed based on the needs and issues

of the local community and youth. The recommendations I make will therefore be general and flexible. I will start by highlighting the key findings of this research.

Summary of Findings

Racism and discrimination were identified as key problems facing young people. The youth provided examples of how racism in broader society and the media has ripple effects in their lives, schools and communities. Racism was seen to exist at various levels in their schools ranging from the overall school environment, in student relations, in the attitudes and practices of teachers and administrators, in staff representation and in the curriculum. The prevalence of racism and discrimination in youth's lives is also clear given that all the youth had experienced or witnessed incidents of racism and discrimination. Most youth were severely impacted by the name-calling, harassment, assault or differential treatment they endured. It was detrimental to their self-esteem and left many of them feeling like they did not belong. The impact of these experiences demonstrate the urgent need for intervention and for a renewed vigilance in ensuring every young person is able to reach their full potential and feel safe in their schools and communities.

Most of the youth felt helpless or did not know what to do or who to go to when they were facing racism and discrimination. Most ignored the situation as they feared retaliation from their perpetrators, did not want to be seen as 'tattle tales' or felt they could not turn to their administrators, teachers or other school staff for support. Participants turned to their friends for help but could not count on their peers to intervene if they were witnesses or bystanders to their harassment or teasing. Rather student bystanders feared becoming the targets themselves or retribution from the perpetrators.

The targets of discrimination and issues varied in each community. A common theme was that anyone who was seen as being different or vulnerable was targeted. The youth connected racism to other forms of discrimination, such as social condition, gender and religion. While no one form of discrimination was seen as worse, racism and homophobia were identified as common and major issues.

The youth had a clear understanding of the meaning and manifestations of racism. While some of the youth could not provide the legal or formal definition of discrimination, they were clearly aware of and able to identify discrimination. The youth did not have a strong understanding of their legal rights and social responsibilities in relation to how they are protected from discrimination and steps and actions they can take to stop it from happening. The participants felt that students and staff need to be informed of the extent that racism and discrimination are problems and their impact.

Many participants also discussed the strong role that the media and popular culture play in shaping racism in youth's lives. The findings reveal that several youth were proficiently media literate and concerned about the negative portrayal and stereotyping of minorities in the media and their impact on youth's actions and behaviours. However, they did not feel the general student population had this same level of awareness. Furthermore, the students did not raise the more critical questions that are a part of media education such as: Who produces these images? What are the motives? Who profits? Who loses? (Thoman, 1995) We must focus on developing in young people the critical thinking skills to probe and ask these deeper questions and build advocacy skills on how to challenge and redress these images and corporate practices (Ibid.). Recommendations for media education will later be made.

The youth ranged in their involvement in diversity and anti-racism activities. Racial background did not influence the youth's involvement. Minority students did not feel compelled to be involved in the fight because of their racial background. It is noteworthy that many of the White students were committed to the struggle against racism and expressed the view that racism and discrimination were problems affecting all of society. This finding was contrary to other studies (Moy, 1996), which have found that White youth do not seem as interested in issues of racism as students of colour (p. 128).

Other than a few schools, existing school strategies were for the most part seen as ineffective. Schools were seen as using methods and messages that did not strongly impact youth. For example, students were bored by or desensitized to annual assemblies on zero tolerance or did not feel compelled by pins or posters that stated "stop racism." School policies were seen as important but ineffective as students were unaware of them, they were not enforced, or there were no consequences for perpetrators. Discipline or zero tolerance on their own were not seen as effective deterrents in stopping racism. The students felt that it was important for perpetrators to face the consequences of their actions but also be educated about the impact of their actions. The students called for their schools to do more and become more proactive in creating positive school cultures. They urged staff and students to intervene and support victims in situations of discrimination.

The youth varied in the strategies and messages they saw as being effective in reaching youth. The one medium that almost all the participants saw as being effective was television and in particular commercials. The types of campaigns that youth saw as working were those that were shocking, realistic, showed impact and consequences of

discrimination, and messages that came directly from youth. The types of campaigns they did not see as working were ones that preached to them; did not show the reality of the situation; seemed fake or contrived and were not authentic as they tried too hard to be cool or sound like youth.

Overall, these findings demonstrate the value of speaking to youth. It is important for youth to be involved in the planning and development stages, and not just in the implementation of campaigns. It would help make future strategies much more meaningful for youth. The other gap in this research is that, although an attempt was made, I did not speak to students who are seen as the perpetrators. It is strongly recommended that further research be undertaken to speak to this target group given that their experiences and perspectives may be different from their peers.

Communications Plan

Now that I have summarized the key findings of the research, I would like to focus on developing a communications plan. As Laba et al. (1993) state, it is important to develop a communication strategy around a social issue because it gives it focus, force and direction. This is useful given the messages are communicated in an environment where there is information overload and competition to get youth's attention. A communication strategy typically starts by looking at an organization's goals and priorities for communicating the message.

The challenge is that this plan is not being developed for any particular organization. The original purpose of this research was to develop a communications plan for the BC Human Rights Commission for its youth based education program. Although the Commission no longer exists, this research clearly demonstrates that there is a critical need for this work to continue. It is vital that youths' experiences with discrimination be

addressed and youth be made aware of their human rights protections. It is crucial that we do not rely solely on the school system to educate youth as so much of youth's socialization and education occurs outside of the school system. Furthermore, the current government in a March 28, 2003 news release promised that the new human rights body will emphasize education. While the government does not specifically mention whether youth are a priority, this study strongly urges them to do so. A commitment to education is fundamental to fostering respect of human rights. This plan will provide a general framework.

The next step in a communication plan is to outline the objectives of the organization in developing the strategy. The results of this research suggest the following as key priorities and goals for communicating issues of racism and discrimination.

- Increase youth's awareness of:
 - the destructive consequences and impact of racism and discrimination on the lives of youth.
 - their rights and how they are protected from discrimination.
 - the support networks available to them to help them deal with situations.
 - their responsibilities in taking actions to prevent discrimination.
- Use a variety of methods to reach youth and be innovative with approaches as youth get bored and desensitized.
- Provide more opportunities for youth to share their voices and to be actively involved in planning, developing and implementing campaigns.
- Start early by reaching children in elementary school and through their parents (although this research focuses on secondary school youth).

In developing a communications plan, social issues communication can be used as a model. Social issues communication works for addressing racism in the lives of youth because it not only understands the nature and role of communication in the media environment but analyzes and applies this role in the design and implementation of

communication plans and campaigns (Laba et al.). As the research result demonstrate, using the media environment is critical because young audiences show a strong inclination to commercial popular culture images and messages that dominate the media environment (Ibid.). The media can also be used as a vehicle for challenging racism by exposing youth to positive messages to counter some of the negative messages.

Social issues communication also works because it aims to persuade the target group to raise their awareness of an issue, promote changes to their attitudes with the ultimate goal of modifying their behaviour. These are all goals we want to achieve in relation to addressing racism and discrimination in the lives of youth. Most importantly though, social issues communication is an appropriate model because it recognizes that complex social issues, such as racism, are not just addressed through individual change, but through broader social transformation and social change. The social change is achieved with a focus on advocacy, citizenship and mobilizing and involving the community by building people's own capacity to bring about change.

These principles of advocacy and community mobilization are critical because they recognize the importance of youth involvement in addressing social issues. The participants stressed that messages have greater impact when they come directly from youth. There will be greater 'buy in' from youth if they feel their peers are involved and communicating the message. Youth feel empowered when they are encouraged and supported to work in the role of stakeholder, peer-leader and the advocate. These roles provide youth with skills and power to make changes in their communities.

The results of this research demonstrate that youth are not a homogenous group. They are a diverse audience with varying interests, perspectives and learning styles.

Given these differences, it would be difficult to reach all youth at the same time. It is recommended that social marketing principles of positioning be applied to the challenge of reaching youth. Positioning is determining what is the best media to use and how the message can be best organized to reach the target group. With a diverse audience, such as youth, a media mix is recommended, which involves using a combination of media channels to have optimum reach and impact on the diverse target group (Laba et al.).

In determining the appropriate messages for youth, this study as well as my experience of working with young people has shown that teenagers share some common characteristics that identify key patterns in their communication style. I found that most of the teens who participated in this study to be quite politically and media savvy. They were cynical, critical and analytical about the messages around them. My experience has shown, and the youth in this study have confirmed, that it is important to be honest, transparent and authentic with youth about campaign objectives or else they see through it. For example, in 1996, while I was working at the BC Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism, we organized an anti-racism youth forum just before the provincial election. The Minister attended the conference and made a speech that had political undertones. One youth called the Minister on it by asking him whether he was only at the forum to get their votes in the future and whether he cared about them. The Minister was put in the hot seat and had to convince the youth of his commitment. I also have learned that it is important not to try to sound like teens by sounding cool, as they see it as you trying too hard to connect with them. It is also important to not preach to youth and tell them what is best for them. It is important to be sincere with youth and give them something they identify and relate to.

Another important principle of social marketing and social issues communication is targeting. Communications are most effective when it is clear who the messages are for and they are aimed at specific target groups. In order to do this, social issues communication follows the principle of market segmentation, which is dividing a diverse audience into segments for concentrated and persuasive communication. (Laba et al., p.14). The research results indicate that in developing anti-racism/discrimination strategies, a youth audience can be segmented into the following categories:

- **The converted:** These are students who are highly active in anti-racism and diversity activities. They are aware of the issues and willing to commit their time and energy. They are driven by more than just addressing their own personal experiences, but are committed to making society a better place. They are instrumental in reaching other youth in their schools and communities. They challenge stereotypes of youth being apathetic, lazy or uninterested.
- **The general student population:** Students concerned about issues of racism and discrimination, but do not feel responsible and would not commit their personal time and energy. They are receptive to the message and see the need for activities. They are not highly aware of what to do in situations. Their behaviours range from encouraging perpetrators' actions by laughing, or acting as passive bystanders to themselves being targets.
- **Hard to reach – perpetrators:** These youth fit the description of your typical bully. The students described them as having power and influence and not caring about other's feelings. A few felt that students who pick on other kids do it to feel better about themselves, are looking for attention or have their own problems.
- **Hard to reach – marginalized and vulnerable youth:** Students who are often socially isolated and feel unaccepted because of their differences. They also often face social barriers, such as language, culture or disabilities. They likely do not want to call attention to their problems.

In developing and implementing a campaign there will be a number of driving forces (factors which assist in meeting the goals) and restraining forces (factors

restraining the goals) (Ibid, p. 15). The following are some examples of driving and restraining forces that may exist in a communication strategy that aims to work towards preventing racism and discrimination in the lives of youth by increasing their awareness of the consequences of discrimination and their human rights. The objective would be to try to minimize the restraining forces and build on the driving forces.

Restraining Forces

- racism in youth's lives
- racist messages and images in the media contradict positive messages
- lack of support from school system
- loss of hope, energy
- public backlash against concepts and policies such as multiculturalism and human rights.

Driving Forces

- media and public attention given to issues of bullying.
- increased societal awareness of issues of racism.
- increased protection from discrimination
- strength of multiculturalism and diversity recognized by businesses and in marketing strategies.
- Canadians general support towards social justice
- community based anti-racism organizations and organizations that act as advocates against racism

In the following chart I outline some possible communication strategies that can be used to reach each of the segments of a youth audience. I will identify what the objectives or goals are in reaching them, the types of methods that would be effective and the types of messages that would work for them.

Table 1 - Sample Communication Strategies

Target Audience	Goal (objectives, key issues)	Method (mediums to reach audience)	Message (types of messages to convey)
Converted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support networks • Provide motivation and encouragement to continue efforts • Provide opportunities to strategize, share ideas with other activists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences • Resource guides • Information brochures • Youth groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety • Information • Motivational, inspirational • Empower, rewarding
General Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of impact • Awareness of human right protections • Responsibility in taking action, intervening or reporting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety • Mass media, TV, plays • Entertainment • Student led presentations, workshops • Classroom sessions • Social, fun, involve friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety • Humour • Entertainment • Graphic • Realistic • Experiential • Shocking
Hard to Reach – Perpetrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate about impact of their actions on victims and their families. • Educate about the consequences of their actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to one address issues • Mandatory programs • Discipline with understanding of actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact • Consequences • Experiential • Hard facts
Hard to Reach – Marginalized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support, empower • Awareness of human rights protection • Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet • Youth groups • Counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Networks available • Educate about rights.

The Campaign – Example of a Successful Model

Based on the positive feedback from the participants, I am recommending that an anti-racism/discrimination communication campaign be developed that is similar to the Critics Choice Video Vote Program contest developed by the BC Ministry of Health. Critics' Choice is a school-based anti-tobacco prevention program. A video that features twelve advertisements drawn from several countries to show different strategies to combat smoking is distributed to schools around the province. Teachers use the tape to run a focus group with students to get their opinion on which campaigns are most effective in helping teenagers to quit smoking. The students vote on the advertisements they like the best. The goal is to have youth discuss the advertisements and evaluate them in an informal way and to involve them in the process of determining what advertisements are effective. The youth identified advertisements showing the shocking and real consequences of smoking as most effective. (Sanderson, 2002).

The participants identified Critics Choice as an example of an effective and powerful campaign that addresses a social problem. The youth recalled and described the various commercials prior to them being shown in the focus group. Audience recollection of the content of the message is a considerable accomplishment for a social issues communication campaign (Laba et al). Several youth also talked about the personal impact some of the commercials have had on their lives in making them quit smoking. The following are some key strengths of this campaign:

- It combines a number of media. First, it uses the medium of television in a format youth relate to. The commercials are developed in formats similar to the commercial media environment. They are short, quick and fast paced.

- The campaign also uses the medium of classroom discussions and school curriculum to reach youth. There is a follow up discussion that they have with their peers about the issues. Incorporating the project in the classroom, makes it mandatory for students to participate increasing the likelihood of them receiving the message and it reaching a broader group.
- It uses a variety of messages ranging from humour, emotional, informational, shocking and graphic giving youth with varying interests something to relate to.
- The contest aspect makes it fun for youth like a game.
- Getting to vote and be part of a focus group conveys that youth's opinions matter.
- Cost effective because it uses existing commercials.

Several youth recommended that an anti-racism campaign should be developed in a similar format. Therefore I am proposing that a similar campaign be launched. This campaign could be developed in partnership with Racism – Stop It video contest developed by Canadian Heritage. The program invites youth between the ages of 12 and 18 to develop 60 to 90 second videos that represent their views on eliminating racism. The top ten videos are chosen from across Canada, edited to a 30 second public service format and broadcast nationally on television. The campaign I am proposing could have youth select the winning videos. In addition, public service announcements previously developed nationally and internationally could be featured on the video to get a variety. It would also be useful in determining whether the youth prefer professionally developed or youth developed commercials. This is a model campaign because it uses the media and television to reach youth; but then through classroom discussion provides them an opportunity to critically think about, understand or challenge the messages.

Recommendations for the School System

These recommendations will focus on the education system given that it was the area the youth talked the most about. The areas I will focus on include: the role of administrators, the role of teachers, counsellors and other school staff; curriculum and policies. These recommendations are based on the findings of this study and supported by other studies, including the Pilot Study on Bullying Trends and Interventions by the Kids Help Phone, Responding to Racism Guides produced by the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and the Report on Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation in BC Schools by the BC Safe Schools Task Force.

Administrators

- Acknowledge that racism and discrimination are problems and that your school is committed to working towards fostering equality. Do not see that acknowledging these problems will look bad for your school reputation. Not doing anything makes your school look worse as student's and staff's right to a safe school are not protected. Showing you are doing something about racism and discrimination is being proactive, fair and responsible to your students, staff and community.
- Develop and implement a school wide response that includes everyone. Stress that multiculturalism and anti-racism/discrimination are about everyone as racism and discrimination impacts and poisons the whole school environment. It is not the responsibility of administration, teachers or students to address these problems on their own. They require a collaborative effort.
- Create a school culture where differences are seen as positive. Infuse multicultural and anti-racist principles throughout the whole school: in the curriculum, environment, hallway and classroom images, teaching practices, administration attitudes and student relations.
- Work with your staff and students in developing ongoing curriculum and school activities that recognize and increase awareness of the value of cultures. Build understanding of the history and contributions of cultures, not just focusing on the food, clothing and dances of communities. Include all cultures in this recognition, including those

of Anglo-Saxon background. Bring in community representatives to assist in this information sharing.

- Increase awareness of staff and students of racism and discrimination and their impact on victims. Bring in guest speakers to share their personal stories with experiences of racism and discrimination.
- Create a safe culture for students to come forward with complaints. Don't discourage reporting by making complainants feel weak. Address the school culture where students are afraid to come forward because of the fear of being seen a tattler or retribution.
- Treat allegations as serious and validate student's experiences by acknowledging the impact. Ensure immediate responses and interventions when incidents occur.
- Follow up with students and let them know what steps have and will be taken. Find out what they would like done. Increase awareness of availability of services, supports and interventions that exist within school and community. Make sure there are safe places for students to turn to. Notify and involve parents as required.
- Treat all students and staff equally. Make everyone feel they are part of the school culture and have a role to play.
- Ensure your staff is culturally diverse and representative of your community. Provide all staff and administration with ongoing cultural competency and anti-racism training.
- Use proactive measures to prevent incidents from occurring. Use mediums that youth find effective, e.g. humour, personal narratives, drama. Make sure all presentations and assemblies are interactive, high energy and use youth to lead the sessions.
- Encourage student involvement and leadership. Eliminate barriers for student participation by reducing bureaucratic approval processes.
- Note: while administrators are seen as playing a lead role in implementing these recommendations, they require the commitment and support of school staff and students.

Teachers, Counsellors and Other School Staff

- Make sure that there is direct and immediate intervention in all incidents of racism and discrimination and are treated seriously. Do not treat name-calling as just a group of friends being jovial with each other. Students are looking to you as role models to convey that these words are inappropriate and unacceptable.

- Ensure that students are aware that all reports and counselling sessions will be kept confidential and anonymous.
- Ensure that intervention suggestions that are provided to students are realistic, practical and something they are comfortable with, e.g. telling students to use “I” statements to communicate the impact of discrimination may set them up for further harassment.
- Acknowledge the student’s experience. Find out what they would like done. Let them know what you have done and will do.
- Be proactive, watch for subtle signs of harassment or intolerance in your classroom. Address these issues.
- If you are uncomfortable intervening in situations of racism and discrimination, this is understandable as often these situations can be difficult to deal with. However, it is unacceptable that you do not do anything. Make sure you get the adequate training to become more comfortable in intervening. Attend a training anti-racism session or invite a trainer into your school.
- Strategize and network with other staff about effective responses. Discuss incidents and experiences for problem solving and conflict resolution. Use the expertise within your community, e.g. anti-racism professionals, youth workers or community representatives.
- Teacher training programs also must include multicultural and anti-racist education as key components. New teachers should be equipped with dealing with current social issues. Teachers also should be provided with adequate and ongoing opportunities for anti-racism conflict resolutions training and skills.
- Treat all students fairly and equitably. Deal with any student perceptions that there is racial bias in the way they are being treated. While this may not be your intention, it is important to discover and address the reasons the student may feel this way.

Students

- Become involved in school anti-racism, multiculturalism or diversity activities. Use your energy and innovative ideas in the fight against racism.
- If you are not able to commit the time to getting involved, support your peers who are involved. Let them know you appreciate their efforts.

- Do not encourage situations of racism, discrimination or harassment by laughing at the perpetrators' actions or by watching. Sometimes this can encourage a bully's action as they are often looking for attention or an audience.
- Do not intervene in situations if you do not feel safe. Turn to school staff, friends, parents or community resources for support. Do not fear retribution. Your report should be kept anonymous and confidential.
- Speak out against racism and discrimination in your circle of friends or family. You have a great influence on what they think.
- Know your rights – find out how you are protected from discrimination and the actions you can take and who you can turn to for help to deal with your situation.
- Demand that your school be a safe environment. Ask your school to implement a policy if they do not have one. These are your rights – you should be protected from racism and discrimination.

Curriculum Reform and Learning Resources

- Review school curriculum and classroom resources to challenge and remove racial bias, ethnocentrism, stereotyping and omissions (Henry et al, 1995).
- Include in the curriculum and learning resources the views, experiences of the diverse cultural groups in Canada and the contributions they have made and continue to make in Canadian society. This inclusion should be more than token references or added on material. This information should be integrated as part of the overall class lessons and students should be encouraged to think about such omissions (Ghosh, 1996).
- Include the presentation of minority cultures' history and experiences from their own perspectives and not through the interpretation of the dominant culture (Clarke, 1996).
- Teach the history of racism in Canadian society and legislative protections.
- Teach student critical thinking skills that encourage them to challenge and overcome the racist and discriminatory images and messages that are presented to them in the media, their books and in their curriculum.
- Media education, which is an informed and critical understanding of the media, must be integrated as a core part of the school curriculum and not be treated as an add-on (Sheperd, 1993, Duncan).

- Teach students to become media literate so that they can:
 - understand how the media works to construct ideas, information and news
 - understand how the media benefits some and excludes others
 - seek alternative sources for information and entertainment
 - use the media for their own advantage and enjoyment. (Kipping).
- Educators must be provided with adequate resources to teach students about the media's portrayal of minorities and the influences of this portrayal on how we see ourselves and others (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 1998). The Media Awareness Network provides resources for teachers on approaches to media education at www.media-awareness.ca.
- Treat education as a two way learning process and see students as experts of the issues affecting them – include and relate to students' real life experiences.

Policies

- Ensure your school has a specific anti-racism/discrimination policy. Racism and discrimination can not be seen as being addressed as part of general school code of conducts on respect.
- Set up a committee made up of staff, student and community representatives to develop the policy. It is important to involve students because they are aware of the type of incidents that are occurring and can provide feedback on what types of responses will work. There will also be greater 'buy in' from youth if they see they are part of the policies.
- Policies should be enforced and students should recognize they are effective. Make sure consequences for the perpetrators' actions have an impact on them and make them aware of the impact of their actions on the victim.
- Make sure students are aware of policies. Communicate policies through school agendas, homerooms or bulletin boards. If using assemblies, make sure the message is part of broader education session, such as combining the assembly with guest speakers or theatre presentation.
- Ensure parents are also aware of school policies so they know the appropriate steps they can take and who to turn to for help. It also helps parents keep schools accountable.
- Regularly review policies to ensure they are meeting the needs of staff and students.

It is also important to state that any anti-racism/discrimination public education campaign must be part of long-term process. Racism and discrimination will not be eliminated through one-shot approaches. Rather there also must be a commitment and collaboration from other social institutions such as the media, government and community. For any change to the education system to be effective, parents and community must also be included in the change process. Parents are key sources of influence and support for their children. Collaborative efforts with parents, community, media and government agencies greatly increase the likelihood of a positive and equitable school environment for all students (Cummins, 1986 cited in Clarke, 1996, p. 163).

It is crucial that we as adults in our various roles act as allies for young people. We heard from the students who put themselves at risk by tackling issues of racism and discrimination with the hope of making their peers more aware and changing their behaviours. However, we also have some work to do in reaching those youth that do not feel racism and discrimination are a part of their responsibility because it does not impact them. Yet the participants felt it was crucial that youth be involved in leading and developing campaigns for them to have the greatest effect.

We must act as support networks for all youth and ensure they feel safe. We must make sure that the voices and ideas of all youth are heard. We must make sure that the responsibility of change is not just placed on youth given they are full of energy, enthusiasm and passion. We must work with them and foster their passion and commitment, while at the same time having the courage ourselves to make change.

Dei (1996) talks about the importance of collaboration and working across issues in eliminating racism given our current political and economic era of conservatism:

Despite some good intentions, society has so far not been successful in eradicating the menace of racism and other forms of oppression and discrimination. One of the challenges to anti-racism in the post-modern era is to call upon all critical and progressive educators and community workers to forge new solidarities....New solidarities must seek to rupture the political, economic and ideological status quo and challenge society to side with the forces for social justice, peace and human dignity. The personal risks taken in advocating for social change are real and insidious, particularly given the growing organized resistance against progressive change....But the strength in our alliances will come from a development of a shared commitment to work for meaningful change (p. 18).

Raman's call for action also reminds us how important a collective response is if we want young people to take action towards eliminating racism and discrimination:

I just wish I could stand up and just start saying, it should be stopped. But it takes more than just one to do that...If there was a group of us wanting to do it.

APPENDIX # 1

Table 2 – List of Participants

Following is a list of the participants that participated in the interviews. The youth who participated in the focus group have a ✓ by their name. Pseudonyms have been used. Their racial background is listed as students identified themselves. Activism refers to the level of participants' involvement in school or community activities. The D indicates that they were also involved in activities promoting diversity or addressing racism.

Pitt Meadows

Name	Sex	Age	Grade	Ethnic/racial group	Status*	Activism
Carrie ✓	FM	15	10	Scottish/North American	majority	high (D-high)
Carl ✓	M	14	10	English/Scottish	majority	low (D-mid)
Sam ✓	M	17	12	Korean	minority	low
Michelle ✓	FM	17	12	Sweden, Scotland, England	majority	low
Parm	M	15	10	Indian	minority	mid

Surrey

Rani	FM	18	12	Indian	minority	mid (D-mid)
Tara ✓	FM	13	8	Japanese and Caucasian	mixed	high
Alisha ✓	FM	14	9	Scottish, Irish, Canadian	majority	high
Arun	M	14	10	Sikh, born in Canada	minority	mid
Jas ✓	M	17	12	Sikh, Punjabi	minority	mid (D-mid)
Meghan ✓	FM	15	11	Canadian, Dutch, German	majority	mid (D-mid)

Vancouver

James ✓	M	15	10	Asian, Chinese	minority	high (D-high)
Natasha ✓	FM	17	12	Half Chinese and European (British, Scottish, Irish)	mixed	high (D-high)
Teroy ✓	M	16	11	Caribbean and British	mixed	mid
Huang ✓	M	17	11	Vietnamese	minority	mid
Brian	M	17	12	Canadian, British ancestors	majority	mid
Cindy ✓	FM	15	10	Venezuelan, Canadian	minority	high (D-high)
Shannon	FM	16	10	Nisga'a, First Nations	minority	low
Jason ✓	M	16	10	First Nations	minority	high (D-high)
Shaun ✓	M	15	10	Greek, European	majority	low

Vernon

Amy ✓	FM	16	11	Dutch and Scottish	majority	high
Chand ✓	M	15	10	Sikh	minority	mid
Dean ✓	M	17	12	Norwegian, partly British	majority	mid (D-mid)
Mia ✓	FM	14	9	Native Okanogan	minority	low
Raman ✓	FM	15	10	Indian, Canadian	minority	mid

* Membership in racial group of majority or minority status in Canada.

Total Youth 25 12 females 13 males

1 – age 13 4 – age 14 8 – age 15 4 – age 16 7 – age 17 1 – age 18

APPENDIX # 2

Table 3 - List of Participants' Schools

City	Public School	Private School	Alternate Programs
Pitt Meadows	Pitt Meadows Secondary School		
Surrey	Queen Elizabeth Secondary School LA Matheson North Surrey Secondary School Enver Creek Johnston Heights Secondary School	South Surrey Independent School	Home Schooling
Vancouver	Templeton Secondary School Vancouver Technical Britannia Secondary School		Aries Project, Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Prince of Wales TECH program (environmental program)
Vernon	Vernon Secondary School Fulton Secondary School		

APPENDIX # 3

Interview Guide

Identification

Sex

Age:

Grade:

Racial/ethnic background:

Do you get involved in activities in your school or community? If yes, what types? (e.g. sports, clubs, academic, diversity/social justice, anti-racism, social, other)

Awareness of Issues

- What do you think are some of the biggest problems facing youth today?
- How would you describe the diversity in your school or community? How do you think this affects your school or community? (Is it a good or bad thing?)
- Who do you think is seen as being different or not belonging?
- What does discrimination mean to you? Describe some types?
- How do you feel about racism? What does it mean to you?
- Do you think racism exists in society? What are the causes? Are racism and discrimination a problem in your school or community? Can you give examples (e.g. overall environment, how people behave, in curriculum)?
- How do you think others in your school or community, like your teachers, administrators or family, feel about racism and discrimination? Do they think it's a problem?
- How do you think your friends feel about racism and discrimination?
- Who do you think are the targets of discrimination in your school or community? How are they treated? (e.g. negatively, fairly, ignored)
- Who are the kids that do the picking on?
- What are some of the names you have heard youth use when they are teasing or discriminating? (What's the worst way to tease someone?)
- Do you think some types of discrimination or unfair treatment are more tolerated or ignored than others? How do you think racism is viewed in comparison to other types of discrimination?

Experiences/Responses

- If someone at your school, work or in a social setting was being picked on because they're different or called names like fag or Hindu, what would happen?
- What should happen in this situation? Can you give examples of racism that were handled positively? Negatively? (e.g. by other youth, teachers or media)?

- Have you or someone close to you ever experienced or witnessed racism or discrimination? Can you tell me what happened?
- How was the situation handled? (What did you do, what steps did you take, how did others respond?)
- What do you think about what was done? (Were you comfortable dealing with situation?)
- Who do you or would you turn to for help in a situation involving racism? Would you go to adults or authorities for help (e.g. parents, administrators, teachers or police)? (Are you comfortable going to them?) Why or why not?

Strategies

- Is racism and discrimination talked about or addressed by your school, media, family or community? If yes, how so or what is done?
- How do you think racism and discrimination can be best dealt with and prevented in your school or community?
- What do you think are some of the main influences on the lives of youth?
- What role does TV play?
- What attracts your attention usually (say with advertising, TV, radio or in entertainment, fashion)?
- What do you think are the best ways of reaching youth (e.g. what type of methods and messages do you think appeal to youth)?
- What kind of campaign would you develop?
- Is there a particular campaign or message about some social problem that has really affected you (e.g. a T.V. show, a movie, a classroom discussion or an event you went to?) What did you like about it?

Youth Involvement

- Who do you think is responsible for addressing racism and discrimination?
- Do you think it's important that youth are involved in or take action against racism and discrimination? Why or why not?
- What are some things that youth can do to prevent racism and discrimination?
- Why do you think some youth (or you) don't get involved in activities?
- What would make them (or you) want to do something about racism or discrimination? How do you reach hard to reach?
- What do you think about methods like posters, TV commercials, school clubs, plays, class presentations, assemblies, video, music, Internet, others)? Give examples of ones you've liked.

APPENDIX # 4

Focus Group Outline

Introductions (5 minutes)

Warm-up exercise

- Introduce self and tell us 2 things about yourself - one truth, one lie. Use exercise to discuss stereotypes and assumptions we make about people.

Overview (5 minutes)

Human Rights and Youth (10 min.)

- Brainstorming - How many of you know about the Human Rights Code? It is the law in BC that protects people from discrimination.
- What characteristics do you think people are protected from discrimination under the human rights law? (grounds - race, colour, ancestry, religion, physical/mental disability, marital status, family status, sex, sexual orientation, age, criminal conviction, political belief, place of origin)
- Where are people protected from discrimination? (work, public services (school, stores, restaurants), public associations, looking for a place to live, publications.

Case Studies (30 minutes)

- Present group with following 2 scenarios of discrimination (handout)

Situation 1 - Chris

Chris, a grade 9 student, while walking down the hall to his science class is picked on by a group of kids in his class. They call him names like 'faggot', 'wus', 'pretty-boy'.

He sees his science teacher standing in front of the classroom, close enough to have heard the name-calling. The teacher kind of shakes his head and walks into the classroom.

The teacher does not say anything to Chris or to the other students and begins the class. Chris doesn't bother saying anything to anyone as he figures no one's really going to do anything.

Situation 2 - Sandeep

Sandeep and a group of his friends like to hang out at the mall Friday after school and do some shopping for CD's and clothes. Lately the security guard at the mall has been giving them a hard time. He told them the mall administration is concerned about violence starting because of the gangs hanging out at the mall and that customers have complained about their safety.

Last Friday, the guard tells the guys they can't come to the mall as a group. Sandeep starts shouting at the guard and says he can't stop them from coming to the mall. The guard asks him to leave or else he'll have to call the police. Sandeep's friends tell him to cool down and leave. Sandeep walks away but continues to swear at the guard, calling him white trash.

- Work through scenarios by discussing:
 - are these situations realistic? Does this kind of stuff happen?
 - how is the situation dealt with? how should it be? who is responsible?
 - the barriers that prevent youth from responding/taking action?
 - how can the situation be prevented? what changes need to happen?

Feedback on Existing campaigns (30 minutes)

- Display existing communication campaigns on social issues ranging from celebratory, hard-hitting, shock, sentimental, curriculum based) such as:
 - Posters - Multiculturalism/Sexual exploitation/Racism Leaves Scars/Stop Racism
 - Competitions - Stop Racism/Smoke Free
 - Written materials (brochures, bookmarks, stickers, tattoos)
 - Activity booklets
- Get youth feedback on:
 - What they like/don't?
 - The impact on them (e.g. what captures their interest, makes them care or makes them want to do something.
 - The visuals, the participants, messages, dialogue, format, length...
- What types of methods/messages would be effective (e.g. what they've seen in their school or community or what is needed).

Small Group Activity (30 minutes)

- Youth work together in pairs to come up with an idea for a campaign they think would be effective for reaching young people in addressing discrimination.
- Present to the larger group.

Wrap-up and Debrief

APPENDIX # 5

Description of Campaigns

Celebratory

Poster: Multiculturalism is Mutual Respect
Developed by: BC Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism.
Image of two children of diverse backgrounds hugging.

Poster: Differences Welcome. Multicultural British Columbia
Developed by: BC Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism.
A Year 2000 calendar with an image of children of diverse backgrounds forming a circle.

Public Service Ad: Growing Stronger Together
Developed by: BC Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism
Images of children of diverse backgrounds are shown while a jingle called 'Growing Stronger Together' is playing in the background.

Public Service Ad: Don't Be Blinded by Colours
Developed by: Vancouver Technical School students, Multiculturalism BC
Part of a contest held by the BC Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism. Features black and white images of youth while messages such as 'We All Have Feelings... We All Have a Culture... We All Share Canada' are scrolled across the screen to background music.

Poster: Together Today
Developed by: BC Association for Community Living
Shows an image of a young person with developmental disabilities high fiving another youth with the message 'Together, We're Changing the Face of Tomorrow, Today'.

Symbols

Posters and Video Contest: Racism – Stop It
Developed by: Canadian Heritage
An annual public education campaign initiated by the Multiculturalism Program of the Government of Canada as part of the March 21 campaign, commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The poster series includes a hand symbol in a bright colour with the words 'Racism Stop It'. The poster is accompanied by small stickers in the shape of a hand saying 'Racism Stop It'. The poster and stickers are distributed to schools along with a resource guide for teachers. (Shown on page 124).

Poster: Together for Equality
Developed by: BC Human Rights Commission
Developed in recognition of the United Nations International Year of Peace. The concept was created by a student at Thomas Haney Secondary School as part of an art class assignment. The poster shows the hands of school staff, students and parents. (Shown on page 111).

Emotional, Hard Hitting

Posters: Racism Leaves Scars

Developed by: BC Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism.

A five poster series with a slogan on the bottom of each poster is Racism Leaves Scars. Each poster also includes a visual with one of the following messages:

- Don't Let Colour Build Walls – a group of students of diverse cultural backgrounds ostracize a Native female
- Don't Turn Your Back on Racism – 2 males of Asian and South Asian descent stand up against each other
- Hate Has No Place in our Community – 2 white youth say no to racist leaflets
- I Go to School to Learn, Not to be Harassed – a group of students and a teacher wipe graffiti off of a student locker.
- Racism: Don't Let it Run in Your Family – a Black and a White mother argue in the playground while their two young children watch.

The poster series is accompanied by a pocket guide that provides information for secondary students, including: What is racism?; What can you do to help stop racism?; What are your rights?; Who can you talk to or call to help victims of racism?

Public Service Ad: Live Violence Free – Bullying is Dead Serious

Developed by: B.C. Association of Broadcasters and the BC Government

- Television and radio public service announcements (PSAs) supported by a toll-free information line and an information kit. The PSAs were part of an anti-violence campaign that each year focused on a different issue.
- Year 2 focused on bullying. 2 x 30 sec radio and television PSAs were developed with the key message of 'Bullying is Dead Serious'. The PSAs show the experiences of Kevin and Sarah in their schools and communities and intimidation, the isolation they face and the serious consequences.

Public Service Ad: Live Violence Free – Anti-Racism

Developed by: B.C. Association of Broadcasters and the BC Government

- Year 3 of the campaign (2001) focused on anti-racism and featured 2 scenarios – the 'Food Court' and 'The Deli'. The food court scene makes the viewer imagine what it is like to be the target of racism when no one wants to sit beside them in the food court and make derogatory comments about the way they smell. The second scenario, 'The Deli' makes the viewer the target of racism from a staff and customers at a deli when they are teased about their name. Both commercials end with the message, 'If 30 seconds of racism feels this bad - Imagine a lifetime.'

Posters: Sexual Exploitation
Developed by: BC Ministry of Attorney General, Save the Children Canada,
BC Provincial Prostitution Unit

Poster series with black and white images featuring the experiences of youth involved in the sex trade industry. Each poster contains the slogan: Sex is Being Bought From a Child Right Now: It's Child Abuse. Each poster contains one of the following messages:

- He is a criminal in this transaction – features an older male approaching a young female in his vehicle
- He does it for food – for survival – shows a young male on the streets
- She believed his promise of glamour and love – shows a distraught young female.
- She came from a good home – it still happened – features a young female that has been abused.

Posters/Curriculum Unit: Student Anti-Violence Program

Developed by: School District # 42 (Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows)

Anti-violence program built around five posters which depict graphic portrayals of physical violence, put downs, gossip, prejudice and sexual harassment. Learning aides based on the posters help students to discuss each topic and suggest their own solutions. Copies are available by contacting glae@pop.schdistict42.bc.ca. Shown on page 115.

Shock, Fear

Poster: Poster Child

Developed by: BC Ministry of Health

Features the famous poster child showing the destructive consequences of smoking. Shown on page 106.

Poster: There Should Be a Law

Developed by: Victoria Equal Opportunity Commission, Australia

Bold writing states: 'There Should Be a Law to Deal With All You Dykes and Faggots.' In small lettering, it states: There is, it protects you from this kind of attitude.

Humour

Poster: Know Someone Who Thinks This is Eye Contact

Developed by: Victoria Equal Opportunity Commission, Australia

Shows the chest area of a woman with the message 'Know Someone Who Thinks This is Eye Contact'.

Variety

Video Contest: Critics Choice

Developed by: BC Ministry of Health

An anti-tobacco prevention program that includes a video that features twelve advertisements drawn from several countries to show different strategies to combat smoking is distributed to schools around the province. Students vote on the advertisements they like the best.

Resource Guides, Brochures

Booklet: Choose Dignity – A Kit for Fighting Hate
Developed by: Westcoast Coalition for Human Dignity
Includes a booklet with information on hate activity in Canada and suggestions for fighting hate for young people who want to get involved in combating hate.

Guide book: YOUth Act Now
Developed by: BC Human Rights Commission
A guide book outlining how to get involved in the YOUth Act Now – End Discrimination campaign, which invited youth to submit ideas for activities to prevent discrimination. Several of the projects were selected to receive funding. The guide book provides examples of activities youth could develop along with suggested resources.

Magazine: GASP
Developed by: BC Ministry of Health
Features graphic images, facts and stories on the truth about tobacco

Card: No Means No
Developed by: Canadian Federation of Students, BC Ministry of Women's Equality
A card that defines the various ways no means no in dating situations. Ends with slogan: Date Rape, Not Understanding No.

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