

---

**ADULT LEARNING KNOWLEDGE CENTRE**

---

**CENTRE DU SAVOIR SUR L'APPRENTISSAGE CHEZ LES ADULTES**

---

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH INITIATIVE**

**AFRICAN CANADIAN COMMUNITY**

**2008**

# **African Canadian Knowledge Exchange Community Outreach Report**

Prepared for

## **The Adult Learning Knowledge Centre Of the Canadian Council of Learning**

Prepared by

Sunday Miller  
of  
**GODSun & Associates Consulting**

July, 2008



**Adult Learning Knowledge Centre  
Centre du Savoir  
Apprentissage chez les adultes**



**GODSun & Associates Consulting**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to Community Outreach Initiative	1
Summary	2
Acknowledgements	4
Forward	5
Introduction	6
Overview of the Process	8
African Canadian Presence in the Atlantic Provinces	9
<b>Research Findings</b>	14
Question 1 Learning needs and gaps	15
Question 2 Meeting the needs	18
Question 3 Obstacles or challenges	20
Question 4 Dealing with obstacles and challenges	22
Question 5 Who should be involved?	23
<b>Discussion</b>	
Introduction	24
Dreams of African Canadians	25
Leadership	27
Financial Concerns	28
Government	30
Healing	31
<b>Recommendations</b>	33
<b>Conclusion</b>	35
<b>Bibliography</b>	37
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A - Population Statistics	
Appendix B - African Canadian Organizations and Institutions	
Appendix C - Community News Bulletin	
Appendix D - Community Outreach Report, Digby, Nova Scotia	
Appendix E - Community Outreach Report, Truro, Nova Scotia	
Appendix F - Community Outreach Report, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia	
Appendix G - Community Outreach Report, Saint John, New Brunswick	
Appendix H - Community Outreach Report, St. John's, Newfoundland	
Appendix I - Definitions	
Appendix J - BLAC Report on Education: Summary of Recommendation	

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY OUTREACH INITIATIVE**

The Adult Learning Knowledge Centre (AdLKC) was established in 2005 by the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) to advance adult learning across Canada. Working with government, educational institutes and community organizations, AdLKC seeks to improve the general public's understanding of the role of lifelong learning in creating economic productivity, social equity and civic engagement, and to foster adult learning systems that are coordinated, accessible and relevant to the needs and interests of all Canadians.

CCL is an independent, non-profit corporation that promotes and supports research to improve all aspects of learning—across the country and across all walks of life. Funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada, CCL was created in 2004 following a series of nationwide consultations where Canadians agreed that lifelong learning is essential to make Canada a world leader in innovation, skills and learning.

Adult learning encompasses a broad spectrum of activities including formal and informal learning. It is usually understood to be purposeful and intentional learning undertaken by adults, either alone or in groups, resulting in distinct and measurable advances in their knowledge, skills and/or attitudes. Adult learning also includes community development initiatives which create opportunities for communities and for individuals within these communities.

In its commitment to developing equitable and accessible adult learning, AdLKC recognizes the importance of overcoming systemic barriers to learning, particularly related to language, race, class, ethnicity and accessibility.

In 2008, AdLKC initiated a community outreach project aimed at five identity-based communities within Atlantic Canada: Aboriginal, African-Canadian, Francophone, immigrants, and people with disabilities. Guided by the adult learning principle that communities are the experts on their issues, the outreach project sought advice from community representatives.

During the first six months of 2008, consultations took place throughout Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. These provided opportunities for dynamic dialogue about adult learning issues. Problems were identified and solutions articulated.

While each of the five communities is distinct in its history, character, and concerns, each shares a desire to increase adult learning opportunities available to their communities, to expand their knowledge, understanding and skills, and to improve the future for themselves and their children.

Each report offers wide-ranging recommendations for expanded programs, improved access and a better understanding of the barriers. Whether the systemic barriers are physical, financial or attitudinal, they impede both individual and community advancement. The reports of AdLKC's community outreach initiative offer insight into adult learning from the perspectives of five vital communities in Atlantic Canada.

## **SUMMARY**

The African Canadian Knowledge Exchange gathered information at eight meetings in March and April 2008 in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland. (The Prince Edward Island community was too busy to meet the project's time constraints.) Each meeting was an open brainstorming session where the following questions were discussed:

- What would you identify as the learning needs of adults in the African Canadian (AC) population? (What are the learning gaps?)
- How would you propose to meet those needs?
- What obstacles or challenges need to be considered in order to meet the learning needs?
- How may these challenges and obstacles be dealt with?
- Who should be involved in the process and at what stage?

In response, most of the identified common themes are the same that were identified 14 years previously in the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report on Education: programming, leadership, finances and healing.

## **PROGRAMS**

The African Canadian population indicated that there was a need for increased programming. The rural communities have limited educational opportunities with little free or affordable space in which to hold programs.

Concern was also expressed for adults who would like to further themselves but cannot afford to quit work to go back to school due to family commitments. Participants also found there was nothing in place for the under-employed who wanted to find a challenging job that would enable them to develop more skills. It was felt that if you were not on EI or Social Assistance there was no place for you to go to achieve your educational goals.

The present structures do not enable disabled adult learners to achieve their educational goals. There was also concern about the lack of programs to recognize prior experience and skills that people had acquired throughout their life—not just associated with academic learning.

## **LEADERSHIP**

It was felt that there needed to be an umbrella organization that would take charge of adult learning needs and move the learning agenda forward. None of the recognized

community organizations had taken on the role of advocating for the adult learner, developing a clear and concise process for learning and doing whatever it takes to make it happen. The feeling was that a non-profit organization should take on this challenge, as there will always be questions of sustainability and funding.

## **HEALING**

At every meeting there was some mention of healing. It was felt that negative attitudes have to be overcome for the communities to move forward. People's experiences as refugees or oppressed peoples need to be dealt with in a holistic manner.

The participants recommended that the AdLKC assist the African Canadian population develop a strategy to deal with some of the identified challenges. This would require bringing together the community organizations and community members to discuss the issues in this report and determine how we move on so that more African Canadians have a better chance of achieving their educational and economic goals/dreams.

The Black community is willing to create its own solutions but it needs the political and economic will of the Atlantic provinces to move beyond talk to action.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The participants came up with many recommendations including:

- Hold another meeting in the Atlantic provinces that will bring African Canadians together to discuss the learning challenges raised by the participants. This would include African Canadian organizations that are presently in place in the Atlantic provinces.
- The community should identify an organization in the African Canadian community to approach to determine if they would be willing to be responsible for advancing the adult learning agenda for African Canadians in the Atlantic provinces.
- Develop a mentorship program made up of committed and concerned individuals.
- Establish learning centres in each African Canadian community that will enable adults to have easy access to further learning opportunities.

African Canadians want to do more and to achieve more in their community. They want to live in an environment where they have the same opportunity to achieve their goals as the next person. An equal opportunity is desired to achieve their potential. African Canadians want innovative programs and/or institutions that will not open the door for some and close the door for others. They want an environment where everyone, regardless of the challenges they face, will be able to walk through the door and find a place where they can sit down, feel at home, and move forward.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people and organizations for assisting GODSun & Associates in making contact with African Canadians in the Atlantic provinces:

- All the coordinators who helped me make it happen: Crystal States and Brenda Clarke of the Regional Educators Program with the Black Educators Association, Melissa Whitman of the Black Employment Partnership Committee in Yarmouth, Jocelyn Stevens of PRUDE in Saint John New Brunswick, Zainab Jerrett of the African and Canadian Association of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Ben Bishop for being willing to sit down with me and brainstorm names to be contacted in the Atlantic provinces;
- Wayn Hamilton, Director of the Department of African Nova Scotian Affairs for providing contacts for me and for disseminating the information;
- Delvina Bernard, Director of the Council on African Canadian Education and Dr. Patrick Kakembo, Director of the African Canadian Services Division of the Department of Education for suggesting that I meet with the masters students and for arranging the meeting;
- Calvin Gough, Adult Education Coordinator with the African Canadian Services Division for sending me a list of his contacts in the Atlantic provinces.

If there is anyone that I have missed, I apologize for my oversight. Your assistance was greatly appreciated.

## FORWARD

When one is dealing with education it is impossible to do so without acknowledging the impact it has on all aspects of life. This report for the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre is to identify the learning gaps that exist in the lives of African Canadians in the Atlantic provinces. One has to look at ‘why’ these learning gaps exist. Without answering the question ‘why’ any solutions will have a minimal impact at best.

This is a huge issue and will take more than a few community meetings, but I have tried to create a holistic view of the situation in as brief a format as possible. I may have raised more questions than I have answered, but I have attempted to shed some light on the situation and to give an idea of the work that has been done by the community to improve their situation.

One cannot look at the situation of a racially visible group and not use the “r” word, racism. It is evident from all the research that there is a race issue in Canada. It is no different here. What is different is that the Atlantic provinces house the indigenous Blacks of Canada, those who have been here for centuries—in most cases longer than people now residing and prospering in Canada.

That economic prosperity and pursuit of freedom and independence has been denied the African Canadian in Atlantic Canada. It is a chain that has been wrapped around the feet of every person living here. Bob Marley pleaded with Ebenezer Scrooge in the *Christmas Carol* to take care because he didn’t know or understand the weight of chain he would be required to bear because of his behaviour towards his fellow humans. The plight of the African Canadian is a weight of chain that the provinces need to take care to remove before it is too late.

As Ebenezer was able to change, so too may we in the Atlantic provinces create opportunities for everyone equally, thus paving the way for economic freedom and increased prosperity for all.

## INTRODUCTION

In January 2008, Sunday Miller of GODSun & Associates Consulting agreed to hold six knowledge exchange meetings in African Canadian communities across the Atlantic provinces. The purpose was to gather information on what the adults in these communities viewed as their educational needs. Meetings were held in March and April in various communities in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland. Meetings were not scheduled in Prince Edward Island due to the community's busy schedule and the project's time constraints.

This report will:

- set the historical background for the presence of African descent peoples living in the Atlantic provinces;
- outline the process used to establish the community meetings and to gather the learning needs information;
- provide a brief overview of the educational and economic status of African Canadians;
- give a summary of the reports generated as well as the complete report for each community;
- summarize the comments made by the participants;
- provide a discussion on the social, educational and economic situation of African Canadians;
- make recommendations for next steps in this process; and
- draw conclusions.

Challenges encountered were:

- February is African Heritage month and is very busy for people of African descent. People were not willing to put another meeting on their agenda or extend a meeting in order to accommodate gathering information.
- There is a large population of African descent people in Nova Scotia so determining where to have meetings was difficult. Due to time constraints, meetings were not held in Prince Edward Island or Cape Breton.
- The Black population covers a large geographical region. Known contacts and organizations were used to help distribute information, but people who were not affiliated did not get the information.
- An attempt was made to contact members of the African Francophone community but it was not successful.

The shining points in this process were:

- Of eight scheduled meetings, only two had a low turnout.
- Excellent information was gathered that will prove to be beneficial for establishing next steps.
- The visited communities have become aware of the Canadian Council of Learning and the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre.
- The communities seem to all be on the same page although they are miles apart and in different provinces.
- People seem to be open to working towards creating a culture of learning and educational advancement in the African Canadian communities.
- The facilitator became aware that no matter how different we think we are, in reality we are the same. The differences are less important than what we have in common. That is something to celebrate.

The comments from the sessions held in Nova Scotia were similar to those at the focus sessions in New Brunswick and Newfoundland. If a meeting had been held in PEI, similar comments may have been voiced. This finding demonstrates that African Canadians in the Atlantic Provinces are having the same experience regardless of where they are living and, therefore, a solution for one could be an acceptable solution for all.

The summary of this report was available at the Adult Learning Symposium in St. John's, Newfoundland, June 23–25, 2008.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS**

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

A general information notice was sent out to community organizations and individuals in mid-January. (See Appendix C for a copy of this News Bulletin.) They were requested to send the information to their community constituents and to members of the community who should be aware of this meeting. The information was spread more rapidly and further abroad than it would have been if just disseminated by one organization.

Calls were made to community organizations to enlist their aid in identifying someone who would coordinate the meeting in their area. The intent was to get the information out as quickly as possible. Due to February being African Heritage month, there was little interest in a community outreach meeting.

Once a coordinator was identified, a date, time and place was arranged based on the activities of that community. An attempt was made to piggyback on other activities but of three meetings set up this way, only one took place. Meeting schedules were sent to everyone on the contact list so if someone could not make a meeting in their area they could attend a meeting elsewhere. As changes were made, a notice was sent to everyone on the contact list.

### **MEETING PROCESS**

Folders and brochures were obtained from the AdLKC. A packet was assembled for each meeting containing brochures on CCL and AdLKC, an agenda and the list of questions to be addressed. A sheet was circulated for contact information of the attendees.

The meeting was basically a brainstorming session as it was felt that this would be the easiest and quickest way to get through the questions. All comments were noted on a flip chart. There was no judging of comments. The transcribed notes were sent out to the attendees for review and to verify that they accurately reflected their intent.

One session was held with the Masters students of the Africentric Adult Education Program at Mount Saint Vincent University. Instead of a brainstorming session, a presentation was made on CCL and the AdLKC and this knowledge exchange project. They were left with an information packet and were asked to e-mail their responses. Unfortunately, due to their heavy workload, only one has responded.

# AFRICAN CANADIAN PRESENCE IN THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES

## HISTORY

African descent peoples or Blacks have lived permanently in most of the Maritimes for at least 300 years<sup>1</sup>. Among the first Blacks to the region were both free persons and slaves. Free Blacks entered in large numbers:

- As part of the Loyalist immigration of 1782–1784, 3,500 African Americans left the United States in 1783 to settle in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.
- As the Maroons from Jamaica in 1796;
- As Black Refugees during and immediately after the war of 1812;
- As part of the nineteenth century immigration from the United States;
- As part of the twentieth century immigration mainly from the Caribbean, United States, and Africa.

## NEW BRUNSWICK

In 1696, an English soldier returning from an expedition against the French and their Indian allies in northern Acadia (New Brunswick) brought with him a Black man. He was carried to the St. John River by the French who captured him during a raid into New England. He was freed by Major Benjamin Church who had led a counter attack from Massachusetts<sup>2</sup>. New Brunswick wasn't established as a province until 1784.

New Brunswick formed part of Acadia, which became Nova Scotia after 1713 when France ceded it to the English. The first New England settlers brought slaves with them and settled on the St. John River in 1763.

With the arrival of the loyalists came the first free Blacks to settle in New Brunswick. Their path was a very difficult one. They had been promised land, but 20 years later some still had not received it. Due to their destitution, some signed away their freedom and became indentured servants in exchange for food, clothing, etc. Because of the difficulties they faced, a large number of the free Blacks chose to leave New Brunswick for Sierra Leone.

The Black refugees were slaves who escaped from their masters in Virginia and Maryland during the war of 1812. The British welcomed them with provisions and shelter. Most were taken to Bermuda where the British fleet was based. At the end of the war the question was “what to do with these refugees?” In 1815, 400-500 of these Black refugees came to New Brunswick by way of Nova Scotia and settled in Loch Lomond. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Pachai, Bridglal *Peoples of the Maritimes*, 1997, p. 8

<sup>2</sup> Raymond, W.O., *History of the River St. John 1604 – 1784*, p. 52

ancestors of the majority of the Blacks living in New Brunswick came from the United States and the West Indies

For some time after the formation of the province, many of the African descent children did not attend school. In some cases there was no school in their community and in other instances it was because they weren't allowed to attend a school with white children. Separate schools sprang up. As early as 1790, members of the Black community tried to get schools for their children. In 1812, the first successful Black settlement was set up in Otnabog, New Brunswick.

The number of African descent people in New Brunswick is perhaps understated since some community members refuse to fill out the forms and others who do not identify themselves as Black. This is because their country of origin did not distinguish a person based on their skin colour so they identify with other factors. This is a North American construct based on discriminatory practices.

At the time of the first census in 1824 there were 1,513 Blacks living in NB. In 1921, the Black population declined to 1,190 and by 1961 it was back up to 1,274<sup>3</sup>. The 1991 Census indicated that there were approximately 3,000 African Canadians living in New Brunswick. According to the 2001 census there are 3,850 Blacks living in New Brunswick, about 2 ½ times the 1824 figure. (See Table 1 in Appendix A)

Blacks formed many organizations to assist them in their struggle to survive. The efforts of organizations such as the New Brunswick Association for the Advancement of Coloured People enabled Blacks to deal with some of their difficulties. Things are far from ideal but they are not what they used to be.

## **NOVA SCOTIA**

The presence of African descent peoples in the Maritimes goes back to at least 1604 when a Mathieu da Costa came to Port Royal in the service of a French colonizing expedition. His family can be traced to Portugal. Da Costa played a vital role as interpreter between the French and the MicMac when they were attempting to establish the European trade industry. He is one of four men listed as having died of scurvy in the winter of 1606–1607.

In 1783, 3,000 Black Loyalists came to Nova Scotia. More than 1500 of these immigrants settled in Birchtown making it the largest free Black community in North America<sup>4</sup>. The Black Pioneers, the only all-Black regiment raised by Great Britain during the Revolution, settled in Digby and nearby Brindley Town. A third area of Black concentration was Little Tracadie near Guysborough, and the fourth was Preston, near Dartmouth.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Invisible Minorities, Employment Equity Research Project, Jan 1999. p. 8-9.

<sup>4</sup> Blythe, Bob *The Odyssey of the Black Loyalists*, The Unfinished Revolution

In 1796, 550 Jamaican Maroons arrived in Halifax. They were martial people and had resisted European rule when in Jamaica. They were put to work building the fortification at the Citadel. Their stay here was fraught with tension and in 1800 the majority left for Sierra Leone.

From 1813–1816, 1,600 Black refugees arrived in Nova Scotia from Bermuda where they had been stationed with the British fleet.

There were many prominent Blacks who fought for the cause of their people and demonstrated awesome leadership establishing organizations and societies to help their communities. James Johnston founded the Industrial School of Nova Scotia for Coloured Children, which lasted for three weeks before it was blown up in the Halifax Explosion. This school has since been transformed into the Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children. It was started to take care of Black orphans and neglected children, to train them and to place them back in society. The names may have changed but some of those organizations are still in existence. For a complete listing of African Canadian organizations and institutions, see Appendix B.

## **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

In 1783, St. John's Island (which became Prince Edward Island in 1799<sup>5</sup>) had 26 Black slaves, and the following year 16 Black servants were added to this number. By 1881 the Black population had risen to 155. Appendix A Table 2 indicates the present population of African Canadians in PEI.

## **NEWFOUNDLAND**

Little information was available on the history of African descent people in Newfoundland. According to Bridglal Pachai in his book *Peoples of the Maritimes, Blacks*, Newfoundland had 55 Blacks of single origin and 125 Blacks of multiple origin. Pachai acknowledges that these figures are probably low. Refer to Table 4 in Appendix A for a historical accounting of statistical figures.

## **THE PRESENT**

According to Pachai there are three main factors which contributed to the general poverty suffered by Blacks in the Maritimes: lands granted on the basis of licenses of occupation; racial prejudice and discrimination; and poor education which exacerbated the difficulties to attain upward mobility in the job market<sup>6</sup>.

Poor education was the result of segregated schools and school buses that would not stop in Black settlements to take children to the integrated secondary schools. In 1970, the highest grade available in a segregated school was grade 6. In rural areas the situation was

---

<sup>5</sup> Pachai, Bridglal. *Peoples of the Maritimes, Blacks*, 1997 p. 12

<sup>6</sup> Pachai, Bridglal, *Peoples of the Maritimes, Blacks*, 1997. p. 25

worse<sup>7</sup>. According to the BLAC Report, segregation was used to maintain a practice of racial superiority of Whites over Blacks. Segregated schools helped to maintain and support the established pattern of Black servitude well beyond 1783, and have led to continued racial discrimination and economic deprivation in Nova Scotia<sup>8</sup>.

The highest concentration of African Canadians in the Atlantic Provinces is in Nova Scotia (Refer to Tables 1 & 2 in Appendix A).

The 2006 Census enumerated 58,600 racially visible groups in the Atlantic region. The four Atlantic provinces share similar ethnocultural characteristics and many of the region's residents can trace their ancestors back to the first settlements in Canada. The oldest African descent free communities in North America are located in Nova Scotia. Racially visible groups accounted for 4.2% of the population, the highest proportion in the Atlantic region. Blacks accounted for just over one-half of its racially visible population.

The 2006 Census enumerated 19,200 people belonging to the Black visible group. The vast majority (91.7%) were Canadian-born. Nine of 10 Blacks in Halifax were Canadian-born, the highest proportion in any census metropolitan area. In fact, Halifax had the highest proportion of Canadian-born racially visible groups in the country. Due to these large numbers many organizations have been established in Nova Scotia. As a result, most of the available information regarding the educational, social and economic status of African Canadians in the Maritimes has come from Nova Scotia.

## **ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL STATUS**

In 1991, 7% of Canadians with a bachelor's degree were poor. Seventeen percent of African Canadians with a bachelor's degree were poor and were at the same level as those without a degree. In spite of educational attainment and the fact that Blacks are less likely to be dependent on assistance than the population as a whole, in 1991, 31.5% of the population lived below the Canadian poverty line including 40% of all African Canadian children.

Recent studies cast relevant insight on the educational and economic situation of Blacks in Canada. According to a study done in 1997 by Professor James L. Torczyner of McGill University, Blacks had comparable educational attainment as non Blacks yet the unemployment among Blacks was higher than the Canadian population as a whole (15% vs. 10%) and Black workers earned less money than the Canadian population<sup>9</sup>. Torczyner also said that Black men had marginally higher levels of educational attainment than do all men, all women, or Black women in Canada<sup>10</sup>.

---

<sup>7</sup> Pachai, Bridglal, *Peoples of the Maritimes, Blacks, 199*, p. 30

<sup>8</sup> BLAC Report on Education *Redressing Inequity-Empowering Black Learners*, December 1994, p. 55

<sup>9</sup> Canadian Heritage: Multiculturalism Vol 2. *Visible Minority Workers are at Greater Economic Risk*, July 21, 1998

<sup>10</sup> McGill News, Alumni Quarterly, *The Complex Face of Black Canada*, Winter of 1997

A study done in 1999 indicated that the Maritimes has the highest rate of African Canadians in Canada who have not completed high school. This in part is due to the fact that the African Canadians in the Atlantic provinces are indigenous Blacks who have been the targets of systemic racism. Nine in 10 Blacks in Halifax were Canadian-born, the highest proportion of Canadian-born Blacks in any census metropolitan area. In fact, Halifax had the highest proportion of Canadian-born visible minorities in the country<sup>11</sup>.

The Canadian Association of Social Workers developed a report on the status of women based on the 2001 Census. They concluded that African Canadian women are among the poorest of the poor in Canada. They found that:

- The average income of African Canadian women was \$20,029, while the average income of all Canadians was \$29,769. A disproportionate share of African Canadian women had incomes below the poverty line
- The average wage of African Canadian women was 79% of what African Canadian men earned and only 57% of what all Canadian men earned. This means that 34.5% of African Canadian women in families were poor and 52.7% of unattached African Canadian women were poor versus 13.7% of all women in families and 41.9% of all unattached women in the general population.
- African Canadian women are unemployed at a rate that is 63% higher than for all women.

---

<sup>11</sup> *Canada's Ethnocultural Mosaic, 2006 Census: Provinces and Territories*

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The following questions were asked at each meeting:

1. What would you identify as the learning needs of adults in the African Canadian (AC) population? (What are the learning gaps?)
2. How would you propose to meet those needs?
3. What obstacles or challenges need to be considered in order to meet the learning needs?
4. How may these challenges and obstacles be dealt with?
5. Who should be involved in the process and at what stage?

The findings will be dealt with in the same sequence as the questions. This will be a summary of the most common responses for each question from each group. For an exhaustive list of the responses, refer to Appendix D – H.

Recommendations and conclusions are at the end of this report.

## QUESTION ONE

### WHAT WOULD YOU IDENTIFY AS THE LEARNING NEEDS OF ADULTS IN THE AFRICAN CANADIAN (AC) POPULATION? (WHAT ARE THE LEARNING GAPS?)

#### PROGRAMS

In the rural areas there are basically limited educational opportunities. The common complaint was the lack of programs and program delivery. This is in part due to the lack of free or affordable space within African Canadian communities where training and learning for adults could take place regularly. A number of the rural communities do not have access to a community college within a reasonable travel distance from their home.

There are many adults in the African Canadian population who have received a grade 12 certificate but do not have the skills that go with it. Programs are needed to enable these people to develop their literacy/numeracy skills.

It was also suggested that there was a need for more modular or individualized training. For example, an adult with a learning disability would need individualized training in order to achieve their desired educational goal. There needs to be recognition that the cookie cutter approach to learning programs won't work for everyone.

It was also mentioned on numerous occasions that programs were not in place that recognized prior experience. There is a need for people in the community to be able to receive certification for their skills and abilities.

Participants often suggested a need for some sort of mentorship program. People lacked information regarding requirements to enter programs as well as information on what is available. There was a lack of trust and people felt that there was no one within the system who would support them. People felt that they needed someone who would be there to assist and guide them through the educational bureaucracy and the obstacles that they were sure to face. Some were not sure how they would get started on their educational goals, so having a mentor would be of great benefit.

There continues to be a need for more Blacks in the educational system as teachers and administrators.

#### ***Suggested Programs:***

- Basic literacy;
- Computer training;
- Workshops such as CPR, first aid, etc.;
- Financial management;
- Financial investment;
- Wills/Estate planning;

- Career Management;
- A program that would enable an adult to stay on top of the changes in the educational system. In this way adults would be able to help their child with homework;
- English language;
- Job training;
- How to become financially independent;
- Mentorship.

## **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Many African Canadians expressed their interest in further education but stated that they could not afford to quit their job to pursue further studies since they had to work to support themselves and/or their family. They felt there was nothing in place for the aspiring adult learner who was not on Employment Insurance (EI) or Social Assistance. An employed adult who wants to improve him/her self and can't afford to quit their job cannot access funds or any government programs to get ahead.

It was recognized that the cost of transportation and the added cost of childcare for single parents made further education impossible for many members of the African Canadian population. There seemed to be a lack of funding for childcare regardless of one's social or economic level.

There are adults in the African Canadian population between the ages of 25–35 who have a grade 12 diploma but are functionally illiterate. There is no financial support for adult learners who desperately need academic upgrading. And there is a high possibility that due to their literacy challenges they are unemployed and not able to afford any academic pursuit.

There is also a serious problem with underemployment within the Black community. This impacts one's financial resources prohibiting further education, not to mention one's self-esteem. Underemployment could be the result of low educational attainment or discriminatory practices within the work place.

The inability to afford medication that helps potential adult learners function and be successful also prevents them from taking advantage of learning opportunities in their community.

For those on assistance it was another set of problems.

- Transportation to the learning venue: In the rural areas, longer distances have to be travelled to take advantage of learning opportunities. Those who are on social assistance have a travel allotment. Once that amount has been used the learner is expected to pay out of their own pocket. Since they can't afford to get to the learning site they stay home. Educational progress is not made and frustration increases.
- The adult learner finds the funding process intimidating. The length of the application, the terminology and the complexity of the forms is overwhelming.

## **LEADERSHIP**

There is no umbrella organization in the African Canadian communities willing to be responsible for adult learning in the Atlantic provinces. It was acknowledged that there are many African Canadian organizations but there was uncertainty as to whether these organizations were following/achieving their mandates. Participants were not able to identify one specific organization that they could say with certainty was dealing with adult education or was focused on adult learning. People felt that they were learning in isolation without community support. This made the learning experience that much more difficult and frustrating.

It was also felt that there was a lack of collaboration and partnering within the African Canadian communities that caused learning to be in isolation and without support. This was evident in three ways:

- community to community;
- community organization to community organization;
- community to learning organizations/institutions.

## **ASSESSMENT**

It was felt that there was a lack of assessment ability within the African Canadian communities so people with learning needs were not being identified. There is a need for an effective assessment process that will enable adult learners to take personal ownership of their skills and abilities. There was a recognition that knowing how to self assess and to reflect on one's learning is a difficult process, especially since they may have had bad experiences with past learning. In some communities the waiting time for assessment seemed to be too long and led to educational delays.

## **QUESTION TWO**

### **HOW WOULD YOU PROPOSE TO MEET THOSE NEEDS?**

#### **PROGRAMS**

- The learning process and environment needs to be transformed. It may even require that the learning venue be changed. For example, instead of the adult learner leaving their community to obtain further education have the instructor go to the learner's community.
- Provide flexible access to academic upgrading that will accommodate the adults who are working and/or are single parents responsible for providing for their family.
- Provide more culturally relevant curriculum and incorporate the achievements or activities of community members into the curriculum
- There needs to be more programs available in the communities and access to the programs has to be put in place. These programs must meet the needs of the adult learner, the individual, and not the institution.
- Evaluate all the programs and organizations that impact African Canadian learners.

#### **LEADERSHIP**

- There needs to be something in place that will tie all the provincial organizations together and has pro-active leadership. This could be a position, several positions, or a formal structure. Whatever is put in place needs to be able to deal with education holistically.
- The communities need to identify African Canadians who are committed to the cause of the community and who are willing to speak out regarding these needs. The community also needs to be willing to give members of the opportunity to take on leadership roles and to become an advocate for the community.
- Opportunities are needed for mentorship and then provide incentive to community members to be involved in mentoring and/or tutoring
- There needs to be more collaboration and partnership between and among African organizations. Opportunities also need to be provided for the exchange of best practices, knowledge, etc. with other African organizations globally.

## **EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS**

- The policy makers in the educational system need to be aware of the learning needs of African Canadians. And those organizations that interact with new immigrants need to ensure they have adequate information on all aspects of life and learning in Canada as well as having African Canadian representation in the decision-making positions.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- Service providers should create a more flexible funding structure that will support and enable adult learners to further their education. Review the funding for transportation and have discretionary funds available for adult learners in recognition of the complexities of life.
- The business community should be engaged. There is a need for employer support and dialogue to determine how the needs of the employer can be met with the adult learner from the African Canadian community.
- There has to be access to space and affordable transportation.
- The African Canadian communities in the Atlantic provinces have to become financially independent.

## **PERSONAL**

- There needs to be a healing process to enable the learner to grow within and to deal with bad learning experiences of the past so that they can become interested in learning again. There is an urgent need to identify ways to provide an easy and non-threatening way for community members to participate in a positive higher learning experience. Educational institutions need to provide opportunities for community members to become involved in a learning environment.
- The African Canadian communities need to become supportive environments built on trust and love.

### **QUESTION THREE**

#### **WHAT OBSTACLES OR CHALLENGES NEED TO BE CONSIDERED IN ORDER TO MEET THE LEARNING NEEDS?**

##### **ATTITUDINAL CHALLENGES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

The following behaviours/attitudes were identified as prevalent in the African Canadian community and would hinder solutions to educational needs of adults in the community:

- Defeated thinking;
- The attitude African Canadians have towards one another or the lack of love they have for each other ;
- Lack of a positive self image;
- Lack of personal growth;
- African Canadians don't know who they are and don't value what they have to offer as individuals and as a community;
- Lack of interest/motivation;
- Lack of hope/vision/goals/dreams;
- Selfishness;
- Jealousy;
- The need to hang onto resentments;
- There is no support for the development of a community of learning, and there is an unwillingness to celebrate the successes of everyone, no matter how small. The community is identified as lacking the internal support mechanisms and trust among members which leads to a lack of unity or solidarity. The lack of trust and of willingness to work together as African Canadians prevents the creation of a supportive and unified community;
- There is a negative focus and the propagation of negative stereotypes;
- There is an attitude of dependency where African Canadians are not willing to take responsibility for their own lives and work hard to achieve goals;
- Power struggles within the communities.

##### **ATTITUDINAL CHALLENGES OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY**

- Stereotypes of African Canadians as being poor and opportunistic;
- Racism;
- Systemic barriers;
- There was a concern that the rural areas are not viewed as important as the urban areas. There is too much deconstruction of rural communities and, as a result , the rural adult learner is not being reached.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL/INSTITUTIONAL CONCERNS**

There is a demonstrated need for control and maintaining power within the communities and their organizations. This is in part due to the funding environment requiring that they compete with one another. There is a concern that the organizations within the African Canadian communities may not be willing to work together. There is also the question of how effective these organizations are.

There is a concern that any new initiatives put in place for African Canadians may not be supported by the general population and that there may not be the economic or political will to financially support them. The status quo will reign supreme and outreach to the community will not happen if resources are not put towards doing the community outreach.

There is also concern that people may not be willing to accept the information coming from the African Canadian community because the community lacks economic clout and will not be taken seriously. And if it is not taken seriously, no one will be willing to change.

It was also suggested that the educational organizations or institutions may not be willing to change to address the learning needs of adults in these communities. The educators may resist any changes or modification to the curriculum that would incorporate the achievements or successes of African Canadians in their community. They may also be unwilling to incorporate Africentric principles to attract more African Canadians to their programs. (See Appendix I for a definition of Africentricity)

## QUESTION FOUR

### HOW MAY THESE OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES BE DEALT WITH?

#### COMMUNITY

- Conduct more and better organized community consultations which may increase the number of participants entering learning opportunities;
- Provide opportunities for social networking;
- Find those in the community who have 'been there, done that' who are willing to act as guides or mentors for others. In other words, build support mechanisms and mentoring systems;
- Members need to change attitudes and behaviours that reinforce the stereotypical perspective of African Canadians;
- A concerted effort needs to be made to become more united;
- Community members need to work at respecting each other and respecting leaders so that they can do the work that needs to be done; Without this in place it will be very difficult to move ahead;
- People need to be willing to get involved in the community organizations and develop their leadership skills because there is a need for a new and fresh perspective;
- There needs to be more governance training in the communities so that community members know how structures should work;
- Need to have a dream session;
- Build a library of people's talents/gifts and then celebrate people's contributions and successes;
- Need a planning day to more adequately answer this question;
- Have a motivational speakers list and have motivational sessions in the communities with follow-up;
- Need to create a healing process for members of the African Canadian communities since there is a need for mental and emotional healing;
- Need to gain economic and financial independence;
- Develop a focus of community benefit instead of individual benefit.

Develop the following attitudes:

- Non judgmental;
- Respect ;
- Positive attitude;
- Faith that each individual person has a unique purpose.

There is a need to have more collaboration with businesses and organizations in the African Canadian community.

## **LEADERSHIP:**

- There needs to be leadership in place that will hold all structures accountable to the community and that will be willing to be responsible for moving the vision forward.
- There needs to be a coordinator whose sole job is to ensure that the funds get to where they need to be in the community.
- Have the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre help the African Canadian communities develop a strategy to deal with the issues identified.
- Bring all the communities together to talk about the issues.
- Create an umbrella group to deal with these issues. This group should not be a community not-for-profit organization.
- Develop leadership in small pockets across the provinces.
- Strengthen a core of organizations/groups that in turn can be support for other organizations throughout the Atlantic provinces.

## **GOVERNMENT**

- Find out how Provincial Councils work so that concerns and ideas can be put forward.
- The government needs to recognize credentials of community members.

## **COMMUNICATION**

- Share information and knowledge.
- Put information regarding learning opportunities and community activities on the popular media channels;
- Create a Black directory online.

## **QUESTION FIVE**

### **WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS AND AT WHAT STAGE?**

- The community members should be involved in the process in the early stages; then the community organizations and all service providers;
- The same people who attended the community outreach meeting as well as members of community and provincial organizations;
- Council on African Canadian Education;
- The Black Educators Association;
- Calvin Gough – Adult Education Coordinator with the Department of Education;
- Nova Scotia Community College;
- The universities;
- Federal, provincial and municipal governments.

## DISCUSSION

### INTRODUCTION

Numerous surveys, focus groups, round tables, etc. have been held over the past 20 years, if not longer, to get input from the African Nova Scotian community on their educational, economic, and social needs. The list looks something like this:

- *The Nova Scotia Advisory Group on Race Relations* provided the Provincial, Federal, and Municipal governments with 94 recommendations.
- *The BLAC Report on Education* in 1994 provided the provincial government with 46 recommendations, all of which were agreed upon by for implementation by 1999. Fourteen years later these recommendations are still being worked on.
- *The Black Business Report* in 1995 provided 39 recommendations.
- *The Task Force on Government Services to Nova Scotia's Black Community* in 1996 provided 45 recommendations.

Although these reports are all in relation to Nova Scotia, the comments gathered through this knowledge exchange process indicate that the challenges faced by African Nova Scotians are the same as African Canadians in the other provinces.

The responses during the Community Outreach sessions make it clear that African Canadians have a very good idea of the obstacles they face and have solutions for them. After all, they have been dealing with the same problems for centuries. Their response has also given a clear indication of their dreams and aspirations or themselves and for the future success of all African Canadians, as well as the overall success of the provinces in which they reside.

I will initially focus my comments on these hidden dreams, hopes, and aspirations. I use the term "hidden" because they are still struggling to have these dreams and aspirations met. We are indeed a product of our ancestors who hung on and struggled to survive until they were given the land that had been promised to them in the American Revolution and the war of 1812. Their dream was to be free, to have a place of their own, to be able to provide well for themselves and their family, to leave a heritage, to achieve their own potential and to be part of a healthy and prosperous community. That dream is still alive today.

Freedom takes many shapes and being free to achieve your potential and determine your future based on your ability, and not your race, is still something to be attained by African Canadians in the Atlantic provinces.

## DREAMS OF AFRICAN CANADIANS

In any building assignment the obstacles must be removed to create a foundation on which one can build a stable and secure building. The building of a stable and secure community is no different.

A long list of attitudes was identified as prevalent in the African Canadian communities. These attitudes colour everything in one's world, yet we should recognize that they are obstacles in the way of a better state of being. The acknowledgment of these attitudes indicates a personal or individual search for change or transformation.

Each African Canadian participant would like:

- to think like a conqueror;
- to love each other and have that love evident in their behaviour towards each other;
- to have a positive self-image;
- to be growing personally on all levels;
- to know who they are and value what they have to offer to society;
- to be motivated and interested in life around them;
- to have hope;
- to have dreams and goals;
- to have a vision for their future;
- to be others-centered;
- to celebrate sincerely the accomplishments of others;
- to not take offense and if a wrong is done to them to be able to forgive and let it go;
- to have a positive focus;
- to destroy negative stereotypes;
- to take responsibility for their own lives;
- to be able to work hard to achieve their goals;
- to live in a community free of power struggles where there is support for each individual's chosen field of advancement;
- to live in a community where even the smallest success is shared and celebrated; and
- to create a community based on trust and unity where structures function effectively for the benefit of all.

Looking back over the history of African Canadians in the Atlantic provinces one can see that in spite of the hardships they have faced they have attempted to create the above world for themselves and others.

In 1782, the first of the Black Loyalists arrived. These were people seeking a new life: a life of freedom and opportunity. They thought that their past of slavery and oppression

would be behind them. They were intent on creating a better world for themselves, hoping to establish secure homes, families and communities. As history records show, it wasn't that simple. The colour of their skin prevented justice from taking place. Their hard work and commitment in the British army could not guarantee them that the promises of land and provisions would be fulfilled. Some of the Loyalists got tired of waiting and left for Sierra Leone. Those who stayed fought a fight that continues today.

They fought to get land, jobs that would use their skills to enable them to survive in this harsh land, and equal status with the other newcomers. Many years later some received land but most of them lost it because it could not be farmed. Depending upon their status upon arrival, they expected to receive 100–1,000 acres. None of the Black loyalists received more than 50 acres. As a result, they had to indenture themselves to survive.

The land given was separated from the white community. And in most cases it was the land that no one wanted because it was thought to be impossible to work. But they worked it to establish their independence and stability, though this led to conditions of abject poverty. The adults knew that it was essential for their children to get an education if they were to break the cycle of enforced poverty. So the fight began for schools. As a result segregated schools began. These were better than nothing but they prevented African Canadian children from being educated, in most cases, beyond grade six. Segregated schools were legally abolished in 1954, but the communities were separate so the segregated schools remained until the 70's. The attitudes that caused segregated schools were still in place.

Children who were able to attend the integrated schools were not treated fairly. The BLAC Report highlights the issues around the systemic racism that unfortunately, is still so prevalent in the educational system in Nova Scotia. It appears that the situation in the other provinces is similar. The BLAC Report gave recommendations that benefited the whole school system and not just African descent children.

If we look back over the organizations that the African descent people have established, it is evident that we are dealing with a people who are looking for solutions.

If we look at the responses to question three (What obstacles or challenges need to be considered in order to meet the learning needs?), it is easy to understand why the people in the African Canadian population in the Atlantic provinces seem to have lost hope. These obstacles are recognized as concerns that need to be dealt with. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.." <sup>12</sup> The people of African descent came to Canada with high hopes. Hopes that have not been allowed to take root and grow because of the colour of their skin and because when they came they were easily identified as the disenfranchised.

In our meetings, the question was "what good is this going to do? Will there be any follow up or will it end just like all the others with no major impact on the community?" Yet some community members were still willing to meet and to pour out their hearts regarding the dreams for themselves, their people and their community. African descent

---

<sup>12</sup> Proverbs 13: 12

people are a resilient people because even though things seem to be against them they are always willing to hang onto a ray of hope. Runoko Rashidi put it this way:

*“The thing that really strikes me is the resilience of the Black communities here....it’s amazing the resilience of these Black communities in the Prestons and the various other places that I’ve been to. It really stands out to me. Such a small population that nevertheless has managed to remain intact for such a long period of time is a remarkable testament to the strength and tenacity of African people. I am very impressed<sup>13</sup>.”*

Every person who reads this report could paint the picture of the life, community, society that the African descent person wants. It is the same life, community, society that you would paint for yourself. It would be a society where people are not judged by the colour of their skin, or their accent, or the texture of their hair, etc. It would be a place where everyone is positive towards the other, respects them and believes that each individual has a unique purpose for being here.

When the individual groups identified how their dreams could be brought to fruition they looked towards themselves as well as outward. It is clear that the attitudinal issues are going to take a concerted effort on the part of all peoples in Atlantic Canada. It has taken centuries to create such an overwhelming sense of oppression, defeat and worthlessness and it will not be healed overnight.

## **LEADERSHIP**

There was an expressed desire for a person or organization to be established to champion the cause of the African Canadian adult who wants to further their education yet has many obstacles such as lack of funding, literacy or lack of human support.

The community has identified the need for an umbrella organization that will be given the responsibility to champion and advocate for the learning needs of the African Canadian adult. The leaders must champion and advocate for adult learning in the African Canadian communities with a faith or belief in their people. These leaders will not maintain the status quo but will seek to change the learning, social and economic environment.

There may be an organization that has shown good governance, strategic visioning and goal accomplishment as well as having demonstrated their commitment to their people and community, but none of the participants suggested one.

This organization needs to be arms length from the government so it will have the power to do what needs to be done. It was also suggested that it not be a non-profit since that would mean uncertainty of sustainability. It needs to be an organization that will not show preference to any one organization or province. The challenge will be to find an organization that will be able and willing to work collaboratively with all the other African Canadian educational organizations and communities.

---

<sup>13</sup> *Racism and the Black World Response International Symposium*, Aug.5, 2001, pg.31

The message has come through loud and clear that there is no faith in those who are presently seen to be responsible for adult learning in the African Canadian communities. This is in part due to the lack of collaboration in the past and the inherent dysfunctions in community organizations as a result of their struggle for power and funding. The lack of collaboration is to a certain extent due to the fear of losing funding to another community organization. And since it is hard for African Canadians to find employment, they work in isolation. This is one of the unfortunate results of the systemic marginalization of a people.

Mentorship is another important component of leadership. Many of the participants spoke of their desire to get involved in further education but didn't know how to go about it. This may be due to people learning in isolation. Members of the community do not know what others are doing.

There is a need for an educational mentorship program. Ideally the mentors would be members of the African Canadian community but that is not essential. Most important is someone who is successful and is willing to give honest and open direction. Members of the community are tired of learning everything the hard way.

## **FINANCIAL CONCERNS**

Due to poverty among most African Canadians well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, education was limited or considered a luxury. Employment opportunities were limited and Blacks were usually relegated to the heaviest and the lowest paid jobs. African Canadian parents have actively advocated for improved education for their children. As a result more and more Blacks are getting higher education.

In a just world higher education would equate to improved finances. Yet according to a report released by the Canadian Association of Social Workers, African Canadian women are among the poorest of the poor in Canada. The report states that the major factors are racism in the workplace and limited access to higher education. As well social assistance is not set up to give one a respectable standard of living. Blacks' income is among the lowest in Canada. Due to racism one may not necessarily be able to access employment equal to one's education which leads to financial insecurity.

According to the NALL study, adults without a high school diploma or only high school spent as much time in informal learning activities as those with a university degree.<sup>14</sup> According to the *Too Many Left Behind* report by Karen Myers and Patrice de Broucker, less educated adults are five times less likely to participate in structured learning than those with a university degree. The main reasons identified by African Canadians in the Atlantic provinces for not being involved in learning opportunities are lack of finances and accessibility.

According to H. Nigel Thomas in *Spirits in the Dark*, some 3.1% of African Canadian men have master's degrees. This is more than the Canadian population as a whole.

---

<sup>14</sup> David W. Livingstone, Nall Working Papers, p. 2

According to a report done by Research Design Associates Inc for PRUDE Incorporated, the Maritimes has the highest rate of African Canadians in Canada who have not completed high school, which leads to reduced numbers of African Canadians attending university. I would suggest that this is due to the number of indigenous Blacks living in the Maritimes who have been fighting the battle of discrimination, systemic racism and exploitation for centuries.

In 1991, 7% of Canadians with a bachelor's degree were poor. 17% of African Canadians with a bachelor's degree were poor and were at the same level as those without a degree. In spite of educational attainment and the fact that Blacks are less likely to be dependent on assistance than the population as a whole, in 1991 31.5% of the population lived below the Canadian poverty line including 40% of all African Canadian children.

The Canadian Association of Social Workers report on the status of women based on the 2001 Census found:

- The average income of African Canadian women was \$20,029, while the average income of all Canadians was \$29,769. A disproportionate share of African Canadian women had incomes below the poverty line.
- The average wage of African Canadian women was 79% of what African Canadian men earned and only 57% of what all Canadian men earned. This translated into 34.5% of African Canadian women in families who were poor and 52.7% of unattached African Canadian women were poor versus 13.7% of all women in families and 41.9% of all unattached women in the general population.
- African Canadian women are unemployed at a rate that is 63% higher than for all women.

Even having a university degree is no guarantee of employment and/or once the employment has been obtained of achieving upward mobility. Many participants spoke of their underemployment. In some cases they are employed on a contractual basis so there are no benefits. Nor do they have access to professional development and because of the nature of their work they do not have the financial ability to pay for additional training.

Members of the African Canadian communities on social assistance are excluded from the educational system, as there are disincentives to go back to school. Several years ago there was a newsworthy situation of a single mother on social assistance who forced to quit university because she couldn't receive a student loan and social assistance at the same time. She was committing fraud by receiving both and was being taken to court.

Childcare is a concern for the single parent and the child-care assistance depends upon the social worker. When women gain employment under the Employment Supports Program umbrella, 70 percent of their wages are deducted. This limits their access to transportation

and childcare and creates dependence on income assistance thereby reducing their financial stability and independence. <sup>15</sup>

The economic will of the provinces' governments and businesses is necessary for there to be success. There is also a real possibility that the will of the general population will be "status quo" regardless of what solution is identified. In order for the economic level of the Atlantic provinces to be increased, the educational goals of all its inhabitants need to be met.

It is clear that there are many African Canadians who would like to continue their education but are not financially able to do so. In many cases these are people who have achieved a certain level of educational success but are underemployed. This situation leads to discouragement, resentment, and anger. It is in everyone's best interest to have people working at the level that challenges them and causes them to grow and develop. Robert Upshaw stated that:

*"We can never forget, or permit others to forget, that our present level of development as a people is the result of long-standing racism, exploitive practices, and the absence of justice where the rights of African Nova Scotians are concerned."*<sup>16</sup>

The question was asked: if funds are forthcoming how shall they be managed?"

There was an acknowledgement that there is a lack of individual financial management and/or investment know-how in the African Canadian community. Most African families get by on much less than other families, so they know how to budget their money, but need to learn how to leverage money to get more for their dollar. Whoever is managing funds must be a capable person of integrity. Whatever funding is available must be used to take care of the weakest first.

## **GOVERNMENT**

Throughout the history of Nova Scotia the promises that the government has made to Black Nova Scotians have not been honoured. The present patterns of poverty and isolation among African Nova Scotians/Canadians and the widespread distrust of the government systems can be traced back to the 1700s.

The BLAC recommendations were to have been put in place by 1999 so that by 2001 Nova Scotia would have a more equitable school system. The African Nova Scotian community is still waiting for the fulfillment of those promises.

The Task Force Report on Government Services to the African Nova Scotian was given a three-month deadline and it took the government over four years to respond. This creates real doubt regarding the government's willingness to change the status quo.

---

<sup>15</sup> Renee Ross, *Struggling to Survive: Women on Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) in Nova Scotia Provide Their Priority Areas for Policy Reform*. May 2006. pg. 2

<sup>16</sup> *Racism and the Black World Response International Symposium*, August 5, 2001. p. 29

There seems to be little faith in government, but a kernel of hope remains. The BLAC report said:

*“The severity of the problems facing the African Nova Scotian community cannot be addressed by the community alone. For the governments and school boards not to act will lead eventually and inevitably to even greater social and fiscal costs to everyone in the province, to say nothing of the continued wastage of human and economic resources.”<sup>17</sup>*

## HEALING

There was reference made at each session to the need for healing. There have been many unjust acts perpetrated against the African Canadian in the Atlantic provinces almost from the day of their arrival. The history of Blacks in North America has led to some behaviours and attitudes that are self-defeating but which, for whatever reason, we don't seem able to overcome. A 1995 report about entrepreneurial success or challenges in Nova Scotia identified internal challenges faced by the African Canadian communities such as:

- lack of interaction between communities, communities and resources;
- lack of cohesion in the communities which prevents effective planning and implementation;
- leadership and representation<sup>18</sup>.

In the 2001 survey, *The Education & Training Needs of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia*, there is recognition of the lack of unity among Blacks who were born here and those who have immigrated here. There is a desire by some newcomers to remain separate from those indigenous to the area because they believe that it will disadvantage them<sup>19</sup>. They have seen the attitudes towards the indigenous Blacks and wish not to be treated in the same way.

This healing process must come from within the African peoples, but I believe that some outside assistance is necessary. African Canadians have been trying to heal themselves by going back to their African roots to create a sense of self-worth and self-esteem, through development of Black curriculum and cultural academic enrichment programs that teach African descent people about their heritage with a holistic perspective.

The BLAC Report was to have been the beginning of the second stage of the journey for the Department of Education and Culture<sup>20</sup>. But the recommendations are still being fulfilled. The recognition of and admission to the need for healing is the beginning of the process including the following:

---

<sup>17</sup> BLAC Report on Education, *Redressing Inequity – Empowering Black Learners*, December 1994. p. 66

<sup>18</sup> The African Nova Scotian Business Ad-Hoc Committee, Michael Rolle, August 1995, p.31

<sup>19</sup> *The Education & Training Needs of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia*, June 2001 p 16, 38

<sup>20</sup> *Response to the Black Learners Advisory Committee Report on Education*, Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, June 1995, p. 12

- The general population acknowledging that the people of African descent have been exploited and treated unjustly in the Atlantic provinces;
- An apology made to them;
- African Canadians accepting the apology and forgiving them for the unjust acts that have been perpetrated against them because of their skin colour.

There is even a possibility that some sort of reparation would take place for those who have been removed from their land.

The emotional and mental well-being of African Canadians is just as important to the provinces as their social and economic well-being. African descent peoples in the Atlantic provinces have been attempting to achieve their potential from the first moment of stepping on this soil. Feeling good about oneself goes a long way to assisting one in achieving their potential but it cannot overcome systemic racism and pre-determined barriers based on skin colour.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

#	RECOMMENDATION	TIME LINE
1	Hold another meeting in the Atlantic provinces that will bring African Canadians (AC) together to discuss the learning challenges raised by the participants. This would include African Canadian organizations that are presently in place in the Atlantic provinces.	Within the year
2	The AdLKC assist the African Canadian population in the Atlantic provinces to organize this meeting.	
3	Develop a communication process or plan in order to reach as many of the community organizations and people of the African Canadian population in the Atlantic provinces as possible.	Within two months of making the decision to hold another meeting
4	Give sufficient time to this communication process of at least six months.	
5	The community prioritize the educational needs of the AC community in the Atlantic provinces to determine what gets dealt with first.	At the community meeting
6	Stakeholders (including service providers) be included in the process after the community has come to some agreement regarding priorities and process. This could be a second meeting with the intent of addressing some of the concerns around social assistance, transportation, child care, funding for those not on assistance, etc.	
7	The community should identify an organization in the African Canadian community to approach to determine if they would be willing to be responsible for advancing the adult learning agenda for African Canadians in the Atlantic provinces.	At the community meeting
8	The AC community needs to determine the mandate, vision, and scope of the work that would be required in regards to adult learning.	Community meeting
9	Create an open and transparent process that includes AC from all social, economic and educational levels.	
10	Develop a mentorship program made up of committed and concerned individuals.	Within the year
11	Establish learning centres in each AC community that will	Within the next

	enable adults to have easy access to further learning opportunities.	three years
12	Implement portfolio development programs in AC communities to record the informal learning that has taken place.	Within the next three years
12	Recognize the prior learning of AC.	Now
13	Determine what internal mechanisms need to be in place in order to assist the members of the Black community.	
14	Develop authentic leadership in the African Canadian community. Leadership that goes beyond theory and talk to actual implementation.	Ongoing
15	Create a learning continuum so that regardless of where one gets off, one can get back on and continue the process.	
16	Discuss the attitudes identified in the report.	Community meeting
17	Recognize the need for healing and identify possible healing strategies.	Community meeting
18	Create a healing process so that the community can come together in solidarity and unity.	Three-four months after the community meeting
19	Provide an opportunity for African descent organizations to get together to exchange best practices and ideas. Perhaps a celebration of development.	
20	Provide opportunities for valuable work experience that will enable the learner to grow.	
21	Provide assessment training in the African Canadian communities so that adult learners will have a better chance of having their learning disabilities identified and remedial action taken.	Within six months
22	Create a Black Directory of Who's Who on line.	Now
23	Review the response to questions two and four.	

## CONCLUSION

Access to learning opportunities for less educated adults in Canada is generally poor. According to the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, nine million Canadians between the ages of 16 and 65 have literacy skills below the level considered necessary to function in today's society. African Canadians in the Atlantic provinces also deal with systemic racism. It is an attitude that is evident in the way they are looked at or treated. Unfortunately, this discriminatory attitude has affected the way they treat each other and the extent to which they work together in solidarity.

Many reports have highlighted the unhealthy environment that African Canadians live in. Their communities have been researched and polled to determine their needs and how to resolve them. The members of the African Canadian population in the Atlantic provinces know what their needs are and have been giving solutions for many years. It is unfortunate that their needs are not seen as a priority and effective measures put in place. There are many possible reasons for the delay but to members of the African Canadian population the delay boils down to: they are not valued or considered important enough to have effective and long-term solutions. As Robert Upshaw so eloquently put it, the developmental status of the African Canadian in the Atlantic provinces is the result of systemic racism, enforced poverty and exploitation.

African Canadians want to do more and to achieve more in their community. They want to live in an environment where they have the same opportunity to achieve their goals as the next person. An equal opportunity is desired to achieve their potential. African Canadians want innovative programs and/or institutions that will not open the door for some and close the door for others. They want an environment where everyone, regardless of the challenges they face, will be able to walk through the door and find a place where they can sit down, feel at home and move forward.

Much has been done in certain areas but there are still too many learners left behind. And the severity of the problems that African Canadians face is not something that can be effectively dealt with by the community alone. There needs to be a willingness of government and the general population to come alongside and provide the necessary support to create the structures, deliver the programs and provide the opportunity for healing.

Learning is a very vital piece to achieving economic well-being, which can lead to being able to live a life free of stress and emotional turmoil. It has been shown that, due to racism, upward mobility in the job is not a given even with high levels of education. It is hard to recognize and admit, especially if these are views practiced for centuries.

Whatever is done will require an effective communication plan. The African Canadian community has been through so much that a malaise has set in. They have looked towards

government and then towards their own organizations for relief from the injustice. Many are still without recourse. The communities may be hard to mobilize. If the organization has poor communication then the process will be flawed before it gets underway.

Any transformation will require intervention, healing and extra support to get beyond the obstacles to problem solving and implementation. If the will of the people is to make a difference then it can be done. There needs to be a meeting of all the stakeholders in the African Canadian community and a frank discussion on the economic and educational status of the communities. There needs to be a public acknowledgement of what has been done to the African Canadian. Then solutions with timelines for implementing them need to be implemented and an organization made responsible to carry them out.

*“The essence of power is the ability to define someone’s reality and make them live according to that definition.”<sup>21</sup>*

African Canadians in the Atlantic provinces want to define their own reality and have the freedom to live according to that definition.

---

<sup>21</sup> *Racism and the Black World Response, Ending the Marginalization of the Global African Presence*, Runoko Rashidi p. 31

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1 Department of Education and Culture, Response to the Black Learners Advisory Committee's Report on Education, 1995
- 2 Holy Bible, Proverbs
- 3 Pachai, Bridglal. *Peoples of the Maritimes, Blacks*. 1997
- 4 Walker, James. *The West Indians in Canada*. 1981
- 5 *Websters New World Dictionary*
- 6 The Council on African Canadian Education: *Establishing an Africentric Learning Institute*. 2002
- 7 Spray, W. A. *The Blacks in New Brunswick*. 1972
- 8 Blythe, Bob. *The Odyssey of the Black Loyalists: The Unfinished Revolution*.
- 9 Statistics Canada. Census Population 1986, 2001, 2006
- 10 Raymond, W. O. *History of the River St. John 1604 – 1784*
- 11 May, Catherine. *Ottawa Citizen*. 2003
- 12 BLAC Report on Education *Redressing Inequity – Empowering Black Learners*. December, 1994
- 13 Government of Canada, Department of Finance, 2003 Budget
- 14 Spalding, Donna. *The Invisible Minorities*, Employment Equity Research Project, January, 1999
- 15 Canadian Heritage: Multiculturalism Vol. 2, *Visible Minority Workers are at Greater Economic Risk*, July 21, 1998
- 16 McGill News, Alumni Quarterly, *The Complex Face of Black Canada*, Winter of 1997
- 17 Rashidi, Runoko. *Ending the Marginalization of the Global African Presence*, August, 2001 at the Racism and Black World Response International Symposium
- 18 Livingstone, David W. Nall Working Papers

- 19 *Towards Responsive Education*, Discussion Paper, Subcommittee on Education Human Resources Sector, March 1999
- 20 Ross, Renee, *Struggling to Survive: Women on Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) in Nova Scotia Provide Their Priority Areas for Policy Reform*, May 2006
- 21 Upshaw, Robert. *African Nova Scotian Communities in Struggle*, August, 2001 at the Racism and Black World Response International Symposium
- 22 Rolle, Michael. *Consultant's Research Report*, The African Nova Scotian Business Ad-Hoc Committee, August 1995
- 23 *The Education and Training Needs of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia*, June 2001

**APPENDIX A**

**AFRICAN CANADIAN POPULATION STATISTICS**

**IN THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES**

Table 1

**Racially Visible Population**

ITEM	Canada	Newfoundland	PEI	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick
Total Population	29,639,035	505,075	133,385	897,570	719,710
Black	662,210	840	370	19,670	3,850
% of total	2.2	0.17	0.28	2.2	0.53

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Population

Table 2

**Racially Visible Population**

ITEM	Canada	Newfoundland	PEI	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick
Total Population	31,241,030	500,605	134,205	903,090	719,650
Black	783,795	905	640	19,230	4,455
% of total	2.5	0.18	0.48	2.1	0.62

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population

Table 3

**Gender Breakdown of African Canadians**

Province	Total Black Population	Males	Females
New Brunswick	4,455	2,290	2,165
Newfoundland	905	500	405
Nova Scotia	19,230	9,150	10,080
Prince Edward Island	640	315	330

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population

Table 4

**Immigrant Population by Place of Birth**

Item	Canada	NL	PEI	Nova Scotia
Caribbean and Bermuda	317,765	145	90	980
Africa	374,565	560	165	2,125

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population

Table 5

**Population of Blacks in the Maritimes**

Item	Blacks of Single Origin	Blacks of Multiple Origin
NL	55	125
Nova Scotia	7855	5060
New Brunswick	935	1145
PEI	50	225

Source: Statistics Canada, 1986 Census of Population

## APPENDIX B

### AFRICAN CANADIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

*The following is a list of organizations started in Nova Scotia by African Canadians. This is by no means an exhaustive list.*

African United Baptist Association, 1854

The Halifax Coloured Citizens Improvement League, 1932

Coloured Education Centre, 1938

Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured Peoples (NSAACP), 1945—Dr. Oliver—to serve as a provincial body to further the interests of the Black people of Nova Scotia

The Black United Front, 1969—Dr. Oliver

The Society for the Protection and Preservation of Black Culture in Nova Scotia known as the Black Cultural Society for Nova Scotia—Dr. Oliver

Watershed Association Development Enterprise (WADE), 1984

Black Business Consortium Society of Nova Scotia, 1971

The Black Educators Association, 1969

The Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) 1991 created by the Province of Nova Scotia

Transition Year Program – Dalhousie and the community college

Indigenous Black and Native Micmac Law Program

George Washington Carver Credit Union, 1950

North Preston Ratepayers Association, late 1940s

Black Professional Women's Group, 1969

The East Preston Lions Club, 1977

Afro-Canadian Caucus of Nova Scotia, 1921

Black Business Initiative, 1997

Council on African Canadian Education, 1995

African Canadian Services Division, 1995

African Nova Scotian Affairs, 2006

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, 1967

Black Cultural Centre, 1977

### ***African Canadian Organizations in New Brunswick***

The New Brunswick Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, 1959

The New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, 1967

PRUDE (Pride of Race, Unity and Dignity through Education), 1980

Its aims are to promote cultural identity through education and local and provincial activities, stressing Black culture, heritage, and religion. PRUDE also monitors the needs of Blacks and promotes activities, discussions and programs aimed at enhancement of cultural standards and resolution of problems.

Colour Progressive Association, 1943

The Provincial Resources of Black Energy (PROBE), 1969

### ***African Canadian Organizations in Newfoundland***

African and Canadian Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (ACENL)

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY NEWS BULLETIN

**NEWS BULLETIN**

Attention Community Members:

This notice is being sent to inform you that a meeting is being planned to discuss the educational needs of **adult** African Canadians in the Atlantic Provinces.

The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) has been mandated to assist with improving life-long learning opportunities in Canada. Five Knowledge Centres have been established that deal with:

- Aboriginal learning
- Adult Learning
- Early Childhood learning
- Health and learning
- Work and learning

Since CCL's formation in 2004 activity has taken place across Canada in many of the above five areas. In the adult learning area there has been a recognition that more work needs to be done with the African Canadian population in the Atlantic Provinces.

Therefore, a meeting will be held in your area sometime during the month of March, 2008. The intent of the meeting will be to get your input on what you consider to be some of the more pressing needs of adult African Canadian learners.

Keep a look out for more information about a meeting that will take place near you and please come out to voice your concerns, needs and, ideas as they relate to adult learning for African Canadians.

I look forward to seeing you at a meeting.

Sunday Miller  
902- 449-2097

**APPENDIX D**  
**COMMUNITY OUTREACH RESPONSE**  
**DIGBY, NOVA SCOTIA**

1. **What would you identify as the learning needs of adults in the African Canadian population? (What are the learning gaps?)**
  - Lack of partnership and collaboration; people learning in isolated silos;
  - No umbrella organization responsible for adult learning;
  - Mandate of organizations questionable and not being followed;
  - Financial resources;
  - Lack of programs and program delivery in rural areas;
  - Lack of space within community to deliver programs ( i.e. no community college);
  - Lack of evening programs;
  - Lack of a community of learning for support;
  - Lack of interest/lack of hope;
  - A missing piece of love;
  - Lack of IT knowledge and capability;
  - Lack of people in the learning environment that look like us;
  - Inappropriate learning materials (materials that make one feel uncomfortable or bad about oneself instead of good and proud).
  
2. **How would you propose to meet those needs?**
  - With leadership that is pro-active—one or several positions;
  - A formal structure;
  - Look at education holistically.
  
3. **What obstacles or challenges need to be considered in order to meet the learning needs?**
  - See #1;
  - Having structures that are already present within the African NS community willing to work together;
  - Response of general population towards new initiatives for ANS;
  - Geographical locations and distances;
  - Defeated thinking;

- The attitude we have towards each other.
4. **How may these challenges and obstacles be dealt with?**
- Someone needs to take charge and be accountable for moving the vision forward;
  - The creation of a healing process within the Black community. We need emotional and mental healing.
5. **Who should be involved in the process and at which stage?**
- CACE/BEA/Calvin Gough with the DOE/ NSCC/Universities.

**APPENDIX E**  
**COMMUNITY OUTREACH RESPONSE**  
**TRURO, NOVA SCOTIA**

**What would you identify as the learning needs of adults in the African Canadian population? (What are the learning gaps?)**

- Basic literacy—there is a lack of programming;
- Nothing in place for those who aren't on EI or Social Assistance;
- Their status of underemployment;
- 25–35-year-old adults who have a grade 12 diploma but are illiterate;
- No financial support for adults who need upgrading ;
- Financial support for working adults who wish to pursue post-secondary/university, but can't afford to as they still need to work to support themselves/family;
- Not implementing the structures currently in place in the ANS communities;
- Lack of collaboration and partnership in the community;
- Lack of an effective communication process ;
- Computer training ;
- Workshops such as WHMIS, first aid, etc.;
- Financial management/investment;
- Transportation;
- Lack of programs in the community;
- Wills/Estate planning;
- Old Age Security and Pensions—knowing what one is entitled to and how to go about making sure that you access the entitlements;
- Ability to identify the people with the learning need;
- Career management;
- Parent support groups.

**How would you propose to meet those needs?**

- Building partnerships;
- Building trust and love within the community;
- Healing ;
- Building a supportive community.

**What obstacles or challenges need to be considered in order to meet the learning needs?**

- Self image;
- Power struggles within the communities;
- Selfishness, jealousy;
- Effective structures in the community;
- Unwillingness to celebrate the successes of everyone, no matter how small;
- The negative focus; need to learn how to focus on the positive.

**How may these challenges and obstacles be dealt with?**

- Have motivational sessions in the community, and implement follow-up;
- The creation of community cells that will support members of the cell;
- A planning day is needed to more adequately answer this question.

**Who should be involved in the process and at which stage?**

- Same people as the ones who attended this meeting, as well as members of provincial and community organizations.

March 11, 2008

## APPENDIX F

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH RESPONSE

#### YARMOUTH, NOVA SCOTIA

**1. What would you identify as the learning needs of adults in the African Canadian population? (What are the learning gaps?)**

- Funding—lack of personal financial resources; this prevents the potential adult learner from being able to purchase necessary medication that would enable one to take advantage of further learning opportunities;
- No career objective/management;
- The structure/process that is in place for those with a grade 12 certificate; They have the certificate but not the skills (functionally illiterate);
- Health challenges due to comprehension and memory retention;
- Lack of mentorship/support;
- Self-esteem/psychological challenge; cycle of negativism is hard to break;
- Lack of trust and support in the system; lack of advocacy;
- Lack of funding for childcare at any social/economic level;
- Limited educational opportunities in the community;
- Funding for transportation. DCS requires that the learner pay for the transportation cost above a certain amount. Is difficult in the rural areas since the learners must travel to the learning sites;
- The funding process is intimidating for the learner (length, terminology, and complexity of the forms that have to be filled out by the learner);
- No recognition of needs of those with learning disabilities;
- The learning structure at the NSCC doesn't support adult learners and those with learning challenges;
- An adult with a learning disability is kept out of a trade due to the process and structure;
- The community college has moved away from the community and has become an elite college. Has lost the community;
- Insufficient funding for needed programs;
- Stereotypes ;
- Lack of access to free or affordable space where training could take place;
- Lack of assessment ability within the community.

**2. How would you propose to meet those needs?**

- African Canadians with learning disabilities need their own schools;
- A community college for African Canadians to meet/include all learning needs;
- Employer support/dialogue to discuss needs of employers and how to achieve those needs with the adult learner;

- Black educators;
- Mentors;
- Policy makers to be aware of the issues;
- Leadership to tie all the provincial organizations together;
- Become financially independent;
- More Black administrators in the educational process;
- Pre-requisites that take into account changes in the system since the adults were in school. Their learning must be updated so they can learn successfully.
- More interactive programs;
- Evaluation of present programs/organizations and awareness of these.

**3. What obstacles or challenges need to be considered in order to meet the learning needs?**

- Finances;
- Educational barriers;
- People's busy schedules and inconveniences;
- Family responsibilities;
- Lack of commitment/vision;
- Lack of trust in our own community;
- Lack of internal support mechanisms;
- Our own lack of personal growth and response towards one another;
- Propagation of negative stereotypes;
- Need of control and power; power struggles.

**4. How may these challenges and obstacles be dealt with?**

- More training in the community about how structures should work
- More and better organized consultations
- Fresh blood to get a new perspective/process
- A dream session
- Leadership training
- A library of people's talents/gifts
- Celebrate people's contributions and success
- A non-judgmental attitude
- A positive environment within and without
- Faith: that each individual person has a unique purpose
- A core of groups that are strengthened to support others across the province

**5. Who should be involved in the process and at which stage?**

- The whole community should be involved: individuals, organizations, etc.

March 20, 2008

**APPENDIX G**

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH RESPONSE**

**SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK**

**1. What would you identify as the learning needs of adults in the African Canadian (AC) population? (What are the learning gaps?)**

- Knowing where to go for resources or information;
- Personal financial needs;
- There is no program or funding in place that enables adults with a job who want to improve themselves. They can't afford to quit their job, but they also can't access funds or government programs to move on.
- Lack of transportation;
- Ageism;
- Lack of programs in place to recognize prior experience;
- Lack of collaboration and partnership between learning organizations and institutions;
- Clear indication of process to find where to go for further education;
- Need more friendly institutions or environments;
- Technology gap;
- No programs in place to enable an adult to stay on top of changes taking place in education;
- No mentorship to guide people through the system or educational obstacles;
- Racial inequality;
- Expectations—African Canadians are not expected to achieve;
- Jealousy—peer and community;
- Getting work experience;
- Lack of opportunity for quality jobs;
- Size of the community that you live in;
- Not knowing how to get started on educational goals;
- Lack of career management planning.

**2. How would you propose to meet those needs?**

- More programs;
- More access to programs;
- More access to space and affordable transportation;
- More discussions about education and opportunities;
- Adult programs that meet the needs of the individuals;

- Create connections within the community;
- Need people who understand the needs of African Canadians in institutions such as Service Canada, etc.;
- Change the assessment process to meet the needs of the adult;
- Change the employment and training process;
- Collaboration and partnership among other African organizations;
- Provide opportunities to exchange best practices, knowledge, etc., with other African organizations globally;
- Provide opportunities to celebrate successes in the community.

**3. What obstacles or challenges need to be considered in order to meet the learning needs?**

- Negativity;
- Jealousy;
- Lack of solidarity;
- Community attitude; lack of community—not willing to support one another;
- The organizations/institutions may not be willing to change;
- Power struggles;
- Lack of leadership;
- Lack of healthy and/or effective communication;
- The need to hang on to resentments;
- The need for healing;
- Low self-esteem;
- Lack of motivation;
- We don't know who we are and we don't value what we have to offer;
- Lack of focus and goals;
- Lack of vision;
- Lack of dreams;
- We have created a dependency attitude. We expect others to do for us;
- Lack of willingness to work hard;
- Not willing to take responsibility for our own lives.

**4. How may these challenges and obstacles be dealt with?**

- Have the community bond together for a cause (surveys).
- Find out how the Provincial Council works so that we can put forward ideas.
- Bring all the communities together to talk about the issues.
- Keep informed on the business trends and share information and knowledge
- Put information on popular media channels.
- Create an umbrella group to do the above. This group should not be a community not-for-profit organization.
- Provide opportunities for community members to be involved in the community (via volunteering, etc.).

- Create a Black directory online.
- Develop leadership in small pockets.
- Need on-going growth and development in the community; need to create awareness of the community and what is going on the community, etc.
- Have a speakers' circle that can motivate people.

**5. Who should be involved in the process and at which stage?**

- Community organizations and the government.

**APPENDIX H**  
**COMMUNITY OUTREACH REPORT**  
**ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND**

**1. What would you identify as the learning needs of adults in the African Canadian (AC) population? (What are the learning gaps?)**

- English;
- Job training;
- Workshops;
- Waiting time for assessment;
- Cultural integration;
- Lack of guidance;
- Lack of information regarding requirements needed to enter programs;
- Education regarding how to become financially independent;
- There is nothing in place for the young adult who wants to finish high school;
- Lack of access to information/programs that are currently available;
- Improper assessment which is being done according to age and not knowledge (this is a concern in the school system);
- Lack of African Canadian educators. Need more in the system;
- Lack of opportunity for volunteering;
- The organizations that are in place have inadequate information.

**2. How would you propose to meet those needs?**

- Create awareness of needs with the policy makers in the educational system;
- Speak out regarding the needs of the community;
- The organizations interacting with new immigrants need to have adequate information on all aspects of life and learning in Canada;
- The organizations interacting with new immigrants need to have African Canadian representation in the decision-making positions;
- Need African Canadians who are committed to the cause/needs of the community;
- Need leadership in the community;
- The community has to be willing to give the opportunity for leadership;
- Community members need to develop persistence;
- The community needs to become financially independent.

### **3. What obstacles or challenges need to be considered in order to meet the learning needs?**

- People may not be willing to accept the information that is coming from the community;
- People may not be willing to change;
- Racism;
- Systemic barriers;
- Stereotypes;
- Lack of motivation in the community;
- Language barrier;
- Cultural barrier;
- Sexism;
- The community lacks economic support and therefore it is not taken seriously;
- The perception that Africans are poor and opportunistic;
- African Canadians do not work together as a community;
- Lack of trust for each other which leads to lack of community;
- The lack of thinking of 'togetherness' which prevents the community from developing;
- People not willing to come together to form a supportive community;
- There is a need for healing from the past experiences and extra support is needed for this.

### **4. How may these challenges and obstacles be dealt with?**

- By providing opportunities for social networking;
- Need financial and economic independence;
- The credentials of members of the community need to be recognized;
- Community members need to be pro-active and motivated enough to go out and get the information as needed;
- Need to develop a list of contacts within the community;
- Those who have been here for a period of time and have successfully dealt with the challenges need to be willing to help the newcomers;
- The immigrants need to be integrated into the decision-making process;
- The community needs to change some of the attitudes that reinforce the stereotypical perspectives of African Canadians;
- Need to build support networks and mentoring systems;
- Make a concerted effort to be more united: visit, call people, etc.;
- Respect each other;
- Give respect to leaders so they can go ahead and do the work that needs to be done. Support the leaders;
- In order to move forward it is necessary to be united and to respect the leader;
- The new immigrants must educate themselves about the culture they are in;
- People need to be interested in leading;

- People have to be willing to take positions on community organizations and develop their leadership potential;
- Need to focus on community benefit and not individual benefit;
- Become less self-centered;
- The Office of Immigration needs to put on workshops;
- Need to inform the community.

#### **5. Who should be involved in the process and at which stage?**

- All service providers should be involved (Provincial, Federal, Immigration organizations, etc.) and they need to implement their immigration policies.
- The Provincial and Federal governments only recognize the Association for New Canadians and they don't have the resources to meet the needs.
- One association (AIC) cannot meet the needs of all new Canadians.
- The government needs to review the programs that they have signed with AIC.
- African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes works with the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association in Nova Scotia. This federally funded partnership needs to be put in place in Newfoundland.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **AFRICENTRICITY**<sup>22</sup>

- Africentricity is about the validation of African experiences and history. It is a review of the continued exclusion and marginalization of African knowledge systems from educational textbooks and mainstream academic knowledge.
- Africentricity is about opening a new and transformed consciousness for all people, particularly those of African descent.
- Africentricity is about inclusion, particularly in a world in which there is marginalization of African people's experiences and destruction of their identities.
- A cardinal interest of Africentricity is to 'move' or 'bring' all people's of African descent from the margins to the centre of world history.
- Africentricity embodies a struggle for the total liberation of the African mind from the effects of enslavement, colonialism and neo-colonialism.
- An important theoretical aspect of Africentricity consists of an analysis and interpretation from the perspective of African people as subjects rather than objects on the fringes of European experiences.

#### **UNDEREMPLOYED**

Working in seasonal jobs or part-time

#### **RACIALLY VISIBLE GROUPS**

The term "racially visible groups" is used in place of visible minorities except when being used in materials being quoted. African descent peoples or Blacks are not a minority group globally.

---

<sup>22</sup> Council on African Canadian Education. *Establishing an Africentric Learning Institute – Part of the Vision of the Council on African Canadian Education*

## **APPENDIX J**

### **BLAC REPORT ON EDUCATION**

#### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND UPGRADING**

20a Link upgrading and job skills training to employment by targeting jobs. Make the job re-entry programs more effective and relevant by incorporating work placement with prospective employers for at least a year. Offer colleges and university extension courses in the community.

20b Establish adult literacy (0–6) programs in Black communities. These programs must be community-based, community-owned, and run by the communities. Develop a Black Provincial Literacy Network.

20c Most learners who enrol in upgrading programs want to obtain their GED. However, 16 weeks is not sufficient to bring learners to this level. Therefore extend the time frames at the Learning Centres to meet the needs of the learners.

20d Human Resources Development Canada should provide increased allowances for people in training, retraining and upgrading programs to a level adequate to cover essential living expenses for trainees and their families. It is essential that single parents in training programs receive adequate day care support to care for their children.

21a Community College campuses should make every effort to recruit in the African Nova Scotian communities, and develop better communication with the African Nova Scotian communities.

21b Set up support systems on the Community College campuses to help with the transition and retention of African Nova Scotian students.

21c Develop and implement race relations policies for the whole Community College system.

22a To increase access to the apprenticeship programs for African Nova Scotians, better coordination between the Community College placement offices and the Apprenticeship division must be developed. Also make the restrictive grade requirements for apprenticeship more flexible and take experience into consideration.

<sup>23</sup>

22b Provide scholarships for apprentices and technical trainees the same way scholarships are awarded for other post-secondary fields of education.

---

<sup>23</sup> BLAC Report on Education – Summary of Recommendations, December 1994, pp. 23, 24