

RECONSTRUCTION AND RESET: A PLAN FOR CANADA

COVID-19 has exposed and significantly increased pre-existing racial inequities in Canada. The policy responses by different orders of government have failed to redress structural and systemic disadvantages along racial lines.

The pandemic has amplified major racial inequalities in employment, healthcare, access to senior care, housing, access to justice and education. Anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism continue unabated. The rise of anti-Asian hate has been ignored. COVID-19 has also made visible Canada's hypocrisy towards migrant workers – their work is deemed essential, yet the workers themselves are treated as disposable.

While the Canadian government is working on a recovery plan from the pandemic, we need to reimagine what a society founded on justice, equity and dignity would truly look like. To that end, the Colour of Poverty Colour of Change (COP-COC) is proposing a **Reconstruction and Reset Plan** for Canada, one that will not only address racial inequality, but pave the foundation for a more prosperous and fair society for all.

We envision a future of an egalitarian Canada where the rights of all people are respected, and Indigenous peoples' demand for justice, sovereignty and full nation-to-nation relationships with Canada is supported. As such, we call on Canada to begin by negotiating directly with Indigenous peoples on a recovery and reset plan.

The COP-COC's Reconstruction and Reset Plan is set out as follows:

Anti-Racism

- Create a National Action Plan Against Racism to accompany the national Anti-Racism Strategy, containing concrete strategies with actionable goals, measurable targets, and timetables, and the necessary resource allocation that accompanies each strategy and action to address all forms of racism including anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism and Islamophobia.
- Adopt a federal Anti-Racism Act to build a legislative foundation for the Anti-Racism Secretariat with dedicated and sustainable funding support. The Anti-Racism Act must name and address all forms of racism including anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, and Islamophobia.

Data Collection

- Mandate the collection of data disaggregated by race and other sociodemographic identities to better measure and understand the racial impact of government policies, programs, and practices in the labour market, economic inequality, and poverty; policing, the criminal justice system and access to justice; child welfare; environment; health and mental health; housing; social and cultural benefits; education; refugee protection, interdiction, immigration and citizenship; and media, social media, and mass communication.
- Develop reporting mechanisms and an accountability framework for the ownership and responsible use of data to improve outcomes and wellbeing of racialized communities.

Employment Equity

- Strengthen the federal Employment Equity Act and attach employment equity measures through Community Benefits Agreements to all federal investment and recovery programs, to ensure racialized groups and other underrepresented groups have equitable access to any new jobs created and benefit equitably from all investment.

Health Equity

- Develop a National Health Equity Strategy including a strategy for Senior Care to address racial inequities in access and in health outcomes

Poverty Reduction and Housing

- Update the federal Poverty Reduction Strategy and National Housing Strategy to include targeted actions and objectives to alleviate disproportionate levels of poverty and address core housing needs among racialized communities.

Gender Equality

- Create a national Affordable Child Care strategy based on gender and racial equity lens
- Provide targeted funding for racialized communities to address gender-based violence.

Immigration

- Implement a regularization program to provide a pathway to permanent residence status for all people with precarious immigration status, including all migrant workers.
- Develop national regulatory standards for the protection and safety of precarious workers and migrant workers.
- Rebalance the overall immigration program by increasing family reunification and relaxing criteria to be fair and more inclusive, and by extending the economic immigration program to applicants in all occupations and skill levels (including all occupations deemed essential work during the pandemic).
- End all immigration detention, and pursue alternatives in situations where detention is judged to be necessary, consistent with respect for human rights and dignity.
- Open up settlement and integration services for all regardless of status.
- Establish a fully resourced independent oversight body for the Canada Border Services Agency.
- Repeal criminal inadmissibility in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)* to remove double punishment.
- Repeal the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement.
- Eliminate citizenship fees.

Justice

- Provide sustainable and adequate funding for legal aid.
- Systematically coordinate and track racist hate crimes across all provinces and territories.
- Work toward the elimination of disproportionately high rates of incarceration of Indigenous peoples and people of African descent, as well as other racialized people over-represented in jails due to reasons related to racial inequality such as socioeconomic disparity.
- Mandate RCMP to collect race based data and work with provinces to eliminate systemic racism in policing across the country.