

ANTI-RACISM FRAMEWORK

FOR CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION SECTOR

JANUARY 2021



THIS FRAMEWORK HAS BEEN REVISED BY AN INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUP CONVENED BY COOPERATION CANADA. ALL CANADIAN ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ARE INVITED TO OFFICIALLY ENDORSE THE FRAMEWORK AS PER THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OUTLINED BELOW. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT [COOPERATION CANADA](#).



GET INVOLVED!



**ANTI-RACIST
COOPERATION**

We are inviting organizations in Canada's international cooperation sector to carefully review the Framework and officially sign on. Please consider committing to the Framework in one or many of the following ways:

1) Sign the Statement

As signatories, organizations will:

- Publicly endorse the Statement
- Commit to integrating Statement commitments into their institutional and operational structures and processes;
- Commit to reporting on the Indicators annually in an effort to track collective progress towards anti-racism in the sector.

2) Join the Task Force

The Task Force is responsible for producing annual progress reports on the Framework and providing recommendations to the Working Group. Members can offer in-kind or financial support for the Task Force for data collection, analysis, report drafting, graphic design, note-taking, report translation and/or communications.

3) Become a member of the Working Group

The Working Group is responsible for implementing recommendations of the Task Force by supporting signatory organizations with tools, resources, and communities of practice. This includes training, resource repositories, policy templates, communications and advocacy guidelines. Organizations without the capacity to join every Working Group meeting can send representatives to participate in specific initiatives or key moments as appropriate.

4) All of the above!

If you have organizational capacity, we welcome representatives to join in on all initiatives, as this is truly a collective effort.

TIMELINE

JANUARY 20

The official launch of the Framework and call for institutional sign-on.

FEBRUARY 5

Public Launch of the Framework alongside an initial list of signatories during the International Development Week.

MARCH 21

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: the final deadline to sign onto the Framework in 2021 by submitting survey information to support the baseline report.

MAY 21

World Day for Cultural diversity for Dialogue and Development and the Release of the Framework's baseline report and recommendations.

JUNE 21

Formation of the Working Group to set the priorities and address the recommendations outlined by the Task Force.

FAQ:

What is the framework?

The Framework is a starting point for Canada's international cooperation sector to inform its approach to anti-racism in a collective and proactive way - one that leaves room for collaboration, knowledge sharing and continuous learning. The Framework should not be considered an achievement but an inclusive springboard for future antiracism efforts.

The Framework consists of a statement, along with performance measurement indicators that will guide organizations on the anti-racism journey and contribute to improving sector-wide data on the progress made towards a more antiracist sector and society.

Why should our organization sign on?

Signing the statement means that your organization recognizes that racism is a problem our sector must address, and you are ready to be part of the solution. Signing on suggests your organization's willingness to engage in this work collectively, learn from others, share lessons and take part in joint initiatives.

This Framework can:

- Guide your organization's priorities through internal processes of analyzing progress
- Offer tools and resources for your organization
- Provide you with a community of practice for knowledge exchange and peer support.

Does my organization have to be a member of Cooperation Canada to get engaged?

No. Any organization self-identifying as a part of Canada's international cooperation sector is invited to commit to this anti-racism framework.

What if I don't agree with everything in the statement?

Signing the document does not mean you agree on every detail of the statement, but you are willing to work with others to address racism in our sector. The goal is to work through the challenges of addressing racism together, and that means allowing space for mindsets and language used to change and evolve along with the individuals who are on the journey.

The language and approaches of the framework were developed in consultation with experts in diversity, equity, and inclusion, and diverse actors from the sector, while upholding the right of people to self-identify using the terms they prefer. We hope the statement reflects the consultative process and collective effort used to develop its contents while recognizing that no statement is perfectly aligned with everyone's points of view.





FAQ (CONT):

Can individuals participate if they are not part of an organization?

While individuals can get involved in the Task Force and the Working Group, only organizations can be signatories.

What is the length of this commitment?

While we hope that this Framework will act as a long-term effort to address racial inequality in the sector, organizations will have the option to opt-in or opt-out of the Framework on an annual basis.

Should I sign on next year, once my organization has had more time to get our affairs in order?

We encourage your organization to sign on right away! Here are some concerns that we hope to address

- My organization is too small:

Large, medium, and small organizations face different challenges and opportunities in this process. While we expect each organization will undergo tailored processes of anti-racist change specific to their context, we do not think that this process should be done in a vacuum. To change everything, we need everyone!

- We don't have enough resources for this work

That is why you could benefit from a collective and coordinated approach, that includes learning from each other and sharing resources. Together, we are better at trouble-shooting and coming up with ideas for further synergies.

We are already doing our own anti-racism work

This Framework is not meant to replace institutional initiatives or stand for the entirety of your organization's anti-racist efforts. Why not partake in this collective platform and support the sector, as a whole, to do better?

What if we don't have data to report on the Indicators?

We anticipate that most organizations will not have data for every indicator at the beginning. Data availability, and lack thereof, is a crucial indicator itself, helping us to prioritize our work in certain areas, and come up with creative solutions to our institutional limitations.

Will our names be shared?

The list of signatory organizations will be available to the public. However, reports will present information and sector trends in a confidential manner, providing a sector-pulse on anti-racist efforts without naming and shaming. No data or findings will be explicitly associated with any one organization.

Should we be concerned about reputational risks?

Racism in our sector is itself a reputational risk. By signing the statement, you are indicating that your organization is aware of the problem and wants to be part of the solution. We are in a moment where collectively, as a sector, organizations must work together to address racism in all areas of our work and transform and minimize power imbalances.



FAQ (CONT):

How will the data be analyzed, what will the reports look like?

The task force will use data from surveys, either for each organization's institutional data, or through periodic sector-wide anonymous surveys, for individual feedback. These will be employed to make overarching conclusions about the progress of the sector as a whole towards anti-racist efforts.

A diverse taskforce will ensure that multiple perspectives are considered when analyzing the data and making recommendations. Taskforce members will also receive appropriate training for collecting and analyzing race- and gender-sensitive data to ensure methodological rigour and intellectual integrity throughout the production of the reports.

Reports will list signatories whose data is used to produce the report itself, however reports will not single out any organizations nor threaten the reputation of the sector. Instead, a balance will be sought to celebrate the progress made while adopting a self-reflexive approach that calls for ever-greater attention and investments in antiracist agendas.

What if we miss the March 2021 deadline to submit the institutional surveys?

Only organizations providing data for the baseline survey will be listed in the annual report and considered as signatories of the Framework, regardless of any prior commitments. If you are absolutely unable to meet this deadline, please consider ensuring all institutional arrangements are made for early 2022, when the second call for institutional sign-on will be launched.

How will the Framework help signatories?

The Working Group, to be formed in June 2021, will be the body that supports signatories in meeting these commitments. The working group will communicate with all signatories to produce and disseminate useful tools such as a roster of specialists engaged in this area of work, policy templates, collective learning projects, communications and advocacy resources, to name but a few.



**ANTI-RACIST
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CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION SECTOR'S COMMITMENTS TO ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC RACISM



Global uprisings against anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism have held a magnifying glass up to the legacy of racial injustice that continues to characterize our society as well as power relationships between the wealthiest and historically disadvantaged countries. Racial injustice is systemic and as such needs no force to keep it alive. Systemic racism is the result of racially biased narratives, structures, and systems that can impact even the most well-meaning efforts. Across the world, individuals and communities are "racialized" - defined based on socially constructed notions of race, which explicitly, and even more often implicitly, impose a false hierarchy of superiority and inferiority.

Systemic racism exists everywhere, including in the international cooperation sector, which aims to contribute to building a better and fairer world. To do that, our organizations must address the sector's legacy of racial bias and global interventions that have denied peoples and institutions from historically disadvantaged countries their agency and right to self-determination in the name of economic and social progress.

As a signatory to human rights treaties (including those addressing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and protecting all persons from bias based on race, ethnicity, or other identity factors), we are committed to upholding values of equality, dignity and inclusion and advocating for their application across all areas of Canada's global engagement.

Harmful narratives are at times difficult to recognize and can be masked by stated commitments to multiculturalism. A “White Saviour” complex has been a long-standing feature of international cooperation – casting people benefitting from privilege, usually from White-dominated cultures, as the providers of superior solutions for challenges in historically disadvantaged countries. Such narratives have contributed to decades of tied aid and externally-imposed fiscal policies, and enabled the growth of exploitative private practices that undermine the rights of marginalized peoples across the globe. These narratives are woven into the global dependency on wealthy countries, foundations, and organizations that, if left unchecked, can continue the colonial injustices our sector aims to redress.

To enable change, Canada’s international cooperation sector needs to address racial bias within its governance structures. Canada’s charitable sector is diverse yet still led by predominantly White individuals. For example, a [2017 study conducted by Ryerson University](#) found that racialized individuals made up 53.7% of the sector, yet 19% of organizations were governed by an all White Board of Directors. People from various racial, especially Black and Indigenous, groups are far too often excluded from decision-making roles. The absence of adequate data is a critical barrier to identifying and overcoming systemic racism in Canada’s international cooperation sector. This Framework aims to help to collectively overcome this barrier.

Anti-racist reforms are a matter of priorities. As a sector, we proclaim progressive values of social justice, equality, and sustainability. Our organizations, colleagues, partners, vendors, and volunteers work tirelessly to, among other goals, foster global solidarity and environmental sustainability, support the most vulnerable, lend a hand after the most horrific disasters, and help rebuild better, more just, societies for us all. We work in coalitions that transcend divisions and surmount our individual or institutional limitations. As such, we have the responsibility to examine and scale-up personal and collective efforts to build a more anti-racist sector.

Our sector stands to gain so much from diversity and inclusion. Inclusive structures, however, must precede diverse teams, which, in turn, contribute to creative ideas, agency of the communities we support, effective partnerships, and meaningful public engagement that strengthens our mandates, and institutional and collective capacities.

As leaders in international cooperation, we are committed - both in our institutions and in the work that we do - to embark on a continuous and transformative process of anti-racist change. We must address all practices that can perpetuate prejudiced and racist outcomes in hiring, program design, communication, fundraising and advocacy, and embed anti-racist approaches into the very structure of our institutions. While acknowledging the centrality of addressing anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism in our anti-racist efforts, we aim to adopt an intersectional approach. This means considering the intersecting identity factors that influence how different groups experience discrimination across geographical, political, social, and economic contexts in which we work. Driven by the ambition of a pluralistic and a united sector, we pledge to examine and work to redress ways in which our institutions and relationships exert various forms of power over our partners, colleagues and communities with whom we strive to collaborate. Below are our commitments.



**ANTI-RACIST
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OUR COMMITMENTS

OVERARCHING COMMITMENT

We, signatories, commit to ensuring a continuous process of anti-racist change while centering colleagues, partners, and communities with experiences of racial bias and discrimination, particularly Black, Indigenous, and/or people from historically disadvantaged countries.

We commit to listening to, learning from and acting on institutional and sector-wide calls for an anti-racist agenda. Colleagues within our sector who have experienced racism and microaggressions within and outside the workplace have been leading dialogues on their experiences. We acknowledge that the laborious, unpaid and emotional work of dismantling racism cannot rest only on the shoulders of individuals within communities that have been negatively impacted by racism and these individuals cannot be expected to continue to carry the burden of undoing their own oppression.

Anti-racism, as a deliberate struggle against racist discrimination and oppression, remains the responsibility of every single stakeholder of the international cooperation sector. We commit to being accountable to volunteers, employees, partners and communities experiencing racism, to listening to and amplifying the voices of sector employees on the margins, to strengthening our mental health and human resource support, to strengthen the capacity of all stakeholders to engage in anti-racist efforts.

We acknowledge the need to listen, educate ourselves, and examine our own privilege in relation to race and other identity factors, such as class, gender, age, ability, country of origin etc. We commit to continuous learning, listening and amplifying the voices of all those experiencing discrimination and/or racism.

We also commit to leveraging our individual and institutional power, privilege and platforms to ensure concrete and measurable steps towards racial justice.

COMMITMENT 1:

We commit to measuring the ways in which employees experience the workplace unequally and acting upon this data to construct more diverse and inclusive work spaces

In Canada, whenever data is collected about race, disparities are observed. [The Ontario Human Rights Commission](#) has found that data collection can play a useful and often essential role in creating strong human rights and human resources strategies for organizations across sectors. If we ignore, for example, the race, gender, age, nationality or ability of employees, we cannot begin to address the ways in which employees experience the workplace unequally. We measure what we prioritize. Despite this, few organizations have adopted the practice of tracking, monitoring and addressing gaps in their workforce. We commit to improving our internal confidential data collection and analysis processes to better identify and address gaps in the diversity, equitability and inclusiveness of our hiring, retention and promotion policies and processes - and in our organizational cultures at large, while adhering to ethical data collection processes.

We commit to acting on data about racial disparities in our sector and devising safe and equitable work environments at all levels of the organization, including in decision-making, institutional and executive roles.

OUR COMMITMENTS CONT.

COMMITMENT 1 cont.

We commit to introducing equalizing interventions that remove barriers that under-represented communities may face to gaining advancement within our organizations, such as career development resources so that Black, Indigenous and people of colour can thrive. We commit to pro-actively seeking out more diverse vendors, partners, and contract workers to improve representation in all aspects of our work. We commit to valuing and fairly compensating the work of Black, Indigenous and people of color who have and continue to experience racial bias and discrimination.

We recognize that people self-identify in many ways, beyond their racial identities. For many in the sector (e.g. women, 2SLGBTQI+, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, and/or persons from historically disadvantaged countries), intersecting identities can exacerbate barriers to professional mobility and inclusion. We commit to applying an intersectional lens, by considering lived realities of diverse groups and their multidimensional challenges in our societies, to all our anti-racism efforts.

COMMITMENT 2

We commit to recognizing and eliminating racism in our story telling, advocacy, fundraising, and knowledge sharing, and to using our platforms to support the anti-racist agenda.

In the early 1990s, humanitarian organizations gained the reputation for showcasing children in vulnerable communities across historically disadvantaged countries, jeopardizing human dignity for fundraising purposes. Some improvements in recognizing the dignity and the agency of individuals and communities with whom our sector works have been made. However, many harmful narratives, which lead to condescending and self-serving attitudes towards communities our sector aims to support, remain to be rewritten.

Language and imagery are powerful. We commit to critically reviewing our storytelling in a way that consistently and continuously reflects on the implicit messages conveyed in our marketing, fundraising, advocacy, terminology, and reporting communications. We commit to upholding the dignity and self-determination of communities represented in our work and increasing diversity and inclusion at all levels of our storytelling and public events, including prioritizing and amplifying voices of local partners and community members and partnering with more diverse and representative local vendors and influencers (including those working in less formalized and/or creative fields).

We commit to representing diverse communities that support and work in international cooperation, as well as ensuring that the depictions of communities with whom we work are multidimensional, heterogeneous, and respectful of lived experiences. We further commit to upholding values reflected in [Cooperation Canada's Code of Ethics](#).

OUR COMMITMENTS CONT.



COMMITMENT 3

We commit to implementing anti-racism efforts into the design and delivery of our context-specific, culturally competent programming and continuously improving the way we design, implement, and evaluate, our work

Racism, colourism, xenophobia, internalized oppression, and systemic inequality are not confined to any one geographic region. They are deeply rooted in the practice of marginalization for the purposes of political, colonial, and economic gain. Some sector actors have perpetuated this legacy by protecting their own self-interests and insufficiently consulting stakeholders from historically disadvantaged countries. Unchecked power imbalances can exacerbate existing inequalities, including in some cases creating situations of exploitation and abuse, eroding public trust in the sector as a whole. As international cooperation actors, it is our responsibility to advocate for the rights of racialized communities everywhere, especially in relation to the Canadian Government and Canadian organizations abroad, helping to redress the colonial injustice and work towards more equitable and sustainable societies.

Despite good intentions, people who are trained in international cooperation are not always able to understand racially equitable and culturally appropriate ways of working with diverse, and predominantly marginalized, communities. As such, it is critical that the anti-racism efforts adopted by Canada's international cooperation sector be informed by the power dynamics on global, regional, and local scales.

We commit to devising systems that recognize racial and ethnic relations wherever we work and supporting domestic efforts to dismantle racism within local systems, institutions, and practices.

We commit to supporting continuous and inclusive training of staff, in Canada and globally, on concepts of privilege and power based on human rights, cultural competency and anti-racism modules. We commit to building intersectional and culturally competent anti-racism efforts into the design and delivery of our programming. We commit to supporting the capacities for the ongoing prioritization of local decision-making by communities with whom we work.

COMMITMENTS TO REPORTING AND TRACKING

Overall, we commit to continuously taking responsibility and dismantling problematic structures of inequality in our workplaces and in the work that we do. To coordinate these efforts, diverse actors in this field have come together to collectively lead a process of institutional trust-building, learning, and institutional and operational change. This sector-wide framework for anti-racism represents a starting point for this work, which must be continuous and unwavering, designed around a measurable set of commitments towards anti-racism.

OUR COMMITMENTS CONT.

The signatories of this statement commit to report against the Framework indicators to track collective progress towards anti-racist efforts of our field. Signatories will provide confidential progress reports to the Task Force for Anti-Racism Efforts of the International Cooperation Sector. The task force will produce sector-wide annual reports without explicitly naming individual organizations. Annual reports will provide recommendations to inform priorities of the Working Group, formed to support signatory organizations, create platforms for peer learning and exchange, and advocate for structural and legislative changes that enable the anti-racist commitments outlined in this statement.

The first reporting process will serve to form a sector-wide baseline and give institutions an opportunity to identify indicators for which they do not have data. This process will serve to set the parameters and targets for the following years and help organizations strengthen their institutional capacity to engage in sector-wide anti-racist efforts. Indicators and reporting requirements may be periodically reviewed in consultation with signatories to allow for continuous progress. Stakeholder engagement within and beyond this sector is welcome. We do not presume to have all the answers. In fact, we welcome suggestions to hold ourselves accountable to the Black, Indigenous and diverse racialized communities in Canada and the anti-racist struggle globally. This is only one step in a long process towards overcoming injustice.



INDICATOR FRAMEWORK

Below is the overarching framework that will be used to measure progress on anti-racism by signatory organizations. A comprehensive measurement framework, including indicators and survey questions, to be sent to all signatories for annual reporting.

Goal

Strengthen the capacity of the international cooperation sector to undertake a continuous process of anti-racist change while centering colleagues, partners, and communities with experiences of racial bias and discrimination

Commitments

Administration & Human Resources

We commit to measuring, understanding, and addressing the ways in which employees experience the workplace unequally from an anti-racist lens

Communication, Advocacy & Knowledge Management

We commit to recognizing and eliminating racism in our advocacy, communications and knowledge sharing activities, as well as to using our platforms to support the anti-racist agenda

Program Design, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning, & Operations

We commit to implementing anti-racism efforts into the design and delivery of context-specific, community-driven projects and programming

Markers

Explicit anti-racist human resource practices and policies are adopted organization-wide

Accessible, quality professional development opportunities are available to, and utilized by, staff and leadership

Organizational commitment to anti-racist practice is reflected in the experiences and composition of staff and leadership

Racialized staff and leadership determine whether organizations are successful in meeting this commitment

Explicit anti-racist communications, fundraising, and stakeholder engagement policies, procedures and guidance are adopted organization-wide

Accessible, quality professional development opportunities are available to, and utilized by, communications and knowledge sharing staff and consultants

Anti-racist communications and knowledge-sharing activities are adequately resourced and undertaken

Racialized staff and stakeholders determine whether organizations are successful in meeting this commitment

Explicit anti-racist operational policies and procedures are adopted in organizational projects and programming and staff guidance is provided

Accessible, quality professional development opportunities are available to, and utilized by, staff, operational partners, and communities

Organizational commitment to anti-racist operations is reflected in the experience and composition of staff and partners

Racialized partners and communities determine whether organizations are successful in meeting this commitment

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR SIGNATORIES



In signing on to the Anti-Racism Framework, your organization agrees to comply with and be bound by the following terms and conditions of use, which together with Cooperation Canada's privacy policy govern your relationship with Anti-Racism Cooperation.

- **Due diligence:** Your organization has signed on to the framework on a voluntary basis and all necessary due diligence to obtain consent from appropriate decision-making authorities within your organization were taken prior to signing on.
- **Reporting:** All organizations who sign on to the Anti-Racism Framework will be required to report against the established Indicators by the deadline and through the channel identified by the Anti-Racism Task Force.
- **Signatory status:** Failure to report against the indicators by the designated deadline will result in the removal of your organization's name from the public statement and in all public communications in the corresponding reporting period.
- **Confidentiality:** The list of organizations who have signed on to the Anti-Racism Framework and reported their indicators to the Anti-Racism Task Force will be made public. The Anti-Racism Task Force and/or any other Anti-Racism Cooperation representative involved in obtaining, analyzing and reporting on data provided by signatory organizations will, to the best of their ability, ensure that data sets cannot be attributed to any one organization. All public reports will present information and sector trends in a confidential manner, providing a sector-pulse on anti-racist efforts without naming individual organizations without their prior written consent.
- **Commitment:** Signatory organizations acknowledge that signing on to the Anti-Racism Framework is not a symbolic gesture and commit to making reasonable efforts to address sector and /or organizational gaps and opportunities identified in the baseline report. These efforts can be undertaken by organizations independently, as part of their participation in the Anti-Racism Working Group and/or in coordination with other sector initiatives.
- **Timeframe:** Signatory organizations are committed to the Anti-Racism Framework for a 12-month period beginning on the date of the most recent public facing report that they are signed on to. Organizations will have the option to renew, withdraw or commence their commitment to the Framework on an annual basis.

**** For the purpose of this policy, "signing on" to the Anti-Racism Framework refers to publicly endorsing and committing to integrating the Anti-Racism Statement Commitments into their institutional and operational structures and processes. Public endorsement may include, but is not limited to, having their organization's name attached to Anti-Racism Framework communication materials, social media posts, media releases and reports.***

NEXT STEPS:

SIGN ON

Complete [this form](#) to become a signatory.

COMPLETE THE BASELINE SURVEY

Please send your survey data by 21 March, by contacting [Cooperation Canada](#).

SEEK SUPPORT

Contact [Cooperation Canada](#) to be put in touch with members of the Anti-racism Advisory Group and/or one of our ED ambassadors for a peer-to-peer chat.

JOIN OUR WORKING GROUPS

To signal your interest in joining the Task Force or the Working Group, please click [here](#).

ENGAGE OTHERS

Help us spread the message by sharing the Framework within your networks!



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