

Be an Ally to Eliminate Racism and Discrimination!

Did you know that March 21st is the [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#)? To raise public awareness about racism and discrimination and the role we can all play in eliminating it, we've come up with a video campaign.

The videos use puppets because they come in every conceivable shape, size, and colour, and can display every possible human (or non-human!) trait. Since they are not ethnic, gender or age-specific, they can demonstrate the many faces of racism without pointing to any particular group or groups.

A call to mobilize against racism and discrimination

The United Nations General Assembly created the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 1966, 6 years after police killed 69 peaceful apartheid protestors in South Africa. The designation was—and still is—a call out to the world to mobilize against racism and discrimination.

Since this time, South Africa and many other countries around the world have been working to abolish racist laws and practices. Guided by the [International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#), the global community has been building a framework for fighting racism.

There are too many people, communities, and societies that continue to suffer from the injustice and stigma of racism. This is one reason why the struggle against racial discrimination remains a central element in UNESCO's work.

Racism: Canada is not immune

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO actively fights racism and discrimination in all forms. This work is important because, while Canada is a multicultural country that welcomes newcomers from all parts of the world, the reality is that no country is perfect—and hate crimes here have been on the rise. For example, did you know that:

- Police reported a 47% increase in racism incidents between 2016 and 2017, with most targeting Canadians of Black, Arab, and West Asian backgrounds? Incidents affecting members of the Black population made up almost one-third of all hate crimes.
- Black and Indigenous peoples in Canada are vastly over-represented in the criminal justice system?
- Hate crimes against Muslims in Canada tripled from 2012 to 2015?

What are we doing about it?

CCUNESCO promotes social inclusion to fight discrimination. For example, we have:

- Developed a relationship between the [International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities](#) (ICARR) and the [International Observatory of Mayors on Living Together](#) to encourage diversity
- Supported the publication of [City Policies on Living Together](#)
- Published three toolkits through our [Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities](#) to help cities welcome newcomers and refugees—including LGBTQ2+ people—and reconcile with Indigenous peoples
- Supported initiatives that aim to eradicate racism, including the National Black Canadian Summit, and partnerships with the [Michaëlle Jean Foundation](#) and the [Federation of Black Canadians](#)

As well, we are promoting the [International Decade for People of African Descent](#) (2015–2024) with a special issue of [Canadian Diversity](#) magazine and by supporting initiatives that celebrate Black culture, like the Taste of the Caribbean festival in Montreal and Caribana in Toronto.

Campaigning for improvement

Despite their use of humour, our campaign videos conclude with a strong and serious call to action, asking viewers to:

- **Acknowledge:** Listen to people who are affected.
- **Challenge:** Call it out—whether at work, on public transportation, or with friends and family.
- **Support:** Be an ally. This means asking how you can use your position of privilege to advocate on someone’s behalf—not by deciding anything for them, but by listening.

The bystanders and secondary characters in the videos demonstrate the power of allyship to break down the structures that uphold discrimination.

Be an ally – every day of the year. Listen, challenge, and join the fight to end racism and discrimination.

For Further Reading

Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities toolkits:

- [LGBTQ2+ Inclusiveness](#)
- [Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples: A Holistic Approach](#)
- [Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees to Canada](#)

["Eradicating structural racism for Black Canadians", Policy Options](#)

[Navigating race in Canadian workplaces: A toolkit for diversity and inclusion practitioners, Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion](#)

["Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2017", Statistics Canada](#)

["Race, Crime and Justice in Canada", The John Howard Society of Canada](#)

[Report of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance \(including the Durban Declaration and the Programme of Action\)](#)