



New Brunswick
Child & Youth
Advocate



Défenseur des
enfants et des jeunes
du Nouveau-Brunswick

New Brunswick
African Association
United we stand



Association Africaine
du Nouveau Brunswick
L'Union fait la force

John Howard
THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF FREDERICTON
LA SOCIÉTÉ JOHN HOWARD DU FREDERICTON

INTRODUCTION

“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.”

Audre Lorde, Poet.

~

“Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.”

Mahatma Gandhi, Lawyer, Politician, Social Activist, Writer.

~

“In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist. We must be anti-racist.”

Angela Davis, Political Activist

The New Brunswick African Association aims to ensure the social, economic, cultural integration and development of the African community in New Brunswick.

The New Brunswick Office of the Child and Youth Advocate strives to defend the rights and interests of children and youth.

The John Howard Society of Fredericton Inc. (JHSF) is a not-for-profit community-based agency that actively promotes policies and legislation that creates and maintains just, peaceful and safe communities. They aim to build safer communities by working with individuals, families, and partner agencies on the root causes and consequences of crime.

Together, they collaborated to offer the opportunity to 10 youth involved with the New Brunswick African Association to share and discuss their experiences and opinions around Anti-Black Racism.

Aged between 9 and 21, the young participants coming from Tanzania, Central African Republic, South Africa, Congo, Kenya, Belgium, and Canada (New Brunswick and Alberta), got together on July 6th, 2022, as part of a workshop activity facilitated by the New Brunswick Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

After an ice breaker activity, the group participated in a workshop called Rebalancing the Wheel.

This workshop has been developed by Dr. Lori Vitale Cox, Elsipogtog First Nations, New Brunswick, in the context of transgenerational trauma that occurs as a result of 'progress and development in mainstream terms and the disorders that arise in youth populations that result from the 'social disordering'".

The workshop as designed by Dr. Lori Vitale Cox is using a 5 steps methodology that we adapted and used to facilitate discussions around Anti-Black Racism. Each step leads to a talking circle where each participant is welcome to share their thoughts. Ultimately, the group works together to construct a mural that will reflect the ideas of the different talking circles.



Picture of the mural at the end of the workshop

STEP 1: LAKE OF TEARS

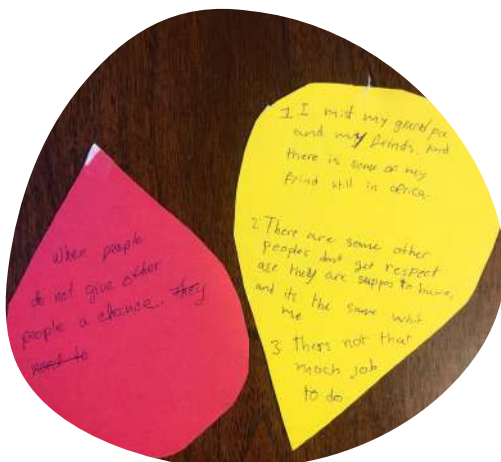
The first talking circle aims to populate the first part of the mural called the Lake of Tears. The tears are the representation of what affects the youth, their concerns, preoccupations, feelings of sadness, anger, despair, ect.

"When people do not give other people a chance" (Picture 1)

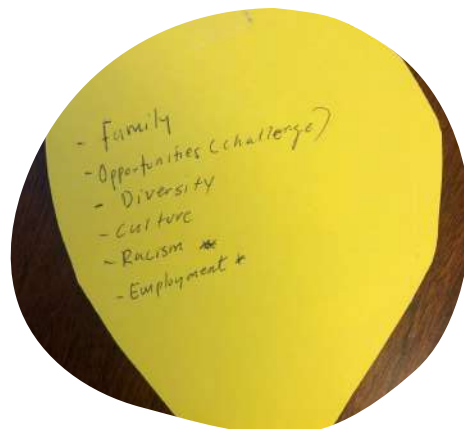
"I miss my grandpa and my friends. And there is some of my friends still in Africa. There are some other people don't get respect as they are supposed to have, and it's the same with me. There's not that much job to do." (Picture 1)

"Family, Opportunities (challenges), Diversity, Culture, Racism, Employment" (Picture 2)

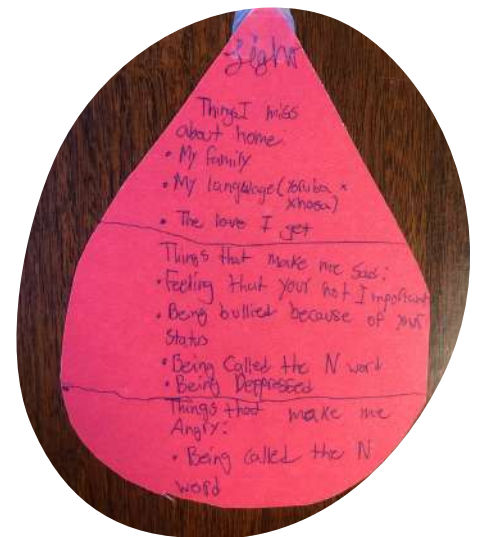
"Things that I miss about home : my family, my language (Yoruba and Xhosa), the love I get
Things that make me sad : feeling that you're not important, being bullied because of your status, being called the N word, being depressed
Things that make me angry : being called the N word" (Picture 3)



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3

After reading what has been written by the participants on their tears, language identity and lived experience of racism stood at the center of attention of the talking circle.

"Because I don't speak English fluently I get judged but I can speak 3-4 more languages"

Note: 6 out of the 10 young people in the group spoke another language than English at home

"I tried to join a team of soccer but the coach said I was not good enough before even seeing me playing"

"One time someone said to me « look at you black ball », I felt really mad about it. I went to see the teachers but they didn't give me a chance to talk about it"

"I live racism almost every day. When I wear a hat, I am asked to take my hat off, but there are other people that are not black that wear hats and no one tells them to take it off. So this has nothing to do with the hat. It's because I'm black"

"I got called the N word by a teacher. We were in the hallway and someone yelled. He came towards me, I told him I was not the one yelling but he didn't believe me and got mad and called me the N word"

"We know that if we talk to someone about it they may not care so we let it go"
(About being called the N word)

"It's not that there is not enough jobs. They need people but they won't hire you because of your skin"

"Racism is a continuous thing"
"Racism is in school, sports, employment, housing, ... Racism is big"

"One of my friends said « we are black, we don't deserve to be here »"

STEPS 2 AND 3: RIVER OF HOPE

The second and third talking circles aim to populate the second part of the mural called the River of Hope.

STEP 2: THE ROCKS

The rocks are the representation of what what stands in their way dealing with what they wrote down or discussed during the first step of the workshop (the tears). What are the road blocks they may encounter and prevent them to deal with it.

"Other not seeing an effort you make" (Picture 4)

"When you are struggling and other people try to put you down, it can make your problems worse" (Picture 4)

"When people don't want to trust you" (Picture 6)

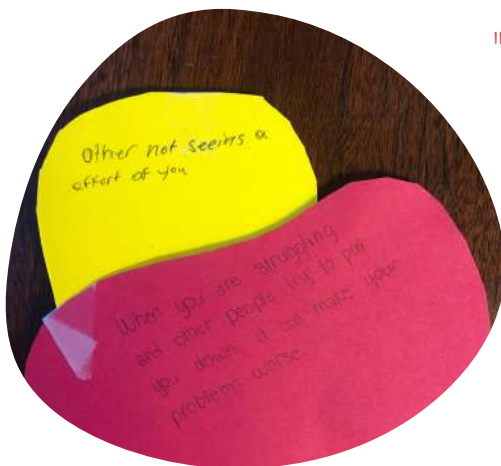
"When people don't listen to you" (Translated from French) (Picture 6)

"Bullies" (Picture 5)

"Getting hurt mentally" (Picture 5)

"When people don't believe the words you speak"

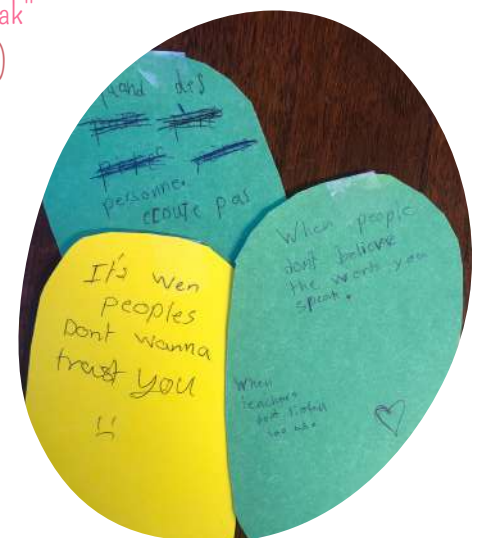
"When teachers don't listen to us" (Picture 6)



Picture 4



Picture 5



Picture 6

STEP 3: THE FISH

The fish are the representation of the strengths of the youth, families and traditional community that can be harnessed. What mechanisms or support they found to make their way through the road blocks they identified in the second step of the workshop (the rocks).

"My personal space" (Picture 7)

"Music, Youtube, Tik Tok, One Piece" (Picture 7)

"Sports, Good friends, Family, Church" (Picture 7)

"This group. Yusuf Shire, Abdi Shire, John Barrow, NB Child and Youth Advocate.
These all help to make positive change" (Picture 8)

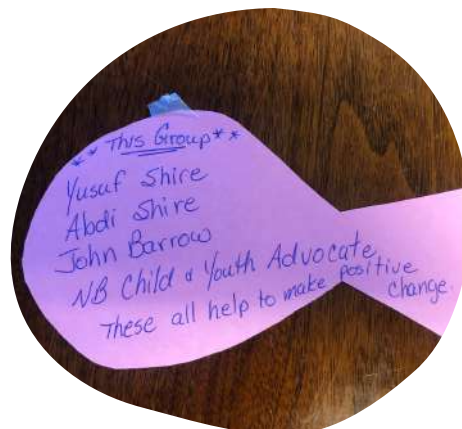
"Friends and family can help encouraging you to keep going" (Picture 9)

"Friends, Family, Strangers" (Picture 9)

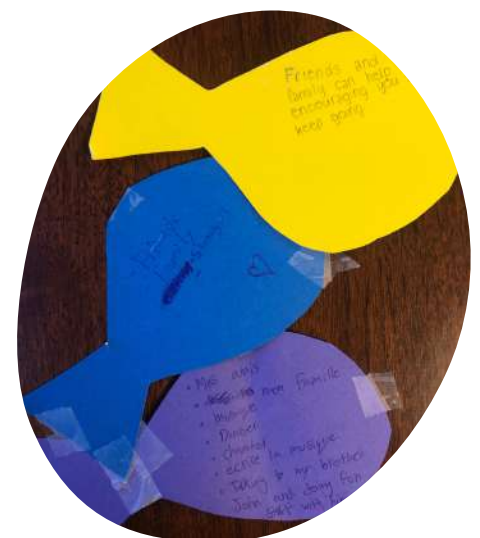
"My friends, My family, Music, Dancing, Singing, Writing songs, Talking to my brother John and doing fun stuff with him" (Translated from French) (Picture 9)



Picture 7



Picture 8



Picture 9

After reading what has been written by the participants on their rocks and fish, the importance of human connections, the importance of education and awareness, and the lack of services in the community stood at the center of attention of the talking circle.

There is a lack of services to help people in need. Kids Help lines is good but what happens if they don't have phones and also people have different needs "

"Once my young brother was sick and my mom went to the hospital and even though there were only 5 people she waited until night and they told her to come back the next day, and she did that 3 times "

"I had the opportunity to play professional soccer but lack of money and lack of support is what blocked me at the time because I didn't know where to go to be sponsored ect and I was here without my parents or anyone that could help me so I never did"

"Sports can be a fish but it can also divide because as it's been said, in some circumstances it can be a divider between riches and poor"

"Strangers can be a fish because sometimes strangers are happy and just want to make other people happy"

"If you go in a high school and ask the students what they know about black history, they would say « slavery », but black people existed before slavery. Slavery is not black history"

"Sharing stories helps to strengthen each others bonding"

"Educating people about differences must start with our children "

STEP 4: A HEALED WORLD

The fourth talking circle aims to populate the last part of the mural called the Healed World.

This step of the workshop consists in a group visioning exercise of the world that is healed and where youth and children have all of their needs met. What does that world look like.

The birds are the representation of their hopes and where we want to go and what we collectively envision for a healed world.

"No racism. No pollution. Everyone is healthy" (Picture 10)

"Love & Harmony. Kindness" (Picture 10)

"Equal opportunities for everybody" (Picture 11)

"Don't have to struggle to make money" (Picture 11)

"A safe place for all cultures" (Picture 12)

"Having a community / Finding a
sens of community" (Picture 12)

"No violence"

"No wars"

"No rape"

"No homelessness" (Picture 13)



Picture 10



Picture 11



Picture 12



Picture 13

STEP 5: TAKING ACTIONS

The fifth and last talking circle aims to reflect on the mural as a whole and brainstorm as a group on the actions that we as a group can take to move towards the Healed World that we envisioned in the step 4 of the workshop.

Education and awareness has been the main focus point of that last round of discussion.

"Skin color does not equal culture or identity"

"I am black but I'm coming from Europe and coming here I found a black community but they would say that I've been white-washed and at first I didn't know that it was a bad thing to say. I am black with a white culture. I've been rejected by white community, and I've been rejected by black community"

"They won't accept that I'm from a white country. They always ask okay but where are you really from, where are your parents from? And when I say my parents are from Burundi or an African country they say 'oh okay' as if they were satisfied but I've only been there once. I can't say that I'm from there"

"People don't understand that you can be black and come from anywhere in the world"

"People think that if racism happens it's because it's our fault"

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, this report was born from the common desire of the group to share their discussions and the result of this workshop broadly and have an impact on the community.

The hope is for this report to be the starting point for more conversations, education, awareness, kindness, recognition of everyone's strengths, and acceptance and unity in our diversity for a better world for all.

