endpoverty edmonton
CUP Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families

Primer
Race-Based Data Collection
(October 2021)

Introduction

Racial inequities are negative externalities propagated by inadequate systems dedicated to tracking, monitoring, and analyzing data on these disparities and the effectiveness of programs and interventions. Race-based data collection (RBDC) and community engagement are necessary preconditions to reveal and contextualize the heterogeneous effect of systemic racism on diverse groups. In this primer, the general principles of how RBD is collected and used across various jurisdictions is discussed. Several initiatives within Ontario's Anti-Racism Act will also be used as examples of how RBDC looks like in the Canadian context. This primer is meant to provide a general overview of the literature and should be not used as a detailed report on RBDC nor is it appropriate for external use. Table 1 at the end of this document provides an overview of the literature used to compile this primer.

Principles, Values, and Ethics

Race-based and other socio demographic data collection and analysis can be used to eliminate racial inequities. This is especially relevant in the context of government institutions whose purpose are to deliver public services, free of discrimination internally and externally. Unfortunately, racial inequities exist because of systemic racism and the lack of data to facilitate **evidence-based** decision making to dismantle these systems. Through collecting RBD, **racial equity** can be forwarded through the more equitable use and distribution of resources. Common themes across RBD toolkits, charters, and regulations include the statistical revelation of racial inequities which can be mitigated through targeted evidence-based policies. RBDC can ensure the **high quality** delivery of services and programs. Data can also **monitor** the progress of policies in eliminating racism and enable **evaluation** procedures. In doing so, government institutions and other organizations that collect RBD are more **accountable** to their constituents/clients and their decisions are more **transparent**. RBDC can facilitate **trust** between communities, organizations, and government institutions and help repair damaged relationships. Moreover, recognizing that **discrimination affects communities differently**, RBDC can enable strategic policy making, rather than attempts at one-size fits all approaches.

Processes, Data Standards and Governance

RBDC requires careful strategic planning and must consider the purpose of collection and analysis, what outcomes/impacts are desired, how will data be collected and stored, and what are regulations and policies around information and privacy. Common themes from the literature scan include **consistent** and **standardized** data collection across government institutions and other organizations, with the expressed **consent of participants**. Data should be **de-identified** and efforts to mitigate re-identification should be paramount to ensure the privacy of individuals and communities. Furthermore, anti-discrimination and data collection **training** should be provided to data collectors to ensure unbiased and high-quality data. While the kind of data analysis largely depends on the mandate of an organization, it is important for there to be comparable statistics across organizations. For example, using the same data fields, methodology for data collection, and data standards. After data collection, data should be **analyzed** in an unbiased manner, with literature suggesting that relevant summary statistics be described. Findings should be **reported** to the relevant stakeholders (and public) in an inclusive and accessible manner. This means that external-facing communication should be multi-format, multi-lingual, use inclusive language, and be presented in a logical and easily understandable manner. It is also suggested that organizations establish task forces to consult affected communities on their findings and provide input on what the policy implications are. Moreover, **quality assurance** needs to be guaranteed to ensure accurate analyses.

Literature notes that RBDC is permitted under legislation such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to ensure racial equity. However, there is other legislation to consider with regards to data standards, privacy, and use of information (FOIP, PIPA). Literature states several procedures and standards for data governance and ownership. Data collected by the government fall under their jurisdiction, meaning that they are also charged with ensuring they have systems in place to consistently monitor risks to privacy, answer complaints, and ensure compliance with regulations. A similar guiding principle may be used by non-governmental bodies. However, literature has also noted that communities are engaged to be proactive in how data pertaining to them are accessed, used, and presented. OCAP and EGAP are notable examples of data governance frameworks.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is essential to the collection and use of RBD as communities are the primary affected parties. Communities are not just observations or participants; along with policy-makers, they are also the **knowledge users** of findings from RBDC and analysis. Community engagement can help identify **appropriate categories**, identify the **needs and priorities** of communities, and identify how **research affects** communities. Literature has noted that research using RBD has sometimes been disconnected from the desires and goals of the affected communities. For example, is the research relevant to them? What systems are in place to ensure that policies are **culturally appropriate** and do not have negative consequences on communities? Community engagement is necessary to facilitate the **co-creation** of solutions. Underpinning community engagement procedures in the RBDC can also facilitate trust towards institutions and organizations which can increase the likelihood of communities to self-identify.

Data Fields

Race and ethnicity must be differentiated with most literature using race as an umbrella term for ethnic subcategories. Different organizations collect data using different categories, and this should be avoided to ensure **standardized** and **consistent** information is collected across different sectors. Other demographic variables may supplement racial and ethnic data. For example, individuals may identify differently regardless of race and ethnicity, depending on languages spoken and religious affiliation. With respect to other diverse groups, other indicators may also be of interest such as being LGBTQ2S+ and disability status. Overall, there should be a **minimum amount of information** collected across institutions and organizations, with additional variables depending on the organization's mandate. Regardless of data fields, the collection of data must be through **self-identification** and **consensual**.

Ontario's Anti-Racism Act (2017)

This section discusses how RBDC and analysis can be used to mitigate racism across sectors.

A. Health and Poverty

The prevalence of low income status along demographic lines creates health inequalities. There has been a lot of evidence that racialized Canadians face lower health outcomes due to the higher probability of being low-income (and in poverty), be under or unemployed, be in low-skilled jobs, have precarious employment, have core housing needs, and have food insecurity. Discrimination against people of colour has led to achievement and educational gaps between racialized and non-racialized Canadians. Abdillahi and Shaw (2020) found that Black Canadians were more likely to be suspended from school, face negative stereotypes from teachers, and be disengaged from school. Black Canadians faced discrimination in the labour market through fewer interview call-backs, have higher unemployment rates, and were more likely to be overeducated than White Canadians. Financial and housing instability were possible channels that led to the lower educational engagement of youths which acted as a self-reinforcing cycle.

A report by Ontario Health (2021) found that racialized Ontarians had higher infection rates, hospitalization (including ICU admission) rates, and death rates. Since July 2021, the Ministry of Health has used de-identified data to help plan vaccination rollouts. An additional $200,000 by the Anti-Racism Directorate will be invested in promoting vaccine up-take in diverse communities. Indeed, RBDC and analysis enabled racial inequities to be identified during the pandemic. Anti-racist approaches to addressing racial inequities in health include addressing barriers to accessing healthcare and services. Apart from COVID-related initiatives, RBDC will also be used to target pre-existing health inequities such as increasing health and mental health resources for Indigenous communities.

B. Police and Security

Recognizing the racism within the justice and police services, the Anti-Racism Directorate will also invest in anti-racism reforms such as raising awareness within these services and increasing community engagement. RBDC will also be used to monitor how racialized communities interact with police services. Analyzing this data can demonstrate the discrimination faced by racialized Ontarians when engaging with police services, such as disproportionate use of force by police officers. RBDC will also be used to monitor discrimination within public services such as workplace harassment and representation in leadership positions.

C. Education

Edmonton Public Schools addressed the discrimination present in its division in 2020. Systemic racism affects many BIPOC but the lack of RBD collection and analysis makes it difficult to demonstrate where, how, and why inequities exist. In 2017, Ontario became the first province in Canada to develop a strategy to combat systemic racism in it's schools through the mandatory collection of RBD. Although RBDC across Ontario varies in consistency and quality, Toronto District School Board has been more proactive. A report by York University (2017) highlights why RBDC is necessary. They found that in Toronto, Black students have lower graduation rates and were twice as likely to drop out or repeat a year. Interestingly, Black students who are from later generations have worse outcomes than first-generation Black students, indicating intergenerational disparities have the potential to be intensified. As part of the initiatives originating from the Anti-Racism Act, Ontario also provided $763 million to support school-related initiatives to reopen, with some investments made directly towards supporting students from diverse families. Several ministries will work in tandem to help increase the graduation rate of Black students. For example, the Ministry of Education will invest $2.94 million, and the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services will invest $6 million.

D. Community and Social Services

Ontario's Anti-Racism Act mandates that The Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services collect RBD to better understand the experiences of children and families from diverse communities, especially BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+, and those with special needs. The ministry hopes to use the RBD to redesign the social services and welfare structure to be community-based, culturally appropriate, and be preventative with early interventions. The Ministry will invest $800,000 annually for Anti-Black racism in the delivery of services in the child welfare system.

Table 1: Summary of Information Sources

Jurisdiction	Principles, Values, and Ethics	Processes & Community Engagement	Data Fields	Data Standards & Governance
Alberta, Anti-Racism Advisory Council Report	1. Create accountability structures for anti-racism initiatives. 2. Justice system reforms (with regards to monitoring hate crimes). 3. Facilitate broad inclusivity and racial equity. 4. Promote equity in educational outcomes 5. Prevent lay-offs in racialized sectors (AHS). 6. Measure progress and outcomes of anti-racism actions.	1. Develop racial equity index for all anti-racism programs and initiatives. 2. Improve disaggregated data collection across sectors for analysis and evaluation of progress in racial equity. 3. Report progress to Albertans. CE 1. In police services: establish an Ombudsperson Office to investigate police complaints, along with punitive powers. 2. Dealing with hate crimes: create the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee (to manage hate crime incidents) and Provincial Hate Crime Unit (to coordinate services and information-sharing between jurisdictions). 3. Encourage racial diversity in police services. 4. Create diversity units in police services to engage the communities, especially marginalized groups. 5. Recruit service providers with lived experience of discrimination. 6. Engage community organizations and networks with deep connections to marginalized communities to assist in raising awareness on racially motivated incidents.	Gender, race, ethnicity, field of work (for international graduates)	Nothing explicitly defined. However, the text implies information sharing between government departments to mitigate racial discrimination. As the council reports directly to the provincial government, data governance is implied to be under the management of the province.

British Columbia, B.C Office of the Human Rights Commissioner report	1. Reveal inequities for systemic change. 2. Good data leads to good policy making. 3. Address systemic racism, colonization, and oppression. 4. Shift focus from individual failure to systems failures. 5. RBDC is complementary to support legal frameworks in eliminating racial discrimination (B.C Human Rights Code, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms). Risks 1. Data misuse could increase stigma and systemic oppression. 2. Big data, privacy, and consent process to use information for 3rd parties. 3. How will research impact communities?	1. Establish the Anti-Discrimination Data Act to collect disaggregated data for analysis and promotion of social change. 2. Establish data standards. 3. Identify opportunities to eliminate discrimination. CE 1. Community engagement can help design and develop collection methods and increase response rates in data collection. At the outcome stage, engagement can contextualize the findings of data analysis and foster co-creation of solutions. 2. Engagement supports decolonization and helps identify the barriers faced by marginalized communities. 3. Community engagement and consultation can build and strengthen relationships between the government and communities. 4. Community engagement supports data sovereignty.	Race, gender, ethnicity, income, age, disability, LGBTQ+, and other socioeconomic indicators.	1. De-identify data (FiveSafes model). 2. Develop a data governance model with Indigenous institutions. 3. Create a Community Governance Board including members from historically and systemically oppressed communities. 4. Establish data standards as outlined by the Community Governance Board. 5. Extend the mandate of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to evaluate data security, governance, and manage complaints. The text refers to OCAP principles in data governance to promote data sovereignty. The Black Health Equity Group in Toronto is developing the EGAP framework. It has similar principles to OCAP but with more emphasis on community engagement to build community capacity to use and report on their own data.
Canada, Canadian Institute for Health Information	1. Health care should be consistently high-quality regardless of demographic characteristics. Disaggregated data can identify inequities across groups. 2. Monitoring health inequalities can increase the understanding of how	1. Differentiate between race and ethnicity (including multi-racial identities). 2. Engage communities to understand socioeconomic disparities, identify appropriate categories, and mitigate risk. 3. Collect data, analyze data, and report the findings of data.	General racial categories subdivided into ethnic categories.	Data standards adapted from the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate's race-data standards.

	policies, programs, and practices impact differing groups.	4. Other considerations: standardize survey questions across jurisdictions and sectors. CE 1. Data collection: community engagement can help identify the appropriate categories that reflect a patient's identities. 2. Analysis: engagement can set priorities for analysis and support interpretation and co-development of solutions. Engagement can also identify the appropriate reference or benchmark categories, which may be different between communities. It can also help with managing or understanding mixed-identity groups, missing data, and small numbers. 3. Reporting: community engagement can contextualize the underlying causes of inequities such as racism, language skills, etc. 4. Engagement can mitigate the risk of misuse of data.		
Toronto, Toronto Police Services Board	1. Guided by legal frameworks such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Ontario Human Rights Code, and Ontario Anti-Racism Act (Anti-Racism Data Standards). 2. RBDC can reveal how different groups interact with the police and racial discrimination in services. 3. RBDC can improve transparency and accountability and improve trust from the community.	1. The Chief of Police will establish the procedures for the mandatory collection, analysis, and public reporting of RBDC, consistent with the Anti-Racism Act. 2. Use self-identification along with police perception, consistent with the Anti-Racism Data Standards. 3. Create a community advisor working group with members from racialized communities who are experts in RBDC and have lived experience to contextualize the experiences of people affected by discrimination. 4. Develop and implement a framework for the Service to analyze and report (quant and qual) RBD to develop an intersectional analysis approach, identify trends, identify racial disparities, assess community safety outcomes, identify opportunities for improvement, identify KPIs, and create action plans. 5. Develop reports on findings. 6. Enter an ongoing partnership with an independent academic or other organization. 7. Evaluate RBDC in context to privacy acts.		

		8. Monitor compliance with policy and procedure. 9. Create systems for training and support in racial discrimination, cultural understanding, and elimination of biases. Develop inclusive external and internal communication strategies.
Ontario, [Anti-Racism Act Monitoring of Systemic Racism]	The Anti-Racism Data Standards monitor systemic racism and racial disparities in the public sector. The principles are: 1. Privacy, Confidentiality, and Dignity. - Protect the confidentiality of personal information of individuals and communities. 2. Commitment and Accountability. 3. Impartiality and Integrity. - The Standards should be impartial and promote public confidence in the elimination of systemic racism. 4. Quality Assurance. - Quality assurance, analysis, and verification of findings. 5. Organizational Resources. - Resources must fulfill the requirements of the Standards. 6. Transparency, Timeliness, and Accessibility. - The information should be publicly available in a clear, transparent, and accessible manner.	- Assess, Plan and Prepare - Identify organizational objectives based on stakeholder and community input. - Determine organizational priorities and resources and conduct privacy impact assessment. - Identify outcomes and establish an analysis plan. - Establish data governance process, collection policies and procedures including quality assurance and information security. - Establish training procedures in compliance with the Anti-Racism Act and other legislation. - Collect Personal Information - Communicate the purpose and method to collect the information to clients and communities. - Implement the collection of information contingent on voluntary expressed consent. - Manage and Protect Personal Information - Quality assurance and security of information. - Maintain a secure system for retaining, storing, and disposing of personal information. - Limit access to and use of information. - Analyze the Information Collected - Calculate and interpret summary statistics. - Determine a criteria for further analysis or remedial action. - Release Data and Results of Analysis to the Public - De-identify data ("De-identification Guidelines for Structured Data" (2016)). - Communicate racial disparities to the public along with reasoning and criteria. - Support and Promote Anti-Racism Organizational Change - Use the analysis to inform evidence-based decision making in eliminating systemic racism. - Monitor and evaluate progress and outcomes of interventions. - Engage the public to eliminate racism. - Participant Observer Information (POI) - Plant to collect, manage, and use POI with input from affected communities and other stakeholders. - Collect POI and ensure accuracy. - Community engagement to determine the objectives, priorities, and outcomes of analyses, especially for affected communities. The Racial Disproportionality and Disparity Indices should be calculated as part of the analysis.

		- Community interests should be considered when releasing potentially sensitive information (such information linked to specific neighbourhoods, etc.). Consideration needs to be taken so that while individual information is secure, general stigmatization of groups/communities does not occur instead. Actions include removing geographic information below census subdivision level. Regardless, the affected communities should be consulted (information could be useful to them). - Manage potential impact of public release: A system needs to be in place to reduce potential re-identification risks and mitigate negative impact on communities.		
Australia and New Zealand, ASCCEG (2019), CALD, Ethnicity Data Protocols	There is a difference between race and ethnicity. Ethnicity is a shared identity or similarity of a group based on one or more distinguishing characteristics (such as history, culture, customs, geographic origin, language, literature, religion). Cultural and ethnic data can identify what information is useful for policy and service delivery needs. Too much emphasis on historical origins may result in data for groups that don't necessarily have affinity with each other. Cultural and linguistic groups are also disproportionately affected by family violence and face greater barriers in seeking assistance. Collecting RBD and CALD data can identify information gaps to facilitate evidence-based decision making.	No specific information was identified. However, consistent collection of data was recommended. Like Canada, Australia also collects a detailed survey every 5 years for the Census. It is recommended for RBD and CALD data to be consistently collected with similar details and standards as the census across all sectors to identify current racial disparities.	Racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural indicators. Broad to narrow categories.	- Statistical standards: ethnicity must be self-identified, permit multiple ethnicities, ethnicity may change over time (ethnic mobility) - Data quality: quality should be like the Census (i.e., consistent, and standardized quality). - Privacy according to the Privacy and Data Protection Act (2014). The text is like the Anti-Racism Act.
United States, Management and Budget Office and Office of Civil Rights, and ASPE	- Data should be collected and analyzed in a timely and consistent manner to assist in identifying racial and ethnic (health) disparities and monitoring progress in mitigating these disparities. - Data collection increases accountability in government institutions to reduce racial disparities.	- Race and ethnicity are differentiated and has a standard definition used across Federal agencies. The United States also has minimum reporting standards but encourages more detailed collection. Like other text in this document, self-identification is used. - There is a federal standard for collection and use of RBD but there are differences across other levels of government. Use of Standards for Record Keeping and Reporting a. Statistical reporting: minimum standards are to be applied for all federally sponsored statistical data collection, except when the sample size is unreliable. Variations must be approved by the OMB. b. General program administrative and grant reporting.		

		c. Civil rights and other compliance reporting. - Like other text in this document, data is self-reported. HHS Standards 1. Racial, ethnic, sex, linguistic, and disability status are minimum data standards on demographic data to be included in surveys conducted by the HHS. 2. Data must be collected, analyzed, and reported objectively, accurately, and usefully. Collecting and reporting data are subject to regulations that prohibit misuse or abuse. Data should be validated and reliable and have sufficient sample sizes. 3. Data collection and reporting activities covered by this policy are surveys administered by HHS. 4. Data standards are minimum, not maximum: additional questions are encouraged. 5. Implementation schedule: this information is individual-level data and can also be used to proxy for household level data should the individual provide information about other members of the household.
GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf (racialequityalliance.org)	The toolkit is meant to emphasize how policies and programs have racial implications. If used by community organizations and government institutions, the racial equity tool develops a mechanism for the implementation and evaluation of impact with respect to how racial equity is advanced and how different communities are affected.	1. What is the proposal and desired results, outcomes, and impact? 2. What kind of data is available and what does it say? - Consider data quality and quantity. Have underrepresented communities been neglected? - How does history affect the data? - What does the current data say about racial inequity? 3. Have communities been engaged? - To promote trust and transparency. - Public hearings, focus groups, interviews, etc. - Sharing and reporting information. 4. Who is affected by the proposal and what are the unintended consequences? - Policies, programs, and services should have some level of vertical and horizontal compatibility, especially to advance racial equity. - How will the proposal affect or be affected by other sectors? - Unintended consequences should be mitigated. 5. What is the plan for implementation? - Funding and capacity considerations. How to ensure accountability? How to communicate and evaluate results?
UK, Office for National Statistics	- Data should be collected in a harmonized manner to ensure comparability in statistical outputs.	- While the Equality Act does not require data to be monitored, institutions are encouraged to understand the impact of their work, something which monitoring information enables. - Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act stipulates that public bodies must monitor the negative consequences of their policies and publish results.

	- Data collection on ethnicity, national identity, and religion is collected to ensure compliance with the Equality Act (2010).	- Data is protected under the Data Protection Act (1998), Human Rights Act (1998), and Freedom of Information Act (2000). - Data collection is permitted under the expressed consent of participants. - Data fields include ethnicity, mixed-ethnicity, religion, main language, nationality, country of birth; all of which have subcategories.