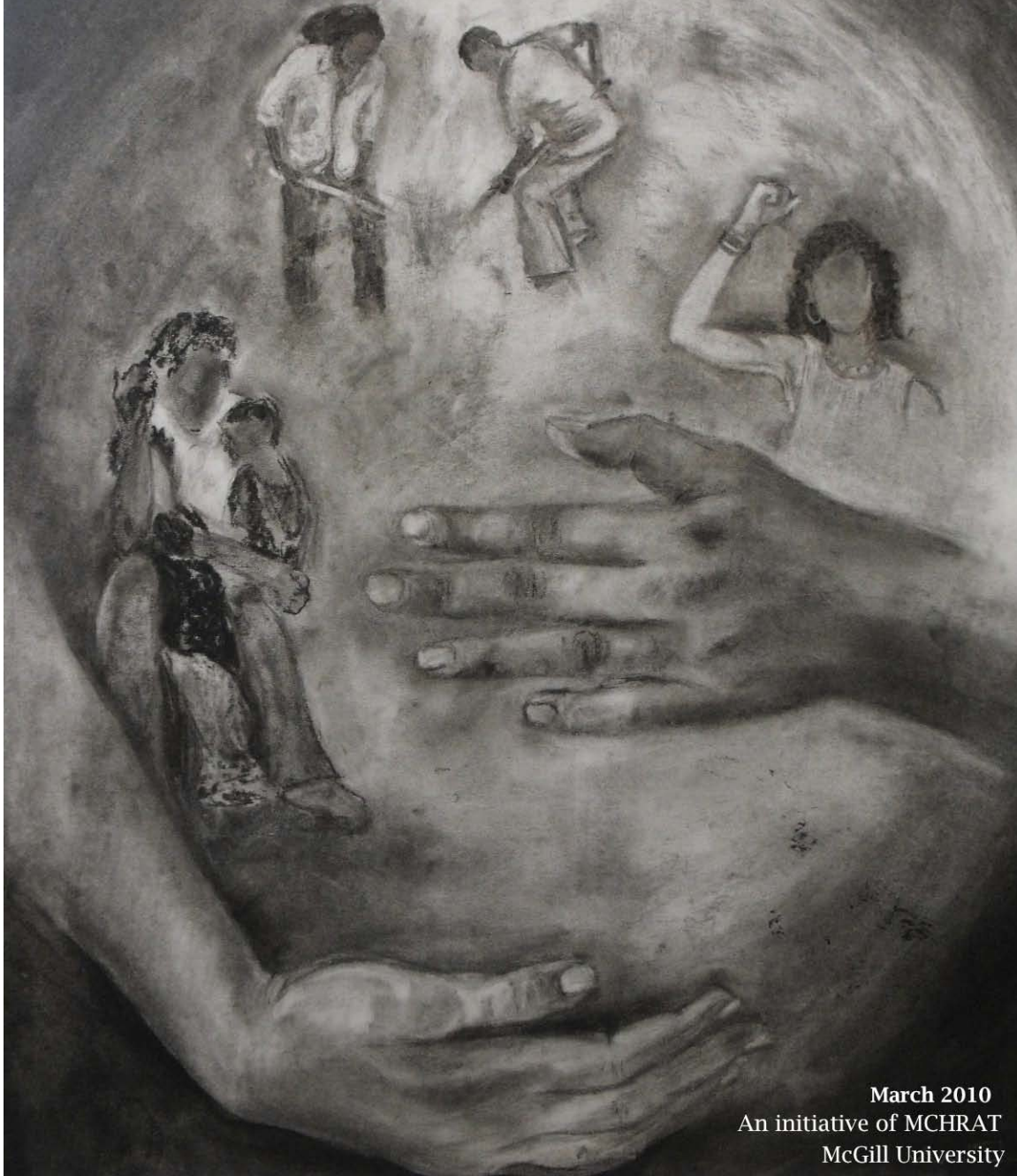


**DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES  
FACING THE BLACK COMMUNITY OF MONTREAL  
IN THE 21ST CENTURY**



March 2010  
An initiative of MCHRAT  
McGill University

**VOLUME THREE  
The Emerging Agenda and Executive Summaries**

Montreal Consortium for Human Rights Advocacy Training

Montreal Black Communities Demographic Project

March 2010

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES FACING THE BLACK COMMUNITY OF  
MONTREAL IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

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**VOLUME THREE**



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## **1. The Emerging Agenda**

In our 2001 study, “**The Evolution of the Black Community in Montreal: Change and Challenge**”, we portrayed a distinctive, vibrant, evolving, and rapidly growing Black community—a multi-faceted tapestry of many strands, cultures and languages drawn from the experiences of the descendents of early settlers in Canada, of Caribbean and, more recently, African immigrants.

Our current study demonstrates that the robust growth of the Black community continued vigorously between 1996 and 2006. The Black community in Montreal increased by 38% in a 10 year period and now stands at 169,065 persons. 4 in 10 Blacks in Montreal were born in Canada, an additional 4 in 10 are Caribbean born (three quarters of whom were born in Haiti), and 1 in 6 are of African origins. The Black community is the largest “visible minority” community on the island of Montreal.

Our 2001 study documented that despite this enormous diversity, inequality experienced by the Black community was profound. The data underscored substantially higher rates of single parent families, poverty, and unemployment and much lower rates of educational attainment and incomes in the Black community. At the same time, we were astonished to find that this inequality persisted even when we compared Blacks and non-Blacks with similar educational and occupational characteristics—often finding that Blacks with more advanced qualifications had higher levels of unemployment and lower incomes than non-Blacks with lesser qualifications.

These findings were grouped around three main themes: **promoting opportunity, strengthening families, and diversity and cohesion**. Broad recommendations were suggested regarding each theme which called for a combination of federal, provincial, municipal, and neighborhood public-private partnerships to work together to advance greater equality, promote stable families, and to work towards building cohesion among the diverse members of the Black community.

In this concluding section we revisit these themes in light of the fresh data from the 2006 Census we presented throughout Volume I, which included an accompanying analysis of 27 neighborhoods where 85% of the Black community resides. The demographic data has been enriched by the separate, qualitative studies in Volume III, which concern the education system, the criminal justice system, employment, older persons, and the role of faith based organizations with immigrants. Drawing from the qualitative studies in volume III, we note policy and program changes introduced in the past ten years to improve educational achievement among young Black persons, and to counteract discrimination in employment.

The emerging agenda and our recommendations evolve from this deeper and more comprehensive approach—through an analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The demographic statistics are revealing, and highlight the significant social and racial inequalities that members of the Black community experience in Quebec society. The qualitative data complement these statistics by introducing experiential data, which are not available from the census.

We present these findings in the hope that they will draw attention to the Black experience of widespread, severe inequality. We hope that these findings provide direct support to members of the Black community, community organizations and public decision-makers seeking to broaden understanding, advance equality, strengthen families, and promote cohesion in an increasingly complex and diverse societal mosaic of Montreal.

## **1.1 Promoting Equality**

Although there have been some improvements for members of the Black community since 1996, Blacks continue to lag significantly behind non-Blacks on every indicator of success. Average incomes and levels of university completion were a third lower in the Black community. Poverty rates, and unemployment rates were twice as high. Black persons were significantly underrepresented in higher status and higher paying occupations and overrepresented in lower paying jobs. Home ownership rates were 75% lower. Black women rank lowest on all educational-occupational and income criteria.

There are demographic factors which explain a portion of these findings, such as the substantially higher percentages of children, women, single parents, immigrants, and unilingual Anglophones among Blacks. The findings of inequality, however, are too pervasive to be accounted for by demographic factors alone. Inequality persists among persons with similar educational qualifications, among persons who perform similar types of jobs, among persons of the same gender and within the same age range, among persons with similar linguistic abilities and among persons who live in the same neighborhood. In relation to each of these factors, Blacks substantially underperform. Inequality is persistent, pervasive, widespread and alarming.

These findings are indicative of systematic “invisible barriers” which we pointed to in our 2001 study and where we suggested “breaking down barriers to employment generally and with senior occupational positions in particular”.

### **1.1.1 Promoting Opportunity and Equality in Employment**

Fo Niemi notes the recognition by all three levels of government that “race based discrimination interfered with economic potential, productivity and social cohesion”. With this “heightened awareness of the systematic nature of discrimination”, a number of promising initiatives were put into effect. Among

them, the 2005 Canada Action Plan against Racism, the Quebec government 2001 mandatory employment equity law, and the 2008 Plan of Action for Diversity Against Racism represent significant attempts to foster diversity and integrate minorities in all aspects of public and private life.

In light of our findings, current efforts, while important, have not proven to be sufficient. Niemi writes that “The lack of resources, delays, inaction, fragmentation of efforts, and negligent monitoring and enforcement have undermined many policies and programs”.

Consequently, although we can point to greater public awareness and recognition of discrimination in employment since our 2001 study, and while we do not underestimate the importance of new governmental programs that have been put in place since then, we underscore the urgency of intensifying efforts which produce demonstrable improvements on the ground as a keystone of this emerging agenda.

There has been long standing discourse about increasing the representation of visible minorities in the public services, which has been translated into employment equity legislation at each level of government. **Public services** form an important part of the social fabric of Canada, and connect citizen to the state. **Greater participation in public services by members of the Black community**—the largest visible minority in Quebec-- can assist to inform policy and program discussions about strengths, needs, perceptions and views of Blacks at decision making levels. It also translates into increased employment and economic well-being for Black Quebecers. Greater visibility at the service provision level invites members of these communities to feel more welcome when seeking service. Particularly new immigrants who may not have experienced a system of social rights, may be less likely to apply for public benefits to which they are entitled. Accessing rights and services is particularly important to the economic security of substantial numbers of Black persons in Montreal who require public services. The hiring of visible minorities, then, promotes access, security, and inclusion. Accessing services democratizes them—strengthening bonds among all Canadians.

Consequently, the **Task Force on the Full Participation of Black Communities in Quebec Society** recommended in 2006 to “prioritize interviewing individuals from under-represented groups, develop clear targets for hiring at departmental levels, and set targets for Blacks at senior departmental positions”. Our findings lend clear support for these recommendations.

Where possible, greater recognition of **foreign credentials** can facilitate employment and integration. The Quebec government has proposed changes to Quebec’s system of skills-assessment and training and has introduced many proposals—including for physicians—which have made it easier for immigrants to have their credentials recognized. Given the high percentage of recent

immigrants in the Black community, further efforts in this direction have been recommended in, for example, the 2007 Bouchard-Taylor Commission.

**Demonstrable results need be multifaceted and evident in both the public and private markets.** Promoting opportunities in higher paying and higher status occupations where Black persons are currently significantly underrepresented is one such approach recommended by the **Task Force on the Full Participation of Black Communities in Quebec** and which is supported by our findings. The Task Force recommended that the “Quebec government should set targets for the representation of cultural communities and visible minorities in senior positions, should invite all employers to ensure fair representation of visible minority Quebecers, and should gather corporations around a mobilizing project to affirm the importance of ethno-cultural diversity as key to Quebec’s economic development.”

Gaining entry to corporate and professional doors accelerates integration, but not necessarily equality. Black university graduates earn a third less than non-Black university graduates, have unemployment rates comparable to non-Black high school dropouts, and, when working in the higher status management and legal occupations earn considerably less. Historically, high status occupations in law and management were dominated and controlled by the non-Black Anglophone and Francophone elite. Persons of color have more recently gained access to these professions, and the inequities in income may, in part, be a function of a comparison between a younger, less senior generation of Black persons entering these professions and a much longer established non-Black community which controls and dominates its upper echelons and corporate board rooms. **Policies to facilitate access up the corporate ladder** are suggested from these data.

**French language instruction for the 1 in 8 unilingual Black Anglophones** may decrease their marginality and increase their employability and competitiveness in the global economy. **Parallel efforts to promote greater bilingualism among Blacks** can translate into higher rates of employment at better pay.

**Black women** have the least income. They are far more likely to be poor than men or non-Black women, are less educated, and are more likely to head single parent families. Irrespective of age, education, language abilities, or occupation, Black women have lower total incomes than all other groups. In 2001 we recommended that an emphasis be placed on programs which specifically enhance educational and occupational opportunities for Black women at all levels. We again suggest that consideration be given to a broad array of programs—from those which encourage Black women to start businesses, undertake professional careers, and have a place in corporate decision making to neighborhood solutions for single parents living below the poverty line with accessible programs leading to real jobs.

**Emphasis on youth** is clearly suggested by our findings. Black persons under the age of 25 account for 43.3% of the population, while among non-Blacks they represented only 29.4%. We suggest the importance of engaging Black youth and prioritizing their economic futures both because they represent such a large proportion of the Black community, and because they are a vibrant and growing community with an abundant source of dynamism and energy that are prerequisites for social and economic advancement.

The challenges for young Blacks are daunting. Of Black persons aged 15—24, 38% had not completed high school; of those in the labor force, 19% were unemployed; and of those employed, 96% earned less than \$25,000. Higher poverty rates induce higher rates of leaving school to find work at low paying jobs. Finishing school can take considerably longer –through a combination of work and adult education classes

We suggest neighborhood strategies involving partnerships between public institutions, community organizations, business and labor in places such as Little Burgundy/St. Henri, Verdun/ Pt. St. Charles, Cote des Neiges, Park Extension, Montreal North, and Rivière-des-Prairies where more than 1 in 2 Black persons live below the poverty line.

### **1.1.2 Promoting Economic Opportunity Through Education**

The data indicate significant advances in educational attainment among Blacks at all levels. High school graduation and university completion rates have risen impressively – particularly for the 25-44 age cohort. The Black community, however, still lags significantly behind their non-Black counterparts.

The financial costs of remaining in school and deferring earnings create more pervasive obstacles for young Blacks than for non-Blacks who may drop out and continue studies on a part time basis—taking longer to graduate. Anne-Marie Livingstone notes that one of the reasons why Black youth in Montreal are less present in the labour force might be that they are still in school. If we take the situation of Black immigrant youth, for example, we find that they are often forced to start a grade or two behind because of their lack of fluency in French and because the education they received in their home countries is not considered equal to Quebec standards. It has also been found that many Black youth who drop-out of high school eventually enroll in adult education as a way to finish their degree.

Focus group discussions with Black high school students showed that those who are at risk of dropping-out and facing academic challenges often do not get the assistance they need to be successful in school. Students indicated that barriers include a lack of assistance from teachers, an unsupportive school climate, and the absence of a curriculum that reflects their lives as Black youth. Livingstone notes that recent initiatives addressing Black students in Montreal schools have only rarely included efforts to improve intercultural and anti-racist education in

schools, professional development for teachers, and relationships between Black parents and schools.

Most school and government personnel believe that policies and practices in education are neutral and fair. Livingstone, however, found that students and parents in focus groups highlighted racism as a pervasive problem that both shapes the daily lives of Black youth and school policies and practices. A lack of attention to the effects of racism and “racial” inequality in schools limits what can be done to raise the achievement and graduation levels of Black students.

Promoting professional awareness among school personnel as well as hiring more representatives of cultural minorities at all levels of authority in the school system will heighten understanding, integration, and ultimately the success rates of Black students.

Anne-Marie Livingstone cites increased recognition and a broad array of initiatives undertaken by the “Services aux communautés culturelles” of the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sports (MELS), community organizations, and schools. Her study demonstrates that the most prominent programs were community driven and conducted in partnership with government and schools. She identifies the “vital and multiple roles” community organizations play in reinforcing Black students’ capacities to succeed academically and to graduate.

Forging stronger partnerships among members of the Black community and schools is paramount to educational success. According to Black students interviewed, “teachers can make a difference by setting high expectations, providing caring and consistent support, and using engaging teaching methods”. In other words, increased governmental support for intellectually demanding, culturally relevant, and supportive programs partnering schools, students, and Black community organizations emerge as central to the educational agenda.

To date, governmental programs designed to address the drop-out rate in Quebec schools have focused on poverty as the single most important cause. While this is both understandable and necessary, it is also vital to recognize that Black youth who live in low-income circumstances face an additional set of challenges due to the combination of poverty and other systemic barriers affecting “visible minorities” and recent immigrants. As noted by Livingstone:

“Strategies to enhance the educational attainment of Black children and youth from low-income backgrounds will be most effective if they focus on strengthening the support that students receive both in schools and in community settings. Schools can make a difference in the lives of children and youth when they commit to equity and excellence in all aspects of policy and practice and actively support culturally-responsive and anti-racist education. Community programs play a necessary role in providing young people with after-school programs that enable students to explore their varied talents and abilities, and to enjoy enriching learning

opportunities. In general, the approach to solving Black students' difficulties in Montreal schools has been to provide remedial assistance in the form of homework help, tutoring, and summer school, for example. While important, these types of programs are insufficient by themselves to remove the socio-economic barriers that prevent Black youth in poverty from succeeding and graduating from school and moving on to post-secondary education. Efforts in schools and in community programs must help Black students and their families to overcome the challenges associated with poverty, cultural and language differences, social exclusion and racism.”

### **1.1.3 Promoting Wealth Accumulation Through Home Ownership**

Home ownership represents the major asset that Canadians will likely acquire during their lifetime, and members of the Black community have dramatically lower rates of home ownership. Only 37.8% of Black persons in Montreal live in homes they own—compared to 62.9% of non-Blacks.

Persons with lower incomes who lack capital and who may have arrived in Montreal after housing prices took off, are less likely to be able to purchase a home. Establishing credit references may be difficult; it may be difficult to obtain loans for homes in less desirable neighborhoods; lending institutions may render themselves less accessible to Blacks; and there may be some hidden biases against selling to Blacks in certain neighborhoods. Whatever each of these factors may contribute to the overall problem, the results are Black homeownership is sharply lower than that of non-Blacks.

Property owners tend to have more of a say in local matters than persons who rent. There is more of a direct relationship between the taxes one pays and the services one receives, and there is more of a commitment to protect and preserve one's capital investment. Consideration might be given to developing and accessing programs which can assist members of the Black community to purchase their first homes, and establish equity which will have multiple effects on the economic security of the Black community for years to come. Home ownership is often the key legacy left for future generations.

The gap between Black and non-Black homeownership rates is not uniform throughout the city—suggesting neighborhood strategies may be useful to consider in addressing strategies to increase home ownership rates. In Brossard, Pierrefonds, Pt. Claire and Pt. aux Trembles more than 2 of 3 Black residents own their homes, and home ownership rates in these communities are comparable for Blacks and non-Blacks. In Laval, Black homeownership rates were 79%—higher than that of non-Blacks. These communities represent residential patterns among the burgeoning Black middle class—people more likely to have acquired the prerequisites for home ownership.



There are a second set of communities where non-Black homeownership rates are moderately lower than the city-wide norm, while Black homeownership rates are drastically lower. In St. Laurent (50%), Bordeaux/Cartierville (49.8%), Ahuntsic (46.4%), and NDG (45.6%) non-Black homeownership rates hover around 50%. In the same communities, Black homeownership rates range from 17% in NDG and St. Laurent, to 12% in Ahuntsic, and 10% in Bordeaux/Cartierville.

Lower homeownership rates in these communities may be due to a larger percentage of apartment rental units, but the widened gap between Black renter and non-Black homeowner in communities such as these may warrant further examination. What factors may explain why Black home ownership rates are so substantially lower in these communities, and how does this impact on overall community life?

There are a third set of communities where homeownership rates are substantially lower for everyone—but are even more significantly lower for Blacks. These communities tend to be economically disadvantaged as a whole. Little Burgundy/St. Henri (31.3%), Pt. St. Charles/Verdun (34.1%), Park Extension (21.8%), Mercier/Hochelaga (36.9%) and Cote des Neiges (22.7%) are all communities where non-Black homeownership rates are less than half the city wide average (62.9%). For Blacks, homeownership rates in these neighborhoods ranged from a low of 7% in Cote des Neiges to a high of 14.8% in Mercier/Hochelaga.

Community leaders in partnership with public institutions and private entrepreneurs may wish to take these dimensions into account when considering strategies directed at specific neighborhoods to enhance Black home ownership.

## **1.2 Strengthening Families**

The data in 2006 continues to suggest as it did in 1996 that Black families in Montreal are experiencing considerable financial and emotional stress. The percentage of Black persons living in husband-wife families was substantially lower than non-Blacks. Single parent rates were twice as high in the Black community. More than 4 in 10 (42.3%) Black children under the age of 14 lived in a single parent family—more than twice the rate of non-Black children (17.9%). Almost one of every two Black children under the age of 15 in Montreal lived below the poverty line in 2006—more than twice the percentage of non-Black children living in poverty (47.1% vs. 21.6%).

Unique demographic data exert a powerful influence on Black families in Montreal. Past immigration policies impacted on the gender structure of the Black community resulted in a substantially higher percentage of adult women. Rapid immigration continues to enlarge, enrich and diversify the Black community. Economic stresses related to immigration are often combined with cultural stress

and loss of identity brought about by the immigrant experience—placing further pressure on families. Immigration experiences have separated parents from children in an unfamiliar environment which lacks traditional communal support.

The Black population is substantially younger than the non-Black population and the absence of significant numbers of elders erodes family cohesion, weakens links to tradition, and may led to a sense of isolation among the Black elderly themselves. Taken together with economic pressures experienced by both single-parent and husband-wife families, these demographic forces will shape the experience of Black families in Montreal for many years to come.

### **1.2.1 Support for Single Parent Families**

More than 4 in 10 (42.3%) Black children under the age of 15 live in single parent families, and almost 1 in 4 (23.2%) Black women aged 15 and over was a single parent in 2006. Black women head single parent families 90% of the time. These single parent rates are at least twice as high than in the non-Black community.

Black single parent families experience considerable financial and emotional stress. More than half of all single parent families live below the poverty line. Black children may often lack male, adult role models. The economic and emotional burdens are largely carried by Black women, while Black children may suffer adverse consequences and find it more difficult to succeed at school.

The data indicate that, contrary to popular conceptions, women between the ages of 15 and 24, although important, do not constitute a substantial portion of the Black single parent population and account for only 4.5% of all Black single parents. Rather, single parent rates are twice as high in the Black community at every age interval. Black women aged 45—64 have the highest single parent rates —three and a half times higher than among non-Black women. And, almost 1 in 5 (18.5%) Black persons over the age of 80 was a single parent in 2006.

This data suggests a reassessment of strategies which focus on young women alone. Programs targeting young, single mothers are of enormous importance, but are not appropriate for older single mothers. The single parent experience in the Black community has multiple causes. Elderly single parents may actually be the grandparents, Black single parent women aged 45-64 are predominantly Caribbean born and significantly outnumber Black men in the same age range.

We suggest that community leaders, government, and service providers consider a multi-faceted strategy which takes into account the differential needs of young mothers, women at various stages of adulthood, and elders to care for their children while improving their economic prospects and strengthening social support services.

### **1.2.2 Support for Children**

The data regarding Black children suggest that many may be at considerable risk . High poverty and single parent family rates, the absence of elders as well as male adult role models, the considerable stress experienced by immigrants in their adaptation to Montreal, language issues, unfamiliarity with a system that may appear to be unresponsive, if not hostile, to their concerns, and experiences of racism compound to create a unique set of challenges confronting Black youth.

The Black community has rallied around its youth and works intensively with them through the hundreds of educational, recreational, cultural, and faith-based programs it has established in scores of neighborhoods throughout the city. Successful programs work in partnership with local schools, recreational centers, and various municipal, and provincial agencies. The size of the Black youth community and the magnitude of the challenges they face, however, suggest a need to take the best practice models developed in Montreal and significantly expand their funding to assist thousands of more young Blacks to successfully transition to adulthood.

Public services-- school personnel, police officers , recreation workers, metro employees, bus drivers—and the like may benefit from cultural competency training. Public services will more likely hit their mark when they are developed in conversation with community leaders and reflect cultural sensitivities.

Often interactions between Black youth and public institutions go awry. Accusations of racial profiling, discrimination, zero tolerance and excessive force have strained relations between Blacks and the institutions of the state. No where has this been more evident than in encounters between Black youth and the criminal justice system.

### **1.2.3 Black Youth and the Criminal Justice System**

There are numerous studies which point to the disproportionate Black representation in correctional institutions for youth and adults as well as the long-term adverse effects of criminalization in a person's social and economic development. The relationship between poverty and the criminal justice system has long been established as have more recent awareness of the ubiquitous effect of racial profiling and stereotyping.

Myriam Denov's accompanying study analyzes 15 in-depth interviews and 2 focus groups which gave voice to a broad spectrum of perspectives, experiences and recommendations regarding Black youth and their relationship with the criminal justice system.

The persons interviewed underscored the corrosive effect of economic disadvantage, single parenthood, and an educational system which fails to meet the needs of minority youth. They noted that Black communities are policed differently than other communities and are subject to racial profiling. Once arrested, Blacks pointed out they were often poorly represented by legal aid, and Black offenders were perceived to receive harsher sentences than non-Blacks for similar offences. In prison, interviews reported racial tension with prison authorities and between Black and non-Black prisoners, and, upon release, face difficult challenges. Thus, in the view of Denov's respondents, "social exclusion is often internalized, leading to the derivation of identity and self-worth in opposition to the norms constructed by mainstream identity."

The respondents in this study, themselves Black persons who have experienced the justice system, recommend stronger community leadership, access to information about the legal system and their rights, strengthening in prison rehabilitation programs, and strengthening family and community support. We give voice to these recommendations which are detailed in Myriam Denov's study in greater detail.

#### **1.2.4 Support for Older People in the Black Community**

We reported in the main demographic text that the Black community has only half the percentage of older persons when compared to the non-Black community (6.4% vs. 13.3%). One in three Black older persons live below the poverty line, and this critical problem is compounded by services which tend to be inaccessible. Black older persons are less likely to be fluent in French, are more likely to have been immigrants, and, may experience a deep sense of isolation as they are "a minority among Blacks because they are elderly and are a minority among the elderly, because they are Black."

Amanda Grenier's synthesis of the life stories of Black older persons and interviews with service providers highlight the need for cultural sensitivity in the provision of services seeking to combat isolation. She identifies unique barriers to access which include language difficulties, historical mistrust of social service agents, as well as lack of cultural sensitivity. One respondent summarized what happens to Black elders when they lose their independence:

"...all of a sudden, they're 70, 80, 90 years old and I have to place them in an institution with food they are not familiar with, holidays they (don't) celebrate.... The people they're surrounded by, they're already 'confused' and who are their people? Who don't look like me, don't eat my food, don't talk like me, don't ....have the same values."

The demographic data underscores the importance of family and community. A much smaller percentage of Black elders live alone. Much higher percentages live with relatives and are single parents –often responsible for grandchildren.

Amanda Grenier's study adds depth and meaning to the importance of family, community and inter-generational solidarity

It is particularly faith-based, community based organizations with which Black elders most identify and to whom Black elders turn for help and belonging. These organizations provide "culturally and physically accessible services including meals, visitations, social or recreational programming, and information sessions on health issues, financial aid, and government services." These services are essential, but require much stronger financial support from both public and private sources.

### **1. 3 Diversity and Cohesion**

Given the significant and increasing diversity among Blacks in Montreal and the complexity of Black identities, one would not expect or seek unanimity of direction, expectation, or strategic orientation on all issues. The data indicate that there are, however, critical issues challenging all segments of the Black community—irrespective of background which include expanding opportunities and strengthening families.

Being able to speak with one voice about these issues is particularly challenged by language and residential patterns. Large numbers of unilingual Black Anglophones and unilingual Black Francophones cannot communicate using a common language. Residential patterns reflect linguistic proficiencies—establishing geographic distance among members of the Black community. The data indicate, therefore, a strong need to increase fluency in French as well as rates of bilingualism not only to advance economic prosperity, but to develop and strengthen a distinct, inclusive, cohesive and dynamic Black Montreal civic identity and sense of shared or first-class citizenship.

Community cohesion is a necessary part of gaining greater responsiveness to overall issues and interests which form a city-wide Black agenda. In 2001, we suggested generating policy forums in which Black persons of all backgrounds, faiths, cultures and languages could discuss central communal agenda items—functioning much like a "parliament of Black communities in Montreal". We renew this suggestion in 2006.

Indeed we recognize public advocacy strategies by Black communal organizations that seek to advance the overall welfare of Montreal Blacks. Strengthening these organizations through close links with neighborhood organizations, and forming multi-ethnic and multi-interest alliances can add vitality and legitimacy to claims on public resources.

For many Black people, community life centers around faith-based organizations in general, and churches in particular. The accompanying studies indicate the profound impact faith-based organizations have on the spiritual, communal and

material lives of many Black residents of Montreal. We suggest a greater, formal recognition and support for the role of faith-based organizations in providing critical services to community members and being an essential cornerstone for Black immigrants in a new environment. In addition to these faith based organizations, scores of community organizations have emerged in the past decade. They too provide essential services and are central to the Black communal identity in Montreal. However, as the number of organizations multiply, the amount of available funding diminishes—often creating competition among equally important Black community organizations for limited available dollars.

This concludes our view of the emerging agenda for the Black community of Montreal. The data points to critical issues which we have outlined in this section with recommendations which we hope will lead to improved circumstances and increased equality for members of the Black community of Montreal. We urge you to consider these findings, contribute to the discussion, and work together to promote necessary change.

## **2. Faith Based Groups and Immigration**

*Report prepared by Dr. Nicole Ives, McGill University School of Social Work, for the 2006 Black Communities Demographic Project.*

### *“Outreach to Immigrants and Refugees as Ministry”:*

*A Descriptive Summary of Ways in Which a Sample of Churches Support Immigrants and Refugees in Montreal’s Black Communities*

This qualitative portion of the Black Communities Demographic Project study explored the role of a sample of religious congregations in providing social services to immigrants and refugees in the Black communities of Montreal. The full report is divided into two sections: the first provides a background context for the findings with a brief overview of faith-based involvement in the provision of social services, including legal and conceptual definitions of terms used; the second section describes the findings, providing excerpts from the qualitative interviews for illustration purposes.

A total of 20 interviews were conducted in Montreal with five pastors, a chaplain, a church program coordinator, an outreach director involved in the provision of services through congregation programs or community ministries originally founded by congregations, three key informants who work with immigrants, refugees and refugee claimants; a CLSC social worker; a permanent resident who won her refugee claim; someone still in the process of claiming refugee status; and six individuals who had landed immigrant status.

Religious congregations have historically been involved in the provision of social services in communities either on their own, in partnership with other congregations, or working with secular agencies in the provision of social services. In Black communities, congregations have long served as purveyors of services as well as facilitators of access to community programs and resources. Churches commonly include community outreach as part of their church ministry.

In Montreal, churches with predominantly Black congregations and communities have continued the tradition of addressing social, economic, and cultural needs of community members. For congregations that are located in areas with a high proportion of immigrants and refugees such as Côte-des-Neiges, Notre-Dame-de-Grace/Montreal West, Little Burgundy/St. Henri or St. Michel, work with immigrants and refugees was folded into the general functioning of the congregation.

Programs included (a) general integration activities including assisting with cultural adjustment, mediating gender role conflicts for immigrant couples, working with families having intergenerational conflicts, providing linkages to employment opportunities through information and referral for youth and adults, and helping with educational and professional credential challenges; (b) a sanctuary initiative; (c) legal assistance for refugee claimants from countries on

Canada's Moratoria List; (d) food bank programs; and (e) a community outreach program for elderly congregation members.

Churches can have a significant impact on the integration of immigrants and refugees. Their social networking capabilities in their communities can serve as a mediator between refugees/immigrants and the host society. Congregations appear to be an excellent source of bonding and bridging social capital for newcomers and may best provide a network of relationships and friendships that most closely approximate the network of family and friends that a refugee or immigrant has lost. Moreover, critical to long-term economic self sufficiency, studies in the USA and Canada have found that support by congregations appears to be positively related to obtaining higher wages and higher benefit levels in employment as well as language acquisition.



### **3. Employment and Criminal Justice**

*Report prepared by Fo Niemi, Executive Director, CRARR, for the 2006 Black Communities Demographic Project.*

The following report provides a quantitative, qualitative, and descriptive review of the major policies, programs, and other initiatives concerning employment and criminal justice, enacted or adopted between 1998 and 2008, which have considerably impacted Black communities in Montreal. Additionally, select court decisions concerning employment, labor and justice and their impact on Black Montrealers, will be examined.

The ten-year period covered in this report showcases a crucial chapter in Canadian history and public policy. Not only did it signal the conclusion of a millennium and the embarking of a new one; the decade in question, it also contained events of international dimension that significantly shaped domestic public policy.

In a decade debilitated by terrorism and the war on terror, global interdependence, natural disasters and economic turmoil, new paradigms and challenges arose. The rapid growth of migration from the Arab world to Western countries sparked social tension and conflicts that aroused debates over national identity, fundamental values, gender equality, overt hate and the place of religion in public space. Ultimately, governments in Quebec and Ontario, as in France and the United Kingdom, reacted to these dynamics by creating commissions of inquiries and special government committees to examine and address these issues.

Cumulatively, these measures have had an adverse effect on the principles of equality, diversity, and liberty, which have been fundamental values of all international and domestic human rights mandates since the end of the Second World War. Often, these values are overridden by public concerns with security and identity. The ensuing political and social climate led to the enactment of security-based measures that commonly generate adverse consequences for racialized men and women, such as the U.S. *International Traffic in Arms Regulations*. These regulations require all aerospace companies in Canada that receive U.S. military contracts to screen out employees and applicants born in more than 20 countries (including Haiti, Somalia, Ethiopia, Cuba and Venezuela) deemed to be hostile to American national security.

The ramifications of such measures are especially felt by young men from Black and “Brown” communities, whose races are increasingly associated in the public psyche with crime and terrorism, and are often framed as a threat to the public good and social cohesion.

Security-based concerns have also produced the effect of stalling or delaying several existing programs related to diversity and equality. Notwithstanding many

developments that negatively impact on racialized groups, this report also acknowledges positive policies and programs adopted during this ten-year period. At all three levels of government, measures were created to balance and counteract anti-terrorist policy, as well as to address socio-economic and cultural disadvantages in a systemic fashion.

Some of the most promising policies and practices, such as the federal *Embracing Change* initiative, the 2005 *Canada Action Plan against Racism*, the Quebec Government's 2001 mandatory employment equity law and the 2008 Plan of Action for Diversity and against Racism, were among numerous projects set in place to leverage diversity and foster the integration of minorities in all aspects of public and private life. Although some did not achieve their goals, the fact that they were adopted and are still operational to a certain degree provides a framework and a precedent for future actions.

A review of employment laws, policies, and programs adopted between 1998 and 2008, reveals the recognition on the part of governments at all levels (federal, provincial and municipal) that race-based discrimination interfered with economic potential, productivity, and social cohesion. There was heightened awareness of the systemic nature of discrimination, and the need for new and creative measures to remove obstacles, and promote inclusive development and participation.

Numerous laws and policies focused on encouraging minorities' access to employment by combating systemic barriers. However, many government actions appeared to fall short of their intended goals, as they were not fully or effectively implemented. Finally, contradictory developments appeared that adversely impacted minorities, and were hostile to racial integration and equality.

Major developments in criminal justice and civil rights between 1998 and 2008, point towards what many would call a "law and order" agenda, whereby increased police powers and orientations towards repression and prosecution were tangibly felt. As in the case of employment, three trends can be detected: a hardening of positions and attitudes towards acts and conduct deemed threatening to national and public security and the "feeling of security"; accompanied by government actions that enhance police powers, while undermining the protection of human rights and democratic oversight.

These trends inevitably led to public and community pressures for government and judicial actions to address racial profiling and other civil rights violations due to community pressures, such as the Quebec Government's creation in 2003 of the Task Force on Racial Profiling, and precedent-setting court decisions in 2005 and 2007 in Quebec that confirmed and sanctioned racial profiling in law enforcement.

#### **4. Community Perspectives on Youth & Justice**

*Report prepared by Dr. Myriam Denov, McGill University School of Social Work, for the 2006 Black Communities Demographic Project.*

Although Black Canadians are over-represented in the criminal justice system, their views are largely under-represented in criminal justice research. In response, through 15 in-depth interviews and 2 focus groups, members of Montreal's Black communities were invited to share their perspectives, experiences and recommendations on Black youth and their relationship with the criminal justice system. Participants included Black youth, community workers and activists, prisoners, young mothers, and correctional service staff. This report highlights community perspectives on the police, courts, corrections, reintegration, and identity.

##### Key Findings

- **Police:** The relationship between Black youth and the police was described as being hostile, superficial, or non-existent. Participants generally asserted that Black communities are policed differently than other communities in Montreal. Racial profiling was reportedly common among young Black males and was seen as both a cause and effect of the adversarial relationship between Black youth and the police. Policies to combat gang violence were of particular concern.
- **Courts:** Many Black youth facing criminal charges were reported to rely heavily on legal aid, which was said to not always provide adequate representation. Black offenders were perceived to receive harsher sentences than members of other communities. Education and access to information concerning the legal system and individual rights were reported to be inadequate.
- **Corrections:** Some prisoners interviewed reported racial tension with prison authorities, while expressing solidarity with one another. Both racial and linguistic divisions were reported to exist among prisoners. Prisoners interviewed reported benefiting from psychological counseling to deal with the challenges associated with conviction, incarceration, and other underlying issues. Religion was deemed important to many prisoners, while others strategically used their time inside to reflect upon their values, lifestyle, and sense of self. Respondents found rehabilitation and educational programs useful while in prison, however English-language programs were reportedly difficult to access. The support of family and friends was said to increase the overall well-being of prisoners.
- **Reintegration:** The transition from prison to community was reported to be difficult and, at times, overwhelming, particularly for those having served long sentences. Family and community support were regarded as extremely important for successful reintegration. Employment

opportunities upon release were said to be challenging, and these difficulties were reportedly compounded by racial prejudice. It was reported that few resources were available to assist ex-prisoners, particularly visible minority youth, with regard to long-term reintegration.

- **Youth identity, community and society:** Respondents' understandings of Black identity were complex and diverse. Social marginalization and a lack of supportive relationships were reported as being two of the central challenges facing Black youth. Respondents commented on how social exclusion is often internalized, leading to the derivation of identity and self-worth in opposition to the norms constructed by mainstream society. Families were reportedly deeply affected by economic disadvantage, single parenthood, and lack of community leadership. Education was described as essential, but currently delivered through a system that fails to meet the needs of minority youth. Negative media depictions of Black youth were perceived to be harmful. Gender differences were also noted, where Black males were reported to have more legal problems, while females were reportedly overburdened and politically isolated. Newcomers to Canada were thought to face unique difficulties, including post-traumatic stress, the threat of deportation, and disillusionment about opportunities in Canada.

## **5. Education**

*Report prepared by Anne Marie Livingstone, independent researcher, BCDP, for the 2006 Black Communities Demographic Project.*

The objective of the qualitative research on education for the “2006 Black Communities Demographic Project” (BCDP) was two-fold: a) to examine developments in policy and practice since the first BCDP study was published in 2001, and b) to gain a better understanding of the experiences of Black students in school. A combination of methods was used to get both a broad and detailed view of existing policies and programs, and to understand their impact on Black students. The methods consisted of: a) interviews with key informants, namely school principals, government and school board representatives, and directors of Black community organizations; b) focus group discussions with teachers and parents, and; c) a participatory research project involving Black high school students from across Montreal. The findings of the research are summarized in two separate reports: one analyzes changes in public and community-based programs since 2001, and the second discusses results from the participatory research project with youth. The following executive summary describes the main findings from both reports.

### **A. Key Developments Since 2001**

Since 2001, both public and community-based organizations have either conducted or supported initiatives that are targeted specifically to Black students. This includes:

- 1) The Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sports (MELS), and more specifically the “*Direction des services aux communautés culturelles*” (DSC), has sponsored research on Black high school students in Montreal and disseminated the results of this research in seminars with community actors and public agencies. The DSC has also provided funding for community organizations to operate academic support programs, including summer schools. Moreover, the DSC has sponsored the creation of new pedagogical materials on Black history for teachers in Quebec schools.
- 2) A few organizations serving the Haitian community have been part of an initiative funded by the MELS to implement a pilot project of “summer schools” in a few Montreal neighborhoods.
- 3) Community organizations have been active in implementing several different types of programs, including: a) tutoring and homework help, b) summer schools, c) cultural and educational activities on Black history and life, d) after-school and weekend recreational activities, and e) programs to support and empower Black parents.
- 4) A group of educators from the Haitian community formed an “advisory body” that is designed to respond to requests for assistance from schools. The aim

is to help schools become more “culturally” responsive in serving Haitian students.

- 5) A coalition of Black community organizations and activists came together to develop a proposal and lobby the government for the creation of an Afro-centric school.
- 6) Schools involved in or contacted for the research have undertaken a variety of different initiatives, including: a) working with Black community organizations to offer after-school programs, tutoring, homework help, and summer schools; b) forming special committees to enhance relations between schools, parents and community organizations; c) creating a Black history course for senior grades.

## **B. Analysis of Program Changes**

**New initiatives since 2001 have largely been community-driven; most, if not all, of these initiatives have been implemented in partnership with government and schools.**

In general, the majority of programs developed to address the drop-out rate of Black students have been driven by Black community organizations, often with the support of public agencies. These programs have generally been located in specific schools and neighbourhoods. As a result, they have not been connected to any broad policy agenda, and are somewhat isolated and dispersed. Nevertheless, several of these programs have been implemented with the support of individual schools, School Boards, and the DSC. Given that many programs are run on a small scale and in specific schools and neighbourhoods, they are only able to reach a relatively small proportion of the entire population of Black students. The demand and the need for services like these - free tutoring, homework help, and summer schools – is probably much greater.

**Community organizations are playing vital and multiple roles in reinforcing Black students’ capacities to succeed academically and to graduate.**

Results from the focus group discussions with Black students revealed that community organizations play a number of important roles in promoting students’ participation and success in school. Their support comes in the form of practical assistance with things like homework, tutoring, and professional training. In addition, these organizations provide youth with valuable emotional and social support, encouragement, and adult guidance. According to students, partnerships between schools and Black community organizations have also been beneficial because they have brought “role models” and mentors from the Black community into schools.

**To date, efforts to address the drop-out rate of Black students have focused on providing remedial assistance outside of school hours; the role of schools and teaching in influencing the performance of students has received limited attention.**

As indicated, many of the new initiatives have involved providing students with remedial help either after school or during the summer. While important, these efforts do not fully address the factors within schools that influence students' academic success. The research with Black high school students revealed that the school climate and the quality of teaching and student-teacher relations exert a significant impact on their well-being and engagement at school. Yet these issues have only rarely been the subject of policy and/or programs. In the present research, it was possible to identify only one school where attempts were being made to change school-wide policies and classroom practices to better serve Black students and other minority youth.

**Black students say that teachers can make a difference by setting high expectations, providing caring and consistent support, and using engaging teaching methods.**

In focus group discussions, students talked at length about the importance of their teachers in promoting their motivation and performance in the classroom. They explained that teachers could either have a positive or negative effect on their engagement in school. Across the four focus groups with youth, students also gave similar descriptions of the teachers they found most helpful and effective. The youth explained that they appreciated when teachers maintained high expectations, developed caring and respectful relationships with students, encouraged and pushed them to succeed when they were having difficulties, and used teaching techniques that were dynamic and engaging.

**The integration of intercultural education has taken place mostly in extra-curricular activities and less in curricula.**

A few of the teachers who participated in focus group discussions indicated that they were incorporating curriculum materials on Black history, culture and literature into their teaching. It is unclear to what extent these practices were widespread within schools, but they are probably not commonplace. When asked, most of the teachers mentioned that they did not know about the government's "intercultural policy" or had ever received any formal training in intercultural and anti-racism education. Most commonly, multicultural education was something that took place during extra-curricular and after-school activities. Discussions with youth showed that they perceive the absence of Blacks in the curriculum as a sign that their identities and contributions are not worthy of attention.

**Public policies and programs target "poverty" as the single most important cause of drop-out, which may not always reflect the reality of Black students**

It is well-accepted that poverty is one of the most significant causes leading to poor school performance and drop-out. Yet, for Black students living in low-income circumstances, poverty may not be the only, or the most significant, barrier to their full participation in school and society. Findings indicate that Black

students who live in poverty must often deal with multiple challenges related to racism, immigration, language, and cultural differences.

**Recent research has enhanced our knowledge of the factors that impact on the school success of Black students, but much still remains to be understood.**

Recent research conducted on Black high school students has greatly improved our understanding of the overall patterns in high school graduation and drop-out, and some of their causes and consequences. What has yet to be fully understood are the “within-school” influences on student performance. In interviews with key informants, it was suggested that a better understanding is needed of the impact of racism and institutional discrimination in education. Students, parents, and some school and community-based staff indicated that racism and prejudice remain persistent and pervasive problems both in schools and outside. For most school personnel, however, racism was only rarely spoken of as an issue that was relevant to schools. Moreover, it appears that the topic of racism in schools is generally shrouded in fear and incomprehension. The experience of one school in the youth participatory research project shows that frank and constructive discussions about racism and “racial” inequalities can make a significant difference.

**Context of funding is unfavorable to long-term solutions**

In interviews with key informant it was mentioned that the support for long-term solutions to school drop-out is hampered by a context of declining budgets and financial security. The education system has been through some important budget cuts in recent years. In addition, community organizations must continually deal with a climate of uncertainty about future funding and grants that are often short-term and unstable.

**C. Conclusions**

The conclusions arising from the research on education include the following:

- The changes that have emerged since 2001 have mainly been in the form of “programs” and not policy. Many of the new programs have been spearheaded by well-meaning and concerned individuals in public agencies and community organizations. While public policies have to some extent provided a context for these new programs to occur; the question remains whether these programs would benefit from being part of a more coordinated and broad-based strategy.
- In spite of the significance of the efforts made to date, it is clear that they represent only a partial response to the multiple and complex causes affecting Black students’ academic engagement and graduation from school. Consistent with the research base, Black students who were interviewed for this research suggested that strategies to promote their success in school should include teacher support, pedagogy, multicultural education, and extra-curricular and after-school programs.



- Partnerships between schools and community organizations have grown in importance in the last several years. These partnerships seem to have a number of advantages, including: a) they increase students' access to beneficial programs and services that might otherwise remain out of reach; b) they strengthen students' motivation and skills to succeed in school and plan for the future, and c) they connect Black students to positive and nurturing adults and "role models."
- Student success in schools is built on good programs and practices, but also on caring and supportive relationships both in schools and in community organizations. Black students say they appreciate when administrators, teachers and community workers provide encouragement, support, and guidance. Black parents also expressed the importance of enhancing the relationship between parents and schools.
- In order to increase Black students' success in school, it is necessary to support the people who work with them every day both in schools and in community organizations. Administrators, teachers, school counselors, and community workers need conditions that will allow them to enhance their own policies, programs, and practices in ways that promote equity and excellence for all students.
- It is not enough to have policy guidelines and manuals to create real changes in education. School staff needs time and opportunities to think, reflect, and exchange with colleagues about their schooling practices and to learn more about the backgrounds and experiences of the students and communities they serve. Most of the teachers who serve Black students do not share the same cultural and social backgrounds. Teachers in focus group discussions said they valued opportunities to exchange with colleagues on topics such as cultural diversity, racism, and equity.
- The research has shown that leadership in schools and community organizations can make a significant difference. School leaders can provide a context for talking about and exploring "race" relations and racism in a way that feels safe, constructive, and non-judgmental. Community organizations can respond to the academic and non-academic needs of students, and help school personnel acquire the knowledge and skills to be responsive to the backgrounds and experiences of Black students.
- Schools and community organizations cannot be expected to act alone or independently. Strategies to raise the academic performance and graduation rates of Black students must be systemic and holistic, and involve actions at multiple levels including government policy, schools, communities, and families.

## **6. Older People**

*Report prepared by Amanda Grenier, Liz Airton & Sarina Isenberg, McGill University School of Social Work, for the 2006 Black Communities Demographic Project.*

Our portion of the report discusses the needs and experiences of Black elderly living in Montreal. In Part I, we provide a collection of key statistics related to demographical information on Black elderly. These statistics include language, country of origin, socio-economic status, gender breakdown and life expectancy.

In Part II, we provide a snapshot of the service context as outlined by service providers who work with the Black elderly in community, recreational and clinical settings. These interviews highlight the needs of black elders, including the need for: cultural sensitivity with regard to service provision (i.e. food, housing), services aimed at abating the isolation that stems from being both an elder *and* an immigrant, and measures mitigating the pervasive effects of poverty on an individual and community level. Furthermore, this section draws attention to challenges within the current service system and in particular, access to social services; these include: language (difficulty communicating in French), an entrenched historical mistrust of social services and social service agents (such as social workers, etc.), an emphasis on intergenerational families and mutual care provision, and a misalignment between the community's self-definition and the understanding of same on the part of social services. This section also highlights the ways in which given the aforementioned barriers to public services, the Black community has innovatively learned to support itself through community- and faith-based services. These organizations provide culturally and physically accessible services including meals, visitations, social or recreational programming, and information sessions on health issues, financial aid, and governmental services. While these services form an integral aspect of services for older members of the Black community, the provision of these services alone is not adequate to the existing needs that would ensure the health and well-being of Black elders.

In Part III, we document major themes from life story interviews with Black elders. Results in this section were drawn from interviews with eleven senior members of the Montréal Black community. The sample was comprised of six women and five men, ranging from the ages of 78 to 93 years; three of these individuals were born in Canada and the rest were immigrants to Canada from the West Indies or the Caribbean. Five major themes were prominent: The first theme discusses the pervasive and systemic racism that was present within many of the elder's experience's upon immigrating to Montreal. Stories about racism related to housing, employment, access to services, social exclusion, and language barriers as a result of not speaking French. A second predominant

theme expressed within the life story interviews was the importance of ensuring and maintaining one's independence, most often through hard work and perseverance. The third theme highlighted the importance of having a strong faith and the significant role that church played in many of the senior's lives. The fourth and fifth themes are the interlocking notions of community and intergenerational solidarity, with participants stressing the importance of engendering cohesion in the Black community and organizing as a collectivity. This was achieved through religion and spirituality, as well as through the notion of striving for solidarity as a community. Community requires recognizing the struggles *and* achievements of members of the Black community, and maintaining a sense of obligation to younger members of the Black community. Within this theme, elders expressed concern for Black youth, specifically regarding educational attainment, respect for elders, and adherence to the law.

In conclusion, we discuss how our research can be translated into lessons for policy makers. We outline two key lessons for future planning. The first is that the compound effects of racism and discrimination experienced in earlier parts of the life course can have a serious impact on older people in late life. One of the significant policy implications stemming from these findings pertains to Canada's three-level retirement income system. The life long employment patterns of Blacks has the potential to severely improve and/or limit their ability to prepare for a retirement that is not characterized by continual poverty. The second lesson is that the strength and resilience built up by a community in the face of these pervasive and systemic hurdles are important resources for Black elders and the Black community in general. Finally, in combination with other sections of this report, findings highlight the need to incorporate a historically-situated life course perspective of the Black community into our research and policy efforts. To that end, our findings suggest that it is vital to engage the participation of the Black community when developing and implementing initiatives aimed at improving the health, well-being and social inclusion of the Black elderly. As was highlighted by interviews with service providers and Black elders, services for elders are already being provided by Black community organizations under considerable duress given a lack of fiscal, human and physical (i.e. space-based) resources. In addition to structural changes related to life long disadvantage, it is this expertise in targeted service delivery as well as the knowledge of Black elders themselves that should be held as an essential resource by researchers and policymakers.

## **7. Summary of Demographic Findings**

*Report prepared by Dr. Jim Torczyner, McGill University School of Social Work, for the 2006 Black Communities Demographic Project.*

**In 2006, Statistics Canada counted 783,795 Blacks in Canada and 169,065 Blacks in Montreal.** These numbers reflect a phenomenal growth rate of over 37% during the past decade.

**Today, more than 1 in 5 Canadian Blacks live in Montreal.**

The 783,795 Black persons living in Canada in 2006 constituted 2.5% of the total population of Canada. Over 60% of the Canadian Black population lives in Ontario and another 24% reside in Quebec. Blacks formed 2.5% of the national population, in Toronto (6.9%) and Montreal (4.7%)

In the northeastern, primarily French-speaking neighborhoods of St. Michel, Rivière-des-Prairies and Montreal North, there were higher percentages of Blacks than anywhere else in the city. Almost one in five residents of St. Michel is Black, as is one in six in Rivière-des-Prairies and Montreal North. More than 34,000 Black persons lived in these neighborhoods in 2006, and alone they constituted 20% of all Blacks in Montreal.

In 2006, close to 26,000 Black persons lived in the Western, more Anglophone neighborhoods of Cote-des-Neiges, NDG/Montreal West, Lasalle and Little Burgundy/St. Henri. They constituted 15% of all Blacks living in the city. In 1996, 1 in 10 residents in these neighborhoods was Black.

**The most significant growth in the Black community in the past decade took place in Laval. Almost 17,000 Blacks lived in Laval in 2006.** The growth rate of the Black community in Laval was an astonishing 81.6% and is largely attributable to a burgeoning middle class.

### **7.1 Age and Gender Structure of the Black Community in Canada**

**The Black community remains considerably younger than the Montreal population as whole. Almost one of every two Black persons in Montreal were under the age of 25 in 2006 (43.3%),** compared with slightly less than 30% of the total Montreal population (29.4%).

**One in four members of the Black community were children under the age of 14 (26.6%),** while all children in Montreal constituted only 16.8% of the non-Black population.

**Non-Blacks were twice as likely as Blacks to be over the age of 65.** 13.3% of non-Blacks and only 6.4% of Blacks were over the age of 65 in 1996.

**Women account for 52.9% and men 47.1% of the Black population. The number of females exceeds that of males in every adult age category, and the gender gap grows as age increases**

## **7.2 Linguistic Abilities Among Blacks in Montreal**

**For more than half of all Blacks in Montreal, French was not the first language learned at home (55.4%)** Home language for more than 1 in 5 Blacks (21.3%) is English, and an additional 1 in 3 (33.8%) spoke neither English nor French at home.

**The rates of French mother tongue have increased in the Black community (from 36.2% to 39.8%), while in the non-Black community rates of French mother tongue decreased (from 68.2% to 66.1%).** In both the Black and non-Black communities, the acquisition of English as a mother tongue declined, while the percentage of persons who had a mother tongue other than English or French increased.

**Rates of bilingualism have increased dramatically in the Black community during the past decade.** In 2006, 44.5% of Blacks were bilingual—compared to 35.8% in 1996. The 1 in 8 Blacks who only speak English cannot communicate with the more than 4 in 10 Blacks who only speak French. Less than half—only those who are bilingual--can speak with both unilingual Anglophones and Francophones who comprise more than half of the Black community (55%).

**More men note French only as a mother tongue, and more women list English only as the first language learned at home.** Almost half (48.2%) of Black men were bilingual, while substantially fewer (41.2%) Black women speak both of Canada's official languages.

**Rates of bilingualism are somewhat higher among Blacks than non-Blacks aged 15--24 (66.6% vs. 64.1%).** Only 1 in 6 Blacks over the age of 65 are bilingual.

### **7.3 The Impact of Immigration on the Black Community of Montreal**

**95,000 Black persons in Montreal are immigrants and they account for 56% of Blacks in Montreal.** 4 in 10 (40.3%) of all Black persons in Montreal immigrated to Canada during the past twenty five years.

**Rapid immigration is continuing.** Between 1991 and 2000, 27,265 Black persons immigrated to Canada and now live in Montreal. In the five year period of 2001—2006 (the last available census data) 22,655 more Black immigrants arrived in Montreal. Blacks born in Canada account for 40%; Caribbean born add 41%; and persons born in Africa contributed an additional 16% to the total population of Blacks in Montreal. Almost 8 out of 10 (78.7%) Black, Caribbean immigrants were born in Haiti. Haitian born Blacks accounted for more than 3 of every 10 Black persons (31%) living in Montreal in 2006.

**Close to 27,000 persons were born in Africa and they accounted for almost 1 in 6 (15.9%) Blacks living in Montreal in 2006.** This percentage has risen dramatically since the last census (12.7% in 1996). In the last fifteen years, the African Black community has grown more than tenfold. The major source of African immigration is the Congo.

**Favouritism in immigration policy toward Black women over Black men is evident in every immigration period since 1961.** Between 1961 and 1991, women accounted for 57% of all Black immigrants living in Montreal, while men only represented 43%.

**Black females were more likely to have been born in the Caribbean,** where as Black men were more likely to be born in Africa at **(53%).**

**1 in 5 (20.1%) Blacks who immigrated to Canada after 2001 and now reside in Montreal were unemployed in 2006.**

### **7.4 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Blacks in Montreal**

#### **7.4.1 Levels of Educational Attainment<sup>1</sup>**

**Rates of university completion rose substantially.** Approximately 1 in 10 (10.8%) members of the Black community had completed a university degree in 1996. In 2006, 1 in 6 Blacks (16.5%) had graduated university.

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<sup>1</sup> Any comparisons between 1996 and 2006 education data should be made with caution. Changes in the questions asked, and data collection and processing make comparisons difficult. The focus of the 2006 Census was on completed qualifications rather than participation (e.g., years completed or attended with or without an educational qualification). The 1996 data presented refers to “Highest Level of Schooling”, a variable which cannot be derived from the 2006 Census. Refer to the Education Reference Guide, 2006 Census (Statistics Canada) for additional information.

**Blacks still lag considerably on the upper educational levels when compared with non-Blacks.**

**Older persons, aged 65 and older, and young people in the 15-24 age category, tend to have lower levels of educational attainment.** The elderly represent 8.7% of all Black persons aged 15+, but account for 17% of the Black population which has not obtained a high school degree. Advancing levels of educational attainment are clearly evident in the 25-44 cohorts in both the Black and non-Black communities. Members of the Black community aged 25-44 represented less than half (43.6%) of the 15+ population but accounted for close to 2 out of 3 (63%) Black university graduates. Close to 1 in 4 (23.9%) had graduated university.

Blacks aged 25-44 continue to lag behind non-Black Montrealers in this same age cohort, where close to 1 in 3 (31.9%) persons aged 25—44 have been awarded a university degree.

**Educational attainment rates of Black women and men as well as those of all Montreal women, as noted in our previous study, still persists. Promoting greater educational opportunity for Black women at all age ranges is clearly indicated by the census data as a factor to advancing social and economic equality.**

**Recent immigrants have considerably higher levels of educational attainment than either Canadian-born Blacks or those who immigrated prior to 1990.** Twice as many recent immigrants had a graduate degree than did Canadian born Blacks (6.2% vs. 3.1%).

Montrealers generally have higher levels of educational attainment attendance than the national average, as do Montreal Blacks when compared with their national counterparts.

#### **7.4.2 Income Levels**

**The average income for Blacks from all sources was one third less than the average income for all Montrealers (\$22,701 for Blacks vs. \$34,196 for Montrealers in general).**

- One in three Blacks (34%) had total incomes less than \$10,000 in 2006. Among non-Blacks, less than 1 in 4 (23.8%) had incomes less than \$10,000 in 2006.
- Almost 7 in 10 Blacks' (68%) total incomes were less than \$25,000 a year. Among non-Blacks, slightly more than half (51.6%) had incomes less than \$25,000.
- Twice the percentage of non-Blacks have total incomes between \$45,000 and \$75,000, as less than 1 in 13 (7.5%) members of the Black community

could be considered solidly middle class, with incomes between \$45,000 and \$75,000 in 1996. Among non-Blacks, however, one in 6 (15.9%) had incomes in this range.

- Four times as many Non-Blacks had incomes greater than \$75,000 a year compared with Blacks (7.2% vs.1.8%). About 1 in 200 (0.6%) Blacks had incomes greater than \$100,000 in 2006. Among non-Blacks, the percentage of people earning more than \$100,000 was six times higher at 3.4%.
- The higher the income category, the more likely it will be overrepresented by non-Black men and underrepresented by Black women. 1 in 9 non-Black men (11.0%) earned more than \$75,000 in 2006—far outpacing the figures for non-Black women, where less than 1 in 27(3.6%) earned more than \$75,000. Black men were less likely than non-Black women to have incomes greater than \$75,000, as only 1 in 40 (2.7%) were represented in the upper income categories. Black women trailed all other categories. About 1 in 100 (1.3%) Black women had incomes greater than \$75,000 in 2006—a percentage ten times lower than that of non-Black men.
- Approximately 6 in 10 Black women between the ages of 25 and 65 had income less than \$25,000. Less than half of non-Black women in this age category and less than a third of non-Black men had incomes below \$25,000 in 2006.
- 8 out of 10 (80%) Black women aged 65 and over had incomes less than \$25,000, as did 3 out of 4 (74.8%) non-Black women in this age category. About 2 out of 3 (67.9%) of Black men 65 and over had incomes less than \$25,000, and among non-Black men in this age category, less than half (48.1%) had incomes less than \$25,000.
- In the 45—64 year age interval—the category generally considered to comprise the years of highest earnings, the persistence of inequality is most striking. 1 in 50 (2.1%) Black women between the ages of 45—64 had incomes greater than \$75,000. Black men were twice as likely to make this high income category at 1 in 25 (4.6%). Nine times as many (17.9%) non-Black men between the ages of 45 and 65 had incomes greater than \$75,000 in 2006.
- Most young people 15- 24 years of age earn less than \$25,000. Almost 3 out of 4 (73.2%) young Black persons had total incomes of less than \$10,000 in 2006, and an additional 23% earned between \$10,000 and \$25,000. **Taken together, 96% of all Black persons 15-24 years of age earned less than \$25,000 per year.**

### **7.4.3 Education and Total Income**

**Members of the Black community, who have obtained the same educational qualifications as members of the non-Black community, earn dramatically less than their non-Black counterparts. Moreover, Blacks with higher educational qualifications systematically earn less than non-Blacks who have lower educational qualifications.**



3 in 10 (30.3%) Black persons who completed a graduate degree (MA and PhD) or an advanced degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry, earned more than \$45,000 in 1996. Of this group, 6.4% earned more than \$100,000. Among non-Blacks with these educational qualifications, more than half (54.4%) earned \$45,000 or more. Almost 1 in 6 (17.1%) earned more than \$100,000.

1 in 5 (22.8%) Black persons who hold a Bachelors degree earned \$45,000 or more. Less than 2 in 100 (1.4%) earned more than \$100,000. Among non-Black university graduates, more than 4 in 10 (42.4%) -- earned at least \$45,000. About 1 in 12 (8%) earned more than \$100,000.

Half (50.4%) of all Black persons who have not completed high school earned less than \$10,000 in 2006. Among non-Blacks, the percentage was substantially lower ,at 38.3%.

High school completion rates have less of an impact on the incomes of Blacks than of non-Blacks. The percentage of Blacks with incomes less than \$10,000 who have completed high school was 43%. Among non-Blacks, 27.6% of high school graduates earned less than \$10,000.

#### **7.4.4 Occupation Groups and Total Income<sup>2</sup>**

**Black persons are underrepresented in the higher status and higher paying occupations, and overrepresented in lower status and lower paying occupations.** Blacks are underrepresented in management occupations (1.8%), judges, lawyers and notaries (1.4%), and among physicians and dentists, (1.8%). Fewer than 2 in 100 managers, doctors, judges, lawyers and dentists were Black in 2006. Blacks are overrepresented in the lower status and lower paying sales and service, and clerical occupational categories.

**The Black community has made inroads in the educator and human service provider occupations.**

**A clear finding of this study is that one reason Black persons earn less than non-Blacks, is because they are overrepresented in lower paying occupations and underrepresented in higher paying ones.**

**Blacks not only earn less overall, but earn less than their non-Black counterparts within each occupational category.**

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<sup>2</sup> Occupation data does not apply to unemployed persons 15 years and over who have never worked for pay or in self-employment or who had last worked prior to January 1, 2005 only. In Montreal, occupational data was collected for 87,910 Black persons.

- Non-Black managers were three times more likely to earn more than \$75,000 than Black managers (31.7% vs. 11.9%).
- More than twice as many Black managers earned less than \$25,000 when compared with non-Blacks (43.9% vs. 20.9%).
- About two and a half times as many non-Black lawyers, judges and notaries earned more than \$75,000 (48.6% vs. 19.4%).
- Almost twice as many Black lawyers, judges and notaries earned less than \$25,000 (30.6% vs. 17.5%).

#### **7.4.5 Knowledge of Official Languages and Total Income**

**Persons who are bilingual are more likely to have higher incomes than unilingual Francophones or Anglophones, in both the Black and non-Black communities.**

#### **7.4.6 Participation rates in the Labour Force<sup>3</sup>**

**Blacks remain in the workforce to a much greater degree than the non-Black elderly.** Participation rates in the labour force were somewhat higher in the Black community than they were for Montrealers, (68.4% vs. 66.4%), which means that a higher percentage of Black persons were either working or seeking employment than non-Blacks. A higher percentage of men are labour force participants than women—and this is equally true in the Black and non-Black communities.

**Young Black persons aged 15—24 are less likely to be in the labor force than young non-Blacks** (53.9% of young Blacks vs. 63.3% of young non-Black persons).

#### **7.4.7 Unemployment**

**The data indicate the Black unemployment in Montreal was twice as high as non-Black unemployment in 2006 (13.4% vs. 6.6%).** For women, unemployment rates were higher in both Black and non-Black communities.

**Black unemployment rates are higher for each age cohort.**

**More recent Black immigrants have a higher chance of being unemployed.**

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<sup>3</sup> Labour force activity refers to the labour market activity of the population 15 years of age and over in the week (Sunday to Saturday) prior to Census Day. Respondents are classified as Employed, Unemployed or Not in the Labour Force. The labour force includes the employed and unemployed (2006 Census Dictionary, Catalogue no. 92-566-XWE). The participation rate is calculated by dividing the sum of the employed and unemployed by the total population over 14 years of age. The unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the unemployed into the population of labour force participants.

### **7.4.8 Education and Unemployment**

**Black unemployment rates were twice as high as that of non-Blacks within each educational category.**

Black persons with a university degree are twice as likely to be unemployed as a non-Black person with similar credentials, as 1 in 9 (10.9%) of Black university graduates were unemployed. About 1 in 20 (5.4%) non-Black university graduates were unemployed in 2006. **Black persons with a graduate degree had higher unemployment rates than non-Black high school drop outs (13.4% vs. 12.0%).**

### **7.4.9 Home Ownership**

**Blacks are far less likely to own their own homes.**

**In Montreal, the percentage of renters in the Black community is equal to the percentage of home owners in the non-Black community** as 62.2% of Black persons are renters while 62.9% of non-Blacks are homeowners.

### **7.5 Poverty among Blacks in Montreal**

**Poverty rates among Blacks were twice as high as those among non-Blacks (39.2% vs. 20.2% for non-Blacks).** Women have much higher poverty rates than men, as 38.5% were poor compared with 33.9% of Black men. Non-Black men have the lowest poverty rates and non-Black women follow closely after.

**Almost one of every two Black children under the age of 15 in Montreal lived below the poverty line in 2006—more than twice the percentage of non-Black children living in poverty (47.1% vs. 21.6%).** Black children accounted for almost 8% (7.8%) of all children in Montreal, but represented closer to 17% of all low income children in Montreal. Close to 1 in 3 persons who were poor and Black in 2006 were children under the age of 15. 1 in 3 (33%) Black Montrealers aged 65 and over was poor in 2006.

### **7.6 Family Structure**

#### **7.6.1 Living Arrangements**

**The percentage of Black persons living in husband-wife families was substantially lower than non-Blacks.** Single parent rates were twice as high in the Black community. More than 4 in 10 (42.3%) of Black children under the age of 14 lived in a single parent family—more than twice the rate of non-Black children (17.9%).

## **7.6.2 Living Arrangements and Income**

**Husband-wife families are the most economically secure in both the Black and non-Black communities.**

**Black husband-wife families are substantially more likely than other Black persons to be homeowners.**

**In the Black community, more than half (51%) of single parent families lived below the poverty line as did 3 of 10 (29%) non-Black single parent families.**

Only 1 in 4 (25.8%) of Black men aged 65-79 were living with their spouse in 2006, and 1 in 6 (16.5%) Black women lived with their spouse. For Black persons aged 80 and over, less than 1 in 5 (18.3%) men and less than 1 in 25 (4.8%) women lived with their spouse.

**Demographic data point to the extraordinary capacity of Black families to look after each other when compared with non-Blacks families.** One in eight Black persons (12.6%) aged 65-79 were heads of lone parent families as were close to 1 in 5 (18.5%) Blacks aged 80 and over. Elderly Black persons were at least three times more likely to be living with family. More than 3 of 10 (31.7%) Black persons aged 80 and over lived with relatives in 2006 compared with less than 1 in 12 (8.3%) non-Blacks aged 80 and over.

**Almost 1 in 4 (23.2%) Black women aged 15 and over were single parents in 2006.** The rate of single parenthood among Black women is three times the rate for Non-Black women, where about 1 in 12 (8.8%) were single parents in 2006. Women between the ages of 15 and 24—although important—do not constitute a substantial portion of the single parent population in either the Black or non-Black communities (4.5%). Women between the ages of 45—64 have the highest rates of single parenthood in the Black community. More than 1 in 3 (34.2%) were single parents and these figures are 350% higher than for non-Black women.

Single parent rates among Black women are at least twice as high at each age range when compared to non-Black women.

**The vast majority of people in the Black community marry each other, however, Black men were more likely to marry non-Black women than were Black women to marry non-Black men.**

Less than half (44.4%) of all Black children of any age live in husband-wife families where both parents are Black.

5,710 Black children live in interracial families. Another, 4,490 Black children of any age live in husband-wife or single parent families where the parents are not

**Black. Taken together, these more complex family relationships account for about 1 in 7 (13.9%) Black children in Montreal.**

## Black Communities Demographic Project

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