

# NB BLACK SUMMIT ANALYSIS REPORT



FEB 2023  
NEW BRUNSWICK



New Brunswick  
African Association  
United we stand



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du Nouveau Brunswick  
L'Union fait la force



**FBEC • CEFN**  
Federal Black Employee Caucus  
Caucus des employés fédéraux noirs

## *Abstract*

This report provides an analysis of the NB Black Summit and offers recommendations for future events.

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# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

KNOW THE PAST, SHAPE THE FUTURE.



## I. Introduction

The NB Black Summit held on February 24 and 25, 2023, in Rodd Hotel in Miramichi, NB, was an inaugural event hosted by the New Brunswick African Association, AERA, and BOTA NB, with the support of B3 organizations across the province. The summit aimed to bring together NB Black and African descent leaders, organizations, and supporters to discuss community issues and strategies for dismantling systemic barriers.

The summit, themed “NB Black Perspectives: Action and Change,” invited workshop hosts to lead discussions on various topics. Three Workshops were scheduled on Saturday, February 25, at 9:30 am, 11:15 am, and 2:00 pm.

## II. Summit Program Overview

The summit program consisted of the following key events:

### **Friday, February 24, 2023:**

- African Dinner and Keynote

### **Saturday, February 25, 2023:**

- 8:45 am - 9:25 am: Welcome Session
- 9:30 am - 10:45 am: Session 1
- 10:45 am - 11:15 am: Networking Break
- 11:15 am - 12:30 pm: Session 2
- 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm: Lunch and Networking Break
- 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm: Session 3
- 3:30 pm - 4:00 pm: Networking Break
- 4:00 pm - 4:45 pm: Wrap up and Next Steps

## III. NB Black Summit Presenters and Keynote Bios

### **DAVID OLARA**

*Settlement Practitioner*

David Olara is a highly experienced Settlement Practitioner with nine years of experience working with culturally diverse new Canadians. With a certificate in Forced Migration Issues from York University, he has a strong understanding of immigrant adaptation challenges. David is skilled in supportive counseling in intercultural environments and effectively communicates in multicultural settings.

He is a respectful and non-judgmental team player who easily builds rapport with coworkers and clients. With fluency in English, Swahili, Acholi, and Luganda, he brings strong public relations, conflict transformation, and problem-solving skills. David has made significant contributions in settlement organizations and has been actively involved in volunteer work, including serving as a settlement and addiction counselor and family unification coordinator. He holds various certifications, including Settlement Practitioner Level II, Forced Migration Issues, and Conflict Transformation.

David's expertise, dedication, and passion for supporting newcomers make him a valuable presenter at the NB Black Summit

## **SAA ANDREW GBONGBOR**

*Battle of the Arts (BOTA-NB)*

“Saa Andrew Gbongbor, Former President of the New Brunswick African Association | Founder & Chief Creative Officer, Battle of the Arts NB. A Black-led organization that uses arts and culture to amplify, create, uplift, empower and provide opportunity and safe space for diverse youth to excel through the arts.

Saa Andrew is originally from Sierra Leone and studied Human Rights Law at Saint Thomas University.

He is also the current Cultural Diversity Coordinator for the above university. Saa led leadership and team building training for groups, community, and organizations within Atlantic Canada and beyond. He is also the president for the New Brunswick Black Artists Alliance. Saa records and produces music. He is a songwriter (Afro-beats) and has released two CD's, plus many singles.

Saa Andrew has traveled around Canada, working with diverse artists and community leaders on numerous projects. Saa is an engaged community leader, resides in Fredericton NB”

## **RONALD SHARPE**

*Atlantic Equity and Research Alliance*

Ronald Sharpe is an Analyst in the Organizational Performance Branch for Public Service Procurement Canada (Atlantic Region). Since 2022, he has held a leadership role as Senior Strategic Policy Advisor for the Federal Black Employee Caucus Public Service. He works collaboratively with provincial leaders and Community organizations across the Atlantic region.

He has also co-founded the artistic and community-based non-profit, Atlantic Equity and Research Alliance (AEARA), an organization set up to provide additional research toward economic career support services for racialized groups in New Brunswick, Canada.

He was integral in organizing Interdepartmental Training Pilots, Career Developmental programs, conferences and Summits. He also has an affinity for utilizing his research skills to analyze federal and provincial legislation, with an affinity for legal jurisprudence, case law, and law Acts and regulations related to New Brunswick.

His profession continuously finds him working with Senior Officials, employees, community leaders, and public sectors at all levels for policy changes toward an equitable future.

## **JESSIE SAGAWA, Keynote and Workshop Facilitator**

Jessie Sagawa, Ph.D is an educator, researcher, writer, facilitator, motivational speaker, and anti-black racism community activist who is interested in transformational narratives. She attended the University of Malawi Chancellor College campus and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts with Credit. A year later, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Honours with Distinction. Her master's and doctoral degrees are from the University of New Brunswick.

Her master's thesis, winner of the Canadian Governor General's Gold Medal for Best master's Thesis in the Humanities, compares the African works of Canadian Margaret Laurence, and London-based Nigerian author, Buchi Emecheta.

Her doctoral thesis is a feminist post-colonial analysis of how colonialism, feminism, matriliney, and patriliney impact the representation of women in selected Malawian novels written in English. Her research interests include: the writings of African and African-descended writers, Orature, women's issues and the impact of class, gender and race, anti-black racism, ESL, AESL, and financial literacy. Currently she is increasingly focusing on tutoring, community activism, assisting in finding solutions to problems created by Anti-Black racism, decolonizing curricula, as well as researching and publicizing affirmative and transformational African historical narratives which have African and African descended subjects at the centre



## **IV. Workshops Overview**

### **4.1 Justice and Black Communities in NB**

Led by Ronald Sharpe and AEARA, the Justice and Black Communities workshop aimed to explore the intersection of justice and Black communities in New Brunswick (NB). Participants engaged in discussions to uncover systemic challenges and discrimination faced by Black communities in the province. The workshop created a space for meaningful conversations that explored potential strategies and actionable solutions to address these issues. Through this workshop, participants gained a deeper understanding of the Black experiences and perspectives in communities and explored the laws and Rules of Court unique to NB that could be utilized to support justice reform and address justice and Public Safety disparities.

### **4.2 Immigration, Integration, and the Settlement**

Integration and Settlement for Black Immigrant Communities in NB Led by David Olara, a leading expert on settlement and integration and current Settlement Practitioner with the New Brunswick African Association.

This workshop focused on addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by Black immigrant communities during the integration and settlement process in New Brunswick (NB). Participants gathered to explore key issues, including anti-Black racism prevalent in the settlement sector and the lack of representation of Black practitioners and leaders within all 14 settlement agencies in NB. The workshop aimed to reimagine settlement programs to be Afrocentric and community driven.

Discussions within the workshop delved into the experiences of Black immigrants, shedding light on the specific barriers they encounter during their settlement journey. Anti-Black racism within the settlement sector was explored in depth, highlighting the need for systemic change and racism accountability within existing services and programs. Participants engaged in conversations that centered around reshaping settlement practices to be more inclusive, responsive, and tailored to the unique needs of Black immigrant communities.

One key focus of the workshop was the underrepresentation of Black practitioners and leaders in the settlement sector in NB. Participants discussed strategies to address this issue, such as increasing opportunities for Black individuals to enter leadership roles within settlement agencies. By amplifying diverse voices and perspectives within the sector, the workshop aimed to create more equitable and anti-racist settlement services and programs.

Through knowledge sharing and collaborative discussions, participants gained valuable insights and developed strategies to enhance the integration and settlement process for Black immigrant communities in NB. The workshop served as a platform for participants to reimagine

settlement programs with an Afrocentric and community-driven approach, ensuring that the unique experiences and needs of Black immigrants are acknowledged and addressed.

This workshop provided a space for critical dialogue, empowering participants to challenge systemic barriers and work towards creating more inclusive and effective settlement programs for Black immigrant communities in NB. By centering the voices and experiences of Black immigrants, the workshop contributed to fostering a more equitable and supportive environment for their integration and settlement in the province.

The Atlantic settlement sector and especially New Brunswick is plagued by well-documented instances of anti-Black racism. A significant number of Black employees have left white-led settlement organizations due to these issues. Media reports have shed light on substandard housing conditions experienced by Black and African immigrant families, while evidence supports the bullying and harassment faced by Black immigrant children and youth in schools, often without adequate support from the system.

These circumstances have resulted in ongoing human rights complaints and lawsuits against these publicly funded organizations, as individuals are forced to seek justice for the systemic harm caused. Urgent action is needed to address and rectify these deeply ingrained systemic problems. Simultaneously, it is crucial to allocate direct funding to B3 ethnocultural communities to support newcomer integration, surpassing mere cultural activities.

Transparency and accountability can be ensured through robust reporting mechanisms established within the Government of New Brunswick. Moreover, a dedicated group within the Black task force should thoroughly review funding allocation policies and practices to effectively address these pressing concerns.

### **4.3 Education**

The Education workshop was designed to address pertinent issues surrounding education in New Brunswick, particularly concerning Black communities, children and youth in the school system, and the experience of parent teachers relationship. The education workshop was led by experienced educators and professionals. Dr Jessie Sagawa, English Instructor at the University of New Brunswick, and Saa Andrew Gbongbor, Human Rights Law Graduate, community advocates with over seventeen years experience working with racialized school-age children and youth.

The workshop aimed to identify the existing barriers and inequities faced by Black students in accessing quality education in the New Brunswick School system.. Participants engaged in constructive dialogues to explore innovative teaching methodologies, inclusive curriculum development, and supportive learning environments. The workshop also emphasized the importance of fostering culturally responsive practices and empowering Black students to thrive academically. The session was fully attended by stakeholders, parents, who expressed their

frustration about the current school system, as less to no effort is in place to help Black children reach their potential. Parents expressed the challenges they face with balancing work, and the odd timing for parent teacher meetings, as most parents are on-call work schedules. The dominant white led teachers do not know how to respond to Black children who are bullied in class or call the 'N' word. Racialized and minority students face trauma, mental health challenges from dealing with the negative experiences in school. During the education session, junior and high school students took the stage, expressed how they feel everyday as they get into their classes, not seeing teachers that look like them.

Youth who attended the summit also expressed their current challenges in school, and recommended that they currently have only white teachers in their school and this becomes a barrier to communicating their feelings and reaching out for counselling or explaining a need. They want black teachers also in the their schools

#### 4.4 Francophone Realities in NB

Led by Anicet Buranga and AIAC-NB, The Francophone Realities workshop focused on the linguistic and cultural experiences of the Francophone community in NB. Participants engaged in discussions and activities that highlighted the challenges faced by Francophones, including language preservation, cultural identity, and access to services. The workshop promoted a deeper understanding of the Francophone heritage and its contributions to the fabric of NB society. By fostering dialogue and collaboration, participants explored strategies to support and enhance the Francophone realities in the province.

Overall, these workshops at the NB Black Summit provided a platform for critical conversations, knowledge sharing, and collaborative problem-solving. They aimed to raise awareness, foster understanding, and generate actionable solutions to address the unique challenges faced by Black communities, immigrants, students, and the Francophone community in NB. By engaging participants in meaningful dialogue and empowering them to act, the workshops contributed to building a more inclusive and equitable society in New Brunswick

Anicet Buranga ,  
AIAC-NB

Of Rwandan origin and Romanian citizenship, Anicet Buranga arrived in New Brunswick in 2020 as a permanent resident. He is the founder of a non-profit organization named Afro-Canadian Initiatives Association of New-Brunswick (ACIA-NB) created four months after his arrival in the province. He is one of New Brunswick's Afro-descendant community leaders. His volunteer involvement in the community is much appreciated.

## **V. Strengths of the Summit**

The NB Black Summit was an event filled with impactful moments and opportunities for growth, connection, and collaboration. Here are some of the key highlights:

### **Insightful and Thought-Provoking Keynote Speeches:**

Renowned speakers and experts delivered powerful keynote speeches that ignited discussions and inspired attendees. These speeches provided deep insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by Black communities in New Brunswick. Keynote speakers shared their expertise, personal experiences, and perspectives, stimulating critical thinking and sparking conversations that would shape the workshops and discussions to follow.

### **Meaningful Workshops and knowledge sharing spaces.**

The summit offered a diverse range of workshops that delved into pressing issues in justice, immigration, settlement, and education systems. Led by experts in their respective fields, these workshops provided valuable opportunities for participants to engage in constructive dialogues, share experiences, and explore innovative strategies and solutions. Attendees gained practical knowledge, actionable insights, and a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by Black communities in NB.

### **Cultural Performances:**

The summit celebrated the rich cultural heritage of Black communities through captivating cultural performances. Attendees experienced the vibrancy and diversity of art forms such as music, dance, spoken word, and visual arts. These performances not only entertained and uplifted the spirits of the participants but also showcased the immense talent and contributions of Black artists within the community.

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CELEBRATING

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HISTORY

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FEBRUARY











## **Networking Opportunities:**

With over Seventy-Nine participants in this summit, there were ample networking opportunities for participants to connect, exchange ideas, and establish valuable relationships. Attendees had the chance to engage with like-minded individuals, professionals, community leaders, and organizations dedicated to supporting and empowering Black communities in NB. These connections fostered collaboration, resource sharing, and future partnerships aimed at driving positive change within the community.

The inaugural NB Black Summit was a transformative event and participants left the summit with new knowledge, meaningful connections, and a renewed sense of empowerment to address the challenges faced by Black communities.

“Black coalition to represent with communities and all levels of government  
Gathering together for the NB Summit allowed unity and recognition of the need to come together more efficiently. The concept of advancing with a coalition representing Black and people of African descent Leaders and including both francophones and anglophones was determined as a catalyst for future levels of influence to eliminate anti-black racism from NB policy and Black economic development.

The agreement was unanimous that part of the objectives and the success of the NB SummitS will be in sharing and collaborative effort within a directory and a place to provide a hub for a community action plan

of the Black community business professionals and organizations.

It was agreed the Summit organizers should progress to provide a ‘starting point’ for continued talk toward a governance structure that could support a horizontal-led council or Caucus of Black community organizations, developing many B3 (Black-led, Black-focused, and Black-serving) organizations under an umbrella coalition organization that still allows autonomy to each organizational member and represent with communities and all levels of government to access to levels of government funding.

The final structural Governance would be determined with Black leaders across NB reviewed with the completed report and agreement with the action plans outlined from the Summit.”

## **Organize Follow-Up Sessions:**

To sustain the momentum and impact of the summit, it is beneficial to organize follow-up sessions. These sessions can serve as a platform for ongoing discussions, collaborations, and progress updates on the initiatives and projects initiated during the summit. By facilitating continued engagement and accountability, the follow-up sessions can ensure that the momentum generated at the summit translates into tangible outcomes and lasting change.

By implementing these recommendations, future NB Black Summits can build upon their successes and further contribute to the empowerment, representation, and advancement of Black communities in New Brunswick.

## VII. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS (PROPOSED ACTION PLAN)

To ensure the continued growth and success of future NB Black Communities, the following recommendations have been deemed priority for GNB policy makers for immediate actions:

Prioritize the Development of a Black Task Force determined by Organizations from the Summit to advise GNB on Policies affecting Black communities:

There is a need for the development of a Black-led Task force made of Black leaders and B3 (Black-led, Black-focused, Black serving) organizations to engage with the Government of New Brunswick (GNB) to create concrete actions to address the NB Commissioner's Report of Systemic Racism.

The GNB's appointed New Brunswick's Commissioner, Manju Varnu, on Systemic Racism by the premier. The Commissioner was given a one-year mandate to examine the extent and scope of systemic racism in the province. Working independently from the government, I was to fulfill the following objectives:

1. Carry out public consultations to gather views and information about the nature and impact of systemic racism;  
on racialized immigrants, Indigenous populations, Black, and people of colour.
2. Engage with government institutions, in particular, education, health, social development and justice sectors;
3. Provide a report outlining the extent and scope of systemic racism in New Brunswick, including the government's role in eliminating systemic racism within provincial institutions and agencies and in the province generally.

The report concluded with a culmination of recommendations to address systemic racism in various facets of the lives of New Brunswickers. One of the recommendations was a Taskforce.

The Summit leaders recognize that "nothing for us without us should exist." It is necessary to be at the policy table for self-determination to exist, and it is essential to address the policies that continue to oppress with a black voice at the table in their creation. It is recommended that representatives of the larger coalition of organizations liaison with the GNB address areas that require immediate policy changes to remove anti-Black racism from the current structure.

Better access to Departments, Call of Proposals and Onboarding/Orientation programs for new immigrants:

Better onboarding/orientation programs for new immigrants, such as collaboratively created initiatives that recognize the talents and skills of new immigrants by welcoming them through economic immigration streams (similar to pilots with refugees).

### **These new measures should include but not be limited to:**

Expediting the processing of permanent residence applications for applicants in several streams, so they can start working and contributing faster;

Making it easier for new immigrants to get settlement funds;

Decreasing or Waiving fees for permanent residence applications;

Making the application process more flexible;

Residential options that is realistically affordable and accessible focusing on a variety of needs from mixed-income, mixed-tenure, and mixed-use housing near transit and other amenities, integrated with supports and services.

Provide pre-departure medical services to assist with immigration medical exams.

There is also a need for better communication with Black communities and federal government departments/agencies due to difficulty accessing the immigration department.

There is a need for a more significant examination of Calls to Submit Proposals to the Government of New Brunswick to help new immigrants. Recommendations such as launching a national call for proposals in conjunction with Black communities would improve existing pre- and post-arrival support services and options for private sponsors and ensure new immigrants take full advantage of their assistance.

## **Incorporate Dedicated Sessions on Systemic Racism, anti Black racism and Discrimination**

To deepen the impact of the summit, it is crucial to include dedicated mandatory sessions that specifically address systemic racism, anti-Black and discrimination directed at GNB staff and management. These sessions can facilitate open and honest discussions about the structural barriers faced by Black communities and explore strategies for dismantling systemic inequalities.

The objective is for them to be led by B3 organizations and speakers to ensure self-determination of outcomes within sessions. By centering these discussions, the summit can play a vital role in raising awareness and fostering collective action towards achieving equity and justice.

The appointment of new Government sponsored Community centre(s), such as the NB Black Cultural & Justice Centre to support Arts & Cultural and reforms to Justice and Public Safety.

## **NB Black Cultural Centres**

The Action Plan recommends creating a New Brunswick Black Cultural Centre Commission to Protect, Preserve and Promote the history and culture of people of African Descent in New Brunswick.

It has been recognized that before the government divided the provinces at Confederation in 1867, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick had the same history, yet as NS grew, NB was placed into obscurity. The creation would support museums across NB and become cultural gathering places where the rich history of Canada's oldest and long-standing Black communities within New Brunswick can be discovered and explored.

Working with the Black community on providing its heritage would further be a resource to educate our schools about our culture. Arts and culture are very prominent in the Black community, and it has been denied in our educational institutes. Therefore should be developed in partnership with the GNB to create cultural arts Centres. These centres could be separated or amalgamated with a building that formally incorporates other needs supports, such as medical and the proposed NB Justice Strategy Community Institute.

Discussions have been underway with some government agencies and black Organizations, like the NB history association and Afro Canadian Initiative Association of New Brunswick (ACIA-NB), and their response was very encouraging and supportive. Developing a Black cultural arts centre would create greater retention in diversity and promote more art and funding support for artists, particularly with historical relevance.







## Justice and Public Safety

It was determined as a priority of the Black community for the need to appoint new government-sponsored community bodies utilizing best practices from established successful initiatives in provinces such as Nova Scotia with their NS Black Justice Institute for current and areas where miscarriages of justice could have occurred.

Building Data-driven analysis compiled with anecdotal evidence, there is a demand for Black people to be treated fairly within the justice system. The Ontario Court of Appeal has recently recognized that “the existence of anti-Black racism in Canadian society is beyond reasonable dispute and is properly the subject matter of judicial notice. It is well recognized that criminal justice institutions do not treat racialized groups equally.” (R. v. Theriault 2021 ONCA 517 at para 143). Public Safety is equally wrought with injustice concerning harassment and discrimination in encounters with police in New Brunswick.

The Criminal Conviction Review Group (CCRG) within the Department of Justice Canada handles the current criminal conviction review process. However on February 16, 2023, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada introduced a bill to amend the Criminal Code to establish an independent commission to review, investigate, and decide which criminal cases should be returned to the justice system due to a potential miscarriage of justice. Although a step, it continues in the status quo approach to leave Black communities out of the consultation or review process that continues existing barriers available for remedies to miscarriages of justice. Having a task force that works with provincial and federal government justice departments will reduce mental health pressures, such as the impacts of financial barriers, lack of legal representation and key stressors in experiences of lengthy delays that, in some cases, are years for justice.

- <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/pl/mjrca-lcees/index.html>
- <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/ccr-rc/mjc-cej/toc-tdm.html>

Black people have limited access to resources or legal representation for cases involving harassment and discrimination in encounters with police in New Brunswick. The addition of Community-based provincial justice institutes in communities could work with the new federal commission with a community Justice system that would include:

- a. Black Heritage organizations urged to arrange legal orientations for new families
- b. Better support for reporting racism and representation within the school system
- c. The cultural sensitivity to develop a directory of Black lawyers and the need to advance more representation of lawyers and judges.
- d. Analysis of existing reforms unique to provinces lost in historical neglect by current legal structures.
- e. In a review of NB justice reform, notable cases were where anti-Black racism and anti-racism formed part of judgment/decision. Policy reform is required to review reopening these cases for retribution for the time spent in court with new powers, such as the ability of overturning and granting pardons.

It was noted that communities that were most faced were left out of the development. And acknowledge anything built for us without us is by nature against us.” A justice strategy that offers support to black and marginalized people and established best practices with work already achieved, such as the Nova Scotia Black Justice Institute. I need to look into the justice reform that acknowledges communities in the development of a New Brunswick justice institute is long overdue.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the NB Black Summit was a significant event that brought together leaders and organizations to discuss community issues and strategies for progress. While the summit had strengths in its keynote speeches, workshops, and networking opportunities, the provided recommendations have been offered to enhance future summits and ensure continued growth and empowerment of the Black community in New Brunswick.

## **PARTNER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

AEARA

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