

Youth Action Project on JUSTICE

Calls to Action

The Youth Action Project (YAP) is initiated and supported by the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights. YAP engages young people in experiential learning about important community issues through a human rights lens.

Over the past three years, the Centre has been following the city's End Poverty Edmonton initiative and working with young Edmontonians to share their understanding of the challenges and solutions around ending poverty in our city and making systemic change. We have successfully been able to offer a platform for young people to share their views about how to make their city a better place while making meaningful change. We were proud to see all recommendations made to the City integrated into their End Poverty Edmonton strategy and roadmap.

One of the key areas that came out during two years of work on poverty issues in Edmonton was a clear desire by the young people to look at the barriers that community face in relation to policing. Partnered up with the Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Division of the Edmonton Police Service, we began a learning journey in the fall of 2017 of which four recommendations have been built by these young people reflecting on their learnings and experiences.

The proposed actions include:

Security Proposed Action(s)

Recognizing the significant pressures and trauma experienced by police officers on the job, we call upon the Edmonton Police Service to commit to embedding a culture of self care for officers that recognizes and addresses the stress they experience in the line of duty as well as the stigma that is associated with seeking help. To aid this effort we recommend a public story-sharing campaign that humanizes police and confronts societal and institutional stigmas to seeking help.

Freedom Proposed Action(s)

We call upon the Government of Alberta to include an investigation of *Justice* in the curriculum for secondary school students to learn about their rights and responsibilities within the criminal justice system (policing, the Youth Criminal Justice Act). Based on our community research, students need knowledge that strengthens their ability to self-advocate, navigate the criminal justice system and participate meaningfully as citizens. This action should involve an audit of existing curriculum as well as new curriculum that appropriately meets the needs of young people

Dignity Proposed Action(s)

We call upon the Edmonton Police Commission and Edmonton City Council to ensure that those with lived experience of poverty and criminalization have a voice on the Police Commission. We call upon the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Police Commission to approach lived experience as a skill set needed for one's role on the Commission in order to be valued similarly to financial acumen or legal knowledge.

Justice Proposed Action(s)

We call upon the Government of Alberta to (re)affirm their commitment to the TRC Calls to Action, in particular #30 which *calls upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade, and to issue detailed annual reports that monitor and evaluate progress*. We recommend that this call to action also be extended to consider other overrepresented racialized communities (black and newcomer populations) in conflict with the law and in prison.

In order to action this recommendation, we recommend the Government of Alberta encourage and fund pre-sentencing extra-judicial measures (where appropriate) and restorative justice practices such as youth-centered sentencing circles as outlined in the Youth Criminal Justice Act (2003).