

# Employee Letters to DMs/Anti-Racism Task Force re: Racism and Barriers

## Employee 1

### Message to the DMs

After careful reflection on my 12 years as a federal public servant, I feel emboldened to write this message to you.

You are my Deputy Ministers, and I do not presume to lecture you. Instead, I am motivated to share these – confidential – views with you, given your good will and genuine receptivity on matters of racial barriers in the Public Service.

#### 1. *Our culture holds people back from our senior ranks*

- I know of no barriers rooted in racial hatred here in Ottawa-Gatineau. Instead, there is an inertia upheld by a) access, b) privilege, and c) indifference. The heart of our challenge is that these barriers remain mostly unspoken – and unknown to many.
- Many of the capable senior executives whom I have served were “fast tracked” into their positions. They extend this courtesy to others, but I have rarely seen such trust and privilege conferred upon high-potential employees who are racialized.
- Due to their cultural backgrounds, many people of colour – like some women – are often taught by their families to be modest in their conduct. Such people who do not self-promote may be overlooked.

#### 2. *Technical matters also preserve the status quo*

##### a) **Little diversity among interviewers**

- A personal example, with two cases below. Out of the total roughly 48 people who sat opposite me in 13 interviews, only one was racialized.
- At a 2019 interview to serve as a part-time member of the National Capital Commission, an Order-in-Council position, I was asked by 5 white males on my board what I would do at the NCC for diversity and inclusion. There was not even one woman on this interview panel. I did qualify into a Governor-in-Council pool, and I wish the new NCC board members well.
- I succeeded in 8 of my 9 EX-1 interviews to finally become a director. While there were women on all 9 interview panels, there was not one single racialized person at the decision-making table. The only reason I became an EX-1 is because my Deputy Minister vouched for me to be recruited from a pool. I should mention that this supportive DM was a white male.

- [REDACTED], it is a certainty to me that a stubborn glass ceiling is in place in the Public Service.

**b) Careful use of non-advertised processes needed**

- I do not offer data pointing to any conclusion, but I plainly ask whether non-advertised appointments across the Public Service disfavour racialized employees.
- During my 6 years of service at the Privy Council Office, one powerful senior executive told me that non-advertised EX appointments are used because, “Well, people know who they want to hire”. This person is now a full Deputy and has only 1 person of colour among their ~14 senior executives.
- A review of EX promotional appointments at my former department, PCO, made during the past 12 months points to significant use of this tool that renders me uncomfortable. Some 15 EX appointments were made during this period, and 10 of them have been non-advertised.
  - Link to jobs.gc.ca archive: <https://emploisfp-psjobs.cfp-psc.gc.ca/psrs-srfp/applicant/page2440?tab=3&tabKeepCriteria=3&mode=archive>

**3. You may have considered these recommendations**

Ultimately, I do not recommend affirmative action. Instead, I advocate for a level playing field for racialized public servants who are interested in the EX ranks because we are afforded fewer opportunities.

- Recruitment boards: Interviews for employees at all levels should not only include women as panel members, but also one racialized person. Candidates should hereon feel unhindered to request this.
- Overlooked staff: There is a cohort of competent people who have been passed up and are working below their level. Consideration could be given to their career paths.
- Communications: Discussing the uncomfortable issue of race risks alienating some who are not of colour. We must take care so that no single group is made to feel as though they are solely responsible for any barriers that remain in place. Instead, this charge is upon us all.

**Message to the Anti-Racism Task Force**

Here are a few ideas for consideration and further development.

- **Racial stratification** – It is mentioned anecdotally that racialized IRCC staff are in the lower classification levels. Do we have data to validate this?

- **Identification of “overlooked” cohort** – Not sure whether staff self-identify and there is a database. But how do we know who wants to come forward and take on more challenges?
  - Can we review the IRCC application/interview results to capture data on self-identified racialized applicants?
  - If so, what does the data indicate?
- **Mid-year PMA reviews** – In some cultures, individuals do not self-advocate for career advancement. Some of our employees have such cultural backgrounds. How do we discuss career plans with employees this time around?
- **September EXCOM EX talent management** – Apply a lens on racialized executives, with a focus on Black EXs.
- **Acting assignments** – Are racialized employees “tapped on the shoulder” to get acting assignments? In particular, are there very few acting assignments for Black IRCC staff?
- **Mentoring** – What are the moral obligations of racialized managers? Should they be the first to come forward to offer interview coaching and career advice? Can we use any other networks – Executive Leadership Committee, Ops Directors Planners network, etc – to advance equality of opportunities?
- **Communication** – Race is a delicate and sensitive topic. Not everyone will support these efforts. How do we avoid any backlash against advancement of racialized IRCC workers?
  - Racial barriers are themselves excesses...but will IRCC anti-racism efforts be seen as excesses?

## Message to Champions following a discussion with various employees

Colleagues, Champions,

Thanks for dialing in this afternoon, and your comments. We had a 75-minute informal – and unfiltered – conversation with 46 people from across IRCC. Participants were emboldened and forthright, with their emphasis on racism over other forms of discrimination.

Bottom line, participants have ideas and are willing to do work to support concrete actions. Put differently, there is potential for momentum. Below is my report, with a recommendation that we have a chat amongst ourselves before holding another cross-department call.

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### 1. Participant comments

#### General

- Participants started by positing that in addition to racial hatred are systemic institutional barriers, some even inadvertent.

- Terminology: “people of colour”, or “racialized person” instead of Visible Minority, as some cities are >50% racialized populations.
  - “Equity” instead of “equality”.
- One employee crestfallen when his then-5 year-old son was told by schoolmates they wouldn’t play with him because he is Black.
- Global Affairs Canada could have presented a more diverse set of execs to pursue the UN Security Council seat
  - Canada has a very large immigrant base, a clear competitive advantage over Ireland and Norway.

### IRCC specific

- While IRCC does have a diverse leadership cadre, can strive harder due to the very clientele the department serves.
- Some colleagues want to explain their personal IRCC experiences without committing “career suicide”, and not as formal grievances.
- Interview boards should be more diverse.
- Two employees believed that some children of non-racialized IRCC execs have their children get jobs here.
- Anonymous Slido post: “There is an overall lack of transparency and bias in EX appointments”.
- One employee feels that racialized employees are disfavoured when it comes to international posting locations.
- CPC-Ottawa-OSC have an overrepresentation of people of colour in processing jobs compared to management.

## 2. Suggestions made

- Canada School of Public Service has several recommended courses on unconscious bias.
- One Comms person is willing to volunteer to support the sending out of invitations for future “Safe Space Chats” about racism.
- There is a large number of anti-racism resources that IRCC can disseminate to staff via e-mails, or by posting them on our Intranet.
- IRCC can avail itself of support from the Federal Black Employee Caucus for toolkits and keynote speakers.

## 3. Considerations/Analysis

- IRCC in my view is a very progressive environment. And I was surprised to hear some comments made today. We may want to communicate our diversity numbers to staff.
  - With some suggested improvements, we can position ourselves to be the best department w.r.t. issues of race and discrimination.
- There was a desire to focus on anti-Black racism. We could have stronger messaging along these lines, and plan for a more robust Black History Month in February 2021.
- Some participants on today’s call wrote to me with numerous suggestions – these people can help as idea-generators, and volunteers.

Some participants asked for a further conversation, but this cuts both ways, as others want actions instead of discussion. For now, I would like to refrain from setting up a third call with employees myself, as I have no such mandate. Indeed, we now have more grassroots unfiltered feedback, a few proposals and several willing volunteers.

Am happy to support the champions by discussing this further with you and [REDACTED] next week. If you agree, we can set up a call.

## Employee 2

### Message to the DG in response to DMs message

This email is from the heart.

Regrettably, I am conflicted by the DM's message. As a Black woman, I am pleased the Deputy Minister took the time to acknowledge the devastating situations in the United States and in Canada due to years of injustice, inequality and racism. I am also, however, deeply disappointed that her statement fell short, as it did not reference a plan of action to combat anti-Black racism within the department nor establish mandatory anti-racism training.

We are living in a world of uncertainty and fear. The lack of solid mechanisms in place to removing systemic and institutional barriers towards Black people and people of colour, including unconscious bias, harms us all as public servants on a daily basis.

Over the years, I have been having discussions on the lack of representation in senior leadership roles within the Federal government. Recently, I took this opportunity to ask friends and former colleagues from various departments, including IRCC, if they have ever reported to a black person in the role of Director, Assistant-Director, Director General or Assistant Deputy Minister. It was alarming to realize not one of them ever has, despite many of them being in the Federal government for decades. We must do better.

The IRCC mandate includes welcoming people from around the world and yet our own internal leadership positions and tables are not reflective of that global diversity especially in terms of Black representation. [REDACTED] is the first black, woman Associate Deputy Minister in a Federal department, and that comes after 152 years of existence as a country.

There is still a long way to go for us to achieve equality. In order to get there, we need to take concrete actions to dismantle institutional and systemic anti-Black racism.

All employees, particularly those in senior management positions, should participate in anti-racism and unconscious bias learning activities with a specific module on anti-Black racism. This training should be reoccurring for everyone, and included over the course of leadership development. Training cannot be the only solution, but it is a good start.

It has been 20 years since the Embracing Change initiative, and if anyone were to examine the career trajectory of those employees, the systemic barriers within the federal government would be evident. It is time we all had the opportunity to breathe.

Let's make a commitment to fighting oppression by implementing concrete actions which will ensure real lasting change.

Looking forward to hearing your thoughts.

Respectfully,

## Message to the Champion of Visible Minority

Good morning [REDACTED],

Hope this email finds you well.

I am interested in learning more about the Deputy Minister's task force being created in terms of the goals, objectives, timelines and desired outcomes, and I was told you would be the person to contact.

Representation is a topic dear to my heart. Would you be able to provide information on the following:

- The actions being proposed to address the lack of Black representation in executive leadership roles;
- The steps being taken to address anti-Black racism within our department; and
- Are there any Black employees represented on the taskforce who could provide valuable insight on the issues surrounding anti-Black racism?

In my opinion, this is more than a question of "diversity" and "inclusion". It is about real representation of Black public servants throughout the entire federal government.

During the course of my 20 years as a public servant, I have been advocating for the proper representation and treatment of visible minorities within the public service especially for Black employees since they are often the ones negatively impacted the most. Attached, you will find an email which I had sent to a former IRCC Deputy Minister, [REDACTED], in 2008. It has been over 10 years since the initial email, however, I still believe wholeheartedly that IRCC could be doing better and should be the department leading by example.

I am pleased to see this task force created; and I am eagerly looking forward to seeing its successful outcome.

Many thanks,

## Exchange between Employee and former Deputies in 2008

Dear [REDACTED]:

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my concerns.

While I can appreciate the breadth of experience of the members of EXCOM and the intent of their decision to have responsibility for employment equity and diversity fall upon [REDACTED] shoulders, it

is unfortunate the impact of that decision on visible minorities was seemingly not taken into consideration.

I cannot imagine an issue more fully entrenched throughout all federal departments as the advancement and promotion of official languages. It is an issue recognized by Parliament and championed across Canada by the Commissioner of Official Languages, [REDACTED], whose mandate is "to take all actions and measures within the authority of the Commissioner with a view to ensuring recognition of the status of each of the official languages and compliance with the spirit and intent of this Act in the administration of the affairs of federal institutions, including any of their activities relating to the advancement of English and French in Canadian society." Employment Equity and Diversity does not have an official spokesperson or a government agency dedicated solely to its advancement. It is for this reason that, in my opinion, an official Champion for Diversity and Employment Equity is integral to the successful achievement of full representation and understanding at Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada welcomes citizens of all races, religions, colours and creeds from around the world. This magnificent mosaic should be reflected in every building, on every floor, at every level of Citizenship and Immigration Canada across this country and around the world. Who better to ensure this than our own Champion of Diversity and Employment Equity? As a visible minority woman, I took great pride in this department's recognition of the importance of diversity and employment equity with a distinct and committed Champion. I fervently hope you and EXCOM will give me cause for that great pride again one day.

Thank you once again for considering my concerns.

Respectfully yours,

-----Original Message-----

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** October 1, 2008 5:50 PM  
**To:**  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: CIC Champion for EE & Diversity

Dear X

Let me begin by thanking you for your participation in the Demographic Survey Focus Group. The input received from employees who took the time to attend these sessions will prove invaluable as the department continues to review its Employment Equity and Diversity Program. I share your conviction that the Department should lead by example in the area of Employment Equity and Diversity and this is why we are supporting pilots such as the Young Newcomers Internship Program and have launched the Employment Equity Recruitment and Development Initiative. I believe that more can be done and through the focus groups, I am hoping that feedback received will lead to new and innovative initiatives.

With respect to a Champion for Employment Equity and Diversity, the role of champions was discussed at an Executive Committee (EXCOM) meeting. More specifically, members of the Executive Committee believe that the importance of Diversity and Employment Equity is recognized in the Department and as such the entrenchment of this issue into the department's operating practices should revert back to the ADM, Corporate Services [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] has responsibility for Human Resources as well as strategic planning and development of the department's business plan and internal communications - all key functions in embedding Diversity and EE in the culture of CIC.

I can appreciate that you have a different view on the approach taken by the Executive Committee regarding the various championship roles but I am grateful that you took the time to voice your concerns- you and colleagues like you will help ensure EXCOM's vigilance with respect to the advancement of Diversity and EE at CIC.

[REDACTED]  
Deputy Minister / Sous-ministre  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@cic.gc.ca  
Citizenship and Immigration Canada | 365 Laurier Avenue West Ottawa ON K1A 1L1  
Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada | 365, avenue Laurier Ouest Ottawa ON K1A 1L1  
Government of Canada | Gouvernement du Canada

-----Original Message-----

**From:** X  
**Sent:** September 24, 2008 4:50 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** CIC Champion for EE & Diversity

Dear Deputy Minister [REDACTED],

I recently attended a meeting for the Demographic Survey Process and inquired about our Champion for Employment Equity & Diversity because I felt that the importance of this survey could be shared through our champion. I was deeply disheartened to learn of the Executive Committee's decision to discontinue a Champion for Employment Equity & Diversity.

If our employment equity numbers are in line with the rest of the federal public service, only three of the four Equity groups have seen representation numbers increase. However, as you are undoubtedly aware, visible minorities are experiencing significant challenges in achieving progress and in fact are experiencing a growing representation gap. In my humble opinion, it is the opportune time for an



Employment Equity Champion to press forward to ensure that the Clerk's renewal action plan is successfully implemented.

Human Resources had 8 years since Embracing Change to make progress with employment equity representation. As visible minorities remain the final group, please don't retreat from the challenge that is before us.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada states that we are committed to a representative and diverse workforce and attracting people from all cultures to Canada because it makes good business sense. I truly believe we should be the Department leading by example in this area. The importance of having an Employment Equity & Diversity Champion who is committed to the Clerk's renewal action plan is essential. Representation is just as important as being served in an official language.

I encourage you to please reconsider the decision to discontinue the Champion for Employment Equity and Diversity.

Thank you so much for your time.

Respectfully yours,

## Employee 3

Exchange between Employee and DMs

**From:**

**Date:** July 22, 2020 at 3:07:36 PM EDT

**To:** [REDACTED]"

**Subject:** Anti-racism efforts at IRCC podcast

Good Day [REDACTED],

I recently listened to your [Episode 3: Anti-racism efforts at IRCC](#) podcast, and I applaud you both for following through on your plan for change. Your bold and swift steps in assuring that we move beyond the dialogue to things that are measurable shows a commitment to improving the work environment for Blacks and Indigenous public servants. It is my hope that the strategies and tools used to proactively

embed equity into our ethos also includes contributions from those who have expertise in systemic racism and have been the recipient of anti-Black and Indigenous racism.

Mentoring and the importance of having suitable mentors were mentioned on the podcast. In my previous email to you, I also mentioned mentoring as one tool to use. Research also supports “reskilling” for racialized individuals. For example, many Black and Indigenous public servants enter the public service at entry level positions and the majority of them remain at these levels; one reason being the lack of opportunity to learn new, viable and relevant skills. This is where reskilling comes in (retraining and up-skilling) and programs for career-development and advancement. However, I can go on forever on what my research has revealed and different programs to implement to help with re-skilling, but, the purpose of my email is to say, thank you for your commitment to change. Regards,

**From:** X

**Sent:** June 23, 2020 8:55 AM

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: Message from the Deputy Ministers | Un message des sous-ministres

Thanks, [REDACTED], for being receptive and responding to my email. I know that a change in the ethos of any organization starts with senior leadership, and culture change is difficult when senior management is not aware of the issues. I believe you are dedicated to initiating the type of change that will lead to a paradigm shift at IRCC.

I am encouraged to hear that you appreciate the mentoring recommendation. I have been a mentor with the Federal Internship for Newcomers (FIN) for 2 years and I have experienced firsthand the impact mentoring can have on individuals. There are studies about the benefits of mentoring and best practices as it relates to mentoring for inclusion within the public service. I believe working together we can start an exceptional program that will support Black public servants.

I am pleased that you will be looking into the hiring practices. It is troubling to see the underrepresentation of Black and Indigenous people within our walls. I know this problem is not unique to IRCC, and is an issue of great complexity, but oversight and accountability at all levels of the hiring process would help to remove barriers.

We must treat breaking the cycle of anti-Black systemic racism with the same level of determination, creativity, and ingenuity we have applied to confronting the challenge of COVID-19.

IRCC has amazing innovative individuals that also want change and have ideals to address anti-Black systemic racism. I believe working together is a **positive** start to a fair and equitable workplace.

Looking forward to being an agent of change.

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** June 21, 2020 4:21 PM

**To:** X, [REDACTED]@cic.gc.ca>

**Subject:** RE: Message from the Deputy Ministers | Un message des sous-ministres

Dear X,

I note that [REDACTED] has already reached out but I want to respond to your email as well. Your criticism of our note to all staff is helpful and will enable us to do better next time. Among your suggestions, I really appreciate your notes about mentoring and some oversight of our hiring practises.

To address the issues of systemic racism in the department we all need to do our part. As senior management we need to do better and we take this challenge seriously. Thank you for sharing your previous correspondence as well, it is helpful for [REDACTED] and me to understand where you have raised these concerns in the past.

We look forward to working with you to bring about change.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Deputy Minister, Office of the Deputy Minister  
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada / Government of Canada

[REDACTED]@cic.gc.ca / [REDACTED]

Sous-ministre, Bureau du sous-ministre  
Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

[REDACTED]@cic.gc.ca / [REDACTED]

**From:** X

**Sent:** June 18, 2020 9:43 AM

**To:** [REDACTED]@cic.gc.ca>; [REDACTED]@cic.gc.ca>

**Subject:** FW: Message from the Deputy Ministers | Un message des sous-ministres

I am writing this email to address your June 3, 2020 message. I have revisited it several times and each time I am left with the same sentiment, that it falls short of addressing deep anti-Black racism and systemic racism within the public service and most specifically in IRCC. These types of conversations are uncomfortable for many but silence should not be an option because it allows systemic and anti-Black racism to flourish within our walls.

The message fails on several fronts:

1. It does not identify, name, or address systemic racism.
2. It does not provide hope, recourse, and action.
3. It presents a false narrative of what anti-Black racism and systemic racism is.
4. It does not convey the seriousness of systemic racism and the impact it has on Black public servants within IRCC.
5. It does not convey that senior level management is taking systemic racism and racial disparities seriously.

As a person who has studied, researched, and wrote on systemic/institutional racism within the Ontario Public Service, has lived experience, and observed institutional racism within IRCC, it was discouraging to

read the statement, “If you experience or witness behaviors that contradict these values,” then it is on you to report these incidents to your manager. It was discouraging because that statement speaks on individual racism, not institutional racism which is the focus of the global protests. With systemic/institutional racism the onus is on management to ask, “How is racism operating here?” and then mobilize with others to confront the system and dismantle it not put it back on the victims of the system.

Let us be honest, this is not about “feeling afraid of living in our own skin,” but as demonstrated in Associate Deputy ██████████ interview with ██████████ on The National last week, it is about racial disparities that exist in our country and at IRCC. There is a disparity in the number of Black employees in the public service at all levels, and the gap widens at higher position levels. To contextualize this, as recent as October 2019, IRCC introduced a new pilot program, Integrated Case Analysis Centre (ICAC). There were over 100 individuals hired but less than 3% of those hired were Black and/or Indigenous people. Out of the 3% only 1 was a black male. Roughly 50% of those hired were Brown people. These statistics support research and data that shows that Black and Indigenous people are disproportionately underrepresented in the public service. This is discouraging; IRCC should be a representative body of the individuals within our society and the people we serve (we receive immigrants from African nations as well as Asian countries).

So how and why is this happening? On a micro-level, IRCC has not done an adequate job in auditing their hiring practices. Too often individuals are promoted or appointed through inequitable processes. Furthermore, the same way applicant names are used to discriminate and preclude someone from an opportunity, names are also used to give opportunities. For example, for the past 2 years (starting in 2018) the individuals assessing the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) have selected only Brown individuals. One of the individuals involved in the hiring process explicitly told me that she intentionally selected those individuals because she knew by their names that they were Brown like her. This behaviour is alarming and appalling. When I expressed my concerns, she attempted to retract her statement. Nevertheless, she said it and this confirms a conscious effort to select certain marginalized individuals over other qualified candidates.

There are barriers to enter the public sector, and also barriers to opportunities. Black individuals are not given the same opportunities to advance as non-Black individuals. Access to opportunities are limited or non-existent for Black public servants. Therefore, your message would have been better received if there was an acknowledgement of the existing disparities within IRCC and a promise to correct the disparities were included in your message.

Your message provided links to a self-advocacy template letter and the Federal Black Employee Caucus, but what is senior level management doing to ensure accountability? What is senior level management doing to prevent individuals from using their position to select and promote friends or certain marginalized individuals over others? What is senior management doing to audit hiring practices within IRCC? The answers are not found in committees, self-identifying, and or diversity champions, we have tried that, and it has failed. For example, I have reached out to the Diversity Champion and the Diversity Committee at IRCC (**please see attached emails**), to present a program that highlights Black contributions to Canada by highlighting the Black settlement in Nova Scotia and Mifflin Wistar Gibbs (first Black politician in BC), but sadly it has been 2 years without a response from the Diversity Committee even after the Diversity Champion emailed them to get back to me. Like many other

committees that supposedly support diversity, this committee was inactive, and served no purpose but to check off a box. Research shows that diversity policies do not reduce racial inequality and that these policies are superficial and fail to question the more covert forms of control and ways of maintaining power in the workplace.

So, it cannot be status quo, a change is needed. No more talks about promoting diversity at the exclusion of Black people. No more talks about a safe and equitable workplace at the exclusion of Black and Indigenous people. These talks may sound good but does nothing to change the ethos of the work environment for Black and Indigenous people within IRCC. It is time to focus our attention and resources on dismantling this system that is pervasive and excludes Black Canadians and Indigenous people. I have started the conversation with my A/D and management team (initial email attached) but change starts at the top, not at middle management. Senior Management must hold directors, managers, and supervisors responsible in how they select individuals for acting and appointment opportunities. To quote from the same Martin Luther King Jr speech (1966 convocation at Illinois Wesleyan University) that you paraphrased in your message, "**...[H]istory has proven that social systems always have a last minute, a strong breathing power. And the guardians of the status quo are always on hand with their oxygen tents to keep the old order alive. And so in a sense segregation is still with us. Not in the open sense that it used to be with us, with legal sanction, but in the covert, in the subtle, in the defacto sense.**"

Now is the time to be innovative and sincere in addressing systemic racism and not to be guardians of the status quo. It is time to set up mentoring programs for Black public servants. It is time to listen to their concerns. It is time to create a panel with people that look like me on it to monitor hiring practices and report back to senior level management. There is work to be done and together we can dismantle the system and make IRCC an equitable workplace for ALL!

With sincere concern and hope that working together can and will bring change,

## Employee 4

Hello [REDACTED],

First let me say thank you for putting this task force together, it is long overdue.

My name is X, I am a visible minority on the IT side of IRCC. I am writing to you in private because I am not yet comfortable enough to communicate publicly.

I've been with this department for my entire public service of 15 years. I am very proud to work for IRCC, I consider it a privilege to work here, but in that time of 15 years I have seen both the good side of this department and the bad.

Please make no mistake, systemic racism does exist in the department, you just have to know where to look. I'm sure you are receiving the same stories from others, but here are some of the things I've noted and experienced over the years:

- no diversity in middle and upper management especially in the field of IT. My directorate is uniformly Caucasian French Canadian
- visible minorities stuck in CS1 (entry level) positions for 5-10 years while non-minorities are not (this is very real I can show examples today).
- Fellow colleagues having to adopt a more western sounding name, to better their career opportunities.
- Social team outings are geared towards one culture, in other words I don't find Friday pub nights comfortable for my background, but feel I have to go to further my career.
- Generation gap: I have found that the older generation of IRCC employees are more prone to being less politically correct ie. I have been called "Oriental" during work, a term I find highly offensive and outdated.
- Lack of training: personally I have asked for French training every year for the past 15 years, and have never received it (Language training on the IT side is particularly difficult to obtain). This may not necessarily have to do with race, but it does contribute to the problem.
- And of course the big one that affects all public service, the bilingual language requirement is biased toward Francophone Canadians and is a major barrier for immigrants.

Please don't get me wrong, I am very happy with my career today, I have worked hard and have reached a senior level, but I see many barriers and biases my colleagues of colour have to face as I did.

I think IRCC is very tolerant and inclusive place to work, IRCC has employed some especially inspiring woman of colour in executive roles such as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], but we can and should do better.

PS. I am terribly unsettled by the "bilingual bonus" pay, I would love to see some executives voluntarily give this up if their first language is naturally French, there is enough privilege already.

## Employee 5

Hello [REDACTED],

Thank you for taking the time to write to me. Your presentation on racism has had incredible resonance within the department and beyond.

I even referred you to the Department of Justice because they needed a panelist. I thought you would be the best person for this panel.

I am willing to meet with you in the future to get to know you and discuss this issue further.

Here are some points that might be of interest to you.

- Targeted recruitment

- Executive Management & Leadership Internship Program for EX - 1 (rotational internship in 3 different programs). This will help increase representation at the middle and senior management level and close the gap.
- Retention to increase representation
  - ✓ Exit interview (to find out what is wrong, why you are leaving, to avoid brain drain, and an eternal restart.
  - ✓ Keep the corporate memory and
  - ✓ No warning process to promote the best.
- Add diversity as an indicator in the PMAs of senior managers
- Trust and include them in interesting and large projects, where they would gain experience, visibility and networking.
- Analysis and research of data on MV, especially on intersectionality (women + MV or disability + MV etc...)
- Participate as a board member for recruitment and competition processes (interviewer, screening process)
- Set up an action plan with objectives to be reached and a follow-up committee
- Set up a generic email the IRCC listens and go around the offices here and in the embassies to listen to the VMs on their concerns.
- Break the circle of "no experience, no work" and promote "Learning by doing" because it is by forging that one becomes forged.
- Language training and supervisory training (Supervisor Development Program (G313) and give them the chance to supervise.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to suggest these few points above.

I am glad to know that you are the Director of the Anti-Racism Task Force and I wish you good luck in this new challenge.

## Employee 6

Dear [REDACTED],

First of all, I want to thank you for your [June 3 message](#) and for the sustained emphasis at all levels of our department on anti-racism, overcoming bias, and building a more respectful and inclusive workplace. The training sessions by [REDACTED] were particularly impactful. Polling the audience as she did really brought the message home. I'm really happy to hear she'll be leading an anti-racism task force. It makes me even prouder to work for IRCC.

I have 20 years of experience with the Department as a career Foreign Service officer. I've worked in a range of operational contexts, including overseas in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. On the basis of that experience, I'd like to raise a few suggestions for the task force.

### **Anti-Racism Training for IRCC Decision Makers**

It's so important that IRCC employees be representative of Canada's incredibly diversity and that we embody the values of the department. I won't speak to recruitment here, since I know that's a big piece

of what you're already tackling (e.g. only 7 out of 299 Foreign Service officers are black; how many are indigenous?). I will speak to training, specifically for IRCC decision-makers.

We are the front-line of Canada's immigration system. We wield a lot of power over our clients' lives, and so our decisions need to be free from racism, bias, and discrimination on any ground. I can recall receiving some unconscious bias training way back at the beginning of my career. We have an opportunity now to make anti-racism training a part of every employee's career roadmap, and to **reinforce it at intervals** throughout our careers.

My suggestion is that we hire qualified anti-racism educators to give meaningful **anti-racism workshops for all decision-makers**, now and whenever a new decision-maker receives training for their delegated authority. For Foreign Service officers, being actively anti-racist when we are working outside Canada can be even more daunting than here in Canada. The values we hold as Canadians may not be shared by our staff, partners, and clients abroad (**we need to train locally-engaged staff too**). So our cohort needs specialized tools to help us intervene with sensitivity and impact when we see other people being treated in a racist matter while we are working in foreign countries.

It's worth taking a close look at the **learning roadmaps for decision-makers** to ensure the messages being amplified now continue to be heard loud and clear, again and again.

- **Incorporate a commitment to anti-racism into our PMA process alongside Values & Ethics and make anti-racism refreshers a mandatory part of the PLP;**
- **Make it a part of pre-posting briefings;**
- **Incorporate it into all training and refresher courses for supervisors and managers; and**
- **Develop a suite of anti-racism management tools so managers will be equipped to guide their teams.**

In your latest podcast on Anti-Racism Efforts at IRCC, you mentioned receiving lots of suggestions about training. I'm just adding my voice to theirs from my particular perspective in the Foreign Service. It's not just International Network decision-makers who can benefit, of course. It's everyone, in every unit, division, branch, and sector of our organization.

Thank you for welcoming us to bring our concerns forward so we can all listen, learn, and become a more truly inclusive and respectful IRCC community.

Sincerely / Cordialement,

## Employee 7

**From:**

**Sent:** May 24, 2021 5:25 PM

**To:** [REDACTED]@cic.gc.ca>; [REDACTED]@cic.gc.ca>

**Subject:** Non-advertised processes & racial barriers



██████████,

Having noted two non-advertised IRCC EX-2 appointments within a fortnight, I am writing concerning an ongoing trend that is at odds with the spirit of the Clerk's January 22, 2021 Call to Action.

In the past 1½ years, IRCC has given the following non-advertised promotions to non-racialized males:

- 5+ EX-1 appointments
- 3 EX-2 appointments
- 2 EX-2 appointments, re-classification
- 2 EX-3 appointments, re-classification
- Source: <https://emploisfp-psjobs.cfp-psc.gc.ca/psrs-srfp/applicant/page2440?requestedPage=4&fromPage=3&tab=5&log=false&mode=archive>

These data points do not even take into account the racial barriers to *acting* executive opportunities.

In raising the above trend in the aggregate, I concede that I have no right to critique whether *individual* candidates merit a promotional appointment. But in all frankness, I consider such a trend not only a barrier to my own career progression, but to numerous others, so it is also a concern to our department as a whole.

I do know how hard Senior Management and the Anti-Racism Task Force continue to work to reducing barriers, and I don't presume to lecture you. But do you mind raising this matter at higher levels, like with ██████████ so that it is clear that this trend continues at its normal pace?

Respectfully,

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**From:**

**Sent:** May 27, 2021 3:36 PM

**To:** ██████████@cic.gc.ca>; ██████████@cic.gc.ca>

**Cc:** ██████████@cic.gc.ca>

**Subject:** Acting EX IRCC assignments: barrier

██████████,

I just took a look at the 73 acting EX assignments at IRCC from May 2020 to May 2021:

<https://emploisfp-psjobs.cfp-psc.gc.ca/psrs-srfp/applicant/page2440?requestedPage=4&fromPage=3&tab=5&log=false&mode=archive>

Two of the 73 were racialized, by my quick review.

If they don't monitor acting EX assignments. Bottom line, are there any DM or ADM-level checks and balances for EX acting assignments? More bottom line, how can there be under 5 acting EX assignments for racialized IRCC staff under a total of 73 such staffing decisions.

Barrier, anyone?

In fairness, some people had several acting assignments within the year – so the number of racialized-to-nonracialized acting EX IRCC assignments is lower, perhaps 2 out of 60 or 2 out of 65.

And what would this look like at the non-EX classifications, particularly with entry (AS-2, PM-3) and mid-level (PM-4, EC-4) acting assignments?