

AMCC

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

REPORT

ABSTRACT

This report encapsulates the community-driven aspirations and shared vision gathered during the community engagement process for the establishment of the African Multicultural Community Centre (AMCC). It summarizes the communities' hopes and recommendations, reflecting a shared vision for a vibrant and inclusive space.



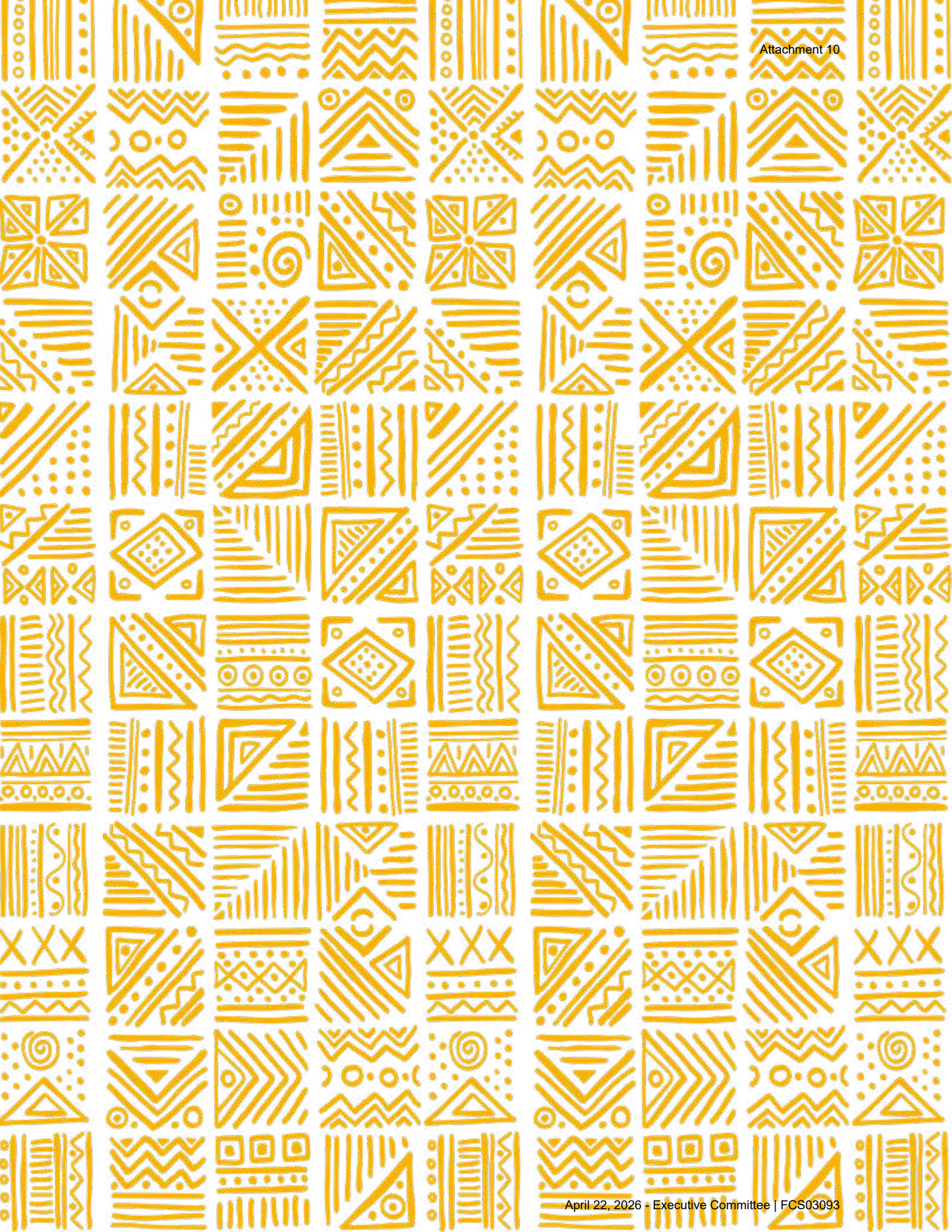


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	9
Background & Context of the AMCC Facility Project	9
Purpose of the Report	9
Scope & Objectives	10
Overview	10
Methodology	13
Engagement Methods	13
How The Community Was Involved	14
Data Collection & Analysis	16
Community Demographics	18
Information About The Communities of African Descent In Edmonton	18
Demographic Data	18
Key Findings	21
Presentation of The Most Significant Finding from The Engagement Process	21
Other Findings	36
Recommendations	39
Lessons Learned	40
Conclusion	42
Appendices	47
References	48
Acknowledgements	49
Glossary	49

PROJECT NAME

AFRICAN MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY CENTRE (AMCC)

PROJECT DURATION

2 MONTHS

PROJECT LEADS

CNEORM SERVICES LTD

NNEKA OTOGBOLU . DR. COLINS UGOCHUKWU

DATE OF REPORT

NOVEMBER 15, 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Overview

The community engagement for the African Multicultural Community Centre (AMCC) facility project was initiated to actively engage and solicit feedback from Edmonton's diverse communities of African descent regarding the facility's concept and establishment. The AMCC is envisioned as a hub that celebrates and supports the rich cultural heritage of these communities.

Methodology

Our engagement methodology encompasses a range of approaches designed to ensure inclusivity and robust community participation. These methods included digital surveys, focus group discussions, community town hall forums, and one-on-one interviews. This diversified approach provided a platform for all Edmonton's African descent community members to contribute their perspectives. In terms of numbers, we had 381 respondents attempt the digital survey, 263 valid responses for the English version, and 21 valid responses for the French version. In addition, 263 people RSVP'd while 147 attended the Town Hall meeting. Additionally, there were 64 participants in the focus group sessions, and 5 community leaders participated in one-on-one sessions.

Key Findings

Through our comprehensive engagement efforts, there was a clear community consensus strongly affirming and supporting the establishment of a Multicultural Community Centre facility. We have gathered vital insights from Edmonton's communities of African descent, and several important themes emerged from the review of responses received.

The primary and overarching focus was on the shared vision and hopes for what the AMCC facility could be. The communities expressed expectations that went beyond just a physical space; they envisioned a place where their dreams and aspirations could come to life. The survey results indicated that about 62% of respondents envisioned the proposed

centre as a place of celebration and community integration, showcasing to the broader Edmonton communities the wonders, excitement, and rich cultural heritage of our Black communities.

Additionally, the communities voiced a deep desire for a space that prioritized mental health and wellness; no less than 45% perceived that the centre could contribute to mental health and wellness through youth and family programs. People emphasized the importance of having resources and support for emotional well-being within the proposed AMCC facility. There were also significant concerns, raised about economic and social disparities, where the communities sought a place that could offer opportunities and resources to bridge these gaps. About 60% of respondents indicated that workshops/events on financial literacy and economic empowerment would be most valuable for individuals and families within Edmonton's communities of African descent.

Moreover, the aspirations for intergenerational learning resonated strongly, reflecting the communities' wish for a space that fosters the sharing of cultural heritage and knowledge across generations. Finally, collaboration and partnerships were significant themes showcasing the communities' keen interest in a space that promotes unity and cooperation, bringing diverse groups and organizations together.

Recommendations

Based on the feedback received, the following recommendations in this report reflect the communities' desire and hopes. Implementing a diverse range of programs and services within the proposed AMCC facility and celebrating the rich

cultural heritage of the African descent communities was one of the key recommendations that we heard.

Additionally, the communities strongly advocated prioritizing initiatives focused on seniors and youth, fostering education, mentorship, and recreational activities for the younger generation. Another key recommendation was the importance of a centrally located and easily accessible facility for the proposed AMCC, ensuring convenience for community members from various neighbourhoods. There were notable emphases on creating adaptable spaces within the centre to accommodate diverse events and activities. Furthermore, recommendations in this report included the incorporation of language support services and facilities catering to members of Edmonton's communities of African descent with disabilities. These suggestions form a crucial framework for a vibrant and inclusive AMCC facility that will meet Edmonton's African descent communities' varied needs and aspirations.

Lessons Learned

We have identified several valuable lessons throughout our engagement journey. One of the lessons learned by the team is the value of comprehensive engagement. We learned that engaging diverse communities and segments within the communities is vital for a holistic understanding of regular needs and desires in regards to the proposed AMCC facility.

The learnings serve as valuable takeaways from the community engagement process, reflecting on the experience and insights gained to improve future community engagement initiatives and



the successful development and operations of the proposed AMCC facility.

Conclusion

The community engagement for the African Multicultural Community Centre (AMCC) facility project has successfully provided an open platform for the diverse communities of African descent in Edmonton to voice their perspective on establishing the facility. By implementing the recommendations outlined in this report, we have the opportunity to create a facility that reflects the desires and needs of the community, fostering

a space where cultural heritage is celebrated and embraced.

This executive summary offers a snapshot of the project's goals, methods, key findings, recommendations, and lessons learned, focusing on the vision of the African Multicultural Community Centre (AMCC) facility. Stakeholders and decision-makers are encouraged to explore the full report to deeply understand the communities' insights and the path forward in realizing the AMCC facility.



INTRODUCTION

Background & Context of the AMCC Facility Project

A report titled “Supporting Space Access: Meeting Emergent Immigration/ Business Case Template Refugee Community Needs and Its Social Integration,” published by the City of Edmonton in July 2008, noted a 63.2% rise in the number of immigrants between 2001 - 2006, compared to the population between 1996 - 2000.

The City of Edmonton’s community services and the Council for Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta (Africa Centre) collaborated to develop a comprehensive functional program and site analysis in response to the growing demand. These findings were to guide the conceptual design of a new Africa Centre.

Due to many factors—including the pandemic, the transition of leadership at Africa Centre, and the change in leadership in the City Council—this project was paused and revisited in 2023. Taking into consideration the emergent priorities of Edmonton’s Black communities — coming out of the pandemic, Africa Centre’s strategic plans and goals, and the City of Edmonton’s anti-Black racism strategy—there was a need to revisit the proposed plan for the Africa Multicultural Community Center to re-engage with the communities and to get their feedback on the proposed facility.

Purpose of the Report

The primary objective of this report is to document and present the feedback (findings, insights, and recommendations) from the comprehensive community engagement conducted by CNEORM Services Ltd within Edmonton’s diverse communities of African descent. Explicitly focused on the concept of establishing the African Multicultural Community Centre (AMCC) facility, this report aims to:

- **Capture Community Perspectives:** Present a detailed account of the diverse views, aspirations, concerns, and needs expressed by the communities of African descent regarding the establishment and operations of the AMCC facility.

- **Summarize Engagement Methodology:** Outline the methods, approaches, and tools utilized during the community engagement process, demonstrating the inclusivity and comprehensiveness of the undertaken activities.
- **Highlight Key Findings:** Present key findings derived from the engagement activities emphasizing the most significant feedback and insights obtained from the communities
- **Offer Actionable Recommendations:** Provide practical and actionable recommendations on the findings, addressing the desires, concerns, and needs expressed by the community for the successful development and management of the AMCC facility.
- **Identify Lessons Learned:** Share lessons learned from the engagement process, including what worked effectively, challenges encountered, and recommendations for improving future community engagement initiatives and establishing the AMCC facility.
- **Inform Stakeholders and Decision-Makers:** Serves as a comprehensive resource for stakeholders, decision-makers and relevant entities involved in the planning and execution of the AMCC facility. The report aims to offer valuable insights to aid the development of the business case.
- The ultimate objective of this report is to provide a comprehensive understanding of Edmonton's communities' perspectives and preferences and to provide actionable recommendations to ensure that the proposed AMCC facility project adequately serves Edmonton's diverse communities of African descent.

Scope & Objectives

This report encompasses the outcomes and recommendations derived from a comprehensive community engagement initiative targeted at Edmonton's diverse communities of African descent. In the engagement process, we specifically solicited feedback, aspirations, concerns, and needs regarding establishing the African Multicultural Community Centre (AMCC). The report contains:

- **Community Engagement Activities:** Details of the methods and tools for engaging the communities, including surveys, town hall community forums, focus group discussions, and one-on-one interviews.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Documentation and analysis of the insights, feedback, and opinions gathered from the communities regarding the proposed AMCC facility.
- **Recommendations and Actionable Insights:** Actionable recommendations based on community feedback to guide the establishment and operations of the AMCC facility.
- **Lessons Learned and Insights for Future Engagement Initiatives:** Reflection on the successes, challenges, and lessons learned during the engagement process to improve future community engagement activities.

Overview of the Engagement Process & Methods

The community engagement process undertaken during this project was designed to be inclusive, participatory, and multifaceted. The methods employed were diverse and aimed to provide



multiple opportunities for engagement and feedback collection from Edmonton's communities of African descent.

Methods Utilized

- **Community Town Hall Gatherings:** Open community forums were organized, inviting broad participation and enabling a larger audience to voice their opinions, concerns, and aspirations regarding the AMCC facility. These forums fostered a sense of collective ownership and engagement among the community members.
- **Focus Group Conversations:** Small group conversations were organized to expand the reach of communities absent at the town hall gathering. It also gave room for a more nuanced and in-depth exploration of the community and desires regarding the project.
- **Surveys:** The engagement initiative incorporated online surveys disseminated among Edmonton's communities of African descent. These surveys were designed to capture various opinions, concerns, and suggestions about the AMCC facility.
- **One-on-One Interviews:** Personal interviews were conducted with community leaders, stakeholders and individuals to gather individualized perspectives. These interviews offered a more intimate platform for individuals to express their views.
- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** To meet the needs of all segments of African descent communities, the engagement process was designed to be accessible and accommodating. Different age groups and socio-economic backgrounds were included, as well as language diversity and accessibility for people with disabilities.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Data from these engagement methods were meticulously collated and analyzed. This report presents the insights gained from these engagement activities, which comprehensively understand the communities' views on the AMCC.



METHODOLOGY

This section aims to provide an overview of the specific methods used, the structure of the engagement activities, and the approach used to collect and analyze data. Additionally, it highlights the consideration given to ensuring inclusivity and ethical practices.

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Survey Method

- **Design:** A structured survey was designed to gather feedback (opinions, preferences, and suggestions) from Edmonton's communities of African descent regarding the AMCC facility. The survey was crafted to cover diverse aspects such as the envisioned services, the name of the centre, preferred programs, and the communities' expectations of the centre. These questions were tailored considering the current and future priorities of the communities. We had 381 people attempt the survey, 263 valid responses for the English version and 21 valid responses for the french version.
- **Distribution:** Surveys were distributed digitally and online through various social media platforms and websites for the project and ethnocultural community WhatsApp groups. The surveys were also tweaked to align well for deep conversations and used as guiding quotations for the town hall gatherings and focus group conversations. *(Results on page 15)*

Town Hall Gatherings

Format

Open forums were organized in community spaces, allowing a larger audience to discuss the AMCC facility. Considering the diversity of Edmonton's communities of African descent, different town hall gatherings were held to accommodate the cultural diversities, age, language needs and geographical locations of the significant ethnocultural groups of African descent in Edmonton. Based on this strategy, we held six town hall gatherings tailored for the Caribbean, African, Francophone, South Sudanese, Historical Black Canadian, and Youth Communities. Invitations were sent electronically via

community organizations, social media, community WhatsApp groups, and word of mouth. Invitees were required to sign up to attend via Eventbrite, though non-registered guests were also welcome to attend. We had 263 community members RSVP for all town hall events and a show rate of 55.8%, with 147 people in attendance.

Facilitation

The discussions were facilitated by members of the communities gathered at the town hall sessions.

The discussions were facilitated to encourage active participation, where community members were given opportunities to voice their ideas and concerns openly.

Focus Group Discussions.

Composition

Small group discussions were conducted with community members representing different age groups, ethnocultural backgrounds, and a variety of professions.

Approach

Three focus group discussions were held: community leaders forum, a group of Somali community members, and children aged 8 - 17 at their basketball training space. These sessions covered conversations around specific themes related to the proposed AMCC facility. Participants were encouraged to share their thoughts, concerns, and ideas about the programs, facilities, and services they envisioned within the centre. Deeper conversations were had with the community leaders' forum, where ideas such as the proposed size of the AMCC facility and the operational and funding

plans were discussed. We had a combined number of 64 community members attend the focus group engagement.

One-on-One Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with community leaders, key stakeholders, and selected community members. We engaged with five community leaders one on one.

Approach

These interviews offered a personalized platform for in-depth conversations, allowing participants to express their individual perspectives, concerns, and expectations regarding the proposed AMCC facility.

HOW THE COMMUNITY WAS INVOLVED

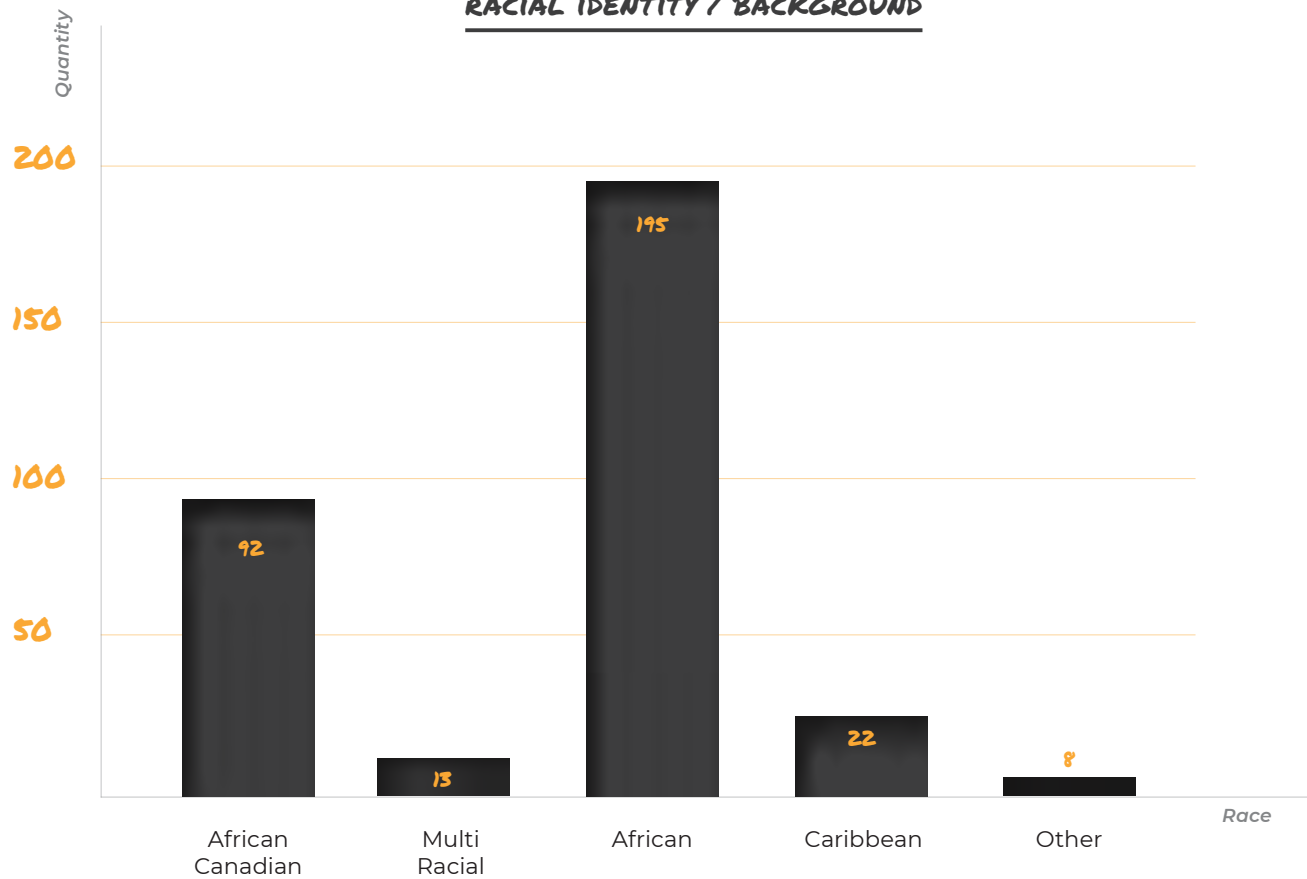
This section emphasizes the diverse approaches used to engage the communities, ensuring broad participation, inclusivity, and respect for cultural values throughout the engagement process.

The engagement process was meticulously designed to ensure robust community involvement, fostering inclusivity and diverse participation among Edmonton's communities of African descent. Various methods were employed to actively involve and engage community members in shaping the vision of the proposed AMCC facility. Some of these methods are:

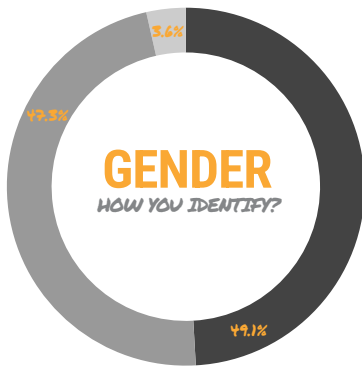
Survey Dissemination & Feedback Collections

Surveys were distributed widely across multiple channels accessible to the community, including social media, ethnocultural WhatsApp groups,

RACIAL IDENTITY / BACKGROUND

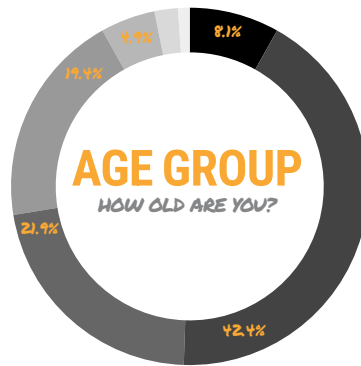


AMCC ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS VISUALIZED

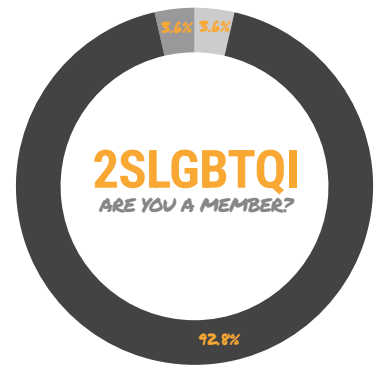


- 49.1% | Women
- 47.3% | Men
- 3.6% | Other *

* Other here includes those who selected non-binary or prefer not to say.



- 8.1% | Under 25
- 42.4% | 25 - 34
- 21.9% | 35 - 44
- 19.4% | 45 - 54
- 4.9% | 55 - 64
- 2.1% | 65 - Over
- 1.1% | No Comment



- 92.8% | No
- 3.6% | Yes
- 3.6% | No Comment

events and local organizations. The responses were primarily driven by the community members, providing a broad range of opinions, preferences, and suggestions regarding the AMCC facility.

Community Town Hall Gatherings

Open community forums were organized in accessible community spaces, inviting broad participation. These forums served as platforms for interactive discussions, allowing community members to express their collective desires, concerns, and expectations for the proposed facility. Some factors considered were the availability of parking spaces at the venues, close and accessible bus routes selected, and culturally appropriate refreshments provided at all in-person sessions.

Focus Group Discussions & Small Group Engagement

Groups were structured to include diverse representation, comprising individuals from various age groups, professions, and socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Professions and cultural backgrounds. Participants engaged in open discussions, exchanging ideas, concerns, and desires related to the proposed facility ensuring a spectrum of viewpoints. Some factors considered were the availability of parking spaces at the venues, close and accessible bus routes, and culturally appropriate refreshments provided at all in-person sessions.

One-on-One Interviews

The consulting team directly engaged community leaders, influential individuals, and stakeholders through one-on-one interviews to gather detailed,

personalized perspectives. These conversations provided the space to express individual concerns, and aspirations about the proposed facility, ensuring that specific viewpoints were heard.

Inclusivity & Accessibility Considerations

Considering language diversity, we had French translation services at the community town hall to make room for our Francophone communities. We also provided a French version of the digital survey that garnered 26 responses. We had a couple of sessions with Arabic and Dinka translations available on-site. Considerations were made for individuals with disabilities to participate in engagement activities, ensuring inclusivity across diverse demographics.

Digital Presence

Leveraging digital media, we created an interactive webpage that shared updates on upcoming events and had the surveys in French and English. Information on upcoming town hall sessions was shared via social media. Refer to the statistics on the following page.

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Compilation of Data

- **Survey Responses** from the distributed surveys were collected, organized, and compiled into a centralized dataset, allowing for a comprehensive analysis.
- **Transcripts and Notes:** Detailed transcripts and notes from the town hall gathering, focus group

SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS

17,323

COMBINED
FACEBOOK + INSTAGRAM
IMPRESSIONS

1,366

INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS/
PROFILES REACHED

412

FACEBOOK CLICKS

discussion, and interviews were compiled for further examinations and analysis.

Qualitative Analysis

Thematic Analysis: Thematic patterns and recurring topics within qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, and forums were identified and categorized. Comprehensive examination often used qualitative data to extract essential content and themes related to the proposed AMCC facility.

Quantitative Analysis

- **Statistical Examination:** Quantitative data from the surveys were subject to statistical analysis to identify the communities trends, preferences, and priority areas.
- **Data Representation:** Graphs, charts, and visual aids were employed to represent quantitative data for easier comprehension and visualization of community preferences.

Comparative Analysis

- **Cross-referencing Data:** To identify intersections, correlations, and disparities between qualitative and quantitative feedback, a comparative analysis was conducted between qualitative and quantitative data.

- **Identification of Consensus:** Efforts were made to identify areas where qualitative and quantitative data converged to outline common community sentiments.

Community Validation & Verification

A mid-project check-in was carried out to allow community leaders and members to review findings, ensuring the accuracy and validation of the interpreted data. The interim report was presented to community representatives for feedback, validation, and further insights.

Iterative Analysis & Refinement

The analysis process was iterative, involving multiple reviews to ensure accuracy, comprehensiveness, and thoroughness in capturing community sentiments. Insights and findings were refined based on feedback received during validation, ensuring the report accurately represents the communities' voice.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the data collection and analysis, measures were taken to ensure the anonymity of respondents and maintain confidentiality in handling sensitive data. The data was handled



3.0M

BY 2041, THE BLACK POPULATION IN CANADA IS EXPECTED TO DOUBLE, WITH A MINIMUM OF 3 MILLION PEOPLE.

with the utmost respect for individual privacy, ensuring the ethical treatment of community members' information.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

This section aims to provide a descriptive overview of Edmonton communities of African descent, encompassing their cultural diversity, demographic data, and the range of contributions they make to the city.

Information About The Communities of African descent In Edmonton

Edmonton, Alberta, is home to a vibrant and diverse population of African descent communities comprising various African, Caribbean, and historical Black Canadians and their descendants. These communities contribute significantly to the city's cultural fabric and exhibit a rich cultural tapestry of traditions, languages, and histories.

Edmonton's communities of African descent represent diverse cultural backgrounds, including individuals from nations such as Somalia, Nigeria, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana, Eritrea, South Sudan, Ethiopia, America, and many others. Each group brings unique customs, languages and traditions.

These communities exhibit diversity in socio-economic backgrounds, encompassing professionals, students, entrepreneurs, skilled labour and individuals employed in various sectors and contributing to the city's vibrancy.

Different community-based organizations, cultural organizations, and religious institutions support these communities by providing solidarity and social support, and preserving their cultural heritage.

Demographic Data

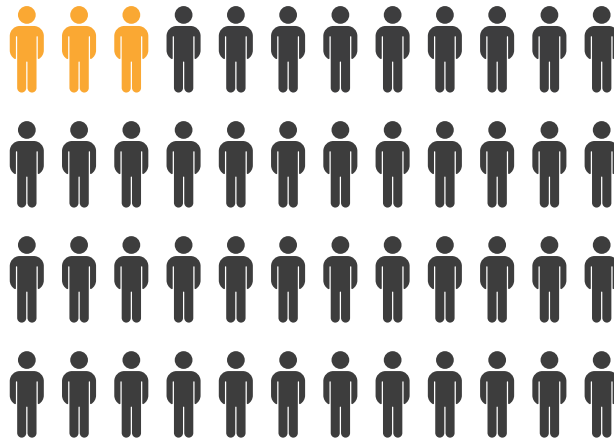
Edmonton is home to Canada's fastest-growing and youngest Black population. According to Canada's most recent demographic projections (August 22, 2022), immigration is projected to remain the main driver of population growth over the coming decades, continuing a trend that began in the early 1990s (Statistics Canada, 2022). By 2041, the Black population in Canada is expected to more than double, from 1.5 million people in 2016 to more than 3.0 million people. These national trends match projections for Edmonton.

The following gives a picture of the demographic data on Edmonton's African descent communities:

2021 CENSUS DATA ON BLACK PEOPLE IN EDMONTON

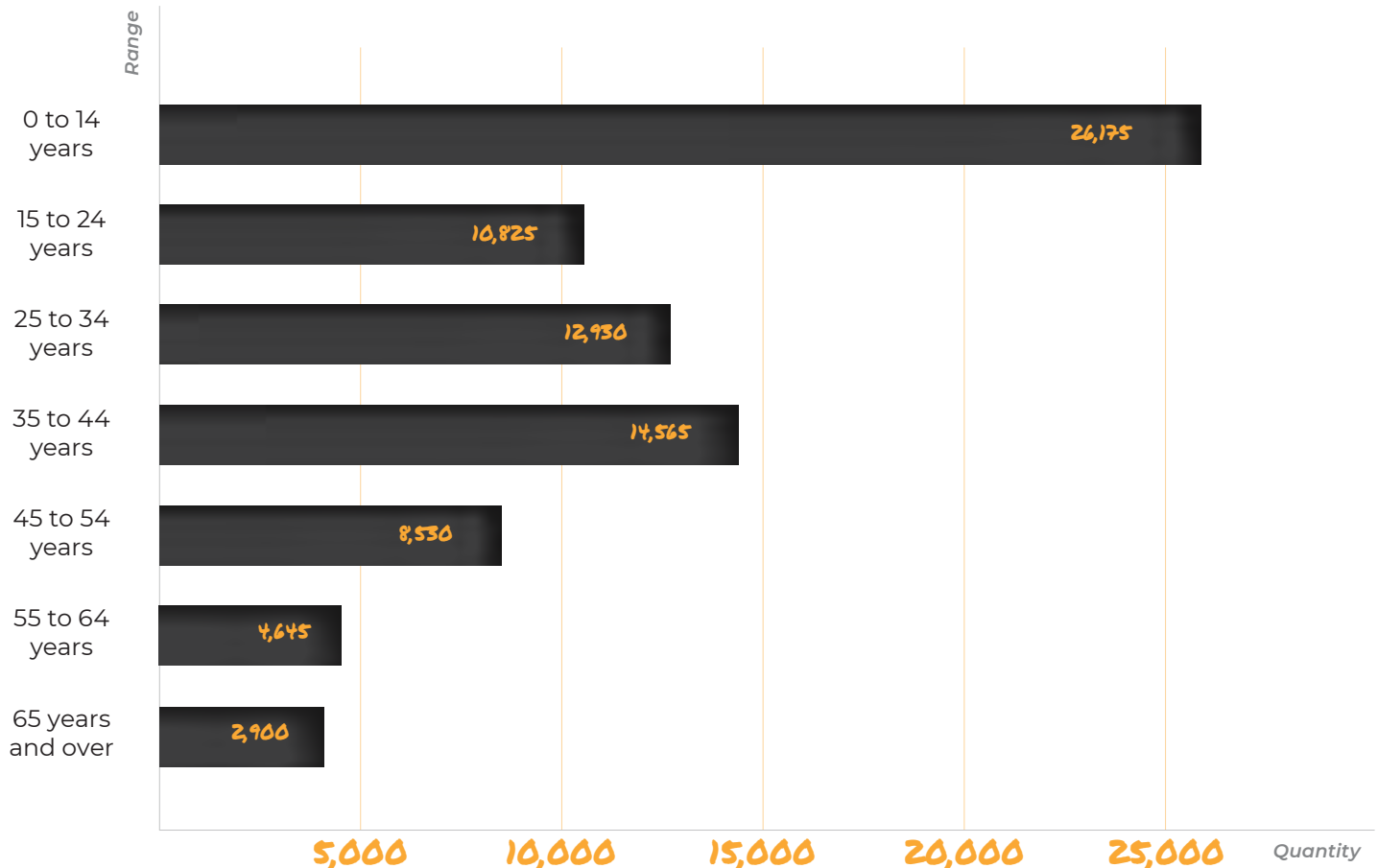
5.8%

OF EDMONTON'S
POPULATION IS BLACK OR/
AND AFRICAN DESCENT



3 IN EVERY 60
INDIVIDUALS
NATIONWIDE IS
BLACK OR/AND
AFRICAN DESCENT

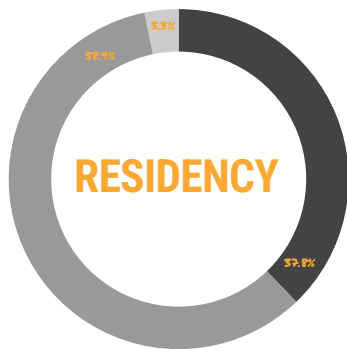
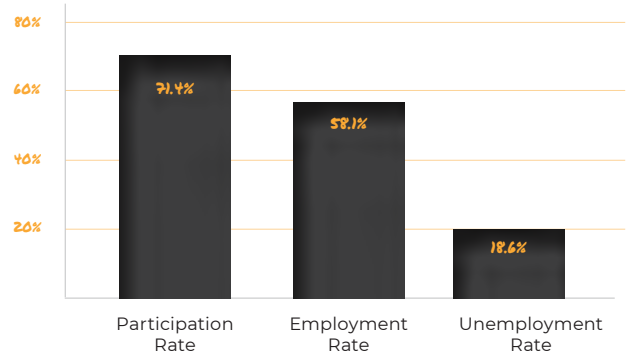
AGE RANGE OF THE BLACK POPULATION IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA



3RD

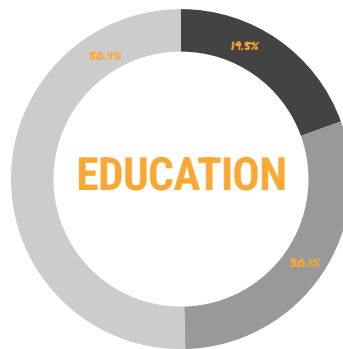
LARGEST VISIBLE MINORITY PROVINCE-WIDE, IN TERMS OF POPULATION (17.5%)

LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

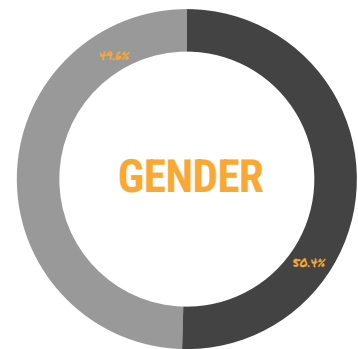


- 37.8% | Non-Immigrants
- 58.9% | Immigrants
- 3.3% | Non-Permanent Residents*

* This includes temporary residents of different nature.



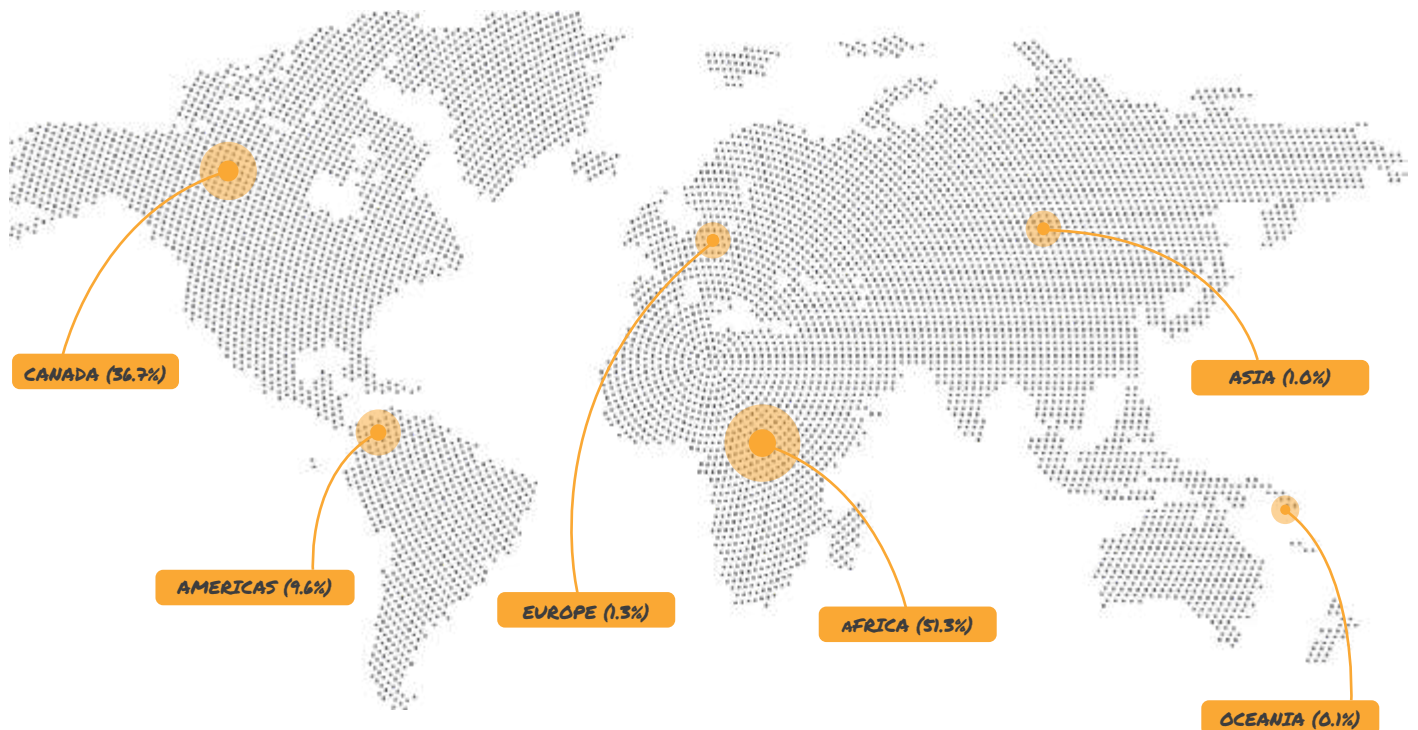
- 19.5% | No certificate, diploma, or degree
- 30.1% | High school diploma or equivalency
- 50.4% | Post secondary certificate, diploma or degree



- 50.4% | Men+ *
- 49.6% | Women+ *

* Statistics Canada used + to include non-binary people

PLACE OF BIRTH



KEY FINDINGS

This section summarizes the most crucial feedback and desires expressed by Edmonton's communities of African descent. This section outlines the core areas of interest, concerns, and recommendations vital for establishing and ensuring the success of the proposed African Multicultural Community Center (AMCC) facility.

PRESENTATION OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FINDING FROM THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Overall, community members were engaged through town hall discussions or the digital survey. They expressed strong support for the AMCC project. We elicited the overall vision and perceptions of different dimensions of vision from community members. In this section, we present findings from the overall vision and then discuss the different dimensions in detail.

Overall Vision, Hope and Expectations for the Proposed AMCC Facility Project

The town hall participants were asked to share their vision for the Africa Multicultural Community Centre and its potential impact on the community, and the emergent themes from these discussions are presented below.

A Hub That Represents & Stands for African Culture, History, Legacies and Heritage

We heard strongly from town hall participants that the AMCC should be a hub that represents people of African descent. discussed a desire for:

- A reflection of culture and heritage through artwork, flags for different countries, food, games, etc.
- A place where other non-Black people can understand African and Black culture.



SECOND GENERATION KIDS – CONNECTION TO HISTORY, CULTURE AND WHERE THEY COME FROM."

"SEE CULTURE AND HERITAGE REFLECTED – E.G. ARTWORK, FLAGS FOR DIFFERENT. A PLACE WHERE YOU FEEL YOU ARE HOME."

"A PLACE WHERE OTHER NON-BLACKS CAN UNDERSTAND AFRICAN BLACK CULTURE. COULD ALSO INCLUDE FOOD. A PLACE WITHOUT LIMITATIONS ON FOOD. MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE YOUNG BLACK POPULATION IN EDMONTON."

15%

**OF PARTICIPANTS PREFER
AN COMMUNITY HUB
FOR INTERACTION AND
NETWORKING!**



**"CLASSES ON ARTS,
TRADITIONAL DANCES,
POTTERY, MUSIC.
TECHNICALITIES UNSURE
BUT NEEDED"**

**"FOSTERING CULTURE
PRESERVATION,
PROMOTING UNITY,
PLATFORM FOR SHARING
AFRICAN HERITAGE,
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT OF THE
COMMUNITY WITHIN
THE CITY."**

- A library with African literature, including the history of the pre-colonial era

Results of the digital survey also support this theme. A majority (62%) of survey participants described their vision for the centre as a place of celebration and community integration, showcasing to the Edmonton community the wonders, excitement, and rich cultural heritage of our Black communities. Some survey participants also expressed that the AMCC should be a place where African cultures, traditions, and heritage can be expressed.

Youth Involvement & Capacity Building

According to town hall participants, it is essential for the proposed AMCC to actively engage youth of African descent and provide programming to support their capacity building. Some of their suggested ways were:

- Education and training programs, including language programs, classes on arts, traditional dances, pottery, and music .
- Mentoring and opportunities for knowledge transfer from the older to the younger generation.
- Providing support to develop the entrepreneurial and leadership skills of young people of African descent.
- Provision of opportunities for the youth to meaningfully engage with the labour market .

From the digital survey, 15% of participants indicated that they would like the centre to be a place of interaction and networking for the growth of Black people.

A Recreational Centre for Showcasing Skills & Talents

This theme was discussed in terms of:

- Having sports facilities and equipment in the centre to ensure people of African descent are able to showcase their talents in sports without barriers .

- Using arts and culture as an avenue for interaction across multiple cultures. This could be in the form of music, dance, and poetry.

"IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE CENTRE TO HAVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION, RECREATION AND ART AND A PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO INTERACT ACROSS ETHNICITIES. THE NAME SHOULDN'T JUST INCLUDE THE CONTINENT AND OTHER GROUPS OF AFRICAN DESCENT".

A Central Source of Information & Interaction for People of African Descent (7%)

According to 7% of town hall participants, the AMCC should be the centralized place for accessing information about existing services available to people of African descent. They also discussed this regarding the availability of information and settlement services for newcomers. Some of the specific suggestions from town hall participants included:

- Serving as a central repository of information and services.
- A place for newcomers to access information on settlement services available to them, e.g. opening a bank account, accessing healthcare services, finding employment, etc.

This theme from the town hall is also supported by 59% of digital survey respondents who expressed

that the centre should be a place where those who are established share their knowledge and experience with those who are new to Canada, a place where new Canadians will find a home away from home.

"CONNECTION TO AFRICA FROM INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PERSPECTIVE - SUPPORT FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS"

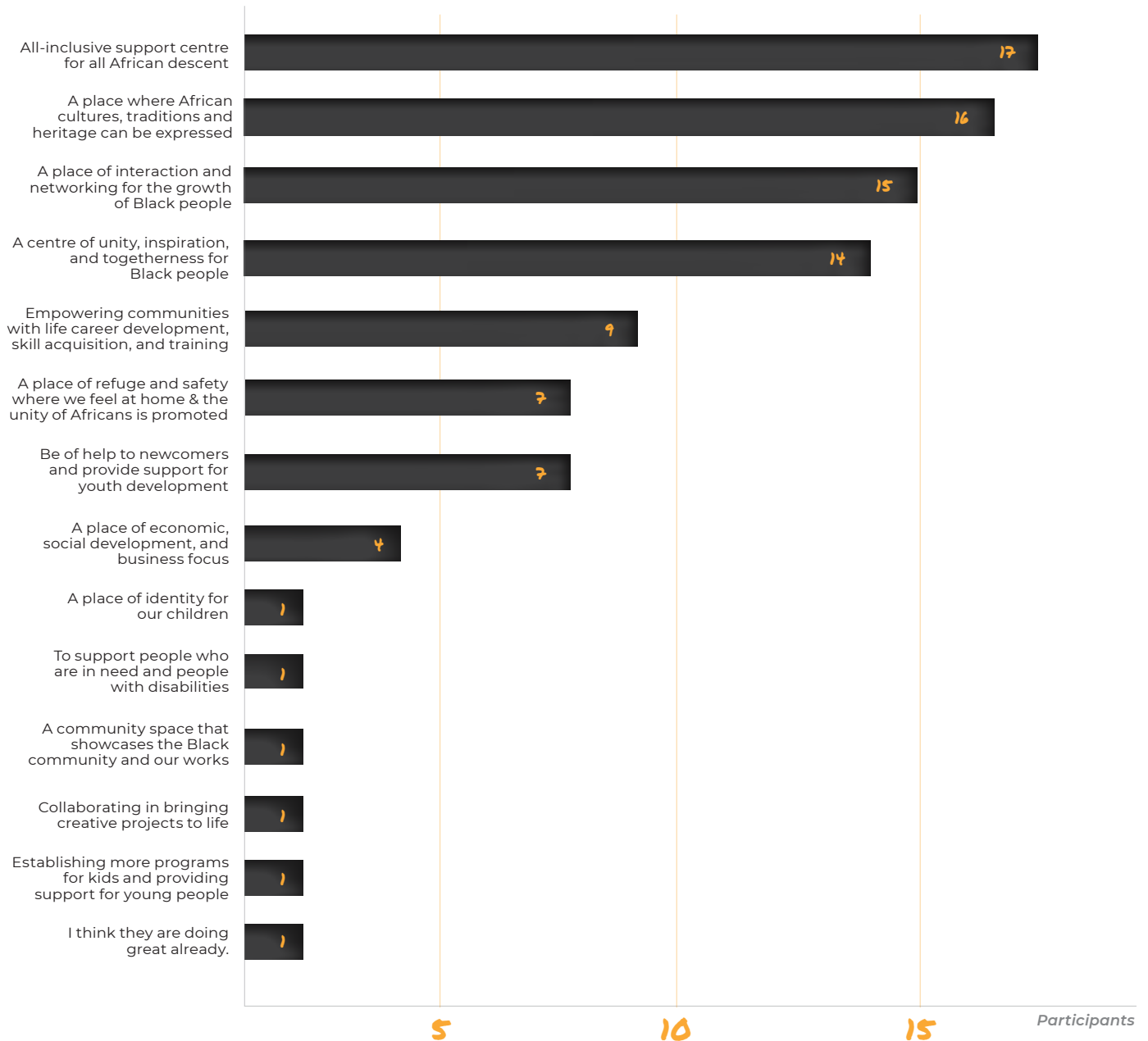
Intergenerational Gathering Space & Inclusive Support

Town hall participants expressed that the centre should have relevant and inclusive programming for young girls and kids. They also indicated that resources and support should be available for vulnerable members of the community, including families in need, persons with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness. Some survey respondents who provided written feedback indicated that the centre should be an all-inclusive support centre for all people of African descent. They also indicated that it should be a centre of unity, inspiration, and togetherness for Black people.

In addition, more than half (55%) of survey respondents indicated that the centre should be an intergenerational gathering space supporting the needs of children, families, women, men, and seniors.

We now present findings on the different dimensions of the vision for the AMCC according to the community members we engaged.

RESPONDENTS VISION OF THE AMCC FACILITY



DIMENSION 1: MENTAL HEALTH

According to most town hall participants, the centre should afford people access to professional mental health services, therapies, cultural supports, and sharing experiences with resources available. More so, about 15% believed that the centre would provide mental health counselling services, advice, mentoring, parenting and role models for people, and 8% believed that recreation or coming together creates a sense of acceptance and therapy that contributes to mental well-being.

"SPACE TO FACILITATE MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID"

"MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT CENTRE WITH THERAPISTS OF AFRICAN DESCENT. JOB CREATION HELPS PEOPLE TO TALK TO THOSE THAT REPRESENT THEM."

"REPRESENTATION IS VERY IMPORTANT - JUST GOING TO A PLACE AND SEEING SOMEONE THAT LOOKS LIKE YOU."

"BLACK MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS"

"PROVIDING SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT. CULTURAL SENSITIVITY, MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS, PROMOTING DIALOGUE."

"SUPPORT FOR YOUTH, E.G. SCHOOL STRESS. INDIVIDUALS WITH EXPERIENCE TO HELP STUDENTS WITH SCHOOL STRESS, ETC. COUNSELLING SUPPORT FROM EXPERIENCED PEOPLE"

"CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS."

"TO HAVE A CENTRE THAT HAS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO COME AND TALK AND TO SEE PEOPLE LIKE US WHO WANT TO HELP US, SUCH AS SOCIAL WORK, COUNSELLING, AND COUNSELLORS WHO ARE LIKE US - THAT WILL HELP US."

"THE CENTRE SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE DISCUSSIONS FOR YOUTH SO THEY CAN ACQUIRE THE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING TO LEAVE AND THRIVE REGARDLESS OF THE SITUATION - A WAY OF PREPARING THE YOUTH FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE."

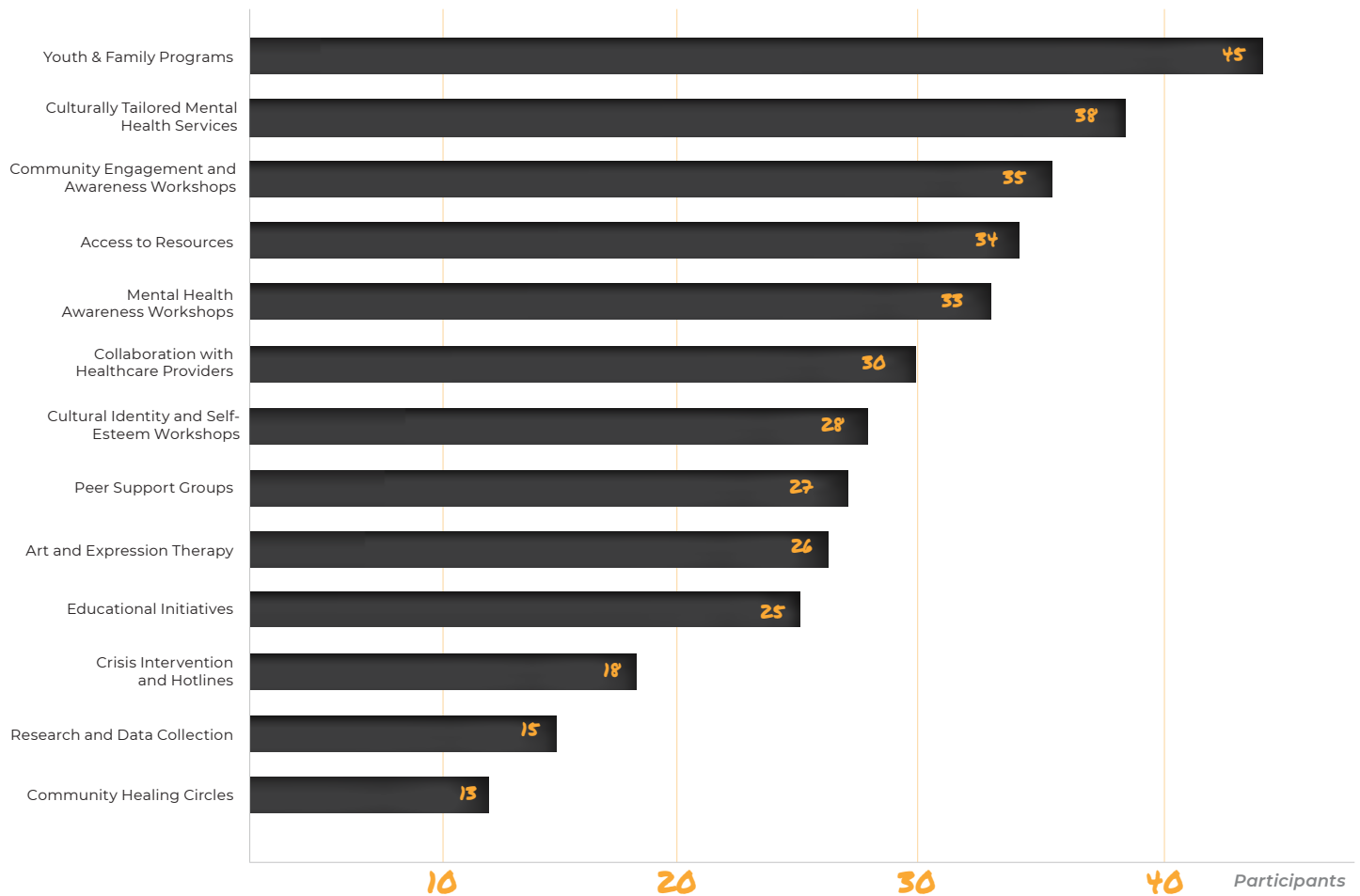
"WE SHOULD HAVE CERTIFIED PSYCHOLOGISTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH, COUNSELLORS, AND RUN SMALL GROUPS OR TRIADS TO TEST."

A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN MEET AND SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES."

"A TOUCHSTONE THAT IS CULTURALLY RELEVANT FOR INDIVIDUALS TO CONNECT, OFFER, AND RECEIVE SUPPORTS OF VARIOUS KINDS."

"CREATE A SPACE THAT IS 'HOME' TO ALL. A SAFE SPACE FOR MEETING AND COMING TOGETHER."

SUGGESTED WAYS THE CENTRE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO OVERALL MENTAL HEALTH



DIMENSION 2: ADDRESSING ECONOMIC & SOCIAL DISPARITIES

Town hall participants discussed various ways through which the AMCC could play a role in addressing social and economic disparities within our communities. The following describes the key themes that emerged from the discussions. Results from the digital survey are presented where appropriate.

Supports to Create Wealth

Participants generally expressed the need to address economic disparities by providing services to help community members create wealth. First and foremost, participants highlighted the need for financial literacy support. They discussed that in terms of providing opportunities for community members to be self-sufficient. They also identified the provision of courses on financial literacy, including budgeting, banking, and support on home buying/ownership. Respondents to the digital survey further support

this theme. Six out of every ten survey respondents (60%) indicated that workshops/events on financial literacy and economic empowerment would be most valuable for individuals and families within Edmonton's communities of African descent.

Secondly, town hall participants identified business and entrepreneurship support as another mechanism for creating wealth. Some of the specific ideas included:

- Supports for community members in scaling their business.
- Setting up endowment funds to provide capital for entrepreneurs of African descent.
- Information on funding sources for entrepreneurs.
- Mentorship and professional support for entrepreneurs.

Almost half of survey respondents (that is, 45%) indicated that the AMCC could be an incubator for developing economic opportunities and creating business connections.

Town Hall participants also identified differences in employment opportunities and outcomes as reasons for economic disparities in the community. They identified many ways to provide employment support for the community, including:

- Mentorship and career coaching opportunities to bridge the gap, particularly when led by successful community members.
- Supports for the development of employability skills, including soft skills like building confidence, learning to articulate oneself, and public speaking.
- Supports for community members to enter into different professions.

Some town hall participants felt that some differences in employment outcomes arise because newcomers struggle to recognize their foreign credentials. They also indicated that employers' requirement for Canadian working experience becomes a barrier to newcomers' entry into the labour market. They would like the AMCC to be able to form partnerships with employment agencies and other stakeholders to address the systemic barriers to meaningful employment for community members.

"BY ASSISTING NEWCOMERS IN TRANSFERRING THEIR EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS FROM BACK HOME, WILL ALLOW MORE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY TO ACQUIRE SKILLED/HIGH PAYING JOBS" - WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

"INVESTING IN OUR PROFESSIONALS, CREATING A NETWORK THAT WE REFER PEOPLE TO" - WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

Finally, in the spirit of creating wealth, some participants suggested the creation of credit unions by the AMCC. They indicated that it would contribute to the financial sustainability of the center and provide needed capital for community members. Some indicated that the traditional banking system only sometimes meets the communities' unique needs, and getting their credit union would be helpful.

A Central Hub for Support

Participants generally indicated that the AMCC could be a central hub for connecting community members to different available supports.

According to participants, it is essential for community members, including newcomers, to have a place to access the correct information.

Some of

the ways that could be realized, according to participants, included:

- Creating awareness of existing services to community members.
- Providing information and navigation support to community members to ensure they are able to access services available to them .
- Serving as a centralized source of newcomer support and settlement services.

*"RESOURCE HUB FOR IMMIGRANTS,
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, YOUTH, ETC."
- WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN
HALL PARTICIPANT*

Provision of Education & Settlement Supports

Another theme that emerged from community members on how the centre could address social and economic disparities was providing education and settlement support. Some of the specific ways identified were:

- English language services for newcomers.
- Settlement information on shopping, participation in religious activities, and banking.

- Workshops on accessing government services such as scholarships, student loans, etc.
- Mentorships in education.
- Support for kids in using their free time.

Family Support & Group-Specific Programming

Some town hall participants identified the need for services that would support families, including vulnerable ones. They included:

- Ensuring the availability of professionals on-site, e.g. social workers.
- Low-cost child care and after-school care.
- Resources and events for seniors and retirees in the community .
- Over 40% of survey respondents identified parenting and family support as very valuable to the community.

Other Ideas

Additional ideas that emerged from the discussion included:

- Using the media to amplify the activities of community members. Participants felt that the media shapes/controls the narrative, and it is crucial that we share the success of community members and ensure a positive representation of the community.
- Provision of opportunities for cultural development and promotion of arts and culture. This could be done through African markets and traditional African/Caribbean food catering services. Participants suggested that this would take an intergenerational approach.

- Provision of life skills or hands-on skills such as cooking and sewing at the centre.
- Advocating for socio-economic justice for community members and providing affordable office spaces for community organizations.
- Running a social enterprise in the centre, including a commercial kitchen, rentals, gardens, etc.
- Teaching skills like basket weaving, painting, and cooking with an African touch.
- Recreational activities such as fitness or sports that include different generations.

We also heard from participants about certain social events that could be done at the centre to encourage intergenerational participation. These included:

- Games & arts.
- Hangout lounges and meeting spaces.
- Pan African events centre, e.g. weddings & parties.
- Celebration of African Heritage events.
- Country-specific food and recreation programming.

DIMENSION 3: INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACHES

Town hall participants discussed how the centre can effectively engage community members of different ages. Discussions focused on any cultural or intergenerational approaches that could be beneficial, as well as any programs or services that would benefit community members of different ages. Where applicable, responses from the digital survey are also added.

Arts & Cultural Programming

We heard strongly from participants that arts and cultural programming would be one of the beneficial ways of engaging community members of different ages. Some of the specific ways identified included:

- Cultural dancing as an opportunity for all to showcase their different dances as well as teach younger members of the community how to dance .
- Creating African cultural days and observing them at the AMCC.

Intergenerational Mentorship & Knowledge Transfer

According to participants, the centre could serve as a hub for the older generation to transfer knowledge to the younger generation. This could take the form of

- Cultural storytelling, folklore and African/ Caribbean literature.
- Specific programs for kids to learn from seniors.
- Women support groups that provide opportunities for older women to mentor younger ones.
- Men support groups that help men share information on dealing with addictions.
- History classes and opportunity to learn from our ancestors.

- Sharing circles that encourage the sharing of ideas between the older and the younger generations.

"ACTIVITIES FOR THE ELDERS THAT REMIND THEM OF THEIR YOUTH; INTERGENERATIONAL TIME WHERE ELDERS COME IN AND TALK TO THE YOUTH" – WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

"PRIORITIZING THE PASSING DOWN OF LANGUAGES" – WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

"PASS HERITAGE TO THE YOUNG GENERATION" – WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT.

Two out of every ten digital survey respondents (21.3%) also identified intergenerational dialogue and support as one of the programs that could benefit the community.

Welcoming Space with Appropriate Programming for All Ages

We also heard from participants that it is essential for the space to be inviting for all generations and to have programs that appeal to all generations. They indicated that the space needs to be accessible. Stairs can be an issue for seniors, so it is important to ensure activities are on the main floor. Some emphasized the need for programs to target

all ages and not be done in isolation. Some said that we do not currently have culturally appropriate spaces. Therefore, allowing seniors to gather and deal with language barriers is essential.

"ENGAGING INDIVIDUALS OF ALL AGES, LANGUAGES, ABILITIES AND BACKGROUNDS WOULD ALLOW THOSE WHO DON'T NORMALLY HAVE A VOICE TO EXPLORE THEIR CHALLENGES AND CELEBRATE THEIR WHOLISTIC OUTCOMES REGARDLESS OF AGE" – WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

"SPACE HAS TO LOOK ACCEPTING/INVITING TO ALL" – WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

This theme is also supported by more than half of digital survey respondents (54%), who indicated that the AMCC should be an intergenerational gathering space that supports the needs of community members of different ages.

Family Support & Activities to Engage Youth/Kids

Participants emphasized the need for support for families, particularly the most vulnerable. Some indicated that it would ensure peaceful co-existence between multiple generations. Some examples of support identified here included:

- First aid and ability to make necessary referrals.
- Professionals to help seniors with funeral arrangements.

- After-school programming for the youth, e.g. sports storytelling led by seniors. This would help them learn about the different cultures.

In addition, some suggestions emerged about how kids/youths could be engaged at the centre, including:

- Spaces for the little ones with associated entertainment.
- Educational support and recreational programming for youth.
- Mentorship for youth and children.

"FAMILY PROGRAMMING; MATERNAL/PARENTAL CARE, E.G. DOULA SERVICES CLASSES" – WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

Other Ideas

- Participants emphasized the need for conflict resolution processes appropriate for intergenerational conflicts.
- Some participants indicated a need for aggressive marketing to spread awareness about programming, including considering a Black-owned media organization at the centre.
- Having a group within the centre that represents different perspectives and can influence policy/social issues.

DIMENSION 4: PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

We heard strongly from town hall participants that partnerships and collaborations would be crucial for the sustainability of the AMCC. Some

participants indicated that it is essential for partnerships not to be limited to groups of African descent but more expanded as long as they are helpful for the centre to reach its goals.

"COLLABORATION WITH AFRICAN AND NON-AFRICAN ORGANIZATIONS WITH SAME VALUES, MISSION" – WRITTEN FEEDBACK FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

This section outlines the various partnerships and collaborations that emerged from the discussions.

Non-Profit & Immigrant-Serving Organizations

Town hall participants identified some non-profit organizations and organizations serving other marginalized community groups as essential partners for sustaining the AMCC. These included:

- Individual African nation/ethnocultural organizations.
- Other African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) organizations.
- Newcomer-serving organizations like the Edmonton Mennonite Centre For Newcomers, Catholic Social Services.
- Edmonton Arts Council.
- Organizations serving other marginalized groups, e.g. Indigenous Peoples, Filipinos, etc.

"BY COLLABORATING WITH OTHER IMMIGRATION INSTITUTIONS, IT CAN MAKE IMMIGRATION EASIER" – WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT.

Educational Institutions & Oversight Bodies

There was strong support for partnering with existing educational institutions and other bodies overseeing the formal/informal learning sector.

Some specific partnerships identified were:

- Institutions of higher learning (e.g. colleges and universities).
- Various school boards (public, Catholic and French) to inform youth and parents about programming.
- The Edmonton Public Library.
- Islamic school organizations .

Business Community

We heard from town hall participants that partnerships with the business community would be crucial in providing the relevant support, especially for entrepreneurs, but also with funding for the centre. Some participants highlighted the need for partnerships with big corporations focusing on economic diversity. Others highlighted the need to partner with Black-owned businesses. Another partnership identified was with employment agencies, unions, and organizations that employ skilled labour to help reduce some of the barriers community members face in accessing meaningful employment.

"COLLABORATE WITH SMALL BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES THAT SELL STUFF LIKE AFRICAN FOOD AND CLOTHING AT A GOOD PRICE. I THINK IT WOULD HELP VENDORS AND CUSTOMERS SO THEY DON'T ALWAYS BUY EXPENSIVE ITEMS" - WRITTEN COMMENT BY A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

Financial Organizations & Funding Agencies

To sustain the AMCC, participants highlighted the need for strategic partnerships with financial institutions, funding agencies, and foundations.

This included:

- The City of Edmonton.
- The Edmonton Community Foundation.
- Other foundations with a constant stream of money.
- Institutions to help with financial literacy, estate planning, and life insurance.
- Local financial services provider.

Student Associations

Participants identified partnerships with student associations as essential for connecting with the younger generation. Black Student Associations across different institutions of higher learning were identified as critical partners to that effect.

"BLACK STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS ACROSS EDMONTON TO CREATE A LINK TO YOUTH" - WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT.

Government Organizations in Africa & the Caribbean

A few participants highlighted the need for partnerships with organizations back home (Africa and the Caribbean). The partnership ideas could include the African Union and the governments of the different Caribbean Islands.

Other Partnerships

- Some participants suggested partnerships with event organizers to ensure the centre is able to generate revenue from events such as weddings and festivals and also be able to serve as a traditional restaurant.
- A few participants highlighted the need for partnerships with faith-based organizations within the ACB community.
- Other participants would like to see partnerships with political offices to ensure the community can share its perspectives on social issues.
- A few participants also wanted partnerships with sports organizations to support recreational programming at the centre.
- A few participants also mentioned partnerships with community members. This could be through the creation of a volunteer database.

- Equal voting rights for each community .
- Forming community advisory boards to advise and inform planning and policy formulation at the centre.
- Providing opportunities for learning about the diverse cultures of the community.
- Ensuring that marginalized members of our community, e.g. 2SLGBTQI+, and people with disabilities, feel they belong at the centre.
- Sharing stories and images that reflect the diverse cultures in the community.

"KEEPING TRACK OF THE EVENTS YOU HAVE SO THAT NO COUNTRY IS LEFT OUT"- WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

"LOOKING AT DIVERSITY IN NEW DIMENSIONS, E.G. DISABILITY"- WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

"RECOGNIZE THAT WE CANNOT SPEAK FOR ANY ONE COMMUNITY; HENCE, WE MUST ENCOURAGE ALL MEMBERS TO SHARE THEIR INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES AND REALITIES (INCLUDING ISSUES OF TRAUMA)"- WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

DIMENSION 5: INCLUSIVITY

Town hall participants were asked to identify strategies that can be implemented to ensure that the African Multicultural Community Centre remains inclusive and welcoming to all members of our diverse community. The following describes the various themes that emerged from that discussion.

Community Representation

We heard strongly from participants that it is important for every community member to feel represented at the centre. This could include:

The majority (61%) of digital survey respondents indicated that the AMCC should be a place of celebration and community integration, showcasing to the Edmonton community the wonders,

excitement, and rich cultural heritage of our Black communities.

Governance & Oversight

According to some town hall participants, the management and board structure of the centre is fundamental to the success of the proposed AMCC facility. Management must be reflective of the diverse groups in the community. The management and oversight board must be trained in cultural sensitivity to promote an understanding of the different cultures within the community. Management should also be able to create a welcoming environment that celebrates the communities' rich culture. Rules and policies that govern the centre must be culturally sensitive.

"EXECUTIVE MUST BE MADE UP OF PEOPLE FROM BOTH THE CARIBBEAN AND AFRICAN COMMUNITIES"- WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

Inclusive Design & Accessible Programming

Some participants highlighted the need for the centre's design to be inclusive. This inclusivity must also be reflected in the centre's mission statement and visible as people access the centre. Other suggestions for inclusive design were:

- Representing flags of different African and Caribbean nations at the centre .
- Culturally appropriate space for events and celebrations.

A few participants highlighted that programs need to be cost-effective. They suggested the consideration of a sliding scale for pricing based on income.

"MAKE INCLUSION A PART OF THE MISSION/ VISION STATEMENT; MAKE IT PART OF DESIGN WITHIN THE BUILDING"- WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT.

"ARTWORK FROM ALL CULTURES; DIFFERENT EVENTS TO REPRESENT THE DIFFERENT CULTURES AND COUNTRIES"- WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

Addressing Gaps & Misconceptions

A few participants suggested that the centre needs to improve continuously. This could include:

- Constant evaluation to identify gaps, ensuring that there is the correct data to examine the extent to which programming reaches the intended audience. This evaluation needs to happen at all levels.
- Listening to the community and improving programming based on identified gaps.

According to some participants, it was also essential to communicate clearly, provide different avenues for dialogue, and address any misconceptions about the centre. All community members need to have a fair understanding of the vision for the centre. Participants suggested using culturally appropriate conflict resolution processes in situations where conflicts arise.

DIMENSION 6: UNITY, PRIDE AND CULTURAL CONNECTION

Participants were led to discuss how the AMCC could foster a sense of unity, pride, and cultural connection among community members.

A Space that Makes Community Members Proud

We heard strongly from town hall participants that the AMCC should be a space that makes community members proud. This included:

- Ensuring the design reflects Africa and the Caribbean and making community members see themselves reflected.
- Using African/Caribbean arts and culture to decorate the centre.
- Having images that portray powerful/influential people of African descent, e.g. Black women.
- Ensuring the name reflects the diverse community.
- Consulting with design experts of African descent.
- Ensuring the space is accessible, clean, well-maintained, and aesthetically pleasing.

"STATE OF THE ART EDIFICE, WELL MAINTAINED AND STAFFED WITH FRIENDLY INDIVIDUALS"- WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

A Space Where Committee Members Feel A Sense of Belonging

Some town hall participants emphasized the need for everyone to feel welcomed at the centre and feel they can participate in programming. Some of the ways that could be achieved included:

- Looking beyond race and considering intersectionalities.
- Having inclusive, inviting, and culturally appropriate programs.
- Participating in each others' events and ensuring greater collaboration.

"EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES GIVEN TO EVERYONE; PROMOTION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY"- WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

"A SENSE OF TOGETHERNESS AND A FACILITY THAT BRINGS EVERYONE TOGETHER"- WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

"BE SUPPORTIVE OF EACH OTHER IRRESPECTIVE OF WHICH PART YOU ARE FROM" - WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

"ALL CULTURES SEE THEIR COUNTRIES, FOODS AND PRACTICES REPRESENTED" - WRITTEN COMMENT FROM A TOWN HALL PARTICIPANT

Opportunities for Feedback & Continuous Improvement

- Ensuring that there is a mechanism for feedback from the community on how to improve the centre continuously.
- Collecting data at different levels to understand levels of participation and associated outcomes.

Leadership

According to some participants, the AMCC could enhance connection through transparent leadership. They discussed this in terms of:

- Ensuring leaders do not show favouritism or partisan bias. Leaders should leave any cultural or ethnic biases outside.
- Providing opportunities for the younger generation to serve in leadership roles.
- Having clearly defined roles and responsibilities and terms of engagement.

Employee Professionalism

Participants expressed the need for employees at the centre to show a sense of professionalism when serving community members. This could include :

- Creating a welcoming environment.
- Having a sense of excellence in service delivery and customer experience.

Other Ideas

- Teaching and preserving African/Caribbean values at the centre so future generations can be proud of their identity.

- Figuring out social activities/events that connect us, e.g. food. Intentionally building cultural connections and connecting with other community members of different heritage.
- Asking community members to contribute financially to the development of the centre. This would make them feel proud that they contributed to a project like this and want to preserve it.
- Using the space to show off our arts and culture and many good examples of community members doing good work worth celebrating.

OTHER FINDINGS

Benefits of the AMCC to the City of Edmonton

Respondents envisioned the AMCC facility to fulfill various roles, serving as a space where African cultures, traditions, and heritage can thrive and be celebrated. In addition, the center is imagined as a communal area that proudly highlights the diverse contributions of the Black community and showcases their creative endeavors.

At its core, respondents' hopes and expectations for the center is anticipated to be a unifying force, providing inspiration, and fostering a sense of togetherness among individuals of African descent. It is expected to play a crucial role in promoting African culture, heightening awareness, facilitating networking, and serving as an essential source of information.

" I SEE THE CENTRE AS A PLACE WHERE AFRICAN CULTURES, TRADITIONS AND HERITAGE CAN BE EXPRESSED".

"A COMMUNITY SPACE THAT SHOWCASES BLACK COMMUNITY AND OUR WORKS".

"A PLACE OF INTERACTION AND NETWORKING FOR THE GROWTH OF BLACK PEOPLE"

Survey respondents express a collective desire for the center to actively contribute to the preservation and promotion of African traditions, cultural heritage, and legacy. This joint effort is not only seen as a means of strengthening community bonds but is also viewed as a way to attract newcomers, particularly from the Black community to the city of Edmonton, putting the city on the map thereby enhancing its overall appeal and growth for investments and residency purposes.

Data has shown that community centres increase the value of the community and home values of local homes, drawing in more residents and contributing to economic growth. A recent survey showed that over 50% of respondents polled agreed that history and culture are strong influences on their choice of holiday destination. For example, Chinatown in various cities around the world often serves as a hub for tourists interested in exploring Chinese culture, cuisine, and traditions. These areas typically feature community centers that organize cultural events, festivals, and provide information about the heritage of the community.

Similarly, Little Italy districts attract people interested in Italian culture, and cultural centers within these communities often offer language classes, cooking demonstrations, and cultural exhibitions. These activities contribute to the overall appeal of the area, making it not only a destination for tourists but also an attractive place for residents to live.

What Should The Centre Be Called?

Understanding that the name African Multicultural Community Centre might be exclusive to some Edmontonians of African descent, it was well-emphasized to all respondents that they could suggest alternative names for the centre. Findings from the qualitative and quantitative data are as follows:

The town hall session participants believed that the name African Multicultural Community Centre is fine and should be retained. More so, in terms of words that were often mentioned, the most significant word was "African," followed by "multicultural" and "centre."

"UNITED AFRICA DESCENDANTS MULTICULTURAL CENTRE."

"AFRICAN NATION CENTRE."

"GLOBAL MULTICULTURAL CENTRE."

"UNITY AND DIVERSE, MULTICULTURAL CENTRE."

"AFRICAN UNITED MULTICULTURAL CENTRE."

"CURRENT NAME IS FINE."

"AFRICAN DESCENDANTS CENTRE"

"THE PAMOJA CENTRE (TOGETHER)"

"ALBERTA-AFRICAN-CANADIAN PEOPLES' COMMUNITY"

"MELTING POT CENTRE)AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN CENTRE"

"AFRICA DIASPORA MULTICULTURAL CENTRE OF EDMONTON"

"UNITED AFRICA DIASPORA CENTRE"

"FOUNDATION AND BEYOND"

THE MEETING PLACE

"THE DESCENDANTS AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN CENTRE (DACC)"

"THE UMOJA CENTRE (UNITY)"

The responses from the survey to this question were similar and corroborative. The results indicate that 20% thought the African Multicultural Community Centre is fine as it is and should be retained. Reinforcing this, about 14% mentioned some names that are not different from the African Multicultural Community Centre, while 18% suggested that the centre should be called the African Diaspora Community Centre. Other suggested names at the minimal level are:

AFRICAN CENTRE (9%)

AFRICAN COMMUNITY CENTRE (8%)

AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN CENTRE (5%)

AFRICAN CULTURAL CENTRE (3%)

Specific Programs Communities Would Like to See at the Proposed AMCC Facility Project

From the qualitative data analyzed, the following were some programs mentioned by most attendees as programs they would like to see at the centre that are much needed by the community. Most respondents mentioned cultural art and historical and traditional materials that depict African heritage (33%). Others include computer services, educational training and materials (19%), and sports activities, as well as social events (11%).

"CULTURAL DANCE OR FITNESS CLASS."

"HISTORY CLASSES ABOUT OUR ANCESTORS."

"CULTURAL COOKING CLASSES - ELDERS TO TEACH YOUNG ONES."

"CULTURAL MUSIC."

"INTERGENERATIONAL MENTORSHIP, CULTURAL STORYTELLING, FOLKLORE."

"BASKET WEAVING, PAINTING (A FORM OF ART THERAPY)."

"INCLUDE STEMM (SCIENCE, TECH, MEDICINE)"

"MORE YOUTH MENTORSHIP THAT IS CULTURALLY FOCUSED"

POTENTIAL PROGRAMS, SERVICES & RESOURCES



59%

EVENT SPACES



40%

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE



45%

LEGAL AID



38%

LIBRARY



36%

LOW-COST HOUSING



33%

FOOD BANK SERVICES



31%

DAY CARE

"INCLUDE SPORTS ACTIVITIES."

"EDUCATION SHOULD NOT BE NEGLECTED."

"INCLUDE INDOOR SOCCER, HOCKEY, BASKETBALL, SPACE FOR ELDERLY TO GO OUT AND RELAX, KITCHEN, GYM."

"MAINTAINING AND SUSTAINING A BUSINESS TO BE ABLE TO EMPLOY COMMUNITY MEMBERS."

In the quantitative data analysis, event spaces (59%), legal aid (45%), and after-school care (40%) are the leading programs mentioned when respondents were asked what specific programs, services, or resources they would like to see offered at the African Multicultural Community Centre to serve the needs of our community best. Other

programs such as library (38%), low-cost housing (36%), Food bank outlet (33%) and day care (31%) were also mentioned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are essential in guiding future actions and decisions regarding establishing the proposed African Multicultural Community Centre (AMCC) facility based on the insights gathered from the community engagement process.

Program & Services Development

Develop a diverse array of programs and services within the AMCC, including language classes, cultural events, art workshops, and educational sessions to celebrate the cultural heritage of the

African, Caribbean, and Historical Black Canadian communities. Prioritize creating youth-centric programs and mentorship opportunities focused on education, career guidance, and recreational activities to engage and empower the younger generation.

Facility Design & Location

The proposed AMCC facility should be located centrally, ensuring ease of access via public transportation to serve various neighbourhoods and communities within Edmonton. The facility should have adaptable spaces to host events, meetings and cultural activities, and amenities such as a library, computer lab and cultural exhibit areas.

Inclusivity & Accessibility Measures

Implement language support services and language classes to ensure inclusivity for non-English speakers within the community. The design should incorporate facilities and services catering to differently-abled individuals to ensure the centre is accessible and welcoming to all community members.

Cultural Preservation & Collaboration

Create opportunities for cultural preservation through events, exhibitions and programs celebrating the diverse heritage of Edmonton's communities of African descent. Foster collaborations with non-profit and immigrant-serving organizations, the business community, financial organizations, and local funders in the city, student associations in the post-secondary institutions, local artists, cultural groups, and educational institutions to promote cultural pride and heritage with the proposed AMCC facility.

40

Community Governance & Participation

Establish a governance structure within the proposed AMCC facility that includes community presentation and encourages active participation in decision-making processes. Develop avenues for community members to contribute through volunteer work, advisory roles, and organizational support with the AMCC.

Community Validation & Adaptation

Continue the process of member checking and community consultations to ensure findings align with the communities' needs and values. We also suggest that these recommendations be adjusted and refined based on ongoing community feedback and validation processes to ensure alignment with community expectations and emergent priorities.

These detailed recommendations provide actionable steps and considerations for successfully establishing and operating the proposed African Multicultural Community Centre (AMCC) facility. They reflect the desires, needs, and aspirations of African descent communities in Edmonton, derived from the engagement process.

LESSONS LEARNED

Throughout the dynamic journey of our consultancy engagement around the proposed AMCC facility, we encountered invaluable lessons that shaped our understanding of the diverse communities of African descent in Edmonton. These pivotal insights guided our approach and were pillars of wisdom that influenced our interactions, methodologies, and project outcomes. Here are

the key lessons from our immersive involvement in this laudable project:

Comprehensive Engagement

We learned the value of comprehensive engagement. We understood that engaging diverse communities and segments within the communities is vital for a holistic understanding of the needs and desires regarding the proposed AMCC facility.

Iterative Approach in Methodology

We learned through this process that we had to use an iterative approach to our methodology, leaving room for adjustments and improvements in the engagement process based on ongoing feedback and validation.

Proactive Inclusivity

During the town hall gatherings, we constantly asked ourselves questions about who was not currently in the space and should be there. When we identify the gaps in communities not represented or adequately represented, we made efforts to reach out to the members of those communities to invite them to engagement sessions or hold separate engagement sessions for them, ensuring language translations and accessibility are available to encourage broader participation.

Community-Centred Decision-Making

We also learned that the community wanted to be involved in any decision-making process that affects them. We learned that involving the communities as early as possible in decision-making leads to more community-aligned

and authentic decisions for the proposed AMCC facility.

Continuous Improvements in Engagement Strategies

We realized the importance of evolving our engagement strategies based on the challenges and successes encountered during the project.

Ethical & Respectful Engagement Practices

We learned to prioritize respectful and ethical engagement during this project. We understood the importance of maintaining confidentiality, respecting diverse opinions, and being culturally sensitive throughout the engagement process.

CONCLUSION

In concluding this transformative community engagement journey for the proposed AMCC facility, it is evident that the dreams and aspirations expressed by Edmonton's diverse communities of African descent transcend mere words.

Beyond cultural celebration, there is a shared longing for a place that nurtures complete well-being. Mental health and wellness emerged as an essential component sought by the community as a space designed to support emotional and mental health needs.

Furthermore, economic and social disparities are addressed within the envisioned AMCC facility. To the communities, it is more than a building. It is a beacon of opportunities, resources, and support to bridge gaps and empower Edmonton's African descent communities.

Intergenerational learning stands tall in this shared dream, symbolizing a commitment to passing down cultural wisdom and traditions. The AMCC facility is envisioned as a place that will honour heritage by fostering a continuous cycle of learning and sharing across generations.

Collaborations and partnerships resonate profoundly in the communities' vision. It is hoped that the proposed AMCC facility will be a hub where diverse groups converge and where connections and collaborations blossom between local organizations, educators, artists, etc, to fostering unity and celebrating diversity.

In wrapping up, the communities visualize the proposed AMCC facility not just as a physical structure; it embodies the collective yearnings and hopes of a community seeking nurturing, empowering, and unifying spaces. A space that is beyond cultural celebrations will help address mental well-being, social disparities, intergenerational wisdom sharing, and collaborative partnerships.



APPENDICES

1. **Raw Data:** The raw data from all surveys and data collected throughout the span of the project is currently housed online, [here](#).
2. **Youth Engagement Session Article/Story:** An online article highlighting the engagement session held with the community youth, [here](#).
3. **Event Images:** Photographs from focus groups, interviews, and surveys are attached below.
4. **Digital Media Photos:** Social media posts and Eventbrite marketing.
5. **Stakeholder Feedback; Engagement Materials.**







REFERENCES

Statistics Canada (2021). Census of Population 2021. Accessed from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/datasets/Index-eng.cfm?Temporal=2021&Theme=-1&VNA-MEE=&GA=-1&S=0#wb-auto-2>

The Importance of Mental Health in Assisted Living Facilities. Derby Assisted Living. <https://www.derbyassistedliving.com/blog/the-importance-of-mental-health-in-assisted-living-facilities>

Why A Community Center Is Beneficial For Your Community. <https://sportsfacilities.com/why-a-community-center-is-beneficial-for-your-community/>

How Culture and Heritage Tourism Boosts More Than A Visitor Economy. <https://www.mytravelresearch.com/culture-and-heritage-tourism-boosts-visitor-economy/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the diverse members of Edmonton's African descent communities who generously shared their insights and aspirations through the community engagement process for the proposed African Multicultural Community Centre (AMCC). Their passion, dedication, and invaluable contributions formed the very essence of this project.

We appreciate the community leaders, stakeholders, and volunteers whose unwavering support and commitment played a pivotal role in facilitating and enriching the engagement session. Their guidance was instrumental in shaping the vision and aspiration for the proposed AMCC facility.

Special thanks to organizations such as JANA, Edmonton Intercultural Centre, Shiloh Baptist Church, the Business Student Association of the University of Alberta, and the South Sudanese Community Centre for the gift of the spaces used to gather for the town hall sessions.

Additionally, we acknowledge the dedicated team members and consultants whose diligence, commitment, and passion were vital in orchestrating and capturing the collective aspirations and recommendations that form the cornerstone of the AMCC project.

Finally, we thank everyone involved in this transformative journey whose contributions helped shape the blueprint for a vibrant, inclusive, community-centred African Multicultural Community Centre in Edmonton.

GLOSSARY

- **African Multicultural Community Centre:** The African Multicultural Community Centre aims to be a hub where Edmonton's diverse African descent communities can come together to celebrate culture, share experiences, access essential services, and empower one another. It's a space designed to foster unity, growth, and resilience within our community.
- **AMCC:** African Multicultural Community Centre.
- **Community Engagement:** The process of actively involving and seeking input from members of the community to gather perspectives, feedback, and insights. In the context of this report, seeking input from the diverse communities of African descent in Edmonton regarding the establishment of the AMCC facility.
- **Digital Surveys:** A method of collecting feedback and opinions through online surveys, providing a convenient and accessible way for community members to participate in the engagement process.
- **Diversity:** Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender—the groups that most often come to mind when the term “diversity” is used—but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.
Source: Found Hers Report. Pg 76
- **Edmonton Communities of African Descent:** Generally includes diverse individuals, populations, and communities in Edmonton, Alberta that identify as having African, Historical Black Canadians, or Caribbean ancestry.
- **Ethnicity:** A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base. Examples of different ethnic groups used in the survey are: African-Canadian Descent, African, Caribbean, and multi-racial and/or multi-ethnic (multiple races/ethnicities).
Source: Found Hers Report. Pg 76
- **Focus Group Discussions:** A qualitative research method involving group discussions among community members, organized to gather in-depth insights and perspectives on the AMCC facility.
- **Facebook Clicks:** A measurement of engagement on the social media platform, Facebook.
- **Impressions:** A measurement of how many individual social media accounts viewed a post/ad.
- **Historical Black Canadians:** Early settlers of African descent who migrated to Canada as freed people. They mostly came from Oklahoma, Mississippi, and Alabama, and mostly settled as farmers in Canada.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring the active involvement and representation of diverse voices and perspectives within the community engagement process, allowing all members of the African descent communities in Edmonton to contribute their views.
- **Intergenerational Learning:** The commitment to passing down cultural wisdom and traditions from one generation to another, a significant aspect of the shared dream for the AMCC facility.
- **One-on-One Interviews:** Individual interviews conducted to gather personal and detailed perspectives from community members, ensuring a more personal and in-depth understanding of their views.
- **Town Hall Forums:** Community gatherings or forums where open discussions and presentations take place, allowing a larger audience to participate and share their thoughts on the proposed AMCC facility.





