



How they got started:

In the fall of 2020, an exciting initiative called the Agenda Gap program launched.

Drawing from an East Vancouver high school,







it brought together six young people from diverse backgrounds.

The challenge:

Meeting weekly online with facilitators, these youth quickly identified a crucial link: **racism was directly impacting the mental health of young people in their community**. This personal understanding became their powerful motivation.





Here’s how they made a difference:

<p>Building a network</p>  <p>They started by mapping out their support systems and connected with their school’s Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) lead. This ally provided invaluable insights.</p>	<p>Finding key allies</p>  <p>Their research led them to a school district trustee who was already working on anti-racism issues. By meeting with these allies, the youth gained a deep understanding of existing school policies & pinpointed where they could make the biggest changes.</p>
<p>Focusing their efforts</p>  <p>Armed with this knowledge, they decided to advocate for significant changes to the Vancouver School Board’s anti-racism and youth engagement policies.</p>	<p>Crafting a powerful message</p>  <p>With support, they drafted a presentation that highlighted their own experiences and the impact of current policies, including clear "Calls to Action" for change. They even got feedback from teachers to refine their message.</p>

Their change action:

The culmination of their hard work was a **recorded presentation given to 22 Vancouver School Board Trustees** during an online public meeting. Their presentation powerfully stressed the need for policy reform, crucially emphasizing the **importance of youth input** to create a safer educational environment.

Ripple effects:

 <p>A Lasting Platform for Advocacy: In collaboration with their school’s BIPOC lead, the youth launched a BIPOC club. This club used content from the Agenda Gap curriculum & established a lasting platform for ongoing advocacy.</p> <p>.....</p>	 <p>Creating Safer Spaces: The BIPOC club became a safe space where BIPOC students could share their lived experiences, find support, and build stronger connections with peers.</p> <p>.....</p>
 <p>Collective Action in Action: Demonstrating the power of working together, the BIPOC club went on to host a powerful anti-racism workshop the following academic year.</p>	 <p>Teachers Changed Practices: After seeing the youth's presentation, teacher allies reported making changes in their classrooms and updating their curriculum.</p>