


ADDRESSING ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NL

September 2019
Community Report



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Addressing Islamophobia In Newfoundland and Labrador Community Report: September 2019

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Project Overview

The main goal of the Addressing Islamophobia in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) project is to increase local knowledge about countering Islamophobia and xenophobic discrimination, and to foster community-wide anti-Islamophobia responses.

We understand Islamophobia as a fear and/or hatred of Islam and Muslims (and those perceived as Muslim) that translates into everyday individual, ideological, systemic and intersectional forms of xenophobia and racism. We advocate for an understanding of Islamophobia as anti-Muslim racism and discrimination because Islamophobia cannot be understood and defined outside of racism and processes of racialization. Lastly, although we highlight Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism and discrimination, these cannot be understood as operating separately from colonialism, anti-Semitism, religious and cultural discrimination, and other forms of intersectional oppression.

In terms of building community capacity among service-providers and community members to counter Islamophobia, racism and xenophobia, the conference was a milestone in NL history.

The project had two phases:

- 1) **Fall-Spring 2017-2018:** The first phase centred community consultations to assess the needs and capacity of our community collaborators regarding Islamophobia in NL.

We engaged over 40 community collaborators, representing 27 community and university groups. Through two formal group consultation meetings on October 3 and 19, 2017, an e-survey and individualized consultations, we determined a need to increase community awareness and community capacities to address Islamophobia. These initial consultations and survey also inspired constructive working relationships across organizations.

More specifically, the first group consultation provided us with an inventory of shared experiences and resources. Through facilitated discussion, we identified many gaps in education and services. The second group consultation focused on identifying strategies to best deliver information to appropriate audiences.

For more on the project's first phase, see: <https://www.yaffle.ca/projects/3324> It was funded by the Office of Public Engagement's Quick Accelerator Fund at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN).



Project Overview

- 2) **Fall-Spring 2018-2019:** The second phase aimed at developing and delivering anti-Islamophobia workshops through a two-day conference. The conference focused on anti-Islamophobia advocacy, ally-ship and education for public service providers.

The National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), a Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization and leader in anti-Islamophobia training in Canada, were a crucial part of the success of our project. They helped us plan, co-design and co-facilitate conference sessions and workshops.

For more details, please see the website we developed for this project: <https://www.mun.ca/relstudies/more/AddressingIslamophobia/>. It was funded largely by MUN's Office of Public Engagement's Accelerator Fund, the Vice-President Academic and the MUN Faculty Association.



Project Objectives



The main goal of Addressing Islamophobia in NL was to increase local knowledge about how to counter Islamophobia and xenophobic discrimination, and to develop community-wide anti-Islamophobia strategies.

We successfully met this goal and all five of the objectives set out in our initial funding proposal to MUN's Office of Public Engagement. Our conference evaluation survey administered on Day 2 of the conference indicated that conference participants who filled out the survey (n=26) felt that all five objectives were completely or mostly met throughout the conference. Our community and university collaborators also provided positive responses about the conference and the engagement process.

Below, we list each objective and then describe how these objectives were met before, during and after the conference.

1. To improve local knowledge about national and global strategies to respond to Islamophobia, racisms, and xenophobic discrimination.

During our first-phase community consultations, we found that although there was some capacity to support cultural, racial and religious diversity in our province, there was a clear need to support anti-Islamophobia efforts.

This project added to local knowledge about Islamophobia and provided anti-Islamophobia strategies throughout each stage of the project. First and foremost, the two-day conference itself added to local knowledge about Islamophobia; this was the first time (to our knowledge) that any such conference, professional development or workshop was offered in NL, and the fact that over 80 participants were able to learn from this initiative is significant.

Project Objectives

As well, the NCCM was able to provide much-needed expertise about Islamophobia and anti-Islamophobia strategies nationally and globally, particularly in the planning and delivery of the conference and workshops. In the conference planning stages, they offered templates of their workshops which were adapted to our local context, offered suggestions about keynote panelists (in the Anti-Islamophobia Praxis Keynote Panel), co-developed and co-facilitated the individual break-out sessions, and took the lead on most of the general information sessions (for example, “Framing the Discussion on Islamophobia”). All of their materials were adapted alongside local stakeholders. This was a labourious but meaningful process.

As well, the longevity of the project from the first-phase of consultations in October 2017 to the conference in September 2018 and post-conference activities has meant that over 40 organizations and groups (and well over 200 individuals) have been directly engaged in the project. This high level of engagement from the initiation of the project to planning of the conference and dissemination allowed us to consult with and learn from our collaborators, but also to engage in a process of implementing anti-Islamophobia throughout the engagement. Another example of this type of teaching and learning also happened within the collaborative developing and delivering of the anti-Islamophobia workshops.

Finally, the efforts of our partners in furthering local knowledge and helping make our province a more equitable place to live, continues. Each of the partners, collaborators and participants continue to share the information and materials we created. The following are all legacies of the conference and flow from its original objectives:

- A Religious-Studies and Scholarship in the Arts sponsored public lecture by Dr. Ramachandran
- The Film Series on Islamophobia
- The Addressing Islamophobia Twitter-feed
- ARC-NL’s Facebook page
- Increased community engagement (the best example being the planning for a possible Mayor’s Roundtable on Racism)
- Through radio and print media op-eds and interviews
- Through the ongoing work of Anti-Islamophobia and anti-racist organizations and groups such as the Muslim Association of NL (MANAL), the Muslim Students’ Association (MSA), the ARC-NL, and the Canadian Federation of Students-NL (CFS-NL).

Knowledge dissemination continues.

Project Objectives

2. To develop collaborative relationships among organizations and groups already engaged in working with, and in support of, Muslim and other local racialized communities.

This project was, as one partner said, “One of the most collaborative projects” that they had been involved with.

Although many community organizations already had working relationships, as did several on-campus groups, until this project, there had been little cross-conversation about Islamophobia and strategies to address racialized and religious discrimination. For example, although the ARC-NL had some connections with the CFS-NL, the MUNSU and the NL Human Rights Commission (NL- HRC),¹ these relationships were deepened as a result of this public engagement.

A significant collaborative relationship was also initiated between MANAL and NCCM. In the aftermath of Quebec City Mosque shootings in 2017, both organizations were invited to offer their testimony before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Their recommendations were included in the Committee’s Report, “Taking Action Against Systemic Racism and Religious Discrimination including Islamophobia” (1). However, it was through their involvement in the Addressing Islamophobia in NL Project that MANAL and NCCM developed more structured and longer-term collaborative relations. Also, throughout the Project, there has been an increase in the number of public sector organizations reaching out to MANAL and inviting Muslim representatives to provide input to their consultation committees and employee training programs.

For the Project Leads and External Partner, similarly, new relationships were also developed. These relationships led to further opportunities to continue the anti-Islamophobia work. For example, Municipalities NL invited us to deliver workshops on micro-aggressions; several community boards invited us to make presentations where we were able to advance anti-Islamophobia initiatives; and, the MANAL invited us to speak on our project and on anti-Islamophobia. As well, ARC-NL invited Addressing Islamophobia in NL to participate in a two-day anti-racism workshop with a group of 5- to 12-year old girl Sparks, Brownies and Girl Guides in March of 2019. The ARC-NL, the MANAL and the Project Leads fostered meaningful relationships with the NCCM, with opportunity for future collaboration. Without a doubt, all such relationships have been enriched as a result of this project.

¹ The Human Rights Commission (NL-HRC) is an independent at arm’s length government agency that is responsible for promoting an understanding of, acceptance of, and compliance with the provisions of the Human Rights Act. While the NL-HRC was a collaborator on this project, we should note that it is not a community organization.

Project Objectives

3. To plan, coordinate, and deliver anti-Islamophobia workshops on September 22-23, 2018.

As outlined in the description of our activities (below), anti-Islamophobia workshops were successfully planned, coordinated and delivered. The conference evaluation surveys indicate that participants felt it was very well organized (all of the participants rated the logistics at the highest in the scale). The high-degree of collaboration among all project partners added to the success of the project, as did the invaluable support and commitment of the graduate student assistant, undergraduate student assistants, and highly invested student volunteers.

4. To advance conversations about Islamophobia with the goal of supporting equity, fairness and inclusion in NL.

The workshops advanced the conversation about Islamophobia in the context of media engagement, workplace negotiations, organizational policy and practice, and in working intersectionally with Muslims. Participants had the opportunity to learn the basics of i) how the media works, ii) the tools and tactics required for engaging the media and dealing with controversial questions and, iii) how to generate positive coverage.

The impacts of Islamophobia in the workplace and reasonable accommodations were examined and discussed. Strategies were identified for service-providers to help them forward and integrate anti-racism and anti-Islamophobia into their everyday policy and practice. The conference also closely addressed the best ways to work with Muslim communities and families who have experienced Islamophobia, racisms, and other forms of xenophobia.



Project Objectives

5. To work toward a provincial strategy that addresses discrimination and strategizes tools of inclusion for NL service providers.

The project made significant strides in working toward provincial solutions that address discrimination, particularly in the area of addressing Islamophobia in NL. In the last session of the conference, we allotted time to develop recommendations for local and provincial strategies.

The session was facilitated by the NCCM and the Project Leads, and was well attended

especially given it was at the end of a full two-day conference on a sunny Sunday afternoon! The Provost and the Special Adviser to the President on Aboriginal Affairs were also in attendance.



Although we realized that the last session's goals were ambitious, the session was an excellent one. Conference participants became actively engaged in pondering the possibilities for working together. These conversations formed an important basis for our provincial recommendations (at the end of this report).



Preparing for the Conference



Community and university collaborators were engaged in each aspect of the project. An eight-person Advisory Team was formed in April 2018 and met monthly thereafter. The team consisted of the project leaders and community and university collaborators. Team members were consulted via email as needed to support the development and running of the conference.

The Advisory Team brought to the project a wealth of local expertise in human rights, social justice, social service provision, community organization, along with first-hand experience of Muslims and other racialized groups in NL. They offered in-kind support throughout the planning and implementation of each phase of the project, and acted as conference facilitators. The conference workshops were jointly planned and facilitated by NCCM, Project Leads, ARC-NL and other members of the Advisory Team.

More specifically, the structure of the conference and the content of the breakout workshops were designed with the help of the Advisory Team members. The project's Graduate Assistant and several ISWEP (International Student Work Experience Program) and MUCEP (Memorial's Undergraduate Career Experience Program) students provided logistical, organizational and administrative support.

Nineteen student volunteers were recruited, trained and assigned specific duties over the two-day conference. As well, several project collaborators served as facilitators or offered introductions to each session or workshop. Several collaborators and other community organizations set up information booths about their organizations.

The Conference

Over 80 participants, including eight people who joined virtually through teleconference technology (from Grenfell Campus and Labrador), attended the conference at Memorial University on September 22-23, 2018. The participants included service-providers and members of community organizations, community members and MUN students, staff and faculty.

The conference included various general sessions and four breakout workshops co-designed and co-facilitated by thirteen facilitators. The workshops were:

- Engaging the Media
- Workplace Negotiations and Accommodations
- Integrating Anti-Racism and Anti-Islamophobia in Organizational Policy and Practice, and
- Working Intersectionally with Muslim Communities and Families.

Each of the breakout workshops included one or two members of local collaborator organizations and for most, a facilitator from the NCCM. This mix intended to build local capacity.

In the weeks prior to the conference, facilitators developed their presentations in consultation with each other and finalized the content and structure of the sessions in a joint meeting before the conference. The structure of the conference allowed every participant to attend a maximum of two breakout workshops over two days.



The Conference



On Day One, the conference included a keynote speaker on niqab debates in Canada. On Day Two a keynote panel on Anti-Islamophobia in Practice was held. This panel brought together four anti-Islamophobia activists from different parts of the country through teleconferencing.

The conference concluded with a roundtable discussion on provincial strategies to address Islamophobia in NL.

For a complete schedule of the conference, including the session titles and the names of all of those who presented, please see:

<https://www.mun.ca/reilstudies/more/AddressingIslamophobia/workshop2018.php>

Post-Conference

ADDRESSING
ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NL presents:

A Winter 2019 Film Series

YOUR LAST WALK IN THE MOSQUE



Time: 12-1:30pm
Date: Tuesday, Jan. 29th
Location: EN 1004

Our first film - Your Last Walk in the Mosque - will commemorate the January 2017 shootings in Québec, CA.

Discussion to follow. All are welcome.

After the successful completion of the conference, community and university collaborators continued to engage in anti-Islamophobia initiatives throughout the project.

The Addressing Islamophobia in NL Project Leads developed and implemented an Addressing Islamophobia Film Series in the Winter 2019 term on the St. John's campus. As part of raising anti-Islamophobia awareness among students and staff at the university, three films were screened:

- "Your Last Walk in the Mosque" (January 29th)
- "14 and Muslim" (February 28th) and
- "I am Rohingya" (March 21st).

On March 23rd, 2019 in the Great Hall at Queen's College at Memorial University, the Addressing Islamophobia in NL team, along with the Anti-Racism Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador (ARC-NL, our External Partner) and the undergraduate students of Dr. Delores Mullings' Social Justice class (Social Work 2711), helped organize "A Vigil of Solidarity for the New Zealand Shooting".

Post-Conference



Throughout the different phases of the project, the Project Leads and ARC-NL, sustained a community, university and online presence. In addition to the more than 40 community organizations we engaged, the project also reached countless others through recruitment and advertising of the conference and knowledge mobilization efforts. One of these took place between the consultations and conference: a special lecture by Dr. Tanisha Ramachandran (Wake Forest University) on “Gendering Hate Through Religion: Islamophobia and Muslim Women” March 7, 2018.

The team co-leads and coordinator also presented on their public engagement work for the *People, Place, and Public Engagement* conference at Memorial University of Newfoundland (October 26, 2018).

The project website led to an invitation for Aneesh Sasikumar, the project's coordinator, and Dr. Sobia Shaikh to attend the Federal Government's Ministerial Forum on Anti-Racism for the Atlantic Provinces. The forum was hosted by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism and held in Halifax in December 2018.

THE DEPARTMENT OF
RELIGIOUS STUDIES
PRESENTS



Please join Dr. Tanisha Ramachandran of Wake Forest University for this public lecture

This talk examines how Muslim Canadian women are racialized and gendered through hate crimes primarily triggered by material markers of religion. While these women differ in age, race, ethnicity, class, language, and practice, the violences they experience are similar, as are their occurrence in public and the rarity of bystander intervention. An analysis of hate crimes exposes tension between the visibility of Muslim women as other/threat and the perennial colonial trope that equates their unveiling with rescue and liberation.

**Wednesday, March 7th at 7pm
A1046, Arts & Administration**

Discussion and reception to follow.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
JSELBY@MUN.CA

Gendering Hate through Religion: Islamophobia & Muslim Women

Post-Conference

The Project Leads and ARC-NL gave several radio interviews on the CBC, VOXM and CHMR where they spoke about the conference and the need for more anti-Islamophobia awareness. Here are two examples:

- A segment on the CBC St. John's Morning show titled, "Anti-Racism Discussion," February 20, 2019. The interview can be heard at: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/shows/st-john-s-morning-show/segment/15671494>
- A noon-hour "Cross-Talk" program on "Racism and Discriminations in NL," September 20, 2018 The interview can be heard at: <https://podcast-a.akamaihd.net/mp3/podcasts/crosstalk-J1pZYJq8-20180920.mp3>

The Project Leads continue to be involved in other local, university, provincial and national initiatives, where they advance the project and further foster an awareness of Islamophobia. The workshops at Municipalities NL and local Girl Guides in March 2019 are two such examples.



At the university level, the project facilitated connections among the Project Leads and other groups, committees and members of the university community at the St. John's and Grenfell campuses, and the Labrador Institute. Notably, we supported the Internationalization Working Group at the Grenfell Campus with their film screenings and have been in conversation with them about offering anti-Islamophobia training.

Dr. Jennifer Selby, one of the Project leads, developed a third-year course entitled, "What is Islamophobia?" for the Department of Religious Studies. This course has been proposed to the Associate Dean Undergraduate in the Humanities and Social Sciences (August 2019).

The Project Leads, ARC-NL, MANAL with other community and university collaborators continue to be involved in raising awareness about Islamophobia, racism and discrimination in the province. One notable and ongoing initiative was a meeting with the Mayor of St. John's, Mr. Danny Breen, in May 2019. At this meeting we raised awareness about the effects of Islamophobia and other forms of racialized discrimination on community members. Mayor Breen agreed to host a "Mayor's Roundtable on Racism," the early planning of which is underway.

Community Partners

The Project Leads, Dr. Sobia Shaikh and Dr. Jennifer Selby, and the external partner, Ms. Jenne Nolan (ARC-NL and SJSWC) and other members of the Anti-Racism Coalition of NL, mobilized the support of more than 40 community/university collaborators throughout the project. The project's Advisory Team was led by the Project Leads, and consisted of members from:

- The ARC-NL (Our Primary External Community Partner), Ms. Jenne Nolan
- The Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (MANAL)
- The NL Human Rights Commission (NL-HRC)
- The Muslim Students' Association at MUN (MSA)
- The MUN Students' Union (MUNSU)
- The Canadian Federation of Students-NL (CFS-NL)
- The Association for New Canadians (ANC)
- The Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council (RIAC)
- The St. John's Status of Women Council (SJSWC)
- MUN's Aboriginal Resource Office (ARO)
- MUN's Faculty Association (MUNFA)
- MUCEP, ISWEP and a Graduate Assistant (GA) students
- The National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM)

Community Partners

The public engagement of each partner is described in greater depth below:

- The NCCM served as consultants to the project and brought their expertise and leadership to co-plan and co-deliver anti-Islamophobia workshops. The NCCM's involvement was key to presenting a national and global perspective to the participants. In addition, they provided in-kind financial support to the project.
- The ARC-NL's main goal is to promote a culture of anti-racism within the province of NL through community-building and educational initiatives. The coalition's community-organizing initiatives were essential to the birth and sustenance of this project. ARC-NL members contributed to the project through their community-organizing and public-education expertise. ARC-NL continues to organize anti-Islamophobia initiatives beyond the project throughout the province.

As a grassroots community organization, the MANAL brought expertise and the prospect for long-term collaborative work for the betterment of Muslims' experiences in the province. Similarly, the MSA and individual Muslim members of the project team shared their lived experiences. Both the MANAL and the MSA offered their public education expertise, which they have developed over years of involvement in local cross-cultural and interfaith initiatives.

- The RIAC and the ANC work to support culturally, racially and religiously diverse people in NL. They offer their expertise and unique perspectives arising from their collective experience of supporting racialized, immigrant, refugee, and Muslim communities in NL.



Community Partners

- The MUNSU, the CFS-NL, the ARO and the NL-HRC continue to be at the forefront of human rights, anti-racist, decolonization, and/or anti-xenophobia campaigns on campus and in the local community. In addition, they offered their extensive experience, and shared best practices for combatting oppression and discrimination both within our meetings and throughout the conference.
- Student training: Aneesh Sasikumar, the project's Graduate Assistant, and more than a dozen ISWEP and MUCEP students, provided organizational and administrative support, and their expertise throughout the project. Student support was invaluable to the coordinating of the project.
- Several individuals from the community and university also co-planned and co-facilitated specific workshops throughout the conference.
- The Project Leads coordinated the project and contributed their academic and professional expertise in the areas of community organizing, education (public and university), human rights, social justice, intersectional anti-discrimination praxis, religious accommodation, social and health service provision, advocacy, community organizing and the experience of Muslims and other minoritized groups in NL.

Benefits of the Project

- We increased our knowledge around Islamophobia, racism, and racialized, religious and xenophobic discrimination to be used in our everyday organizing, service, and education work.

- We created collaborative relationships among organizations and groups already engaged in this work and who continue to advance it.

- We initiated and fostered community-wide conversations about Islamophobia with the goal to support equity, fairness and inclusion in NL.

- We developed local and provincial strategies to address these forms of discrimination and strategize on how to build tools of inclusion for service providers in our province.

- Additionally, together, the project's External Partner, Advisory Team Members, and the Project Leads have improved our capacity to provide leadership in community-wide conversations around Islamophobia and continue to advance our efforts to equity, fairness and inclusion.

In sum, we have increased our local capacity to address issues of discrimination and racism.



Benefits of the Project

Our partners were also able to advance their goals:

ARC-NL's goal of promoting anti-racism and the NL-HRC's goals for the advancement of human rights were enhanced; CFS-NL and MUNSU were able to showcase and propel their social justice campaigns forward. Furthermore, local advocacy groups became more visible in the community and were able to strengthen their organizing skills by participating in the planning of the project.



Both the MANAL as a grassroots community organization serving Muslims in the province and the MSA as a student-based organization assisting Muslim students at MUN benefited from a concerted community focus on reducing anti-Muslim discrimination. This attention supported their work in advancing cross-cultural understanding among Muslims and non-Muslim people of NL. Notably, the MANAL increased their community leadership in anti-Islamophobia in NL and benefited from working closely with the NCCM.



The NCCM also benefited from their involvement in the project. First, they were able to make and solidify ongoing connections with various community organizations and leaders throughout

the engagement process, and, as well, throughout the conference in the fall. This was the first time that the NCCM came to NL. And since their visit, their connection with key community organizations in the province grew exponentially.

NCCM returned to St. John's to host their "Know Your Rights National Tour" with two community workshops, one at Memorial University and the other at the An-Noor Masjid on July 23-24, 2019.

Social service providers involved in this concerted focus on Islamophobia, also self-reflexively considered how their practices might be enhanced for working within Muslim and other racialized communities.

This project also serves as a template for the coalition to develop other related engagements to address racism and racialized discrimination in the province.



Future Possibilities



The conference evaluation form indicated that participants thought the project was a success and that its objectives were achieved. Some of the comments from the evaluation (and also echoed during conference workshops) indicated that the insights garnered during the two-day conference needed to be brought to a larger audience.

In general terms, the project gave a new collaborative direction to anti-Islamophobic and anti-racism work in the province. One notable and ongoing initiative was the meeting with the Mayor of St. John's, Mr. Breen to plan a proposed Mayor's Roundtable on Racism as mentioned above, which will solidify the work of the project.

More work must be done in the form of larger workshops and awareness programs that include the broader community within and outside St. John's area. Since the conference, some participants have requested more workshops for other local organisations, institutions and public school and university students.

Lastly, our work to date has focused on service providers and our university networks. Future initiatives could consider similar conferences in Labrador, and West and Central regions of the province. Ideally, workshops and training programs should be given to all public and private service providers to equip them with the necessary tools to address and prevent Islamophobic and other forms of racialized discrimination.

Provincial Recommendations

The recommendations that follow are drawn from the stories we heard about Islamophobia and racism in Newfoundland and Labrador throughout the Addressing Islamophobia in Newfoundland and Labrador project and from the proceedings of the September 2018 conference, held at MUN. The conference concluded with a session that aimed to mobilize insights and work from the project into various recommendations. Since March 2017, the project has collaborated with over 40 community and university partners, and directly engaged over 300 individuals across the province. This section is a condensed summary of those recommendations made specifically for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We offer recommendations specific to racism, Islamophobia and to other forms of racialized, cultural and religious discrimination. The recommendations are offered to support and further the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's commendable accomplishments to date, in relation to immigration, multiculturalism and human rights. While there has been success in attracting new Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, the stories that we heard throughout the project and the conference make clear that Islamophobia and racism exist in the province, and that Muslim and racialized people are negatively and profoundly affected by Islamophobia and racism.² Without acknowledging and addressing racism and Islamophobia our province's goal of a diverse and economically-strong province, will be much harder to achieve.

We call on the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, including all departments, services, commissions and agencies under provincial jurisdiction (the Province), to take leadership on addressing racism and Islamophobia. We know that addressing racism and Islamophobia cannot happen without a concerted effort among all levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal), organizations in public, private and non-profit sectors, trade unions, professional associations, and citizens alike. The partners and collaborators of Addressing Islamophobia in NL are committed to continue working on building a strong anti-racist and anti-Islamophobic agenda among all sectors within Newfoundland and Labrador. However, we also know that the Province is uniquely positioned to provide leadership, support and accountability for this important work.

²² See Sulaimon Giwa's 2018 article, <https://theconversation.com/newfoundland-needs-immigrants-and-anti-racism-action-now-94712>

Provincial Recommendations

We recommend that:

1. The Province develop an Anti-Racist/Anti-Islamophobia (AR/AI) Action Plan 2020-2025 which outlines the Province's specific commitments to addressing Islamophobia and racism in NL. This plan should include:

1A. A clear statement of commitment to anti-racism and anti-Islamophobia.³

1B. The establishment of Provincial AR/AI Action Plan Steering Committee, which includes the Province's departmental and agency heads, as well as community members from organizations who have taken leadership in anti-racism and anti-Islamophobia in NL.⁴

1C. Intensive anti-racist and anti-Islamophobia training for all members of the AR/AI Action Plan Steering Committee.

1D. A report of the progress of the AR/AI Steering Committee's Action Plan.

1E. Bi-annual reporting of the Province's actions taken to address anti-Muslim racism and other forms of racism and discrimination.

1F. A full AR/AI Action Plan (with a timeline), should be launched no later than January 31, 2021.

1G. A plan to promote community and academic work that seeks to monitor and challenge discrimination and racism in Newfoundland and Labrador via the Addressing Islamophobia website and/or other such social media.

1H. Increased support for the Province's Human Rights Commission to better respond to allegations of systemic and individual acts of racism and discrimination within the Province's departments and agencies.

³ We recommend that the Province adopt the following definition of Islamophobia: Islamophobia is a fear and/or hatred of Islam and Muslims (and those perceived as Muslim) that translates into everyday individual, ideological, systemic and intersectional forms of xenophobia and racism. Islamophobia must be understood as anti-Muslim racism and discrimination, and as integral to processes of racism and racialization. Islamophobia cannot be understood as operating separately from colonialism, anti-Semitism, religious and cultural discrimination, or other forms of oppression.

⁴ The Addressing Islamophobia in NL Project website lists many of our community partners, including, the Anti-Racism Coalition of NL (ARC-NL), the Muslim Association of NL (MANAL), MUN's Muslim Students' Association (MUN MSA), the NL Human Rights Commission, the Canadian Federation of Students-NL (CFS-NL), and MUN's Aboriginal Resource Office.

Provincial Recommendations

1I. The creation of brochures (in hard copy and online). These would provide information on how individuals can strategically intervene (as allies) to systemic and individual racism, discrimination, including Islamophobia. Examples from workplaces, schools, and other public spaces are recommended.

1J. To strengthen anti-racism, anti-discrimination and intervention training and education for all public employees and for members of all organizations funded by the Province through an education and outreach unit within the Human Rights Commission.⁵

1K. Engagement of community groups and organizations across NL in facilitated conversations about racism, Islamophobia and the history of colonialism in Newfoundland and Labrador.

1L. A strategy to increase the representation of Indigenous and racialized communities on provincial boards, commissions, agencies and committees.

1M. A strategy to increase racial and cultural diversity among employees of the Province.

1N. The development of community-engaged public-education campaigns about the experiences of racism and Islamophobia for people who are experiencing multiple forms of discrimination and oppression (for example, disability, ageism, and people who are experiencing economic and social precarity).

2. The Province implement a plan to monitor and publicly report on the prevalence of incidents of racist, Islamophobic and other forms of cultural and religious discrimination in Newfoundland and Labrador, through:

2A. An anonymous and online reporting forum, in collaboration with the Anti-Racism Coalition-NL, the NL Human Rights Commission, and community groups affected by racism, Islamophobia and other forms of cultural and religious discrimination.⁶

⁵ This recommendation is supported by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Call to Action #57 to educate public servants in "intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism".

⁶ For example, see the National Council of Canadian Muslim's reporting form: <https://www.nccm.ca/programs/incident-report-form/>

Provincial Recommendations

2B. A public education campaign that encourages the use of and promotes the online reporting forum (see 2A above).

2C. Research which compiles existing data about racism and Islamophobia in NL through existing sources, such as from the RCMP and RNC; the National Coalition of Canadian Muslims (NCCM); and the NL Human Rights Commission.

2D. Asking MUN researchers with demonstrated expertise in, and/or lived experience of racism, anti-racism and Islamophobia, to conduct a study and prepare a report on the lived experience and prevalence of racism, Islamophobia and other forms of cultural and religious discrimination in NL.

3. The Province take leadership in promoting anti-racism and anti-Islamophobia in all sectors through public education, collaborative community discussions, and government policy. Although not exhaustive, the following are highlights of recommendations from the Addressing Islamophobia in NL proceedings. We call on the Province to specifically provide leadership in the following sectors:

3A. PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Province should:

- Promote anti-racism, inclusion, reconciliation and positive representations of marginalized communities throughout the education system from kindergarten to postsecondary.⁷
- Provide educators with anti-racism, anti-Islamophobia, anti-oppression and bystander-intervention training. Such training would equip and provide the tools for creating more inclusive educational environments.
- Encourage students to report Islamophobic and racist bullying at all levels of schooling from kindergarten to postsecondary.
- Direct funding to primary, secondary and postsecondary institutions for school and on-campus support groups, resource centres and Indigenous and other racialized community spaces.
- Foster partnerships between educators and front-line community organizations to reach out to children and youth whose access to education is adversely affected by bullying and violence or discriminatory discipline policies or practices.

⁷ This recommendation is supported by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, specifically #63, #63, and #64.

Provincial Recommendations

3B. HOUSING AND URBAN PLANNING

The Province should:

- Engage with Indigenous, Muslim and other racialized communities to uncover and address systemic barriers that have a discriminatory effect on these communities.
- Engage with Indigenous, Muslim and other racialized communities to uncover and address marginalization of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Develop a working group of members of racialized and Indigenous communities, community organizations, landlords and social housing providers. Such a group would recommend equitable policies and practices in areas such as tenant-selection processes and criteria for selection, consistent with human-rights principles.

3C. POLICE SERVICES

The Province should work with police services to:

- Consult with local communities to hear concerns and receive input on response measures.
- Support Police and Crime Commissioners in ensuring appropriate resources are allocated for tackling hate crime effectively at the local level.
- Establish or enhance a comprehensive anti-racism and anti-discrimination vision statement and implement effective policies and procedures (including a complaints mechanism).
- Establish staff training to help prevent and respond to issues of racism and discrimination in policing services and in the community.
- Ensure appropriate representation of Indigenous and racialized groups in recruitment and at all levels of the organization.

Provincial Recommendations

- Establish a community working group with representation from Indigenous and racialized community organizations to develop and implement a framework for a policy on race-based data collection and analysis.⁸

3D. HEALTH SERVICES

The Province should:

- Ensure that the legislation that govern the professions include anti-Islamophobia, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and cultural safety/competency training and regular policy/practice reviews.⁹
- Consult regularly with local Muslim, Indigenous and racialized communities, as well as the Anti-Racism Coalition-NL, the NL Human Rights Commission and other groups to discuss any concerns and/or complaints as they arise.
- Increase the inclusion of diverse ways of healing to meet the spiritual and cultural needs of Indigenous, Muslim, and other racialized patients/clients.¹⁰
- Establish or enhance a comprehensive anti-racism and anti-discrimination vision statement.
- Implement effective policies and procedures (including a complaints mechanism), as well as a commitment to pursue mandatory staff training to help prevent and respond to issues of racism and discrimination in health services and in the community.

⁸ As part of efforts to reduce bias and discrimination, identify disparities in service, and inform evidence-based decision-making and accountability, race-based data collection policy initiatives are currently being developed among police service providers such as the Toronto Police Services Board. This is in the works after calls for the collection of race-based data by the Canadian Mental Health Association in Ontario in their report Racialized Populations and Mental Health Court Diversion (CMHA, 2019).

⁹ See Gunn, Brenda L. "Ignored to Death: Systemic Racism in the Canadian Healthcare System." United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Health/UniversityManitoba.pdf>.

¹⁰ Reading, Charlotte. "Policies, programs and strategies to address aboriginal racism: A Canadian perspective." Prince George, BC: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2014.

Provincial Recommendations

- Increase employment opportunities for Indigenous, Muslim, and other racialized peoples among healthcare providers, and to provide support to those individuals so they may thrive while employed in healthcare.

3E. MEDIA

The Province should seek to work with media outlets and regulators to:

- Intervene more proactively in cases of alleged discriminatory reporting.
- Encourage anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-Islamophobia, and other forms of training to examine biases and stereotyping in reporting and the media's role in perpetuating racism and Islamophobia.
- Ensure that the perspectives of Indigenous, Muslim, and other racialized people are represented in reporting, broadcasting and publishing.
- Centre Indigenous and racialized voices in matters pertaining to Indigenous and racial justice.
- Increase employment opportunities and supports for Indigenous, Muslim, and other racialized peoples within media.

3F. LABOUR FORCE AND WORKPLACE

The Province should:

- Create more awareness and action to address barriers to equal labour-market participation.
- Encourage all employers to make potential workplace accommodations, and to develop and implement non-discriminatory policies and practices as a requirement for licensing applications and/or renewal.
- Make licensing renewals conditional upon evidence of non-discriminatory policies and practices.
- Work with all employers, including labour unions and professional bodies, to develop and adequately implement intersectional anti-racist and anti-discrimination action plans.

Provincial Recommendations

3G. LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Province should:

- Liaise with the NL Human Rights Commission, community organizations, and the legal community to develop a plan to facilitate prevention, interventions, and remedies for those who experience racism and discrimination.
- Train, hire and retain lawyers who have expertise in human rights and immigration, particularly in Legal Aid.
- Designate January 29th as the “National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia”, as part of a nation-wide initiative. This date reflects the devastating terrorist attack on the Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec (CCIQ) on January 29, 2017, which claimed the lives of six Muslims who left behind spouses and seventeen orphans, and seriously injured, physically and emotionally, many others.



ADDRESSING ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NL

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