



Canadian
Race Relations
Foundation

Fondation
canadienne des
relations raciales

Event Report

1. **Name of the Event:** "Le vivre ensemble"...mais pour qui et comment? Naviguer les droits de la personne a Montreal / "Living together"...but for who and how? Navigating human rights in Montreal Bilingual Roundtable
2. **Event Date:** Monday, December 9, 2019, 5:30-7:30 pm
3. **Brief Description of the Event:**

The event was a free and bilingual roundtable to discuss human rights in Montreal. Catering was available and community groups were invited to bring and share their resources for the public on a "Resource Table."

To protect human rights, the event aimed to help attendees:

- Understand and discuss the experiences of Montrealers who may not experience the principles of "vivre ensemble," especially in relation to race, gender, and religion, among other aspects;
- Work together to find solutions to this exclusion;
- Learn about existing resources and ways to prevent and respond to the injustices and discrimination people may be facing; and,
- Create partnerships and meaningful exchanges and dialogues between community members affected by and responding to this issue.

This event was a chance to refocus on International Human Rights Day (December 10).

Agenda:

- Land acknowledgement
- Opening remarks by Emilie Nicolas, Canadian Race Relations Foundation Board Member
- Roundtable 1 – Attendees joined a discussion at a table
- Roundtable 2 – Attendees invited to join discussions at another table
- Panelist presentation
- Question & Answer period with panelists
- Time to engage freely with other community leaders and attendees at the end of the evening

Eight roundtables were arranged to discuss one of the following topics: access to justice, discrimination, education, employment/income inequality, employment and workplace discrimination, health, housing, and poverty. The public were invited to join any table of their interest.

We told them that their thoughts were important to us and would help all the organizations at the event better understand what is happening in Montreal. Note takers were at each table to document their thoughts. Everything shared was kept confidential, unless participants wanted to share their names.

All presentation slides were prepared in the opposing language of the spoken language, to offer a translation of the verbal presentations and ensure bilingual representation.

Due to rain and the slow Montreal traffic on rainy days and during rush hour, 30 individuals participated overall, despite the 52 online registrants via EventBrite.

4. **Speakers & Moderators:**

MC: Dr. Sabrina Jafralie, CCRL Co-founder and Director of K-12 education, provided French-English translation throughout the event

Speakers:

- **Ms. Tiffany Callender**, Executive Director, [Côte-des-Neiges Black Community Association](#) (unable to attend at the end due to family emergency)
- **Ms. Hanadi Saad**, Director, [Justice Femme](#)
- **Dr. Hicham Tiflati**, Quebec Regional Director, [the Centre for Civic Religious Literacy](#)

Special guest: **Ms. Emilie Nicolas**, CRRF Board Member

5. **Audience:**

- a. Number of attendees:** 30 of 52 online registrants (from the 583 views of event posting online.) Based on Eventbrite analysis, 15% of registrants found the event through EventBrite. 85% were from our own channels.
- b. Who were the main audience?**

All members of the public, local non-profits and community leaders, academics, and students were invited to attend. We connected with individuals and organizations directly in-person, by phone, via email, and social media outlets and asked them to distribute the poster within their networks. Some of the organizations included:

- All the non-profit organizations with offices in the Community Resource Centre Cotes-des-Neiges, listed here: <http://english.cccdn.org/>. This included a variety of organizations that support communities based on their ethnic, racial, gender, language, and new immigrant status.
- Cotes-des-Neiges Black Community Association
- Canadian Council of Muslim Women
- National Council of Canadian Muslims
- Canadian Jewish Association
- Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs Quebec
- World Sikh Organization
- Baha'I Canada
- B'Nai Brith Quebec
- Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence
- Justice Femme
- Coalition Inclusion Quebec
- Christian-Jewish Dialogue Montreal
- GRIS Montreal
- All of these student organizations: <https://ssmu.ca/clubs/religion-culture-clubs/>, <https://www.concordia.ca/artsci/students/associations.html>

6. Strategic Impact

CRRF Strategic Objectives 2017-2020

The CRRF will ...

- 1) Identify key issues of racism and racial discrimination
- 2) Be recognized as the leading national comprehensive resource on racism, race relations, best practices and recommended solutions
- 3) Engage Canadian Youth and other groups in addressing racism and race relations using a variety of means
- 4) Develop and promote education on the content of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Multiculturalism Act, their inherent values as a source for building a common understanding of our individual responsibilities, and as a tool for exploring the nature of rights and their limits in Canada with respect to speech, religious beliefs and discrimination

a. Which of the above strategic objectives were met?

We addressed strategic objectives 1, 2, and 4. To identify key issues of racism and racial discrimination, our panelists discussed race as an aspect of religious and gender discrimination in Montreal. The questions at each roundtable (that were adapted from questions that the CRRF used in previous roundtable events) invited participants to identify key issues based on their experiences too. These are noted in the roundtable notes in Appendix I.

To address strategic objective 2, Emilie Nicolas, the CRRF board member introduced CRRF to open the roundtable event. This was significant as most people in Montreal are familiar with the work of the Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations (www.CRARR.org), in comparison.

To address strategic objective 4, we shared printed versions of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in French and English. This was shared instead of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Multiculturalism Act due to the political nature of the Canadian Charter versus the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. The UN documents were shared to offer a more neutral platform and a common foundation for discussion to minimize potential conflicts that could arise for a public roundtable on human rights in a Quebec context.

b. Please assess the strategic impact. Describe why (or why not) the event was a success? How did you measure the success? What metrics were used to measure success? (Please do not exceed half a page.)

Our event had four objectives and we were able to address each one:

- Objective #1: Understand and discuss the experiences of Montrealers who may not experience the principles of "vivre ensemble," especially in relation to race, gender, and religion, among other aspects
 - The roundtable notes indicate that this was accomplished, and several participants told the facilitators that this was the first time they were given the opportunity to share their experiences with the knowledge that community leaders and local organizations would know their sharing and could facilitate a degree of social change.
- Objective #2: Work together to find solutions to this exclusion

- A number of interested parties and organizations that attended the session have shown interest in finding local initiatives to address some aspects of exclusion that participants raised.
- Objective #3: Learn about existing resources and ways to prevent and respond to the injustices and discrimination people may be facing
 - A resource table was set-up at the event so that community groups could share their resources with the public. Many groups brought their resource materials and several attendees gathered around the resource table at the end of the session to take materials.
- Objective #4: Create partnerships and meaningful exchanges and dialogues between community members affected by and responding to this issue
 - Several representatives from local community groups shared that they appreciated the invitation and opportunity to attend the event because, although many are well established, they met individuals and groups who are not part of their existing network.

However, at least two other events were scheduled in the city (one on the previous Friday, and one of the same day) regarding the International Human Rights Day. The main Montreal-based organization championing work on racism (www.CRARR.org) was one of the organizations hosting a conflicting event, which meant that the ED could not speak at our event even though he was interested.

Additionally, a member of a key community organization wanted to attend but got mixed up with the many events at this time of year, suggesting that December is a very difficult time to host such an event.

Overall, as a public event, we greatly endeavoured to welcome all members of the public. This was achieved as individuals outside our network attended, including walk-ins who saw our poster or happened to be in the neighbourhood.

Survey results in Appendix II indicate an aspect of our success as well.

c. How can this event be improved in the future?

To clarify the messaging:

- Focus on one or a few particular aspects of human rights, rather than many.
- An aspect of the poster or EventBrite should have clarified the concept of “human rights” depending on who the event wants to engage, because a new immigrant I met when distributing posters expressed that she did not understand what “human rights” referenced.

To increase the number of attendees:

- If the event aims to bring in stakeholders already engaged in human rights work, it would be beneficial to host the event during office hours so that local non-profits or stakeholders could participate during their work hours. Although we scheduled the event after typical work hours so that organizations could join right after work, personal or post-work commitments may have limited the event attendance. One or two community representatives we approached made this recommendation too.
- An event in early December for the public is always challenging due to unpredictable weather. If the public were the intended audience, co-host the event with another organization that offers regular events that would coincide with the desired date of the event. This would ensure participation from a specific subset of the public that is engaged and attending another portion of a related public event.

To accommodate for English and French needs:

- Facilitators at each roundtable were selected because of their bilingualism in French and English, in addition to their research and/or facilitation experiences. While table discussions were open to being in both languages, this required some repetition for roundtable participants who only spoke one language. In the future, a bilingual event would be more effective if roundtables were of one language, but a replicate of that topic was available at another roundtable in the other language. This would however require more funding to offer honorariums for additional facilitators.

To offer more time for discussion and participation:

- The event agenda was somewhat flexible, to include two roundtable discussions followed by panelist remarks that would relate to the details shared at each roundtable. However, perhaps given the mood in the room on a rainy Monday evening in Montreal and the frantic preparation for their presentation, the MC shortened the time for each roundtable discussion and the panelists minimally incorporated their sharing to the roundtable discussions. (One of the panelists had to take their son to emergency care at the hospital before they arrived.) Many of these aspects were uncontrollable but it would be better to allot a minimum of 30 minutes for the roundtable discussion and to remind the panelists of their focus and role at the event (beyond their presentation) upon arrival, where possible.

To gather more feedback: offer in-person surveys so that they can be completed as soon as possible and ensure a higher response rate

To better prepare and support facilitators: (These ideas were raised by some facilitators, even as they were all chosen because of their experience in research and facilitation. This highlights the importance of facilitator preparation for events about controversial issues that welcome the public.)

- Meet with them prior the day of the event, not just the day of the event at the venue, as some will arrive late for a final meeting due to traffic or previous engagements. This will give them time to review the details in-person or virtually, in addition to the email that was sent to them with "do's and don'ts" facilitation guidance material.
- At the prior meeting, reaffirm the opportunity to record the conversation if all the attendees at the table offer consent. This will allow the facilitator and/or notetaker more confidence in engaging in the conversation and minimize fear of missing important points.
- Clarify that if conflict arises during table discussions, that they can flag the event coordinators for support.
- In addition to discussing the facilitation guidance, it is valuable and helpful to clarify the tone of the event with facilitators. This will help them be more ready for the unpredictable nature of a public event. For example, the event organizers were flexible and grouped many topics into one table, given the number of attendees in certain topics. However, at least one facilitator was taken off guard when three topics were grouped into her table. She was unaware of the level of detail that was needed in the reporting and unsure of whether or not to address all the questions from each theme or to follow the flow of the table conversation. With this in mind, it is ideal to have at least one facilitator or notetaker per topic, regardless of the number of people who engage with each topic.
- As it is hard to find interested and capable facilitators or notetakers, it is helpful to source facilitators/notetakers from students studying social work or counselling in nearby universities. These students are typically trained to provide detailed and relatively objective notes from individual or group conversations. Since it is difficult to offer honorarium amounts that are

- appropriate for these skills, it can be beneficial to offer university students a letter of recommendation in lieu of or in addition to an honorarium.
- If detailed notes are needed from each roundtable discussion, honorariums or recognition of facilitator/notetakers' role needs to acknowledge that transcribing focus group discussions requires significantly more time. This should be budgeted and considered in advance.

Appendix I: Roundtable notes

Each facilitator documented the discussion in different styles, as noted below, but the degree of detail about the discussion content is relatively consistent.

Themes: Employment & Workplace Discrimination and Employment/Income inequality

- 1) Quelles sont les formes de discrimination les plus courantes auxquelles sont confrontés les Montréalais en milieu de travail ?
 - 2) Quels sont les obstacles aux progrès ou aux possibilités pour les minorités racialisées ?
 - 3) Quelles sont les trois à cinq principales solutions possibles aux problèmes structurels ou à l'amélioration de la culture en milieu de travail ? (Y a-t-il quelque chose que nous pouvons apprendre des autres villes ?)
- 1) What are the most common forms of discrimination facing Montrealers in the workplace?
 - 2) What are barriers to advancements or opportunities for racialized minorities?
 - 3) What are top three to five potential solutions to structural issues or improving workplace culture? (Is there anything we can learn from other cities?)
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- 1) Au-delà des obstacles initiaux à l'embauche et à la promotion, quelles sont les façons plus subtiles et nuancées dont les droits de la personne sont violés ou menacés dans certaines communautés de Montréal ? Y a-t-il des groupes qui ont plus d'obstacles que d'autres ?
 - 2) Étant donné le nombre disproportionné de nouveaux arrivants et de minorités qui sont au chômage, sous-employés ou occupant des emplois à bas salaires, en quoi nos stratégies seraient-elles différentes si nous abordions cette question comme une violation des droits économiques plutôt que comme une simple question d'emploi ?
 - 3) Quelles mesures doivent être élaborées afin d'améliorer les résultats en matière d'emploi des nouveaux arrivants, des minorités racialisées et des femmes ? Quels changements systémiques sont nécessaires ?
- 1) Beyond the initial barriers to hiring and promotion, what are the more subtle, nuanced ways in which human rights are violated or threatened for some communities in Montreal? Are there some groups who have more barriers than others?
 - 2) Given the disproportionate numbers of newcomers and minorities who are unemployed, under-employed or in low-wage jobs, how would our strategies differ if we approach this as a violations of economic rights rather than simply an employment issue?
 - 3) What measures need to be developed in order to improve the employment outcomes of newcomers and racialized minorities and females? What systemic changes are required?

I interviewed 12 people at the round table discussions. The common themes are the following:

Prejudice exists among the French Quebecois before you can get an interview because of non-Quebecois last names. Even if you are competent, they look at what you look like and discriminate based on visible difference from the dominate group.

A participant said she gave her name, which is not Quebecois but Spanish, over the phone and right away the job wasn't available

Even if you are very competent in skills you have to be academically superior but nonetheless a French Quebecois will be chosen before you.

Several participants gave examples of going to apply for jobs highly qualified but based on their turban, or colour, they were turned away.

The Franco environment/culture and Anglo environment/culture are different in that the Anglo environment is more welcoming. One participant postulated that it's perhaps because the Anglos are also excluded by the Franco dominant group and subsequently are more understanding, open and embracing of immigrants.

All participants feel more at ease in an Anglophone environment because they feel less judged.

The discrimination in this province is systemic wherein it is difficult to blame any particular employer because to access the system is full of obstacles.

One participant gave an example of applying for work unsuccessfully because each time it was another department that would decide, as if he were getting the 'run around'

There is a hidden agenda that perpetuates in society where certain positions are for immigrants and others for French Quebecois, for example, the police, management is restricted to French Quebecois.

All participants are convinced that there is no hope for high level jobs in Quebec if you are not French, highly academic and speak Quebecois French.

Some suggestions for change would be to have a minimum quota of immigrants for police and other exclusive positions. Another would be to improve/accelerate the equivalence of diplomas 'so doctors and engineers don't all end up as Uber drivers.'

All participants are adults facing difficulty getting credential equivalence and believe that is complicated on purpose to keep the good jobs for the Quebecois.

Bill 21 took a lot of the discussion time because of the impact it has on employability and increased discrimination. It was unanimous that there is a "pre and post Bill 21" treatment of immigrants. Before May 2019, there was discrimination and hate but not like it has been since the Bill was passed. The participants feel that this law has legitimized despicable, racist behaviour. Even if you speak French, for example, wearing a turban seemingly authorizes Quebecois to judge you as not welcomed. This law has formalized the right to discriminatory behaviours towards visible minorities, the participants concluded. Even if you complain to the Hate Crime Unit, there are not enough people on the force (4) to take any action.

Ms Saad spoke mostly about the injustices and the increasing number of teachers facing discrimination (25 since September). Getting internships for coop work is very difficult as well.

One example not with teachers but in a bakery involved a hijab wearing woman who refused to hire another hijab wearing woman for fear that the clients assume the bakery is Muslim. The applicant wasn't hired because the bakery faced societal pressure and did not want to be labeled Muslim and subsequently lose customers.

Theme: Education

- 1) Quels sont les principaux problèmes liés à la discrimination dans les écoles de Montréal et comment peut-on les éliminer ou les réduire ?
- 2) Une partie des droits à l'éducation implique que les écoles soient des environnements sûrs, exempts d'intimidation, de discrimination et de menaces de violence. Que peut-on faire pour régler le problème de l'intimidation ou de la discrimination raciale ?
- 3) Que faut-il faire pour éliminer les obstacles financiers ou systémiques pour les jeunes qui veulent fréquenter un collège ou une université ?
- 1) What are the biggest issues related to discrimination in Montreal schools, and how can they be eliminated or reduced?
- 2) Part of the rights to education involves having schools that are safe environment free from bullying, discrimination, and threats of violence. What can be done to deal with the issue of bullying, or racial discrimination?
- 3) What is required to remove financial or systemic barriers for youth who want to attend college and university?

Round 1 (6 people)

- Quebec fails to recognize academic and professional qualifications from home-country, making it difficult to get a job of choice
- Immigrants have to re-do their studies
- My parents were in the police force in India, but their qualifications were not recognized here
- Some people change their names on their CVs to get jobs.
- I study at Concordia as a Poli-Sci coop student, Bill 21 makes it more difficult for me to get an internship. People are facing discrimination because they wear a hijab or a turban. I have limited access to workspace. I can work for the federal government, but not a provincial one. Amrit Kaur wanted to be a teacher here, but now she has moved to B.C.
- I feel like the only way I can make a change is to tell my story to the media. Outside of Quebec maybe protests work, but here in Quebec.
- Language is also an issue for those of us who don't speak French well enough
- Before Bill 21, I experience lots of name-calling too. I was the first Sikh/person in a turban to go to my school. Some of my teachers are racist too. If I were late, they wouldn't let me in class, but if others were late, they were allowed in.
- Only after I graduated did I start making friends with some of the other students. They started asking me questions about being Sikh.
- There are no resources available to make schools more inclusive
- Students are tolerant when they know. Knowledge is key.
- If we remove hijabs and turban-wearing teachers from schools, how can we promote diversity if we can't see it?
- Pre-service teaching doesn't include anti-racist pedagogy
- Educating educators (sensibilisation en français) is a good initiative

Round 2 (5 people)

- I do anti-Semitism work in schools. A lot of teachers and students don't understand that their behaviour is anti-Semitic. They say it is just our perception. I find that if I pick up the phone to try to explain to administrators they don't really listen. If I write a letter though, it gets more attention.
- Teachers are not aware of their biases in grading and teaching, also in the way they treat specific students
- I go to College Brébeuf and face discrimination because I'm an Anglophone. Most kids who are most discriminatory are studying political science and they are encouraged by teachers in the sense that they get preferential treatment. These are our future leaders and it's really problematic.
- Bill 21 is giving people more power.

- I live in St. Leonard. I am on the committee of parents in my school. New immigrants from the Maghreb region are encouraged to move here and it's like a ghettoization of us.

Themes: (Due to numbers, these three topics were grouped together at one table.)

- Access to justice
- Housing
- Poverty

Accès à la justice / Access to Justice

- 1) Quels sont certains des domaines où les Montréalais ont de la difficulté à accéder à la justice, au point où leurs droits humains sont violés ? Par exemple, le coût des conseils et de la représentation juridiques, de la protection juridique, de l'aide juridique et de la lutte contre les injustices dans des systèmes comme celui de la brutalité policière.
 - 2) Bien que la violence familiale touche toutes les communautés, les femmes des communautés racialisées souffrent souvent en silence et font face à d'autres difficultés pour trouver du soutien. Comment faire en sorte que les victimes des communautés racialisées, y compris les immigrants et les réfugiés, aient accès à la protection offerte par le système judiciaire ?
 - 3) Quels moyens ou changements novateurs pouvons-nous adopter pour améliorer l'accès à la justice ?
- 1) What are some of the areas where people in Montreal struggle with access to justice, to the point where their human rights are violated? Examples include the cost of legal advice and representation, legal protection, legal aid, and addressing injustices in systems like police brutality.
 - 2) While domestic violence affects all communities, women from racialized communities often suffer in silence and face additional struggles in finding support. How do we ensure that victims from racialized communities, including immigrants and refugees, can access protection offered by the legal system?
 - 3) What innovative means or changes can we adopt in order to improve access to justice?

Logement / Housing

- 1) Comment faire en sorte que nos voix soient entendues dans les décisions en matière de politiques et de financement public et dans les mesures prises par la province et les gouvernements municipaux pour augmenter le nombre de logements locatifs abordables à Montréal ?
 - 2) Quelles nouvelles idées et solutions issues d'exemples, de modèles ou d'expériences dans d'autres parties du monde peuvent aider à relever le(s) défi(s) du logement abordable pour tous à Montréal ?
- 1) How do we ensure that our voices are heard in the policy and public funding decisions and actions by the Province and Municipal Governments in increasing affordable rental housing in Montreal?
 - 2) What new ideas and solutions from examples, models, or experiences in other parts of the world, can help address the challenge(s) of affordable housing for all in Montreal?

Please note:

- The conversation in both groups centered predominantly on the access to justice topic further to participants' interests.
- There was brief discussion of housing in the second group and there were (implicit) allusions to poverty at certain points in the conversation.
- While the conversation often moved fluidly from one idea to another, participants' comments have been retroactively classified under the most relevant question.
- Participant tone has been captured as much as possible.

Group 1

(3 participants + facilitator)

Access to justice:

- 1) What are some of the areas where people in Montreal struggle with access to justice, to the point where their human rights are violated? Examples include the cost of legal advice and representation, legal protection, legal aid, and addressing injustices in systems like police brutality.
 - 97% of police officers and firemen are “pure laine Québécois” yet 70% of the communities they serve in Montréal are “uglies”. “Uglies” is the term that the participant frequently uses during the conversation to refer to people of varied racialized backgrounds, including himself. This inconsistency in representation is problematic: When the police force does not demographically represent the population/communities it serves, stereotypes are reinforced, and those communities are systematically misunderstood by the police.
 - Property taxes in “white enclaves” fund services that “uglies” may not feel that they have access to. “Cultural wars” result. He is concerned about the frequency with which he and others are “painted with a brown brush”.
 - In the aftermath of September 11th, there were virtually no Arabic speakers in the Canadian government, which was problematic. There was a frantic scramble to improve this and while the situation is somewhat better today, it is still far from ideal.
 - A participant gave the example of a Peruvian gentleman who owned a five-story building. In communications with public authorities about concerns (facilitator note: unclear whether the gentleman’s concerns were related to the building or in the neighborhood), authorities did not believe that he was the owner of the building, and repeatedly insisted to speak to the actual owner of the building.
 - Public transport is not equitably distributed; some communities have better (more frequent, more proximal) access than others.
 - A participant gave the example of a few people gathered near a metro station who were speaking Jamaican English. The police approached them but did not understand their replies to the police’s questions. A police officer became aggressive and began them beating up.
 - Two participants spoke frequently of “pure laine Québécois” and linguistic prejudice against English-speakers. One noted that he was discriminated against by provincial language policy (French as the official language) and in regular informal interactions. Another noted that as a native English speaker yet an able French speaker, since his French accent is not perceived as sufficiently Québécois he is also discriminated against. They expressed concern about the French protectionist approach to language, which limits access to justice and equity.
 - A participant’s daughter was born in the province of Québec, but is not recognized by others as a Quebecer because of her linguistic background.

- 2) While domestic violence affects all communities, women from racialized communities often suffer in silence and face additional struggles in finding support. How do we ensure that victims from racialized communities, including immigrants and refugees, can access protection offered by the legal system?
 - A representative of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women noted that on numerous occasions when Muslim women call the police for assistance in situations of domestic violence or domestic concern, often the women would like to have their partner go away for a short time, to have some peace and allow a situation to deescalate. However, the police responders strongly encourage the women to press charges against their partners. This is not in keeping with what the women typically want. There is a mismatch between the support they are hoping to receive when they call the police and the support they are offered.

- 3) What innovative means or changes can we adopt in order to improve access to justice?
 - With regards to Muslim women’s interactions with the police force, it is important to have an increased awareness of one’s own rights. It would be important to have increased/improved cultural education of the police force.
 - Increase diversity with an improved recruitment process for positions of authority (police, etc.)
 - Police should be close to the population. They should go to community events, and learn to appreciate the community cultures in positive contexts. This could help them learn to engage more productively, and also help to improve community trust in the police force.

Group 2

(3 participants + facilitator; note that despite encouragement to explore different topics during the second round, two participants from group 1 chose to stay at this table for group 2)

Housing

- 1) How do we ensure that our voices are heard in the policy and public funding decisions and actions by the Province and Municipal Governments in increasing affordable rental housing in Montreal?
 - A participant spoke of her experience living in the same condo building for 50 years. The annual general meetings are conducted almost exclusively in French, whereas she is more at ease in English. Despite repeated requests, the meetings continue to be conducted nearly exclusively in French. She has been told that there is not time for an English summary of the topics being discussed. Sometimes at the end of a meeting, the coordinators may say, "Any questions?" But she is unable to pose questions since she was not able to fully understand the preceding conversation. As a property owner, she feels excluded from the conversation and is not able to weigh in on decisions that affect her home.

Access to justice

- 1) What are some of the areas where people in Montreal struggle with access to justice, to the point where their human rights are violated? Examples include the cost of legal advice and representation, legal protection, legal aid, and addressing injustices in systems like police brutality.
 - A participant was parking his car and was told that he didn't have the right to park there. When he responded in educated French, the person immediately changed their mind and told him that he could park his car there as long as he'd like. He finds that the register of French that one uses matters. He finished secondary school in 1968 and taught himself French.
 - A participant spoke to inequitable application of disability exemptions from work, from his experience and stories he has heard while working in a tax department at the government. At one point, he was asked to take over the evaluation of a dossier requesting short-term disability that one of his colleagues had begun, as the colleague was not available. A Peruvian gentleman came to his office and put his broken leg up on his desk, saying, "Here it is!" The participant was confused and the Peruvian gentleman explained to him that his colleague (who was previously in charge of the dossier) had suspected that he was not telling the truth, despite the fact that he had sent the required medical documentation already. The colleague had told the gentleman that he had to come to the office in person to prove that his leg was really broken. The participant reflected that this was a clear case of discrimination by his colleague, yet when he reported it to a supervisor they did not want to hear about it. He contrasted this experience with another case in which a "pure laine Québécois" broke a pinkie and their co-workers immediately said that they should be granted short-term disability for this accident. He reflected that such inconsistencies and abuses of power lead "uglies" to keep a low profile.

Theme: Discrimination

- 1) Comment la discrimination se manifeste-t-elle à Montréal et dans quels domaines les plus critiques ?
 - 2) Quels sont les mécanismes existants pour lutter contre la discrimination ? Sont-ils adéquats ou efficaces ?
 - 3) Quels changements préconiseriez-vous et à qui pour améliorer la situation ?
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- 1) How does discrimination manifest itself in Montreal, and in what most critical areas?
 - 2) What are the existing mechanisms to address discrimination? Are they adequate or effective?
 - 3) What changes would you advocate and to whom in order to improve the situation?
- **Group 1: How does discrimination manifest itself in Montreal, and in what most critical areas?**
 - Participant works with people who are constantly discriminated against, mostly the Jewish population in Montreal, she sees a lot of workplace discrimination and discrimination within schools. With religious accommodation laws put into place, not all employers practice it or even care of it. So when an employee

tells an employer that they need a day off well in advance to have a religious holiday off, because their faith doesn't permit them to work on that day, the employer gives them a difficult time and starts question them on how religious they are and in some cases, threaten that they might lose their job if they don't come into work that day.

- In schools, students are asked to write exams on religious holidays and are not accommodated for despite the fact that most schools have policies that account for this. Most schools have a system to have the exam deferred on these days. But sometimes, the teacher doesn't permit to do so as they reserve these deferred days for those who have medical conditions. Teachers are not willing to accommodate. Some teachers are asking for proof, like a letter from a rabbi. More emphasize is placed on proving how religious students are as opposed to accommodating for them. They see this in public schools and especially universities. All of which are public institutions.
- The problem seems to be more prominent in French public schools and universities. There is a clear difference between the French and English sectors. And this is solely from the administration perspective. The problems are much larger when you look at the student population and on-campus groups.
- Most of the Jewish student body is pro-Israel, which is often followed by the label of being a xenophobe, racist or white supremacists. These labels are very scary. Being a Zionist doesn't make you any of these things or hate any particular religion. Jewish people have the right to self-determination, want to remember their ancestors, but also live in harmony with everyone else. Jewish university students on campuses across Canada are being made to feel very scared. It is becoming more prevalent.
- This participant's organization has a 24/7 anti-hate hotline via telephone or online and problems on campus are becoming more and more of an issue. And there are various degrees of discrimination that are reported on the hotline as well. This hotline focuses on anti-Semitism. They also get calls from non-Jewish people reporting anti-Semitism as well, either if they've been confused for being Jewish or if they witness it happening to someone else. A lot of people are afraid to report or feel that nothing will happen and the police won't do anything. They get calls from all sectors and a wide variety of them.
- As of 2018, they have a record number of anti-Semitic incidents that keep getting worse and worse. There is then a sharing of reports and exchange of knowledge.
- She goes on to say that they do not get any calls from the ultra-orthodox Jewish community because they are insular, closed off and keep to themselves. They generally do feel more excluded from society as would any ultra-orthodox community in any religion. They experience instances of hate more frequently and do not feel that anything can or will be done. They look and act different and are thus perceived differently, which is the same as any other group. This sentiment is not reserved solely for the ultra-orthodox Jewish community.
- The next participant is from Justice Femme, which was created in 2012 at the time of the Charter of Values debate. Muslim women were being targeted on the streets because of their hijabs and faced lots of Islamophobia. She feels that what the other participant described on part of the Jewish community is exactly the same as to how the Muslim community Montreal feels as well. Post Bill 21, discrimination against Muslim women is 200% more. The effect of Bill 21 is not only on government workers, but all workers. For jobs in any fields, like programmers, women are being asked in the interview process directly if they can take off their hijabs. Bill 21 and the CAAQ has opened the door to normalizing discrimination and women are at the front of this. Women do not report to authorities and the cases her organization are not even 1-2% of what actually happens. They have created pamphlets that were launched last week during the 12 days of action to end violence against women. The pamphlet is about Islamophobia and educating Muslim women about their rights and how to speak out against hate crimes. Emphasis is also placed on witnesses and what they can do – how they can speak up and not normalize such behaviours. There is also a section on hate crimes in social media.
- Participants agreed that hate crimes via social media is the absolute worst type of discrimination. People can hide behind screens and be anonymous with no consequence. People are allowed to spew as much hate as they want and get like-minded people to join on the conversation via Facebook pages, Twitter, Instagram. There is very little research on this. Online anti-Semitism comes in so many different forms, from the extreme left and the extreme right. People tend to focus on the extreme right, with neo-Nazis, which does need attention, but no one is ever talking about the extreme left. People do not see the impact of the extreme left. But this one participant feels it because she is Jewish. She feels that the neo-Nazis hate her because she is Jewish, not like everyone else, and the extreme left calls her a white supremacist. Neo-Nazis say that she is not white though and on the left, she is accused of being pro-

Israel. She calls this hate two sides of the same coin and the hate is very prevalent. Most of her organizations findings in Canada indicate that the online hate gets worse and worse. There are individuals and groups – in all likelihood paid by someone – to post hate messages. They can have upwards of 100 posts that incite hate. As things are more open, our society is becoming smaller, and people are becoming more closed and growing apart. Globalization does and does not work. Our society is supposed to live together and understand one another, but that's not what we are seeing.

- The most troubling is the infringement of rights with the Canadian and Quebec charters.

Group 2: What changes would you advocate and to whom in order to improve the situation?

- One participant speaks as to how cultural sensitization is necessary. All intervenors should be culturally sensitized to the different communities they work with. And they should know how to go into these communities. In one case, the police were called because the husband was stressed and shouting at the wife while the children were traumatized. The neighbours called the police and the police encourage the woman to press charges against her husband. She did not want to. She just needed a bit of space. But the police forced her to press charges. They took the husband away and the children were taken away by child protection services. The woman is now suffering more all alone. The police should be culturally sensitized to not force the woman in such a way and actually listen to what the woman wants.
- Another participant says that its important to create awareness about any type of community. Associations and organizations need to work with institutions. All organizations have their own missions, but organizations should work together to have a bigger impact and create awareness. There is an importance for collaborations and partnerships in order to work on the ground and get to know the people/community in order to work together.
- There should also be no looking down at certain communities either. There is the idea of the Quebecoise and the pure line and that others are less than.
- Awareness must be done among communities. But one participant raises the question as to how we actually influence the system. The system is top down. One day, a woman was feeling intimidated by a neighbour in her own apartment as her kids were playing in the house. The neighbour said, "Oh you Arab, go back home." The police came but they didn't do anything because the Quebecoise woman was apparently mentally ill. The police suggested that the Quebecoise woman move up a floor. It was the only suggestion the police provided. The intimidated woman felt that the Quebecois police men did not care about her and that they only cared about their own people. She was very disappointed and has no more trust in the system. But how do we influence the system? The system is problematic.
- There was a hand-in-hand protest against Bill 21, but this did nothing and didn't have an impact. The Bill still passed.
- Another participant suggests that different communities need to work with the dominant community to raise awareness. They should know what to do when they go into a Muslim home. We need to find Allies. Arab communities need to work with the main legal system to raise awareness and share their culture with them. The dominant community needs to provide the means to do so and not exclude minority communities.
- The police need to do more too. Policemen need to be invited to events like tonight. They need to be attracted and asked to come. One participant chimes in and says if they are invited, they will come. There have been instances where this was done. They need to be made aware and care about how they treat immigrants. Perhaps it's difficult to satisfy the local people. If the only alternative they provide is to move, then the minority will be more willing to listen to the majority. There is a lack of compassion towards newcomers. They do not mingle with newcomers or immigrants.
- Another story is that a Quebecois man noticed that somebody had bumped into/damaged his car. Their first thought was that it definitely had to be an immigrant. There was no proof, but he was so sure. He made this claim to an immigrant, but he identified the immigrant he knew as a "good immigrant." Here, there is no compassion to newcomers.
- An immigrant woman at the table does say though that it is immigrants' duty to stretch out their hand. When she came 45 years ago, all her neighbours were white (French, Irish, etc.). She used to invite them to her home however small it was, inviting them to sit and talk to her. It should be the immigrants; duty as well.
- It should be a multiway street of integration.

Theme : Santé / Health

Q1) Quels sont, selon vous, les défis les plus importants que doivent relever les minorités racialisées et les immigrants pour accéder aux soins de santé ?

Q2) Le bien-être mental est un déterminant important de la santé globale. Pourtant, il existe des problèmes chroniques et systémiques parmi les nouveaux arrivants (y compris le racisme) qui mènent à une mauvaise santé mentale. Comment pouvons-nous changer le récit pour aborder la discussion sur la protection de la santé mentale sous l'angle des droits de la personne ?

Q1) What do you see as the most significant challenges to racialized minorities and immigrants in accessing health care?

Q2) Mental wellness is an important determinant of overall health. Yet there are chronic and systemic issues among the newcomer experience (including racism) that lead to poor mental health. How do we change the narrative so that we can approach the discussion of protecting mental health from a human rights stand point?

There was one participant at this table for the first round of discussion.

The participant voluntarily provided her professional background as it was of particular relevance to the theme, lending to an interesting perspective. She is a physician who has been practicing family medicine in the Montreal area since 1983. She has diverse practitioner experience. She stated that approximately two-thirds of her total patients were of an ethnic minority group.

Q1) The participant did not directly respond to this question, despite attempts at redirecting her she did not address the question but instead shared her observations of her patients' experiences as follows:

Two-thirds of the practice were immigrants, mostly new immigrants. They were quite naïve, not aware of the resources available to them. They are primarily very hard-working, middle-income individuals. Very few were at poverty level (these were mostly newcomer immigrants). All generally felt grateful to have the advantage of having a socialized health care system available to them (to everyone). She added that there was particular challenge for the elderly, irrespective of ethnic origin, to accessing medications. Medications that are needed are sometimes not covered on Medicare, and the elderly women in particular, would cut down on needed medications because they were not afforded in the household budget. Pension money very limited and most went towards other expenses. She gave the example of a 70-year-old female patient who was very fragile and had some deficiencies. She was working at Costco, despite physically finding it very difficult to work, but had no choice since her pension was not enough for survival. The round table participant (being this woman's physician) recommended that the woman take calcium and B12 for her deficiencies (for which she provided a prescription) but these were not covered on Medicare. The patient could not afford them and thus did not purchase them. The patient was living hand-to-mouth and medication was secondary to food. Eventually the woman developed paralysis. She also stopped coming to the doctor as she stated that she does not have money for medication therefore no point in going to see the doctor.

The round table participant stated that she feels that there is a serious lack of support for the elderly. Another example is that there is no one monitoring whether the elderly take their medication (most of whom are on

multiple medications). They may have cognitive decline and forget to take their medication or stop completely. There are no social services available to monitor this and if the individual happens to be eligible for social support, it is a long and complicated process to get approval.

Overall the round table participant said that ACCESS to services and medication, in particular for seniors was a major issue (both for ethnic minorities and non).

Q2) The participant stated that society does not empathise with those suffering with mental health issues, and this is even more the case in ethnic minorities.

Overall, for both Q1 and Q2 she believes that more social workers need to be made available to the health practitioner teams. As it is the case in the hospital setting, physicians have access in limited circumstances to social workers if needed. The same should be true for private practice; this would help with the problem of accessing resources. More social workers being available to family practice physicians would help in accessing additional resources.

There were four participants at this table for the second round of discussion.

Q1) Participant 1 stated that immigrants and minorities have problems accessing health services and getting information about what is available to them. This individual arrived as an immigrant 6 years ago and still finds it difficult to navigate the system.

Participant 2 had a different experience. Also a recent immigrant she felt she had access to a lot of information. She was obtaining regular and continuous access via her local community organisation, who works with immigrants to familiarise them with the local community and resources available to them. She said the experience varies from person to person. Some have a large network of family and friends that are already here. They play an important part in helping in the transition. She also stated that education level has an impact on things since then they can look things up online.

Participant 3 said that the system (in the origin country) from which immigrants come is unique in each country. This dictates the expectations and experience once they are here. Some people have access to web resources and know how to manage these. Others do not. IN ADDITION, she said she has friends who do not speak French and therefore cannot understand information that is available only in French, or websites like the Provincial Government websites (French only, difficult to access this information and resources).

Q2) All participants shared the opinion that there is a language barrier and a cultural barrier that exists for immigrants. A very big component to mental health is the ability to express oneself and to feel understood. If the professionals cannot understand or are not sensitive to perhaps the norms of a culture or frame of reference, the individual will not feel supported/comfortable/helped. Most local social centre staff are not knowledgeable about existing issues in each culture. A difficult situation for the immigrant when discussing family relations, or sexual orientation. All participants felt that health professionals need to understand the norms of their patient's culture, and that exercising cultural sensitivity would help significantly.