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**POLICY BRIEF - SEPTEMBER 2019**

**DISCRIMINATION IN  
THE WORKPLACE:  
A STUMBLING BLOCK  
TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT FOR ARAB  
YOUTH IN THE CANADIAN  
LABOUR MARKET**

**AISHA SHIBLI**

## Statement/Summary

The policy brief addresses the ongoing concerns from Arab youth across Canada regarding their experiences of exclusion and discrimination within their workplace. As diversity becomes an increasingly important issue within the workplace, employment equity initiatives have become an area of growing interest within organizations. This policy brief explores the indirect, and often direct, discriminatory practices in the workplace that impedes the professional development of Arab youth. This brief also provides recommendations for the growing need of inclusionary practices in the labour market.

## Key Findings

- Institutionalized racial discrimination is deeply rooted in the labour market and continues to remain invisible despite recent workplace equity changes;
- Visible minority immigrants, including Arab youth, in Canada are more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace;
- The majority of the Arab youth respondents acknowledged that they are at a disadvantage in their current jobs;
- The majority of the Arab youth respondents said that while it is up to them to culturally adapt to their workplace, their workplace must also accommodate their culture and religion.

## Introduction

Since the late 1960s, Canada's demographic composition has been continuously changing, particularly since the introduction of the nation's multiculturalism policies. Canada is renowned as one of the most racially diverse nations in the world, and if the current demographic trends continue, by 2031, 29% to 32% of the population will be comprised of visible minorities. This means that one in every four individuals will be foreign-born in Canada. The Arab population in Canada has been increasing significantly faster than the overall population, the majority of which are foreign-born. In fact, Canadians of Arab origin constitute the largest non-European ethnic group in the country, representing 2.7% of the total population. Those of Arab origin are relatively young and are in their "prime working years" between the ages of 25 and 44, compared to other ethnic populations residing in Canada. Of these numbers, those who are educationally and occupationally prepared for the labour market are less likely to be employed than non-Arabs who share similar qualifications, and a majority of those employed have experienced discrimination in the work place based on their race or skin colour.

In 2016, a nationwide survey was conducted by Drs. Bessma Momani and Melissa Finn at the University of Waterloo on Arab youth between 18 and 29 years of age to better understand the experiences of Arab youth living in Canada. Of the 973 Arab youth respondents, it was revealed that 38% of Arabs between 18 and 29 years of age alleged experiencing discrimination when applying for a job. This number is projected to increase as the Arab youth demographic increases. With a growing Arab population mainly comprised of youth and foreign-born Arabs - a demographic that continues to experience unemployment and underemployment - it is important for labour markets, particularly employers, to address and implement employment equity initiatives for their employees who are of minority descent.

## Data Findings

The purpose of the nationwide survey is to gain a better understanding of Arabs' sense of belonging and social integration in Canada. The survey focused on topics of identity and transnational connections, political participation, campus life, education, and professional development. For the purposes of this policy brief, the professional development of the Arab youth has been analyzed. The qualitative data in this policy brief considers two focus groups with approximately 90 Arab youth in total that are located in Toronto and Waterloo, as well as an in-depth analysis of the literature review on the professional development and the workplace environment of visible minorities and Arab youth in Canada. Currently, there is little to no academic research or literature on Arab youth in professional development or in the workplace. Where the quantitative data will highlight the statistics of the professional development of Arab youth, the qualitative data will supplement it with empirical research.

## History of Visible Minority Workers and Systemic Racism in Canada's Workplace

Statistics Canada states that Canada's population growth is the highest among the Group of Seven (G7) countries, and it reportedly has the highest immigration rates to date with 21.9% of Canadians being immigrants (an increase the country has not seen for over 85 years), yet immigrants, particularly those who are visible minorities, in Canada remain at a disadvantage in the labour market. Research has shown that visible minorities face some form of discrimination at the job application stage, well before they are given an interview. In fact, visible minorities experience "lower salaries, fewer opportunities for advancement, and ghettoization into less desirable jobs such as part-time contract positions", and the workplace

is regarded as one of the common public spaces where discrimination occurs, both directly and indirectly. This begs the question: why do visible minorities continue to experience higher rates of discrimination in the labour market compared to their non-visible minority counterparts?

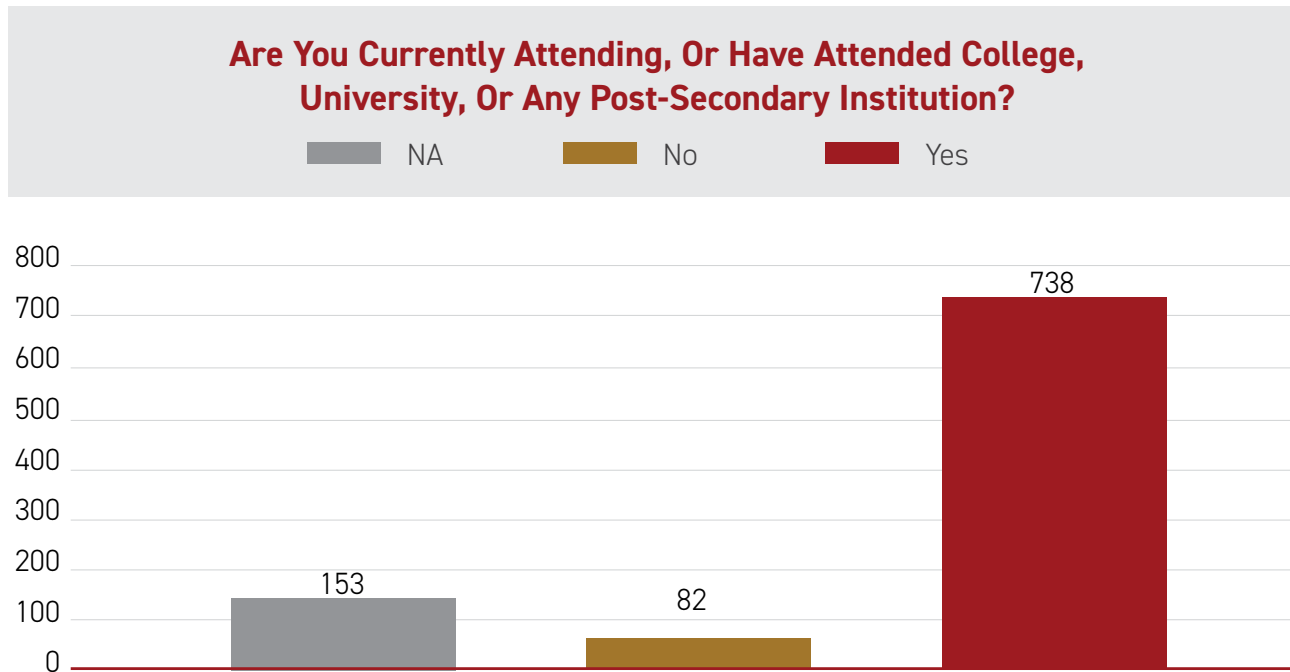
It begins with the introduction of the 1967 point system and the country's multiculturalism policy that was implemented in 1971. Where the point system assesses newcomers on a variety of criteria such as language, education, work experience, age, arranged employment in Canada, and adaptability, the multicultural policy was formalized and implemented to ensure and promote diversity, which ultimately served as a way to facilitate inter-ethnic equity. Further, The Employment Equity Act, 1986, requires all employers to engage in and achieve equality in the workplace by providing accommodations and equal opportunity for the more vulnerable or disadvantaged sectors of the population, which includes women, Indigenous peoples, individuals with disabilities, and visible minorities. The Act varies across each province; it does not entirely apply to provincial organizations or the private sector as it does for the federally-regulated industries and federal public services. Further, the Canadian government establishes Arabs, originally from North Africa or the Middle East, as being white, despite being noticeably "non-white". Arabs who check off the box 'visible minority' are often lumped together with other visible minorities, making it difficult to distinguish which minority groups are in fact facing discrimination or employment inequity in the workplace.

Despite Canada's successful immigration point system, which has been hailed as one of the best systems in the world with various countries replicating it, Canada's federal legislation on employment equity is not completely effective, as visible minorities, including those of Arab origin, continue to face particular employment hardships. This may be due to the division of powers between levels of government,

where the federal government is responsible for immigration, the provincial government oversees employment, health and education, amongst other responsibilities. While the point-system has placed an emphasis on highly-skilled minorities, a critical gap between minorities and their professional and career development continues to be present, and has recently begun posing a challenge to policy-making decisions.

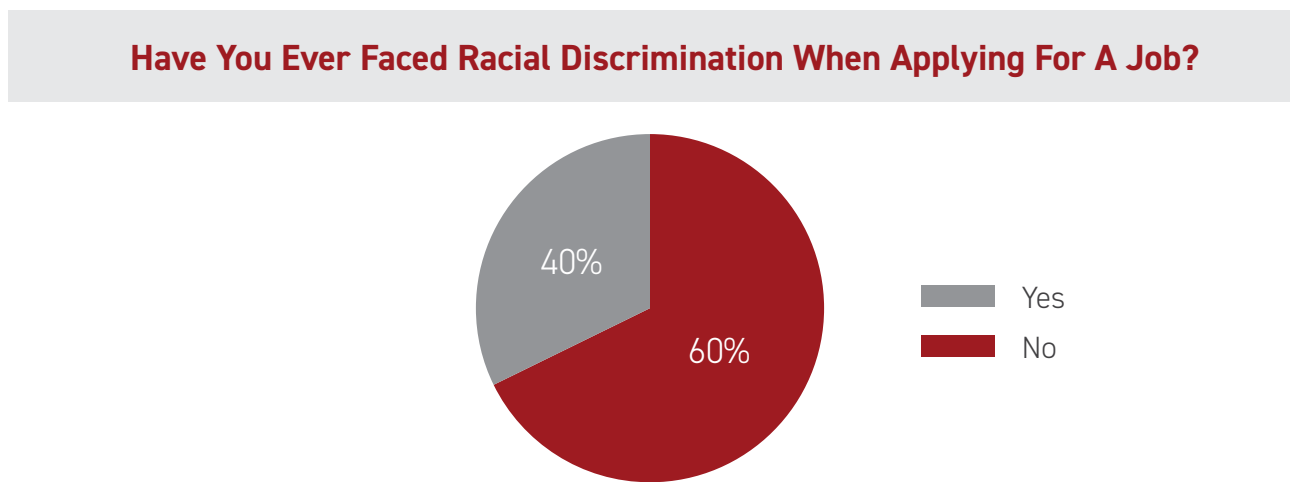
## Data from the Survey

In the survey, respondents were asked if they are currently attending, or have attended college, university, or any post-secondary institution, and if they have ever experienced discrimination when applying for a job:



The chart above reveals that of the 973 survey respondents, 738 or roughly 76% of Arab youth are currently attending, or have attended college, university, or any post-secondary

institution. The chart, however, does not specify if the respondents have obtained their education abroad or within Canada.



Of those who have attended or are attending a post-secondary institution, 40% stated that they have experienced racial discrimination when applying for job, compared to 60% who have not experienced racial discrimination when applying for job. Henry (1999) states in his report entitled *Two Studies of Racial Discrimination in Employment* that intentional, whether direct or indirect, or unintentional discrimination can occur at any point during employment, including but not limited to the employer receiving the application to the screening process to the selection and even termination. Visible minorities tend to have higher education levels than non-visible minorities, yet despite 7.7 million of Canadians being visible minorities, which constitutes 22.3% of the population, those with post-secondary education report more workplace discrimination than those with less education.

Barriers continue to exist in the labour market for minorities, including Arab youth, such as social and economic exclusion and integration, amongst other issues. Despite their level of educational attainment and work experience, Arab youth, amongst other visible minority groups, are severely underrepresented in both the lower and upper echelons of many Canadian organizations. The Conference Board of Canada 2004 report titled *The Voices of Visible Minorities: Speaking Out on Breaking Down Barriers* suggests that this is due to the "propensity for sameness, preservation of status quo, and underlying racism", all of which impede the professional development and growth of Arab youth in the labour market.

Two focus group discussions were carried out in Toronto and Waterloo where 90 Arab youth were present to answer a variety of questions related to workplace discrimination. When asked if they experienced discrimination in the workplace, the majority of respondents answered yes.

When asked if they experienced discrimination during the job hunt, a respondent said:

*"... Not necessarily in the job but in the job hunt as my friend say when you're having interviews, but I guess the part where discrimination is most influential is when the introductions are made...if you have just any kind of ethnicity here in Canada with diverse people, they are not going to show you they are discriminating but inside you can see that there is reluctance and hesitance..."*

When asked if respondents experienced discrimination based on higher expectations in the workplace, a respondent said:

*"Naturally yes, it depends on the firm... discrimination in terms of expected outcomes, you will really have to push above your weight, so they can say "oh here he is, the productive Arab", not just any Arab who just wants to lazy around and say I just want to stay in Canada, I guess that kind of discrimination in terms of you really need to work hard which in the end is possible but in the short term is not, that positive discrimination on the long run maybe it's best."*

When Arab youth were asked what strategies they will use to better help their chances of getting a job as an Arab Canadian, one respondent said that they shaved their facial hair prior to their interview to change their appearance and to be perceived as a professional. When asked if they would change their name or remove every hint of their ethnicity, culture, religion, political views, or associations, a respondent said:

*"There's a lot of people who call me Mariah instead of Mariam because Mariam is too back and forth, "what? what's your name?" so I tell people to call me Mariah and change my name because in an interview no one remembers me, so it's easy, people remember it..."*

*"I remove everything other than my name, that has to do with, like mentioning, if I were Palestinian, a cause, or a Muslim student association, I remove it or call it just the "humanitarian something" and I actually got job rejections because of that, and after that I told them that I worked in a human rights organisation (Palestine) and did*

*the whole interview and the CEO asked me "are you Palestinian" and I told him I was Egyptian and I think that's why I got rejected because I did everything else right, and after that, I even removed the human right stuff."*

A study conducted in Sweden found that those of Arab origin received 50% less call backs for job interviews due to their ethnic names as compared to those with Western names. Similarly, a study was conducted by Thanasombat and Trasviña (2005) in California to find a correlation between different ethnic groups' names and interview call backs. The study found that applicants of Arab and South-Asian descent were less likely to receive a response or call back for employment. Thanasombat and Trasviña (2005) conclude their research findings by arguing that Arab and Asian Americans have "diminished employment opportunities because employment agencies focus on their names, not qualifications." One respondent discussed the ongoing studies on Arab or minority names compared to Western names on resumes, saying:

*"There has been research, they have done studies on resumes with name that are not very white/western, they used two samples basically, resumes with a name and a resume with numbers on them. Qualifications were the same between the two batches, and when they saw the names, not only the Arab [name], any name that is off they tend to go for the white names. That is why there is a trend that people come here: they change their name. Ahmed becomes Andrew or Michael, which is fine and allowed if that increases your recruiting chances that's better, but when they compared with the resumes with just numbers, people with same qualifications with the white names .... I think that might have an effect, might be very indirect or small..."*

While in the workplace, Arab youth respondents spoke about other forms of discrimination they experienced. One respondent discussed the cross-cultural and social discrimination they experience. The respondent said:

*"...If it's a small team we go hang out together, we go out for drinks but if you don't know how to establish social interactions with your colleagues then subconsciously you'll be discriminated, you're not on par with the crew, you don't go out every Friday night or after work so on that side, that happens a lot of time and I have to work harder for it."*

When asked if respondents experienced discrimination in the workplace based on their nationality, some Arab youth respondents reflected on other visible minorities in the workplace as well:

*"I have a friend he is Pakistani, in the same program, he applied to a job at a place, I believe it was Boeing and he went there and they loved his resume, he went to the interview, they asked him his nationality and he said Pakistani, well because of your nationality we cannot take u because they sell engines to the states, so we cannot guarantee you the job and they were very honest with him, because of his nationality."*

*"...I have had an experience where this one girl like walks in and she's a Muslim hijabi girl, she walked in, applying to a Jewish firm I was sitting on the sideline, when she started, the first thing she said is, "I am an Arabic Muslim woman" and the second those words came out of her mouth, everyone on the panel, I saw with my own eyes, they said "tsssss". It's not even from the sense that she's an Arab Muslim woman it's because she's identifying herself as an Arabic Muslim woman."*

*"So I would add that minorities who perform weakly at a job or whatever they are in my opinion, picked on, trampled on, more than non-minorities, people who are not meeting expectations, they love people with organization, giving them a harder time, specifically if you know them being a minority is very visible, they have an accent, for example."*

Although not all participants experienced discrimination, the majority acknowledged that

they are disadvantaged in their job and that various forms of barriers exist in the labour market for themselves and for other disadvantaged groups, particularly visible minorities. While most employers adhere to the Employment Equity policies, discrimination, subtle or in its disguised forms, continues to exist.

*"A lot of them [employers] are not open minded and some of them are racist. I haven't experienced it personally but I can see people not being very lenient to that person, they prefer working with someone who is not Arab, with them rather than an Arab working with them. I did it in Montreal, when I worked there, they were very French and they like French people so if you don't kind of follow this French, they will not be racist but they won't love you as much."*

*"There are two types of discriminations there is a distilled discrimination which I have never experienced and I don't think exists in Canada anymore, and then there is people attitude but that's not something you can change yourself, so I do experience those things sometimes, for example some person doesn't like me for whatever reason, they assume I am Muslim and that's how they direct it and that's wrong but it does bother me, but it doesn't affect my opportunities or shot at getting a job."*

Institutionalized and systemic racial discrimination is deeply embedded within many organizations and continues to remain invisible despite recent equity changes. Carol Agocs (2001) said: "Until discriminatory barriers in the informal social behaviour of the workplace are revealed and brought into the focus of employment equity change interventions, little progress toward equality will be made." Although there is a greater desire to hire visible minorities, organizations place little emphasis on taking the appropriate and adequate steps to retain them. Termed as the "revolving door syndrome" visible minorities who continue to experience any form of discrimination are more likely to leave their job. Discriminatory practices

not only isolate visible minorities, it limits their career opportunities.

## Existing Government Initiatives

### Federal Government Legislation & Commitments

Despite the shared governance responsibilities, both the Canadian federal and provincial/territorial governments have legislation in place to protect the rights of Canadian workers from all forms of discrimination. The Canadian Human Rights Act, the Multiculturalism Act, the Canada Labour Code, and the Employment Equity Act are all pieces of legislation that prohibits any form of discrimination based on an individual's ethnicity, race, gender, religion, sex, and sexual orientation, amongst five other grounds of discrimination. However, legislation such as the Multiculturalism Act does not reduce racial inequality, and the Employment Equity Act (EEA) is only effective for federally-regulated industries and larger crown corporations that have over 100 employees. In fact, the EEA does not apply to the private sector, nor does it apply to provincial organizations, and the application of such policies varies drastically across the provinces. Critics of these legislations argue that they are superficial and is often "ineffective in meeting its goal for ethnoracial minorities." Where the federal legislation applies to all federally regulated industries, provincial legislation simply fills in any gaps that are left unaddressed in the federal legislation, protecting citizens from discrimination in provincial and territorial jurisdictions such as schools, stores, and housing, amongst many other workplaces. However, ensuring a diverse and equitable workforce with no discriminatory practices goes beyond what is written and mandated in legislation.

In 2005, the Government of Canada announced a \$56 million commitment, over a period of five years, to combat racism in the country's first ever Action Plan Against Racism. The Canadian Action Plan Against Racism's (CAPAR) purpose is

to “strengthen social cohesion, further Canada’s human rights framework, and demonstrate federal leadership in the fight against racism” (Government of Canada, 2005). An evaluation of the Action Plan highlighted some notable failures of the design and delivery of CAPAR: CAPAR was unsuccessful focusing on anti-racism initiatives as intended, instead priorities were focused on social cohesion and access to economic opportunity; CAPAR’s governance structure was “limited in its effectiveness” likely due to the limited resources; CAPAR’s horizontal approach added limitations; and CAPAR’s activities were not inclusive; amongst many other failures. Nonetheless, CAPAR was created with the intention to include all Canadians regardless of “background, race, or ethnicity.” Many of these government initiatives attempt to increase the dialogue amongst various stakeholders in supporting anti-discriminatory or racism-free workplaces, however, many do not address the ongoing issues that continue to perpetuate racism and discrimination.

## Provincial/Territorial Government Commitments

In recent years, various provinces across the country have committed to addressing systemic racism in government policies. Ontario’s Government created a three-year provincial initiative in 2017 called “A Better Way Forward: Ontario’s 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan. This Strategic Plan resulted in the Government of Ontario to pass the Anti-Racism Act. British Columbia recognizes March 21 as the Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; Alberta established an anti-racism advisory council to advise their government to effectively address racism ; and Newfoundland and Labrador released a five-year action plan for not only increasing immigration but to address the challenges of skilled immigrants. Provinces across Canada are recognizing the importance of anti-racism approaches, however, systemic racism continues to exist against racialized persons.

## Recommendations

For the purposes of this policy brief, the recommendations provided below are specific to the barriers faced by the majority of the Arab youth respondents who wished to see change in their work environment.

### **1. Increase Communication and Organization Amongst All Levels of Government**

Issue: Although legislation is more effective in employment than in retention or promotion, the sheer eradication of the way society perceives and treats minorities will require more than just a piece of legislation. Current legislation is simply a modest response to the ongoing systemic discrimination in the workforce. There is a clear lack of organization and coordination amongst all three levels of government regarding their diversity and anti-racist initiatives.

Recommendation: By working together, the federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal governments can utilize their resources to address systemic and institutional changes from the bottom up. All levels of government provide “critical pathways to participation” and in turn these “pathways allow us to bring equity efforts” in setting standards for anti-discriminatory policies, practices, and behaviours. Ultimately, without mandated legislation from the government, Arab youth, and other minorities who are subject to workplace discrimination, would have to rely on the good intentions and attitudes of their employers and fellow employees who may be “unaware of their biases and who would have neither the incentive nor the capacity to set or enforce high standards.” This process of systemic change is iterative.

### **2. Recognizing Racism and Discrimination in the Workplace**

Issue: The barriers that Arab youth have experienced tend to be individual or micro-level issues, however, these experiences must be recognized as a systemic issue that continues



to dominates the labour market in Canada. Workplaces have only recently recognized the need to address equity, diversity, and inclusivity mainly for practical and ethical purposes, and due to the increasingly diverse population. However, one of the difficulties in addressing barriers or discrimination in the workplace is that there is a common belief that racism does not exist in Canada, thus making “discrimination more likely to appear non-existent.” Due to this false belief, many employers do not have anti-discriminatory policies. Hyde and Hopkins (2004) study analyzing 161 organizations’ ‘diversity climate’ found that various forms of racial and gender segregations were quite common, and due to the weak diversity climates, the strategies to promote diversity “tend to be basic and limited” and usually does not result in systemic change).

Recommendation: During the focus groups conducted by the Canadian Arab Institute, an Arab youth respondent said: “If two people are performing weakly, I feel that the minority would be discussed, trampled on and you know, given worse reviews than the non-minority.” When asked what could be done to improve the workplace for Arab Canadians, one respondent said acknowledging the different cultures, including the Arab culture, in the workplace is imperative to a successful workplace experience for both Arabs and non-Arab employers; the Arab youth respondent said: “Exposure will make things better when people get to meet people from other faiths cultures and whatnot.” Addressing systemic discrimination is often a challenge in the workplace because there may be little to no evidence of individual discrimination. Simply acknowledging that diversity exists in the workplace is a form of educating oneself. However, the acknowledgement of diversity is not sufficient alone. Employers must acknowledge that systemic, institutional and societal racism exists.

### **3. Leadership**

Issue: During the focus groups, respondents

discussed the need for diversity in the workplace to combat discrimination. They further mentioned that a knowledgeable and sensitive leader within the workplace is essential, as many of the respondents’ current coworkers can often be discriminatory, whether subtle or directly.

Recommendation: Leaders in the workplace play a critical role in recognizing that racism and diversity exists. Managers must create a fair and inclusive environment by removing barriers. Managers must recognize targeted groups who face barriers and are responsible for ensuring their employers are not engaging in discrimination or harassment. Leaders of the workplace must hire qualified individuals regardless of their race; they must have an open-door policy to provide equal opportunity; and they must value diversity. Some respondents made reference to having a supportive manager who will assist them in their professional growth. It is crucial for leaders in a workplace to create an inclusive culture and ensure that their non-racialized employees are participating in closing the gap. According to the OHRC, leaders are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their employers are not engaging or contributing to discrimination practices in the workplace, as failure to do so results in serious repercussions.

### **4. Changing Social Behaviour of the Workplace**

Issue: While some of the Arab youth respondents’ experiences to racism and discrimination in the workplace were direct, many forms of discrimination and racism experienced were subtle or indirect, which provided more opportunity for unconscious or conscious biases. Despite Canada’s commitment to promoting a diverse and multicultural society, Arab youth continue to face racial exclusions and discrimination in all forms in the workplace, from exclusions such as social gatherings where alcohol is served or refusing religious or cultural accommodations to prejudiced attitudes. Discrimination in the workplace is becoming more discreet and subtle, particularly

in organizations where institutionalized racism and discrimination have a longstanding history. In fact, "institutionalized racism constrains such organizations in managing this ideal of providing just, equitable and useful services for everyone, especially the non-dominant groups in society" (Miller, 2002). Carlos Agocs and Harish Jain (2001) iterated that the impact of discrimination and racism in the workplace is not uncommon, particularly in workplaces in which "whiteness is constructed as normative" thus resulting in social behavior that includes these dominant groups (typically "white, heterosexual and able-bodied" males) to "harass, exclude or marginalize members of racialized minorities." The Ontario Human Rights Commission further contends that aspects of a workplace's culture, such as communication styles, leadership abilities, and interpersonal skills, tend to be social behaviours constructed by dominant groups. Although workplaces may provide social stability, they "shape and are shaped by societal attitudes and processes" and often maintain such attitudes that reflect prevailing norms.

Recommendation: Dismantling the status quo is difficult and identifying and eliminating systemic racial discrimination that is embedded in the workplace requires a shift in the social behavior and culture of the workplace (Agocs and Harish, 2001). Dominelli (1989) provides five strategies that organizations adopt to avoid addressing racism. These five stages include: denial, colour-blind strategies, patronizing approaches, decontextualization, and avoidance (to view a detailed explanation of the five stages, view Appendix A). By valuing differences, Arabs will feel more integrated than assimilated. Further, Atkinson et al (1989) provides strategies to alter the structural inequalities in the workplace, which include five stages: conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspective, and integrative stages (to view a detailed explanation of the five stages, view Appendix B). While these five stages were developed for individuals to reevaluate oneself, it may also apply to institutions.

## 5. Workplace Policies and Practices

Issue: Some workplaces have made progress in developing and implementing policies and practices that address systemic barriers for visible minorities while other workplaces are reviewing theirs to accommodate to the growing diverse population, while other workplaces currently have policies and practices in place that indirectly promote systemic discrimination. While the majority of Arab youth respondents acknowledged the growing need for diversity in the workforce, they also recognized that it is up to them to educate their employers in diversifying their work environment. However, there is an obligation on workplaces to create an environment free from discrimination and that such workplaces must be aware whether their policies and practices are resulting in further fostering systemic discrimination. The Supreme Court of Canada has stated that all "systems must be designed to be inclusive of all persons" and such policies should not be exempt from this. While formal policies may exist, many are not applied in practice.

Recommendation: Formal policies are required to address systemic racial discrimination and barriers that exist in the workplace, however, the policies must be applied evenly. Practices such as diversity training for all employees is vital in breaking down the current barriers that exist. Examples of policies and practices for workplaces to adopt include:

- Drafting and implementing transparent policies
- Providing accommodation such as work arrangements when it comes to religious or cultural events for Arabs
- Working closely with agencies or centres that represent targeted groups such as visible minorities

Further, during the focus groups, when asked what could be done to improve the workplace for Canadian Arabs, several respondents addressed the lack of diversity and equity workshops available. One of the most effective ways to

address organizational diversity is through formal and mandatory workshop, particularly workshops that target awareness, individual skill development and communication, and acknowledgment of other group identities, such as race, ethnicity, and religious affiliation, amongst others. Topics of diversity can range from taking on the perspective of racialized minorities to adopting various approaches to create an inclusive workplace. Mandatory team-building exercises or inter-personal individual training that focus on hidden biases or implementing corrective measures focusing on acknowledging and valuing such differences is required for an organization to be successful.

## 6. Mentorship and Networking Programs

**Issue:** Many participants during the focus groups expressed the need for networking opportunities and mentorship programs both in the workplace and outside of the workplace. While there are countless mentorship programs across the provinces, the Conference Board of Canada (CBC), in partnership with a group of private and public sector organizations, implemented a national program to maximize the talents of visible minorities. The program aims to empower visible minority employees to excel in their workplace; support visible minorities career aspirations; ensure that workplaces are aware of cultural differences; and support networking initiatives for visible minorities. The CBC's project is aimed at targeting managers, leaders, and human resource departments, amongst others, to ensure the success of visible minorities in the workplace. The CBC has identified that mentoring programs are a vital component in the professional growth of educated visible minorities.

**Recommendation:** During the focus groups, when asked what could be done to improve the workplace for Arab Canadians, respondents expressed that networking opportunities were vital to improving the workplace. Respondents from the focus groups continued to highlighted

the importance of networking opportunities and how networking attributed to their success in obtaining their jobs. Local programs such as the Canadian Arab Institute's mentorship program that focus on the professional development of Arab youth and skilled immigrant professionals can be vital in advancing the career development of Arab youth. This particular local program creates a network for the Arab youth and helps the youth gain a better understanding of the Canadian workforce culture. Nonetheless, mentorship programs and networking opportunities provide a mutual learning endeavor for both the Arab youth and their non-Arab counterpart.

## Conclusion

Addressing institutionalized racism is an ongoing process. Despite Canada's employment equity initiatives and legislations, discrimination in the workplace continues to be persistently unequal. While acknowledging employment inequity is one of the first steps to addressing it, "employment equity alone is not a panacea for eliminating systemic discrimination in the workplace." Moy Tam, the Chief Operating Officer of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, stated that in order for employment equity to succeed, we must "put more effort into raising public awareness about the existence of systemic discrimination in the workplace." Addressing discrimination and racism faced by Arab youth requires an understanding of discrimination and racism and the way it is often manifested in the labour market. Arab youth are one of many racialized groups that are implicitly and explicitly excluded from professional development opportunities, team building exercises, job opportunities, and decision-making roles, amongst others. Discrimination and racism in all forms severely impedes professional development, and although one-third of Canada's population is composed of visible minorities and immigrants, racial discrimination continues to deny these groups from reaching their full career potential.

## Appendix A

“Denial: Rejecting the existence of cultural and institutional racism in favour of the view that racism is confined to personal prejudice (in its crude manifestation). This issue is particularly well treated in the McPherson Report in its critique of an earlier inquiry into police practices (Home Office, 1981) which claimed that racism within the force was only the product of a few ‘rotten apples’.

Colour-blind strategies: The spurious notion that all people are the same and ought to be treated accordingly; for example, service providers may assume that clients of a service should all be ready to use the same mode of service delivery (e.g. clinic attendance). Therefore, if they fail to attend, they are seen as unmotivated to change.

Patronising approaches: Giving lip-service to an ideal of racial equality but ensuring white people remain in positions of power; for example, the anxiety white professionals express that people from minority ethnic groups will not be ‘high-powered’ enough for positions in the organization, or that they will be so over-focused on the needs of their own community that they will not be able to take a broader view of the needs of the wider population.

Decontextualisation: Acknowledging the presence of racism in general terms, but denying it in specific instances involving daily routines and interactions. This can be particularly the case for those adopting a liberal position, but who consistently seek other explanations for events rather than face or name discrimination as a main feature in them.

Avoidance: Accepting that racism exists, but denying the particular responsibility of the individual to do something about it. The commonly expressed idea that a particular committee or person is dealing with the issue may be used as a means not to effect changes now.”

## Appendix B

“Conformity (pre-encounter) stage: Attitudes and beliefs are ethnocentric. There is limited accurate knowledge about other ethnic groups, with more of an adherence to social stereotypes.

Differences are unimportant. Dissonance (encounter) stage: Events occur which force an acknowledgement of whiteness and the implications of this. Feelings of guilt, shame and anger may characterize this stage.

Resistance and immersion stage: Starting to question and challenge one's own racism. Experience of guilt at being part of the oppressive system and a move towards the oppressed groups (or an identification with them). This stage can result in a steep learning curve, although the possibility of retreat into the confines of white culture, if rejected, is still an option.

Introspective stage: Reduction of defensiveness and increasing understanding of the ways in which the person has been shaped by their own cultural forces into functioning within racist parameters. A need for greater autonomy is experienced and the person no longer denies the implications of being white.

Integrative awareness stage: Denial of personal responsibility for perpetuating racism is no longer present. Appreciation of those aspects of white culture which are non-exploitative, and also positive valuation of cultural diversity.”

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13. Since the introduction of the point system, the majority of visible immigrants who have been accepted into Canada have at least an undergraduate degree, and since the introduction of the multicultural policy, there has been an increase in the number of immigrants who are visible minorities. Prospective newcomers can earn up to 25 points out of 100 for education alone, and in recent years, the point system has placed a greater emphasis on post-secondary education, as opposed to other skills in various sectors. However, policymakers in Canada continue to be concerned about the lack of integration into the high-skilled labour market despite the point system intentionally ruling out immigrants who do not carry an undergraduate degree.
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17. The United Nations Council on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has called upon Canada to reconsider and amend its definition and use of the term visible minority (Frances Woolley, "Visible Minority: A Misleading Concept that Ought to be Retired.")
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33. Another notable Government commitment is the Labour Program's "Racism-Free Workplace Strategy" (RFWS), which was a result of the CAPAR. The objective of the RFWS is to "facilitate the integration of members of visible minorities

and Aboriginal peoples in Canadian workplaces by developing tools, guidelines, and educational materials for employers, practitioners, and managers in order to prevent racism and discrimination and to promote diversity" (Government of Canada, "Summative Evaluation: Racism-Free Workplace Strategy," Government of Canada, May 2011 ). In fact, the RFWS has not only failed in protecting visible minority workers, it also has participated in the systemic biases in the immigration process which has led to ongoing racial profiling and deportations

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