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Community Report By:



Tackling Islamophobia through Sport & Physical Activity: *Executive Summary*

Lead Author:

Eve Sotiriadou

Launch Date:

Spring 2025

PARTICIPATING PARTNERS



Tackling Islamophobia through Sport & Physical Activity in Winnipeg

Case Studies of Muslim and Non-Muslim Interactions in Sport

Executive Summary

This report explores the role of organized sport as both a site of exclusion and a potential space for transformation in the lives of Muslim youth and newcomer communities in Canada. Using community-based research and case studies from Winnipeg, this work examines how anti-Muslim racism and systemic barriers manifest in sport settings, and how culturally responsive approaches can create more inclusive environments. Despite Canada's commitment to multiculturalism, Muslim athletes, especially those who visibly express their faith, continue to face discrimination, isolation, and limited opportunities for full participation in sport.

Drawing from direct engagement with athletes, coaches, parents, and community leaders, the report highlights the importance of centring inclusion not only at the level of youth programming but also through intentional integration of families, particularly parents and caregivers who play a central role in children's participation. Case studies reveal that while technical skill development is valued, it must be accompanied by relationship-building, mentorship, and recognition of the broader cultural and economic challenges that newcomer communities face. This includes addressing financial constraints, language barriers, and the lack of culturally sensitive sport infrastructure.

The findings underscore the urgency of reimagining sport as a platform for social inclusion, healing, and community empowerment. Practical recommendations include investing in mentorship models, multilingual resources, culturally responsive training for coaches, women-only spaces, and direct engagement with parents and caregivers. The report concludes with a call to action for sport organizations, policymakers, and community actors to disrupt systemic inequities and build sustainable, inclusive practices that affirm the identities, needs, and practices of the communities they intend to support.

Recommendations

To build inclusive, equitable sport spaces that support Muslim, newcomer, racialized communities and religious minorities, we recommend:

- **Engage community organizations**, including ethnocultural, religious, and newcomer-serving groups, to co-create programs that reflect lived experiences and foster trust.
- **Provide translated materials and interpretation** to improve communication, reduce confusion, and increase access for families with language barriers.
- **Ensure programming is responsive to community needs by supporting modest attire** and providing appropriate accommodations during religious observances, including Ramadan.

- **Integrate parents and caregivers** through orientation sessions, peer connection opportunities, and consistent relationship-building, recognizing that children's participation depends on parental comfort and trust.
- **Address financial barriers by subsidizing fees, supporting transportation, and identifying hidden costs that prevent full participation**, while recognizing that not all Muslim community members experience financial need. As with mainstream sports, targeted supports should be directed toward low-income groups to ensure equitable access.
- **Institutionalize anti-racism and cultural safety training** for staff, coaches, and volunteers, supported by leadership and embedded in ongoing professional development.
- **Track progress and promote accountability** by collecting disaggregated data, setting inclusion benchmarks, and sharing regular updates on equity goals and outcomes.