



**Newsletter**  
Issue 18  
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## Let's Talk Racism and Discrimination

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," says Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet we know that in reality people from some groups are treated less equal than others and experience very different life outcomes. Why? Racism and discrimination – two words that elicit emotional responses: outrage, denial, anger, fear and more.

Moving beyond emotion, evidence shows that racism and discrimination affect immigrants and refugees in Waterloo Region. In our 2017 community survey, 27 per cent of immigrant and refugee participants had experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months, most frequently due to their language (39 per cent), race (35 per cent), culture (25 per cent) or religion (23 per cent). They noted that this had most frequently occurred at work or when applying for a job or promotion, in a store, bank, restaurant or at community or public event.

These are facts about people's experiences of living here, which negatively impact the opportunities and life outcomes of those affected – the education, employment, health, housing and more of our neighbours and friends. They have crushing impacts on confidence, wellbeing and sense of belonging, and hold us back as a community because some groups continue to be left behind.

This issue of our Newsletter is an exploration of reflections, thinking and experiences of racism and discrimination, and a contribution to emerging discussions in Waterloo Region. We are grateful to Rohan Thompson and Sarah Shafiq for co-editing this issue with us and to the contributing authors for sharing their expertise, opinions and experiences.

This Newsletter is part of the Immigration Partnership's journey of acknowledging and coming to terms with racism and discrimination in Waterloo Region and determining our way of responding. It may raise questions, disbelief or discomfort. That's OK. Real change starts with the end of denial and acknowledgment that racism and discrimination exist and that we all have some form of power for change. We invite you to journey with us.

**Tara Bedard**

*Executive Director, Immigration Partnership*

## Laying the Foundations

Racism and discrimination are a continuing and complex reality that exists at the individual and systemic levels. Racism and discrimination are prevalent in direct and indirect forms, both of which impact people's rights, access to opportunities and life outcomes. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code are legal commitments that give all people equal rights and opportunities under the law. This section addresses some key concepts and definitions for understanding how racism and discrimination impact individuals, groups and systems.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) defines racism as a belief that one group is superior or inferior to others. Racism can be openly displayed in racial jokes, slurs or hate crimes. It can also be deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, people don't even realize they have these beliefs. Instead, they are assumptions that have evolved over time and have become part of systems and institutions and how they operate.

Discrimination can result from individual behaviour as well as because of the unintended and often unconscious consequences of a discriminatory system. Individual, direct discrimination happens when one person is treated differently than another person because of a certain characteristic, such as immigration status.

Systemic discrimination is a pattern of policies, practices and behaviours that exist within the structures of an organization and which perpetuate or create disadvantage for members of specific groups. For example, a policy that applies to everyone in the same way may also disadvantage a group of people who share a certain characteristic, such as their immigration status or being a member of the African, Black and Caribbean community in Canada. The policy is not intentionally discriminatory, but the outcome of its application is - this is known as systemic discrimination.

Tackling systemic discrimination is complex but the OHRC expects that organizations be aware that their "normal way of doing things" may be having a negative impact on certain groups and that they take action to address those impacts to achieve equality and equity. In order to do this, disaggregated data must be collected and analyzed to identify the differences in outcomes across groups and specific action to

change current policies and practices must be taken on the basis of that information.

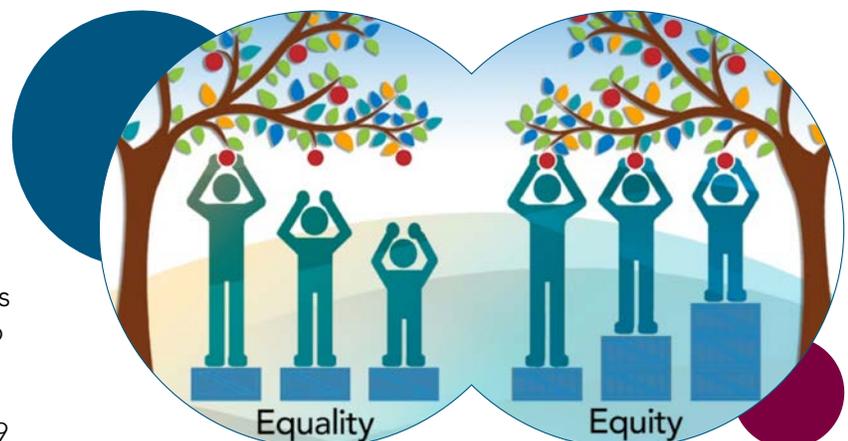
### Racism and Discrimination: Definition of Terms

**Discrimination:** treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics. It can be manifested within the individual, institutional and systemic level. (Ontario Human Rights Commission)

**Equity:** fairness, impartiality, even-handedness. A distinct process of recognizing differences within groups of individuals, and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspects of a person's life (Ontario Human Rights Commission)

**Power:** access to privileges such as information/knowledge, connections, experience and expertise, resources and decision-making that enhance a person's chances of getting what they need to live a comfortable, safe, productive and profitable life. (Ontario Human Rights Commission)

**Prejudice:** negative prejudgment or preconceived feelings or notions about another person or group of persons based on perceived characteristics. (Ontario Human Rights Commission)



**Privilege:** unearned power, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities that exist for members of the dominant group(s) in society. It can also refer to the relative privilege of one group compared to another. (Ontario Human Rights Commission)

**Oppression:** the obvious and subtle ways dominant groups maintain status, privilege and power over others, using physical, psychological, social or economic threats or force. Frequently an explicit ideology is used to sanction the unfair subjugation of an individual or group by a more powerful individual or group, which causes injustices in everyday interactions between marginalized groups and the dominant group. ([The 519 Glossary of Terms](#))

“Many people think that collecting and analyzing data that identifies people on the basis of race, disability, sexual orientation and other Ontario Human Rights Code[1] (the Code) grounds is not allowed. But collecting data on Code grounds for a Code-consistent purpose is permitted, and is in accordance with Canada’s human rights legislative framework [...]. The Ontario Human Rights Commission (the OHRC) has found that data collection can play a useful and often essential role in creating strong human rights and human resources strategies for organizations in the public, private and non-profit sectors.”

– Count me in! Collecting human rights based-data – Ontario Human Rights Commission

## The Importance of Anti-Racism Work: Beyond “Saris and Samosas”

*Deepa Ahluwalia, Equity and Inclusion Officer, WRDSB*

With more and more awareness and conversations happening about equity and social justice, we see an increase in efforts to create more inclusive and welcoming places and spaces. While this is positive, unless we are intentional about taking an anti-racism approach, our efforts will miss the mark. When we lead from an anti-racism approach, this means that we acknowledge that racism exists and we make decisions and take actions that oppose the idea that one group is racially superior over another and undo the legacy of policies and practices which have advantaged one group over another. From this approach, we take—and create—every opportunity afforded to us to identify and breakdown direct and systemic discriminatory practices that play out in our daily lives.

Unfortunately, many people confuse true anti-racism work, which seeks to eliminate barriers for people who experience inequity in our policies, procedures, systems and structures, with the feel good, “let’s all celebrate our culture” initiatives that really don’t change anything.

These events are sometimes called “Saris and Samosas” by people in equity focussed professions. “Saris and Samosas” events only serve to downplay the real impact of racism that many groups experience. It allows those with racial privilege to feel good about supporting these seemingly

positive events, but never really challenges anybody into any action or systemic change.

Not to say that there is not a place for events that celebrate culture and diversity, but could we be more purposeful in our efforts? When hosting a multicultural or diversity event, you have a captive audience. Consider using this opportunity to highlight for those in attendance the inequities and injustices that people in our country, province and community experience. For instance, there are many examples of racism that immigrants and refugees in this country have had to endure and continue to have to deal with. What actions, big or small, can we take, individually or collectively, to effect necessary change?

Multicultural events have served a purpose in helping us to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of our community, but we need to move beyond multiculturalism and start taking a really critical look at who these benefit. Those who experience racism need more from our society, and from us.

“When we lead from an anti-racism approach, this means that we acknowledge that racism exists and we make decisions and take actions that oppose the idea that one group is racially superior over another and undo the legacy of policies and practices which have advantaged one group over another.”

# Expressions of Systemic Racism and Discrimination

## In Health Care . . .

*Ruth Cameron, Executive Director, The AIDS Committee of Cambridge Kitchener, Waterloo and Area*

Many Canadians value our publicly funded health care system as a symbol of equality since access to services is not based on an individual's ability to pay. We assume that our "free" system (not free, but funded through [moderately progressive taxation](#)) treats all individuals equally.

Disparities in experiences exist for Indigenous, Black, racialized and newcomer groups while seeking assistance for health-related issues. Examples include Canadian research that has identified [lower health care access rates for Black women](#). Disparities also exist for non-white health care providers with documented incidents of patients [refusing assistance](#) from Indigenous and racialized physicians. The nature of disparities for racialized and newcomer communities is wide-ranging, including lower rates of health and dental care access, more chronic pain and poorer outcomes for pain management and [fewer satisfactory interactions](#), experiences and outcomes when seeking care.

In Canada, research on racialization and health inequities is limited. Some available studies focus on immigrant or refugee health, but cannot identify racialized and non-racialized participants. Health care registry data collection in Canada does not routinely record race or ethnicity. In Ontario, the [Toronto Central LHIN](#) is the only region collecting demographic data on race and ethnicity for hospital and community health center clients.

The overrepresentation of Indigenous, racialized and Black individuals in our limited data on health care disparities in Canada is complemented by a small number of reports documenting the

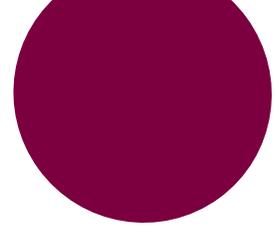
underrepresentation of Black and Indigenous applicants and students in our schools of medicine. This issue is exacerbated by an even smaller number of [equity-based recruitment](#) programs within schools of medicine and nursing seeking to correct this imbalance and collect demographics on the race and ethnicity of future clinicians.

Racism is a social determinant of health. Social [determinants](#) are the social and economic conditions that influence our health and well-being. Locally we have several [clinics](#) dedicated to supporting the unique [health care](#) needs of immigrants and refugees, but like most regions in Ontario, we cannot fully identify and assess whether there are differences in the experiences, needs and care outcomes for racialized users in our health care system.

With demographic data on health care providers, we could assess progress towards a workforce in health care that represents the full ethno-racial diversity within our region. Far more demographic data is needed on the disparities experienced by racialized newcomer, Black and Indigenous individuals within health-care systems locally, so that we can improve the equity of our health care system and the well-being of disadvantaged communities within Waterloo Region.

“Health inequities are differences in health outcomes that are avoidable, unfair and systematically related to social inequality and disadvantage”.

– Wellesley Institute



## In Housing . . .

Marika Galadza, Manager of Community Engagement, Reception House  
Zakim Tokhy, Housing Specialist, Reception House

When Government-Assisted Refugees arrive at Reception House, one of our first objectives is to help them find a permanent home. A safe place to call home is especially critical to settlement for people whose concept of home has been shattered by war, violence and persecution. Often, due to factors beyond their control, finding a home remains elusive for far too long.

“It can be hard to prove discrimination, but the treatment that our clients receive versus other Canadians in the rental market is not equitable,” says Zakim Tokhy, Housing Specialist.

As the rental market becomes more competitive, factors like race, ethnicity, citizenship, religion, age, gender identity and ability stack up against newcomers in an increasingly discriminatory tenant selection process.

“Some discrimination can be very obvious, and some are more subtle,” says Zakim, who has helped Government-Assisted Refugees find a home for over 10 years.

“One of the most common types of discrimination we see is when a landlord suddenly stops calling or sending emails when he hears that the prospective tenant arrived in Canada as a refugee. It is also common when a refugee is looking at a house or apartment to rent that instead of the prospective tenant asking the owner questions, it is the owner who asks all the questions: Where are you from?

“My male client who has struggled with finding and maintaining housing told me that he rarely gets any responses when sending email messages signed with his legal name. He decided to send messages out using a “Canadian” sounding name and noted he always gets a response when he does this. On at least one occasion he was approved to move to a new address and when he showed up the owner changed her mind and reported to me that he “lied” about something and refused to let him live there.”

– Ontario Works Caseworker

How will you pay the rent? How much money do you get? Do you have a guarantor?”, says Zakim.

Often, we also see a difference in response from landlords when they see the applicant’s name or hear their accent.

While many renters feel the strain of the current housing crisis, refugee newcomers feel it even more acutely, as they are passed up for renters with local employment history, credit history and landlord references. Some refugee families can wait months and face many application rejections.

“It’s a difficult way to start your life in Canada. After you’ve been through so much, to go door to door, only to be turned away,” says Fran Olmstead, Manager of Resettlement and Housing.

Many landlords see renting to refugee newcomers as a risk, but this perceived risk is based on misinformation. Government Assisted Refugees are stable applicants with a reliable income, and their residency status is not in question—they arrive as permanent residents. Many property owners in Waterloo Region do take the time to understand where our clients come from and give them the opportunity to rebuild their homes – to them, we say thank you.

Be a housing advocate. Have a space to rent or share? Contact: [zakim@receptionhouse.ca](mailto:zakim@receptionhouse.ca).

## In Employment . . .

Paulina Cisneros, Career Advisor, University of Waterloo

Racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance are an undercurrent in the Canadian employment process. There are some barriers that prevent newcomers, especially those from racialized backgrounds, from accessing and staying in the Canadian labour market. For example, applicants that have more anglicized names are more commonly chosen for interviews; this is supported by studies such as: "[Why do some employers prefer to interview Matthew, but not Samir?](#)" and "[Whitened Résumés: Race and Self-Presentation in the Labor Market.](#)" This leads some newcomers to change or shorten their names. This action may result in getting more interviews or even opportunities, but personal identity is very important and it can lead to some erasure or a feeling that one can't be their true authentic self at work.

Another common employment practice that disadvantages immigrant job-seekers has been the requirement of [Canadian work experience](#) and credentials. While the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has prohibited employers from requiring Canadian work experience, this continues to prevent newcomers from being selected for interviews. As a result, some newcomers resort to making their resume feel as "Canadian" as possible and underplay the international experience they might have.

These are just a few examples of discrimination in the workplace. In December 2018, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released the report "[Persistent Inequality: Ontario's Colour-coded Labour Market](#)" that shows how racialized workers in Ontario continue to experience higher unemployment rates and significant wage gaps compared to non-racialized workers.

Several laws provide protection to job-seekers in Ontario in reaction to those practices. The OHRC prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, receipt of public assistance, record of offences, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding) and sexual orientation. [The Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) prohibits harassment at work.

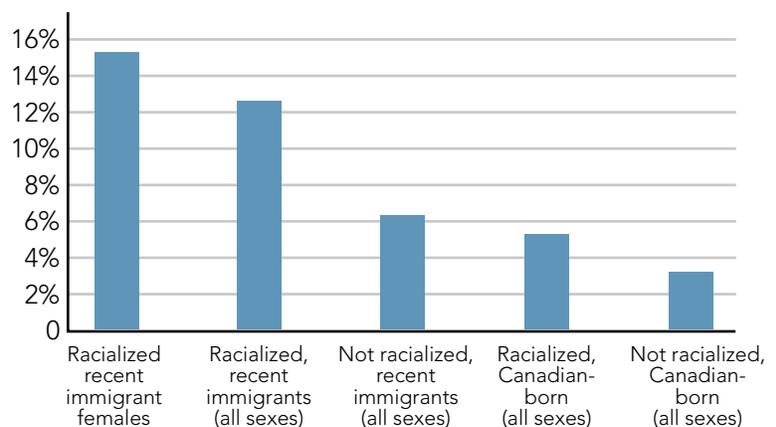
There are also less tangible cultural barriers to employment. It is imperative for newcomers to learn to navigate the Canadian employment process. Some internationally trained professionals struggle to find a direct pathway to their previous professions as local certification can be riddled with barriers. On top of everything, "fit" is very important to employers during and after the hiring process and it has to do with how easily newcomers can fit into the workplace culture. Newcomers often benefit from formal or informal mentorship to help them navigate all the cultural nuances that are hard to pin down, while some employers are starting to look at redefining workplace culture in an increasingly diverse environment.

Canada instituted the Multiculturalism Act in 1988 with the aim of upholding and enhancing multiculturalism, including racial diversity. To level the playing field in employment so that people from all backgrounds have the same opportunities, we need diverse representation at all levels, at all workplaces and in all industries. This representation, along with efforts to educate employers about the advantages of having a racially and culturally diverse workforce, will help us chip away at the impacts of racism and discrimination in employment.

"I have been in a managerial position and have had others assume that I am not the manager. They thought that a subordinate who was white was the manager. This happened often enough that I figure it had to do with my skin colour. It makes me feel defeated."

– Racialized employee

**Unemployment Rates**  
(age 25-64, with university education or above)  
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo CMA - 2016 Census



## Personal Reflection on the Positionality of Immigrants

Hiba Farooqi, Cameron Heights high school student, Waterloo Region

The reality of immigrating to a settler-colonial state from your home is that you do not actually have to confront race itself until you are forced to. I never thought of myself as “brown” until my family moved to Canada, a sentiment one of my aunts has echoed before—that she did not think of herself as “brown” until her kids attended school and learned that they were brown, because white is the default that the rest of us have to catch up to. That does not mean racism and colonialism hadn’t permeated our lives before—it had—and they are something generations of our families have suffered the consequences of.

The typical immigrant story you hear across cultures is that our parents sacrificed their homes, family and the comfort of familiarity in hopes of seeking out—although unknown—better opportunities for their children: better education, better jobs and more financial security. This is the narrative of most immigrant families and it is true. It also means immigrants are constantly positioned between the ramifications of hundreds of years of colonial violence in their home countries which lack the capacity to provide the same opportunities and the position of fighting for those opportunities in a country that has implemented a race-based class system meant to hold us back.

Even then, immigrant labourers are turned into a commodity rather than first being considered as people. In Canada, the majority of immigrants admitted are economic migrants—those chosen for their contribution to the country’s economy based on a points-based system that evaluates their ability to provide labour to serve capital interests. Immigration applicants with disabilities suffer most under this system, because a system that is focused on labour inherently does not accommodate disability. Often they are not disabled because of how they differ in mental or physical attributes, but because capitalist requirements of labour and production disable them. I still have family in Pakistan unable to get visas because of disability.

Now, I can talk all about being called a terrorist and Osama Bin Laden’s wife, having my hijab pulled

off repeatedly, being heckled at by drivers and told to go back to my own country. Also, I have been forced by almost every English or History teacher I have ever had to explain why Muslim people are human beings to a classroom full of defensive white kids who have been fed Western propaganda all their lives. I have been the target of some Jordan Peterson-fanatic who was convinced Muslims in his neighbourhood were organized terrorists and preyed on my vulnerability to make me feel as uncomfortable and unsafe as possible. All these things and more have happened and they were awful and degrading.

What I find most disheartening is, again, the position of immigrants between two locations of colonial violence—one in the Global South, where development is measured on an axis of Western civilization, and one within the West itself, where exceptions to the rule will never obtain the “easy” lifestyle they thought they would by immigrating to a better country with “more opportunities”.

I do not intend to make it seem as if my family is poverty-ridden—not at all. We get by, but my mom does work two jobs and my dad has to travel far for his and they are supporting four daughters. It is certainly a lot of work and I can tell this is not exactly what they pictured when they believed moving to Canada would mean a better, more comfortable life. I simply want to highlight the position of choosing between lesser opportunities and lesser security back home and the notion of better opportunities and more security, but being classed as a race that always has to prove their humanity.



“It also means immigrants are constantly positioned between the ramifications of hundreds of years of colonial violence in their home countries that do not have the capacity to provide the same opportunities and the position of fighting for those opportunities in a country that has implemented a race-based class system meant to hold us back.”

## If we aren't counted, then we don't count . . .

Ciann L. Wilson, Assistant Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University

In 2018, I was giving a guest lecture in a Laurier social work class about my health research with Black, Indigenous and people of colour communities when the question was posed: "Isn't talking about race-based statistics helping to perpetuate stereotypes about communities and reaffirming racism?"

This is a complicated and loaded question. As people of colour, if we are not counted—that is if our data and research is not collected—then our realities aren't taken into consideration. In the absence of race-based data, we will continue to think that we live in some imagined post-racial, colour-blind, multicultural utopia where racism does not exist.

The truth is my reality as a Black woman is never colour-blind; it is in living colour. There is a great privilege inherent in being able to pretend race (a social construct) and racism (a pervasive violence that shapes the material conditions of all groups of people on a racial hierarchy) do not inform our world and our interactions within it.

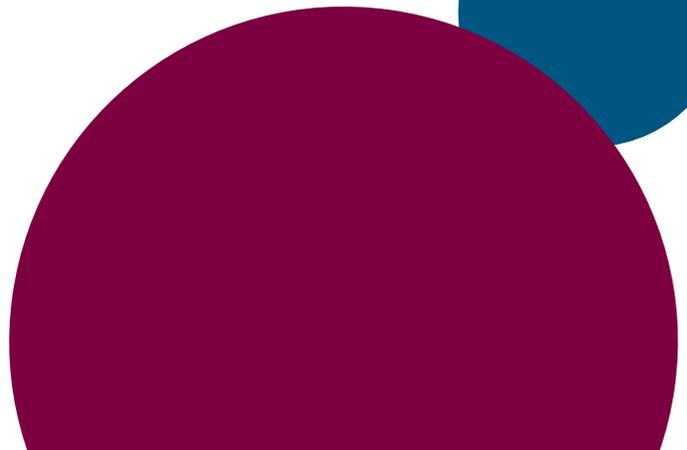
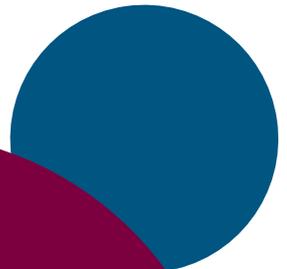
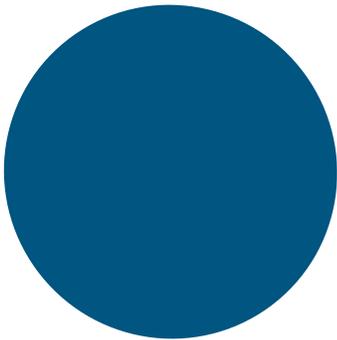
Disaggregated race-based data and statistics may be interpreted as blaming or pointing the finger at individuals and specific ethno-cultural communities as being solely responsible for their poor health outcomes. However, when we try to understand this information by discussing how systemic racism and discrimination shapes the Black or Indigenous or immigrant experience in Canada (impacting everything from one's ability to retain a job with

health benefits to pay for medical expenses, to their encounter with the physician who ignores and dismisses their complaints of feeling pain) only then can we get a broad picture of the lived realities of racialized and Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Race-based statistics have helped to shed light on issues such as the over-representation of [Indigenous](#) and [Black men and women](#) in the prison system; the [over-representation of Indigenous and Black children](#) taken from their families and their homes and placed in custody of the Children's Aid Society; and the [rise in hate crimes](#) against Jewish, Muslim and Black populations in Canada.

Given the rising cost of living and rapid changes in Toronto, as well as an abounding population of international students, Waterloo Region has seen a growth in communities of colour. In fact, Waterloo Region is one of the fastest growing areas west of the Greater Toronto Area. Roughly 16.9 per cent (Statistics Can) of Waterloo Region residents identify as being racialized and roughly 23 per cent are immigrants.

Sadly, Waterloo Region was also among the three Canadian census metropolitan areas [with the highest increase in hate crimes 2014 to 2015](#). Given these trends, we cannot afford to play colour-blind politics when it comes to counting, and addressing, the needs of its diverse residents.



## Hate Crimes

Sarah Shafiq, Islamophobia Project Coordinator, Coalition of Muslim Women of KW

The [2018 Statistics Canada report](#) on police-reported hate crimes is deeply troubling. The year 2017 saw the highest number of reported hate crimes in Canada since this information became available in 2009. In Ontario, there was a 207 per cent increase in hate crimes against Muslims, an 84 per cent increase in crimes against Black people and 41 per cent increase in incidents against Jewish people. Black Canadians remain the most targeted group across the country.

Unfortunately, Waterloo Region has known high hate crimes rates. [Local](#) media unofficially dubbed Waterloo Region the “hate crime capital” of Canada in 2011 following the release of 2009 Statistics Canada data showing Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge had the highest rate of police-reported hate crimes the country. According to the latest Statistics Canada report, there were [53 police reported hate crimes](#) in Waterloo Region in 2017. The reporting of such crimes has been a concern for law enforcement agencies and others as at times up to two-thirds are not reported to the police for various reasons. Another problem that has to be taken into account is the use of a broad classification that makes it difficult to discern whether for example a Black Muslim has been targeted due to his race, religion or both.

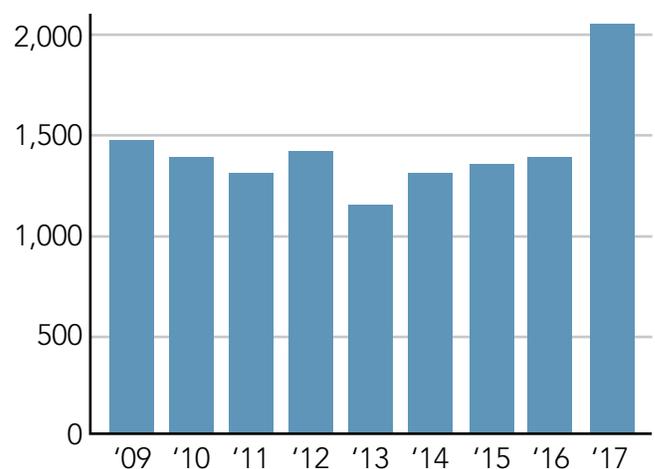
The underlying issue faced by victimized communities is the existence of hate sentiment in our community. We know from history that hate sentiment, if fueled by propaganda, can lead to systemic oppression, repressive state policies like internment camps and even to genocides – just look to the Holocaust. The rise of hate crimes in Canada and Waterloo Region after the election of Donald Trump shows us that Waterloo Region is not immune to such trends. Intense pro-active work to confront hate groups, the alt-right and white supremacy must take place at an individual as well as community level in our Region.

**Hate incidents:** expressions of bias, prejudice and bigotry that are carried out by individuals, groups, organizations and states, directed against stigmatized and marginalized groups in communities, and intended to affirm and secure existing structures of domination and subordination.

**Hate crimes:** hate incidents that are also criminal offences committed against a person or property and motivated, in whole or in part, by bias or prejudice based on real or perceived race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, gender, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar factor. (Hate Crimes Community Working Group (2006).

– Addressing Hate Crime in Ontario: Final Report of the Hate Crimes Community Working Group. Ontario. pp. 18-19

Number of police-reported hate crimes



Source: Statistics Canada  
CBC News, Published: Nov. 28, 2018



# What Can We Do? What Can You Do?

## Allyship

Leanne Hughes, Program Consultant, Waterloo Region District School Board

“Ally” is both a noun (a person, place or thing) and a verb (an action). Merriam Webster gives one definition to be “noun: a person who is not a member of a marginalized or mistreated group but who expresses or gives support to that group,” and another definition to be “verb: to unite or form a connection or relation between.” There are many perspectives on what it means to be an ally. I have spoken with friends, colleagues and community

members who hold the belief that when speaking of allyship, the word “ally” should be used more as a verb than a noun.

“At work, I ally with different groups in my community by using my privilege to advocate for them when they are not present, and to make space for their voices when they are present.”

In this sense, a person would choose to ally with groups that may need their voices amplified in an effort to unite and form a connection

but would not proclaim, “I am an ally”, because it is not a label I should give to myself. “Ally” is an action I am taking, rather than something I am becoming.

One action I take is to recognize that I have membership in a variety of social groups that afford me significant privileges as I move through the world. Because I lack their lived experiences, as an able-bodied white person, I endeavour to learn as much as I can about the issues and challenges

faced by marginalized and oppressed groups. To ally, I listen. I read books, watch videos and ask questions. I look for inequities around me. And I actively pursue ways to raise questions or create awareness when speaking with others. As I educate myself, I take the responsibility to share my learning with those around me.

At work, I ally with different groups in my community by using my privilege to advocate for them when they are not present, and to make space for their voices when they are present. When they are not present, I ask questions like, “Who benefits and who does not? Who is being included or excluded? How can we seek out the experiences and perspectives of members of this group? Have we considered what the impact might be on the members of this group? How do we get X involved? How do we do things differently so that we realize different outcomes for disadvantaged groups?” When they are present, I can make space by being quiet, by asking questions, and by “co-signing” that other person in the room by saying, for example: “I am interested in hearing more about what Julie was saying earlier.”

I take these actions because I want my students, friends, colleagues, family and neighbours to feel like they belong. We all experience complex layers of privilege and oppression – I am able to use my voice when I am in a place of privilege; when I am experiencing oppression, I can rely on others. To me, allying means to unite or form a connection between groups, and when I ally with another group, I show that I am taking action in solidarity with their cause.

## Be an Upstander

Many of us have witnessed someone being harassed, insulted and attacked on the basis of personal characteristics such as: race, national or ethnic origin, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, creed, sex, sexual orientation, etc.

It can be easy to be a bystander, to ignore the situation and simply witness a cruel and unacceptable behaviour targeted to someone else. What would happen if there were more upstanders in our communities willing to take action in support of others?

Although the situation can feel intimidating, everyone can act.

1. Remain calm and create a safe space for the person being targeted.
2. Assess the situation. Stay alert and attentive. Check your own safety first. If the targeted person is being physically harmed or assaulted, find a safe area and call 911 immediately.
3. If appropriate, engage in conversation with the targeted person. Do not escalate or provoke the attacker in this situation by engaging or focusing on them. You can just sit or stand with the targeted person as an active approach to building a safe space around them.
4. Keep building a safe space by maintaining eye contact with the targeted person and ignoring the attacker's presence. It is possible that by not acknowledging and responding to the aggression, the attacker will feel frustrated and leave.
5. Continue to engage in conversation until the attacker leaves. If desired, escort the targeted person to a neutral situation.

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter”  
– Martin Luther King, Jr.

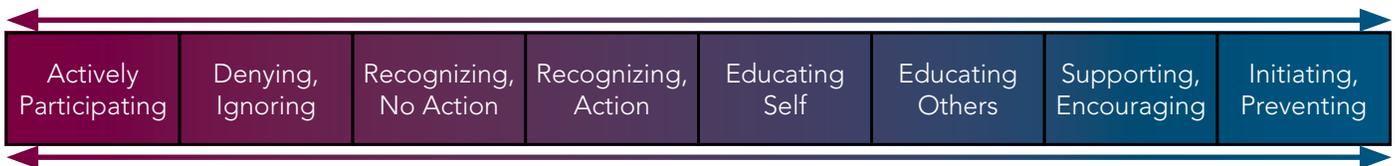
### Are you being harassed, insulted or attacked? You can act.

If you have been the victim of harassment, insult or attack due to your race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, creed, sex, sexual orientation, etc., you should report the incident to the Waterloo Region Police Services immediately. Call 911 in an emergency or 519-570-9777 in non-emergent situations. Keep any relevant material related to the incident and record information about what happened.

In certain cases, you might consider filing a complaint with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. If you need human rights legal advice or help filing an application, contact the Ontario Human Rights Legal Support Centre at: 1-866-625-5179 / [www.hrlsc.on.ca](http://www.hrlsc.on.ca) and speak with a Human Rights Advisor.

To file an application directly with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, visit their website and follow the instructions at: [www.hrto.ca](http://www.hrto.ca)

### Being an Ally - The Action Continuum



Supporting Oppression

Confronting Oppression

Adams, M., Bell, L., & Griffin, P. (1997). Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook. New York: Routledge.

# Immigration Partnership People

## Dr. Ernest Osei, Immigration Partnership Council Member

I was born in Ghana and arrived in Canada in 1989 with my wife to enroll in graduate studies at McMaster University.

As a member of the Immigration Partnership Council, I feel welcomed and a sense of belonging in our region. Since arriving in Kitchener, I have noticed diversity increase within our communities.

Racism and discrimination are divisive and damaging towards building the harmony in Waterloo Region. Although there are efforts from our community to promote tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity, still racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance exist as problems in our society. These vices, including discriminatory practices, are widespread and can particularly target immigrants and refugees. Waterloo Region can help address these issues by striving to build better communities and taking comprehensive measures to promote tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity.

Our differences, such as race, colour, religion, language and more, that distinguish us from others, should not destroy or frighten us. We each have a responsibility to work together in getting to

know each other, celebrating and appreciating our differences and learning from one another across our communities. We should avoid criticizing each other and instead help educate one another about the realities of discrimination from our experiences.

Every person is born free and equal with dignity, and we are entitled to equal rights without discrimination that divides us into separate different categories—race, color, religion or language—and treat us differently. I encourage everyone to do their part in opposing racism and discrimination in Waterloo Region. We can start by caring for our neighbours with kind and generous actions. This can be as simple as forming friendships, participating in community activities with those of other faiths or races, being proactive in challenging stereotypes and acting to address discrimination.

Let's learn how to love our neighbour as our self.



## Minkyung Kim, Belong Steering Group Vice Chair

I am a newcomer to Waterloo Region. Living as a visible minority has made me pay attention to discrimination and racism.

As an employment counsellor, I have an opportunity to meet newcomers from different cultural backgrounds. Although their skin colour, cultural identity or religion is different, they all have similar goals in their life after immigrating to Canada: To have access to better opportunities and life in Canada.

They want to get a job, educate themselves and provide their children with education. They want to have a place to live in security and safety. These are fundamental aspects of life that most people want and have. I think that racism and discrimination would take away these essential rights in life and discourage and affect newcomers' mental health.

At the end of the day, we all are human beings and our goal is to be happy with all of the people around us.



# Immigration Partnership Updates

## Settle

The Settle Steering Group (SSG) brought partners together to explore mental health services needs among newcomers in Waterloo Region: Where are the gaps and how do we respond? The SSG also facilitated discussions with formal and informal English language learning providers about how to make learning a new language easier for recent immigrants and refugees, including helping newcomers and organizations helping them to better understand the available options, classes, conversation circles, mentoring and workplace language learning possibilities.

With language interpretation, partners are promoting the new Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and Kitchener Waterloo Multicultural Centre [initiative for funded interpretation](#) for doctors, health care providers and other health related settings. Launched in November 2018, this is a major advancement in health care access for new immigrants and refugees that we as a community have been working toward for many years.



With affordable housing growing as a challenge for many new immigrants and refugees, the Immigration Partnership

honoured [Abhi Sankar and Whitehall Apartments](#) with the Newcomer

Landlord Award for going above and beyond to help newcomers find housing. Local media provided great coverage of these inspiring stories of people making a real difference in Waterloo Region. The SSG Housing Task Group also submitted input to the provincial consultation on increasing the housing supply in Ontario.

The settlement sector continued to explore how we can come together and make our work more effective—from exploring a hub where multiple organizations can jointly serve newcomers to organizing shared professional development training for frontline settlement staff.

## Work

The Work Pillar has a busy first quarter with a Networking Training Session for immigrants and refugees as part of its involvement in Communitech's Tech Jam on February 26 and planning the 11th Annual Global Skills Conference where we once again hope for a robust networking event where internationally trained individuals can meet local employers. WSG is also partnering with the Grand River Human Resources Professionals Association for a March 20 educational event on Hiring Immigrants where more than 80 local HR professionals will hear from experts on engaging and/or hiring and retaining immigrant and refugee talent.

WSG continues to discuss and plan the value of an immigrant employment hub in Waterloo Region and an action group is focused on creating a design that will work best for employers and the community. WSG is also committed to looking at ways to best connect employers with immigrant talent, meeting with many area employers in response to a very successful #HireImmigrantsWR awareness campaign. We are hearing their needs and concerns with finding people and suggesting solutions that can assist them such as referrals to specific programs or participation in networking events. Stay tuned for more to come.



## Belong

The Belong Steering Group (BSG) continues to work on the three actions in Immigration Partnership's Community Action Plan. In November, the Social Inclusion Working Group organized the first Multicultural Connections event which provided an opportunity for ethno-cultural groups to network, exchange experiences and explore ways of strengthen social connections among Waterloo Region's multicultural communities. The feedback was very positive, and the working group has been brainstorming different ways to follow-up on the actions suggested by participants.

From November 28 to December 18, the Public Education Working Group hosted the second annual Waterloo Region Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF). Partners screened 10 films at locations in Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo. Close to 400 Waterloo Region residents attended the films and joined in the post-screening discussions. On December, 18, the BSG celebrated International Migrants Day by hosting the last two screenings of the GMFF at the Kitchener City Hall



Rotunda. We are very grateful to our partners in this initiative and cannot wait for this year's festival.

BSG has also been planning actions for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21). It will once again host the #belongtogetherWR social media campaign to take a stand against racism and discrimination in Waterloo Region. We invite you to join this campaign to make sure our communities continue welcoming and embracing of immigrants and refugees.

## Partnership-wide

On behalf of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Immigration Partnership hosted a regional consultation in October 2018. It brought together settlement and other community services to share input with IRCC on immigrant and refugee settlement priorities which will inform federal policy and funding decisions. A smaller workshop was held in January to collectively plan for upcoming applications for federal funding of newcomer settlement programs – this is a big step forward in community

partnership! On the evaluation front, Immigration Partnership partners were surveyed in November to learn their thoughts on engagement with the Partnership, Partnership progress, current trends, challenges and solutions and emerging issues. This annual survey is one way we stay on top of issues impacting immigrants and refugees and make sure we're taking the right actions. Watch for results soon. Planning was also underway for Immigration Partnership's 10+ year anniversary celebrations in 2019!

# Community Events and Updates

## 11th Annual Global Skills Conference



The Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre and partners host this one-day conference for job-ready

internationally trained professionals (ITPs) in Waterloo Region. It provides resources and information on credential recognition, skill development, professional associations, regulatory bodies and related professions. End the day networking with employers at an event hosted by the Immigration Partnership.

When: March 6, 2019

Information and registration:

[www.globalskillsconference.com](http://www.globalskillsconference.com).

Other immigrants and refugees are invited to the networking portion.

Information: <https://bit.ly/2RFpMbP>.

## Speak Up: A Forum on Anti-Racism

When: Thursday, March 21, 6:30 - 9 pm

Where: Kitchener Public Library  
85 Queen St. N., Kitchener

A graphic celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Immigration Partnership. It features a colorful logo with a stylized 'I' and 'P' in blue, yellow, and purple. The text "IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP" is in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with the tagline "Settle. Work. Belong." below it. The background is white with scattered confetti in various colors.

**Immigration Partnership  
10th Anniversary**

2019 will mark ten years of partners across Waterloo Region coming together through the Immigration Partnership to help immigrants and refugees settle, work and belong. Watch [www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca](http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca) for more information on upcoming celebrations.

A graphic for the "Speak Up: A Forum on Anti-Racism" event. It features a dark blue circle with the text "Call to Action!" in white. Below it is a logo consisting of several overlapping, colorful circles in shades of blue, yellow, and purple, with the hashtag "#belongtogetherWR" in a black, handwritten-style font. A small text box below the logo reads: "We know discrimination, xenophobia, racism and racial discrimination exists in Waterloo Region...we can change this together."

**Call to Action!**

**#belongtogetherWR**

We know discrimination, xenophobia, racism and racial discrimination exists in Waterloo Region...we can change this together.

**March 21** the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Stand For**

On March 21, tell us what you have done or can do to build a Waterloo Region free of discrimination, xenophobia and racism. Share on social media using the hashtag #belongtogetherWR.

Visit [www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/belongtogetherWR](http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/belongtogetherWR) to make your commitment!



## New to Waterloo Region?

Check out the Immigration Waterloo Region calendar ([www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/calendar](http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/calendar)) and get weekly updates about upcoming immigrant and refugee-focused programs and events at [www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/subscribe](http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/subscribe).