



Global Voices Information Sheet

The Muslim Youth Canada Project



Photo from the Canadian Council of Muslim Women's Muslim Youth Canada national forum, Ottawa, 2009 (MY Canada website).

Background Info

- The Committee on Homeland Security (part of the U.S. government) was formed in 2002 to help protect America from possible terrorist threats after the World Trade Center attacks in 2001. The Committee holds hearings and helps make laws relating to homeland security.
- Chair Peter King called a committee to determine “The Extent of Radicalization in the American Muslim Community and that Community’s Response.”
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (part of the Canadian government) has a Multiculturalism program that funds projects to help Canadians foster their cultural ancestry and identities, like Muslim Youth Canada.
- Muslim Youth Canada was led by the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, a national advocacy group, which held discussions about issues relating to Muslim Youth all over Canada during a period of two years. The findings are compiled in a video and toolkit.

Key terms

- **Islam**—One of the major religions of the world, rooted in the religious text of the Koran, and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. The word "Islam" is derived from Arabic, which translates to ‘way to peace’ and ‘submission to God.’
- **Muslim**—A person who practices Islam.
- **Hijab**—A headscarf traditionally worn by Muslim women.
- **Civic engagement**— The sense of personal responsibility individuals should feel to uphold their obligations as part of any community. This can mean volunteering, joining community groups, or voting in elections.
- **Radical**—Departing markedly from the usual or customary; extreme.
- **The Toronto 18**—A series of counter-terrorism raids in the Toronto area in 2006 resulted in the arrest of 18 people alleged to be members of an Islamic terrorist group plotting attacks against targets in Ontario, Canada.
- **Terrorism** —The use of violence, or threats of violence, by individuals or groups against civilians or property. Terrorists seek to create terror as a way of achieving political ends.

Global Voices Secondary Educator Resources

Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

Themes and Course Connections:

- Themes: radicalization, isolation, identity, and civic engagement.
- Course Connections: Canadian and World Studies, English and Social Sciences and Humanities.

Materials:

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Computers and internet
- Global Voices column

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals:

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

Knowledge and Understanding:

1. This is Me (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. Ask students to volunteer qualities that they feel define them, or make them who they are (e.g.: freckles, a big family, soccer skills, etc.).
 - b. When this list is complete, ask students to explain how they define themselves. Ask if any of the following factors play a part in this definition:
 - i. The colour of their skin
 - ii. The colour of their hair
 - iii. Their body type
 - iv. Their hobbies
 - v. Their family
 - vi. The friends they keep

- vii. Membership to a specific group
- c. When this list is complete, encourage a discussion using the following suggested questions:
 - i. Why do these qualities define you?
 - ii. How do these qualities define you?
 - iii. Why do you think these qualities make you who you are? Is it because that's what other people see?
 - iv. Do you like some qualities more than you like others? Why?
 - v. Do these qualities ever hold you back from doing certain things?
- d. Explain to students that in the Global Voices column they are about to read, they are going to learn about the extent of radicalization in the American community and how segregation and discrimination leads to this.

Thinking:

1. Reading Comprehension: Global Voices Column (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. Pre reading steps:
 - i. Introduce the topic and encourage students to discuss what they already know about the topic, making predictions around what the column is about.
 - b. Reading steps:
 - i. Read: students must read the text independently, highlighting important points throughout the column.
 - ii. Ask: students must ask themselves what the story is about, recording five questions they are unsure of after reading the column.
 - iii. Paraphrase: encourage students to write point form notes in their own words around what the column is about.
 - c. Post reading discussion:
 - i. What are the main points of the column?
 - ii. What emotions did this column provoke in you?
 - iii. What problem is identified in the column?
 - iv. What questions do you have about the column?
2. Media Literacy (estimated time: 10 minutes)
 - a. Ask each student to perform an OPVL on the Global Voice column.
 - i. Origin: what is the source of this column?
 - ii. Purpose: why was this column written?
 - iii. Value: what are the facts and statistics in this column that give it value?
 - iv. Limitations: what perspective is the column written from, does this cause limitations?
 - b. When this is complete, bring the class back together and discuss student answers.

Communication:

1. Stories of Prejudice and Discrimination (estimated time: 30 minutes)
 - a. Write the words discrimination and prejudice on the board.
 - b. Ask students if anyone would like to explain the meaning of the words to the class.
 - c. Ask students to reflect and think about whether they have ever witnessed or been part of an instance where discrimination or prejudice were used against another person.
 - d. Invite the class to get out of their seats and sit in a circle. Explain to students that they have created a "trust" circle. In this circle they will share their stories of discrimination or prejudice and discuss them together.
 - e. Go around the circle and encourage students to share.
 - f. When sharing is complete ask students the following questions:

- i. How did the victims feel in these situations? Did they deserve to feel this way?
 - ii. Why are prejudice and discrimination wrong?
 - iii. What can we do to prevent prejudice and discrimination from occurring?
How can we stop it in a situation when it has already occurred?
- g. Encourage students to think back to the Global Voices column. Ask students to think about the term “polarizing” and how it was used in the column.
- h. Ask students to discuss how discrimination and prejudice have led to this “polarization” of the Muslim community and the negative effects of this.

Application:

1. Civic Engagement (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Explain to students that in the Global Voices column, civic engagement is suggested as a way to prevent extremism from evolving and prevent polarization. Ask students to explain how civic engagement was explained in the Global Voices column.
 - b. Tell students that, as explained in the column, when a youth’s identity includes a sense of ownership in the civic community, they are less likely to lash out, and more likely to feel like they belong.
 - c. Ask students to explain the meaning of civic engagement.
 - d. Divide the class into pairs.
 - e. Ask pairs to work together and look into services in their own community that youth can use to become more civically engaged.
 - f. Ask each pair to choose one of these services and identify the following information:
 - i. The purpose of the service.
 - ii. Location.
 - iii. Organizer(s).
 - iv. Communities the service is offered to.
 - v. The benefits the service offers to youth who are involved.
 - vi. The requirements for youth who join or participate?
 - g. When they have finished their analysis, bring the class back together and ask pairs to explain their findings to the class.
 - h. When this discussion is complete, encourage students to become more engaged in their community through some of the ways they discussed as a class.

Additional Resources:

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share some additional resources with your students. Listed below are some links to useful online resources:

MY Canada <http://www.4mycanada.ca/>