

Anti-Racism Update

ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon has begun to undertake various initiatives to address equity, inclusiveness, and racism in its policies and programs. Although the City is considered a leader in establishing equitable and inclusive practices, there is much more work to be done. Further, the City cannot reduce or eliminate racism by itself. To achieve such objectives, the Administration is working to support a racism-free Saskatoon through the Anti-Racism Network. It is the City's involvement in this community initiative that is the focus of this report. The City's internal programs and initiatives will be reported on separately.

BACKGROUND

At its March 5, 2018 meeting, the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development, and Community Services considered an administrative report titled, Next Steps in Anti-Racism Education. The Committee resolved, in part:

- "2. That the Administration provide a report to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services regarding an update on the partnership building with the community regarding an anti-racism network."

As part of ongoing efforts to promote understanding and awareness of issues concerning the community, the Administration spearheaded the development of an alliance of organizations and community members working to respond to racism in Saskatoon. It is a coalition of approximately 30 practitioners that includes members from the Saskatchewan Intercultural Association, the City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Open Door Society, Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan, the Saskatoon Police Service and others, as well as individuals associated with the School of Nursing, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, and the College of Medicine.

The initial launch of the Anti-Racism Network occurred in November 2018, and the Network's ultimate goal is a racism-free Saskatoon.

The Network provides feedback and direction on issues related to racism when requested by member organizations. The Network in particular serves as one of the primary reality checks on work being carried out in the community in the establishment of an Anti-Racism Action Plan.

CURRENT STATUS

The City of Saskatoon provides technical and administrative supports and advice to the Anti-Racism Network Steering Committee. The steering committee established a scope of work that includes:

- Creating opportunities for anti-racist/anti-oppressive education and awareness. Working with leaders in the community to make anti-racism courses part of all levels of education in schools and institutions.
- Creating community spaces for conversations and active resistance that do not depend on funding.
- Challenging the dominant discourses within mainstream public (media, public schools and other institutions).
- Creating a critical mass, or a group of people who make significant public change, altering attitudes, behavior, opinions or actions, and providing support to individuals and groups that are facing violence and oppression.
- Developing a network of people who are committed and eager to learn.
- Understanding our historical context as well as the history of resistance to learn what can be effective.
- Working to develop engagement strategies that authentically honour youth perspective of decolonization and resistance.
- Creating partnerships within and between institutions working towards anti-racism (Ex: FSIN/SICC/SIIT/City Council) by way of policy interventions, national dialogue campaigns and sharing of best practice methods, activity and training material.
- Organizing a speaker's bureau for local organizations to access.
- Organizing campaigns and events in order to raise public consciousness.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The Anti-Racism Network coordinates and strengthens the multifaceted efforts of community based groups, non-profit organizations, government institutions, labour unions, foundations and individuals to address systemic and institutional racism. In short, it promotes civic engagement on issues of racial justice.

To support its work, the Network was awarded a grant from Heritage Canada as a part of the National Anti-Racism Action plan. The \$82,500.00 contribution supported the development of concrete tools for training for organizations currently navigating institutional changes that have been outlined at a federal level via the calls of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Simultaneously to the implementation of federal, provincial, and local strategies on reconciliation and anti-racism, this project allowed a range of practitioners to participate directly in the co-construction of a training model that is pertinent to our context, participatory-based, and accessible to a range of actors.

The Network focused its work on planning and delivering a series of free training sessions at the Cosmo Civic Centre Theatre in the City of Saskatoon that led to the development of a community training model. From October 2019 to February 2020, the Network delivered 8 sessions. The sessions drew from the expertise of various local anti-racism experts and included race as social construction, intersectionality, trauma informed perspectives, non-violent communication, understanding privilege, anti-discrimination response training (ART), and white allyship.

The training model was used to gather feedback to develop training modules in three parts from beginner to a more advanced anti-racist perspective. Most recently the Anti-Racism Network delivered Module One of the training to the Faculty of Nursing students at the University of Saskatchewan on August 13 and 14, 2020. The Network is working with the executive of the University to deliver the same training to expand anti-racism learning opportunities.

The project provided meaningful training on anti-racism to the members of the Network and produced a training model on anti-racism that is community-informed and can be applied, and re-adapted by a diverse range of community based organizations, government services, non-profit organizations and businesses.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A copy of this report and all subsequent anti-racism education toolkits and resources will be posted on saskatoon.ca under Anti-Racism Education, along with a link to the Anti-Racism Network Facebook page and website.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial, privacy, social, or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

There is no follow-up required from this report.

Report Approval

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