



MEDIA RELEASE

New survey reveals the perspectives and experiences of Muslims across Canada

Toronto, ON – April 27, 2016. A new national survey reveals what it is like to be Muslim in Canada, and how this has changed over the past decade.

The results show that Muslims as a whole are embracing Canada's diversity, democracy and freedoms, and feeling more positive about the country than a decade ago. This is despite continuing to experience discrimination due to religion and ethnicity, well above levels experienced by the Canadian population-at-large.

This survey is a follow-up to the first-ever national survey of the country's Muslim population conducted by the Environics Institute in 2006. In both cases, a complementary survey of the non-Muslim population was also conducted to provide comparative measures of mainstream opinions about the Muslim community.

*"The survey enables us to look beyond the rhetoric and perceptions about Muslims and get a picture of how Canadian Muslims are faring and how they are regarded", comments **Muneeb Nasir** from the Olive Tree Foundation, one of the lead partners on the study. "Quite importantly, it shows that Muslims take their citizenship seriously and are very proud to be Canadian, more so than others in the country. However, despite this strong attachment, the fact that 35% of Muslims have reported experiencing discrimination or unfair treatment in the past five years is concerning."*

Key findings from the new survey include the following:

- The vast majority (83%) of Muslims feel very proud to be Canadian, and this sentiment has strengthened since 2006 (especially in Quebec). By comparison, 73 percent of non-Muslims feel similarly proud to be Canadian.
- Most (84%) believe Muslims in Canada are treated better than Muslims are treated in other western countries, and this view has strengthened since 2006 (when it was 77%). An increasing majority also believe that non-Muslim opinions of Islam are generally positive (54%) rather than negative (32%). Non-Muslim opinion is in fact more positive than negative, although no more so than 10 years ago.
- One-third (35%) of Muslims report having experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly in the past five years, primarily due to their religion or ethnicity, but also because of their language or sex. This incidence is unchanged from 2006, and is approximately 50 percent higher than for the Canadian population-at-large.
- Nine in ten (90%) Muslims are optimistic the new federal government will lead to improved relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. At the same time, Muslims are more likely to believe the next generation of Muslims will face more, rather than less, discrimination and stereotyping than Muslims do today, and this view is most prevalent among Muslim youth.

“This survey allows Muslims’ own perspectives to be registered through proper research, rather than hypothesized—sometimes hysterically—by others”, says Dr. Kathy Bullock from the Tessellate Institute, another one of the study partners. “Just as the 2006 study is still cited now ten years later, we know this updated version will continue to inform politicians, academics, journalists, community activists, and all concerned about the place of Muslims in society.”

The 2016 survey of Muslims in Canada was conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with the Tessellate Institute, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, the Inspirit Foundation, the Olive Tree Foundation, and Calgary-based Think for Actions. The Inspirit Foundation will be releasing a separate report on the youth findings from the survey. Additional support was provided by The Canadian Muslim Vote and the Muslim Council of Calgary.

The survey is based on interviews conducted by telephone with a representative sample of Muslims 18 years and older, between November 19, 2015 and January 23, 2016. The margin of sampling error for a survey of this size drawn from the population is +/- 4 percent (in 19 out of 20 samples). The survey of non-Muslims was also conducted by telephone, with a representative sample of 987 (ages 18 plus) between February 6 and 15, 2016. The margin of sampling error is +/- 3.1 percent (in 19 of 20 samples).

The Environics Institute for Survey Research

www.environicsinstitute.org

The Environics Institute for Survey Research sponsors relevant and original public opinion and social research related to issues of public policy and social change. The Institute’s primary mission is to survey those not usually heard from, using questions not usually asked.

The Tessellate Institute

www.tessellateinstitute.com

The Tessellate Institute is a charitable organization that explores the lived experiences of Muslims in Canada through academic research and the arts.

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation

www.crrf.fcrr.ca

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation is Canada's leading agency dedicated to the elimination of racism and the promotion of harmonious race relations in the country.

The Inspirit Foundation

www.inspiritfoundation.org

The Inspirit Foundation is a national grant-making organization supporting young people in building a more inclusive and pluralist Canada, in part by funding projects fostering engagement and exchange between young people of different spiritual, religious and secular beliefs.

The Olive Tree Foundation

www.olivetreefoundation.ca

The Olive Tree Foundation is a philanthropic foundation that promotes community development through the collection of endowed funds and charitable contributions to fund services for the long-term benefit of the community.

Think for Actions

www.thinkforactions.com

Think for Actions is a Calgary-based non-profit think tank, focused on professional development of youth and effectively engaging communities through research and interaction offering new solutions.

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