

OSCE CONFERENCE ON COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AND PROMOTING
MUTUAL RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING

**Plenary session 5: Education to promote mutual respect and understanding,
remembrance of the Holocaust, and inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue**
Submitted by:
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My name is Nuzhat Jafri. I represent the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW), a Canadian NGO, where I am a National Board Member. The views I express today are those of my organization. We appreciate the opportunity to share with some best practices that we have developed to promote understanding of Muslims and Muslim women.

Despite extensive media coverage and heightened interest in Islam and Muslims, misinformation and stereotypes about Islam and Muslims persist. To address this challenge CCMW has developed numerous tools that would be useful models for OSCE member states. The following are some examples:

- a general primer on Islam, entitled, *Islam its Roots and Wings*, written in plain language to provide basic information about Islam
- a series of fact sheets on Muslim women, including demographic profiles, based on census and other data which are included in detailed CCMW publications
- a *Media Relations Handbook*, which is designed to assist Muslims in establishing positive media relations and has been used by many non-Muslim NGOs, and as a teaching tool in education programs in secondary and post-secondary institutions. This handbook is already featured as a best practice on ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Information System
- a collection of stories by pioneer Muslim women in Canada
- a resource kit entitled, *In My Own Skin*, which is an educational tool deal designed to deal with issues of young Muslim women

Most recently, the council published a comparative primer on *Muslim and Canadian Family Laws*, which is accompanied by easily accessible booklets on topics such as marriage, divorce, child custody, spousal support, domestic contracts, and inheritance. CCMW has planned a series of workshops to educate the legal profession, community service providers and Muslim women across Canada based on these publications.

To continue to breakdown stereotypes, CCMW is launching an initiative called, *Women Who Inspire*, with the objective of recognizing and profiling Muslim women in Canada who have made a difference and have been agents of change in a variety of areas, including arts and culture, business, academics, communications, among others.

CCMW is active in multi-faith dialogue and is represented in several such forums in various cities across Canada. We continue to outreach to the broader community to promote understanding of Islam and the diversity of Muslims.

We would welcome the opportunity to share these materials and work on joint education initiatives to meet the objectives of the tolerance and non-discrimination program with the OSCE member states. I encourage you to visit the CCMW website to obtain these materials and learn more about our activities at www.ccmw.com.