

CCMARD contextual note

Background

The Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD) was launched by CCUNESCO in 2005 following a call for an international coalition of cities against racism by UNESCO, in the aftermath of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban in 2001. CCMARD celebrated its 10th anniversary last year and is now composed of 69 Canadian municipalities in nine provinces and one territory whose work is supported by a vast network of national, regional and local partners.

Since its launch ten years ago, CCMARD has grown and has led to many results. Numerous municipalities adopted an action plan to fight racism and discrimination, created a municipal inclusion committee or implemented a diversity strategy. CCUNESCO developed a Toolkit for municipalities in which good practices from across the country are profiled, commissioned a special CCMARD edition of the Diversity Journal, and supported the launch of a Guide for municipalities on Advancing Equity and Inclusion. Good practices and experiences from CCMARD signatory municipalities were also presented at national conferences (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies, Canadian Race Relations Foundation) and internationally in UNESCO publications and events such as the Habitat III Conference.

Considerations

Municipalities face rapidly changing issues, which bring new challenges and new needs. For example, displacements of large numbers of refugees have sparked debate on how to provide an inclusive social environment. The Internet has seen the emergence of online hate, often associated with a form of discrimination or racism. Many governments are under pressure to balance competing priorities, a reality that may leave inclusion initiatives to one side of a government's core work. However, when people are excluded at the community level and treated unfairly, priority areas such as security and economic growth are affected.

The first meeting of the international Steering Committee of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (formerly International Coalition of Cities against Racism – ICCAR), that includes representatives from each of the seven regional coalitions, was held in Bologna, Italy in April 2016. In the meeting's outcome document, the Bologna Declaration, all coalitions were invited to reaffirm their commitment to making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable through the implementation of Agenda 2030's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III. Coalitions are also expected to reaffirm the role of ICCAR as a key platform for action in the implementation the SDGs. To do so, regional coalitions are invited to discuss if there is a need to review their 10 Point Plan of Action, responding to the priorities and commitments of global development agendas and contemporary opportunities and challenges for sustainable urban development around the world; and commit to strengthening collaborative action, advocacy and joint initiatives in order to identify and disseminate good practices.

About the CCMARD Advisory Committee

In light of these ICCAR recommendations and based on the desire expressed by many Canadian municipalities and partners for greater involvement of CCMARD on many of the abovementioned issues, the CCUNESCO decided to establish an Advisory Committee for the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD) as a two-year pilot project.

The Advisory Committee for the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD) will advise CCUNESCO on ways to reinforce the network locally, regionally and nationally. It will also advise CCUNESCO on the overall direction of CCMARD.

Other areas of action could include:

- review CCMARD progress with a view of identifying strengths and gaps that need to be addressed in order to maximize the network's effectiveness;
- identify issues of interest for signatory municipalities and suggest ways to address them (e.g. a research paper, a webinar, a toolkit, an awareness-raising campaign, etc.)
- reflect on "emerging" issues such as online bullying, racial and discriminatory hate, reconciliation, special needs of and discrimination towards LGBTQ2 community, etc.;
- advise CCUNESCO on the implementation of the Recommendations adopted by the Steering Committee of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities;
- identify linkages with related initiatives and developments, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and the role of cities in Reconciliation;
- provide insights/recommendations on CCMARD governance structure;
- assist CCUNESCO in identifying partnership opportunities across Canada on CCMARD-related matters and maximizing CCMARD presence at local, regional and national events;
- recommend representatives to attend international events organized by UNESCO in the context of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities when necessary;
- propose initiatives to celebrate the ***International Day to Eliminate Racial Discrimination***;
- present its annual report to CCUNESCO's Executive Committee at its Annual General Meeting.