

Canadian Muslim Excellence: A Time to Celebrate, Educate, and Reflect

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ABSTRACT

This study redresses the limited presence of stories of Muslims in Canadian archival history and curriculum, drawing attention to the racial issues as an antidote, so that public awareness of anti-Islamophobia strategy can be made known. The authors searched, preserved, and distributed the diverse and inclusive stories of Muslim Canadians by employing a comprehensive, multidisciplinary strategy to map the political, ideological, institutional, and economic contributions of Canadian Muslims who are working for a better Canada. The authors made these stories readily available and accessible as an open educational resource under a Creative Commons' license, by creating and constructing a digital archive. This research also works towards developing resources and connections for a range of audiences to develop learning aids to teach Muslim Canadians history. The fabric of this country would not be the same, if it were not for diversity. Muslim Canadians are valued contributors to the Canadian climate, and deserve to be celebrated, rather than mistreated. Sharing the stories of Muslim Canadians who have had a positive impact on this country is intended to increase the positive messaging surrounding some of the wonderful contributions Muslim Canadians have accomplished.



Introduction

Muslims are one of the most culturally and ethnically heterogeneous groups, composed of believers from all continents, belonging to most major racial groups, and speaking a myriad of languages (Jisrawi & Arnold, 2018). They account for 4.9% of the Canadian population (The Daily — The Canadian Census: A Rich Portrait of the Country's Religious and Ethnocultural Diversity, 2022), while still ranking second among the religious groups most targeted by hate crimes, affirming the notable rise in Islamophobia. Islamophobia can be defined as, “the dread, hatred and hostility towards Islam and Muslims perpetrated by a series of closed views that imply and attribute negative and derogatory stereotypes and beliefs to Muslims [and...] which result in practices of exclusion and discrimination” (Wilkins-Laflamme, 2018). Fear of Islam's alleged influence as a result of immigration, worries about the alleged erosion of women's rights, and the belief that religious principles encourage violence are some of the factors that lead to Islamophobia (Islamophobia in Canada | The Canadian Encyclopedia, n.d.). This fear is potentially manifested in bullying, teasing, taunting, name-calling, physical assaults, and hate crimes among children in schools (Elkasssem et al., 2018) and adults in broader society.

Similarly, a national poll conducted by Angus Reid Public Opinion showed that 68% of Quebecers, and 46% of the rest of Canadians had negative stereotypes, and unfavourable views of Islam, when compared to other faiths or minority groups (Wilkins-Laflamme, 2018). In 2009, Statistics Canada began tracking the data of reported hate crimes. Since 2009, the rate of police reported hate incidents is now at its highest. It is important to note that most hate incidents are never reported to the authorities (Police-Reported Hate Crime in Canada, 2020, 2022). In 47% of the reported violent hate crimes, Black Muslims and visibly Muslim women were the primary targets (Police-Reported Hate Crime in Canada, 2020, 2022). From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, incidents of police-reported hate crimes, sentiments, aggression, racial profiling, and discrimination targeting Muslim's race and/or ethnicity has further risen by 71% over the course of 2020-2021 (Police-Reported Crime Statistics in Canada, 2021, 2022). This increase in reporting is the highest in Canada, when compared to any other G7 country. Furthermore, because of the ongoing impact of current Israel-Hamas tensions, the anti-Muslim incidents have increased significantly nationwide (Israel-Hamas War Leads to an Uptick in Hate Crimes Globally | TIME, 2023). Muslim-focused hate crimes and sentiments lead to an increase in stigma and stereotypes against Muslims. Media is playing an important role in fueling this hostility and hate against the Muslim community, by promoting a negative view of Islam (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017). With the increased use of social media, much of this discrimination can be found online. The Canadian government recognizes that discrimination against Muslims results in unjust views and treatment, and that it goes beyond isolated incidents to institutional, systemic, and societal levels (*Combating Islamophobia in Canada - Canada.Ca*, n.d.).

Muslims become more vulnerable to developing post-traumatic stress disorder, emotional and mental trauma, and social exclusion, when overexposed to these thinly veiled racist, discriminatory and hate-based challenges, biases, and chronic distress (Kathawalla & Syed, 2021).

The digital architecture of Canada's archival landscape also suffers from considerable religious illiteracy; especially the Muslim storytelling perspective, which is not inclusive and missing (One Story at a Time: 'Muslims in Canada Archives' Fill Critical Gap in National Narrative | Faculty of Arts & Science, 2022), but also misleading. As researchers also, the authors see how seldom the stories of Muslim achievers are included in the documentation of Canada's historical record, or are represented in academic resources, case studies, scholarly collections, and

conferences. Consequently, Canadian students, for the most part, have little awareness of Canada's ethnic history (Forcione et al., 2023).

Additionally, artificial intelligence, developed by private corporations, like Google, or by government agencies, like Library and Archives Canada (LAC), are just not constructed in a way to help find useful information about Canadian Muslims (Rokay, 2019). When researching Canada's history, there is a lacking presence of the positive impact that Canadian Muslims have made. Canadian history is often told through a Euro-centric lens, and lacks stories through the perspective of Canadian Muslims worth celebrating. (One Story at a Time: 'Muslims in Canada Archives' Fill Critical Gap in National Narrative | Faculty of Arts & Science, 2022). Muslim achievers are rarely included in the documentation of Canada's historical record, nor are they represented in academic resources, case studies, scholarly collections, and conferences. As researchers, the authors noticed that the parallel stories or profiles of Muslim Canadian scholars, academics, scientists, artists, social workers, athletes, philanthropists, political figures, media persons, think tanks, and war heroes, who are working for a better Canada, are unknown. Canada's ethnic history is also not a prime focus in the educational curriculum, leaving students with little awareness of the various ethnic backgrounds that have contributed to making Canada what it is today.

Similarly, although there have been occasional talks about fighting Islamophobia in schools, very few school boards in Ontario have begun to create anti-Islamophobia policies. (With Anti-Muslim Occurrences on the Rise, Schools in Canada Urged to Address Islamophobia | CBC News, 2023). There is a need to respond to public awareness campaigns by continuing to educate the public, and to eliminate the increased social climate of fear and hate, as stated in the House of Commons' Motion 103 (M-103) (*M-103 Systemic Racism and Religious Discrimination 42nd Parliament, 1st Session - Members of Parliament - House of Commons of Canada*, n.d.).

As the authors embark on placing more of a focus on Indigenous, immigrant, and racialized perspectives, the dynamic storytelling should celebrate and humanize the many differences that make up the Canadian mosaic. Similarly, the educational system needs to go beyond rhetoric, and take proactive steps on several fronts (Amtul, 2021; *Scholarship at UWindsor - UWill Discover Student Research Conference: Understanding Pandemic-Related Distress in International Students: An Ongoing Pilot Study*, n.d.), such as giving teachers useful resources to incorporate anti-racist and anti-Islamophobic viewpoints into the classroom; adding books with age-appropriate content that highlight Muslim perspectives, characters, cultural customs; address language, racial issues, and phobias (like Islamophobia) into educational programs and classroom libraries. The recent Senate report also advocates for the development of educational materials, including a multi-platform campaign against Islamophobia, and providing hands-on training to teachers and teacher candidates in post-secondary education (With Anti-Muslim Occurrences on the Rise, Schools in Canada Urged to Address Islamophobia | CBC News, 2023). This also goes hand-in-hand with the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) framework of the United Nations, which calls for accessible, inclusive, and equitable quality education, where wide-ranging inclusive and effective learning environments exist to promote life-long learning opportunities for all individuals (Goal 4: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.).

To combat Islamophobia, it is essential to highlight and appreciate the unsung history of Canadian Muslims, by encouraging compassion and positive stereotypes about Islam and Muslims. Thus, a single platform is needed to efficiently and meaningfully make accessible the history of Muslims in Canada to a diverse audience, based on geography (to provincial, territorial, regional, Indigenous, suburban, urban, and rural, communities), diversity (include indigenous; Black-led, official-language minorities; women-led groups; people living with disabilities,

difference; and racial issues), disciplines (all walks of life), size and type (groups of various sizes and structures), as well as younger and more established organizations.

This study redresses the limited presence of stories of Canadian Muslims in history, draws attention to conduct research highlighting Canadian Muslim excellence, to educate the public of Canadian Muslims' contributions, as well as serving as an anti-Islamophobia strategy. This project sought to draw on Canadian Muslims from several disciplines, including medicine, journalism, athletics, entertainment, the arts, and education, to name a few.

Objectives and aims

The overarching goal of this study is to quell the narrative and the increasingly negative public perceptions about Muslim communities. To achieve this goal, the primary objective is to record, preserve, and catalog the political, ideological, institutional, and economic heritage of local Canadian Muslims who shaped Canada. As a public awareness and anti-Islamophobia strategy, a digital archive of these stories will be distributed as an open educational resource (OER), under a creative common's license. A digital archive of these stories, and accompanying learning aids, equipped with activities and ideas, such as lesson plans containing suggested case studies, assessments, rubrics, and discussion prompts that align with the Ontario curriculum for dissemination to teachers of kindergarten to Grade 12 will also be made available and easily accessible.

It is through this research project that the authors aimed to reach their desired audience to help foster an understanding of history, in often overlooked areas, which in turn, will create a more compassionate and tolerant society. In addition, cultural competence and cultural knowledge will be developed, encouraging self-reflection, while educating the audience on the benefits of valuing diversity. By managing the dynamics of difference, and adapting to multiplicity, as well as the cultural perspectives of communities that are served, outcomes to effectively collaborate with a wider Muslim network can be achieved. The allied advocacy groups in Canada can contribute to municipal anti-Islamophobia public-awareness campaigns, and improve public opinion of Muslims.

Audiences: This project works towards developing connections with a range of audiences, who are most interested in sharing and preserving research on Muslim Canadians. These factions would include K-12 educators, education developers, librarians, scholarly researchers, school-aged children, college/university students, mental-health providers, government, media, policy makers, and members of the public. On campuses, and in surrounding communities, this increased awareness can initiate sparking discussions, influence policies, provide opportunities, and support the enhancement of the value of diversity, inclusive curriculum, and quality teaching.

Although there is accessible research about Canadian Muslims making an impact in their community, there is a clear gap in resources and/or information readily available that highlights their impact outside of their communities of faith. Through celebrating Canadian Muslim excellence, all communities will benefit from developing a greater understanding and appreciation for those who have positively contributed to Canada. Canadian Muslims will also see themselves within the fabric of Canada, rather than feeling isolated within their communities of faith. By creating resources to fill in some of the disparities in educational resources, Canadian Muslims will be able to see themselves in the Canadian identity, while also inspiring today's Muslims and non-Muslims to work together to create a better country and world for all.

Methods

This study followed these stages: the objectives were formulated, the search strategy was defined (keywords, databases, and search engines/tools' selection), inclusion and exclusion criteria were established, and lastly, Canadian Muslims, who met the criteria, were selected. The keywords that were used, when searching academic journal databases using additional search engines, such as Google, Google Scholar, as well as artificial intelligence tools, like ChatGPT, and Copilot, were "impactful Canadian Muslims, memorable, important, popular, groundbreaking, historic, prominent, heroes, 20th-century figures, leaders, civil-rights activists, and human-rights pioneers."

Twitter Call: A call was also put out on Twitter for academics and community members alike to submit names of Canadian Muslims who may have impacted them (King, 2023).

Inclusion Criteria: While conducting this research, it was essential that all the individuals, who the authors selected to highlight, met the criteria of being Canadian; self-identifying as Muslim in faith; have Muslim names; have not publicly been involved, knowingly or unknowingly, in violating the very concept of Islam, like committing polytheism, atheism, immodest dressing, having illicit sexual relationships, a tattooed body, and/or been involved in money-making businesses that are declared haram (forbidden) by Islamic law. They also had to have made a significant impact on Canada, and are people who the authors believe are worthy of being taught about in the schools, and are searchable. The researchers practiced extreme precaution in creating the archive, so as not to offend the Muslim community by selecting someone who does not obviously look Muslim, or is involved in activities/practices that are not approved by the Muslim faith. However, the authors had no means to verify these criteria, other than from what is available on the web for each selected Canadian.

Exclusion criteria: Canadian Muslims, who are champions in their individual professional fields, by virtue of being in service for so long, and not necessarily in Canada as a whole, and were not the first to have ever accomplished a status in their chosen field, were not chosen. If they were active only in local Muslim communities, and not recognized on a national and/or international scale, they were omitted.

Time range: The findings included Canadian Muslims ranging from as early as the year 1851 to the current year. The search was able to find individuals who immigrated to Canada, as well as those who were born and raised in Canada. Findings surrounding common themes of Canadian Muslims fields of work, locations, life pathways, and so on, will all be discussed in the results section.

Photographs: Pictures of Canadian Muslims were located from various websites where these Canadians have either created, or been highlighted on, along with social-media platforms where their profiles exist.

Consents: Prior to the website being made available to the public, when able, the authors reached out to inform the listed Muslim Canadians that they were being recognized for their significant contributions to Canada. In this contact, the link to the website and the pictures were included to let the individuals know the content and photographs being used, providing them with an opportunity to edit the content, and/or share a different photograph, if preferred. The authors are still in the process of contacting the Canadian Muslims listed on the site and getting their responses.

Teaching Aids: The authors also created sample lessons geared toward some of the individuals and/or impacted fields overall. This allows people with different entry points of knowledge surrounding Islamophobia and Canadian Muslims to find ways to access and use the information, eliminating barriers of time and/or their own understanding of how to create such materials. While working to disseminate this information to educators, students, librarians,

researchers, and community members at large, the authors have ensured that the information provided to each of these demographics is accessible.

Results

To achieve the overarching goal of eliminating negative perceptions and stereotypes of Canadian Muslims, the authors understood the need to conduct research in both a thorough and respectful manner. The authors wanted to ensure that they were celebrating worthy Canadian Muslims, while also educating communities about the need to eliminate Islamophobia.

The keywords yielded more than 100 hits, however, often with little relevance to the national connection. The authors conducted repeated searches with and without these keywords, comparing the number of search results. The stories of many Canadian Muslims were reviewed and the advanced search function was used to increase the likelihood that no eligible Canadian Muslim was missed. After reading over 100 Canadian Muslims, the search was narrowed down to the top 20 individuals who met the inclusion criteria, and are thus being celebrated for their historical impact on Canada (Figure 1).

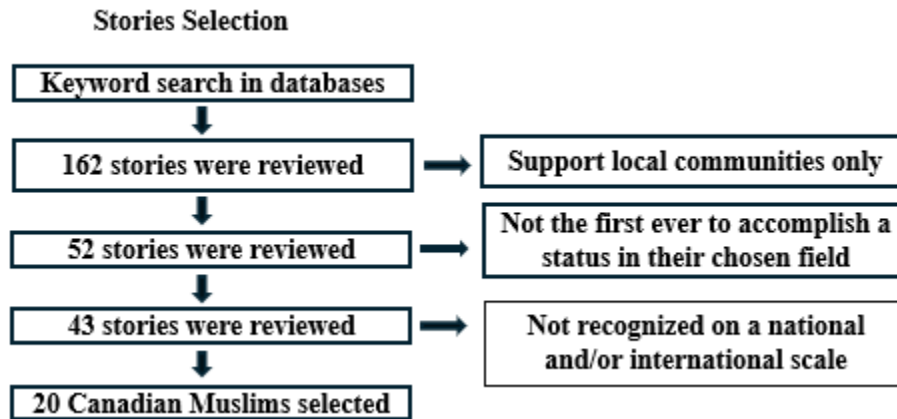


Figure 1: Flow diagram of the selection.

It was evident that there are many Canadian Muslims who are having a positive impact in their fields. Many of them are individuals who are champions in their individual fields, and not necessarily in Canada as a whole. Among these people are university professors, company executives, local-business owners, leaders in local communities, and so on. It was also noted that there is an overwhelming majority of Canadian Muslims doing important work to support members within their Muslim communities. For instance, this was seen from those who were forming and maintaining Muslim Coalitions in their communities, and resource centres to help fellow Muslims navigate systems within their ethnicity. The search criteria centred around amplifying awareness about those who have had an impact on the entire country, and those who were worthy of being taught about in schools, therefore, the result was that not all the local community contributors were selected. While the work that many are doing within their faith-based communities is important and highly valued, it is interesting to note why many of the contributions are occurring within the faith-based communities. Are these types of actions happening because non-Muslims are not making the disruption of Islamophobia a priority, or is it potentially because Muslims are more comfortable advancing their faith-based communities, and may be afraid of being highlighted on

a larger scale? Perhaps no one is providing the support, and resources to the Muslim community are only available from local Canadian Muslims. Considerations like these will be explored further in the discussion section.

Replication in other archives: Stories of some of these Canadian Muslims have also been reported in other archives (One Story at a Time: ‘Muslims in Canada Archives’ Fill Critical Gap in National Narrative | Faculty of Arts & Science, 2022). However, those stories are segregated, more community oriented, have a different focus, and the eligibility criteria was not inclusive.

Discipline hierarchy: The authors used a classification to re-organize all of the stories into discrete disciplines, based on their primary field of identification. While some disciplines were associated with many Canadian Muslims, those that are included in the developed resource are physicians, entrepreneurs, journalists, musicians, athletes, pioneers, authors, educators, and film or media experts.

Along with the remarkable people doing valuable work within their faith-based communities, there are individuals who met the search criteria, and have most definitely impacted Canada positively. For these selected persons, further details were researched pertaining to their impact. The authors also reached out to these people, when possible, to inform them that they were being highlighted to educate others, to assist in combating Islamophobia, and to thank them for their contributions. Table 1 outlines the names, disciplines, and a brief description of the accomplishments of some of the listed Canadian Muslims who were included in the digital archive (Amtul et al., 2024). As a result of these findings, the following themes were noted: they are the first Muslims and/or Muslim Canadians to ever accomplish their status in their chosen fields, have been recognized on a national and/or international scale, and/or are educating others and working to eliminate Islamophobia on a large scale, or in ways that are atypical.

Along with creating the digital archive that highlights the individuals outlined in Table 1, there is also a sample lesson plan (Appendix 1) containing suggested assessment rubrics (Appendix 2), a discussion prompt (Appendix 3), and a story from the archive (Appendix 4) that can assist educators in disseminating this vital information.

Table 1. The list of Canadian Muslims in alphabetical order by last name.

Name	Discipline	Rationale	URL
Ali Abochadi	Entrepreneur	Pioneer, entrepreneur, and fur trader with the Cree people	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/entrepreneur
Dr. Najma Ahmed	Healthcare	Trauma Surgeon	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/doctor/
Reem Ahmed	Culinary	Known for being spotlighted on <i>Master Chef Canada</i> and for her food blog	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/chef/
jeewan chanicka	Education	A long-time activist who has become newsworthy for his work in anti-racism and anti-oppression as a school- board director	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/educator/
Timaj Garad	Arts and Media	Known for her storytelling, arts education, and creative consulting	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/art
Tareq Hadhad	Entrepreneur	Founder and CEO of Peace by Chocolate	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/entrepreneur
Hanan Hazime	Arts and Media	Focus on mental health and stigma	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/art
Nazim Kadri	Sports	First Muslim to ever win a National Hockey League Stanley Cup	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/sports/

Rukhsana Khan	Storyteller	Children’s author and storyteller, focused on writing stories that children of all cultures can connect to	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/storyteller/
Muhammad Lila	Journalism	Well known warzone correspondent	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/wp-admin/post.php?post=24&action=edit
James and Agnes Love	First Canadian Muslims	A significant historical couple	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/first-canadian-muslims/
Danish Mahmood	Scientific Research and Innovation	A young and talented student working to address critical concerns in healthcare	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/science/
Ginella Massa	Journalism	Canadian Screen Award-winning broadcast journalist. She is most known for being the first woman to anchor a national newscast wearing a hijab.	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/journalism/
Dr. Ahmet Fuad Sahin	Healthcare	Recipient of the Order of Canada	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/wp-admin/post.php?post=84&action=edit
Rami Sebei	Sports	Professional Wrestler, signed with WWE	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/wp-admin/post.php?post=44&action=edit
Wali Shah	Literature and Poetry	City of Mississauga Poet Laurette, Changemaker award winner, and RBC’s Top 25 Canadian Immigrants	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/poetry/
Sina Sultani	Filmmaker	Well known writer, producer, and director, production manager on films such as <i>Guardians of the Galaxy III</i> , and <i>Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse</i>	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/filmmaker/
Keinan Abdi Warsame (K’naan)	Musician	Wrote and performed a nationally recognized song, used for Coca-Cola’s promotional anthem for the 2010 FIFA World Cup – <i>Wavin’ Flag</i>	https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/canadianmuslims/chapter/music/

Discussion

Islamophobia presents itself in many ways, but overall, it can be broken down into the othering of Muslims and those associated with Islam. The term *Canadian Muslim* references, “an ethnically, culturally, racially, and theologically diverse community, which includes newcomers, refugees, immigrants, and Canadian-born individuals” (Jisrawi & Arnold, 2018). Knowing the “single most powerful factor at work in achieving the repudiation of violence and reframing of the conflict and its solutions is social, economic, and political inclusion” (Monahan, 2014). This project aims to reach audiences at various platforms to illustrate that Canadian Muslims deserve to be included, respected, and celebrated for their historical contributions. Through the creation of relevant educational materials that highlight Canadian Muslim excellence, the aim to enhance dignity in Canada for the Muslim community members, while creating discussions and educational opportunities for Canadian Muslims to be celebrated.

From the stories of these remarkable Canadian Muslims, it is evident that they have contributed to the Canadian identity positively. Coming to understand the ways that these journalists, physicians, entertainers, and entrepreneurs have stood out in Canada, demonstrates that their faith is in no way an impeding factor for them to positively contribute to the Canadian identity. These outstanding Canadian Muslims prove that there is no need for hatred or judgement

against them. Listening and believing the negative stereotypes and assumptions made about the Muslim faith, only creates more of a divisive society. It is through learning about impactful Canadian Muslims that people can come to understand the true impressions they have made.

In particular, the research pointed to the first Canadian Muslim inhabitants and Canadian pioneers, where Muslim excellence was found in the fields of medicine, entrepreneurship, education, arts and entertainment, journalism, athletics, and culinary arts. Educators and system-wide administrators need to consider the lack of representation and education geared toward celebrating Canadian Muslim distinction. The Muslim students not only deserve to see themselves in a positive light in their schooling, but all students and educators need to be aware of the negatively-biased views that society at large often casts upon Muslim Canadians. To help combat these negative stereotypes and biases, the communities need to overtly expose their students to the meaningful impact that Muslims had, and continue to have, on Canada.

The digital archive is located on eCampusOntario hosted Pressbook (Amtul et al., 2024) and podcasted at UWill Discover platform (UWill Discover: A Podcast on Spotify for Podcasters, n.d.). It will be advertised further for free access on the Teachers Pay Teachers website (All Resources: TPT, n.d.), and provided to various school boards (such as Upper Grand District School Board, Wellington Catholic District School Board, Waterloo Region School Board, and Waterloo Catholic District School Board, to name a few) to alert them of this valuable educational resource. Teachers Pay Teachers is an educational online marketplace for buying and selling learner resources for PreK-12 audiences. (*Behind the Headline: Teachers Are Earning Millions of Dollars Selling Their Lesson Plans on the "iTunes of Education" - Education Next*, n.d.). To continue the maintenance and relevance of the digital archive, people can nominate an impactful Muslim Canadian to be highlighted on this resource. A Google form is linked to the site, along with previously outlined selection criteria, for website visitors to suggest an edit and/or nominate a Muslim Canadian who they believe deserves to be recognized for excellent contributions to Canada.

Creating this archive is not only a way to celebrate the successes of Muslim Canadians, but also a strategy for combatting Islamophobia. This collection will assist in changing the fixed mindsets of those with negative biases toward Muslims. When people learn of the stories presented, with additional supplements in future, they will come to understand that Muslim Canadians are doing a great deal for the country. Recognizing the positive impact that they have had will also encourage other Muslim Canadians to believe that they, too, can make a positive difference in the world that can be recognized. The hope is that this library will motivate Muslim Canadians to allow their excellence to shine, but also, that this website invites Muslim Canadians to see that people just like them have been noticed and heard. It is important for them to see others like them, who are honoured and recognized. This allows future generations to believe that they can also have an influence. It is essential to note that this archive alone will not be the end of this work. Much more remains to be done to begin to fill in the silences of Canadian history regarding people of the Islamic faith, and Muslims in particular. Along with sharing these resources with others, it is essential that all citizens see the need to reflect on and challenge their own biases. When one identifies their bias, preconceived notions and stereotypes can be disrupted. It is through the disruption of negative stereotypes that communities will be able to break down Islamophobia and increase awareness of the truth. What is the truth? It is that Canada has remarkable Muslims who are making a mark in Canada. This country is better because of its diversity, and Muslim Canadians are both an important and welcome contributor to it.

Limitations and future research: This research is limited, because it had to rely on the available artificial intelligence algorithm built in the existing archives, databases, and search

engines. This can impose problems in finding the targeted Muslim Canadians. Furthermore, since this is an ongoing project, a more exhaustive list of Canadian Muslims in the digital archive are being added, in order to include the more representative examples of Canadian Muslims from more disciplines and walk of lives. This inclusion, from a wider scope, will obtain a comprehensive list of Canadian Muslims of excellence.

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Author Bio

Zareen Amtul is a faculty member at the University of Windsor. Her current research focuses on structurally integrating equity-centred, diverse, and culturally inclusive curriculum or pedagogical practices, as well as developing mental-health strategies for students and staff in supporting their learning aptitudes at post-secondary, regional, local, and provincial levels. Dr. Amtul brings a multidisciplinary background in basic, and clinical neurodegenerative, psychiatry research. Her expertise, and particularly her focus on students' affairs, social issues, and community work, as well as her commitment to education, was the impetus behind this project.

April King is the principal of special education with the Upper Grand District School Board and a PhD candidate at the University of Windsor. Her research focuses on addressing the needs of at-risk male teens leaving school early and getting involved in criminal behaviours. She has worked with these students in a school setting for the past 17 years, and in the justice system, for five years. April has a passion to find ways to support these young men and offer training and resources to educators and transitional support workers (social workers, probation officers etc.) to help engage at-risk youth in schools and in their communities, to prevent involvement in criminal activities.

Adita Lia holds a master's degree from the University of Windsor in Medical Biotechnology and a B.Sc. from the University of Malaysia Sarawak. Additionally, she serves as a medical-office administrator, ensuring precise documentation and efficient electronic health records management. As a former training specialist at Augmedix, a San Francisco-based company, she facilitated smooth operations, conducted employee training, and collaborated within teams.

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Appendix 1 – Lesson Plan Example

Lesson topic: Tareq Hadhad's enthusiasm for social responsibility, resiliency, and entrepreneurship

Learning objectives:

1. Recognize Tareq Hadhad's entrepreneurial path and the expansion of Peace by Chocolate.
2. Assess the value of perseverance, willpower, and social responsibility in business.
3. Consider the wider impacts of companies supporting charitable causes.

Duration: 60 -75 minutes

Materials:

1. Article Text: Give students a copy of the provided text to read or print.
2. Laptop/Projector: For multimedia presentations or extra resources.
3. Pens and notebooks: To help students take notes.

Lesson breakdown:

Duration	Topic
Time	Introduction
5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin by giving the ideas of resilience and entrepreneurship. Find out from the students who among the business owners or success stories they have been inspired by. ● Introduce Tareq Hadhad and give a synopsis of the text's account of his journey.
Time	Reading and discussion
10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students should read the assigned text either on their own or in small groups. <p>Lead a discussion in the classroom based on comprehension exercises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How did they launch their Canadian chocolate company? ● Which collaborations and tactics made Peace by Chocolate successful?
Time	Class activity
20 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assign each small group/individual in the class some aspects of Peace by Chocolate's journey, such as establishing a business in a foreign nation, forming alliances, or taking on social responsibility. ● Ask that each group present and discuss their findings, highlighting the importance of the entrepreneurial mindset and decision-making in each area.
Time	<u>Video clip on Tareq Hadhad's speech</u> (<i>Peace by Chocolate: Newcomers' Message Tareq Hadhad TEDxDalhousieU - YouTube</i> , n.d.)
5 -15 mins (If you are pressed for time, allocate 5 minutes; otherwise, indulge in a 15-minute video.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Play a brief video clip from one of Tareq Hadhad's speeches or interviews in which he talks about his goals, difficulties, and the principles of Peace by Chocolate. ● Talk about the most important lessons from the documentary and how Tareq's principles are reflected in the success of his company.

Time	Reflection and journaling
10 mins	<p>Ask each student to consider the following questions on their own in their journals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which business skills did Tareq Hadhad demonstrate in creating Peace by Chocolate? ● Why is it important for businesses to support social causes, and how can they do so? ● Think of a fictional or personal business venture that complies with social responsibility. ● Why is it important that people like Tareq should be studied in school?
Time	Conclusion
10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have a class discussion about the reflections and new insights that were gained to wrap up the lesson. ● Stress the more general business lessons of resiliency, determination, and social responsibility. ● Make a connection between these lessons and the students' own capacity for positive impact and entrepreneurship.

Appendix 2 – Assessment Example

Assessment topic: Tareq Hadhad

1. Question: What is Tareq Hadhad widely recognized as, based on the provided information?

- A) Chef
- B) Chocolatier
- C) Philanthropist
- D) Medical Doctor

Answer: B) Chocolatier

2. Question: In which year did Tareq Hadhad and his family move to Antigonish, Nova Scotia?

- A) 2014
- B) 2016
- C) 2018
- D) 2020

Answer: B) 2016

3. Question: What was the key factor that significantly broadened Peace by Chocolate's customer base?

- A) Local farmers' markets
- B) Online sales
- C) Partnership with a grocery store chain
- D) Opening a flagship store

Answer: B) Online sales

4. Question: Which grocery store chain did Peace by Chocolate partner with in 2018, leading to national distribution across Canada?

- A) Walmart
- B) Sobeys
- C) Costco
- D) Metro

Answer: B) Sobeys

5. Question: What percentage increase in sales did Peace by Chocolate experience in 2018 after the strategic alliance with the grocery store chain?

- A) 100%
- B) 200%
- C) 300%
- D) 400%

Answer: D) 400

Appendix 3 – Example Rubric to Assess Class Discussion

Criteria	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Knowledge and Understanding	Demonstrates deep understanding of the topic, incorporating relevant facts and concepts.	Shows a good understanding of the topic, with accurate use of facts and concepts.	Displays some understanding of the topic but may have gaps or inaccuracies.	Demonstrates limited understanding of the topic; lacks key facts and concepts.
Thinking/Inquiry	Consistently analyzes and evaluates ideas, demonstrating insightful and original thinking.	Generally, analyzes and evaluates ideas, showing a strong grasp of critical thinking skills.	Occasionally analyzes and evaluates ideas but may lack depth.	Unable to consistently analyze or evaluate ideas; lacks critical thinking skills.
Communication	Expresses ideas clearly and concisely, using appropriate vocabulary and language conventions. Demonstrates a high level of respect for diverse perspectives, acknowledging and building upon others' ideas.	Communicates ideas effectively, with few minor language issues. Generally, respects others' ideas, occasionally building upon them.	Communication is generally clear but may be lacking clarity. Shows limited respect for others' ideas; may dismiss or ignore alternative viewpoints.	Communication is unclear and impedes understanding. Disregards others' ideas, demonstrating a lack of respect for diverse perspectives.
Application	Integrates diverse ideas and concepts creatively, contributing insightful perspectives to discussions. Consistently demonstrates the ability to transfer	Demonstrates the ability to synthesize information creatively, contributing to discussions. Generally, shows the ability to transfer	Attempts to integrate ideas creatively but may struggle to consistently offer unique perspectives. Attempts to transfer learning to	Lacks creativity in synthesizing information, relying on conventional or superficial approaches. Rarely or never demonstrates the ability to

	learning from one context to another.	learning to different contexts.	different contexts but may struggle with consistency.	transfer learning to different contexts.
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Appendix 4 – Story of Rukhsana Khan

Born in 1962 in Lahore, Pakistan, Rukhsana Khan is a Canadian author and storyteller for young readers. She moved to Canada when she was three years old, and she grew up in Dundas, Ontario. After completing her studies at Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, she entered the field of biological-chemical technology. She started out as a biological-chemical technician before switching to writing, initially creating songs for kid’s videos. She resides in Toronto, Ontario, with her spouse and their four children, three of whom are daughters and one son.

Rukhsana Khan started her writing journey by creating songs for children’s videos, particularly for Adam’s World. Throughout her writing career, she has produced a wide range of works, including novels, picture books, and collections of short stories with a multicultural theme. She belongs to a number of literary associations, such as Storytelling Toronto, CANSCAIP, The Writer’s Union of Canada, and the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators. Numerous language translations of her books attest to her influence on a global scale. She also supports cultural sensitivity, as demonstrated by her 2008 IBBY World Congress speech in Denmark, “Freedom of Speech Versus Cultural Sensitivity: Balancing the Right to Create Freely vs. the Need of People to be Respected.”¹

She has published fifteen books and has more in the works. The New York Public Library selected her book *BIG RED LOLLIPOP* in 2013 as one of the top 100 children’s books of the previous century. She has made appearances on radio, television, and at international festivals.² Rukhsana Khan is a seasoned presenter with over 23 years of experience who is at ease on stage. Her storytelling style tries to be thought-provoking and entertaining while bringing humor to even the most serious subjects. Every presentation offers educational value by exploring deeper themes and incorporating curriculum elements. Using virtual platforms, it’s now easier and more affordable to schedule her for presentations.²

Thanks to Rukhsana Khan’s storytelling skills, she has performed at festivals all over the world, including Canada, the United States, India, Iran, Italy, Singapore, Denmark, Mexico, and South Africa. As a writer and storyteller, she has also traveled to many different places, including Texas, British Columbia, the Yukon, Alaska, Newfoundland, the Northwest Territories, and England. In addition to giving performances, Khan shares her knowledge by giving workshops to aspiring authors. Her skill as a skilled storyteller is evident in her ability to captivate audiences of all ages.²

Rukhsana Khan has won more than forty awards both domestically and abroad during her career. Her books are frequently included in lists of the “best of the year,” which confirms the wide recognition and praise she has garnered. Throughout her career, Rukhsana Khan has won numerous literary awards. Notable accolades include “King For A Day” being listed in numerous esteemed selections and winning honors from the South Asia Book Award. “Big Red Lollipop” won the Charlotte Zolotow Award and was selected by the New York Public Library. “Wanting Mor” was the recipient of the 2009 Middle East Book Award, and the Canadian Children’s Book Centre honored “A New Life” and “Silly Chicken”.

Throughout her writing career, Rukhsana has produced a wide range of works, including picture books, short story collections, and easy reader and young adult novels with multicultural themes. She belongs to several literary associations, such as Storytelling Toronto, The Writer's Union of Canada, and Canadian Children's Book Centre. Numerous language translations of her books attest to her influence on a global scale. Rukhsana Khan started her writing journey by creating songs for children's videos, particularly for Adam's World. Rukhsana Khan is a seasoned presenter with over 26 years of experience who is at ease on stage. Every presentation offers educational value by exploring deeper themes and incorporating curriculum elements. Rukhsana Khan has won more than 40 awards both domestically and abroad during her career. One of her books was even chosen by the New York Public Library as one of the hundred greatest children's books in the last hundred years. Her books are frequently included in lists of the "best of the year," which confirms the wide recognition and praise she has garnered. Her notable contributions to children's literature have been recognized internationally through the recognition of her works. She has also won individual honours for her contributions as a writer and artist in the literary world.

