

FINAL REPORT



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ANTI-RACISM FILM PROJECT

Final Report





This project is supported by Brandon University CARES Research Centre, Brandon University, and the Government of Canada.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the individuals who graciously shared their experiences, the feedback from the focus groups, as well as the filmmakers who beautifully captured these stories. For that, we extend our heartfelt gratitude.

Credits - "Can't Dim my Light"
Nilufer and Saira Rahman (Snow Angel Films)

Cast (in order of appearance)
Nisreen – Zohra Razzaq
Dr. Stevens – Susan Finnigan
Tina – Thea Hughes
Matt – Ariel Houlton
Marie – Denise Humphreys
Ajah – Akech Mayuom
Dakota – Stephanie Spence
Jacob – Kevin Wu
Shopper – Susan Smiel
Naniji – Najma Kidwai
Siddiqui Phone receptionist – Saira Rahman
Café friends – Anam Khan and Fadiya Sheikheldin
Radio voice – Eric Bossé

Special Thanks to:
Hadass Eviatar
Ivan Hughes
Martin Itzkow
Brenda McLean

Music: "Everlasting Hope" By Elliot Middleton
Licensed by PremiumBeat

"The Way of the Champion"
By Pavel Yudin Licensed by PremiumBeat

Credits - "Friendly Manitoba"
Kejic Productions
Co-Directed: Tara Carpenter and Desiree Brightnose
Written by: Desiree Brightnose, Stephanie Spence, Akech Mayuom
Filmed and Edited by: Tara Carpenter

Credits - "In Search of a Better Life"

Director: Quan Luong
Cinematographer: Tyler Funk
Art Director: Madison Summer Dueck
Editor: Nathalie Massaroni
Production Assistant: Nathan Flores

Cast:
Sheila Ellamil-Lotuaco
Matt Jones
Jeffrey Reyes

Credits - "Choices You Don't Make"

Mike - Antonius Hackett
Male Coworker - Keegan Chase Dykstra
Female Coworker 1 - Anita Molinari
Female Coworker 2 - Laura Jacyna
Female Coworker 3 - Boma Cookey-gam
Friend 1 - Naba
Friend 2 - Bisong Taiwo

Director - Bisong Taiwo
Producer - Adesuwa Ero
Director of Photography - Reginald Isume
Makeup and Costume - Felicheeta Artistry
Location provided by - TableSpace Coworking Co.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Racism affects everyone. Just as Freire (1970) pointed out half a century ago, oppression does not only negatively impact those being oppressed, but also those doing the oppressing. Thus, counteracting racism and messages of hate benefits everyone.

In our world that has rapidly shifted online, racist attitudes have also infiltrated these spaces. This project was born from the curiosity of what might happen if research-based, real-life stories of people experiencing racism could be shared through social media.

The **purpose** of this research was both to examine the attitudes of Manitobans, and also to educate the general public on the experiences of racism in the province, while prompting discussions about racism. We were interested in examining what comments these experiences would inspire when shared on social media. By creating films, we hoped to amplify the voices of those who experience racism, while challenging viewers to learn how to become actively anti-racist.





This **mixed-method** study included a survey of 500 Manitobans, eight focus groups, the creation of four short films, accompanied by a facilitation guide, toolkits of educational resources for each film, multiple presentations in classrooms and professional development settings, and a follow-up survey.

This report summarizes key findings from all stages of the project, presented together with relevant literature and illustrative quotes from participants.

Recommendations that address the findings are included.

The chart on the following pages outlines the key findings from the study.



FINDINGS OVERVIEW



Most people know that racism is a problem.

In our initial survey, 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "Racism is a problem in my area." This number was not statistically different when we compared responses from urban vs. rural places. Across the province, racism is a problem. And most people are aware of the problem.



Intersectionality matters.

There were significant gender differences in how people responded to the survey. Women were more likely to agree that racism is a problem, and also reported experiencing racism more frequently. And when those responses were combined with how respondents identified, both age and ethnic background significantly impacted experiences of racism.



Pushback to anti-racism initiatives follows patterns.

The films received both positive and negative responses online, but the negative comments could be grouped into specific categories. Understanding these commonalities could help educators and allies guide others towards understanding, empathy, and curiosity, rather than defensiveness.



Arts-based methods can be powerful.

The films impacted viewers on an emotional level, which we saw through workshops, survey feedback, and comments through social media. The content of the research was augmented by the method of mobilizing the knowledge through the arts.



Knowing you are not alone is important.

Many of the experiences depicted in the films focused on microaggressions. Feedback from focus groups, filmmakers, social media, and the survey all showed the value of knowing that these are significant interactions which detrimentally impact your wellbeing. Knowing this was a key takeaway for many viewers.



Making change involves education and relationships.

Watching a film on social media can have an educational impact as it may show aspects of life previously not considered by others who do not experience the racism depicted. However, the films also had value within classrooms and professional settings, where relationships were established and discussion could provide further engagement.

INTRODUCTION



Background

The Anti-Racism Film project aimed to learn about and further stories of racism and microaggression experienced in Manitoba, Canada. White supremacy, hate crimes and hate speech have been increasing and particularly in online spaces. Our goal was to explore using online tools to counteract these messages by creating research-based, educational films.



The Manitoba Context

- Population: 1,342,153 (Stats Canada, 2021)
- Average age: 39.7 (Stats Canada, 2021)
- Indigenous population: 18.1% (Stats Canada, 2021)
- Immigrant population (not born in Canada): 19.7% (Stats Canada, 2021)
- Children in poverty: 28% (Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, 2021)
- People in Manitoba aged 25-64 who have a bachelor's degree or higher: 28.8%





Purpose

The purpose of the research was to do three things:

1. Increase public awareness of the racism experienced by Indigenous Peoples, racialized communities, and religious minorities
2. Promote discussions on multiculturalism, diversity, racism, and religious discrimination
3. Contribute to data on the state of public opinion on this disparities



Related Documents and Resources

Under this project umbrella, we have published a [survey report in English and French](#), [four anti-racism films and accompanying toolkits](#), [a facilitation guide](#), [an article about the ethics of this project](#), and an in-depth survey analysis (currently submitted for publication). We are also finishing a final paper on the common pushback maneuvers seen through the video comments.






Research Methods

Data collection and analysis for this study involved an initial survey which was distributed province-wide in January, 2021. The survey was shared through the BU CARES research network and through social media, and received media attention. The survey results were published in a report in May, 2022.

In addition to measuring attitudes of Manitobans, the survey also asked for participants to share stories of a time in the past 12 months where they had witnessed or experienced racism. From the common elements in these stories, four film scripts were created which focused on anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, and racism towards newcomers.

These film scripts were read in focus groups which further refined the scripts. Then filmmakers who had lived experiences with the subject of each film were hired to create the films. The filmmakers further refined the scripts, bringing their experiences and knowledge to the process.


After the films were created, another series of focus groups were held, which included questions about recommendations for resources to include in accompanying toolkits. From these recommendations and from the research of the team, we created four toolkits, one for each film, and a facilitation guide for using the films in classrooms or for professional development.

The films were launched on social media in January, 2022, and promoted again through the BU CARES network. We also began to use the films in classrooms and with different organizations, collecting feedback through a final survey. Findings from all analysis phases, including the social media comments, are included in this report.

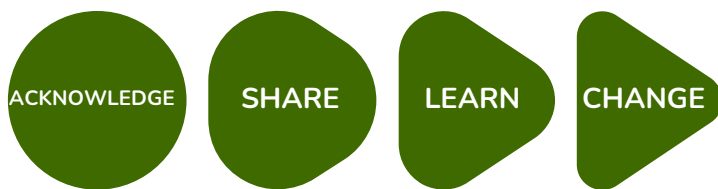




84% SAY RACISM IS A PROBLEM



84% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that racism is a problem in their area of the province.



Power to Change

Acknowledging that racism exists is not the same as actively working towards anti-racism, but in many cases it is the first step. Promoting and engaging discussions through the use of these films allows for further education, experience-sharing, and idea-sharing, which empowers individuals and communities to create change.

Defining Racism

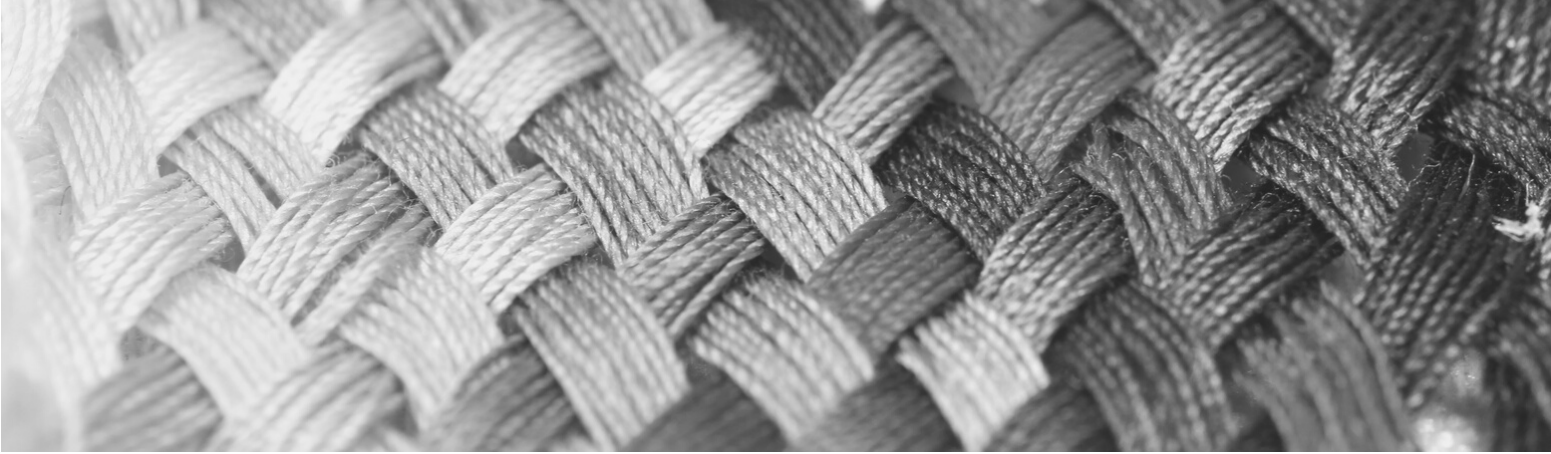
For the survey respondents who did not agree with the statement that racism is a problem in their area in Manitoba, it is possible that they may be thinking about racism as only targeted and individual acts of hate, rather than a system which privileges some at the expense of others. One of the goals of this project was to create a broader understanding of racism, by highlighting and including microaggressions within the films. This broader definition allows for understanding to grow as people become aware of their disparate experiences.

“What we must do is educate ourselves and become anti-racist. But when racist is this big scary word that causes people to shut down and retreat, I'm not sure exactly what steps to take to get there. (Survey Participant)”



INTERSECTIONALITY MATTERS

Race, gender, and age all had a statistically significant impact on both experiences of racism and attitudes towards others.



Gender Differences

in responding to their level of agreement to the statement, “Racism is a problem in my area in Manitoba,” women (n=245) were more likely to agree, either strongly or somewhat, with 89.7% of women agreeing, whereas only 76.7% of men (n=145) agreed with that statement. Disagreement was also split, with 16.9% of men disagreeing somewhat or strongly, and only 5.9% of women.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU EXPERIENCE DISCRIMINATION BECAUSE OF YOUR RACE, CULTURE OR RELIGION?

95% of Indigenous women said very often, often, or sometimes

96 % of women of other ethnic minorities said the same thing

51% of Caucasian/white women said the same thing

Race, Gender & Place

Indigenous women were more likely than Indigenous men to report being treated less respectfully, to report being expected to speak on behalf of all members of their race, culture, or religion, to be ignored or patronized, or to try to act a certain way (dress more formally, speak a certain way, make yourself smaller, etc.). On the other hand, Indigenous men were more likely to report experiencing racism at home or with friends and family (80.8% of Indigenous men, compared to 58.1% of Indigenous women)





Race and Gender

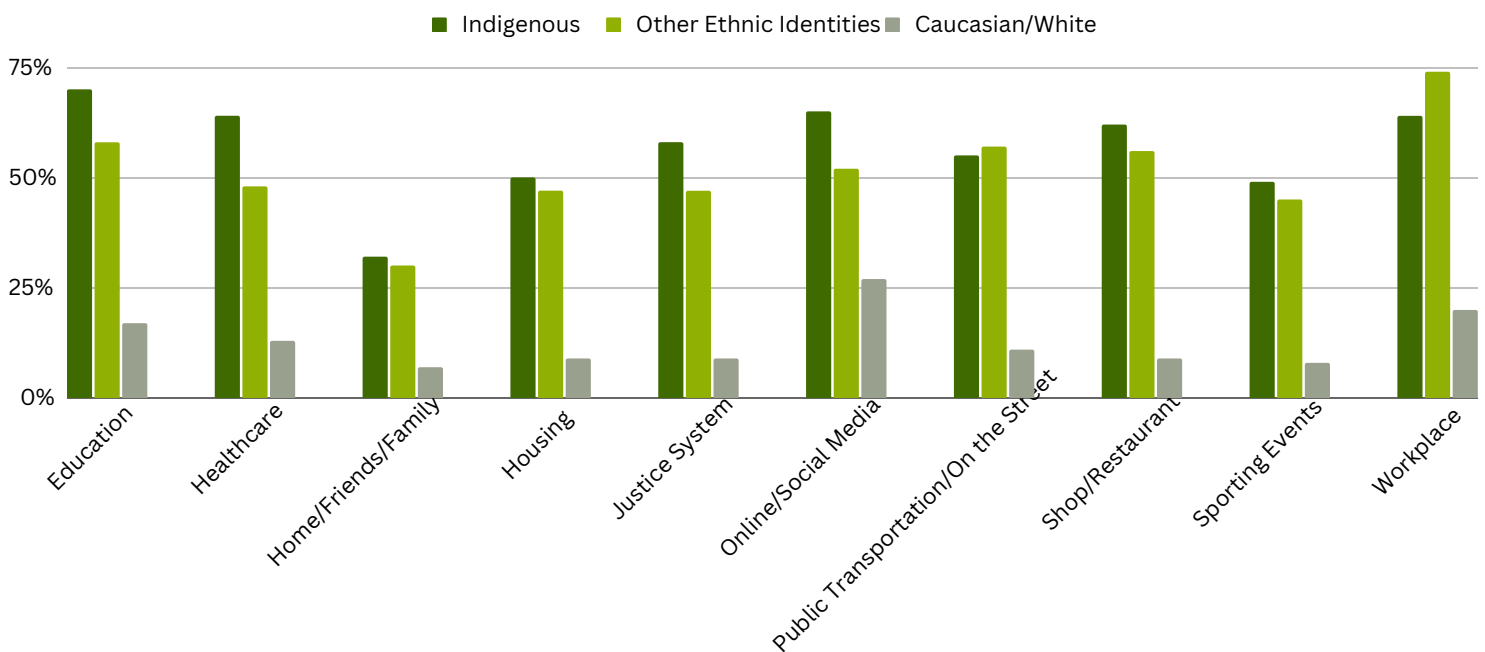
Indigenous women and women from other ethnic identities were more likely than men from those backgrounds to experience discrimination because of their race, culture or religion. However, Caucasian/white respondents did not follow the same trend, as Caucasian/white men reported experiencing this discrimination more frequently than Caucasian/white women.

Age Differences

Women between ages 36-65 were more likely than those between ages 18-35 to strongly agree or agree to racist statements including, "People from racial, cultural, and religious minority groups should behave more like mainstream Canadians," and "People speaking other languages makes life more difficult." Similarly, women over the age of 65 were also more likely to strongly agree or agree to the statements when compared to women of all other age categories.

Place and Race

Where does discrimination happen?





Neutrality

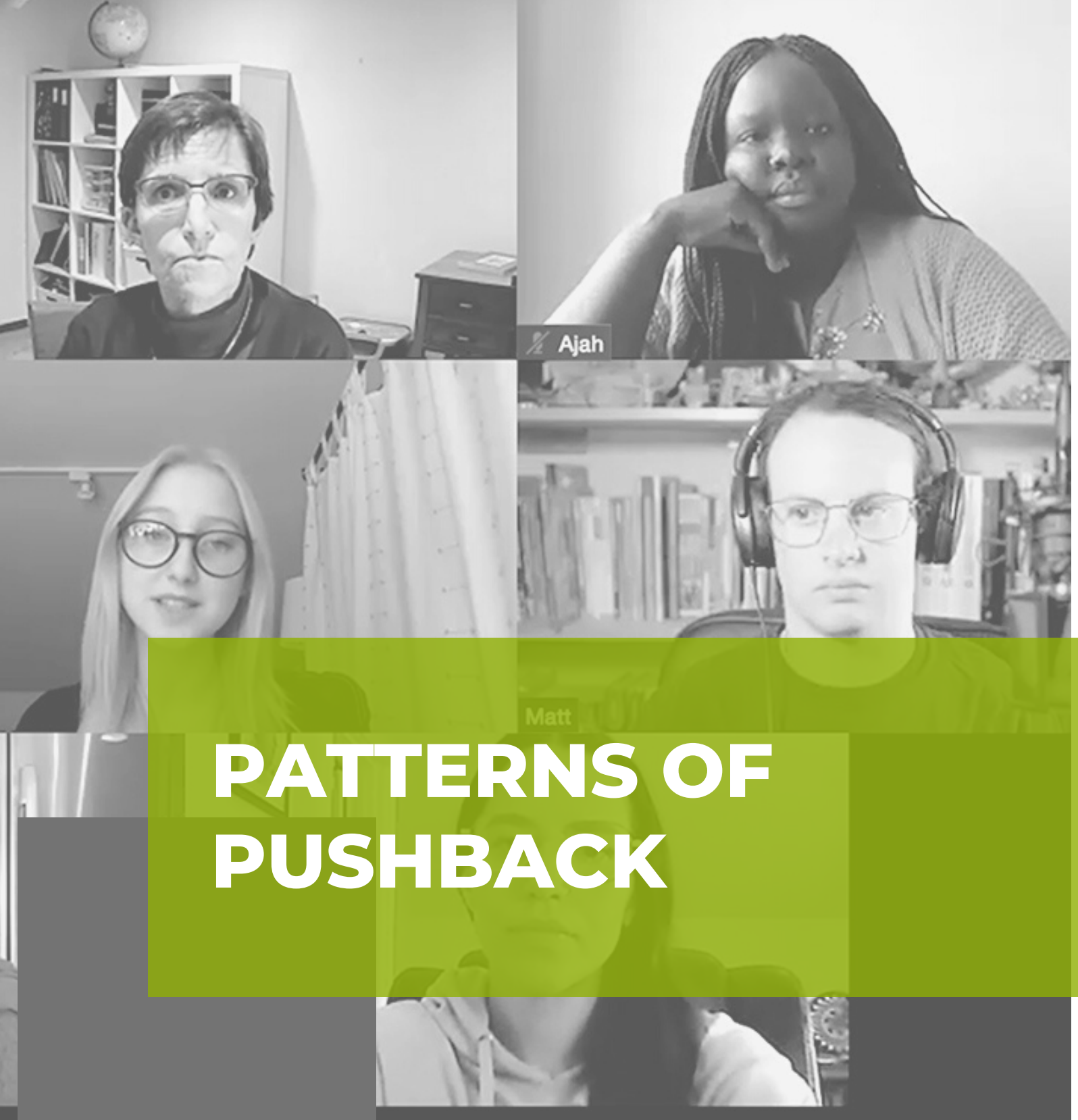
We asked participants to strongly agree, somewhat agree, remain neutral, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with a number of sentences, including: It is a good thing for a country to be made up of different cultures; Indigenous Peoples should behave more like mainstream* Canadians; and people from racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious minority groups should behave more like mainstream Canadians. We also asked people whether they would object, remain neutral, or support if a temple, mosque, or another non-Christian place of worship was being built in their local community.

Each of these questions allowed for a neutral response, and in every question, men were most likely to remain “neutral” when responding to these questions. However, in situations of racism, neutrality can also cause harm.

"I want to share my stories because I feel guilty that I couldn't respond in the moment." (Survey Participant)

I wanted to make a scene but I sat there hoping others noticed the way I was being treated (Survey Participant)

* The wording of these questions were adapted with permission from a similar survey from Western Sydney University in Australia. The phrasing of 'mainstream' was left intentionally vague. For more information, see Kamp, A., Alam, O., Blair, K., & Dunn, K. (2017). Australians' views on cultural diversity, nation and migration, 2015-16. *Cosmopolitan Civil Services: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 9(3), 61-84. <https://doi.org/10.5130/ccs.v9i3.5635>



PATTERNS OF PUSHBACK

Analysis of the comments about each film on social media could be grouped into specific categories.



POSITIVES

Many people shared examples of their own personal experiences with racism, stories of resilience, responses to other comments which created more awareness, educated others, or stood up against hateful comments. There were also many examples of likes, thumbs-up emojis, and general comments like, "This is excellent."



NEGATIVES

In addition to general negative comments, we saw many examples of white supremacy, personal insults, furthering negative stereotypes, fear mongering, defensiveness, blaming, and unsolicited advice that minimized the realities being shared. The negative comments on all four films were deeply harmful, particularly on YouTube.



"It's truly disappointing to see so many people in the comments who refuse to just have a little humility when seeing videos like this. Keep an open mind, you don't know everything."
Tiktok Commenter

"I sometimes visualize the ongoing cycle of racism as a moving walkway at the airport. Active racist behavior is equivalent to walking fast on the conveyor belt... Passive racist behavior is equivalent to standing still on the walkway. No overt effort is being made, but the conveyor belt moves the bystanders along to the same destination as those who are actively walking. Some of the bystanders may feel the motion of the conveyor belt, see the active racists ahead of them, and choose to turn around... But unless they are walking actively in the opposite direction at a speed faster than the conveyor belt, unless they are actively anti racist, they will find themselves carried along with the others."

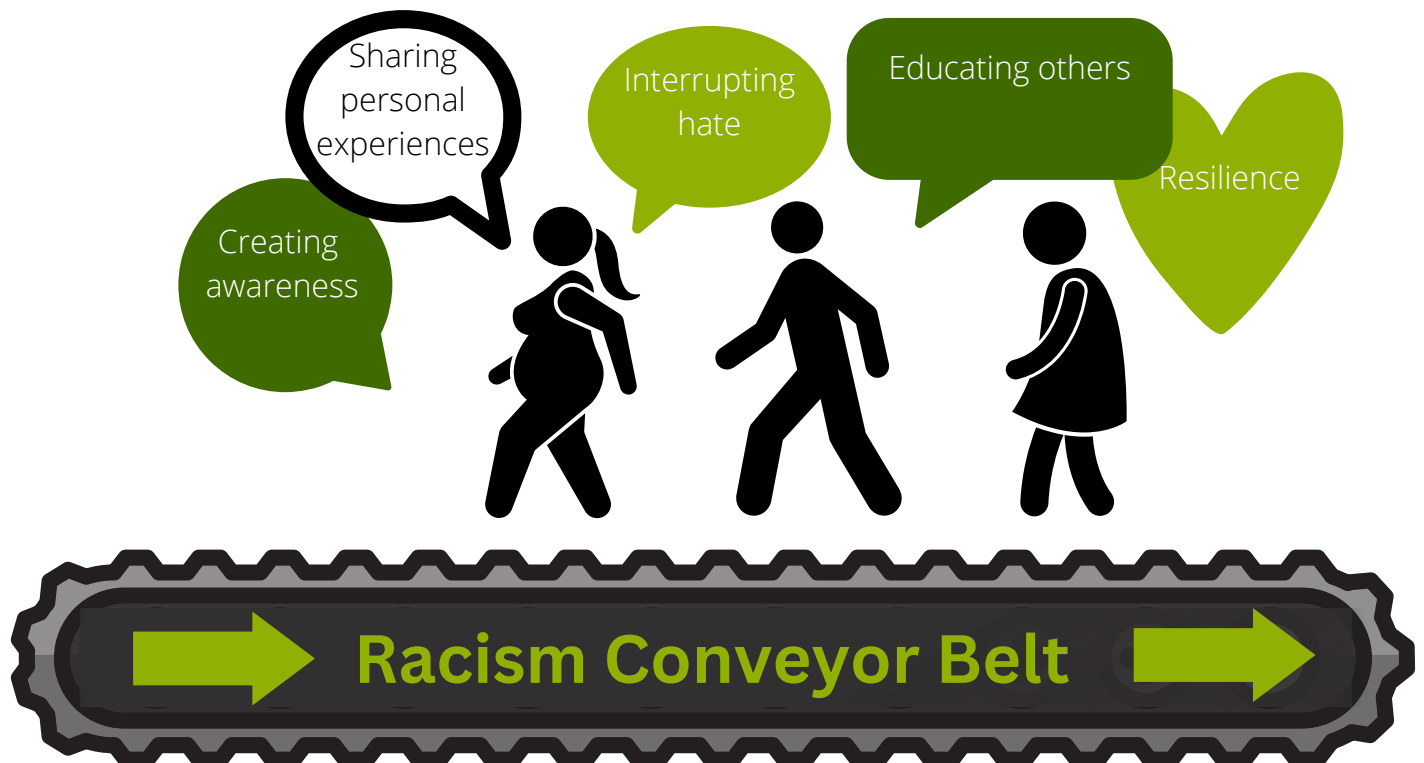
Beverly Daniel Tatum

Racist Social Media Comments



Within the social media comments and dialogues, we saw significant actions where people took it upon themselves to create awareness about racism by educating others within the comments and standing up against hateful comments and racism within the comments. We saw many people sharing their own experiences, and many examples of resilience in the face of racism.

Actions for active anti-racism





ARTS-BASED RESEARCH



Both the content and the medium of film were powerful in evoking a range of emotions.



Feedback, Comments & Emotions

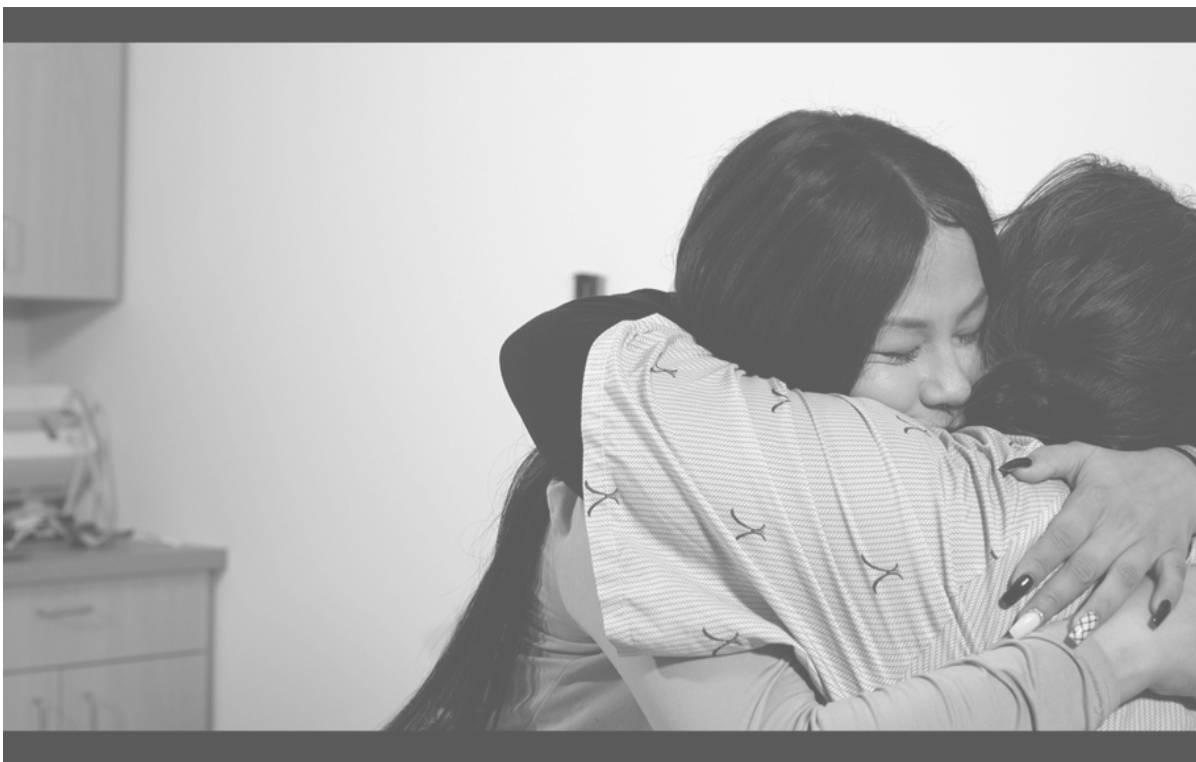
SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS

We sorted the comments into themes based on the emotional tone of each. We identified:

- Anger/Frustration
- Defensiveness
- Hatred/Harm
- Fear
- Hope/Strength
- Sympathy/Empathy

WORKSHOPS

In the workshops and focus groups, we often saw displays of strong emotions including tears, people needing to take breaks, and having difficulty speaking. We found that having a sharing circle to discuss these emotions, and having the presence of supportive counselors, elders, knowledge keepers, and/or trusted leaders was important.





Arts-Based Methods & Emotions

THE POWER OF THE ARTS


"Stories are powerful. The stories that we believe, the stories that we *live into* shape our daily practices, from moment to moment. They have the power to promise some futures and conceal others. They encourage us to see some things and not others." (Loveless, 2019, p. 20).

This project saw the above quote come to life, as the stories shared

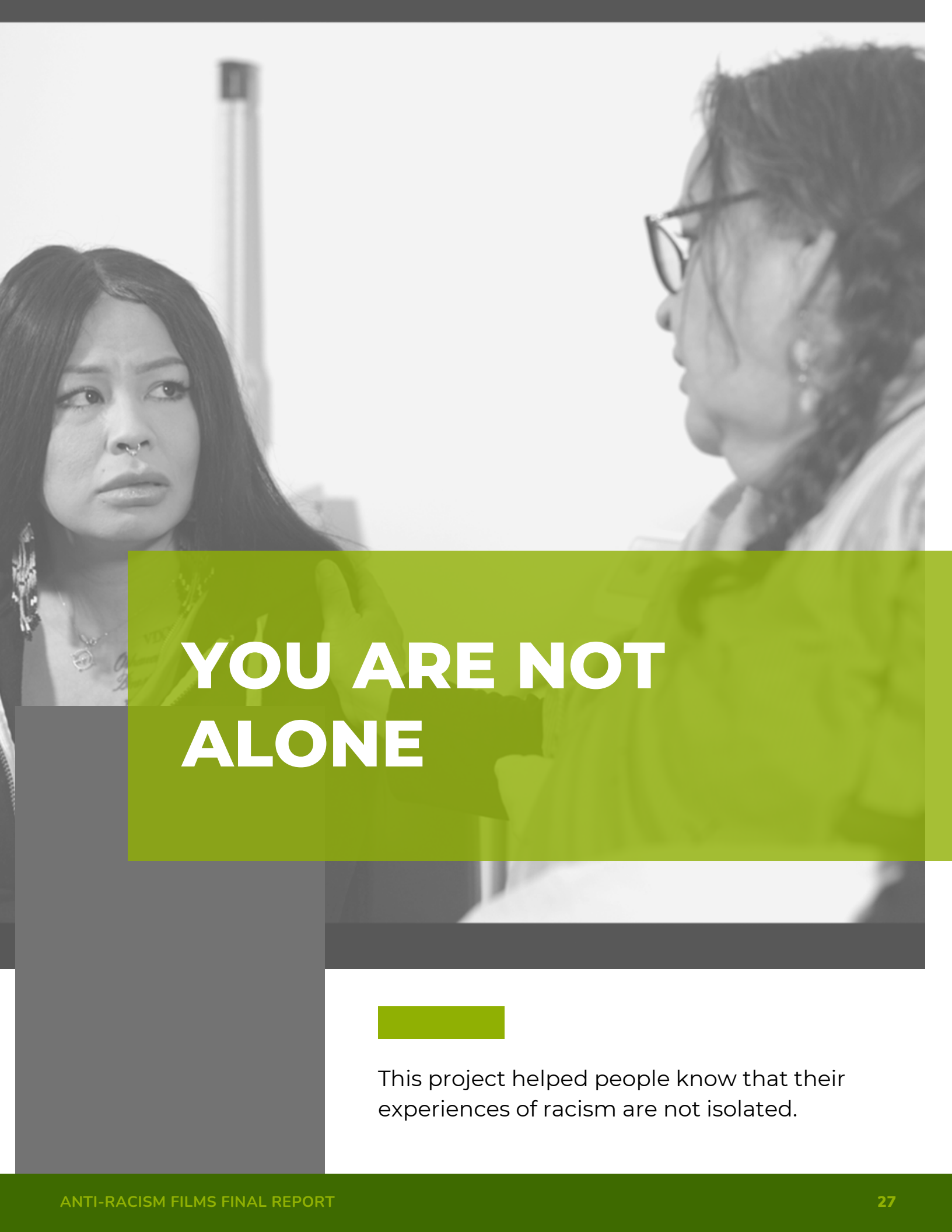
contained the power to *visibilize* and unsettle previously held beliefs. For example, one commenter wrote "this is heartbreaking. I'm so sorry" after viewing a story encouraging them to see racism in healthcare experienced by Indigenous patients. Another wrote, "This brought me to tears. As a First Nations PSW I wish this wasn't the reality 😞"

"Congratulations on such a powerful research project. The use of film to share research findings is very effective." (Survey Participant)

This is sooo sad. My mom was epileptic, we have watched this happen to her on numerous occasions!
(TikTok Commenter)



"This videos (sic) been tugging on everyone's heart strings today"
(TikTok Commenter)



YOU ARE NOT ALONE



This project helped people know that their experiences of racism are not isolated.

REPRESENTING EXPERIENCES

Seeing These Experiences is Inspirational

We heard many comments about the value of people seeing these experiences shared through film. For example, one commenter wrote, "Hey, just wanted to let you know that your vids inspired me to write a short on racism. so, thanks a lot 😊," and another wrote, "This is inspirational. I felt every minute."

Relationships Matter

The strength of relational networks was important, both as sources of strength for those who had strong networks, and as a sense of longing for those who felt isolated. For example, one participant wrote, "Whole system has been messed up for decades I saw it a long time ago but [I] didn't know what to do other than talk to my friends " and another wrote, "I wish I had more strong Indigenous co-workers it's hard being alone in this system."





RECOMMENDATIONS



Ways to move forward, as shared by project participants.

EDUCATION

In this project we saw the benefits of personal sharing, storytelling, research knowledge mobilization, interrupting hateful comments, and creating awareness. Sometimes these happened in classrooms but other times these took place via social media comments, small group discussions at events, or within professional development settings. All of these educational experiences are valuable and have the potential to be transformative.

RELATIONSHIPS

Although the films were impactful and depicted the realities faced by many people in Manitoba, this impact was further supported when done in a relational way. Having sharing circles and opening space for discussion with trusted leaders, teachers, elders, and knowledge keepers created room for deep sharing and engagement.

These [films] are a great start. Having the Facilitation guides will ensure the next step takes place, discussion and reflection on their content with others.
(Survey Participant)

I would love to see more of this examples/videos been shared with school kids to create awareness and to prevent bullying and racism in schools . Creating awareness and make children understand how it might feel to be the one that is targeted will help to reduce instances , I hope .
(Survey Participant)

"Videos will not stop racism. People's attitudes must change through meaningful interaction with people who experience racism. Relationships build change."
(Survey Participant)





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