

National Youth Muslim Summit

Summit Communique

The Australian Multicultural Foundation, in collaboration with the Federal Government's Muslim Youth Sub-group and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, invited 66 young Australian Muslims from every state and territory, who came together to discuss those issues concerning young Australian Muslims. Most importantly, the Summit has focused on finding practical solutions to key issues such as: identity, relationships, employment/education and training, and discrimination.

These young Australians have come together in a spirit of inclusiveness to develop strategies and solutions that will also benefit the wider Australian community. We are encouraged by the many honest and positive contributions of today's Summit delegates. The young people themselves are confident in their commitment to take on the continuing role of advocating for the positive changes envisaged at the Summit.

The Summit identified the following core issues and solutions to be presented to Government for its National Action Plan on community relations:

1. The perceived conflict between Muslim and Australian identity

Solutions:

- Government sponsored education for the public on what Islam is.
- Media campaigns promoting anti-discrimination including TV ads (similar campaign to the anti domestic violence campaign).
- Grass roots communication between Muslims and non-Muslims through social groups, sporting groups, activities, and camps, etc.
- Better education for Muslims about Islam.
- Better education about the compatibility between Australian law and Islamic values.
- School and university based interfaith activities.
- A more proactive approach to promoting multiculturalism should be taken in schools.
- Programs for Muslims to experience and understand Australia's Indigenous heritage.
- Programs and activities that increase the self-esteem of young Australian Muslims so they feel confident about their identity.
- Identifying more successful and high profile Australian Muslims who can act as Ambassadors.

2. Inter-generational conflict between parents and children, especially when parents are migrants and children have been born in Australia

Solutions:

- Providing parent support groups.
- Educating parents about Australian laws.
- Providing activities that include both children and parents such as camps, sporting and camping activities (i.e. father/son and mother/daughter events).
- Parents to be more involved in the child's schooling by being more active in school councils and committees.
- Islamic education that clarifies the differences between religion and culture.
- Improving literacy and English skills among older Muslims so they are better able to communicate outside their immediate community.
- Mentoring programs at schools.
- More interaction between Islamic schools and other denominational schools through school events and projects to break down barriers and misunderstanding.
- Pre-marriage counseling with marital workshops and parenting seminars.

3. Belonging versus marginalisation

Solutions:

- Improve networking among Muslims.
- Improve Muslim representation in politics, public service and community service organizations.
- Funding for Islamically friendly youth services.
- Funding for youth camps.
- Increased training for service providers in cultural/religious sensitivity.
- Increase funding and training available for current youth workers – most of them are volunteers.
- Address bullying and discrimination against Muslims in public schools.
- Building relationships with local councils and Muslim youth centres.
- Fund further programs to prevent or break the social isolation of Muslim youth.
- Promote the duty of community service/volunteerism among young Australian Muslims so that they can continue to engage in the wider community.
- Appeal to religious leaders and Islamic organisations to improve a sense of unity among the Australian umma.

4. Unemployment

Solutions:

- Gain Government commitment to implementing legislation on non-discrimination in the work place.

- Provide an information pamphlet to employers about what Muslims require in the work place and why.
- Increase funding support for apprenticeships for Muslims.
- Increase funding for TAFE training for Muslims.
- Introduce Muslim workers in employment services.
- Fund Muslim employment services in major cities.

5. Muslims and the media

Solutions:

- Increased training of Muslims who can work in the media (including scholarships).
- Funding for documentaries on Australian Muslims.
- Awards for constructive media representations of Islam.
- A monitoring body to prevent Islamophobia in the media.
- Using media campaigns to raise awareness of the impact of discrimination against Muslims and the illegality of religious discrimination in Australia.

6. Community building

Solutions:

- Opening community centres at mosques.
- Imams to encourage connections between different groups.
- More childcare for Muslim women.
- Children play groups for Muslim women to meet with other women from diverse backgrounds.
- Addressing drug use and its impact on the community and not hiding it.
- Addressing family violence and not hiding it.
- Funding for Muslim women's support centres and extended programs for existing centres.
- The actual contents of the Anti Terrorist laws need to be more transparent and available for young people to read and understand in simple language.
- More recruitment of Muslim police in police jurisdictions.
- More positive interaction between police and young Australian Muslims through organised meetings, social, sporting or cultural events.

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