

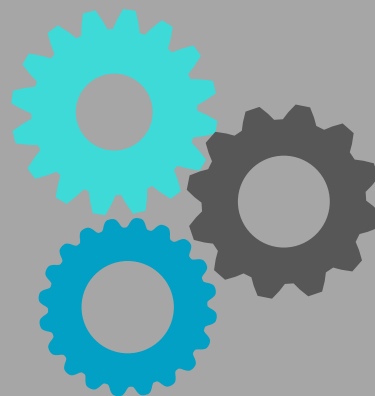
# UNPACKING PROFILING

Numerous experts and community members have outlined how profiling impacts their communities and most especially their lives.

This section of the toolkit seeks to unpack profiling, explore the issues involved and deepen understanding. This is done through two tracks. First, an analytical unpacking asks the question “Why does profiling happen?” This section summarizes cause, effect, and implications of profiling, as expressed by various stakeholders. The second part undertakes a narrative unpacking where the lived experiences of the profiled, the people in power and other community members are presented. This paints a multi-perspective picture of the phenomenon of profiling itself.

## IN THIS SECTION

- 17 WHY DOES PROFILING HAPPEN?
- 17 WE ARE NOT TALKING ENOUGH
- 18 WE ARE NOT DOING ENOUGH
- 20 WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND ENOUGH
- 22 WHAT ARE THE LIVED EXPERIENCES & VIEWS OF PEOPLE?

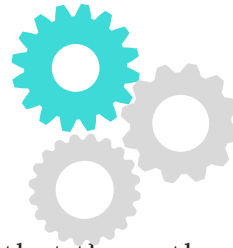


# WHY DOES PROFILING HAPPEN?

---

Three distinct answers to that question emerged from the research done to create this toolkit:

## WE ARE NOT TALKING ENOUGH



One of the key arguments among activists is that the authorities dilute the conversation. Though state organizations have commissioned various reports on profiling over the years, the response and follow ups to the reports have been either mixed or muted. This diminishes the magnitude of the problems with profiling and subsequently waters down any ameliorative measures. Activists specifically emphasize that acknowledging the nature and extent of the issue is a key step to addressing it. State actors, in their defense, point to various conversations that have indeed taken place. Police-community tensions also continue to exist in various forms, sometimes leading to a breakdown of trust and communication.

"THEY HAVE TO ACCEPT TO USE THE R-WORD, THE SYSTEMATIC RACISM CONCEPT. TO ADDRESS RACISM, PEOPLE NEED TO FIRST BE ABLE TO TALK ABOUT IT." [1]

- Fo Niemi  
Executive Director of Centre for  
Research-Action on Race  
Relations

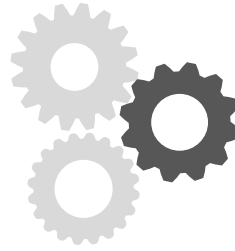
"RECOGNIZING THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM IS THE FIRST STEP. WE WON'T BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THESE ISSUES AS LONG AS WE AVOID ACKNOWLEDGING THE PROBLEM." [2]

- Will Prosper  
Ex-RCMP officer, community  
activist, Hoodstock organiser  
and documentary filmmaker

"I HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO BE KIND TO PEOPLE AND THAT'S JUST THE WAY I WAS BROUGHT UP. I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO GROW UP AROUND WASHINGTON DC - WHICH IS ONE OF THE MORE DIVERSE AREAS IN THE US. IF I GREW UP IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE IN OKLAHOMA THEN I MIGHT BE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON. YOU'RE A PRODUCT OF YOUR ENVIRONMENT. I WAS LUCKY THAT I GREW UP AROUND OF A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO WEREN'T LIKE ME SO IT WASN'T UNUSUAL TO ME." [3]

- JR Hayes  
Pig Destroyer Band Member

# WE ARE NOT DOING ENOUGH

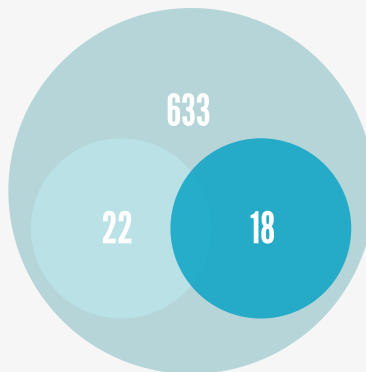


One reason for the continued problem of profiling is that not enough corrective action is being taken to improve the perceptions and attitudes of state actions, and there is inadequate supportive action within communities. There is the perception that when instances of profiling are identified there are not enough disciplinary measures against the offending officers and that the system does not respond adequately. For example, there is a lack of representation for profiled communities within the police departments.

## LONGUEUIL POLICE FORCE

THERE ARE **633 POLICE OFFICERS** SERVING IN THE LONGUEUIL POLICE FORCE [1]

OF THOSE 633 OFFICERS, **22** ARE FROM A **VISIBLE MINORITY**



OF THOSE 633 OFFICERS, **18** ARE FROM AN **ETHNIC MINORITY**

From a preventive stance, it is necessary to sensitize police and other state forces to the lived experiences of the profiled in order to develop both understanding and empathy. On the other hand, currently there are limited supportive actions within communities; these are only sporadically or unevenly available, if at all.

For example, arts-based approaches serve to support the community in the context of dehumanizing experiences such as profiling. There is evidence to show that arts-based and humor-based interventions have benefits for the community. To view examples see Project SOMEONE initiatives [Learning to Hate: an Anti-Hate Comic Project](#) as well as [Landscape of Hope](#), both of which explore the boundaries of inclusivity of marginalized communities by creating exclusive artistic spaces for them to project their unique narratives.

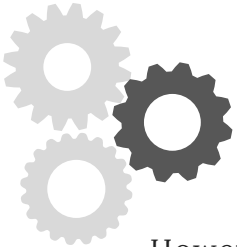
## UNPACKING

"ART IS A VERY PERSONAL EXPRESSION AND WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE PEOPLE ISN'T ALWAYS PRETTY. WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOMETIMES PEOPLE ARE GETTING THOSE UGLY THINGS OUT NOT BECAUSE THEY WANT TO HURT ANOTHER PERSON, BUT JUST BECAUSE THEY WANT TO GET IT OUT OF THEMSELVES. WHEN YOU VIEW ART I THINK YOU HAVE TO VIEW IT A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY THAN YOU VIEW POLITICS OR THINGS LIKE THAT." [1]

- JR Hayes  
Pig Destroyer Band Member

"I LOOK AT THE LOCATION OF ART IN MONTREAL, AND LET'S START WITH THE STATUES—I DON'T SEE ANY STATUES IN THE ST-MICHEL NEIGHBOURHOOD, NOR DO I SEE ANY IN MONTREAL-NORTH. THEY ARE ALWAYS IN THE SAME PLACES, AND NOT EVERYBODY HAS ACCESS TO THAT ART. WHY NOT? THAT'S NOT NORMAL. DON'T WE ALSO HAVE THE RIGHT TO HAVE SCULPTURES? DON'T WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO HAVE ACCESS TO THAT?" [2]

- Will Prosper  
Ex-RCMP officer, community activist, Hoodstock organiser and documentary filmmaker

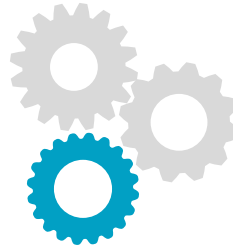


However such support systems are available only in select urban pockets, leaving a vast majority of the communities without access to such opportunities. Finally, there is the issue of public perception of communities. The media paints and emphasizes stereotyped images of communities which the public often consumes unquestioningly. This leads to the narrative of some communities being prone to criminal intentions, which in turn leads to increased profiling. There is scope for more action in both correcting such representations in the media, and in educating people to view such representations with a critical eye.



"We have rules... but are they enforced? Are they even practically enforceable in today's policing context and culture? Is the burden on the victim reasonable given the nature of the actions taken against them? The existence of formal rules is not the end of the story. Far from it. It is also necessary to look at the actual practical application - on the ground - of these rules to assess whether there is a systemic problem. Without admitting it, ... your position has just changed from "the system tolerates racism" to "the legal system may have shortcomings in investigating and punishing racist acts". Two radically different positions. A social system that continually tolerates a legal system that has shortcomings in investigating and punishing racist acts is a system that tolerates racism."  
-An anonymised social media user

# WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND ENOUGH



Yet another aspect that underlies the phenomenon of profiling is the claim that not enough is understood about the issue, what causes it and how it may be addressed. The first claim is that there are not enough data about how extensive the issue of profiling is, and whether the phenomenon is concentrated in particular communities. Available public reports analyze data of certain regions in certain time frames, but such data are not available in consolidated forms. [1]

Secondly, there is the issue of unconscious bias. This refers to the idea that some human actions are driven by prejudices that one is not necessarily aware of. In the case of profiling, it would imply that police officers may indeed be profiling community members but there is no conscious intent on their part to discriminate. Their actions are driven by conditioning and other elements that creates an unconscious bias against the community. Unconscious bias is extensively researched, and there is evidence to demonstrate that it does indeed exist among police officers, but not enough is known about what is a realistic solution to the issue. [2]

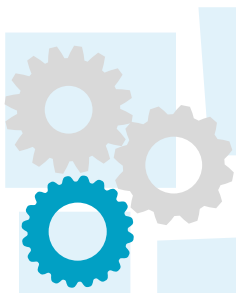


"Every community has "stuff". There's illegal activity everywhere. The problem is criminals are treated differently. And why should a criminal reflect on the entire race? That's what boggles my mind the most."  
-An anonymised social media user

"Racism exists and it does not come only from white people, I've lived it at work from some colleagues and after they are going to accuse us of being racists, we are forced to keep quiet for fear of being called racist."  
-An anonymised social media user

The third aspect is a lack of cultural and religious understanding. Not being open towards practices and beliefs that are different from one's own leads to a sense of othering, which in turn leads to discriminatory behaviour. There is not enough education and understanding among communities regarding such differences. A variation of this is an understanding of the power of symbols and how they affect perceptions. Symbols such as the hijab, for example, stand out in this context. Comments on online forums show that while some members of the public are attuned to how symbols, whether they are religious or cultural (such as flags, fleur de lis, red poppy) are visible enablers of discrimination. [1]

# UNPACKING



The fourth area affected by a lack of understanding is that those in positions of power and privilege do not actually understand the dehumanizing nature of profiling. This makes it difficult for them to see the perspective of the profiled and also the need for action on it. Finally, there exists the reality that profiling can be bi-directional. Communities also hold stereotyped views of those in power, and do not always appreciate that individual and institutional views may be different among the police. This further adds to the complexity of conversations or actions. [1]

"IT'S ABOUT EXISTENCE FOR CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE; TO WALK AROUND WITH THE AWARENESS THAT SOMETHING COULD HAPPEN. IT'S ABOUT BEING CAREFUL; BEING CAREFUL OF WHAT YOU SAY; BEING CAREFUL NOT TO TALK TOO LOUD; BEING CAREFUL NOT TO ATTRACT ATTENTION. LIVING THIS WAY CAN BE VERY ROUGH ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN. IT IS A HUGE BURDEN, INCLUDING PSYCHOLOGICALLY, AND YOU DON'T FEEL FREE TO EXIST." [2]

- Elsa F. Mondésir  
Youth educator and member of  
the Youth Advisory Group of the  
Canadian Commission for  
UNESCO

"IT'S NOT THE INTENT OF THE POLICE OFFICERS THAT WE NEED TO FOCUS ON, IT'S THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PERSON THAT'S BEEN STREET CHECKED THAT WE NEED TO FOCUS ON. AND IF THAT EXPERIENCE IS ONE OF DISCRIMINATION, THEN WE HAVE A PROBLEM WITH PUBLIC TRUST AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE." [1]

- Dylan Mazur  
Community lawyer with BCCLA



## DISCUSSIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

### IN REGARDS TO RACIAL PROFILING, THERE ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT:



#### IT EXISTS

- POLICE CHECKS ARE EXAGGERATED
- DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN WHITES AND VISIBLE MINORITIES



#### IT DOESN'T EXIST

- ITS JUST A VICTIMIZATION SCHEME
- THE POLICE ARE ONLY DOING THEIR JOB



#### IT EXISTS ON BOTH SIDES

- WE ALL HAVE UNCONSCIOUS BIASES
- POLICE DON'T TRUST COMMUNITIES
- COMMUNITIES DON'T TRUST THE POLICE

# WHAT ARE THE LIVED EXPERIENCES & VIEWS OF PEOPLE

---

Click on any of the names to hear more about their experiences and views on racial and social profiling.



**WILL PROSPER**

EX-RCMP OFFICER, COMMUNITY ACTIVIST, HOODSTOCK ORGANISER AND FILMMAKER



**JULIE BOUVIER**

SERGEANT AND HEAD OF VAL D'OR FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY MIXED POLICE STATION



**JEANNETTE BRAZEAU**

ELDER FROM THE ANISHNABE FIRST NATION OF LAC-SIMON, NEAR THE MUNICIPALITY OF VAL-D'OR



**PIERRE PAPATIE**

ELDER FROM THE ANISHNABE FIRST NATION OF LAC-SIMON, NEAR THE MUNICIPALITY OF VAL-D'OR