Network Against Islamophobia

Facilitator Guide for NAI Modules and Workshops
Background, Curriculum notes, and Facilitation Challenges

Created by Network Against Islamophobia and PARCEO

The Network Against Islamophobia (NAI), a project of Jewish Voice for Peace, was created to serve as a resource to, and work with, JVP chapters and other groups interested in organizing against Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism and to be a partner to the broader, Muslim-led movement against Islamophobia.

We created these materials – a two session curriculum and resources; a series of modules; and a facilitator guide – so we can be effective, accountable partners in this work.

Many thanks to Nina Mehta and Krysta Williams from the Participatory Action Research Center (PARCEO) for reviewing and contributing so meaningfully to the curriculum and for co-creating the facilitator guide.

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I. Purpose of the Guide

This Facilitator Guide offers background and ways for using the Network Against Islamophobia (NAI) workshop curriculum and modules as well as practical support for creating an inclusive and welcoming learning environment. We encourage critical thinking and reflection to enable participants to interact with the materials in different ways. The NAI curriculum was designed using a popular education or Participatory Action Research (PAR) framework. PAR is a framework for engaging in research and organizing for social justice that is rooted in a community's own knowledge, wisdom, and experience. This framework is helpful for Network Against Islamophobia facilitation, because it allows for participatory and experiential engagement with the material and with each other during the workshop sessions.

We learn from and partner with the many Muslim and other impacted groups that are in the leadership of organizing against Islamophobia and racism. We created these materials so we can be effective, accountable partners in this work.

The curriculum and resources were developed by NAI for community education and learning with JVP members and others, but they were not created in isolation. All of the materials and information **result** from input and work done with a range of groups. Likewise, the action and organizing examples used in this curriculum were developed and initiated by NAI, not in isolation, but in collaboration and relationship with other groups, including Muslim communities and others directly targeted by Islamophobia. NAI believes that we can and should both initiate actions within our communities and work in solidarity and in coalition with organizing efforts led by Muslim and other targeted groups. This curriculum and its different uses encourage both learning and action. Coming from our different positions and locations as members of JVP **or other groups,** we consider what we can or should be thinking about and doing to stop and interrupt racist or islamophobic acts and policies.

II. Goals of PAR-based Facilitation

Facilitation is a tool used to guide, support and move a process forward. Facilitation through a PAR framework is reflective, intentional, and participatory, ensuring that all voices are heard. Below are some guiding principles that we believe are helpful to keep in mind when facilitating within this framework.

- Foster an environment to build healthy, respectful relationships by developing clear goals and establishing the group's purpose together.
- Recognize who is in the room and remain conscious of issues of power, dynamics, different forms of expression so that all types of participation are valued equally.
- Guide the process while not dominating conversation.
- Facilitators work to ensure that all participants, including themselves, are integrated as genuinely as possible into the group. Facilitators balance the various dynamics and engage as both a teacher and a learner.
- Facilitation is never neutral, it is a political project. Facilitators should be able to express their thoughts and perspectives, since they are active members of the group. Attempting to take a neutral position or to remove themselves from the group is not honest and does not help the group.

III. Participants and Partners

This curriculum and the issue and organizing-based modules can be used in a host of ways by JVP chapters (which includes many different communities of Jews, and also some members who aren't Jewish); coalition work led by Muslim and/or other groups; other community meetings, teach-ins or college groups.

JEWISH COMMUNITIES AND OTHER PARTNERS

If you are going to do a workshop as part of your internal education as a Jewish group (for example, as a JVP chapter or in collaboration with another Jewish organization), we suggest reviewing and using this curriculum together. It's geared for our internal community education, so that we can be stronger and more knowledgeable, principled, and effective as partners and in our organizing against Islamophobia. We have also found that groups outside the Jewish community—other partners and ally groups like Christian groups, for example—have wanted to use the curricula, and a lot of it is also quite appropriate for such groups (except for the part on how do we do this work within Jewish communities, though many of the questions may be appropriate for other partnering communities as well). Below are some questions to consider when working within Jewish and other non-Muslim-led organizations:

- What are our goals and challenges for working within Jewish communities to challenge Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism?
- How do we honor and build upon the multiple Jewish experiences, histories, and locations as we engage in our work?
- How might we begin to address some of those challenges?
- How might we decide which Jewish spaces and/or communities we would like to enter?
- What concrete next steps can we take to begin or strengthen this work within Jewish communities?

COALITION WORK

If you, as a JVP chapter or Jewish group, are partnering to create workshops with Muslim groups or others that have been directly impacted by Islamophobia and racism, we think it might be most valuable to share the curricula and/or materials as possible resources, rather than as a fixed curriculum, so that you and your partners can develop and build it together from the ground up. For example, you can use the resources and materials in a range of contexts, but the framing of the curriculum would be rooted in, and the curriculum would be developed with, the groups doing it together—recognizing the critical role of those most impacted by Islamophobia. Below are some questions to think about when partnering or collaborating with Muslim groups or others directly impacted by Islamophobia:

- What are some of the guiding principles you think are important to keep in mind when working in coalition with Muslim and anti-Islamophobia groups?
- What relationships do you already have/would like to have?
- What would be your explicit goals for building stronger relationships with Muslim communities and other groups and communities working to challenge Islamophobia?
- What are some of the issues you might work on locally that would relate to and build from the connections and intersections in this work among different communities?
- What concrete next steps can we take to begin or strengthen this work?

IV. Curriculum and Resources

NAI Two-Session Workshop:
This workshop series is divided into two 2-hour sessions with several sections within each session. There are also suggested resource materials as follow-up to each of the sections. Materials to be used for this two-session workshop include:
- Full NAI curriculum (two 2-hour sessions)
- Facilitator guide
- Handouts/resource materials to go with each of the curriculum sessions
- Hand-out about NAI and how to be in touch with us

Tips for use:
- Groups who want a full in-depth conversation and expanded conversation
- For JVP chapters and other Jewish groups, college campus groups, and other groups that have time for the full curriculum

Intro Module:
A condensed version of the two session NAI Curriculum. This 60-75 minute Introduction module can also be used in conjunction with the Action, Coalition Building, and Race and Racialization Module options (see below). Materials to be used for this module include:
- 60-75-minute condensed NAI curriculum session
- Facilitator guide
- Handouts/resource materials to go with each of the curriculum sessions
- Handout about NAI and how to be in touch with us

Tips for use:
- For groups that want a condensed version of the full NAI curriculum
- This is useful as a general introduction and as an introduction to the modules (see below)
- For JVP chapters and other Jewish groups, college campus groups, and other general uses

NAI Action Module:
This module is for individuals and groups that want to plan an action or are currently organizing a campaign or action against Islamophobia, including canvassing, solidarity actions, examples like the Chanukah action, Direct Action, among others. This module was designed for JVP chapters and other Jewish groups, college campus groups, and other organizing groups. When planning a campaign or action, participants should think both about how and why they might work with coalitions (see Coalition Building Module) and also how and when to initiate actions within their own groups. Materials to be used for this module include:
- 65 minute module
- Facilitator guide
- Handouts/resource materials to go with each of the curriculum sessions
- Handout about NAI and how to be in touch with us

- We suggest using this module after the Intro module
- Think about how to plan a campaign or action
- Prepare for canvassing, Direct Actions, campaigns or other actions
- Think about when to create and initiate programs and actions within your own groups, and when and why to work in coalition with other groups
- Consider what you want to accomplish with your action

NAI Coalition Building Module:

Many JVP chapters and other groups are thinking about ways to challenge Islamophobia, both within Jewish communities and in partnership with other groups, particularly with Muslim groups and others directly targeted by Islamophobia. This module is designed for groups working in partnership, or wanting to work within coalitions, with Muslim partners and with other groups challenging Islamophobia. Jewish organizations, JVP chapters, college campus groups, and other organizing groups **can think about how t**o plan and initiate actions within their own communities, and in solidarity with other groups. Materials to be used for this module include:
- 60 minute module
- Facilitator guide
- Handouts/resource materials to go with each of the curriculum sessions
- Handout about NAI and how to be in touch with us

Tips for use:
- We suggest using this module after the Intro module
- Entering into coalition work
- Being an effective, accountable partner
- Planning for multi-faith actions and organizing processes, including questions, thoughts, challenges and possibilities for working within coalitions
- Reflect on relationships you have with different groups, and think about who you would like to work with
- Think about how to integrate personal experiences, positions, roles and expertise, while honoring those of others
- Think about when to create your own programs, and when to work in coalition with other groups

Forthcoming: Race, Racism, and Racialization Module

V. Curriculum and Modules: Rationale

Overview—To strengthen our work to challenge Islamophobia from our different locations and communities and through our work at JVP, we believe that building an understanding together of

Islamophobia and and anti-Arab racism and their many manifestations can be enormously valuable to developing and engaging in thoughtful, meaningful, responsible, collective organizing.

The curricula and modules were developed over a three-year period by those of us at NAI, and deeply informed and shaped by the ideas/reflections/feedback/discussions we had from and with JVP chapters, partners in Muslim communities, and others impacted by Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism.

The two-session workshop curriculum was initially geared toward Jewish communities, though many who are not part of Jewish communities have also reached out to us and may find it useful as well. It is designed to be used in its entirety. We also have created shorter modules to enable multiple uses of the curriculum and to make it as accessible as possible.

In addition, we have created a number of resources so that those doing this work can draw upon the great, deep work and thinking of those within Muslim communities and many others who address and have experience with these issues. The curriculum is an evolving one that we will add to, strengthen and deepen as we continue to do our organizing. We have a great deal to learn from and with those who use or draw upon the curriculum in their local communities as well as, of course, from and with those engaged in challenging Islamophobia and racism.

Definitions of Islamophobia—While each of us may bring with us our own understanding of what we consider to be a good definition of Islamophobia, we began the curriculum with this definition section so, as a group doing the curriculum together, we can begin to explore multiple, expansive understandings of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism and their many dimensions. This begins to lay a framework that enables the group from the start to see that Islamophobia is both manifested and articulated in a range of ways that we discuss more throughout the curriculum—for example, in different forms of violence, as anti-Muslim racism, through surveillance, and through "liberal Islamophobia."

Challenging Our Assumptions—We created this section out of an awareness that, for those of us who are not Muslim (even if we have been working to challenge Islamophobia), we can't help but be impacted by the pervasive Islamophobic assumptions that have become "normalized." We highlight Islamophobic assumptions, for example, about issues around violence and terrorism (part of a "liberal Islamophobia" narrative) **and** common misperceptions about who Muslims and Arab American are. We have seen repeatedly how organizing without addressing these assumptions can easily end up unintentionally recreating the very Islamophobia we are wanting to dismantle and reinforcing a notion of "us" and "them" that is very problematic.

Individual vs. State-Sponsored Islamophobia—While we don't minimize individual acts of Islamophobia—they are horrific and express themselves in multiple ways—we also want to really understand state/structural/systemic Islamophobia and why this is so critical for us to address. We want to think more deeply about the complex interaction of individual and state-sponsored Islamophobia. As we know, most mainstream Jewish organizations are either silent about or actively promote many aspects of state-sponsored Islamophobia. We want these manifestations of Islamophobia to be front and center in our work.

<u>Islamophobia and Israel Politics</u>—Once we have this foundation, we can move into the sections on the relationship/interaction/intersections among Islamophobia/Israel politics/the "war on terror"/U.S. imperialism and violence. These connections are generally not made in mainstream Jewish (as well as other) communities. We believe that, without these discussions, we can't truly get to the heart of Islamophobia and that it is essential to have these discussions before we can think about how to organize against it in our communities.

<u>Organizing</u>—We want to think together about how we can organize in our communities—both within our multiple Jewish spaces and as part of the broader movement—to challenge Islamophobia, anti-Arab racism, white supremacy, occupation, and imperialism in our work.

We will continue to think about and strengthen all these sections and will add more resources and curricula on different perspectives related to issues of race and class and gender and to our different locations and identities.

VI. Helpful Considerations Around the Training

As a facilitator, your role is to guide the curriculum sessions as well as individual and group dynamics within the process. These are some helpful considerations for a smooth and effective training.

PLANNING BEFORE THE TRAINING:
- Outreach and follow-up with participants, including emails, phone calls, in-person meetings, informational sessions, flyers, etc.
- Schedule a time to go over the training with your co-facilitator, if you have one.
- If there is no co-facilitator, consider distributing rotating roles to participants, like time-keeper, etc.
- Review curriculum, agenda, and overall goals of training.
- Choose and prepare session activities, questions, quotes, materials, resources etc.
- Think about the space for the training and what materials are needed, this could include video monitor, Internet connection, paper, pens etc.
- Create signs and wayfinding materials for the space.
- Plan and/or familiarize yourself with comfort needs like water, food, bathroom access.
- Information to know or ask about participants before the first session:
    - Personal background as it relates to the topic
    - Previous education about Islamophobia
    - Reason/motivation for participating in the session
    - Language and interpretation needs
    - Childcare needs
    - ADA accessibility of space
    - Are participants okay with being photographed during the session

DURING THE TRAINING:
- Post wayfinding materials and set up the room to match the session needs.
- Reference the day's goals throughout each session.
- Create an atmosphere that maximizes everyone's comfort level. It's helpful to refer back to the

group-generated guidelines at the beginning of each session.
- Facilitators are there to guide and direct but not dominate discussion.
- Be conscious of oppressive language (racist, sexist, homophobic, ageist, etc.) and think about ways to address and mitigate comments beforehand.
- Allow for quiet moments of reflection.
- Check in with your co-facilitator about the overall feeling, time, and needs of the group.
- Set up a system/forum for collecting thoughts, comments and responses that don't fit into the session agenda. Encourage people to use a reflection journal and create an ongoing comments or question space in the form of chart paper, suggestion box, google doc, email thread, etc.

AFTER THE TRAINING:
- Spend a few minutes debriefing about what went well and what was challenging. These reflection questions can be helpful for thinking through some of the questions or thoughts about the session(s).
  - o What went well?
  - o What were challenges?
  - o How did particular activities work or not work for your group?
  - o What alteration (additional tools, info, etc.) do you want to make for next time to address the needs of the group?
- Integrate feedback and make notes for subsequent sessions.
- Share with the rest of the group any resources or follow-up questions that came out of the session.

VII. Facilitation Challenges and Tools

Listed below are several facilitation issues to consider before, while, and after conducting the sessions, along with helpful tips for working through them with the group.

Neutrality: Network Against Islamophobia curriculum is not neutral. The materials and information here are explicitly anti-Islamophobic and anti-racist. They may not appease or appeal to every group. It can be important to conduct the sessions with those who may not be initially open to the curriculum. Some suggestions:
- Ask participants to keep an open mind and engage with new perspectives.
- Ask participants which viewpoint they hear most often in the news, conversations, etc. Does that make it the "right/complete" perspective?
- What other situations are they familiar with where the mainstream media does not share the full story/perspective?

New material: Everyone is learning together and each person is encountering the material from a different background. It is important to show sensitivity to the fact that worldviews may be questioned through exposure to this curriculum. It may also be helpful to remind participants that we often respond with a stance of disbelief or skepticism to information that conflicts with our understanding of a situation. Still, we should strive to remain as open as possible, even if the new information is difficult to accept. Some suggestions:
- Stop the conversation before it escalates further--acknowledge the speaker's feelings and then take a break or move onto another topic.
- Refer back to the discussion guidelines created at beginning of the sessions.
- Check in with the group and the individual(s) later in the session to address the situation. Try to do so in a way that doesn't create an "us and them" scenario.

Participation: Quiet participants may need more time to read, reflect, and process. The challenge is to incorporate their voices or thoughts without putting them on the spot. Encourage all participants to use their reflection journals and provide space for participants to post/express their thoughts or reflections throughout the sessions. This may be through an email discussion thread or through a shared google/web or written document. Emphasize that participants can always go back and spend more time reading through the materials later. Some suggestions:

- Provide 2-3 minutes of "think time" before having people share out in a large group.
- Offer different ways of interacting with the material--journaling, discussions, drawing, etc.
- Use a variety of discussion set-ups--pairs, small groups, museum walks, etc.
- Try sharing quick responses by going all the way around the circle without anyone commenting on what each person says.

Participation: What if the same individuals are always speaking up in the group? Utilize facilitation tools to give everyone the opportunity to contribute (small groups, going around in a circle, sharing out via post-it notes, etc.). Facilitators can appreciate the talkative individual's contribution and, at the same time, encourage others to speak by emphasizing how valuable it is to hear everyone's voice. Some suggestions:

- If it continues to be an issue, speak privately with the talkative individual and collectively figure out a way to address the challenge.
- See tips in scenario #3 for more ideas.

Disruption: How to address racist, Islamophobic, or other disruptive behavior in the group? Community Agreements or Ground Rules are a helpful way of establishing accountability and group response/action to disruptive behavior. Facilitation is also necessary to draw attention back to the established agreements, or help create new ones to deal with the disruption. Deciding as a group how to handle the disruption is important. Some suggestions:

- Create clear Community Agreements that address disruptive behavior.
- Refer back to Community Agreements as needed, relying on the group to take on the issue, and relying on your ability to carry out the group-decided response.
- See tips in scenarios #3 and #4 for other ideas.

Considerable information: The curriculum contains a lot of information, and there is more still. Reflection, discussion and incorporation of additional information is important in order to engage participants' knowledge and analysis as much as possible. Facilitators can gauge participants' capacity to take in more information and guide participants to additional resources. Some suggestions:

- Encourage participants to explore background information and additional resources included in bibliography.
- Acknowledge that we are all teachers and learners in this process. No one is the "expert."
- Allow quiet time for reflection and encourage participants to use their reflection journal.
- Point participants to ways they can be involved in the struggle/process, rather than remaining paralyzed by the new information.

VIII. Additional Resources

JVP Resource [Bringing People Together: Events and Meetings](#)

PARCEO's complete [Facilitator Training](#)

*See complete NAI reading, video, and resources list for additional background information, including NAI videos.