



**ACTION WEEK
AGAINST RACISM
MARCH 12-22, 2009**

**CROSSED-WORDS:
BEING PART OF THE SOLUTION**

Racism is not just a concept. It is something that happens in the everyday. It leads to violence and exclusion, via words and acts we can and should not ignore. Taking action against racism and all the ways in which intolerance is expressed means taking a hard look at the places where it lives. It means changing how we think and how we talk to each other.

Racism limits us, the way a disease does. And it is not a simple infection. It comes with a mass of social evils all mixed in together. These “cross-infections” or “cross-discriminations”—racism plus sexism, ageism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia and xenophobia—are everywhere. At home, at school, at work, in the neighbourhood, in the justice system, hateful words and actions circulate freely, often with no consequences whatsoever. The result is an epidemic exclusion that keeps huge numbers of our fellow citizens from participating in social, cultural and political life.

One way to eliminate this kind of racism is to rethink the “crossed-words” that slip into everyday conversation. Fighting exclusion forces us to look around for new language. If we want to rid ourselves of racism, we need to find new ways of talking—about each other and to each other. Words matter if we hope to build a better, more just world.

For ten years now, our partners in the Action Week Against Racism have been a beacon on the horizon of that better world. We have seen how they think, how they refer to people, how they open themselves up to new ideas and go in search of the Other. These are people with a vision of the common good, expressed in personal initiatives and group projects. We salute their conviction, tenacity and friendship. They come from Quebec City, Montreal, Sherbrooke, La Beauce and beyond. They work in the private sector and in media, in community, government and non-governmental organizations. They are the authors and agents of this Action Week. Words cannot solve every ill, it’s true. But when words are right, and righteous, what better than to celebrate and enjoy them. Thank you, everyone, and have a wonderful 10th anniversary!

AWAR Steering Committee