



2020
4TH ANNUAL
**YOUTH
RESILIENCE**
CONFERENCE REPORT

**Call to Action: Collaborative Approaches
to Build Youth Resilience and Prevent
Radicalization to Violence**

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We would also like to thank all the staff of Midaynta Community Services, the staff of Somali Immigrant Aid organization, participants, and volunteers for their commitment, resilience, and enthusiasm for the conference.

We would also like to acknowledge all panelists who were generous enough to share their time with us. Without your participation, this conference would not have been possible. We appreciate the time you took to share your expertise, knowledge, and wisdom. Special thanks to all our moderators who did a great job chairing the panels and posing questions for the panelists.

Midaynta Community Services would like to acknowledge our monthly roundtable partners, who for many years have supported Midaynta Community Services, participated at our roundtable meetings, and provided us with great insight and expertise. Special thanks to our key partners who participated and supported the conference in various ways: The Ontario Ministry of Children Community and Social Services (MCCSS), United States Consulate General in Toronto; The Ministry of Education; Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE); The Diversity Institute at Ryerson University; The Mosaic Institute; The Black Experience Project; Color of Poverty- Color of Change; The Canadian Council of Imams; Somali Immigrant Aid Organization; Northwood Neighbourhood Services; RCMP, York Regional Police, Toronto Police Service; and Peel Police.

The fourth annual conference was sponsored through the generous support from MCCSS, United States Consulate General in Toronto, OISE, Islamic Relief Canada, SafariOne, and Tawakal Express¹

¹ This report was prepared by Mahad Yusuf, Erica Wright, Regan Johnston, Prerana Bhatnagar, Gauravi Lobo, Muna Ali, and Sixbert Himbaza. Inquiries and comments regarding this report should be directed to info@midaynta.com

Welcome Remarks



Welcome everyone!

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 4th Annual Youth Resilience Conference here at the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto. This year's theme is A Call to Action: Collaborative Approaches to Build Youth Resilience and Prevent Radicalization to violence. The purpose of this youth resiliency conference is to build civil society's capacity to respond to hate, racism, radicalization in Canada and abroad.

Since 2015, Midaynta Community Services has invited youth, scholars, government officials, law enforcement, faith leaders, and community leaders to participate in its annual conference on youth radicalization. At last year's conference the presenters shared their experiences, expertise, and strategies on these issues that continue to make news headlines. Coming out of that Conference, a 'Call to Action' was formulated in order to ensure new areas and angles of this topic continue to be explored and the solutions discussed are initiated.

In 2015, the United Nations developed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development goals which focusses on improving health and education, reduce inequality, and economic growth. The agenda also recognizes violence as a treat to sustainability. Through the Youth Resiliency conference, we hope to achieve these goals.

We believe that having such an exceptional and diverse group of speakers and panelists will provide in-depth insight, as well as, potential solutions and practical tools of engagement models, methods and mechanisms that will help us forge lasting solutions to current problems facing our communities and society at large.

Your presence and participation here today will greatly help drive forth this conversation and engage communities in Ontario and beyond that are eager to learn more about this topic and how they can be catalysts for change.

I would like to give a special thanks to our sponsors, OISE, US Consulate General Toronto, Islamic Relief Canada, SafariOne, and Tawakal Express, as well as our Board of Directors, Roundtable members, staff, and volunteers, without whom none of this would be possible.

Lastly, I would like to thank and recognize today's panelists and speakers who were gracious enough to lend their knowledge and expertise towards our ongoing efforts to combat youth radicalization to violence. I hope everybody has a great day of learning and enjoys today's conference as we all work towards the betterment of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mahad Yusuf'.

Mahad Yusuf, Executive Director
Midaynta Community Services



Premier of Ontario - Premier ministre de l'Ontario



February 18 – 19, 2020

A MESSAGE FROM PREMIER DOUG FORD

I want to extend warm greetings to everyone taking part in the Fourth Annual Youth Resilience Conference. This year's theme, "A Call to Action: Collaborative Approaches to Build Youth Resilience and Prevent Radicalization to Violence" is a timely one.

I thank the hardworking team at Midaynta Community Services for organizing this gathering of experts from different communities and sectors. This event is a great opportunity to share insights and recommendations to address youth violence.

I believe that strong families and communities play an important role in helping young people reject violence and choose productive and positive paths in life. I want to thank the executive, staff and volunteers of Midaynta Community Services for their commitment to assisting newcomers, refugees, youth and other vulnerable groups adapt, find employment and business opportunities, and address issues that affect their families. Your work has done much to build stronger, healthier communities.

Our government is investing in our communities. We are taking a cross government approach to build comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions supports so our children and youth have early access to connected care and services before they hit a crisis point. We have also launched a province-wide strategy to curb gun crime and dismantle gangs once and for all.

By working together, we can build an even greater province for this and the next generation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Ford".

Doug Ford
Premier

Greetings from Dignitaries



Glen Jones

Glen Jones is a Professor of Higher Education and the Dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Mr. Jones spoke on behalf of the university

and mentioned that although education is a critical component of many issues and can, at times, be the problem, education can also provide solutions. We can only find a solution if we collaborate with one another and take the time to learn from each other.

Mr. Jones thanked Mahad and the many faculty members and volunteers who have been involved in the organization and presentations at the conference. He thanked Midaynta for organizing the conference and believes that one of the reasons he has enjoyed this relationship so much is because the organization works so closely with other partners in the community. He believes that this spirit of collaboration is what has been important to the success of this organization.

Mr. Jones also mentioned that organizing conferences like this, bringing together leading speakers, and trying to instil meaningful and insightful conversations, on often a challenging issue, is a very important step for society. He appreciated both the work of community organization, its spirit of collaboration and partnership, and the fact that it wants to further the conversation on these very difficult and challenging issues.

Mr. Jones closed his remarks by welcoming all and hoped to have a productive and stimulating two days of conversation with the hope of moving beyond identifying problems in order to towards find solutions to the challenges the community faces.



Greg Stanford

Greg Stanford is a Consul General for the United States. He began by praising the U.S Consul General's collaboration with Midaynta, as a dynamic, community-based organization

focussed on empowering marginalized communities in Ontario. He was grateful to the many of the participants who travelled from near and far to contribute their valuable expertise and to share unique insights on these important matters. Mr. Stanford believes that dialogues are crucial if we are to make progress on such challenging issues.

The U.S Consul General was delighted to be supporting this year's Youth Radicalization conference by facilitating the inclusion of speaker Dr. Saida Abdi. As a clinician dedicated to building individual, family, and community resilience against violence, he believes that Dr. Abdi's many experiences have given her a deep understanding of the best approaches to countering radicalization. It is only through a collaborative effort that we will find real-world solutions.

Mr. Stanford states that Youth Radicalization is indeed a profound cause for concern. The issue is complex and should never be considered a matter to be addressed only by the limited scope of law enforcement, communities, or families individually. Instead, he believes that we must bring all of these voices together. Mr. Stanford applauded the educators, the police, religious and community leaders, and the parents who have dedicated themselves to helping young people foster critical thinking, cultivate resilience and maintain a commitment to excellence through constructive causes.

He says that we must pay special attention to the issues of resilience. He maintained addressing the issues that lead to Youth Radicalization is the most reliable method to combat hate and radicalization. Therefore, it is our responsibility as members of the

broader community to build bridges of communication and trust. These bridges will serve as the foundation of resilience due to their ability to disrupt dangerous isolation and preserve community, be it within families, religious environments, or schools.

Connecting young people to educational systems and resources, employment opportunities, and social and health services in their communities is the best way to prevent radicalization. Mr. Stanford mentions that this is the crucial work that Midaynta's Youth Outreach Workers do every day, especially with isolated and marginalized groups who are often the most vulnerable to such influences and pressure.

Mr. Stanford concluded his remarks by wishing all a very successful productive conference and that he looks forward to learning more from the community and the best practices we can adopt in order to address this important issue moving forward.



MPP Faisal Hassan

MPP Faisal Hassan started by introducing himself as the Member of Provincial Parliament for the riding of York South-Weston. He expressed that he was honoured to be participating in

the 4th Annual Youth Resilience Conference.

He spoke of the time when he moved to Toronto from Manitoba and started working part-time at Midaynta Community Services in a program designed to support people who were homeless or at risk of being homeless.

He spoke eloquently about the housing crisis in Toronto and the important work being done by Midaynta to address the issue through its housing program. He also expressed his pride as a member of the Somali community — the first Somali-Canadian to be elected in the riding of York-South Weston in the Ontario Legislature — as well as a member of the first-ever Black Caucus in the Ontario Legislature.

MPP Hassan spoke of the causes and impact of gun violence in the city, which has claimed nine young lives so far in the year. He blamed the violence on the lack of investment in education, employment, and opportunities. He argued that it is very important that resources are invested rather than cut and that it was vital that individuals attending the conference understood the importance of this as well. He acknowledged that the conference has led to a call to action and that he will be delighted to receive the recommendations to share with his caucus in order to bring them forward for implementation.

The MPP closed his remarks by thanking everyone in attendance and the community as a whole, reminding the audience of the shared responsibility of working together to ensure that everyone is aware of the issues affecting the youth.



Kevin Pal

Kevin Pal is the Regional Director of the Youth Justice under the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. (MCCSS) Mr. Pal started his remarks by greeting and thanking Midaynta

for the opportunity to address the conference. He was thankful for the recognition of the work the Ministry has done with Mahad for several years. He expressed his pleasure to have had the opportunity to be a part of the conference for the last four years and is excited to see it continue to grow and expand each year.

Mr. Pal was quick to recognize the solutions-focused orientation of the agenda and the opportunities the conference will bring. He stressed how important it is to have the conversations to recognize the challenges related to youth radicalization and to begin a positive conversation in looking for solutions.

He closed by thanking everyone in the audience on behalf of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

Introduction

On February 18th & 19th 2020, Midaynta Community Services held the 4th Annual Conference on Youth Resilience, building on the 2019 Conference's Calls to Action. The 4th Annual Conference on Youth Resilience builds on Midaynta's years of advocacy and action to provide a platform for multiple stakeholders to discuss and devise solutions on issues that impact the black community in Canada. The purpose of this conference was a continuation of Midaynta's many initiatives that work to empower racialized communities in Ontario, provide a platform where issues impacting the black community can be discussed, and take a leading role in addressing such issues

Racialized youth and communities in Canada continue to face systematic barriers, racism and discrimination, trauma and grave mental health concerns that need to be addressed. Amid all these challenges and barriers, the resiliency of racialized youth in Canada is something remarkable. Notwithstanding all the barriers

and challenges racialized youth face, important lessons can be drawn on how the youth cope with such adversity.

Focusing on four themes, the purpose of the 2020 Conference was to examine existing efforts to promote youth resiliency and provide a critical look on what further action continues to be needed. The conference was structured around four panels that focused on the following themes:

- Media Narratives
- Increase of White Supremacism and its impact on gun violence
- State of funding for community organizations
- Educational reforms



Call to Action: Collaborative Approaches to Build Youth Resilience and Prevent Radicalization to Violence

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a disproportionate impact on racialized immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area (and globally), and the recent Black Lives Matter protests which have brought much needed attention to police brutality, have influenced the scope of this year's report. As a result, this report addresses the issues identified and recommendations put forth during the Conference, and postulates ways that progress can continue to be made in light of the events in 2020. By bringing together speakers from various disciplines, the 4th Annual Conference was able to promote an actionable dialogue of the key issues negatively impacting youth resiliency and what calls to action are most effective in practice.

This report will provide an overview of each of the panels and expand on the recommendations put forward by each of the panelists.

Speakers

Speakers at the conference were from academia, law enforcement, non-profit organizations, and various local community organizations. Each day had two panel discussion sessions with each panelist presenting for 10-15 minutes followed by a 30-minute discussion session where members of the audience asked questions and engaged with the panelists. Coffee and lunch breaks also afforded everyone the opportunity to network and to further engage with the panelists. Attendance was open to everyone who responded to the event invite and confirmed their attendance. Overall, event attendance for the 4th Annual Conference was high for the two days and displayed an enthusiastic audience.



2020 4TH ANNUAL YOUTH RESILIENCE CONFERENCE REPORT

Executive Summary

On day one, we heard a panel discussion from members of the media. The focus of this panel was the media's complex interactions with domestic and international terrorism, its critical role in advocacy and awareness, and the need for resources to continue to support trained journalists working on the ground. They discuss challenges and opportunities with social media, which has led to greater public awareness of social justice issues, while at the same time, has created a platform for terrorists to exploit this media coverage to spread their own messages of hate. The panel also acknowledged the media's responsibility in fairly representing racialized and marginalized communities, and to be cautious of prejudicial depictions when they tell stories of these groups.

Critical to discussions around radicalization and violence is white supremacy. Dr. Pamela Palmater, an Indigenous scholar, lawyer, and activist, stated that white supremacy is a systemic and ongoing issue. Motivated by a desire to seize and control wealth and power, this dangerous group, white supremacy is closely linked to gun violence, which proportionately puts the lives of Black and Indigenous People of Colour at risk. Beyond this, we cannot speak about white supremacy without discussing the genocide and ongoing violence perpetuated by the Canadian state against Indigenous peoples.

The second panel discussed the need for increased funding to support capacity building among community organizations. It highlighted the persistent gap in government investment in important community programs and grassroots work, as the majority of current grants are awarded to larger, non-local organizations and institutions who may be out of touch with community issues. The panelists noted that grant application processes need to become more accessible for local organizations, while also offering valuable advice to community organizers and allies in terms of obtaining funding within the current system.

On day two, we heard from members of community organizations, as well as from an advisor of police board, in a panel discussing alternative approaches to addressing radicalization and violence. Key takeaways from the speakers include the benefits of community involvement in policy decisions, including policing. Experience of the panelists has shown that transparency and collaboration increase community trust in authorities, leading to greater safety and resilience. They also called for continued and greater investment in support systems for marginalized groups, including resources such as therapy and rehabilitation for those who have been radicalized, as well as the need to raise awareness of existing supports.



Habeeb Ali next gave a presentation on exploring the ‘clash’ of loyalty between one’s Muslim faith and the norms of their new home in Canada. He explores the role of patriotism and nationalism in radicalization to violence, noting the importance of understanding the root causes of violence, especially among youth. Marginalization and conflicting pressures from peers in Canada, that differ from the expectations of their parents create internal struggles for youth. Many youths who seek to remain true to their faith are also trying to become part of Canada, while also being othered by many Canadians due to their race and their religion. There is a need for support for youth within the Muslim community, and a need for them to have their voices heard.

The final panel on education reform discussed youth marginalization and disenfranchisement as important indicators of radicalization that need to be addressed through youth agency, empowerment, political representation, and healing practices. In discussing education reform, the speakers addressed the role of the current education system in exacerbating inequalities and stated that there is an opportunity to use it instead towards building equity and resilience. They note that racism is not addressed enough in schools, with little context or thought given towards Black History Month, or an anti-oppression lens in history lessons. There is also a need for guidance counsellors in schools to support marginalized youth and, among other needs, to help youth navigate multiple identities within assimilationist contexts. They note that mental health needs to be prioritized through healing practices for youth, family engagement, a holistic understanding of well-being, and through decolonial ways of healing.

Keynote Address 1

Day 1

Saida M. Abdi, PhD, is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota.

She is a trained clinician and an expert in refugee trauma and resilience. She earned her PhD from Boston University. She also holds a second master's degree in Communications from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Dr. Abdi has worked for more than 20 years with Somali youth and families in the diaspora. Her area of focus is building individual, family, and community resilience against violence.

Dr. Abdi is the co-author of the recently published book, *Mental Health Practice with Immigrant and Refugee Youth: A Socioecological Framework* (American Psychological Association, 2019)

She has also authored and co-authored multiple articles on refugee and immigrant children and youth mental health.

Summary

The focus on Dr. Saida's speech was around the importance of building youth resiliency through community support. The environment has failed to promote youth resiliency and instead created adversity. The failure to prevent youth radicalization is not the fault of the individual; rather it is the fault of the environment to provide a support system for youth to thrive. By the time youth become radicalized, it is already too late. To change this environment, a multidisciplinary approach by multiple actors such as policymakers and community leaders, is needed. Dr. Saida conceptualized this approach as providing the last glass of water to one in need in the desert for the common good as tomorrow you could be the one who needs that glass of water.

Dr. Saida states that when children grow up, they are told to be one way in their community, while society is telling them to act another way. Examples include society judging youth for wearing a hijab, telling children that they are not acting 'white enough, or even kicking them out of their homes because they smoke pot. Resilience is the capacity to bounce back in the face of adversity – it is in the community. Yet, what happens to a community when the social environment is not able to support the idea of resilience?

Youth need to be empowered by their communities to build resilience in society. The issues that arise towards youth happen because of community and societal failings. When youth experience hardships or trauma or make mistakes, they should be embraced by the community instead of being pushed out. To find a solution, we need to look at societal practices and institutional dynamics to foster a more supportive environment.

Two things must happen:

1. A multidisciplinary approach to promote trust amongst mental health providers, community members, policymakers, and law enforcement must be created. Once trust is established, it is easier to change the culture of organizations, not just the people who work there.
2. Communities must come together to promote more togetherness to look after its members.

Panel Discussion I: The Media



The role of the media is critical to consider when exploring youth radicalization. The media's relationship with domestic and international terrorism is complicated. On the one hand, the media can play a critical role in advocacy and awareness, but at the same time terrorists can exploit this media coverage to spread their own messages of hate.

The media also has the responsibility to make critical considerations in its role as a victim's advocate. It must be held responsible for how it sometimes represents racialised and minority communities, in how it chooses to tell the stories of certain groups.

The changing landscape of the world means that we also have to consider forms of media outside of traditional news media. This panel addresses the role of social media, freelance media, and other forms of media consumption in smaller community contexts.

The panelists were:

- **Dave Michalski**, Special Advisor to the Office of the General Director, MSF
- **Michelle Shepherd** Journalist, Author, and Filmmaker
- **Dan Mamlok** Postdoctoral Fellow, Project Someone
- **Nadia Barre** Community Communicator, The Resiliency Project

Dave Michalski

Dave Michalski has over 19 years' experience working and living abroad in both secure and insecure locations for MSF (Doctors Without Borders). His Masters dissertation was on the consequences of the West's failure to engage with the Islamic Court Union in 2006 Somalia.

Dave focuses his presentation more on his own experiences while working in war zones. Despite this being a call to action, he acknowledges that he does not have many answers. Instead he will be sharing his observations. He emphasizes that his opinions are his alone and do not represent the view of MSF.

He highlights that the media does intertwine a lot with humanitarian work. Sometimes we need the media to highlight if there is a specific problem. NGOs and other groups like MSF can speak out and advocate for people's rights, but these organizations always have to balance advocacy with the operational needs that they are responding to. They have to ask the question, what about the people, is speaking out worth risking getting kicked out of where they are? Which option is the most effective?

To balance this out, a lot of times, such organizations invite the media to help with advocacy because they can come and go. The media does not have to maintain their operations.

When considering how it affects youth radicalization, there are two crucial things that Dave has come to learn. First, that alienation is a key factor leading to a lack of empathy in the rest of the population.

There are some important considerations to think about with regards to the media?

Access is one of the key things, whether working on a medical project, or trying to report. Access is getting tougher. This is partly because the access is tied into the perceived respectability of the community. Over the last couple of decades, the respectability of both humanitarian workers but also of journalists has been degraded over the last couple of decades. When he says degraded, Dave refers not to lay people but by the belligerence and conflict.

Another factor is one that has changed tremendously in recent times, resources. There has been a closure of bureaus, a rise in the cost of security, of care costs. This lack of resources has seen a rise in freelancers. But unfortunately, freelancers do not always have the right infrastructure around them, they don't have security. They are often pushed into doing dangerous things and then often they do not have the right critical thinking skills to be able to maneuver out of these situations.

MSF had 5 people kidnapped in Northern Syria, and Dave was the head of the crisis response team. The response had over 40 people and took 5 months to resolve. But if it had happened to a freelancer, they would be stuck with only their families for support. Families do not have the skills or the resources, or the emotional distance to solve these complex issues. Dave gives us the example of Steven Sotoloff and American-Jewish freelancer who went to Aleppo in a mistake that cost him his life².

Dave goes on to elaborate on the rise of the citizen journalist, with the advent of the Arab Spring and its effect on journalism. In that context, the State's eyes were not on teenagers on the street tweeting about things, but basically anyone with a cellphone was reporting. But this is dangerous as these people had a sense of invulnerability. They were not trained in journalistic ethics, untrained in risk-management, they were not neutral.

Anyone could then claim to be a journalist or a social worker. It blurs the line of professionalism and leads to the rise of the 'citizen journalist'.

The very same technology that gave this independence was also used to track people and pick them up. It resulted in the targeting of journalists not just by state governments but also by criminals. This kind of thing resulted in the kidnapping of over 50 journalists, which involved betrayal by people who guaranteed the security of journalists and aid workers.

This lack of access leads to misinformation. It can lead to inaccuracies, simplicity and sweeping generalizations. In the case of Somalia for example, with the rise of the Islamic courts, there started to spread stories about banning music, or that people would be flogged if they did not pray. Most of these things never occurred. Another example is when Amnesty International condemned the execution of a murderer, that the Islamic courts did. In this case it was accurate that the Islamic Courts did do that. But then this report was used by Jendayi Fraser to justify the invasion in 2000, late 2006, and ignored the reality on the ground.³

Dave then considers what people want from the media. The media functions on clicks, so it matters a great deal what people are interested in. Here, there is a role to be played by average citizens. People are driven to consume media because of fear, for personal distractions. They prefer to consume more insular media, focusing on immediate things. The more distance placed between the news and us, the less interested we are in consuming it.

For example, in early 2019, there was so much Canadian news about the airplane that went down over Ethiopia. Only because there were so many Canadians on board. People are interested in hearing stories that they connect with.

There is not a huge appetite for nuance, or for non-fictional work that focuses on complex subjects. It is a challenge for the media, in general to find the balance between what sells and what gives tangible, relevant and necessary information.

² Steven Sotoloff was an American Israeli freelance journalist who was kidnapped and murdered in Aleppo by ISIS in 2014. (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/11071159/Steven-Sotloff-beheaded-by-Islamic-State-live.html>)

³ Jendayi Fraser is the former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, heading the Bureau of African Affairs.

As he said at the beginning, Dave's focus was on sharing observations and asking questions. He leaves the audience with a lot of questions.⁴

KEY POINTS:

- The media can play a crucial role in victims advocacy that fieldworkers might not be able to.
- At the same time, the rise of independent journalism in warzones can lead to dangerous consequences.
- The lack of access to conflict zones leads to inaccuracy of information which results in sweeping generalized narratives in the media, which in turn can go on to affect policy decisions.

Michelle Sheppard

Michelle Sheppard is an award-winning journalist, author and filmmaker who has covered issues of terrorism and civil rights since the 9/11 attacks. During her two decades at the Toronto Star, she reported from more than 25 countries.

Michelle focuses on how to be better at journalism, how to be better at telling other people's stories. She did travel and report from conflict zones, but she is not a war correspondent. She covered stories in countries that perhaps do not get enough focus in the global media, such as Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia.

That is how she found herself in Somalia for the first time in 2006 when the ICU was in power. It was an important example to consider, what the media didn't get right, what was the reality on the ground, and how this can have disastrous consequences.

Michelle admits that it is true that readers don't care about countries unless there is a connection to themselves or their own lives. Journalists that want to do foreign coverage, joke about finding a "metro-man". For example, if there was an earthquake in Pakistan, Michelle says a Canadian journalist would try to find

someone in Mississauga who was there at the time, and it then becomes a front-page story.

She managed to find the "metro-man" to get her to Somalia, a Somali Canadian who had gone over to join the Islamic courts. At the time, all she knew about what was happening in with Somali was what was being said in the Western media and in particular, the message coming out of Washington. The narrative was that it was the 'African Taliban'. The spin was as follows; we must consider what happened when we didn't pay attention to the Taliban in Afghanistan, we ended up having the consequence of 9/11.

When Michelle set off to Somalia, the story and the angle that she was going to pursue was about the 'African Taliban'.

What she found on the ground was incredibly different. In a very short time, with the help of many people, she was able to interview Sheikh Sharif who was the head of the ICU at the time, as well as Professor Addou, a better very senior member of the ICU.

She feels that she wrote a nuanced story; acknowledging that there were concerns, and that people were optimistic, but still cautious, and yet really emphasized the fact that there was security. But it was just one of very few stories because she was one of only a handful of western journalists that was on the ground, at that time. In addition to this story, she would go back and forth to Somalia over the years.

A valid criticism that people often have is that when journalists cover certain regions, it's only the negative story that is told. Michelle would try to find positive stories. She admits that those were the harder stories to get on the front-page. There is a perception that people crave good news stories, but it is often the bad news stories that sell. It is a bit of a question; is it the media that's feeding that or is it the public that is craving that? It might be a bit of both, according to Michelle.

Another thing she tried to do when covering issues of terrorism is that she tried to address the root causes and tried to show how radicalism and violent extremism was similar, no matter the group that was perpetrating it. One story that really highlighted this point was when

⁴ An Ethiopian airlines plane crashed just outside of Addis Ababa in March 2019. 32 Kenyans, 18 Canadians, eight Americans and seven British nationals were among the passengers. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-47513508>)

she was in Norway when a far-right terrorist carried out his massacre⁵. She read his 1518-page manifesto and could not believe how similar it was to what Al Qaeda was putting out. Indeed, the Norwegian terrorist was Anti-Muslim, Anti-Immigrants, but the rhetoric was almost the same. This was always the message she tried to put forward.

The curious thing is, that the longer Michelle stayed on the beat she began to become a 'crummier' journalist. She started to argue against many of her stories going on the front-page. This was just because of this realisation that when we are writing about terrorism, what so many of these groups or individuals are craving is that recognition, that infamy.

She would be arguing against a story going on the front-page, because she did not want incredibly troubled children looking for something to belong to, to see such a piece that would function as propaganda for these groups.

Michelle ends her presentation with a final story, one of the stories she told from Mogadishu, the story that her film is about. It started during a 2010 visit to Mogadishu. The war was over, but the Shabab still controlled the areas of town. A contact introduced her to four boys, each had one hand and one foot cut off, by the Shabaab, and the youngest was called Ismail. When it was time for her to leave, Ismail begged her to take him to Canada. She had a little Canadian pin on her bag, and when he motioned for it, she gave it to him.

“As I am running out to leave, he dropped it. My last image was him trying to find this Canadian pin. It was heartbreaking. ”

She came back and wrote that story and thought that nothing was really going to come out of it. But because of many, Somali Canadians, the story did have an impact and a group in Canada worked to get him out of Mogadishu, to get him to safety. A year after the story,

he escaped into Kenya, and he got refuge in Norway. It sounds like a happy story, and ten years have gone by since. But Michelle admits that she and her team are struggling with their film and Ismail is struggling too.

As she said before she prided herself in trying to tell nuance stories. She realised Ismail's story, in some ways, was an 'easy' story. He was a perfectly packaged 'victim'.

“But as we dig deeper into this and we look back, there are so many questions that now come up. He fled in 2011, he had not been home since, he wanted to go home, he got his Norwegian citizenship and he was finally able to travel. So, they went back. Going back really showed the limitations that journalists have. The limitations that a white film crew has, going into Mogadishu and realising the western lens, with which I was telling the story, and the limitations on that.”

Importantly, with watching Ismail both before he went and when he came back. Michelle says that he is now struggling with this idea of displacement. This is something that is just not talked about enough in the media. In Norway, Ismail is never quite Norwegian enough, but when he went back to Mogadishu, he was not quite Somali. He is really struggling with that.

What Michelle and her film crew are struggling with is how to make an honest film without these tidy narratives that the media is used to creating and that audiences are used to consuming?⁶

5 Refers to a Norwegian far-right terrorist, who committed the 2011 Norway attacks. (<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/anders-brevik-right-wing-extremist-who-killed-77-in-utoya-norway-massacre-wins-lawsuit-against-a6992756.html>)

6 Refers to a Norwegian far-right terrorist, who committed the 2011 Norway attacks. (<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/anders-brevik-right-wing-extremist-who-killed-77-in-utoya-norway-massacre-wins-lawsuit-against-a6992756.html>)

KEY POINTS:

- The challenges faced by the media with balancing what 'stories' work and what stories are important.
- It is important for the media to consider how they can tell stories about extremist groups without putting them on the front page and giving them the exposure, they want.
- It is important for the media to be mindful to avoid solely negative narratives when speaking about conflict zones
- The media faces the challenge of being able to craft honest, nuanced stories, but unfortunately the average audience doesn't want to consume those stories.

Nadira Barre

Nadira is a graduate from the University of Toronto with a Specialist Degree in Peace, Conflict, & Justice Studies from the Munk School of Global Affairs. Currently she is the Community Communicator with the Resiliency Project.

Nadira identifies as a Somali Canadian. She agrees with a lot of things discussed at the conference, as someone who has travelled back and lived in Somalia for a while. She sees the inconsistencies in the way in which the media presents the conflict in Somalia.

Nadira's presentation moves us into the solutions to some of the issues we discussed, especially the rise in extremism specifically in Canada.

The Resiliency Project is a collaboration between the city of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Service and the Organization for the Prevention of Violence. Funded through Public Safety Canada's Community Resiliency Fund, the aim of the project is to work with the public to prevent and counter hate and extremism through education, awareness, research, and face-to-face engagement. The government of Canada, over the last few years, has taken a lot of initiative to try to address the issue surrounding hate and extremism across Canada. There are projects across the country that are funded specifically through this stream to try and address these problems.

Nadira discusses the role of technology in dealing with these issues. Her team developed an app to try and address the issues of race and extremism. The app is called Symbol Smart.

There are hundreds of symbols related to hate and extremism. There are over 300 that Nadira and her team know off. The Anti-Defamation League, based in the United States, that focuses on antisemitism accounts for 214. There are hundreds of symbols related to hate used by groups across different ideological spectrums. With the rise of social media, it has exponentially increased the use of symbols in relation to hateful ideologies.

The swastika is still the most used hate-related symbol. However, that in no way captures the more nuanced and obscure symbols that have taken a hold via the internet and social media.

The Resiliency Project recognized the difficulties around trying to identify and understand symbols related to hate. What became clear in their partnership with Edmonton Police Service was that even police officers have a difficult time educating themselves on trying to understand symbols related to hate outside of the swastika. Additionally, through their team's public engagement, they found that there really is no greater understanding within the community on the ways in which these symbols appear, and more importantly, the context of what they mean. Finally, we do not fully consider the impact that they have in different communities.

Through public engagement and stakeholder engagements, through current technological frameworks that exist and through research on existing and upcoming hate related symbols, their team created Symbol Smart. Symbol Smart is an app that uses artificial intelligence to detect and identify symbols related to hate.

It is no longer effective to rely only on traditional media and news outlets to disseminate this level of nuanced information. Similarly, with the rise of social media, it has risen as a tool to exponentially increase the circulation of hate and extremist ideologies. So, Symbol Smart is at its conception a local response to dealing with a growing national issue.

To understand how Symbol Smart works Nadira gave the audience a little demonstration.

Nadira: "How Symbol Smart works is that it uses an image recognition algorithm to detect symbols related to hate that are uploaded onto the app. This algorithm has been trained to identify specific symbols. However, as I mentioned with there being hundreds of symbols related to hate, our team has worked extensively to try and figure out the symbols that appear in the Alberta and Canadian context to really focus in on just what is happening in our communities and use this as a tool to try and understand and combat local trends."

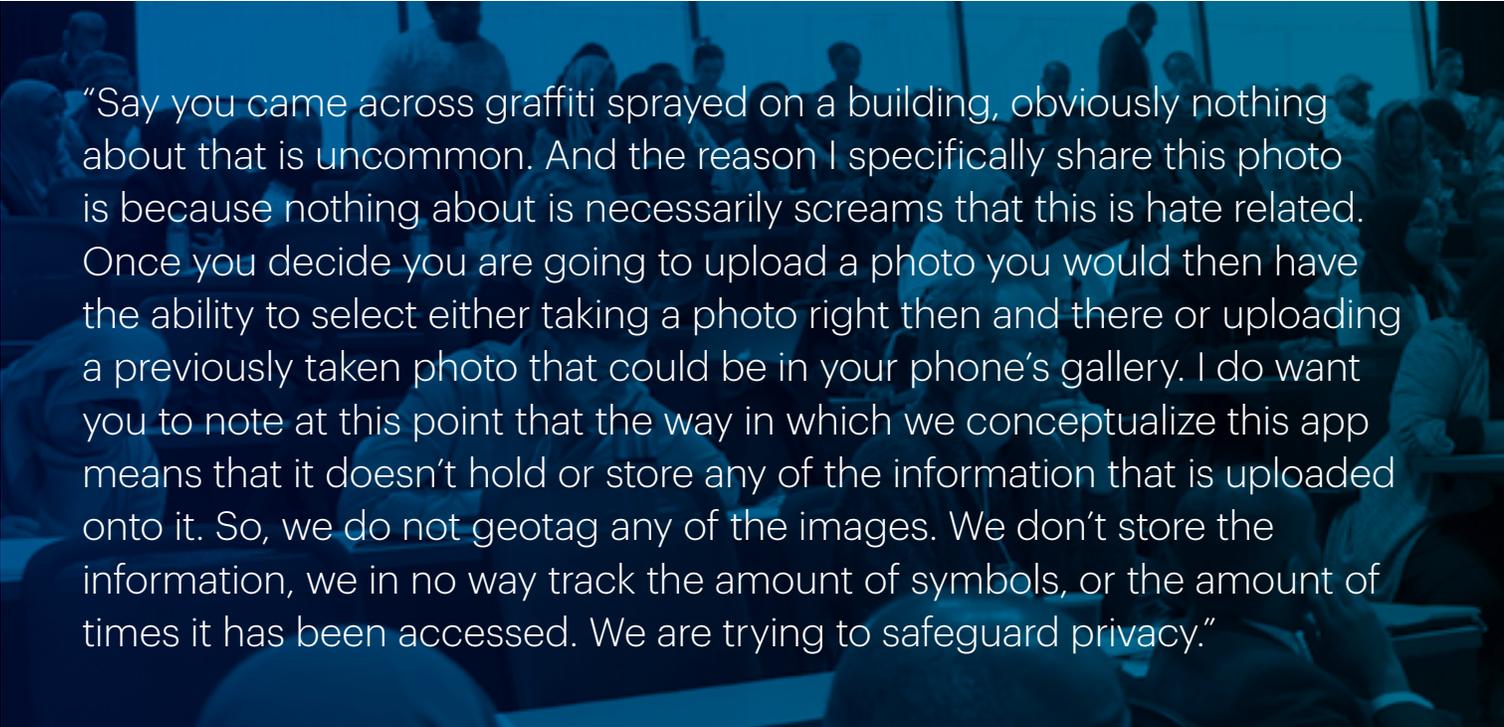
Symbol Smart has three central functions. First, it allows users to take and upload photos in real time. Second, it allows users to upload previously taken photos. Lastly it houses a gallery of all the symbols the app is trained to recognize so that users are able to scroll through and learn about different symbols, and in this way the app also functions as an educational tool.

The app is accessible on all mobile devices and laptops. Almost any device that has access to the internet has access to this app. Nadira gave the audience an overview as to what this looks like; how the image recognition algorithm works and in what contexts it can be used.

Nadira continued her demonstration of Symbol Smart for the audience.

As part of Nadira's demonstration, she runs an image through the app. What comes back was that the image she used had a 94% chance that the symbol was related to hate. Nadira shows the audience what the app tells us about the symbol. The specific symbol she used was called the Wolfsangel. The app also gives a brief definition of the symbol. It helps the user understand what this symbol means. Wolfsangel is an ancient symbol that was appropriated by Nazi Germany. As a result, it has become a symbol of choice by different Neo Nazi groups in Europe and the United States, specifically in the United States. The Neo-Nazi group, the Aryan Nation has incorporated this symbol into their logo.

The app allows users to understand the context in which they are seeing this. If one were to see this symbol in a Jewish Neighbourhood or on a synagogue, it holds a lot more significance because of its ties to Neo-Nazi symbolism and Neo Nazi groups. The context in which these symbols show up is very indicative of local or upcoming trends related to hate and extremism. We really require a new lens to understand what is happening in our neighborhoods. The app works both as an analytical and educational tool to try and understand that.



"Say you came across graffiti sprayed on a building, obviously nothing about that is uncommon. And the reason I specifically share this photo is because nothing about it necessarily screams that this is hate related. Once you decide you are going to upload a photo you would then have the ability to select either taking a photo right then and there or uploading a previously taken photo that could be in your phone's gallery. I do want you to note at this point that the way in which we conceptualize this app means that it doesn't hold or store any of the information that is uploaded onto it. So, we do not geotag any of the images. We don't store the information, we in no way track the amount of symbols, or the amount of times it has been accessed. We are trying to safeguard privacy."

Nadira further demonstrated what happens if the symbol is not related to hate. "If it is not recognized by the app, there is a high likelihood that it is not related to hate. However, that is not a definitive answer. It might also just mean that the app's technology does not have the ability to answer it or it has not been trained to recognize it yet. There is a high probability that is not related to hate, but that in and of itself is not a definitive answer."

Another feature of the app is the gallery which allows users the ability to scroll through. The gallery allows users to scroll through and, as an educational tool, learn about different symbols, learn about their meanings and the ways in which these symbols may appear.

Nadira gives the audience a few examples of symbols that are not necessarily as obvious as the swastika but are relevant in the context and understanding hate and extremism in Canada.

The app currently recognizes 90 plus images all related to hate. Further, this app has the ability to be customized to meet specific needs of provinces that may have different groups active in them. Quebec is a good example, as there are quite a number of groups that almost exclusively operate in that province and do not have chapters in other provinces or territories. The

Resiliency Project will be moving into a field-testing phase where Edmonton Police Service members will be testing the app to see if there are any technical glitches or any errors. It will then be launched internally with Edmonton Police Service to allow their members to better capture the different trends that they might be seeing in their city.

KEY POINTS:

- This is a solution-oriented presentation, that attacks a community-based issue of racial violence
- The focus is on a collaborative project that empowers a community to tackle extremism/hate speech
- It focuses on the importance of community awareness and access to accurate resources to combat hate speech.

Dan Mamlok

Due to the connection being very poor and it was impossible to grasp anything of substance from his speech.



Presentation 1: Dr Pamela Palmater: White Supremacy and Gun Violence

Pamela Palmater is a Mi'kmaq lawyer whose family are citizens of the Mi'kmaw Nation and members of Eel River Bar First Nation in northern New Brunswick. She is a Full Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at Ryerson University and the Chair in Indigenous Governance.

Dr. Palmater starts by acknowledging that she stands on the territory of the Mississauga's. She acknowledges also that she is not of the Mississauga's. Importantly, she acknowledges that as an Indigenous woman, she does not speak for all Indigenous peoples, especially not the Mississauga's. Because she is on their territory, she understands her responsibility to speak honourably and with truth about the issues she is to address.

White supremacy might be well understood by the conference attendees, but it is a subject that the media and government seem to have an exceedingly difficult time with. It is a discussion that is a challenging one, and one that we might wish we didn't need to have all the time, so that we could go about our daily lives. But nevertheless, it is an important discussion that must be had.

It is important to be a part of envisioning a place of peace, social justice and human rights for everybody. While all these things are technically legal rights that belong to all human beings, practice doesn't always match the ideal. There is very serious danger of increasing polarization and visible racial hatred. Visible is an important word. White supremacist ideology has always been there. White supremacy is not a new phenomenon, just because it is made more obvious by having someone like Donald Trump elected to office.

Canada was founded on white supremacist ideology. There is an intricate interplay between complex laws, policies and norms built on white supremacy. We cannot expect these to just go away. White supremacy is systemic, and all these elements work together to continue to reinforce this ideology today. Canada imported the very same white supremacist principles

that were used to perpetuate genocide in other countries. Canada is a state perpetrator of genocide.

When looking at Canada's own historical record, the number one policy option of dealing with the 'Indian' issue was extermination. Dr. Palmater uses the word "Indian" to highlight the way in which Canada's Indian Act still defines First Nations.

The second option, to deal with the 'Indian' issue, was slavery, then segregation, then assimilation. White supremacy is not about a 'clash of cultures. The root of the problem, the root of white supremacy, has always been about power and wealth, not about cultural differences. Dr. Palmater emphasizes the words power and wealth consistently through her presentation since they are the heart of her argument.

'Indian' policies were always about acquiring Indigenous lands and resources and reducing financial obligations that were acquired through treaties. Both these are fundamentally about wealth. Whereas, displacing Indigenous people on to reserves, disrupting traditional systems of governance and breaking up big nations was about power. The power lay in deciding who was going to be controlling and presiding over these lands.

This perspective is not a matter of opinion. It is easy to trace these back to policy documents that illustrate this. For example, when the issue of death and deprivation of Indigenous children in residential schools was brought to the Deputy Superintendent of Indian affairs, his response is "This does not justify a change in policy. Our policy is geared towards a 'final solution' of the Indian problem." The term 'final solution' will not be unfamiliar to those who know their world history. The 'final solution' is about eugenics, it is about exterminating co-called "undesirable populations". It is not about cultures that people want to change. It is about power and wealth.

Residential schools even went against Canada's own laws. By doing nothing about preventable deaths, the Department of Indian Affairs comes "uncomfortably close to the charge of manslaughter". And we know today from the National Inquiry into the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, that it is more than manslaughter. Canada was found guilty of genocide.

Dr. Palmater emphasizes that we need to dispel the myth that settler governments had good intentions. It was always about genocide. The reality about this and educating people about this is surprisingly difficult. In considering the example of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report, focused on residential schools. The very first page of the TRC report found that Canada was guilty of genocide. But most people skip over this page. Instead we tend to jump to questions of; how we move forward. How do we move towards calls to action? What should we do next?

People do not want to really address the underlying issues with residential schools that are still happening today. How can we move on from something that hasn't stopped happening?

People still do not want to talk about genocide. People try to soften it by calling it cultural genocide. It is glossed over by saying that Indigenous people lost some language and traditions at the most. But it wasn't really a genocide. The Holocaust is used as the standard of genocide. The Holocaust was one of the worst examples of genocide. But it is not the only way in which genocide can be committed. This perception lived on until the National Inquiry into the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls report came out and said in the matter of law, there is no doubt; this was a matter of genocide.

There are five ways in which a state can commit genocide and Canada is guilty of all of them. Genocide is first about killing people. But it is also, second, about physical and mental harm. Third, it is about creating the conditions of life meant to destroy a group. Fourth, it is things done to prevent birth like forced sterilization. And fifth it is the transfer of children from one group to the other. Canada is still engaging in ALL those things.



These blatant violations of basic human rights have continued for centuries. Today these violations continue in different forms. Human rights violations are also experienced by Black and racialized peoples in Canada as well – albeit in different forms... The web of white supremacy, who holds the power, who makes the decisions, essentially it is still only white men. This is an issue that impacts a majority of people in this room. This is why it is so important to focus on bringing our youth together. It is important that we find solidarity amongst our movements to fight for peace, justice, and safety for all of us.

Coming back to the initial point, white supremacy has been a problem for a long time. The conversation must be had about how white supremacy still exists in law enforcement, in the military, in the government, in the police force and has a continued impact on lives in our communities. Dr. Palmater's submission to the National Inquiry done in partnership with FAFIA and CWP focused on, specifically this issue. On considering how law enforcement contributed to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This is not just by failing to investigate, but also as perpetrators. For example, shoot-first ask-later policies that put Indigenous and Black people in disproportionate danger. We need to question why police officers have been involved in child porn rings, human trafficking rings and all the other ways in which women of colour and children of colour are exploited by the system. All of these different issues have basis have race and sexual violence at their core, which that makes them a lethal form of subjugation. White supremacy is not just about race, there is a sexual and gendered perspective to it too.

There are obvious, visible ways of perpetuating white supremacy, like verbal racism. But there is also unspoken racism, where people's actions can speak louder than what they might not be saying. Self-serving ideologies of white supremacy always serve someone is need for power and wealth. Power and wealth are the key.

Dr. Palmater presents the example of a piece of legislation that is still active today; the Indian Act, enacted in 1876. The legislative formula that provides for the legislative extinction of indigenous peoples at some point in the near future. Every First Nation has a legislative extinction date. There is a ticking time bomb

on native identity. When there are no more government recognised Indians left, there will be no more Indian bands left. Indigenous people will have no more property and treaty rights. People who defend these policies argue financial defenses, if you create too many legal Indians, it will cost the system too much.

Where there are no more 'Indians' left, the land goes back to the Crown. There is so much to be gained from their political extinction of Indigenous people. And this even though really, they are all still there. They are not actually going anywhere! This is an obvious example of white supremacy.

But the less visible forms of white supremacy that are all around, must also be considered. For example, there are statues of white supremacists all over the country, celebrated as Canadian icons. People pass these statues every day, and people learn to accept it. This normalizes the legacy of white supremacy.

It is easy to identify white supremacists who are vocal, but it is not as easy to confront invisible white supremacist institutions. Another example we can consider is how the issue of murdered and missing Indigenous women was approached. At first blamed, it was blamed on Indigenous men. Then, on realizing that statistically this wasn't true, they blamed serial killers. It is easier to say that this was being done by invisible monsters, the few bad apples in an otherwise functional society. It is hard to move beyond that perception and confront the fact that we have a much bigger issue.

Again, it is important that people don't think that the rise in white supremacy is new, or that if we vote in someone other than Trump it's going to all go away. We cannot VOTE OUT white supremacy. It has infiltrated the system. it is in the conscious mind? / it is conscious in the mind?. White supremacists don't happen to be sitting around. They are purposefully taking control of positions of power. An example of this, is a White Rights Group in Quebec. They were always in the media, fighting against native rights. When they realized this tactic was not working, they rebranded themselves as the Eastern Acadian Metis Group. Even though none of them were Indigenous, they simply changed what they were called, branding themselves Metis.

The election of someone like Trump and his refusal to denounce white supremacist groups is basically saying that they are allowed to keep going. It perpetuates narratives like the labelling of immigrants as criminals, labelling First Nations people as dangerous to national security. White supremacy is not a political issue, it is not about a specific political party. It is in ALL political parties. We might get rid of one of them, you might vote out the worst of them, but even then, it is still there. We cannot vote it out.

Rise of white supremacy, with hatred as their mantra also highlights their general alignment with gun lobbies. We know that firearms are usually used in hate crimes, we know that most people who use firearms are young males.

White supremacy should be considered one of the biggest public safety concerns. While some safety issues are clearly focused on only with large urban areas, we cannot discount the effect in rural areas. Rural issues of public safety tend to get less focus. People in rural areas tend to think guns as protection for themselves and their property. This is problematic if we consider, who do these rural farmers try to protect themselves from? Who they think is a dangerous threat, is usually people of colour. This is a serious problem in rural Canada.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police has asked people to not arm themselves and let police investigate alleged crimes. They have been asked to not shoot and kill people they think are threats. Instead of listening to this, their reaction has been to go out and buy SKS, semi-automatic military grade rifles.

Very often issues of gun control focus around the 'right to bear arms' in Canada. There is NO legal right to bear arms in Canada EXCEPT for Indigenous people. Only Indigenous people have treaty and constitutional rights to bear arms in Canada. But Indigenous people don't go around advocating weapons of war to go hunting.

Canadians do not have an inherent right to bear arms. Bearing arms, except for Indigenous people, has always been a privilege, not a right. White supremacy is now trying to denounce any and all gun control.

Canada has an obligation to protect the public at large from all sorts of public safety threats. Whether it is outbreaks, gun violence or white supremacy. Hate groups within Canada are well known as domestic threats. The largest number of Americans that have been murdered in the United States, have been murdered by white people. The largest domestic threat Canadian's face today is white supremacy.

Historically, Canada has focused on international threats, without really paying enough attention to right wing extremists. Lately Canada's security agencies have started to change their tune. They finally acknowledge that right wing extremist groups pose more threats than ISIS. In recent times, we have seen a dramatic rise in white groups operating in Canada.

Dr. Palmater gives two examples of cases where known white supremacists shot and killed two Indigenous people. Both times, they plead 'misfire', claiming that the shooting was an accident. The first time, this worked, however in the second case, in more recent times it is becoming easier to question. The increased visibility and impact of social media means we can see the narrative of white supremacists more clearly.

Historically, people did not give white nationalists a platform, but things are changing, they are getting platforms to speak. The most powerful thing we can do is silence them, by taking their power away. Silence the hatred by acknowledging it and calling it what it is.

KEY POINTS:

- White supremacy is a systemic, ongoing issue which is motivated by a desire to seize and control wealth and power
- The presentation addresses the genocide perpetuated by the Canadian state, against First Nations
- White supremacy is closely linked to gun violence, both in and outside Canada. The rise of weapons use disproportionately risks the lives of people of colour.

Panel Discussion II: Increased Community Funding for Capacity Building



The second panel considered how community funding can be more efficiently scaled up to increase capacity building.

The panelists were:

- **Akaash Maharaj** who is the CEO of the Mosaic Institute.
- **Jamil Jivani** who is the province’s first Advocate for Community Opportunities and Special Advisor to the Premier.
- **Gerran Collymore** who has received her Master of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy from OISE in the University of Toronto where she specialized in Comparative, International and Development Education.
- **Annie Lessard** Consular Policy Officer, Global Affairs Canada

Akaash Maharaj

Akaash Maharaj is the CEO of the Mosaic Institute, an organization that brings together people, communities, and nations, to foster mutual understanding and to resolve conflict. Akaash also serves as Ambassador-at-Large for the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption. He has addressed the United Nations on international prosecution of Crimes Against Humanity, and he has a special commitment to reconciliation in conflict states. A frequent contributor to international debate, his articles have been published by newspapers in every populated continent, he was a broadcast essayist with TVOntario, The Agenda, and Maclean’s magazine named him one of Canada’s 50 most well-known and respected personalities. He has been decorated twice in Canada’s national honours, for his work on peace in the Middle East and for services to integrity in international sport. He was commissioned a Kentucky Colonel, the state’s highest honour, for his contributions to global affairs.

The focus of Akaash Maharaj's presentation centered on three themes, positioned as three questions:

1. Are community organizations, like Midaynta and communities that do work on countering radicalization against violence underfunded in Canada?
2. Are there specifically racial components to who gets funded and why?
3. Are there means to bridge this gap?

To address the first question, Maharaj found in his research that it was a difficult question to answer. The financial metrics displayed

provide an overly simplistic picture that does not take into account all the financial resources utilized by local community organizations. However, what Maharaj did find was that government funding for local organizations to address CVE was insufficient. Canada, overall, fared poorly in terms of funding when compared internationally. The only country ranked lower than Canada in terms of local investment was the United States. When compared to OECD affiliated countries and European Union countries, Canada continues to fall short.

However, Maharaj stated that increased funding does not necessitate significant results. France, for example, allocated forty-seven million dollars per year to CVE-related projects that was later reported to be completely wasted due to corporate cronyism. Germany and the United Kingdom, both invested large sums into counterterrorism measures that reported mixed results.

Question two, regarding the directed sources of the funding, also showed mixed results. Maharaj pointed out that the Community Resilience Fund under Public Safety Canada was awarded to mostly international organizations or large domestic bureaucratic institutions, despite grants being created to fund local community initiatives. This was not to say that these are not valid organizations, Maharaj just points out that this type of funding, while beneficial for research, does not necessarily lead to applicable methods.

Regarding question 3, to remedy this situation, Maharaj suggests that the grant application process be more accessible to local organizations. This means, reforming the grant application process to be less bureaucratic. Additionally, by including local organizations into the process, it broadens the scope of funding projects as local organizations are more entrenched in the communities. However, an important aspect of this will be to establish some type of organizational metric of success for grant applications. The final step to question 3 will be to change the media and political narratives around local initiatives to support the important work that organizations, like Midaynta are doing.

Maharaj concluded that to move forward to accomplish more tangible results and acquire more funding, local organizations must appeal to a politician's self-interests - tying electoral hopes to community support.

Jamil Jivani

Jamil Jivani was born and raised in the Greater Toronto Area. In December 2019, the government of Ontario appointed Jivani as the province's first Advocate for Community Opportunities and Special Advisor to the Premier. In his role, Jivani is working to open lines of communications between communities and the government to empower community members and enable them to increase their participation in government decision making.

Jivani has helped start four North American charities, and currently serves as the Managing Director of Road Home Research & Analysis, a research non-profit supported by the Pinball Clemons Foundation. He is formerly a visiting professor at Osgoode Hall Law School, where he focused on issues affecting youth, immigrants, and low-income families.

Jivani is a graduate of Yale Law School, York University, and Humber College. His leadership has been recognized by the International Development and Relief Foundation's youth leadership award and the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers' young lawyer of the year award. Jivani's first book, *Why Young Men*, was published in 2018 and nominated for the Toronto Book Awards and Ontario Speaker's Book Award.

Jamil Jivani began with an analysis of the role of a researcher versus the role of an activist and the tension that often lies within the integration of the two roles. Javani illustrated this relationship with an anecdotal example of a trip taken to Brussels in the aftermath of the 2015 Paris attacks. Jivani was there to conduct field work on how a community recovers from a terror attack for a potential book. While Jivani was conducting fieldwork, the Brussels terror attack occurred two subway stops away. After witnessing the communal despair from this incident, Jivani decided to integrate being a researcher and an activist to help the communities impacted by these attacks to build resilience.

Yet, when approaching foundations and government officials, about the financial means in which they could help community organizations solve radicalization and combat systemic racism and generalized stigma, towards community members, Jivani was met with the same response, This is too small to get involved with. Government officials and foundation donors claimed the problems and violence faced by the neighborhoods, where the terror attack emerged from, were not significant enough to invest in. Instead, funding was sent to police and the military. When Jivani's research was published, he also advocated for government officials and foundations to dive deeper into the systemic and structural problems that contribute to radicalization and criminal activity. Jivani stated:

“And I said, there is something in this story of young men who are radicalized that tells you something much deeper about our society. It is not just about them alright, it's also about the schools they go to and the cops they interact with, and the experiences their parents have, and the economy they live in, and there's something deeper. And I wrote a whole book trying to distill policy ideas out of the experiences of these

young men. And, needless to say, I did not get a lot of enthusiasm about making some of these changes because as I am sure you also see there's not a whole lot of sympathy and empathy for people who deal with radicalization as a problem. And there is not a lot of sympathy and empathy for young men, frankly, regardless of the issue you're talking about.”

Bringing this example into the Canadian context, Jivani found similar funding issues and lack of issue saliency in Ontario. However, rather than ignoring Jivani's concerns, the Premier of Ontario employed Jivani to solve it in a newly created role to examine what the government does on employment, on crime and safety, and also on education, and how this web of policies and funding decisions creates or helps deal with challenges in communities.

A central component of this work is assessing where funding is going and is that funding being utilized effectively. Javani lists three core questions to measure this:

1. Making institutions more responsive to what the community is asking for.
2. There are a lot of questions to ask about how responsive these large and very well-funded institutions are to the problems that you observe in your community.
3. What is the kind of organization that we should be giving money to solve a problem in the first place?
4. Where do grassroots organizations, organizations with community relationships with authenticity with young people, with connection to the communities that need a hand up in our society fit in this model?
5. Yet, capacity building of local community organizations should not be ignored as one must be wary of putting resources into organizations that don't have the capacity or skill set to deliver on something

- How important is a place in developing effective policy and funding allocations?
- Policy makers have a bias in thinking that place is an insignificant variable. For example, when tracking poverty in society, we will emphasize things like individualized statistics. Do you have a high school diploma? Are you homeless? Do you have a single parent household? We emphasize the kinds of things that really just tell you about a person, but they don't really tell you [about] where that person lives. Or the relationships that person has.
- And as long as that's how people think about social mobility and improvement, that it just means we get out of places, as opposed to those places changing, then we're going to have a very hard time solving some of the problems that we have talked about.
- Current policy making efforts and funding decisions need to be focused on transforming places: neighbourhoods, towns, revitalizing local economies, changing the set of relationships people have.

Jivani concluded his talk with reference with a call for ideas from the community for ideas that best address the three questions proposed [aco@ontario.ca].

“Any idea you have, any suggestion you have will be read by my team, and if it's feasible, if we like it, if we think it makes sense, we might reach out to you to figure out how we can make some changes happen.”

Geran Collymore

Geran Collymore received her Master of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy from OISE in the University of Toronto where she specialized in Comparative, International and Development Education. Geran has worked with Midaynta's - Mending a Crack in the Sky group to assist with policy analysis and advocacy strategies. Geran is passionate about anti-racism and capacity building for grassroots organizations to promote equitable and inclusive collaborative policy approaches.

Geran Collymore drew upon her experience with the Mending a Crack in the Sky program to speak about access to funding and support for community organizations addressing crises of violence and youth radicalization in marginalized communities. Mending a Crack in the Sky is a three phase healing initiative that is led by mothers impacted by youth radicalization, and the group's work supports youth resiliency and seeks to dismantle the systemic mechanisms that lead to youth radicalization.

Collymore highlighted that there is presently a dearth of funding available to small, local community organizations. Where funding is available, groups like Mending a Crack in the Sky face significant barriers to access, including financial and technical constraints that make it difficult to successfully navigate the complex grant application process. Many community organizations face stigma, exclusion from funders' preferred networks, and late referrals to applications leaving timelines that are not conducive to effective organization and mobilization of resources for applications.

Community organizations serving marginalized groups are faced with marginalization themselves as they encounter systemic barriers in the funding process - racism, lack of accountability and transparency, and a marked scarcity of resources for initiatives that support low-income, racialized and immigrant groups. There is an ongoing problem of providing token amounts of funding to appease groups and meet the bare minimum of government responsibility. This practice is counterproductive as community organizations require adequate and sustained funding to address systemic issues that have been deeply entrenched after years of marginalization.

Further, Collymore found that where the effects of issues such as youth radicalization are isolated and contained within the borders of marginalized communities, there is little political will to mobilize resources in response. Youth radicalization is not a straightforward issue. It is one that has complex roots and implications that cannot be addressed in the short term with limited resources. Asking community organizations to tailor priorities and funding needs to meet a superficial agenda does not allow for the requisite support to address challenges.

To address the barriers to access faced by community organizations, funding committees require inclusive and empowered representation and insights that reflect the realities and needs of the organizations they serve. Additionally, to make the grant application process more equitable funders can facilitate partnerships with grant writers to make these services available to community organizations that cannot afford this necessary expertise. Collymore also stressed that youth at universities and faculty members can employ knowledge and skill sharing to assist with research and program evaluation, the provision of space, and various other supports to bolster the mobilization efforts of community organizations.

KEY POINTS:

- Funding landscape is not accessible for smaller community organizations, nor is it oriented for sustained/robust funding
- Funding allocation process needs to be more transparent, and it requires more input from representatives familiar with the constraints and needs of grassroots organizations
- Funding process should be more holistic rather than exclusively metric driven

Annie Lessard

The theme of Annie Lessard’s speech was to describe the services that Global Affairs Canada’s Consular Services offer Canadians in need when overseas. Lessard’s speech centred around three resources for citizens overseas.

First, Global Affairs Canada offers travel advice and information for Canadians traveling abroad. This includes travel advice online and via the “Smart Travel” app, as well as Registration of Canadians Abroad service. A component of this service is providing Canadians with information on potential risks associated with travelling to a particular destination is using a scale ranging from exercising normal security precautions to avoiding all travel.

Second, Global Affairs Canada provides passport services and emergency travel documents for Canadians abroad, as well as notary services, and other documentation services.

Finally, Global Affairs Canada offers assistance to Canadians in distress abroad, such as Canadians who are detained or arrested, Canadians who are missing abroad or whose whereabouts are unknown, medical emergencies, cases of international parental abduction and child welfare.

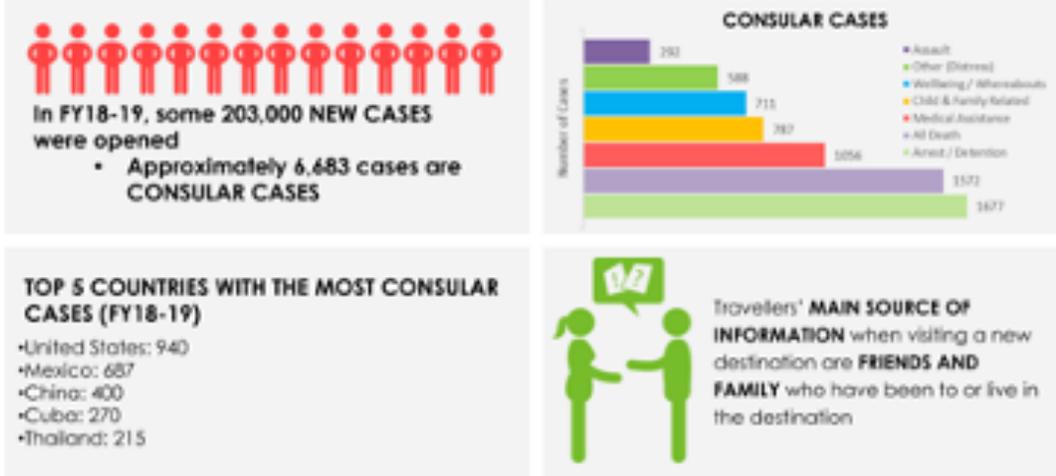
Lessard then reviewed the current environment of Global Affairs Canada’s Consular Services with the following slide:

KEY TAKE-AWAYS:

- Global Affairs Canada’s Consular Services engage with Canadians in three ways:
- Travel Information and Advice
 - Passport and other document services
 - Assistance to Canadians abroad



CONSULAR LANDSCAPE



Lessard concluded her talk with reviewing what Global Affairs Canada can assist Canadians with and what is out of its scope. She outlined it succinctly using this slide:



Lessard described the most recent trends impacting consular assistance. Reported trends included more dual citizens traveling internationally to visit family and in some cases leaving children behind to attend “boarding schools” or to stay with extended family.

Other trends included specific risks to LGBTQ2 Canadians travelling to countries that may not necessarily recognize their rights as well as an increased leaving of complexity for consular services as the result of rapid technological changes, media scrutiny, and citizen inter-connectiveness.

Lessard concluded her talk on the worrisome trends that have emerged from observations of overseas “boarding schools” and the related safety and security concerns for those attending

Keynote Address 2

Day 2

Abdi Aynte is currently a Senior Official with the United Nations. From 2015-2017, he was the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Somalia, and later a Senior Advisor to the current President of Somalia. He is the Director of Planning and Strategic Partnerships with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees. He is the co-founder and former Executive Director of the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS), a leading think tank in Somalia where he currently sits on the Board of Directors. Prior to that Abdi Aynte was a journalist and editor with the leading news organizations around the world, including the BBC, VOA, and Al Jazeera English.

Summary

Abdi Aynte began his keynote speech by thanking Midaynta for the opportunity to be a part of the conference. Speaking in Somali, he narrated a humorous story around the notion and definition of 'youth'. He emphasized on Midaynta's two-pronged conference theme that focused on interventions of collaborative approaches to:

- build youth resilience, and
- prevent radicalization

As being crucial in this day and age. He foregrounded several issues faced by Somali youth in Canada which involve the daily struggles of navigating multiple identities, cultural assimilation, negative stereotypes, and Eurocentric outlooks.

Abdi Aynte addressed these issues of identity by sharing reflections of his own observations and life experiences of belonging to six different places from his birth in Mogadishu, being raised in Cairo, spending time in Minnesota, then working in London, Qatar, and finally his current role in Jordan that also covers Palestine. Describing challenges faced by the average Afro-Canadian youth and their families living within the

broader Canadian context; today, he emphasized that there is a complex identity crisis affecting them. They are labelled with singular stereotypes and looked-at first as 'immigrants', 'blacks', 'ethnic communities', or 'religious groups', despite being born and raised in the country. Therefore, he stressed that

"... the meaning of preventing youth radicalization and building youth resilience, collaboratively, is dependent on where one is situated at a given point in time."

He highlighted how the reality of these identities are underpinned by several challenges like conflict, poverty, or trauma that are carried by these youths and their families, which cannot be understood by the common European Canadian.

Critiquing the lack of effort by the Canadian authorities to understand the contextual realities of Afro-Canadians, Mr. Aynte raises concerns around their assimilationist attitudes, interchangeably stated by synonymous terms like 'inclusion', or 'cohesion'. As a result, there is an implicit expectation for these youth to fit into a mainly Eurocentric culture and outlook, without raising any questions, bringing up traumatic problems, or trying to change the system; and if they do, then the youth are frowned upon as someone who does not want to belong. There is a fundamental challenge faced by these youth around their identities as they do not know any better. On the one hand, this mounts frustration amongst teens and youth as they continue to struggle under the weight of these multiple identities and negative feelings of living in a place where they are not fully accepted or embraced for who they are. On the other hand, in their homes, their parents, for no fault of their own, want them to switch to a different contextual reality largely to avoid youth from assimilating or integrating into this new culture that is foreign to them. Abdi clarifies that he does not speak about these struggles as an anthropologist or sociologist but instead offers his own observations and experiences of living in a country like the United States.

Abdi stressed the call to collective action to do something to change this reality for the youth. Given the rise of racism around the world, often called populism as a misnomer, national identity politics has been used as an incentive to disenfranchise people who are Afro-Canadian. He highlighted two collaborative approaches to combat this:

1. **Collective political participation at all levels by mobilizing oneself and using one's agency as a community of voters, in a democracy, to become visible to a government and its elected officials so they are not ignored as a group of people.** Using the example of Somalis in Minnesota, Mr. Aynte contextualized the respect they receive as a community since they account for a large part of workers who contribute to the economy. Within the larger US context, he expressed how Somalis are viewed myopically as a small community who cannot make a huge change in the system, however, he emphasized that within the state of Minneapolis Somalis are making a big difference because of their active political participation at the local, city, provincial and federal levels by being elected in to the system. He insisted on the need to force political officials to care about the community's issues like having American elected officials stand outside local mosques to interact with Somali community members conversing about their issues. As everything revolved around electoral calculus, it was crucial for these ethnic minorities to be involved and organize themselves.
2. **Better understanding of the communities is required by various levels of the government to be able to empathize with the challenges, fears, nuances, opportunities, and risks faced by the youth and their families like lack of housing, education, or employment opportunities.** Giving an example of the city of Bergen in Norway and their recent local city council level election, they elected five new ethnic minorities including a Somali and a Pakistani as a wave of new immigrants being elected into the council which was the culmination of many years of engagement between the local communities and the authorities. Through appeals

to federal officials to understand the major issues faced by these communities, Minnesotans and are allowed to maintain their cultural identities and norms without being left behind. The state officials understood the importance of keeping the new Americans as active citizens. In Canada, there are ethnic minorities who are highly successful and contribute to the revenue of the country. He posited that there is a clear need for officials to design policies that contribute to decision-making positions, business opportunities, and active public services like the police and funding community organizations

Mr. Aynte concluded by stating the significance of accommodating the communities that the youth hail from, to prevent their radicalization. He shared the history of radicalization in relation to Islam by narrating the story of an incarcerated, prolific Egyptian scholar, Sayyid Qutb, whose radicalization began because of being jailed by his own government out of their fear of his literary work around the issues in Colorado. As a result of his incarceration, he wrote the book, Milestones, which is seen by many scholars as the basis for radicalization theory. He stressed that, today, marginalization and disenfranchisement are very strong indicators of radicalization. If youth do not have employment or educational opportunities, but are frowned upon and expected to assimilate into a system without the necessary tools, radicalization becomes the easiest outlet. Mr. Aynte ended by sharing his experience interviewing dozens of teens and youth in a rehabilitation centre at Al Shabaab, who had been captured and jailed due to their involvement in a radical group. These youth shared a common narrative about joining the radical groups because it gave them a purpose to live, to belong, and it gave them some means to take care of their family. They had been recruited because they were left on the margins of society. Therefore, to build resilience, Mr. Aynte appealed to the audience to ensure that these youth are not left on the margins, but an effort be made to include them in all educational and employment opportunities.

Panel III - alternative approaches



The third panel looked at Alternative Approaches, moderated by Gwyn Chapman, TV Producer/Host, Youth Advocate, and Founder and President of the Canadian Black Caucus.

The panelists were:

- **Landon Turlock**, who is a Registered Social Worker and Community Safety Liaison for the Resiliency Project.
- **Walter Mongare** is the Deputy Director of youth programs, Presidency and Cabinet Affairs Office for the Government of Kenya.
- **Danielle Dowdy** is Advisor of Strategic Policy and Stakeholder Relations for the Toronto Police Services Board.
- **Letricia Whitfield** is a PhD student in Critical Sexual Studies at the California Institute of Integral Studies.

Landon Turlock

Landon Turlock, is a Registered Social Worker and Community Safety Liaison for the Resiliency Project. He has experience in restorative justice, youth work, non-profit leadership, and both community and program development.

THE RESILIENCY PROJECT:

The Resiliency Project⁷ began in 2018 through a collaboration between the City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Police Service (EPS), and the Organization for the Prevention of Violence (OPV). The Resiliency Projects aims to work with the public to prevent and counter violent extremism through awareness, education, research, and online and offline intervention.

The Organization for the Prevention of Violence is a diverse group of professionals with experience in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and other forms of violence and risk reduction. As an organization, the OPV brings community, academic, and practitioner knowledge to bear on the problem of radicalization to violence.

⁷ The Resiliency Project https://www.edmonton.ca/residential_neighbourhoods/fire_safety/the-resiliency-project.aspx

Background

In 2015, Edmonton Police Service (EPS) received numerous calls from external agencies requesting presentations on the warning signs of radicalization and from communities regarding youth who might have been at risk of being radicalized. In response, the Edmonton Police Service partnered with the City of Edmonton and the Organization for the Prevention of Violence to form the Resiliency Project, funded through Public Safety Canada's Community Resilience Fund.

The Resiliency Project has the following key objectives:

- The scope of extremism in Edmonton is better understood.
- EPS understanding of the complexity of violent extremism is enhanced.
- Citizens of Edmonton have increased awareness, vigilance, and resiliency to destructive ideologies.
- Vulnerable individuals are drawn away from extremist influences.

From July 2018 to August 2019, the Resiliency Project connected with over 60 Edmonton stakeholders, including social service organizations and other community groups, to learn about their experiences, and capacities related to the prevention of hate-motivated violence.

Combating Hate Through Awareness:

The primary theme of the feedback was that people required more awareness and education on topics related to the prevention of hate-motivated violence. The community voiced that they did not know the symbols and language related to hate, and the ways to identify people involved in violent extremism.

This feedback resulted in the creation of the Understanding Hate & Extremism awareness session, with the following objectives:

- Define commonly used terms.
- Discuss groups active in the local environment.
- Identify and explain factors related to radicalization leading to violence.

- Identify resources available for individuals who have been victimized by hate-motivated violence.
- Identify resources available for individuals vulnerable to radicalization.

The Understanding Hate and Extremism Awareness Session was piloted on October 25, 2019, with two following sessions held in Edmonton in late 2019 and early 2020. These six hour sessions defined common terms related to hate-motivated violence, discussed active hate groups in Alberta, noted factors that can contribute to radicalization to violent extremism, and identified resources to support those victimized by or involved with hate-motivated violence. As of March 2020, over 100 participants were reached through these sessions. Session evaluations showed that post-session, participants had a better understanding of terms related to hate-motivated violence, the local context of violent extremism, and resources available for those impacted or involved with hate and hate-motivated violence⁸



⁸ OVP also provides information on issues where emergency services need to get involved ([link](#))

OPV 2019 report, Building Awareness, Seeking Solutions: Extremism and Hate-Motivated Violence in Alberta, (available on their website, below) provides the following:

An introduction to the nature of violent extremism

A typology and overviews of the forms of extremism present in Alberta, as well as Canada and the West more broadly, including groups affiliated with Al Qaeda, anti-authority extremists, left-wing extremists, patriot and militia groups, single-issue extremism, and white supremacy groups. Informative overviews of each type of extremism are provided.

Data on the history, presence, and trajectory of each type of extremism in Alberta, based on fieldwork conducted throughout the province.

Key findings from their research, including potential sources of violence, including social isolation, online forums and social media.

A summary of the strengths, key lessons and best practices from pilot programs designed to counter violent extremism; and looks at protective factors in communities against violent extremism

KEY POINTS:

- There is a need to provide people with the information they need to identify hate crime and violent extremism, but also educate them to understand the causes and prevent further marginalization of those vulnerable to being targeted by extremist groups.
- People want to offer support and be involved, and to be part of making their communities safer, and should be given the knowledge to do so, and information on the public support that is available.

Walter Mongare

A CALL TO TODAY'S YOUTH

Walter Mongare began his presentation by asking the audience to stand up and greet the person next to them, creating a meaningful opportunity to allow those present to come a little closer to those in their community for whom these issues matter.

Walter Mongare works for young people in Kenya, whom, he stated make up about 60% of the population, with the median age being 19 years old. It is "a young country with an interesting way of looking at things."

Resilience, according to Walter, is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. He reminds young people that youth is not a state, but rather a time-bound phase of life through which they experience certain types of challenges. Despite the disruptiveness of today's world, he tells young people, "it is your time and your future." They have the opportunity to look at things differently than the previous generations, and to make better decisions than their parents.

He also offers a reminder, a word of caution, to the older generation: "Young people are not a problem to be solved, but an investment for any serious country. Youth are capital, youth are the ones creating innovations. I am humbled being in the presence of young people sharing ideas."

To the youth he says:

"Life has equal opportunities for everyone - the difference is what you do with what you have. Be disruptive as much as you can and do not be apologetic."

For advocacy to gain traction, however, there is also a need for collaboration, and a need to come together with people who are different than you, who are fighting the same battles against injustice. And through collaboration, and through action - without overanalyzing, without waiting - these conversations must be taken out of the boardroom and into the streets.

“Just believe in it and just do what you need to do.”

Walter, in his youth, became a comedian. Being foolish, he said, offers you a different lens. With “foolish courage” you can go out and do what needs to be done, more so than the serious man, simply because you believe in it. With this courage, Walter said, you have the opportunity to change the world.

Danielle Dowdy

TORONTO POLICE SERVICES

Danielle Dowdy is Advisor of Strategic Policy and Stakeholder Relations for the Toronto Police Services Board, advising on policy issues as they relate to Toronto’s communities. She is actively engaged in the community and has worked with the Toronto Police Service for 13 years.

With the Toronto Police Service, she discussed the importance of community engagement in policing, and its role in creating safe, resilient communities. The work discussed demonstrates what it means to truly partner with communities, and how to bring community members effectively and meaningfully to the table when it comes to decision making and policy making. She discussed three initiatives she contributed to in her time with Toronto Police Services:

- Youth in Policing Initiative
- Police and Community Engagement Review (PACER)
- Independent Police Oversight Review and the Street Checks Review

As well as her current work with the Toronto Police Services Board:

- Collective Impact Program
- Race-Based Data Collection Policy
- Memorandum of Understanding: Toronto Police Services board and Crack in the Sky

I. Youth in Policing Initiative

Background: 2005 was known as the Summer of the Gun, where there were high homicide rates in Toronto. The need was to give youth opportunities in communities of high crime rates, which can be the difference in them staying safe and staying outside of the criminal justice system.

The program works specifically with marginalized neighborhoods, where residents see high instances of crime and often have negative relationships with police. It provides youth from these communities aged 14-18 with professional and personal development, hiring them to work in the Toronto Police Services.

These youth work in the police stations where they learn administrative and broader employability skills and are able to meet police and understand what they do. On the other side of this, police have a chance to meet young people and gain a better understanding of what is going on with them and what is happening in their communities.

This is an opportunity for police to open its doors, invite youth in, mentor and help build skills, and create a positive relationship. Dowdy notes that she has kept in contact with many young people who keep the police updated on the situations in their communities. The program is one example of the good that can come from meaningful engagement with the community and has since grown and expanded across several Police Services in Ontario.

II. Police and Community Engagement Review (PACER)

Background: In 2012, and even before this, there were many Toronto Star pieces around the issues of the policy of “carding” or “stop-and-frisk.”⁹ The Police Services, under Deputy Chief Peter Slowly (now Chief of the Ottawa Police Service), opened up and began in-depth consultations with the community in order to build trust.

⁹ In Canada, carding refers to an intelligence gathering police policy involving the stopping, questioning, and documenting of individuals when no particular offense is being investigated. Historically, this policy has led to legal cause for racial profiling, with racialized individuals significantly more likely to be stopped by police, despite no correlation with increased involvement with crime.

The police shared internal policies and procedures and had open discussions about why the police conduct themselves in the manner they have been doing. In turn, they heard the community's expectations, and the issues they had with the police. The aim was to rebuild policies in collaboration with community members, communicating what was operationally necessary for police, but also ensuring that the communities felt respected and that the police understood the harm that had been done.

The community and police worked together monthly for 4 years, hammering out policies and procedures around training and looking at creating community engagement. The Government of Ontario also participated, by their own request, and the policies resulted in the formation of Ontario regulation 58/16 for the Collection of Identifiable information.¹⁰

As a direct response to the community's concerns, under the new policy, if there is an interaction with the police, there is a specified legal way that police must conduct themselves. Police must explain why the person is being stopped; if it is not an investigation, police must let the individual know that they are free to leave; and police must provide a receipt for any stops they make, as proof of the interaction which can be taken to the next level, particularly in instances where an individual has been stopped multiple times.

Police are more mindful of the kinds of engagement they can do in communities, and particularly saw that racialized communities had had enough of police discrimination. The argument that random stops were done for safety was not working - one gun found due to a stop-and-frisk is not worth losing the trust of an entire community. These were difficult conversations, and many community members were angry, frustrated at first at seeing initial policies, but they were at the table. This was key in increasing community safety and building resiliency.

Since the regulation was passed, Dowdy reported that instances of carding have almost completely stopped, down to nearly none from hundreds of instances over the years.

III. Independent Police Oversight Review of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), and the Street Checks Review

Consultations in 2016 of the Independent Police Oversight Review also looked at ways to increase trust in the police. Speaking with 2000 people, they found issues were similar despite regions - what changed was the demographic. In Toronto, racialized people experienced the most discrimination; in the north it was Indigenous peoples; in other parts of the country it was a class issue.

The SIU was not doing justice for these communities, especially in those cases where investigations into police who have severely injured marginalized people. The aim was to introduce legislation to address these inequities. The liberal provincial government took the recommendations and passed legislation (now under review by the Conservative government).

The Independent street checks review, addressing similar issues, looked at the legislation to standardize the ways that police interact with communities across provinces.

IV. Collective Impact

Through Dowdy's work with the Toronto Police Services Board, she created projects aimed at community engagement to shape policy. Collective impact was funded by the Board to train 20 young people (aged 14 to 35) on why police are in their neighborhood, what their rights are, and what they should expect of police, learning from the Ontario Justice Education Network. By opening the doors, and teaching them the law, it empowers these youth.

V. Race-based data collection policy

This new policy (piloted in 2020) requires that police report the race of the person they used force on. "It has been a long time coming," Dowdy notes, having worked in communities for 20 years, and knowing they have been calling for this. It is important to collect and report this information, but in a respectful, non-stigmatizing way, and having community members who can contextualize this information.

10 Police Services Act: Ontario Regulation 58/16 of the Identifying Information in Certain Circumstances - Prohibition and Duties <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/160058>

VI. Memorandum of Understanding: Toronto Police Board and Crack in the Sky

Toronto Police worked with Midaynta Community Services and the mothers from Crack in the Sky, mothers who had lost their children to violence.¹¹ They created a working agreement and signed an MOU in February 2020, for police to offer training and support to these mothers and engage in ongoing consultation with them on the needs of the communities, to restore trust. The Toronto Star reporting on this never-before-done initiative¹². They also created a scorecard to collect data through surveys and to measure progress.

“The way to build resiliency is to truly, meaningfully engage with communities - it is not enough to build programs without talking to people, with one or two meetings. Resiliency comes from opening up the doors and saying, “let’s do this together” but really; rolling up your sleeves and having those hard conversations.”

KEY POINTS:

- authorities need to actively engage in communities and be transparent in their practices, in order to build trust and, as a result, create safer and more resilient communities
- policymakers need to ensure that they are serving the community’s best interests, particularly vulnerable or marginalized groups, and racialized communities, and this comes through meaningful conversation with communities themselves

Letricia Whitfield

Letricia Whitfield is a PhD student in Critical Sexual Studies at the California Institute of Integral Studies. Her research looks at systems of power, privilege and positionality and the objectification of Black bodies. She is the Director of Special Projects at an elementary school, working resilience in K-4th grade by strengthening their emotional, mental and physical health.



11 The Somali Mothers - Mending Crack in the Sky <https://midaynta.com/2019/11/16/the-somali-mothers-mending-crack-in-the-sky-group/>

12 Toronto Star. (2019). They left Somalia for Toronto, then their sons were killed in Canada. These west-end mothers say they are now 'not scared of anything'. <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2019/12/13/the-left-somalia-for-toronto-then-their-sons-were-killed-in-canada-these-west-end-mothers-say-theyre-now-not-scared-of-anything.html>

Half black, half Native American, she says:

“My country was taken from my mother and built on my father’s back; I am not a victim of circumstance but a product of their resilience.”

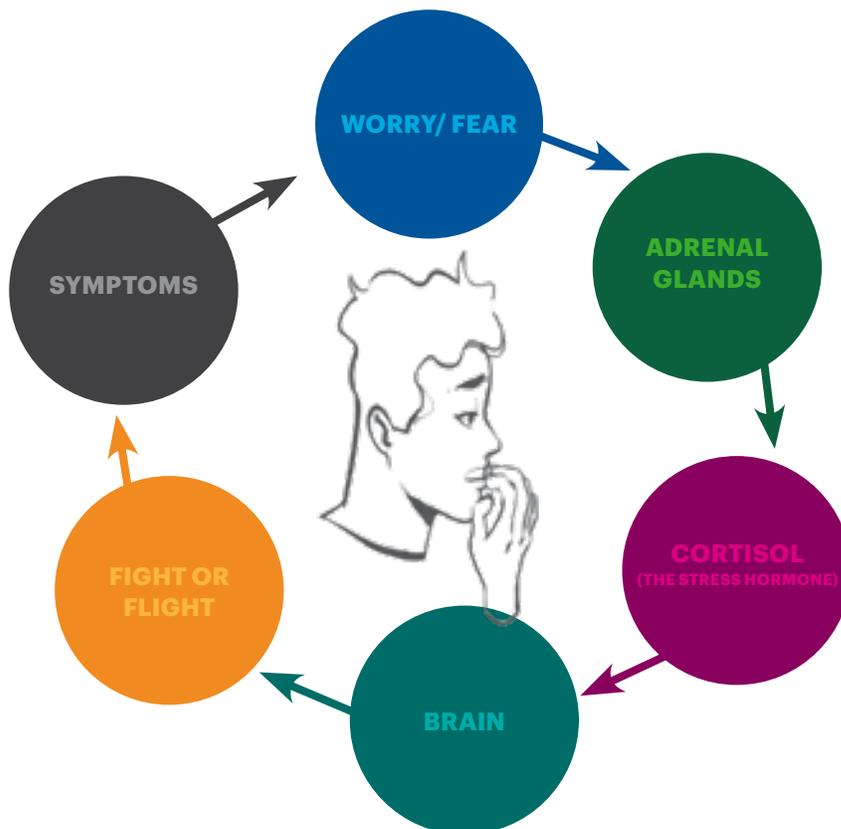
The persistence of deep systemic racism in the US and in Canada, lays out the foundation for “Affect,” the context for Black people to feel this way, and not always have the evidence, making it easy for people to gaslight us and tell us it’s not happening, for people to hide the oppression. When talking about building resilience in Black youth, we should be talking about how, in the face of all this adversity and oppression, are we able to succeed. And how are some Black people more resilient than others. And what can therapy do for us as a community.

In discussing how to understand and respond to trauma to build resilience, her presentation looked at where trauma lives in the body, how it affects our ability to recover (our resilience), and how therapy can mediate some of the effects of trauma

The stress response (SRS), is a complicated system which serves a biological stoplight for near or current dangers. Humans are wired with SRS to respond to stimuli in both their internal and external environments; oftentimes this process is affected ‘transgenerationally through parenting. In the exhaustive change, your body has nothing left to give. When evaluating the pattern of SRS, there is a correlation between SRS and our physiological responses as they affect our cognitive, relational and intrinsic functioning.

Physical manifestations of SRS:

- Pale skin, heart rate, sweating
- Narrowing sense of time – you are no longer looking to the future, and this is one the biggest detriments to mental health
- The body does not register pain until the adrenalin goes away.



What makes a person resilient?

- Child traits
- Family traits
- Characteristics of the broader social environment

This last one is key when considering the impacts of racism and marginalization for certain groups.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

CBT helps individuals adjust their perceptions of the world around us; challenge negative thought patterns; re-establish emotion regulation; and re-shape unhealthy habits. Trauma-focused CBT takes into consideration an individual's relationship with our trauma, and how that affects their ability to change the way they think.

This is important to consider in terms of racialization and discrimination. What we consider to be trauma is different, and 68% of African Americans have been exposed to trauma, whether it be related to interactions with police, community violence, trauma due to racism, intimate partner violence or other abuse, migration trauma, or adverse childhood experiences.

Therapy can support people in developing or achieving:

- Parenting skills
- Relaxation
- Affect regulation
- Cognitive restructuring
- Trauma narrative
- In vivo exposure
- Conjoint parent-child sessions
- Enhancing safety planning

One of the important considerations for racialized people in seeking therapy is finding racially and culturally appropriate care and finding a practitioner who understands the context and the environment from which you are coming from.

Letricia provides the example of a Black young man who is not allowed on a public bus for lacking enough bus fare, who becomes furious, even violent at the driver and may then find himself in trouble

with the law. She says: "But the root of most anger is hurt." Therapy can help us manage our emotions, and become more resilient to hardship, but only if it takes into account the hurt that causes it. What is this young man's experience? If he grew up experiencing microaggressions from teachers and White people in positions of authority, if he has lost a parent due to violence in his neighborhood but the school system responded to his emotional pain through discipline, through disregarding him rather than through support, he would grow up feeling targeted. And this informs his response to a situation as common as an interaction with a White bus driver, whom he sees as being in a position of authority. This anger makes him feel constantly as though someone is trying to harm him.

Unfortunately, often racism is subtle, yet constant and systemic. Often Black people without the words and the proof that they are being excluded and discriminated against, which makes it easy for them to be gaslighted and told that this is not happening.

As Black people, Letricia notes, we will always be shaped by the ability to be resilient amidst injustice. And so, it is important, particularly for young people, to build the coping mechanisms necessary for them to succeed, and a support system which allows them the ability to form trust, despite their hardships.

KEY POINTS:

- There needs to be investment and awareness of support systems, including resources such as therapy, by practitioners who relate to the challenges faced by marginalized youth
- Stigma around seeking mental health support should also be addressed at the individual and community levels
- Diverse mental health professionals need to be employed and accessible in order to adequately serve racialized individuals, and to understand their specific challenges around race, religion, identity
- Racism is subtle, yet constant and systemic. Without the words and the proof for discrimination, Black people can be gaslighted, and when the existence of racism is continuously denied, it is allowed to continue

Presentation II: Exploring the 'clash' of loyalty between faith and one's country. Exploring the role of patriotism and nationalism as a variable of radicalization to violence

Habeeb Ali, Community Development Officer at Human Concern International, and Federal Chaplain with Correctional Services Canada, spoke on the complex challenges that arise due to the conflict of faith and nation. He also talked about the role of nationalism and patriotism as variables of radicalization to violence, and the need to address these issues when we talk about radicalization. Habeeb discussed these insights through the experiences of the prisoners he had worked with. He noted that many people have passed through their experiences of radicalization, but they have not been given the opportunity to have their voices and their stories heard.

Habeeb Ali opened with a dedication to Hodan Nalayeh, acknowledging Black History Month as a time to celebrate our heroes.

"She used to say, 'be a woman; [in Somali]," Too soon oh peace warrior! Too early oh Oprah of Africa! Oh Princess of Black Panther Your beauty exudes musk of Arabia! Shot whilst shooting stories of their mothers They thought they could out your light with their barrels of extremism They even ask one sister to go back home But the world celebrates your hijabiness, your femaleness, your Somaliness, your Muslimness"

Habeeb works with incarcerated men and women, many who have been charged with radicalization and extremism. He offers the words of a young Somali man he has worked with:

"For how long have we been speaking about this topic? And for how long will we be burying our young ones in Toronto? And for how long will our mothers cry, burying our sons and daughters? I do not see the difference."

He tells the story of another young man he has been seeing in counselling, the story of what led to radicalization. It was in part the need to validate the feeling of exclusion. He and other Muslims are working to eliminate the feeling of not belonging, the feeling of being an outsider, yet when they start to feel like part of Canada, racism and hatred from others in this country can shatter that feeling to pieces. This young man had felt that the Imams were sellouts, who did not understand his plight as a young Palestinian boy who was abused and later on discriminated in school, who felt alienated from Palestine, yet separate from Canada. So, he turned to friends on the internet, and became radicalized.

He asked now, why people with his experiences, who have passed through radicalization, have not had the chance to come to the podium and explain what it means to be radicalized. While still incarcerated, some had sought a chance to speak at conferences, but were never allowed. But if these young men and women had the opportunity to speak to the new young people who are affected, it could have an enormous effect.

Habeeb warned of fringe interpretation of the Quran, of individuals making their own judgement, as a self-appointed Imam. But one of the men he worked with, after being incarcerated and interacting with the Imams, received an Ijaza for memorizing the Quran, and was placed on the right path.

He calls to youth to let go of obsession with the physical territory of Islam, which has gained and lost ground. Its spiritual territory is expanding. Young Muslims in the West must see how they can be part of that expansion and have a unique position to show non-Muslims what Islam is about:

“How many times have our territories been changed, and political burdens? How many times have we obsessed over supporting one leader, only for him to become a dictator or a despondent? How many times have we seen despairing young men and women leave their countries in the last episode of extremism in the Middle East, only to be disappointed in what they have received and witnessed in those camps? But the spiritual region, its expansion, caliphate, is such a diverse, limitless knowledge base, and brotherhood and sisterhood.”

Habeeb reminded young people that one can love Canada, while still being a good Muslim. He quotes the prophet Muhammad, saying that to love one's country is part of one's faith, and reminds the audience how Hodan lived this truth:

However, young people need support and need the tools to navigate through today's challenging world. They need the support of their parents as well. In conversation with the audience, the presentation brought to light the need for Muslim parents to engage in discussion with children in a meaningful way, to put less pressure on them, to be less dictatorial and more understanding of their struggles and their needs in their context, particularly the context of racism and struggles with identity and belonging which they may face in Canada. As families, there is a need to talk more about hard topics, for open dialogue between parents and children. On the other hand, children must also understand that the trauma is on both sides.

One young audience member suggested the events that bring youth and the parents into the room, with practitioners and professionals there can help with them dealing with the traumas that exist on both sides. Another young person asked, calling the audience to action in light of this discussion, "are older generations willing to listen, without shame, or cultural corrections or overprotectiveness when their children speak?"

KEY POINTS:

- There is a need for programming that is meant to de-radicalize people who are incarcerated. There are many other rehabilitative programs, but none specifically for those who wish to; anger management, addictions, sex offenders, but nothing for deradicalization for extremism.
- As Muslim parents, there is the need to engage in discussion with children in a meaningful way, potentially with community support
- As educators, there is a need for teachers and school leaders to partner with parents to learn how they can contribute accordingly to supporting youth.

Audience voiced needs:

More programs for Muslim women and girls (in addition to boys' programs), and mentorship including programs to re-learn Islam, with the validation that it is okay to not know, as it is difficult for youth to stay in touch with your din as they may be constantly alienized on other fronts

Need for trained Imams who are updated on issues that are current and specific to their regions, and who know Canadian culture and are open to youth's issues

Need for more community activities, and mental health supports, and to raise awareness of existing programs in ways that reach youth.



Panel IV - Education Reform



The fourth panel discussed different aspects of education reform, moderated by Sigrid Roman - a doctoral student at the department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at the University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

The panelists were:

- **Idris Orughu** is an Activist and a Community Advocate for the Lead for Our Legacy Brampton Black Community Hub and has been at the forefront of the Peel District School Board issues of anti-Black racism.
- **Hoda Samater** is the owner of Begin to Heal Counselling and Consulting Services. She is a Ph.D. student in the Social Justice Education stream at University of Toronto
- **Dr. Sarfaroz Niyozov** is an Associate Professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.
- **Fouzia Navawaz** is an Associate at the Aga Khan University, Teaching and Learning Quality, Karachi

Idris Orughu

Currently working with several of the MPs from Brampton to seek Ottawa's attention with regards to the Black community, the Lead for Our Legacy Brampton Black Community Hub project Idris Orughu hopes to centralize all of the not-for-profit organizations in Peel with the sole objective of minimizing and improving efficiency within these organizations. Idris is a graduate of Western Washington University where he played College Basketball and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Chemistry Minor (BSc). He holds a Personal Financial Planning (PFP), Project Management Professional (PMP) designation and he is also a Certified Scrum Master (CSM).

Idris Orughu begins by touching upon the known and prevalent issue of racism and how it impacts the African community in Canada as well as in the world. He implicates the education system and schools as institutions that are contributing to, and, are part of the problem of racism as they have been affecting Black students and their treatment in society. Reiterating that the issue has been ongoing, but there is a lack of will to address it, Idris focuses on Dr. Carl James's report, "Towards Race Equity in Education", released in April 2017. The main problem reported is how, "Black students are disproportionately being streamed into applied instead of academic programs". Reconfirming connections to this problem through a room check, he posits this statement



to mean that, “the teachers and school authorities have already predetermined the path for Black students, which typically should not be”. He emphasized that Black students should have the free will to be able to choose their academic path on their own with help from their parents. Idris gives evidence of the seriousness highlighted in the report by stating the following statistical facts:

- Black students are suspended at much higher rates as compared to their counterparts,
- Black students face achievement and opportunity gaps within Toronto schools,
- 50% of Black students are in academic programs compared to 81% of white students and 80% of other racialized students
- Black students are twice as likely to be enrolled in applied programs compared to white and other racialized students.
- By the time Black students complete high school, 42% of them are suspended at least once throughout their schooling life as compared to 18% of white students and 18% of other racialized students.

He attributes the cause of this injustice entirely to racism. Stating that anti-black racism shows a trend in Ontario school practices that leads to some of the data included in Dr. James’s report, Idris raises a pertinent question in relation to radicalization of youth – “What lies at the heart of the school to prison pipeline?”. In response to this question, he posits that this disturbing trend in public schools results in Black students being funneled out of the education system and into the criminal justice system. As a result, this limits the chances of Black kids to succeed and increases the likelihood of these kids ending up in prison or having an encounter with the police in comparison to white and other racialized students. Despite issues like learning disabilities amongst students or poverty amongst immigrants, neither do Black students get the necessary counselling services nor any additional care. Instead they are inflicted with punishments, they are isolated, and the police are involved, leading to a criminal case against the student. Calling it somewhat of a norm, he raises an example of two fifteen-year-old Black students who were handcuffed, embarrassed by being paraded through the school, and detained by the police for six hours before the students’ parents could be with them. A second instance was that of an eleven-year-old Black girl, suffering from some challenges, who was temporarily handcuffed by the police. Idris Orughu highlights how such unfortunate behaviour would not take place with other white or racialized students but continues to take place with Black students. He recalls a 1992 race-relations report which responded to the shooting and killing of a twenty-two-year-old Black student for selling drugs and brandishing a knife, which further led to street riots.

Stating that these issues of race has been ongoing and precedes this, Idris emphasizes the 2009 Ontario government’s Equity and Inclusive Education strategy to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers in order to support the well-being of students. Furthermore, in February 2016, the anti-black racism directive was established with the following mandates:

- Eliminate systemic racism in institutions governed and regulated in Ontario,
- Increase awareness and understanding of systemic racism amongst the public,

- Promote fair practices and policies that lead to racial equality,
- Collaborate with communities, business organizations, the government and Ontario human rights.

While these directives paint the picture of progressive social change, in 2019 and today the reality is that, Black people have been storming every meeting at Peel District School Board with regard to ongoing issues of anti-black racism within the schooling system.

He foregrounds that despite the thick population of Black people represented in the Peel region with a number as high as 147,000 and 82,000 in the city of Brampton, unfortunately, the issue of racism is still deeply entrenched within the Peel District School Board. To show the gravity of the situation, Mr. Orughu mentioned a school named McCrimmon in Brampton which was termed as 'McCrimmon-al' by a trustee who was an elected official. Despite protests by the Black community, he refused to give up his position and continues to be an active member of the school board without undergoing any disciplinary actions. In fact, the Integrity Commissioner's report made matters worse as the trustee was absolved from any wrongdoing.

Expressing his disappointment with the sheer length of time across which Black people have been suffering these atrocities, he reiterated the collective failure to address anti-black racism or institutional racism.

He quotes Stephen Lewis - "what we're dealing with at root and fundamentally is anti-black racism. Just as a soothing balm of multiculturalism cannot mask racism, so racism cannot mask its primary target". He connected these issues of racism with the liberal government's commissioning of the report giving reasons behind youth violence and crime in 2008 to state how schools are almost a training ground for such problems. This report made a case against school suspensions and expulsions in Ontario schools as it contributed to the school to prison pipeline.

Some of the root causes are:

- **Poverty** - Idris argued that poverty on its own does not really cause violent crime but poverty without hope, with isolation, with hunger and poor living conditions, poverty with racism and with numerous daily reminders of social exclusion can be an immediate risk factor for violence.
- **Racism** - Sharing a 2005 Supreme Court of Canada statement, Idris emphasized the social fact that racial prejudice against visible minorities is notorious and indisputable.
- **Educational system issues** - Although it is a known belief that education is the best way out of poverty, the educational system has several elements that are risk factors for violence involving our youth:



1. The school curriculum faces a lack of, or, deliberate omission of Afro-centric representation as the education curriculum does not reflect the contributions and history of Black people – “when you don’t see yourself in this history, you don’t see yourself as part of the system” which leads to some issues. As it does not get reflected in society as a lack, the exclusion of success stories of Black students has an adverse impact on the psyche of Black students.
2. The outlook of guidance counsellors in schools, further impacts students as the counsellors do not see Black children as being capable and their training may be insufficient to deal with issues of racism. As non-black counsellors have lower expectations of Black students, therefore, there is a need to have more Black counsellors in the school system.
3. Teachers and Administrators do not conduct essential collective diversity initiatives like Black History Month in schools which should not be just for Black people. This is because it is a period which can showcase critical moments of success stories and achievements of Black people who are not fully represented within the system so that they are shown to non-Black students for them to understand the importance of Black history and to learn from it. In this way, people will see the successes and not perceive Black people as failures or as people who should be excluded from the fabric of society.
4. Criminalization and well-known issues with the justice system,
5. Lack of economic opportunities for youth.

He highlighted the Educational Act on zero tolerance for bad behaviour in schools. He argued that despite its amendment between 2001 and 2008, to include safe school policies the act does not deal with issues of racism adequately as the province is still grappling with complications of past policies.

As a result of all these factors, Idris showed how it comes as no surprise that Black students are under tremendous pressure which leads to violence, gang activity, and possibly radicalization. He shared a quote from a book titled, “Why Young Men? – Rage, race and

Crisis of Identity”, written by Jamil Javani. This spoke about the author feeling rejected from mainstream society because of the way he was treated by his teachers. Police officers who were supposed to be like family and help him solve his problems made matters worse.

The Black community may be one of the most studied ethnic minority groups in Canada, however, in spite of several reports at the federal, provincial, human rights, and judicial levels supporting the plight of Black people, a lot remains unchanged. There is a lack of political will which is one of the biggest obstacles confronting Black people due to institutional racism. He called out the perpetuation of racial divide by well-meaning white people and the coinage of the term ‘institutional racism’ by civil rights activists, Stokely Carmichael and George Hamilton. He quoted the two activists – “much of institutional racism is invisible, especially to those benefiting from it. They argued that institutional racism does not necessarily reflect any deliberate or malicious intent on the part of the dominant group members”. To end, he articulated the UN declared decade for people of African descent from the years 2015 to 2024 which provides a framework for recognition, justice, development, multiple aggravated discrimination, and ongoing inequalities that Canadians of African descent face daily. Idris concluded by highlighting a criticality -

“The Black community will continue to be suppressed, the future of our Black children will continue to erode, our social standing in society will remain doubtful until passive White folks develop a high racial awareness attitude and these White people will make it difficult for politicians to remain complacent.”

KEY POINTS:

- It is the primary responsibility of the education system to discuss and take-up complex issues like racism by creating spaces within the curriculum and the classroom for young voices
- As a first step in this direction, members of the school staff must create a positive school culture of high expectations for each student so that students can make their own academic choices

Hoda Samater

BEGIN TO HEAL

Hoda Samater has 15 years of practice in mental health capacity building and harm reduction. She is the author of “A Call for Change that Recognize and Integrate the African Indigenous Healing Practices into the Social Work Practice” – in the book titled, “Decolonization and Anti-Colonial Praxis: Shared Lineage”. She is trained in short term crisis intervention, long term case management counselling, solution focused counselling and cognitive behavior therapy. She has 7 years of practice as a motivational speaker directed at bridging the systematic and awareness gaps affecting marginalized and vulnerable populations. Hoda is currently enrolled as a PhD student at the University of Toronto in the Social Justice Education stream. She is a Master of Social Work (MSW) graduate in Social Justice and Diversity. She has designed over 20 training sessions on alternative healing strategies using indigenous and Afrocentric frameworks and organized community engagement events for 200+ participants working in the human service sector.

Hoda Samater began her presentation by taking us through her lineage that she learnt at the age of one and a half years by her great-grandmother who raised her mother from the age of four years. She attributed her success and knowledge to her great-grandmother and her parents who have helped her develop into the person she is today. In addition to being a Ph.D. student, a professional, and a social worker, she spoke at this conference as she prides herself on being a part of Midaynta’s history. She emphasized that she would

be presenting a different story at this conference by connecting her story to her mother’s story as it was connected to Mahad Yusuf, the founder of Midaynta Community Services. She began by reading out a story about her work.

From the year 2006 onwards, Hoda has been attempting to find meaningful ways of integrating healing principles into the social work practice and educational spaces to make it feasible for racialized people. She declared that,

“... for most people, social work is an external practice. But, for me it is a practice grounded in the way she was raised. Typically, the way her mother social worked her family at home so that they could be better equipped to navigate foreign systems”.

She drew her inspiration from her mother, who was the inaugural chairperson for Midaynta consistently for 10 years and was the first registered social worker in North America to work in the crisis field. As solutions, she highlighted the need for emphasizing the family structure while also reducing the use of other external systems like the criminal, healthcare, and education systems. She called out the problem with these systems as being based within the colonial framework, wherein, colonization impacted the African continent and the Global South, as well as the ways in which racialized people in Canada function in their day-to-day lifestyle. She went on to acknowledge that in the capacity of a social worker, she herself was a part of the colonial system, practicing behind a desk that maintains the fabric of the colonial system. Referring to Franz Fanon’s book titled, “The Wretched of the Earth”, as a social worker she looked at and continues to look at issues of individualization, dehumanization, and depersonalization. She emphasized that the book indicates how Black people have been impacted as a society and how they can find ways to improve their lives as well as the lives of their children.

She recalled the way her mother social worked her brothers and herself, not in the mainstream Eurocentric way, but more in the reality-based way of social work under the familial umbrella. From doctors' appointments to parent teacher meetings, to seeking summer employment, Hoda's mother was beside her children in trying to provide them with the connection to their systems outside of their home such that they could be supported and protected to navigate complex systems. Because, if they had been left to navigate through those systems on their own, they would have been marginalized, oppressed, and subjugated by the colonial system. As Hoda entered the field of social work as a professional, she was already introduced to, and well-equipped with, reality social work practice. She narrated her experience as a young high-school student entering Canada from the US, being considered a refugee. Despite being extremely well-versed in the English language, having studied in an English school in Abu-Dhabi, she had to begin schooling as an English as Second Language learner (ESL) because the colonial system mis-identified refugees as people who were marginalized and who were unable to speak the English language. As a result, the system put her in a situation where she was dehumanized, individualized and excluded from the dominant culture.

She emphasized the use of alternative opportunities to navigate her way successfully through the system. She stated her mother's teaching,

“If the front door is not open for you, use the back door”

Albeit difficult, she emphasized that there are doors that are available for racialized people through negotiation. Furthermore, she reflected on her diverse lived experiences as a University student attempting to break down systemic barriers, and to also gain access to solutions that were invisible to the naked eye. Therefore, as she began her master's degree she wanted to critique and not criticize the Eurocentric social work practice because her understudy based on her mother's teachings did not fit what she was being taught in school. She went on to complete her master's degree and gained access to ways to engage, assess, intervene, evaluate and report from a social justice lens. Quoting, “two steps forward, three steps backward”, Hoda critiqued that despite being taught the tools, the practicality of her studies was affected by Eurocentrism and Eurocentric ways of knowing, based on philosophical and political reasoning. She emphasized, “what I was taught in University, did not reflect the job”, as she was still considered a Eurocentric social worker although she learned from a social justice lens.



In the pursuit of earning a living, Hoda followed the status-quo, behind a desk, using standardized practices suited for the dominant culture. Over the years she realized how racialized clients were negatively impacted by such a Eurocentric approach as her clients were getting services which were not entirely feasible to their needs. As a social worker for 16 years with two sons, one twenty-year-old and one twelve-year old, the way she learned to navigate the system from her mother, was the same way in which she has taught her children how to navigate the system as she “social works” her kids. She insisted that people working in organizations with people of racialized descent must read Fanon’s book as he was also a psychiatrist who understood people and human behaviour.

As a contextual solution, Hoda presented a current ongoing unique collaborative project with Dr. Sayida, taking place in Edmonton, which is centred in healing solutions grounded in culture, religion and traditional values. Through her speech, she reflected on her journey as a reality-based social worker and demonstrated how her practice integrates and infuses healing principles into the clinical social work practice mimicking her mother’s way of knowing. Therefore, all that her mother taught her was apparent in this project using the TSTR model as an alternative to the African-indigenous ways of developing healing solutions. The model was developed by keeping racialized folks in

mind, specifically for Somali families impacted by conflict and displacement. Highlighting the full form of TSTR: Trauma Systems Therapy for Refugees, she focused on it being an evidence-based model of care for traumatized youth that addressed individual emotional needs as well as the social environment in which he or she lived, strengthened with home visits and clinical support within the home environment. She appreciated the model as an extensive, in-depth, humane one that connected with young people, as if, the practitioner is a parent or a care-provider trying to decipher issues by treating the young person as their son or daughter instead of being seated behind a desk. The project had a 100% success rate where all kids assigned to them were no longer involved in the criminal system. She appreciated the support from Dr. Sayida involving intervention strategies and supporting clinicians as human beings with conflict amongst them. Hoda showcased how despite different personalities within the Somali community, they learn how to resolve internal concerns for the greater good. She concluded by stating the need for hope in life along with the right resources and right connections in order to instill the belief that people were all there together on the day of the conference for a reason and they could achieve success, collectively.



KEY POINTS:

- Youth undergo issues of individualization, dehumanization, and depersonalization that need to be understood while building resilience and preventing radicalization
- In order to navigate the system, youth require healing practices and conversations with practitioners from diverse backgrounds including racialized communities so that they can build trust and form meaningful relationships

Dr. Sarfaroz Niyozov & Fouzia Nawaz

Dr. Sarfaroz Niyozov is an Associate Professor of Curriculum Studies and Teacher Development as well as of Comparative, International and Development Education at OISE, University of Toronto. He completed his Honors Degree in Arabic philology from Tajik State University in 1983, graduate study in Arabic Philology (1988-1992), certificate in Arabic Language Teaching from University of Tunis (1992-93), Master's in Education from the Aga Khan University (1995), and PhD in education from OISE, University of Toronto. He was a graduate student of the 1st cohort at the Aga Khan University-IED. With over 70 publications, Dr. Niyozov has been a member of the boards of scholarly societies such as Comparative International Education Society (CIES), Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) and World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES). He has taught courses on Global Education, Transnational Perspectives on Democracy, Human Right and Citizenship Education, Comparative and International Education, Religious Education, Teacher Development, Curriculum Studies, and Research and Knowledge Production in Non-Western Contexts.

Fouzia Nawaz works at Aga Khan University as an Associate, Teaching and Learning Quality Karachi. Ms. Nawaz specializes in Science (Biology) teaching, learning and assessment. She has taught General Science Content and Method along with Measurement and Evaluation in Education to the BEd Students. She has designed the course for ITA-TWF (2015), which required conceptualization, design and

facilitation of workshops across Pakistan. Her research interests include teaching of Science, youth resilience, classroom assessment and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). She has completed her MPhil education from AKU-IED in 2017.

BUILDING ACADEMIC RESILIENCE

In the capacity of former Director of the Institute for Education and Development from the period of 2015 to 2018 at the Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan, Dr. Niyozov presents a project and paper he jointly undertook as a supervisor with his then student, Fouziya, titled "Understanding and Developing Academic Resilience amongst students in private schools in Karachi". Fouzia, currently an associate at the university, has undertaken extensive and engaging research on this topic as part of her master's thesis.

Dr. Niyozov, drew attention to the alarming statistic of more than 23 million children being out of school in Pakistan, the huge number of dropouts, as well as issues of finance and privatization. Stating the different existing categorizations of schools in Pakistan: government schools, community private schools, commercial private schools, low fee private schools, and religious madrasas; he described the problematic prevalence of perpetual radicalization as a common feature of Pakistan, even before 9/11. However, through this project he presents a much-narrowed focus of the problem, expressing the need to address the wrongful engagement of children in anti-social or radicalization activities.

To clarify the rationality and positionality of the researcher and the participants, Dr. Niyozov expressed how the participant students and science teachers, Miss. Fauzia and he himself suffered through similar struggles and processes around the question of resilience while unpacking the issues of dropouts and struggling to succeed in the schooling system. He further highlights the purpose and objectives of this project that were "to understand the nature of the problem, identify ways, strategies, resources, and support structures that would enable the children in Pakistani schools to succeed and become resilient, academically, and cope with the huge number of challenges". He argued that the scale and gravity of the number of students affected by these contextual challenges in Pakistani schools and society is significantly higher ("10 times") than those in Canada.



Dr. Niyozov, talked about the two research questions that were central to this qualitative study: 1. “how do grade 9 biology students of private schools understand and develop academic resilience?” and 2. “how do the students’ parents and teachers understand and enable them to develop academic resilience capacities?”.

Highlighting the key themes raised from the literature review done by Dr. Niyozov and Miss. Nawaz, factors that address the question of academic resilience are connected to disciplines of: 1. Psychology, 2. Health sciences, 3. Management, and 4. Sociology; with each of these disciplines having its own take and specific way of promoting resilience in students. Supporting the concepts of resilience highlighted by other speakers during the conference, Dr. Niyozov adds that resilience is a product of the interactions between individuals and their environment as well as between the supporting risk factors and protective factors that can be used to overcome problems and build resilience. He specifically focused on academic resilience, which is,

“... the ability to successfully deal with academic drawbacks and challenges that are typical of ordinary academic life”.

The project focuses mainly on academic resilience which can include struggles of dealing with competition for grades, examination pressures, academic stress, etc. during school life. The research methodology of the project was emphasized because it revolved around the question of academic resilience which was a concept that was unknown to the participants of the study. The participants deciphered the conceptualization of academic resilience through visual aids like pictures and cases of people going through hardships and problems but still managing to succeed. The concept was also contextualized to determine how academic resilience would look like in the Urdu language which was translated as “taleemi quwat-e-bardaasht” – “the capacity for taking up academic hardships in order to survive and succeed and never give-up”. These were some ways of overcoming the methodological challenges that participants faced in unpacking how they understood and spoke about the meaning of academic resilience. They analyzed responses from 8 students, 2 teachers and 2 parents, individually and according to themes with quotations from participants to support the research.

This research contribution was three-fold:

- Conceptual: through which the words for academic resilience were coined in the Urdu language
- Contextual: addressing the problem of viewing the technical indicators for academic resilience narrowly, as only getting high grades and scores in examinations
- Methodological: where the idea of resilience could be used to learn skills that could be transferred to other areas of schooling and life by the students.

A further dimension of the project that Dr. Niyozov highlighted was the idea of seeing academic resilience as God's gift "Barkat" as a reward for resilience that came from the hard work that students exert to struggle through systemic challenges of examinations. He re-emphasized the critical importance of the use of creative observations and foregrounding of student voices to understand how the study would play out in the context of Pakistan and its private schools. This study brought to light the overemphasis on the testing culture that was promoted in Karachi with no existence of any discussions on bigger issues of life such as identity, gender or sexuality. Troubled by seeing how the system was individualistic and functioning on for centuries in the same way, he highlighted how there was no emphasis on the need for adaptability and change in the schooling system but instead it was taken for granted that the onus fell entirely on the students and their parents. Therefore, the research itself became an educational project to bring to light all the contextual issues that needed to be addressed. He read out some of the participant views to show the narrow focus of the Pakistani society on seeing testing as the only measure of success amongst students, the academic pressure of doing well in all subjects and the ideas that success was seen as developing resilience through pain. Student participants appealed to teachers to use new materials and methods to motivate them. He also shared parent responses about their challenges around academic pressures faced by their children in the study and how these learnings can be used to understand obstacles to academic resilience as well as ways to build resilience in society.

"Resilience itself as a social, political, economic product of a political discourse has emerged over the last ten years and spread around the world"

which is why it was new for parents and students to understand its conceptualization and discuss it. Supplementary concepts of smart work along with hard work, layers of support in schools, villages, and communities for student success and development of resilience were also shared to indicate the socio-emotional, physical, and financial efforts required for students.

He concluded by expressing the pressing need for a broader understanding of the concept of resilience, along with increased community support in building it through local words, meanings, traditions, models and approaches related to real world connections about what resilience can look like. The study also proposed the need for showing role models for children through sports, entertainment and popular culture in order for them to see what resilience means by following these models. Resilience is a long-term goal which should



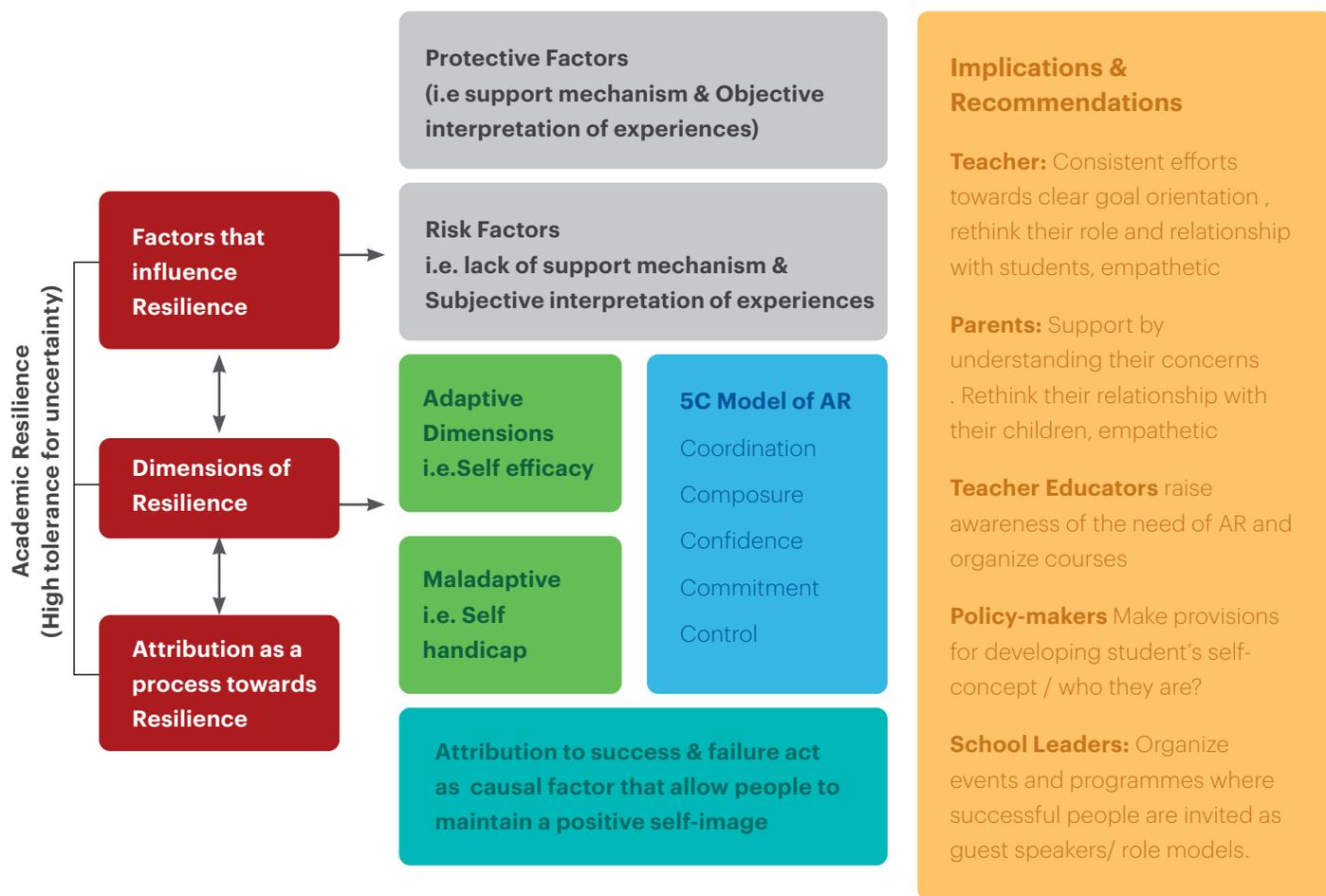
consider not only academic but also other aspects of education and should be connected to positive contribution to society. The project was led mainly by Miss. Fouziya, and it raised the significance of the role of teachers, parents, and school leaders.

Fouziya ended by bringing up implications and recommendations for teachers, parents, teacher education, school leaders, and policy makers. She argued for stakeholder collaboration by stating that teachers and parents need to make efforts in partnership with school leaders and policy makers contributing to these efforts, especially for teacher training, in order to understand, raise awareness, and use the concept of academic resilience in relation to education for every student in the context of schools.

KEY POINTS:

- The issue of out-of-school and dropped-out students undergoing radicalization in the educational context of Pakistan requires conceptual, contextual and methodological dimensions of resilience.
- Students, parents and teachers can help build academic resilience through an interaction between the students and their environment.
- Need for broadened understanding of resilience, building community support, teacher education, and stakeholder collaboration.

Conceptual Framework



Call to action

Social policy issues are so complex that any tangible action seems challenging. Rittel & Webber (1973) identify these issues in general planning for social policy as “wicked problems” (1). When compared with questions raised in the hard sciences, social issues are uniquely complex. All too often, there is not one, but several goals, all impacted by each other. In addition, variables are scattered, difficult to quantify and isolate. Each issue is impacted by the other, and to be able to address the one, it is necessary to address them all. In the case of the issues discussed at this conference, we immediately see the immensity of the issue of youth radicalisation. Youth have multiple identities and challenges in society like marginalization, assimilation, and disenfranchisement which are important indicators of radicalization that need to be

addressed by key stakeholders through promotion of youth agency, empowerment, political representation, and healing practices. In the wide range of subjects discussed, we see how many factors contribute to the problem. We also see how many interventions, at various levels of action are required for any tangible social changes. Several calls to action point at racism as it is not addressed enough. It shows a systemic failure, within the school system and education reform. All too often these ‘wicked problems can hinder the ability to see any tangible action. While the general recommendations that came out of the conference are fairly clear, it can be difficult to identify whose responsibility it is to act. In an effort to make our calls to action tangible and actionable, we identify our recommendations based on specific stakeholders.

<p>MEDIA</p> <p>Responsible and nuances and nuances storytelling</p> <p>Advocacy in areas where there is limited access</p>	<p>GOVERNMENT</p> <p>Deeper community understanding & accommodation</p> <p>Deliberate and strategic stakeholder collaboration</p>	<p>POLICYMAKERS</p> <p>Engagement with community organizations + on-the-ground workers</p> <p>Sustainable and inclusive education reform</p>	<p>FUNDING AGENCIES</p> <p>Prioritize funding needs</p> <p>Ensure funding is accessible</p>	<p>ACADEMICS AND RESEARCHERS</p> <p>Accessibility for grant application processes to non-academic, local organization</p>
<p>LAW ENFORCEMENT</p> <p>Need for community consultation, transparency of procedures, and education of police on issues of discrimination</p>	<p>HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDERS</p> <p>Accessibility & destigmatization of MH support</p> <p>Access to services for those who are marginalized or at risk of radicalization</p>	<p>LOCAL COMMUNITY</p> <p>Collective political agency, visibility & participation</p> <p>Partnerships with the government</p> <p>Sustainable and inclusive education reform</p>	<p>YOUTH AND PARENTS</p> <p>Self and parent engagement</p> <p>Recognition of reciprocal trauma suffered by youth and parents</p>	<p>SCHOOL STAFF</p> <p>Targeted teacher education</p> <p>Conceptual, contextual, methodological understanding of resilience</p>



The Media:

- Responsible storytelling, while paying attention to nuance
- Advocacy in areas where there is limited access

The media plays an important role in framing public consciousness about certain issues. What became evident through this conference is that the media also plays a large part in guiding opinions of leadership, and in turn affecting policy decisions. It is extremely critical then, for journalists to try to represent reality as it is rich, layered, and complex. Especially in representing issues faced by disenfranchised communities, it is important that the nuances are highlighted, to prevent one sided narrative from seizing public fancy as well as prevent misinformation and curb radicalisation of impressionable youth.

The media plays a role in advocacy as well, as media personnel often have access to global conflict zones. Beyond just having the ability then, they have the responsibility to make an effort to draw public attention to complex issues that might otherwise go unnoticed.

The Government:

- Deeper community understanding & accommodation
- Deliberate and strategic stakeholder collaboration

Government officials probably play the most critical role, which has a direct impact on communities. To this effect, various levels of government have a responsibility to participate and engage

with understanding the social realities of varied communities. Especially true for pluralistic societies like Canada, where community issues are bound to be different, the government must be responsible for keeping itself connected with communities. It is important that government officials commit to having a deeper understanding of, and learn to make specific accommodations for communities, depending on community needs.

In order to understand community needs, collaboration becomes crucial. First, local level government bodies are responsible for connecting with community stakeholders. In addition to this though, we all call for more internal collaboration internally between officials at various levels of governance.

Policy Makers:

- Engagement with community organizations and on-the-ground workers
- Sustainable and inclusive education reform

The responsibility of policy makers echo some of the considerations of governance. Elaborating further on collaboration, it becomes crucial for policy makers to play an active role in building engagement with organisations that are working at a ground level. The issues of a community are best understood by organisations who spend their daily hours working to address community needs. These sources of information need to be actively accessed and analysed by policy makers, in order to address tangible community needs.

Building on this, we highlight an immediate need for education policy reform that needs to: (i) foreground the role of education in exacerbating inequalities, (ii) build equity and resilience, and (iii) help youth navigate multiple identities within assimilationist contexts. In considering widespread systemic issues like racism, the most crucial place in which these issues must start to be reframed is through public education. It is more important than ever to address the problem of white supremacy and racism; this can be done best by a concentrated effort at reforming education policy, to make these issues the centre of public consciousness.



Funding Agencies:

- Prioritize funding needs
- Ensure funding is accessible

Community level funding has to ensure that community needs are adequately addressed. Once again, in order to understand local level needs, it is important for collaboration with on ground workers. Second to this, is the need to act on the needs highlighted by ensuring that adequate funding is allocated.

Part of accessibility goes beyond allocation of funds. What also needs to be specifically addressed, is ensuring that certain populations, who oftentimes have the direst needs, are given adequate information to access this funding. This involved literacy programs that create awareness about available funding, digital literacy programs that assist individuals to avail government funds which are accessible online.

Academics and Researchers:

Accessibility for grant application processes to non-academic, local organizations

Academic gatekeeping is a severe detriment towards allowing community level organisations from accessing grants. Local organisations are often barred from being able to access grant funding because of having inadequate 'academic skills. We can rely on academically oriented funding agencies to reduce this gatekeeping. We also call on young scholars to allocate their time to aiding local organisations with grant writing.

Law Enforcement:

- Need for community consultation,
- Transparency of procedures
- Education of police on issues of discrimination

Ensuring that there is a collaborative relationship with law enforcement is the responsibility of both community members, but most importantly, law enforcement officials need to actively address systemic issues of racism and police discrimination. There is a trust deficit between certain communities and law enforcement, and this has to be actively addressed, as part of targeting reform. We call for law enforcement

to establish more collaborative processes, such as consulting with local level leaders. We also call for more awareness and transparency of procedures. A lack of transparency serves to perpetuate a culture of fear, that disproportionately affects racialized communities. Further to this, we also recommend that law enforcement take an active role in undoing systemic problems of racism, white supremacy which lead to police discrimination. The process of unlearning long held attitudes must be an active one and change cannot come about unless there is a concentrated effort to reckon with these issues.

Health Service Providers:

- Accessibility & de-stigmatization of MH support
- Access to services for those who are marginalized or at risk of radicalization

Local health service providers (HSP) are often first points of contact for troubled youth. Here we call for more awareness on mental health issues. HSP themselves required training on being able to spot and provide basic assistance to mental health concerns. This calls for general de-stigmatisation of mental health concerns, and aid in helping communities reduce their own prejudices towards seeking MH support.

Here too, addressing issues of systemic racism and discrimination are important. There is a need to provide specific services to youths in communities that are already marginalised, and to address risk factors that lead to radicalisation. There is a need for more preventive measures, rather than punitive.

We also call on HSP to focus on trauma informed methods of intervention, as well as building more culturally specific forms of therapy and MH intervention.

Local Community:

- Collective political agency, visibility & participation
- Partnerships with the government
- Partnerships with law enforcement

Local community plays a critical role in advocating for its youth. Community mobilisation is the first layer in ensuring active, participatory system wide changes. We call for an emphasis on collective political participation. Community agency, both at a personal level, as well as collaborative level are necessary for local political organization. Community advocacy also plays a role in our earlier calls for more collaboration between government, policy makers and community leaders. Local leadership also has the responsibility to actively seek government support and involvement and be active voices in advocating for community specific needs. As discussed, throughout the conference, community self-reliance is central to resilience and safety. The most critical support for youth and their families can come from these communities themselves. Involvement from external institutions should be based on co-operation and collaboration in partnership with community members.





In addition to this, we call on local community leaders to take an active role in youth engagement. For example, traditional leaders like local Imams, in aiding youth with navigating trauma. Collective community awareness and education is also key. Especially with regards to addressing risk factors of radicalization, community engagement programs which highlight support for youths who have been de-radicalized and give them the opportunity to tell their stories.

There is a need to provide people with the information they need to identify hate crime and violent extremism, but also educate them to understand the causes and prevent further marginalization of those vulnerable to being targeted by extremist groups. People want to offer support and be involved, and to be part of making their communities safer, and should be given the knowledge to do so, and information on the public support that is available. Authorities need to actively engage in communities and be transparent in their practices, in order to build trust and, as a result, create safer and more resilient communities policymakers need to ensure that they are serving the community's best interests, particularly vulnerable or marginalized groups, and racialized communities, and this comes through meaningful conversation with communities themselves.

Youth & Parents:

- Self and parent engagement
- Recognition of reciprocal trauma suffered by youth and parents

Within the community, the organized unit becomes the family. Engagement within families, to ensure that youths have active support systems. Parental engagement can extend to being aware of mental health support, awareness of local resources available. Fundamentally, parental engagement can focus on ensuring that an open line of communication exists between parent and child.

Additionally, there is a responsibility within families to play an active role in de-stigmatization of mental health concerns. Parents and youth can focus on addressing reciprocal trauma and actively seeking MH support for it.

Youth should be empowered, and taken seriously for their ideas and their real experiences with these issues there also needs to be investment and awareness of support systems, including resources such as therapy, by practitioners who relate to the challenges faced by marginalized youth



School Staff:

- Targeted teacher education
- Conceptual, contextual, methodological understanding of resilience

School level interventions that stand outside of wider education policy reform, include targeted teacher education. Teachers can also play a role as local level leadership and provide support to students navigating specific traumas. Teacher education can be extended to include basic MH support, awareness on signs and risk factors of radicalisation. In addition to this, we can for teachers to be given more contextual understanding of facts of resilience.

On a broader scale, there is a critical need for systemic change throughout Canada's education system. Racism is continuously present in classrooms across the country, both overtly, and through embedded processes and teaching practices, including in what

is taught, and more notably in what is left out of the curriculum. Black Indigenous People of Colour are underrepresented among educators and school administration staff, yet their representation is highly important in creating an inclusive curriculum, and in having the capacity and knowledge to teach topics that relate to racism, indignity, identity and similar areas. Studies have shown that Black youth are more likely to have a better academic experience, and less likely to experience racism in schools, in the presence of Black teachers (2). Additionally, there is a need for counsellor training and for the hiring of more diverse counsellors to support racialized youth, particularly in low-income communities. Finally, governments have a responsibility to address this disparity in education and invest in improving the quality of education (including addressing classroom sizes, curriculum, etc.) in low-income neighborhoods and in support programs for marginalized youth.¹³

13 (1) Horst W. J. Rittel, & Webber, M. (1973). Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning. *Policy Sciences*, 4(2), 155-169. Retrieved September 13, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4531523>

Appendix A: Conference agenda

Day 1

Opening Remarks

Mahad Yusuf, Executive Director, Midaynta Community Services

Glen Jones, Professor of Higher Education, and Dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

Greetings from Dignitaries

Greg Stanford, Consul General in Toronto
Faisal Hassan, MPP for York South-Weston

Keynote Address

Dr. Saida Abdi, Assistant professor, University of Minnesota

Panel Discussion I: The Media

Moderator: Kris Miller, Ph.D. PhD Candidate in Sociology & Anthropology at Concordia University

Speakers:

Michelle Shephard, Journalist, Author, and Filmmaker

Nadia Barre, Community Communicator, The Resiliency Project

Dave Michalski, Special Advisor to the Office of the General Director, MSF

Presentation I: White supremacy and gun violence: how this presents a disproportionate risk to Indigenous peoples, racialized peoples, and women

Presentation by **Dr. Pamela Palmater**, Chair in Indigenous Governance, Dept. of Politics and Public Administration, Ryerson University

Panel Discussion II: Increased Community Funding

Moderator: Hamda Mohamed, Support Assistant, Social Development, Finance and Administration, City of Toronto

Speakers:

Akaash Maharaj, Chief Executive Officer, The Mosaic Institute

Jamil Jivani, the Province of Ontario's Advisor for Community Opportunities

Geran Collymore, MEd Student in Educational Leadership and Policy, OISE

Annie Lessard, Consular Policy Officer, Global Affairs Canada

Day 2

Opening Remarks

Mahad Yusuf, Executive Director, Midaynta Community Services

Spoken Word

Sahra Yousuf, Poet and Founder of Write Away Workshops

Ayoub Farah, Poet and Youth Activist

Keynote Address

Abdi Aynte, Director of Planning/Director of Strategic Partnerships, UNRWA

Panel Discussion III: Alternative Approaches

Moderator: Gwyn Chapman, TV Producer/ Host, Youth Advocate, and Founder and President – Canadian Black Caucus

Speakers:

Landon Turlock, Community Safety Liaison, The Resiliency Project

Walter Mongare, Deputy Director in youth programs presidency and cabinet affairs office, Government of Kenya

Danielle Dowdy, Advisor, Strategic Policy and Stakeholder Relations, Toronto Police Services Board

Letricia Whitfield, PhD Student, California Institute of Integral Studies

Presentation II: Exploring the ‘clash’ of loyalty between faith and one’s country - Exploring the role of patriotism and nationalism as a variable of radicalization to violence

By **Habeeb Alli**, Community Development Officer at Human Concern International, and Federal Chaplain with Correctional Services Canada.

Panel Discussion IV: Education Reform

Moderator: Sigrid Roman, Doctoral Student, Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at the University of Toronto - Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Speakers:

Hoda Samater, Owner of Begin to Heal Counselling and Consulting Services, PhD Student, Social Justice Education stream at University of Toronto

Dr. Sarfaroz Niyozov, Associate Professor, OISE

Dr. Fouzia Nawaz, Associate Professor, Teaching and Learning Quality Karachi, Aga Khan University

Idris Orughu, Activist and Community Advocate, Lead for Our Legacy Brampton Black Community Hub

Appendix B: Speaker Profile



DR. SAIDA M. ABDI

Assistant Professor, School of School Work in the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota

Saida M. Abdi, PhD, is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota.

She is trained clinician and an expert in refugee trauma and resilience. She earned her PhD from Boston University. She also holds a second Master's degree in Communications from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Dr. Abdi has worked for more than 20 with Somali youth and families in the diaspora. Her area of focus is building individual, family and community resilience against violence.

Dr. Abdi is the co-author of recently published book, *Mental Health Practice With Immigrant and Refugee Youth: A Socioecological Framework* (American Psychological Association, 2019)

She has also authored and co-authored multiple article on refugee and immigrant children and youth mental health.



ABDI AYNTE

Director of Planning/Director of Strategic Partnerships, UNRWA

Abdi Aynte is currently a Senior Official with the United Nations. From 2015-2017, he was the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Somalia, and later a Senior Advisor to the current President of Somalia.

He's the co-founder, and former Executive Director of the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS), a leading think tank in Somalia where he currently sits on the Board of Directors. Before that for over a decade, Mr. Aynte was a journalist and editor with the leading news organizations around the world, including the BBC, VOA and Al Jazeera English.

Mr. Aynte holds a B.A. in journalism and political science and an M.A. in Government from the Johns Hopkins University in Washington DC.



KRIS MILLET

PhD Candidate in Sociology & Anthropology at Concordia University

Kris Millett is a PhD Candidate in Sociology & Anthropology at Concordia University in Montreal. His research looks at societal responses to the issue of radicalization and violent extremism in Canada, involving ethnographic fieldwork with organizations involved with countering radicalization. This aims to gain sociological insight into the emergence of this field as it expands into new contexts and takes on new types of social problems. Kris also has a background in teacher education and youth work. At the M.A. level, his thesis "Project Traveller and the Criminalization of Somali Canadian Youth" looked at representations of race, ethnicity and crime in the Canadian media, and how this plays into the construction of Canadian identity.



MICHELLE SHEPHARD

Journalist, Author and Filmmaker

Michelle Shephard is an award-winning journalist, author and filmmaker who has covered issues of terrorism and civil rights since the 9/11 attacks. During her two decades at the Toronto Star, she reported from more than 25 countries, including Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Pakistan and went behind the wire at the U.S. Naval prison in Guantanamo Bay more than two dozen times. Shephard was the co-director and producer of the Emmy-nominated documentary *Guantanamo's Child*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2015 and won Canada Screen Awards for best direction and the Donald Brittain Award for Best Social or Political Program.

Her other films include CBC's *The Way Out* (2018, co-director, co-producer, writer), NFB's *Uyghurs: Prisoners of the Absurd* (2015, producer) and the Peabody Award-winning *Under Fire: Journalists in Combat* (2011, associate producer and consultant). She is a three-time recipient of the National Newspaper Award; and the Governor-General's Michener Award for public service journalism, and the author of *Guantanamo's Child: The Untold Story of Omar Khadr*, published in 2008 and *Decade of Fear: Reporting from Terrorism's Grey Zone*, published in 2011.



NADIRA BARRE

Community Communicator, The Resiliency Project

Nadira is a graduate from the University of Toronto with a Specialist Degree in Peace, Conflict, & Justice Studies from the Munk School of Global Affairs. Currently she is the Community Communicator with the Resiliency Project; a project funded by Public Safety Canada and a collaboration between the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Service, and the Organization for the Prevention of Violence. The aim of the Resiliency Project is to work with the public to prevent and counter violent extremism through awareness, education, research, and online and offline intervention. The majority of Nadira's works is bridging together community development practice, countering-violent extremism literature, and public engagement.



DAN MAMLOK

Postdoctoral Fellow, Project Someone

Dan Mamlok is a Horizon Postdoctoral Fellow under the aegis of Concordia's Early Childhood and Elementary Education program, the UNESCO Co-Chair in the Prevention of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism, and the federally funded SOMEONE Project.

He holds a PhD in Educational Leadership, Culture, and Curriculum from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. His dissertation, *Digital Technology and Education in the Age of Globalization*, explored social and cultural aspects of integrating technology and education, and specifically dealt with questions regarding democracy, education, and citizenship. In his current research at Concordia University examines how digital media, books, games, and other cultural artifacts influence the ways in which children construct their understanding of the self and of the other.



DAVE MICHALSKI

Special Advisor to the Office of the General Director, MSF

Dave Michalski has over 19 years working and living abroad in both secure and insecure locations for MSF (Doctors Without Borders) in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Botswana, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Iraq, Libya, South Sudan, Guinea, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Bahrain, Lebanon, Thailand, Myanmar, Belgium and the UAE. His Masters dissertation was on the consequences of the West's failure to engage with the Islamic Court Union in 2006 Somalia. He has led several crisis response teams including kidnapping cases.

Since 2015, he has been an associate professor at the Munk School of Global Affairs (a Masters program at University of Toronto). In his role as Special Advisor to the Office of the General Director of MSF and is currently working on portfolios with regards to Eritrea and Somalia. This is the second time he has addressed the Annual Youth Resiliency Conference in Canada.



AKAASH MAHARAJ

Chief Executive Officer, Mosaic Institute

Akaash Maharaj is CEO of the Mosaic Institute, and leads our work strengthening pluralism within societies and peace between countries.

Mosaic brings together people, communities, and nations, to foster mutual understanding and to resolve conflict. Our projects have included peaceful co-existence on the Tibetan Plateau, national reconciliation after the Sri Lankan civil war, addressing post-genocide trauma, and landmark research on the perceptions and realities of imported conflict in expatriate communities.

Akaash also serves as Ambassador-at-Large for the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption. He has addressed the United Nations on international prosecution of Crimes Against Humanity, and he has a special commitment to reconciliation in conflict states. A frequent contributor to international debate, his articles have been published by newspapers in every populated continent, he was a broadcast essayist with TVOntario's "The Agenda", and Maclean's magazine named him one of Canada's 50 "most well known and respected personalities".

Outside of his professional life, he was a triple gold medallist at the International Championships of Equestrian Skill-at-Arms. He subsequently led the Canadian Equestrian team and federation as CEO, to the team's most successful Olympics and Paralympics of all time.

Akaash earned his Master of Arts from Oxford University, in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, and he was the first overseas student elected President of the student government in Oxford's history. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, of the Royal Asiatic Society, and of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

He has been decorated twice in Canada's national honours, for his work on peace in the Middle East and for services to integrity in international sport. He was commissioned a Kentucky Colonel, the state's highest honour, for his contributions to global affairs.

An active volunteer, he has taught adult literacy, has served as on a range of international and local community boards, and has been particularly involved with UNICEF's efforts on childhood welfare. He is fluent in English and French.



LETRICIA WHITFIED

PhD Student in Critical Sexuality Studies from the California Institute of Integral Studies

Letricia is a master's level clinician who holds a Masters degree in Counseling Psychology with a focus in Applied Behavioral Analysis from Eastern University; she is currently working on a PhD in Critical Sexuality Studies from the California Institute of Integral Studies. Letricia is accustomed to working with large, interdisciplinary populations and has garnered youth interest in political activism, community outreach, and education reformation.

Professionally, she serves as the Director of Special Projects for a minority Elementary School. Here, she works with parents and teachers to improve the mental, emotional, and physical lives of the students in and out of school.



JAMIL JIVANI

Government of Ontario's Advocate for Community Opportunities

Jamil Jivani was born and raised in the Greater Toronto Area. In December 2019, the government of Ontario appointed Jivani as the province's first Advocate for Community Opportunities and Special Advisor to the Premier. In his role, Jivani is working to open lines of communications between communities and the government to empower community members and enable them to increase their participation in government decision making.

Jivani has helped start four North American charities, and currently serves as the Managing Director of Road Home Research & Analysis, a research non-profit supported by the Pinball Clemons Foundation.

He is formerly a visiting professor at Osgoode Hall Law School, where he focused on issues affecting youth, immigrants, and low-income families.

Jivani is a graduate of Yale Law School, York University, and Humber College. His leadership has been recognized by the International Development and Relief Foundation's youth leadership award and the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers' young lawyer of the year award. Jivani's first book, *Why Young Men*, was published in 2018 and nominated for the Toronto Book Awards and Ontario Speaker's Book Award.



GERAN COLLYMORE

Geran Collymore, Med Student in Educational Leadership and Policy at OISE

Geran Collymore has extensive experience working with marginalized youth and communities in Canada and Guyana, particularly in organizing, advocacy, and actionable solution building.

Geran is completing an MEd in Educational Leadership and Policy at OISE where her work centres anti-racism and equity advocacy for Black and racialized families in Ontario's education system.

Geran is especially committed to capacity building for marginalized groups and grassroots organizations to ensure they are equipped to secure sustained and significant progress through sincere inclusion in collaborative policy approaches. Geran is proud to bring unique perspectives, creativity, and a commitment to efficacy in everything she does.



LONDON TURKLOCK

Community Safety Liaison, The Resiliency Project

Landon Turklock is a Registered Social Worker and graduate from MacEwan University's Bachelor of Social Work program with a specialization in Community Development. In his role with the City of Edmonton as the Resiliency Project Community Safety Liaison, he applies community development principles and an asset-based approach to the field of Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism through public engagement and education. Landon brings years of experience in youth work, non-profit leadership, restorative justice, and community/international development to this project.



DANIELLE DOWDY

Advisor, Strategic Policy and Stakeholder Relations, Toronto Police Services Board

Danielle serves as an Advisor to the Board on matters related to policy analysis and development, as well as stakeholder relations. Through her work, Danielle is responsible for deepening the Board's engagement with the communities it is accountable to. Danielle is a business professional with extensive experience in the areas of strategic planning, community development and youth employment. Passionate about community service, she has spent over 20 years working across communities through a variety of community organizations. Professionally, she's worked at the Toronto Police Service for 12 years in many roles, all centred on working with communities on innovative programs.

Her proudest accomplishment has been architecting the Youth in Policing Initiative and building a model that has been replicated across the province in over 22 police services in Ontario. Danielle recently served as Senior Strategic Initiatives Lead to the Honourable Justice Michael Tulloch on the Independent Police Oversight Review and the Independent Street Checks Review.



ANNIE LESSARD

Consular Policy Officer, Global Affairs Canada

Annie Lessard is a social worker by training and joined the Government of Canada in 2010. She currently serves as a Consular Policy Officer at the headquarters of Global Affairs Canada in Ottawa, Canada. Her areas of responsibility include consular engagement, child and youth protection, domestic and gender-based violence, mental health, LGBTQ2, and aging travellers, with a view to bring Canadian citizens to safety, whether in Canada or abroad. Prior to joining the Canadian foreign service, Annie primarily worked with youth in drop-in centres and young offenders under the Canada's Youth Justice Act.



SIGRID ROMAN

Doctoral Student, Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at the University of Toronto - Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Sigrid Roman is a doctoral student in the Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at the University of Toronto - Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Previously, she has taught Canadian law and politics at Danforth Collegiate and Technical Institute and has written on a number of related topics such as the 2015 federal election. Her teaching and research interests are in education and political violence and radicalised behaviour in comparative, international and development perspectives. Her recent focus has been on tackling sensitive and controversial issues in schools through the application of critical citizenship and peace education.



DR. FOUZIA NAWAZ

Associate, Teaching and Learning Quality Karachi, Aga Khan University

Fouzia Nawaz works at Aga Khan University as an Associate, Teaching and Learning Quality Karachi. Ms Nawaz specializes in Science (Biology) teaching, learning and assessment. She has taught General Science Content and Method along with Measurement and Evaluation in Education to the BEd Students. She has designed the course for ITA-TWF (2015), which required conceptualization, design and facilitation of workshops across Pakistan. She was also a part of the NDIE team for Pre-STEP (2012). Prior to this, she was a professional development teacher at a community school in Karachi, and worked with AKU-EB and PTAN (AKU-IED's Platform SAP as a free-lance facilitator). Her research interests include teaching of Science, youth resilience, classroom assessment and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). She has completed her MPhil education from AKU-IED in 2017.



DR. SARFAROZ NIYOZOV

Associate Professor, OISE

Sarfarozi Niyozov is an Associate Professor of Curriculum Studies and Teacher Development as well as of Comparative, International and Development Education at OISE, University of Toronto. Niyozov completed his Honors Degree in Arabic philology from Tajik State University in 1983, graduate study in Arabic Philology (1988-1992), certificate in Arabic Language Teaching from University of Tunis (1992-93), Master's in Education from the Aga Khan University (1995), and PhD in education from OISE, University of Toronto. He was a graduate student of the 1st cohort at the AKU-IED.

Sarfarozi worked as a translator in the Middle East (1980-81; 1984-88), taught at Tajik and Khorog State Universities (1989-1993), Aga Khan University (1994-95; 2015-2018) and OISE University of Toronto (2005- present); He also worked as the founding coordinator of Central Asian Studies Unit at Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, UK (2001-2005); co-director of CIDEA at OISE (2008-2013); editor of Curriculum Inquiry (2013-2015); and Director (dean) of the Institute for Educational Development, Aga Khan University (2015-2018). Since his return to OISE University of Toronto, Sarfarozi has assumed the role of co-chair of the Curriculum & Pedagogy program at the department of Curriculum, Teaching & Learning.

Niyozov has been a member of the boards of scholarly societies such as Comparative International Education Society (CIES), Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) and World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES).

He has taught courses on Global Education, Transnational Perspectives on Democracy, Human Right and Citizenship Education, Comparative and International Education, Religious Education, Teacher Development, Curriculum Studies, and Research and Knowledge Production in Non-Western Contexts.

Dr. Niyozov has more than 70 publications, which include four co-edited books, one co-authored book, journal articles and book chapters about education in post-Soviet countries, educational reform in developing countries, policy borrowing and lending, and the experiences of teachers working with Muslim students in multicultural classrooms. His most recent publications include co-edited volumes: *Learning from Implementation of Education Reforms in Pakistan: Implications for Policy and Practice*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2018; *Education Policies in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan*: Lexington Books (2017); and an upcoming volume *Globalization in the Margins. Education and Post-Colonialist Transformations in Central Asia*, Charlotte NC: IAP Publishing (2019). Niyozov speaks fluently in Tajik (Dari/Persian), Arabic, Russian, English, and has a working knowledge of Urdu.



HODA SAMATER

Owner of Begin to Heal Counselling and Consulting Services

PhD Student, Social Justice Education stream at University of Toronto

Hoda Samater is the Owner of Begin to Heal Counselling and Consulting Services with 15 years of practice in mental health capacity building and harm reduction. She is trained in short term crisis intervention, long term case management counselling, solution focused counselling and cognitive behavior therapy. Hoda is currently enrolled as a PhD student at the University of Toronto in the Social Justice Education stream.

A Graduate of the Master of Social Work (MSW) Degree in Social Justice and Diversity. Embarked with two undergraduate degrees. She has 7 years of practice as a motivational speaker directed at bridging the systematic and awareness gaps affecting marginalized and vulnerable populations. She designed over 20 training sessions on alternative healing strategies using indigenous and Afrocentric frameworks and organized community engagement events for 200+ participants working in the human service sector.

Hoda was invited to speak on topics centered around feasible and accessible treatment options pertinent to immigrants from the Global South. She attended the January 2015 conference held in Kigali, Rwanda as an expert to take part in a 4-day discussion on mobilizing and harnessing the Somali Diaspora for National Reconciliation. She attended the 2019 2nd Annual Summer Dialogues Conference held in Garowe, Somalia on identify workable solutions to counter youth radicalization. She developed a human service curriculum aimed to

improve the way social work is practiced and promoting traditional and religious healing strategies from a multifaceted system perspective.

Hoda Samater is the author of "A Call for Change that Recognize and Integrate the African Indigenous Healing Practices into the Social Work Practice." – in the Book titled "Decolonization and Anti-Colonial Praxis: Shared Lineage".



DR. PAMELA PALMATER

Chair in Indigenous Governance, Dept. of Politics and Public Administration,

Ryerson University

Pamela Palmater is a Mi'kmaq lawyer whose family originates from the Eel River Bar First Nation in northern New Brunswick. She is Full Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at Ryerson University. In addition to her faculty appointment as an Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration, Dr. Palmater holds the Chair in Indigenous Governance, and is also a member of the Yeates School of Graduate Studies, affiliated with the MA program in Public Policy and Administration.

Pamela Palmater completed her Doctorate in the Science of Law (JSD) at Dalhousie University Law Faculty in 2009. Her thesis is entitled: Beyond Blood: Rethinking Aboriginal Identity and Belonging. In addition, she holds a Master in Laws (LLM) from Dalhousie University in Aboriginal Law, a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) at the University of New Brunswick, and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) with a double major in Native Studies and History from St. Thomas University in New Brunswick.

She was called to the bar in New Brunswick in 1998 and is a member of the Law Society of New Brunswick, the Canadian Bar Association and the Indigenous Bar Association. She worked for the federal government on Aboriginal issues for over 10 years. Her position as a lawyer at Justice Canada involved various legal matters pertaining to First Nations. She also held several positions as Director at Indian and Northern Affairs, managing treaties, claims, self-government, land and registration portfolios. She also worked and/or volunteered with national and provincial Aboriginal organisations and communities.

Pamela Palmater was one of the 23 Visionary Women Leaders selected to meet and answer the question "What do 23 women envision for our country for the next 150 years?" A Bold Vision (an organization formed by a coalition of women's organizations in Prince Edward Island, with support from PEI 2014 Inc.) held a conference in Charlottetown, PEI on September 24-26, 2014 to commemorate the 1864 Charlottetown Conference that led to the formation of Canada, to celebrate the vital role women played and will continue to play in the advancement of Canada, and to update the 1864 vision of the 23 men (the Fathers of Confederation). Canadians nominated women leaders from all walks of life to participate in this discussion of the future of Canada. All of the participants contributed to a book sharing their vision for Canada, which was released during the conference.

Dr. Palmater was elected Associate Senior Fellow at Massey College (UofT), effective 24 April 2015. In March 2016, Dr. Palmater was invited to be an inaugural member of the External Advisory Council of the MacEachen Institute for Public Policy and Governance. On 09 May 2016, the Institute was formally launched at a ceremony at Dalhousie University.



HABEEB ALLI

Community Development Officer at Human Concern International and Federal Chaplain with Correctional Services Canada.

Habeeb originates from Guyana where he studied at Queen's College and graduated in India with a Masters in Islamic Theology and Arabic Language, and also a Diploma in Journalism. I lived in India and speak Urdu and Arabic.

Having authored twenty five titles on Islam and poetry, the latest is Wild Lavender. I am a member of the Canadian Council of Muslim Theologians and the Canadian Council of Imams. Besides being an honorary director for the Moeen Centre for Persons with Disabilities, Director at the GTA Faith Alliance and the Abraham Festival in Peterborough I volunteer often with the Regent meals with Muslim Welfare Centre and attend many Interfaith meetings and events for the greater understanding of faith in Canada.

Presently he serves as Community Development Officer at Human Concern International and Federal Chaplain with Correctional Services Canada. Habeeb regularly organises Interfaith events to celebrate Canada Day, Remembrance Day and Mothers Day in the community besides fundraisers for many worthwhile causes. I volunteered to help the Syrian refugees settle and always seek opportunities to give back to the community.

For the past 5 years I have hosted the One Love gala inviting past inmates, community chaplains and interfaith leaders alongside politicians so we may honor the inspiration that comes from diversity chaplaincy in prisons.

He is active on social media and enjoy meeting people of different faiths, languages, ethnicities and backgrounds. His community outreach helped support the HIV movement and he has helped organise the first HIV awareness symposium in the Muslim community as well as produce the first brochure on the topic. The same is true for organ donations and transplantations. Currently Habeeb lives in Toronto with my family.

SAHRA YOUSUF

Poet and Founder, Write Away Workshops

Sahra is a young poet and founder of Write Away Workshops. In addition to her passion of poetry she studies Early Childhood Studies. Sahra tries to combine her two passions by working part time with children while running poetry workshops to empower her community to find and express their voices through poetry.



AYOUB FARAH

Poet and Youth Activist

Being a young millennial entrepreneur, and advocate of mental health, Ayoub strives to revolutionize the narrative on youth of color.

Having been granted the privilege for over 8 years to work with at-risk youth, that have unfortunately fallen victim to trauma, he uses his personal and learned experience to be a part of the solution.

Currently enrolled in the both the Ada Slaight, and Our Noor mentorship programs, alongside the community healing project, he aspires to redefine positive masculinity for younger men.

His creative skill-set, including poetry, fosters his passion to inspire, reflect, and empower masses through insightful, introspective, impactful, and unapologetically vulnerable medium

HAMDA MOHAMED

Support Assistant, Social Development, Finance and Administration, City of Toronto

Hamda Mohamed was born and raised in Ottawa, Ontario. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in International Development Studies from York University. Hamda has worked in Africa as a Gender Specialist to support rural women and youth-led agri-businesses and secure access to credit to advance women's economic participation. She has worked with the City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit to assist senior staff in implementing the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism.

Hamda currently works within the Community Development Unit and remains dedicated to creating space for the self-empowerment of vulnerable groups both domestically and internationally.





IDRIS ORUGHU

Activist and Community Advocate, Lead for Our Legacy Brampton Black Community Hub

A strong believer in community activism and participation, Idris has volunteered in city elections coached basketball teams in Brampton’s youth basketball programs. Further community involvement was demonstrated when he successfully organized and hosted a meet and greet event involving the African & Caribbean community and Mayor Patrick Brown. This event was the first of its kind, with a sole focus on common history and the need for collaboration on political and civic matters.

For the furtherance of the issues affecting the African and Caribbean community, Idris was part of the team that met with Hon Andrew Scheer. He is currently working with several of the MPs from Brampton to seek Ottawa’s attention with regards to the Black community.

Idris leads a strong organization in Peel, Our Legacy Brampton Black Community Hub. This project hopes to centralize all of the Not for profit organization in Peel with the sole objective of minimize and improving efficiency within these organization.

In addition to his active community engagement, Idris has been at the forefront of the Peel District School Board issues of anti-Black racism. He led a team that met with Patrick Case, Assistant Deputy Minister Educational Equity Secretariat and subsequently, the Hon Minister for Education, Stephen Lecce.

Idris is a graduate of Western Washington University where he played College Basketball and graduated with a Bachelors of Science in Biology and a Chemistry Minor (BSc). He holds a Personal Financial Planning (PFP), Project Management Professional (PMP) designation and he is also a Certified Scrum Master (CSM

ABDULRAHMAN ALI

Co-Founder & Managing Director of SafariOne, CEO of HudHud Communications, and Founder & CEO of SafariPay



Abdulrahman Ali is the Co-Founder & Managing Director of SafariOne, CEO of HudHud Communications, and Founder & CEO of SafariPay. Mr. Ali has more than 15 years of experience in the telecom and financial service sectors in North America and East Africa. Mr. Ali holds a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science from Benadir University and a Postgraduate Degree in Business Administration from the University of Wales.



GWYN CHAPMAN

*Co-F TV Producer/Host, Youth Advocate, and Founder
and President – Canadian Black Caucus*

Gwyneth Chapman is a Television Broadcaster, Producer, Photo-Journalist, Writer, Motivational Speaker, and a long time Community Advocate and organizer, President of the Canadian Black Caucus and Inspiring and Empowering Youth Network. She also has her own media company, Inspiring You Media Productions which specializes in media, PR, photography and event productions. Ms. Chapman is passionate about life and people.

A visionary, a strong advocate for youth, a community leader, respected for her ability to get things done, to get the attention and support of those in power. Her dynamic and spirited individuality is exemplified through her work with young people in numerous communities and youth organizations in Ontario.

Her belief in representing underprivileged people underpins her compassionate promotion of the numerous issues prevalent in those communities and the individuals for whom there has been little representation.

Raised in St. Lucia, the USA, and finally, Ottawa, Ms. Chapman first ventured into journalism and community activism in her early teens, volunteering at various community organisations within the city. Using her innate ability to easily interact with people from various walks of life, she eventually began to liaise with community leaders and elected officials within the Federal Government, assisting them in fundraising events and community outreach initiatives in an attempt to help foster a new culture of political involvement in Toronto's black community.

Appendix C: About Midaynta Community Services

Midaynta Community Services is a registered Canadian charitable organization that provides settlement services and other programs that advances education by providing courses, seminars, meetings, counseling and other support services for refugees, immigrants and youths in need. We are a social and settlement services agency, working to improve the quality of life of newcomers in Toronto and vicinity. Midaynta serves community needs regardless of race, national origin, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, ability or religion; and we endeavour to unite the communities by creating a socially cohesive environment under the roof of a “Community Centre.”

Midaynta is committed to building vibrant communities in which social and economic developments are central to all aspects of individual and family life. We believe in and value the provision of high-quality community social services that promote and build a better and prosperous society; We are accessible, equitable, and accountable to the community; We provide free and friendly settlement and community development services, and continue to advocate for a largely underserved and marginalized communities. We believe in working in partnership and collaboratively with other service providers to make a difference in developing the community and the society. We are striving to provide services that promote, accountability, transparency, social justice, equality and equity, partnership, and diversity.

At Midaynta, we offer different programs that are mainly youth focused that aim to support and empower youth in the community. Below are programs we run:

Project Turn Around

Project turn around is one of four funded Gang **Prevention** and **Intervention** programs (GPIP) in the city of Toronto and we are mainly in the North West of Toronto. We are a Holistic culturally appropriate and responsive community-based prevention and

intervention program. Aimed at youth ages 12-20 however, we do serve youth up to 24 years of age and their families.

Prevention: The provision of culturally relevant services to at-risk youth through interactive workshops, employment and training supports, cultural and community education, substance abuse awareness and harm reduction strategies.

Intervention: The planning and implementation of client-centered, trauma-aware, safety informed intervention strategies for youth to participate in a wrap-around rehabilitative/integrative plans in a positive, culturally affirming community setting.

The program supports: Youth who are in conflict with the law, have been sentenced and are at risk to re-offend, are at higher risk of criminal/violent behavior and poorer outcomes, reside in a higher risk neighborhood or area or have multiple risk factors and challenges and/or have experiences specific incidences that increase their risk, such as a sibling in conflict with the law.

Provincial Youth Outreach Worker Program

The Youth Outreach Worker (YOW) Program provides outreach, referral, and follow-up services for youth 12-29 years old and their families to programs and services including but not limited to: Pre-Employment Development (e. Job search, Resume, cover letter, interview skills, etc.), Skilled Trades & Pre-Apprenticeship Programs, Bridging Programs to Post-secondary Education, Mental Health & Addictions Assessment & Treatment, After School & Summer Programs, Recreational Programs, Summer Job Readiness, Community Crisis Response, Parent Education, Conflict Mediation, Diversion & Re-integration Services and Community Service/Volunteering Connections

Enhanced Youth Outreach Worker Program

The Enhanced Youth Outreach worker provides brief therapy to cover gaps in services and for those experiencing long waiting times for Mental Health services. This program serves youth ages 16-21 to support in the development of a healthier state of mind and to develop a positive mindset.

Youth Mentorship Program

The Rites of Passage Youth Mentorship Program is a culturally relevant & responsive mentorship program aimed at supporting the positive development and success of African Canadian youth ages 12-16, who face multiple barriers to success & reside in the Northwest Toronto. We aim to strengthen the young person's self-esteem, self-respect, and community responsibility, and establish connections to mentors in a positive, goal-oriented and culturally relevant way. Our Rites of Passage Youth Mentorship Program seeks to restore a sense of history and place for our youth, of where they come from and how to take the knowledge and oral history of the past to go towards the future.

Housing Program

Midaynta's Housing Program supports low-income individuals and families who face many barriers and challenges in finding and maintaining appropriate and affordable housing and who are struggling to pay the rent. Services also include assistance to find and maintain affordable housing, information, referral, eviction prevention, housing stabilization and counseling, mentoring programs and peer-support initiatives. In order to provide appropriate support to clients, we work in collaboration with a number of other services providers including Toronto Community Housing and Housing Connections.

From the previous **Youth Resiliency conferences**, Midaynta was able to gain knowledge from the discussions and recommendations from different scholars, contributors, and speakers on how best to serve youth with multiple risk factors. This prompted us to ask for and secure funding to run different youth programs. Therefore, the youth programs at Midaynta are an outcome of the Youth Resilience conferences. Our case workers from Project Turn Around, Youth Outreach Workers, Enhanced Youth Outreach Worker, and the Youth Mentorship Co-Ordinator, all incorporate the conferences ideas and recommendations in their work with the youth.

Midaynta Community Services organizes the annual **African Heritage Games**, an ambitious summer sports program created to celebrate African Canadian heritage in order to motivate African youth and their families through educational workshops as well as promoting civic involvement within the African community. The program combined sports and education whilst providing a platform where pressing community issues can be discussed. The summer heritage games were an enormous success, to which more opportunities were made to engage youth in addressing and discussing the different challenges they faced, especially being racialized and/or of Somali descent. The initiative was also used to engage parents and other community members on ideas of how to address different issues in a solution-based approach.

In collaboration with TDSB, Midaynta hosted the **Rising Star Awards** to support, acknowledge, recognize and celebrate youth's academic and athletic accomplishments, community contributions and important roles as student leaders in enriching their own lives and communities. Recognitions were made to exemplary students who have improved their educational standing, rising above obstacles and reaching new heights.









The conference was sponsored by:





Midaynta Community Services

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