

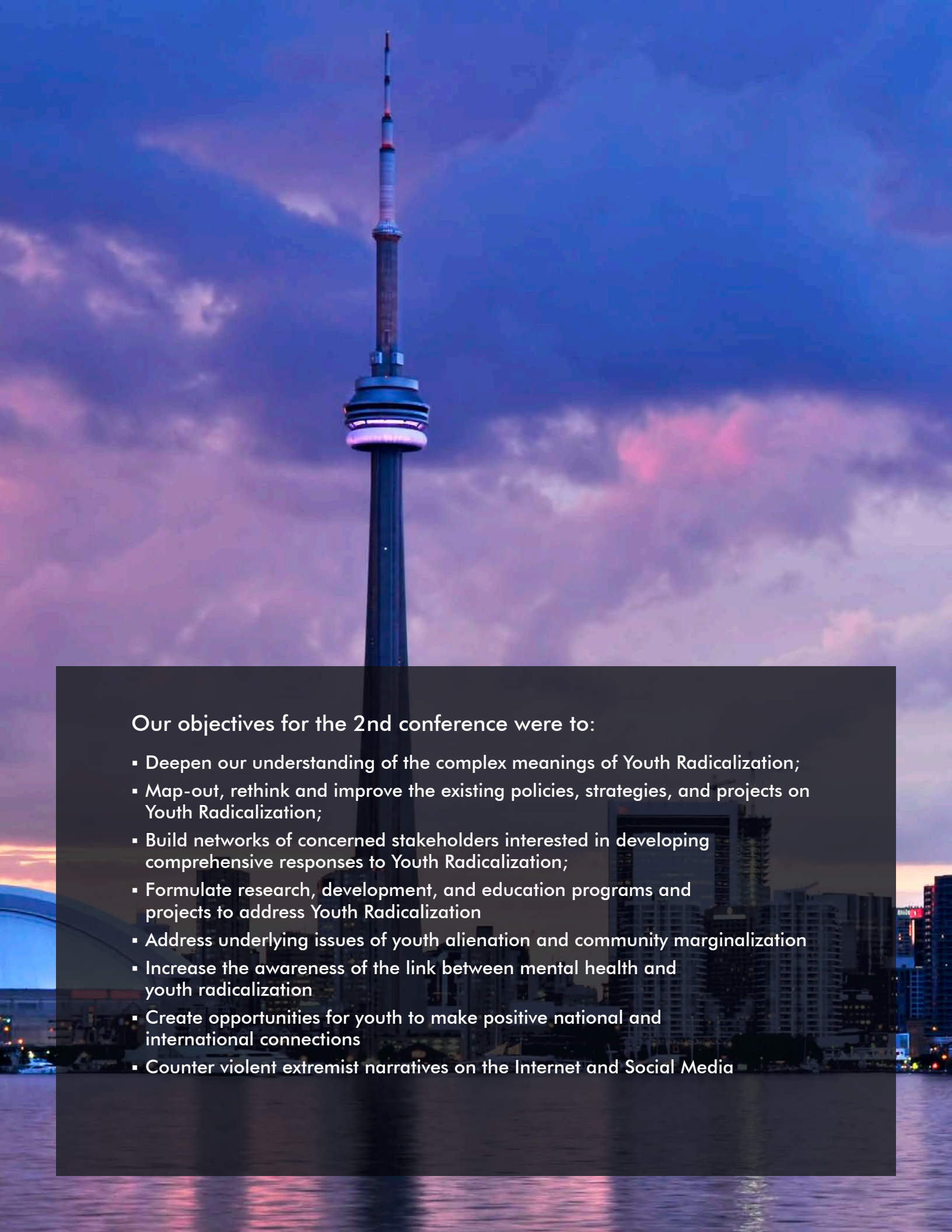
YOUTH RADICALIZATION

NEW AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

2ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

25 APRIL 2017





Our objectives for the 2nd conference were to:

- Deepen our understanding of the complex meanings of Youth Radicalization;
- Map-out, rethink and improve the existing policies, strategies, and projects on Youth Radicalization;
- Build networks of concerned stakeholders interested in developing comprehensive responses to Youth Radicalization;
- Formulate research, development, and education programs and projects to address Youth Radicalization
- Address underlying issues of youth alienation and community marginalization
- Increase the awareness of the link between mental health and youth radicalization
- Create opportunities for youth to make positive national and international connections
- Counter violent extremist narratives on the Internet and Social Media

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Youth Radicalization:

NEW & EMERGING CHALLENGES

YOUTH RADICALIZATION
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Executive Summary

Violent extremism is an evolving phenomenon that continues to dominate the news worldwide. Politicians and concerned citizens around the globe are holding debates to fathom terrorism and ways of counteracting it. A key component in recent years is its recruiting strategies directed at youth which is defined here as youth radicalization, this broadly refers to a process whereby youth adopt radical views and turn them into violent action

For the past three years, Midaynta Community Services has addressed the need for more communication, dialogue, and deep discussion on youth radicalization among educators, faith leaders, community members, and law enforcement. Midaynta Community Services has responded by holding roundtable discussions across Canada that bring these key stakeholders together.

As a community, we recognize the urgency of tackling this increase. However, implementing policy changes requires significant analysis and dialogue. At Midaynta, we felt the need to gather diverse experts—community faith leaders, law enforcement, academic researchers, and government officials—in one setting to investigate the new and ongoing challenges facing youth in dealing with Radicalization. This aim inspired our second annual conference—Youth Radicalization: New and Emerging Challenges—at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto (UT), on November 16–17, 2016.

The conference was organized through the auspices and collaboration of Midaynta Community Services, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE/UT), the Office of the Consulate General of the United States, the Canadian Council of Imams, and the Mosaic Institute. It brought together policymakers, educators, law enforcement, academics, and women and youth leaders from across North America. It gave us the opportunity to explore the causes of youth Radicalization as well as strategies for preventing young people from joining extremist groups both globally and domestically.

“As a community, we recognize the urgency of tackling this issue. However, implementing policy changes requires significant analysis and dialogue”

The two-day conference consisted of six plenary sessions highlighting the factors that persuade youth to yield to Radicalization and subsequently join extremist groups. These factors included identity, education, interfaith relations, pastoral care, mental health, the psychology of terrorism, the dynamics of global conflict, police efforts to counter violent extremism, and the role of social media in youth Radicalization. The deep intellectual dialogue inspired by these topics not only increased our understanding of youth Radicalization, but also captivated the audience.

The first of the six panels—Youth Radicalization: Lessons from Abroad—discussed reasons why youth join extremist organizations. The session involved four presenters who emphasized formations of identity as a contributing factor. The first speaker, Salam Al Marayati from the Muslim Public Affairs Council, maintained that Muslims living in Canada and the United States suffer from a sense of isolation and lack of connection with their new communities. “Where is home?” he asked. “Is home where our grandparents are buried or is it where our grandchildren will be raised?” He stressed the need for a more holistic approach with community organizations at the forefront. “Youth radicalization is a public health matter, not a criminal justice matter. It should be addressed through social service and rehabilitation.”

The second speaker, Dr. Aleksandra Nestic from the Graduate Institute of World Learning in Washington DC, discussed Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) via global citizenship education with an emphasis on identity management and resilience building. She established the pedagogical connection between theory, practice, and policy that can mitigate the factors drawing youth into violent extremism. The community must play an active role in welcoming new immigrants and refugees into their new surroundings and therefore minimize the development of isolation among those who feel ‘lost’ in their new home.

Michelle Shephard, a Toronto Star foreign reporter, discussed Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) policy and the impact of Drone-warfare and geo-political factors. She argued that we need to visit the regions that have been the most impacted if we really want to understand youth radicalization. She highlighted de-radicalization initiatives in Somalia and Denmark that offer amnesty to youth who seek to re-integrate into society through education and training opportunities. She hopes for similar programs in Canada and the US, and concurred with the previous speakers that youth lack a “safe place” to discuss their ideas.

Ryan Lenz from the Southern Poverty Law Center was the last speaker of the panel. Lenz critiqued CVE programs for ignoring White supremacist ideologies that construct the narrative that the West is at conflict with Islam. This narrative helps White supremacists to promote anti-Black, anti-LGBT, and anti-Muslim ideologies. He also brought attention to online Radicalization, specifically how White supremacist ideology is contributing to Radicalization around the world. Lenz referred to White Homicide World Wide—a report by the Southern Poverty Law Center that concluded that hate websites have led to a hundred murders in the US alone.

The second panel—Deepening the Dialogue—illustrated how Public Safety Canada tackles youth Radicalization through practices of citizenship engagement. Since 2009, Public Safety Canada has developed and established outreach programs in conjunction with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Canada Border Services Agency, the RCMP, and the Department of Justice. The main challenge identified by the facilitators was how to involve government agencies in community meetings in a non-threatening way. As a catalyst for discussion with communities, they created narratives based on case studies of youth involved in acts of (violent) extremism. However, audience response to the narratives revealed an even greater challenge in terms of youth Radicalization—the absence of youth as authors of their own stories without reductionist narratives. The voices of young people need to be heard in order to find solutions to their needs.

The third panel—The Role of Public, Religious, Peace & Citizenship Education in Countering Youth Radicalization—discussed the role of the general public and education in countering youth Radicalization. The panelists raised challenges surrounding citizenship and securitization because these are often used to justify the arms race and increased militarization. Dr. Jasmine Zine from Wilfred Laurier University stated that Muslim youth are often forced into a singular narrative created by the dominant group: “They may feel as though they are not worthy of representation or recognition unless they are spoken of solely as perpetrators or architects of violence.” We need to be attentive to the messages we are sending, especially when Muslim youth are not present at conferences. We need to be careful about how the label of Radicalization impacts youth in terms of understanding their place in our nation.



Jeewan Chanicka, an educator and community advocate, argued that the main challenge in tackling youth radicalization is “the structural institutions that normalize and reproduce illicit ideologies about Muslim youth.” We must problematize discourses of Radicalization and violence as they are often construed as a Muslim-only problem. This ill-conceived narrative demonizes and dehumanizes Muslims simply because of their social and religious identity. We cannot have these conversations without challenging institutions, including government, media, and education, that continue to produce these constructs.

The final panelist was Fowzia Duale, Youth Outreach Worker at Midaynta Community Services. Duale explained that it is through her lived experiences as a marginalized youth and her direct confrontation with poverty and systemic racism that she resonates deeply with Somali youth growing up in Canada today. She encounters many challenging situations in her role as a youth worker and there are legitimate concerns about violent extremism regardless of audience or constituency. This panel emphasized the need for all concerned stakeholders to move beyond securitization in order to achieve genuine, lasting peace and social justice for all.

The fourth panel—Ensuring Newcomers Are Settled and Fully Integrated: Challenges & Opportunities in (Re) Settlement, Integration, Community Engagement, & Cultural Competency—highlighted the links between poverty, settlement, local segregation, and youth Radicalization. The first speaker, Dr. Rima Berns-McGown from Simon Fraser University, argued that Public Safety Canada should acknowledge the vindictive and violent systemic barriers that young people of colour face. Youth have to be resilient to make it through these multiple barriers that dehumanize them. In response to overwhelming ‘Whiteness,’ they attempt to ground themselves in their cultural identity.

The next panelist, Lina Chaker from the Windsor Mosque, described some of the successful local initiatives providing vital services to Syrian refugees. These initiatives confront the challenges of building trust between newcomers and the host community through positive media coverage and research platforms that help to integrate refugees and promote civic participation.

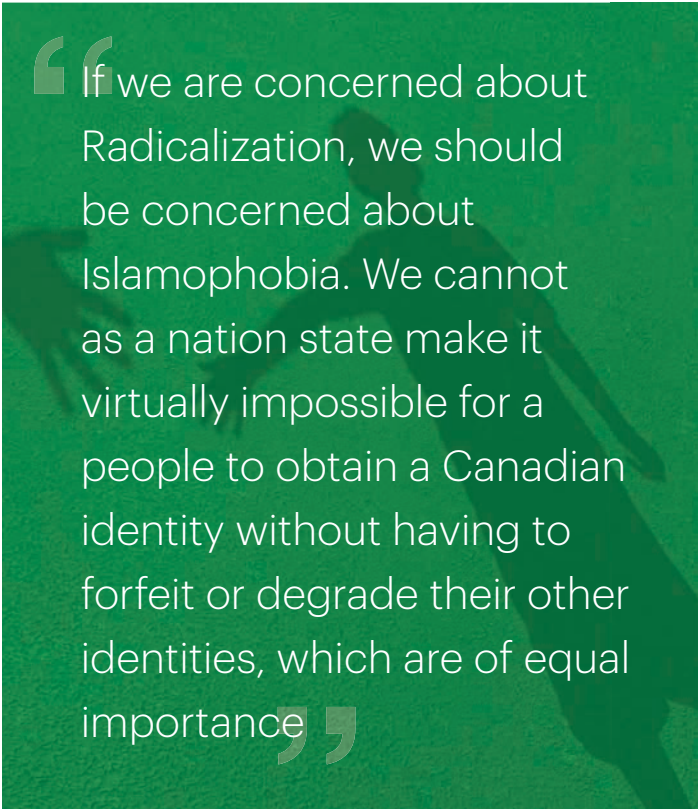
Panelist Dr. Nkechinyelum Chioneso, a community psychologist, addressed the challenges of newcomer integration from a social justice and health equity paradigm, seeking to promote healthy individuals within healthy communities. She emphasized that society, the economy, and the environment need to be considered from an intersection perspective. This approach will break down the barriers to universal and equitable access to health services, especially for the most vulnerable cohorts.

Dr. Nazir Harb, senior research fellow at the Bridge Institute, Georgetown University, has led and organized a lecture series on Islamic Literacy at a local school. This lecture series trains future policy makers and analysts to detect and counteract Islamophobia in legislation. He stressed the importance of highlighting the problem of Islamophobia, challenging the discourses that contribute to it, and building an alternative discourse based on research that is accessible to the public. Islamophobia is an obstacle to strong diverse societies and a threat to human dignity and civil liberties.

The fifth panel—Trauma and Mental Health as it Pertains to Radicalization: Strategies for Social Inclusion & Well-Being—addressed issues of trauma and mental health in relation to Radicalization. The challenge is that mental illness is stigmatized globally, including in the Muslim community, and we cannot talk about youth issues without understanding the trauma their families have endured. The first speaker, Hodan Hassan, a mental health practitioner and educator,

maintained that “historical trauma is a big piece in the puzzle of trying to understand Radicalization.” Her research findings show that many Somali youths live in constant trauma because of the conflict in Somalia and involvement by the West. The challenge Muslim youth face is the struggle to make sense of their dual identities. The second speaker, Imam Yasin Dwyer added that “Muslims are erroneously questioned about their loyalties to the nation state and to their faith, as if one compromises the other.” We must tell our youth, he argued, that they “do not have to pick one identity over the other. They are who they are and that should not be up for speculation.” The third speaker, Dr. Myrna Lashley, stressed that “mental illness is not a precursor for terrorism” and that poor mental health does not equal violent extremism. Dr. Sarah Lyon–Padilla, a research scientist at Stanford University, added that radicalization is not exclusive to a particular group, religion, or nationality. If we are concerned about Radicalization, we should be concerned about Islamophobia. We cannot as a nation state make it virtually impossible for a people to obtain a Canadian identity without having to forfeit or degrade their other identities, which are of equal importance.

The conference concluded with the sixth panel—Raising Awareness of the Role of (Social) Media and Media Literacy in Youth Radicalization—which highlighted the key role of social media in recruitment, radicalization, and connecting youth with “new families” in extremist groups. The first panelist was Saba Husain, MA graduate from the University of Waterloo, who stated that people are drawn to join terrorist groups not for social, economic, political, or religious reasons, but for a need for intimacy and solidarity with like-minded people, and a sense of belonging and identity. Extremist groups work hard to achieve “frame alignment” with potential recruits; that is, “to match the group’s beliefs perfectly with the individual’s beliefs.” Once this alignment is achieved, the argument presented by the group makes sense to the potential recruit and it is much more likely to be internalized. Dr. Amarnath Amarasingam, a post-doctoral fellow, University of Waterloo, emphasized that the appeal of ISIS is not declining and that the rate of radicalization is the same as in the past. Radicalization relies on frequent interaction with group members. The third panelist, Sgt. Brain Smith, CVE coordinator at Toronto Police Services, acknowledged that different extremist groups have a very large presence on social media and that online predators are quite active. “Online predators are a major concern in schools.” Law enforcement continues to provide awareness of online influence and predators who target the youth within our communities. The final panelist, Kamran Bhatti from the



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North American Spiritual Revival, works with youth to enrich their understanding of spirituality and practise active civic engagement in their respective communities. The challenge is to improve media literacy among youth to help them decipher bias and understand how radicalization is socially constructed and conveyed to the public.

Overall, the discussions attempted to conceptualize factors that predispose youth to Radicalization in order to help community leaders and law enforcement implement better strategies for decreasing and eventually eliminating youth involvement in extremist organizations. These strategies include addressing the shortcomings of present practices that leave young people at risk, and funding local community organizations to provide psychosocial services for those in need, especially vulnerable individuals. However, as concerned citizens in communities, law enforcement, media, and governments across the country, we must avoid using divisive language, racism, and discrimination. These practices only produce further rifts across and within communities that, in turn, exacerbate the very isolation amongst youth that predisposes them to Radicalization and violent extremism.



YOUTH RADICALIZATION
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Introduction

For the past 15 years, countries around the world have been dealing with violent extremism and the alarming effects of youth radicalization. Many extremist groups have infiltrated young minds to join in efforts to cause violence and de-stabilization. This includes Canada, where incidents of youth radicalization have become a major concern to public safety officials. According to a 2016 report published in Quebec, an estimated 130–250 Canadians have gone to Syria since 2013 (Public Safety Canada Terrorism Report, 2016). In addition, according to the Minister of Public Safety, the government has monitored approximately 180 individuals with connections to terrorist related activities. These statistics illustrate that Canada is not immune to violent extremism and that a comprehensive approach is needed to address youth radicalization.

Efforts to counteract youth radicalization cannot come from law enforcement alone. They also require the work and engagement of communities. Opportunities need to be provided in appropriate settings for the sharing of ideas, in-depth discussion, and the translation of ideas into action. Recognizing the significance of tackling youth radicalization, Midaynta Community Services has hosted events that bring parents from neighbouring communities together to deepen dialogue and understanding about the issues involved. The presence of community members at these events signifies

to government officials the importance of addressing youth radicalization not only from the standpoint of law enforcement, but also from the standpoint of communities.

However, achieving workable solutions requires an even broader scope of civic engagement and, with this in mind, Midaynta Community Services held its second annual conference—Youth Radicalization: New and Emerging Challenges—in November 2016. Recognizing that the nature of violent extremism today requires a multi-disciplinary analysis and the effort of global leaders, the conference brought together policymakers, law enforcement, community faith leaders, academia, and youth to understand the complexities of youth radicalization and strategize solutions.

The two-day conference consisted of six plenary sessions on the new and emerging challenges of youth radicalization in relation to education, settlement, community engagement, trauma and mental health, and the role of social media in recruiting youth to extremist organizations. Each of the panels inspired deep dialogue on issues ranging from discrimination to youth opportunities. The aim of the conference was not only to influence policymakers at all levels of government, but to provide information for communities, parents, and youth. The hope is that the recommendations resulting from the conference become a teaching tool for eradicating youth violence and radicalization.



Lessons Learned Abroad

PLENARY SESSIONS PANEL 1: YOUTH RADICALIZATION— LESSONS LEARNED ABROAD

Moderator: Dr. Caroline Manion, Professor, Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education, Comparative, International and Development Education, OISE/University of Toronto

FIRST PANELIST: SALAM AL MARAYATI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MUSLIM PUBLIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL, USA

Marayati began by asking “where are we going with this issue from a US perspective?” He pointed out that “part of the problem is that there is such an allergy to the term ‘countering violent extremism’ and so much pushback against US government initiatives.” It would be wise, he argued, for community stakeholders to offer alternatives to CVE in order to counter the use of heavy law enforcement tactics such as surveillance, incarceration, or conviction. CVE is a top-down policy. Instead, CVE should take a bottom-up approach by finding radicals and ways of helping them, with an emphasis on integration rather than radicalization. He explained that Muslims in the US are suffering from an identity crisis based on the feeling that “we don’t belong to America.” “Where is home?” he asked. “Is home where our grandparents are buried or is home where our grandchildren will be raised?”

He brought attention to the fact we began the first resettlement programs for new immigrants and refugees in the US. Further, government should be tested for its loyalty to us, instead of us being tested by government.

He also encouraged us to be self-reflexive about ourselves as Muslims. We should recognize and treat our mosques as safe places instead of judgmental places, along the lines of a hospital where young people like to come and communicate. Youth radicalization, he argued, is a matter of public health, social services, and identity formation rather than a matter of criminal justice and law enforcement. We should empower communities and municipalities to look into and overcome radicalization, and ask law enforcement and the federal government to step back. He suggested that we follow this model by referring to the new White House strategic plan.

SECOND PANELIST: DR. ALEKSANDRA NESIC, PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, AND ADVISOR TO THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT, FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Dr. Nestic began by focusing on three issues that emerged from conferences she had attended on CVE policy in the US. Dr. Nestic developed a pedagogical approach to prevention involving an understanding what identity is and how a crisis of identity manifests itself. What does it look like? How do young

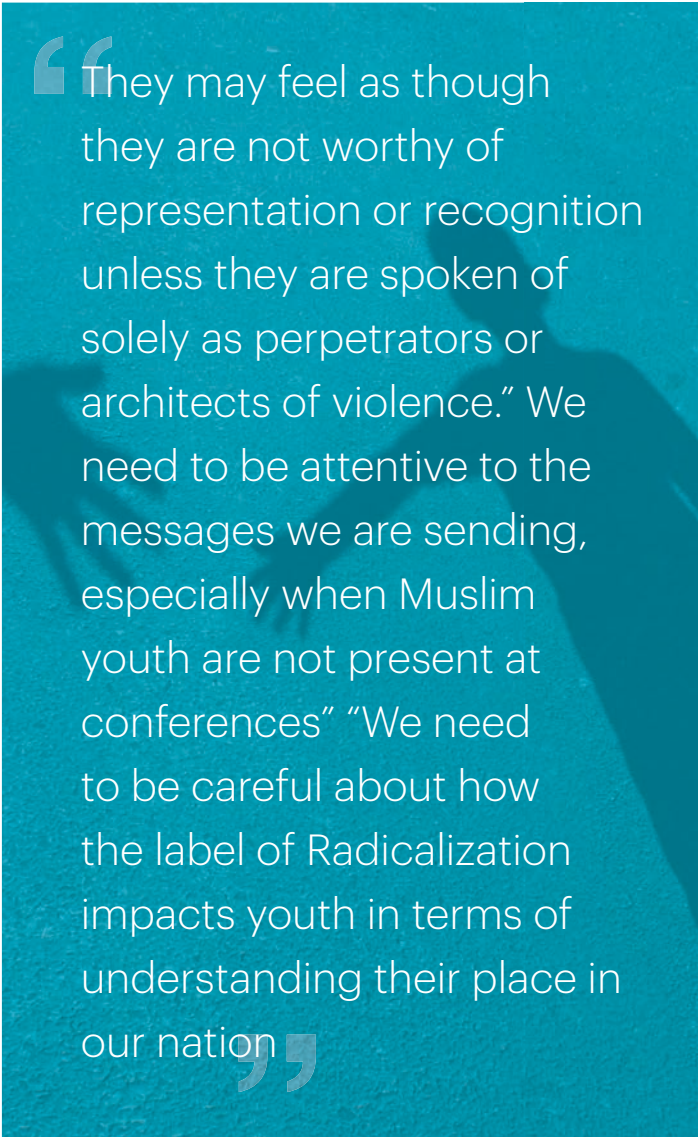
people express their identity crisis? Is the crisis profound or mild? She argued that although we have an idea of the factors that influence radicalization, we do not have a unified way of understanding what radicalization looks like. There is no universal definition for understanding how individuals develop extremist ideologies and beliefs. In addition, radical beliefs do not always end in violence. She maintained that what is missing in our discussion is the critical distinction between ideology and action. Referring to the recent election in the US, she said it is very difficult to investigate the level of violence that has been happening at the local community level. It is also very disturbing that the number of violent incidents against Muslims and other minorities have increased since last year, particularly in schools.

Third, she argued for understanding the difference between 'radicalization' and 'violent radicalization' by looking at the agenda behind the two practices. She defined violent radicalization as "the active pursuit or acceptance of the use of violence to attain a stated goal." This is different from radicalization in general, defined as "the active pursuit or acceptance of far-reaching changes in society, which may or may not constitute a damage to democracy and may not involve the threat or use of violence to attain a stated goal."

Radicalization, she stated, is a set of diverse processes. It is a personal process of "transformative learning" in which an individual adopts extreme political, social, and/or religious ideals and aspirations. Whether or not the attainment of particular goals justifies the use of indiscriminate violence is both a mental and emotional issue. Only through personal narratives will we be able to understand what drives individuals to shift from an ideological perspective to taking action. She suggested we can create a pedagogy of prevention by using a 'global citizenship education' framework and shifting from an ethnocentric to an ethno-relative perspective. There are programs and pathways to do this.

THIRD PANELIST: MICHELLE SHEPHARD, NATIONAL SECURITY REPORTER, TORONTO STAR

Shephard agreed with the other panelists on the issue of identity. She pointed out that many youths leave home and join extremist groups when they think their identity is under question because of government policies. What has happened in the US and the UK, she argued, can easily happen here in Canada. It is a worrying trend. Importantly, media stories miss what is actually happening on the ground. If we want to understand radicalization, we need to visit the regions that have been most impacted. Reflecting on her experiences traveling to different parts of the world has led her



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to conclude that the causes behind the emergence of many terrorist groups, for example al Shabaab, come from what is happening on the ground. Therefore, while it is important to connect the root cause of terrorism with issues of identity and youth themselves (with their own lives), we should not ignore the larger geo-political factors. In addition, we should be discussing state terrorism, not only terrorism itself.

Like other speakers, Shephard noted the lack of safe places where youth can discuss their thoughts openly, without fear and surveillance. She recommended having programs in place to re-integrate individuals into society who have left radical movements, realize their mistakes, and want to return to their respective countries.

FOURTH PANELIST: RYAN LENZ, ONLINE EDITOR AND SENIOR WRITER, SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER, USA

Lenz opened his presentation by reflecting on CVE policy as a lesson learned abroad. He also brought attention to the fact that, based on his research, radicalization is happening at quite an alarming rate online. In order to understand how radicalization happens, he argued, it would be very interesting to look at how individuals take a radical ideology, absorb it, and what they do with it. Referring to research for his publication *Age of the Wolf: A Study of the Rise of Lone Wolf and Leaderless Resistance Terrorism* (2015), he noted the number of domestic movements in the US that promote, and are promoted by, ideologically motivated violence. In the period 2009–2015, every 34 days a white male is motivated by ideology on radical right to perpetrate a violent crime. We

should be considering the violent extremism of white men as seventy-two percent of violent attacks in the US have been committed by one person acting alone. This percentage increases to 90% if we include another individual like a father or a spouse. We need to seriously consider that most of these individuals have spent considerable time absorbing far-right ideologies. These ideologies originate from programs like CVE. He added that leaders from these hate groups have been chosen for very important positions in the US.

Lenz concluded that our concern should be with what is happening here rather than what is happening abroad. It is far more important to see CVE through this domestic lens of violence than to frame it as the West targeting Islam.





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Deepening the Dialogue: Public Safety Canada

PLENARY SESSIONS PANEL 2: DEEPENING THE DIALOGUE: PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA

Public Safety Canada is responsible for the security and safety of Canadians at home in the event of natural disasters, crime, and terrorism. The Citizen Engagement division serves as the secretariat for the Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security, an advisory body of 15 Canadians that advise the Ministers of Justice and of Public Safety Canada on matters of security. Since 2009, the team has developed outreach programs in conjunction with Citizenship and Immigration, Canada Border Services, the RCMP, the Department of Justice, settlement organizations, new immigrants, and more recently, youth.

As the Citizen Engagement team was conducting its initial outreach efforts in different communities, it became apparent that youth often felt misunderstood and under-represented by local agencies and that the public wanted to delve deeper into issues of identity. As a result, they made the outreach events more interactive, exploring questions such as: “What does it mean to be a Canadian? What does it mean to be Sikh, Muslim or Jewish? Can we reconcile the two, or do we need to reconcile the two? What does it mean to be who you are? What are some of the issues that youth are facing?”

The Cross-Cultural Roundtable, the community contacts, and subject experts developed 15 fictional first-person narratives based on the real life events of individuals who have committed or tried to commit a criminal act or go abroad. The narratives do not reveal personal identities and range in subject from the experiences of right-wing extremists to eco-terrorists, violent extremist and others. The team hoped that because the stories are told in a non-threatening way, community members could relate to the characters in a symbolic way. The stories are available in French and English and, have been used in community meetings in the Greater Toronto Area, southern Ontario, and Montreal.

The audience was invited to listen to one of the stories and jot down notes for discussion. The audience was then asked to look at a couple of points: “Who could have intervened in that story and what could they have done? Who do you feel in that story could have noticed something, done something, and what could they have done?”



Responses from the audience to the story were varied and shared in lieu of answering the two questions above. For example, some of the participants felt that the story was offensive and stereotyped Muslim youth while others shared that it was very relevant to the reality faced by some girls in their community. Feedback was also given on the 'personal narrative', raising concerns around the crucial current political context, considering the spread of anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim rhetoric and that much more contextual information was needed.

Examples of other concerns shared during this panel included a need for job security of children in the community, a need to feel safe in the community, entertaining 'bottom-up discussion', to have dialogue with youth, not about youth', and that multiple stories need to be told since there could be a danger in just sharing one.

The "Deepening the Dialogue" session demonstrates how confounding the battle against entrenched racism and bigotry has become; it also challenges those in power to listen to the stories told by youth themselves. In a climate of heightened Islamophobia and the so-called "war on terror" targeting radicalized youth, life for a young Muslim female or male, anywhere, has become difficult. The Citizen Engagement team noted the feedback during the session and concluded by sharing that they appreciated the candor and openness of the participants, taking stock of the criticisms. There was acknowledgement that presenting the narrative to an audience that was not youth-centered, was not conducive to conducting this type of activity.



The Role of Public, Religious, Peace & Citizenship Education in Countering Youth Radicalization

PLENARY SESSIONS PANEL 3: THE ROLE OF PUBLIC, RELIGIOUS, PEACE & CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN COUNTERING YOUTH RADICALIZATION

Moderator: Dr. Kathy Bickmore, Professor, Curriculum Studies and Teacher Development and Comparative International and Development Education, OISE/ University of Toronto

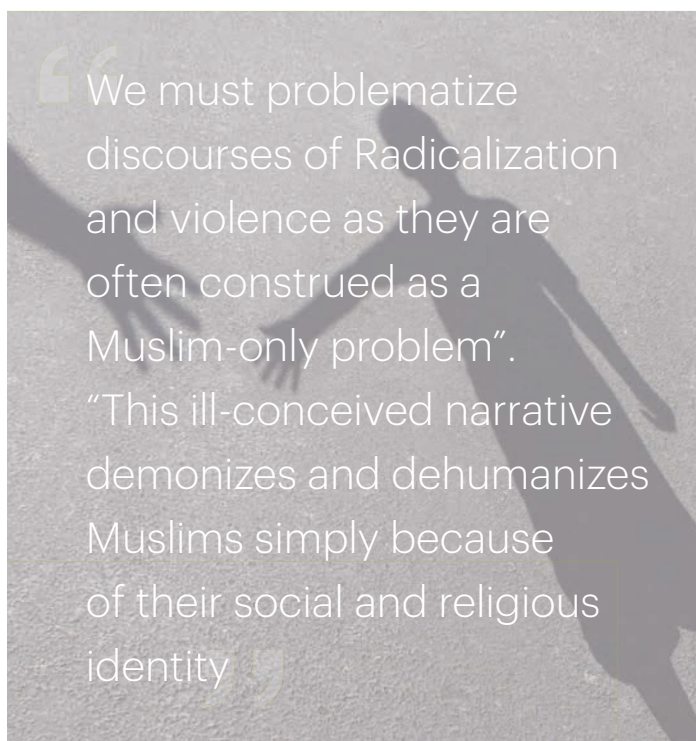
FIRST PANELIST: DR. JASMIN ZINE, SOCIOLOGY AND THE MUSLIM STUDIES OPTION, WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Dr. Zine's presentation revolved around the critical issues of erasure and representation. She argued that Muslim youth must be present when serious discussions are held on issues relating to their identity. Muslim youth are better able to articulate their stories than panelists speaking on their behalf. In addition, we need to see Muslim youth on the conference panels articulating their own aspirations, concerns, and experiences.

Muslim youth, she argued, are often forced into a singular narrative created by the dominant group that views them only as a potential threat to the nation, as default jihadists or radicals. We need to be careful about how this label of radicalization impacts Muslim youth in terms of understanding themselves in the national context. The lack of representation of Muslim youth among the panelists limits the safe and ethical spaces in which they can create counter narratives. She warns that if we limit these spaces of self-representation, harmful dominant narratives can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies. Contrary to seeing themselves as victims of violence, Muslim youth may feel as though they are not worthy of representation or recognition unless they are spoken of as perpetrators or architects of violence.

We need to be attentive to the messages we are sending. “This [singular] narrative of the radical jihadist is tiring” and we need to ensure Muslim youth are at the forefront in countering it. Negative discourses of ‘the jihadist’ and ‘radical terrorist’ are mapped onto their bodies by the dominant group as a pre-condition of who they are. Thus Muslim youth have to deal with constant stigmatization, and proving that they are not jihadists or terrorists.

Dr. Zine deeply understands the concerns about youth radicalization. However, only a small portion of Muslim youth have been lured into radical groups. “That is one too many for the Muslim community.” However, this is not the only narrative.



She emphasized the resiliency of Muslim youth and their resistance to the multiple forms of oppression in which they are undeservedly engaged. The constant need to pathologize Islam and reduce the discourse to radicalization is not a community narrative but a securitization narrative. Muslim resistance to this negative narrative is fundamental. Muslim youth are resisting through civic movements and through the arts. They are speaking out and living their lives with honour and nobility through Islam. They are worthy producers of cultural content and discourse. They are telling their stories, but unfortunately not here at this conference. They are telling their stories through speaking, music, theatre, and the arts. However, Muslim youth still have to carry the collective burden resulting from the militant actions of a few who claim to be practicing their faith.

We cannot have this important conversation, she argued, without talking about Islamophobia. Islamophobia is often seen as an irrational fear, but this denies the logic, rationality, social dominance, and oppression that operate insidiously at multiple ideological, social, and systemic levels to produce relations of power. She maintains that we need to ask what interests Islamophobia serves. “If this was simply about individual attitudes, we could have resolved it. Islamophobia is part of an ideological structure, part of system practices. We need to see who it serves” (Zine, 2016).

With the recent election of Donald Trump as president, we have seen a rise in hate crimes against Muslims. Not only are we witnessing a rise in Islamophobic-induced hate crimes, but also a corresponding rise in the radicalization of young white men. This trend has been identified by a majority of security committees as posing a greater threat to the Western world than ISIS. However, we are not seeing corresponding conferences and dialogues attempting to tackle this issue. For example, when a Muslim person is responsible for an attack, news commentators quickly focus on Islam. Yet when it is a non-Muslim person, commentators focus on the authorities in general and the media in particular. Thus, Islam is always being pathologized. This can potentially push Muslim youth to the fringes which, in turn, makes them ripe for recruitment by violent and radical groups. Islamophobia, she argues, has become the greatest recruiting tool for groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda because it makes it easy for them to justify their fight against the West.

SECOND PANELIST: JEEWAN CHANICKA, EDUCATION OFFICER, INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND PRINCIPAL, YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Chanicka began by sharing his personal experiences. He has lived in different parts of the world, considers himself a true and loyal Canadian, but was often told he is ‘not Canadian enough.’ On account of this labeling, he too once considered leaving this country and joining the fight against the West. However, instead of reporting to the police, he reached out to his community. With the help of fellow community members, he was able to address his cognitive dissonance and reflect on who he was and how he understood the world.



Based on these experiences, he warned us to be mindful of the difference between ‘intent’ and ‘impact.’ Although coming together to speak about issues concerning Muslim youth may be well intended, the absence of youth at this conference can impact us negatively. The voices of Muslim youth are essential to the discussion. “I, too,” he said, “was once the ‘Muslim youth’ we speak of.”

He emphasized the need to look at structural institutions that normalize and reproduce illicit ideologies about Muslim youth. If we ignore the negative and lasting impact of systemic institutions and structures, then our good intentions are void. As Muslims, he explained, we are often not called upon as experts of our own narratives. This is a problem because we become subjects to those who study us and tell us who we are. In addition, we cannot have conversations about these stories without looking at the stark reality that Muslim youth have to navigate. Stories of violence and radicalization are normalized by systemic structures and dominant groups who tell us who we are.

Chanicka believes there is pressing work to be done in our respective communities. But this work needs to be done by marginalized groups instead of institutions. We do not need dominant groups to intervene and tell marginalized communities how they should improve their communities. Instead, it is time for marginalized people themselves to become experts in describing and analysing their lived experiences. People of colour and marginalized people the world over need to be asked to the table not as ‘items on the menu,’ but as ‘deciders’ of the items to be included.

He problematized discourses of radicalization and violence because they are often construed as a Muslim-only problem. Even when white supremacists and other militant groups carry out acts of terror and violence, they are never viewed as terrorists. This normalization of radicalization and violence as a Muslim-only problem is peddled by racist anti-Muslim, anti-Black, anti-immigrant, and anti-refugee constituencies among us and further promoted by kindred media outlets.

There are numerous groups around the world who carry out terrorist acts but are never labeled as terrorists because they are not Muslim. This ill-conceived narrative demonizes and dehumanizes Muslims and whole groups of people simply because of their social and religious identity. We cannot have these conversations without challenging the institutions—government, media, education—that create and continue to produce these constructs.

As he explained, radicalization is a human issue, not a one-group-only problem. Radicalization is interlinked to outliers that, collectively, may negatively affect our young people’s behavior. We need to look at all of the groups of people in our society and look at the salient pieces that rise and snowball regarding radicalization. Muslims and other marginalized groups have been resisting the vindictive singular narrative of Muslims as default terrorists. We do not need the dominant group to teach us to be resilient. We are already resilient. As history shows, in spite of all the unwarranted discrimination and systemic marginalization, we are still here.

THIRD PANELIST: FOWZIA DUALE, YOUTH OUTREACH WORKER, MIDAYNTA COMMUNITY SERVICES

Duale identifies as a visible minority, both Muslim and Black. She lauded the rich Somali heritage and refugee status that accompanied her and her family on fleeing the war in Somalia. Throughout her presentation, she drew on personal examples that showed her inability to make sense of her unmerited marginalization in Canadian society. For example, she spoke of her parents’ confusing inability to provide food for her and her siblings even though she knew they lived in a country filled with rich food resources.

Although Duale no longer faces these dehumanizing circumstances, she still sees instability in the Somali youth community. It is through her lived experiences as a marginalized youth and her direct confrontation with poverty and systemic racism that she resonates deeply with Somali youth in Canada today.

She vividly remembers the events that unfolded after September 11, 2001. That historic day changed her life profoundly and forever. Muslims now have to carry the collective burden of the actions of a few who purported to articulate and live a genuine Muslim faith.

Duale is a central figure in community-based ‘countering violent extremism’ efforts in the Greater Toronto Area. She explained that, as a woman who wears the hijab, this can be difficult. Though she encounters many challenging situations in her role, she believes there are legitimate concerns about violent extremism. However, while white communities are not asked to produce a silver bullet for their white supremacy, Muslim communities are expected to do so as a matter of course.

People have a long history of engaging in violence. However, while we need to prevent, deter, and manage violence, regrettably we can never stop all violence completely. Duale has started engaging the community in creative strategies to prevent young Muslim girls from joining gangs. She said there has been a noticeable increase in female-only gangs in metro Toronto. These female gangs are partially the result of the sexism that young girls experience in male-dominated gangs. A new tactic by female gangs is the ‘romeo trap’ in which girls get into covert relationships in order to hurt or murder the person they are targeting. She surmised that this behaviour essentially comes from a place of pain.

Duale also performs spoken word poetry as part of her Muslim identity. She showcased a video—Extreme Dialogue—as part of her riveting presentation. She uses poetry as a platform to articulate and challenge Islamophobic rhetoric. The video portrays her sense of isolation and pain caused both by fleeing the civil war in Somalia, and growing up in metro Toronto while juggling multiple identities.

CONFERENCE — DAY TWO

Dr. Anderson commended Midaynta Community Services on the conference and its pioneering role in the study of youth radicalization. He sees the study as evolving through several steps—first, building a body of knowledge in this uncharted field; second, framing the problem by identifying the factors causing the radicalization of youth; and third, designing and applying appropriate interventions. The process involves finding common ground among all participants as they listen to possibilities. The sum total of knowledge gained from the field and from research will create a vital community of practice.

He described the work of Midaynta Community Services as “trailblazing” given that no other organization has traversed this field of knowledge before. The work will inspire academics and other organizations to learn and synthesize a new body of knowledge and make it available for the public good. He acknowledged the presence of other faculty members and students at the conference as volunteers or session presenters, as well as the valuable contributions made by stakeholders. He concluded by paying tribute as a concerned citizen to all participants for their interest and leadership, and their desire to find solutions to this worrying problem.

Mahad Yusuf, Executive Director, Midaynta Community Services then stepped in to welcome all participants to the second day of the conference. He asked for honest feedback on the progress of the conference so far. One member of the audience responded by saying that the conference was doing well. He said communities know the issues, have some answers and solutions, and know what should be done. However, they need commensurate support and input from all levels of government. Some illuminating and productive comments and arguments had been generated so far. And indeed, the conversations were sometimes difficult and uncomfortable. Fowzia Duale’s poem Extreme Dialogue that was shared earlier was particularly powerful as it added thematically to the discomfort. Mahad Yusuf announced that it was now available on YouTube.

Dr. Myrna Lashley felt the discomfort was important because it challenges stakeholders and focus groups to do better. She congratulated Midaynta Community Services for initiating and hosting this conference on youth radicalization.



YOUTH RADICALIZATION
06
REPORT

Ensuring Newcomers Are Settled and Fully Integrated: Challenges & Opportunities in (Re) Settlement, Integration, Community Engagement, and Cultural Competency

PLENARY SESSIONS

PANEL 4: ENSURING NEWCOMERS ARE SETTLED AND FULLY INTEGRATED: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES IN (RE) SETTLEMENT, INTEGRATION, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Moderator: Hashi Shafi Executive Director of the Somali Action Alliance.

FIRST PANELIST: DR. RIMA BERNS-MCGOWN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MUSLIM SOCIETIES AND CULTURES, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Cued by the notion of uncomfortable conversations, Dr. Berns-McGown challenged all conference participants to engage in these conversations in order to find lasting solutions to the

youth radicalization problems we face today. She lamented missed opportunities to deepen the conversations, but believes that by staying on task and on principle, we will claim our position of power. She encouraged academics to work hand-in-glove with communities who can provide real-life cases and lived experiences to inform our community of practice in this troubling area.

She emphasized that Public Safety Canada should acknowledge the vindictive and violent systemic barriers that young people of colour face. Beginning as early as kindergarten, young people of colour have to be resilient. She referred to her own lived experience of being told by teachers that she is not good enough and that she did not belong. ‘Whiteness’ is taken as the default standard. These vindictive and violent systemic barriers leave our society in a monologue, creating bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the perpetrators. She said she wanted to echo what Jeewan Chanicka had emphasized the previous day—that Black/Muslim youth feel marginalized.

‘Whiteness,’ she argued, dictates how the national pie is divided at the expense of the rest of the population. She pointed out that CVE research methodology is incomplete and misleading since it fails to include the disaffected white folks who latch on to extremism. She urged Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) to change its negative attitude toward Muslims and remove the systemic barriers that impact them. These barriers have been clearly identified over the past 20 years of dedicated research. The evidence is clear. The source of youth radicalization is not religion per se, nor is it identity per se. Identity, she argued, is fluid, and therefore cannot be cited as a singular motive of youth radicalization.

Public Safety Canada should acknowledge that whiteness is the stumbling block since it is embedded in the systemic structures and institutions that impact racialized peoples in negative ways. By problematizing the ‘resilience’ of racialized groups, we will arrive at the narratives that can help to identify, confront, and dismantle the systemic barriers that continue to sideline and disadvantage us as Muslims.

Such is the show of power, she emphasized, that is required when we challenge the status quo. She exhorted the audience to believe that we have the right and gravitas to approach institutions in our various spheres of influence and start building alliances, evidence, interventions, and best practice protocols that promote intersectional sensitivity, inclusivity, equity, and social justice. She identified whiteness as the problem since it has been established as the default normal.

Public safety research and practices should be couched in resident communities and guided by empowering approaches that will provide lasting practical solutions to the problem of Muslim youth radicalization. This will strengthen capacity for building resilience and peaceful communities to counter the tectonic shift in global public safety.

SECOND PANELIST: LINA CHAKER, MEDIA COORDINATOR, WINDSOR MOSQUE

Chaker described some of the successful local initiatives that provide vital services to Syrian refugees. Their success is due both to research that helps to integrate refugees and promote civic participation, and to positive media coverage that creates trust between the newcomers and the host community. The town of Windsor, with a population of just over 200,000, is going through employment challenges after the closure of sections of the car and food processing industries. There are well over 700 Syrian refugees in the town. The Windsor Mosque offers youth programs focused on storytelling and dramatic presentations. The programs include the participation of religious officials, community agencies, and parents. All are engaged in learning and challenging current world views for the purpose of achieving a sense of belonging and peaceful community living for everyone.

Creative ways of eliminating tensions between hosts and guests have been implemented. In response to a question from Stephen Bahry, Chaker illustrated how the Windsor initiative has pioneered a pushback to monolingualism. Chinese, Arabic, and English are all used to improve access to resources, an initiative pioneered by Bagley High School.

THIRD PANELIST: DR. NKECHINYELUM CHIONESO, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES CENTRE, DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL/COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Dr. Chioneso emphasized that society, the economy, and the environment need to be seen through the lens of intersectionality. This approach breaks down barriers that militate against equitable access to health services, especially for the most vulnerable. Her research prioritized community development and HIV health programs. The project timeline spanned from April 2012 to April 2014. During that time, marginalized Aboriginal populations were engaged in order to combine knowledge and action to produce creative and effective community solutions. As a result, unemployment rates diminished as people got healthier. In addition, traumas were navigated and mediated, resulting in bringing much-needed personal relief and comfort.

This refined organizational approach also improved the coordination and integration of the provision of vital services, and at the same time reduced duplication of services while improving efficiency and accountability. Community engagement partners included faith-based partners, neighbourhood members, public and private job creation ventures, non-social service members with various expertise, entrepreneurs, farmers, lawyers, and political advocates.

Dr. Myrna Lashley asked Chioneso whether she had taken New Zealand's model of culturally safe spaces into consideration during her research. Dr. Chioneso said yes. By setting up hubs, her team was able to harmonize the provision of services and gain the trust of the clients. The clients felt better served and understood by the faith-based personnel and other partners who took the time and effort to meet their needs. Lashley commended the team's work and thanked the panelists for informative discussion.

FOURTH PANELIST: DR. NAZIR HARB, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, THE BRIDGE INITIATIVE, PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL CENTER FOR MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Harb stressed the importance of highlighting the problem of Islamophobia, challenging the discourses that contribute to it, and offering an alternative narrative based on research that is accessible to the public. He argued that Islamophobia is an obstacle to strong pluralistic societies and a threat to human dignity and civil liberties. Anti-Islam and anti-Muslim bigotry and discrimination have increased exponentially in the US and Europe, creating insidious national and global consequences. The emergence of an organized, well-funded Islamophobic network has spawned websites and false narratives on the Internet that seep into the media and popular culture. As a result, Americans—the majority of whom look to the Internet for information—are bombarded with pseudo-scholarship that fosters prejudice and fear.

He is confident that the Bridge Initiative presents unique opportunities for those seeking to educate the public and inform popular culture. The Bridge Initiative is:

a multi-year research project that connects the academic study of Islamophobia with the public square. This pioneering 'crossover' initiative brings together celebrated faculty, subject-matter experts, and seasoned researchers to examine attitudes and behaviors towards Muslims; dissect public discourses on Islam; and uncover the operational mechanisms of engineered Islamophobia in an effort to raise public awareness and enrich public discourse on this insidiously pernicious form of prejudice. (<http://bridge.georgetown.edu>)

He then showed some video clips to underscore his message. He questioned assimilation and integration, and contended that homogeneity cannot be the target. However, using authentic and positive language in personal anecdotes of lived experience can generate meaningful slogans that can produce solutions to conflict. He was convinced that assimilation doesn't really happen, and won't happen for a number of reasons. He asked the audience for personal experiences that illustrate what assimilation and integration respectively feel like on the ground.

One member of the audience asserted that anti-Semitism is just as bad and that something has to be done about it. Another participant commented that tolerance is a horrible concept. Instead, we need to generate genuine processes that empower people to shape our society and collective identity in practical and congenial ways. During this process, reasonable accommodation has to be cultivated and mind-shifts have to occur in order to eliminate tensions. Otherwise, some individuals will become "culturally homeless" and therefore vulnerable to prevailing compulsions, including radicalism.

Harb maintained that, indeed, some White Americans have been radicalized. It is naive to focus on one group. Leaders who preach "othering" within community contexts need to consider the consequences of their comments. What are the "normal" aspirations of any normal youth, irrespective of cultural or religious background? How do we balance individualistic tendencies with the collective? How can we deliver services that meet clients' needs while making them feel included and valued? What about cases where mental illness is the direct cause of violence?

Research is showing that young men in general have been left out of the formal education system, while more women are enrolled in schools, colleges, and universities. Some young men have resorted to joining gangs because gangs make them feel safe, wanted, and valued as community members. What function could authentic role models and creative mentorship play in this context?

Efforts also need to be made to invite and engage White allies as well as artificial intelligence. How do we respond to White fragility, for example? When we feel uncomfortable, we learn in more transformative and lasting ways. He advocated for initiatives such as ‘inviting a Muslim to dinner’ that can foster genuine interactions that break down barriers and prejudices at a personal and meaningful level.

He encouraged rephrasing “Islamophobia” as “religious equity” because we all technically serve the same God. One audience member stated that although she was pained by Trump’s election to the US presidency, she sees his win as a gift—a gift that will help to prove that -isms do exist. “Now we can kick it up a notch, and fight in the open,” she urged. “People used to be wary about male or female, but that has since changed as people now focus on what is real and external. Now we can spin to ‘trump Donald.’”

Harb concluded by cautioning Canadians to avoid the luxury of ‘cooling off,’ a saying he attributed to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who cautioned activists to remain on task during the civil rights movement. In response to a question from the floor regarding how to treat White allies, Rima Berns-McGown described White Canadian guilt about what their forefathers did as a useless emotion that needs to be replaced by a positive commitment to working with the whole community to do what is just and fair for all Canadians. By working together in creative and collaborative ways, she added, we will help to build safer and welcoming communities. This, in turn, will establish effective democratic practices that support harmony, collaboration, and social justice.





YOUTH RADICALIZATION
07
REPORT

Trauma and Mental Health as They Pertain to Radicalization: Strategies for Social Inclusion & Well Being

PLENARY SESSIONS
PANEL 5: TRAUMA AND MENTAL HEALTH AS THEY PERTAIN TO RADICALIZATION: STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION & WELL BEING

Moderator: Marva Wisdom, Founder of Wisdom Consulting Canada

FIRST PANELIST: HODAN HASSAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY, AND CHAIR, SOMALI AMERICAN TASK FORCE

Hassan is a mental health practitioner and educator with 13 years of experience in behavioural health settings. Her expertise has helped to contextualize the historical traumas experienced by youth as potential manifestations of mental illness. Hassan has noticed that mental illness has negative connotations in racialized communities. Specifically, mental illness is stigmatized among Somali youth. The mosque is the first place where Muslim youth seek answers to experiences of mental illness. She urged us to ensure that mosques and

imams are equipped to handle questions about mental illness not only through prayer, but also through doctors, counselors, therapists, social workers, and youth workers.

Hassan referred to the documentary Broken Dreams which follows the events that led 20 young Somali men in Minnesota to leave the US and return to Somalia to join the terrorist group Al-Shabaab. She believes she saw youth in the documentary who were seeking attention and crying out for help. A central topic in the documentary is isolation. Mothers said that their young men who had left for Somalia had isolated themselves completely. Isolation is a central contributing factor to radicalization. However, as Hassan cautioned, it is not the only one. Youth are going through a lot of issues—“teenage stuff”—that pertain to growing up and

trying to make sense of the world. However, with regard to the Minnesota youth, Hassan surmised that they were unable to make sense of their identities. Society forces Muslim youth into certain circles of identity. Thus, in order to reach beyond these circles, youth may create their own identity. This cycle, according to Hassan, can produce steps on the way to youth radicalization.

Hassan's work revolves around historical trauma. We cannot talk about youth issues in Muslim communities without understanding the trauma their families have endured. Historical trauma is a big piece of the puzzle in trying to understand radicalization. We have to look at systems and institutions, including education, that were not created to protect marginalized peoples. An education system that tells our youth they are not good enough to learn is problematic. We have to challenge our law enforcement that believes that all Muslims are terrorists and that all brown and black youths are criminals. We have to examine how these narratives affect our youth, because indeed they do.

Reiterating the importance of identity, Hassan spoke of community work and engagement with Somali youth. As a Somali woman herself, she has always felt that her identity was important to her and her community. Embracing and celebrating her Somali roots was encouraged by her parents. It is important to provide safe spaces for youth to talk about the dissonance they may be experiencing in relation to their personal and collective identity. As a community, we need to work actively with health and religious institutions to ensure that our youth do not feel isolated as they work to make sense of who they are.

SECOND PANELIST: IMAM YASIN DWYER, FAITH-BASED CHAPLAIN, CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Imam Dwyer began by analyzing the psychology behind radicalization and addressing the issue of identity. He, himself, has been asked if he is Muslim first or Canadian first, and believes Muslim youth also face this question. However, what we place first depends on the context. When it comes to community engagement, voting, and making society a better place, he is Canadian first. However, during special times in his life that have to do with the sacred and divine, he is Muslim first. We all have multiple identities that make up who we are.

He fears that difficulties navigating these profound realities of identity can be found in the Muslim community. Identities are supposed to grow in a very natural and organic way. We are who we are as we negotiate and establish our self-conceptions. However, Muslims are questioned not only about their identities, but also about their loyalties to the nation state and their faith, as if one compromises the other. We must tell our youth that they do not have to pick one identity over the other—they are who they are, and that should not be open to speculation.

We also have another issue in our community, an issue he referred to as 'text versus context.' Muslims have a rich source of sacred literature and scripture, but this literature needs interpretation. The difficulty is that some members of the Muslim community may speak on behalf of sacred scriptures and interpret them through the personal dissonance they may be experiencing. We have texts, but we also need context. Therefore, when it comes to our young Muslims and people who are trying to extract meaning from sacred texts, we need to recognize this telling relationship between text and context.

THIRD PANELIST: DR. MYRNA LASHLEY, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY, MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Lashley holds a PhD in counseling psychology from McGill University and is an internationally recognized clinical, teaching, and research authority in cultural psychology. Her expertise thus brought forward critical questions on trauma and mental health pertaining to radicalization.

According to Lashley, one out of every five people, including youth, suffers from a mental disorder or illness. This is a fact that societies need to recognize. However, it is often difficult for young people to speak about their mental health issues and traumatic experiences. She posited that Muslim youth often experience poor mental health when they are struggling to make sense of their identities. This being said, mental illness is not a precursor for terrorism, and Muslim youth who have poor mental health are not extremists or terrorists. The problem is that Muslim youth are expected to carry the heavy burden of condemning each ISIS terror attack even though these attacks have nothing to do with them. If they do not condemn them, they are mistakenly seen as ISIS sympathizers.

We are dealing with vulnerable young people who are victims of violence and specific racisms. Yet, at the same time, they have to explain that they are not the perpetrators of the very acts of violence that are legitimized onto their bodies. Muslim youth have to deal with a lot of 'isms'—racism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, homophobia, and so forth. Racism is an insidious, negative, and prevalent part of numerous Muslim youths' lives, therefore we must be critical when we speak about issues of mental health and trauma.

Lashley recommended that the strength and visions of youth need to be harnessed and their voices heard by community members. Ethical recognition and participatory inclusion must also be cornerstones of government policies and interventions. Communities need to be involved in decision-making processes. "We need to stop doing things 'to' people and start doing things 'with' people." We need to create safe and ethical spaces for Muslim youth to speak about issues that directly impact them, especially issues of mental health.

**FOURTH PANELIST: DR. SARAH LYONS-PADILLA,
RESEARCH SCIENTIST, STANFORD UNIVERSITY**

Lyons-Padilla studies the psychology of homegrown terrorism. This includes "cultural homelessness" and how discrimination plays a key role in the radicalization of Muslims in the US. She identifies herself as a cultural psychologist who examines how people manage their cultural identities.

She began by saying that the idea that extreme terror groups provide people with a sense of meaning, belonging, and purpose has been debated amongst academic scholars. However, this is not exclusive to a particular group of people, religion, or nationality. We need to take a step back and examine what gives people a sense of purpose and what happens when our sense of purpose is stripped away. The groups we belong to provide an important source of meaning

in our lives—this is something psychologists have long known. Consequently, when people feel as though they do not belong, they start to perceive their lives as having less meaning and begin to feel angry. It is the loss of meaning that is associated with greater support for fundamentalist and extremist causes.

We juggle multiple identities. Some people are good at balancing their identities, but others experience cultural homelessness—a lack of purpose or meaning in life and a feeling of not belonging. In addition, the more people feel discriminated against, the more they feel threatened. Discrimination is harmful across the board, but the more people feel culturally homeless, the more intense the feelings of discrimination become and the more they are perceived as a psychological threat. It is in this environment that extremist ideologies start to arise.

When we talk about assimilation, what are we actually speaking about? In numerous countries, this narrative is entirely speaking about the assimilation of marginalized and radicalized people. Instead, we need to reorganize all identities within the nation state. What does it mean to belong to the nation state? Our policies should not push for assimilation. People should be able to express their multifaceted identities, not sacrifice one to the other.

In addition, if we are concerned about racialization, we should be concerned about Islamophobia and integration policies. We need to prevent people from feeling culturally homeless. We cannot as a nation state make it virtually impossible for people to take on a Canadian identity without having to forfeit or degrade their other identities. Asking people to give up part of their cultural identity creates insipid and corrosive cultural homelessness. Islamophobia isolates citizens and promotes exclusion. Identifying particular groups of people as threatening to the security of countries and citizens is amoral and dangerous. We have to work against cultural homelessness, and toward creating ethical and holistic environments that include all identities.



YOUTH RADICALIZATION
08
REPORT

Raising Awareness of the Role of (Social) Media and Media Literacy in Youth Radicalization

PANEL 6: RAISING AWARENESS OF THE ROLE OF (SOCIAL) MEDIA AND MEDIA LITERACY IN YOUTH RADICALIZATION

Moderator: Cst. Jesse Riley, Crime Prevention/Graffiti Liaison Officer, Divisional Policing Support Unit, Toronto Police Services

FIRST PANELIST: SABA HUSAIN, RESEARCHER, COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM, THE CENTRE FOR SECURITY GOVERNANCE

Husain has read numerous studies by researchers who have spoken with convicted terrorists in order to understand youth radicalization. She shared her key findings with the audience. What draws people to terrorist groups is not based on social, economic, political, or religious reasons, but primarily on the experience of intimacy and solidarity with like-minded people. These groups satisfy basic social needs more effectively than political or religious scholars. This has to be taken into account when designing effective CVE policy. The groups appeal to young people who are feeling a lack of identity,

belonging, or significance. This void can be triggered by various circumstances—a death or divorce in the family, an economic crisis, losing a job, losing social mobility, humiliation, discrimination.

Although many people have an identity crisis at some point in their lives, most don't become radical extremists. This is because of who they know and associate with. Studies have found that a person's initial exposure to radical groups occurs through their existing social networks (friends). This holds true for convicted youth in the West. The rest join through family or fellow travelers in search of a meaningful path in life. Joining a radical group is clearly a social process. Husain therefore suggested that we all need to come together to create solutions and alternatives to meet young people's fundamental social needs.

Once a person is exposed to an extremist group, the group works hard to achieve “frame alignment.” This involves matching the group’s belief perfectly with the individual’s belief. Once achieved, the group’s argument makes sense to the potential recruit and he/she is much more likely to be accepted. However, if the frame does not resonate with the individual’s worldview, radicalization doesn’t happen. Husain suggested that this may be a key point of intervention in terms of countering radicalization—in other words, finding the ways that messaging ‘doesn’t’ resonate with potential recruits. The key factor drawing individuals in the West to join extremist groups is a fundamental need to belong to something very important.

Husain argued that we need to come up with an alternative. We need to give young people something to belong to that they feel is important/significant. Extremist groups know this very well. They provide potential recruits with a sense of belonging and acceptance, and an opportunity to restore their lost sense of significance by participating in what they believe is a great and exciting cause.

She also said that we can’t have this conversation today without talking about the vital role of the Internet. Through the Internet, extremists are able to send messages all over the world at the click of a button and foster the social relationships that are critical to engagement in active terrorism. It is not always about political or religious duty. Often it has to do with friendship and belonging and acceptance. She urged that if we truly want to prevent individuals from joining these extremist groups, we need to work together to provide them with alternatives that satisfy their fundamental needs without resorting to violence.

SECOND PANELIST: DR. AMARNATH AMARASINGAM, POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW, UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Amarasingam has interviewed a number of members of ISIS and al-Qaeda who were active in Syria. He chose Syria because it is the game changer when we talk about foreign mobilization not only in terms of numbers, but also in terms of the variety of countries the individuals come from. In addition, individuals who left Canada to become foreign fighters came from different backgrounds. Friendship networks are very effective in recruiting Canadians to Syria and Iraq.

Amarasingam argued that the significance of the online community is overblown. When he initially started looking at the online profiles of convicted individuals, they made him laugh. He really couldn’t see what significance these online

support networks would have with youth. We generally see these individuals on YouTube as lonely. But then came the first game changer—the mass mobilization of people around the world to Syria. “It is the most mediated conflict in the history of the planet. We have never seen conflict with this much local and foreigner attention.” The fighters mentioned above all had Twitter and Facebook accounts and were actively posting. Interestingly, these accounts weren’t shut down. It was this that gave birth to his research study. He also said that these online world supporters began identifying themselves as a kind of family.

Amarasingam added that terrorism is not a one-way street of watching and consuming videos. It involves active two-way conversation. He referred to the ISIS supporter in the UK who was visited by law enforcement warning him to shut down his Twitter account. His dad was enraged, told him to shut down the account, and said that the choice was either keeping Twitter or going to jail. This is not a difficult choice to make, but the supporter expressed his emotional and social attachment to the people connected to his account. He wrote on the Internet:

I know he’s worried about me but he is literally going overboard. He was going on and on earlier until my mom got really upset. He wants me to literally stop my whole life and cut all relations with my Muslim friends online. Trust me, I’ve never felt like I belong anywhere until I met the brothers and sisters online. Now he wants me to cut it all? I can’t do that.

I want to be with people who are on the same level as me. The Muslim brothers and sisters who have the same aqeedah and manhaj as you are very beloved. Hanging around with coconuts is the worst thing ever. Baqiya twitter is one place I felt at home. The internet keeps us connected, keeps us as a family. Sometimes it’s like the person online is the real you.

Amarasingam concluded by saying that such individuals do not really fit into society, or are not well integrated. He mentioned some of the persuasive strategies: “your imam doesn’t understand you—he is older than you and might have not same ethnic background”; “your parents really don’t understand you, but these guys you met online in Germany, Africa, and Syria all of sudden understand what you are going through.” The sense of global brotherhood or global movement is self-governing and emotionally powerful.

THIRD PANELIST: SGT. BRIAN SMITH, DIVISIONAL POLICING SUPPORT UNIT (DPSU), CRIME PREVENTION: FOCUS SITUATION TABLES COORDINATOR, COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE) COORDINATOR, TORONTO POLICE SERVICES

Smith acknowledged that different ideologies have a very large presence on social media and is a major concern of parents. He further elaborated that online predator are present and quite active on social media; as they dealt with these kind of cases a lot as a part of preventions programs. He further added, "online predators are a major concern in schools, as law enforcement continues to provide awareness to online influence, and predators who target the youth within our communities." He added that another big concern is cyberbullying through social media. They are really engaged in that space as educational partners with school boards across the GTA. Youths are using various social media applications without parental supervision and parents must remain vigilant to counteract dangerous and hurtful messages youth maybe exposed to.

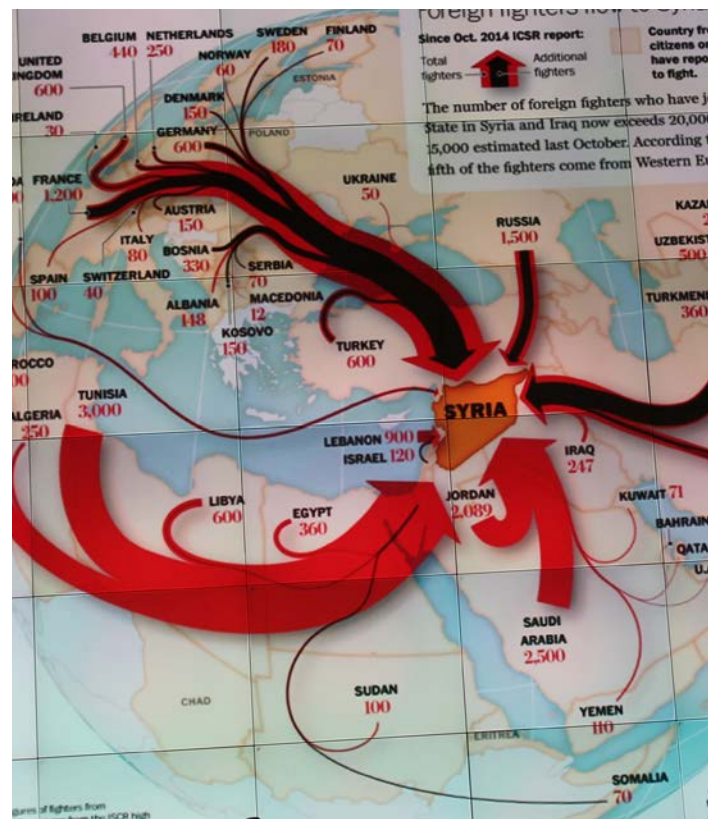
He concludes that good CVE is full of societal efforts involving all aspects of police, government, community, and professional partners aimed at addressing the root causes of violent extremism through approaches that target the social, political, environmental and individual conditions in which violent extremism thrives. Thus we may require more resources that will enable us to combat youth radicalization.

FOURTH PANELIST: KAMRAN BHATTI, CO-FOUNDER, NORTH AMERICAN SPIRITUAL REVIVAL (NASR)

Bhatti seeks to enrich youth's understanding of spirituality and promote active civic engagement in their respective communities. North American Spiritual Revival (NASR) is a community based, not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing quality programs and services that promote social, cultural, and spiritual well-being. The objectives of NASR focus on key areas of Education – To provide education programs and intellectual forums that promote a better understanding of the Islamic tradition; Spiritual Development – To promote sacred growth through spiritually focused group events; Community Outreach – To network and build bridges with organizations on issues of community building and social justice; Cultural Programs – To foster a North American Muslim identity through quality cultural events. (<http://www.naspiritualrevival.com/>).

He emphasized that "his" involvement in the conference was from a "community involvement" perspective. He also highlighted that his organization is not a de-radicalization program. It's a community program for youth to have develop a sense of self and recognize they are a key to the fabric of the Canadian Society. The program performs various activities which services the community such as providing food and services for those at need across the community from various cultures during Ramadan.

The challenges Bhatti highlighted is to improve media literacy among youth to help them decipher media bias and to foster an understand how of radicalization is socially constructed and conveyed through mass media. Bhatti promotes the use of positive message through the media to counteract and resistant dominant narratives.



Youth Radicalization: NEW & EMERGING CHALLENGES

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Recommendations

The interactive discussions of the two-day conference resulted in a very fruitful analysis that highlighted the need to increase community involvement and increase awareness of mental health in relation to youth radicalization. In this section, we provide recommendations that emerged from the conference and that address some of the root causes of violent radicalization among youth in Ontario and Canada, many of whom experience alienation, challenges to opportunities, and predatory recruitment strategies by extremist groups.

1. Collaboration: Increase collaboration between academia, policymakers, community agencies and members to identify research based explanation of youth recruitment into violent extremism – to develop a community based action plan.
2. Settlement and Integration: Provide resources for local community organization to provide social services for refugees and newcomer populations to Canada.
3. Mental Health: Allocate financial resources for community organizations who are culturally responsive to address the issues of mental health and trauma among marginalized youth, families, and their communities.
 - a. Create a mental health and addiction outreach program to build capacity, raise awareness, address stigma and encourage access to treatment and services among the families that are affected by marginalization.
 - b. Culturally responsive and comprehensive programming that provides a full range of mental health and counseling services for marginalized, and socially excluded youth.
- c. Implementation of a comprehensive community healing strategy that will provide counseling and support to victims of violence, their families and community members as well as provide anti-violence resolution services and other interventions.
4. Create Safe Space for Youth
 - a. Establish opportunities for young people to create their own narrative through social engagement and cultural exchange programs to further their capacity for intra/intercultural dialogue and understanding and recognizing achievements i.e. scholarship program
 - b. Develop a program that empowers communities to provide social services, employment opportunities and counselling to youth who seek assistance.
5. Train youth on the safe uses of the internet and social media – to develop a curriculum resource unit to be integrated into the various aspects of the Ontario Curriculum on teaching media literacy.
6. Education: establish an institute to research, develop curriculum and provide training on intervention, diversion, and other community led counter-violent extremism efforts particular to the Canadian context.
7. Create an overreaching network/ alliance among community organization in North American to develop, disseminate and provide information to public, private, and community organization proposed name: North American Alliance for Community Security and Inclusion (NAACSI)
8. Create multi-stakeholder partnerships building on mutual trust, with clear vision on developing campaigns and targeted measures against Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination which may further strengthen vicious systemic barriers that affect marginalized youth



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Appendices

WELCOME MESSAGES



Mahad Yusuf, Executive Director, Midaynta Community Services

Mr. Yusuf welcomed the audience, dignitaries from the government of Canada, and the guest panelists. He also thanked the organizing team, in particular those from OISE/University of Toronto and the US Consulate in Toronto. He noted that this conference would “build civil society’s capacity to respond to and enhance needed understanding on youth radicalization that leads to violent extremism in Canada and around the world.” He then expressed his gratitude to a new partner: the dedicated and diligent team at the Mosaic Institute. Mr. Yusuf also announced the themes and discussions that would be held during the two-day conference and expressed profound gratitude to the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto for hosting the event.

The focus of this conference on youth radicalization has brought together “governments, civil society, academia, and stakeholders from Canada and the United States.” Of particular note is the work being done by Midaynta, especially the “Broken Dreams” project: a documentary film that tells the story of Somali immigrants in Minnesota who escaped the civil war in Somalia only to see their children taken from them by

violent extremist groups. Mr. Yusuf hoped that this conference would result in the development of policies and practices that will not only “resolve the issue of youth radicalization,” but also “serve as a model for tackling the challenges of radicalization around the world.” Mr. Yusuf concluded his welcoming remarks by thanking all those in attendance.



Dr. Glen Jones Dean at OISE, University of Toronto

Dr. Glen Jones, the Dean of the OISE at the University of Toronto welcomed the visiting dignitaries, and participants. Dr. Jones highlighted the success of the first Youth Radicalization conference, and explained the difference between the two conferences. Professor Jones then paid tribute to the presence of different levels of dignitaries from the Canadian government, US representatives, academia, and Midaynta Community Services. The following is a summary of the dean’s welcoming remarks.

“Good morning, it’s a great pleasure to welcome all of you to U of T to this second annual conference for Youth radicalization, the first took place here at OISE on February 2015, was entitled “Youth Radicalization: Policy and Education Response Conference”. It’s a quite detailed analysis of the key themes, issues and challenges associated with youth radicalization that emerged from that initial conversation a little more than a year ago. This conference builds on and extends many of those key themes perhaps with a more international perspective and trying essentially to push these ideas and move deeper in a broader frame. I am in the education business and so I see have a natural tendency to see all problems as educational and all solutions as pointing towards more education. If there’s a single key lesson from Canada’s history of residential schools, it is that a national travesty took place in the name of education, but that educators must play a role in helping our nation understand both the truth of what took place and illuminating some possible pathways towards reconciliation. In the same way, I believe that education and in particular the tremendous resource of our public school system must be viewed as a central mechanism for preventing or discouraging radicalization. How to use this huge educational infrastructure to address this complex of social, political and the personal elements that lead to radicalization is far less clear and I know that this and other core questions will take up and be taken up over the next two days”.

“Education is clearly part of the solution, but so are community organizations, cultural groups, public services, social workers, law enforcement, mental health professionals and the many others who intersect with the challenges of being a young person in the 21st century. And those who are brought together through a forum like this can work across communities, across interests and professions to learn from each other to discuss the “lessons learned” as in the title of the first plenary session this morning. This is a community initiated conference, and I really, and very much appreciate the hard work of Mahad and his team. It’s hard when you meet with these folks not to be energized, not to see the community working to try to deal with community issues. And I really appreciate

that energy and that dedication. One of our reasons for supporting this is essentially to create a safe space for what is really a very difficult series of conversations. We are discussing an extraordinarily complex challenging phenomenon and we strongly support this extremely important evidence-based discussion. My appreciation to the organizers for their hard work and thanks to all of you for taking the time to be engaged and my very best wishes for a productive and thoughtful over the next two days.

Thank you to the organizers and to all of you for being engaged and very best wishes for a productive discussion over the next two days”, he concluded.



Dr. Stephen Anderson, Director, CIDEC (Comparative, International, and Development Education Centre), OISE/University of Toronto

Dr. Anderson opened his remarks by discussing his work in countries such as Pakistan and how it connects to his work on education. He emphasized the need for extensive research on youth radicalization as well as resources since this field is relatively new. He described this conference and its work as “trailblazing and pioneering.”

Dr. Anderson highlighted the importance of active community engagement in combating and eventually solving youth radicalization. He emphasized the need for communication, open discussion, and increasing “awareness and knowledge” through civil societies like Midaynta Community Services and its partners. “Groups of people coming together during moments like these and discussing this contemporary and somewhat new issue create ideal opportunities to engage in productive interactions that are shared by many of the concerned civil society and the individuals here today.” Dr. Anderson concluded his opening remarks by welcoming the dignitaries, participants, and members of CIDEC to this “august and historic” conference.

Greetings from Dignitaries

Ministry of Education

Minister

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



November 7, 2016

To the Attendees of the Second Annual Youth Radicalization Conference:

On behalf of the Ministry of Education, I am delighted to extend my best wishes to the participants, volunteers and organizers of the Second Annual Conference on "Youth Radicalization: New and Emerging Issues".

I commend Midaynta Community Services for all that they do to provide crucial resources and services to refugees, immigrants and youth in need. Programs like these help newcomers and their families prepare for the future ahead and are essential to building vibrant communities.

I am thrilled to know that two major themes of the conference are education and well-being. Education is about more than just learning to read and write. It is about ensuring that students have a supportive learning environment that helps them gain the knowledge and skills to be confident, engaged citizens.

Please accept my best wishes for a successful conference.

Sincerely,

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

Mitzie Hunter, MBA
Minister



DR. ERIC HOSKINS, MPP
St. Paul's

Midaynta Community Services
1992 Yonge St #203
Toronto, ON
M4S 1Z7

November 15th, 2016

Dear Mr. Yusuf:

I would like to extend my best wishes to all those involved in the Youth Radicalization Conference 2016.

This conference offers delegates from public, private and community organizations a chance to highlight key issues in order to better understand radicalization to violence. This provides an important opportunity to identify emerging challenges and advance strategies that will take us one step closer to a more inclusive and tolerant society.

I applaud the efforts to bring together practitioners, academics and other concerned stakeholders to reach a fuller understanding of youth radicalization, and develop responses to this complex issue.

I congratulate Midaynta Community Services, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and the Mosaic Institute for their collective contribution to facilitating this discussion.

I am confident that this year's conference will foster and inspire dialogue as it builds relationships and generates new ideas.

Enjoy the conference!

Sincerely,

Eric Hoskins, MPP

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Welcoming Remarks by US Consulate General Juan Alsace:

Mr. Alsace is a career Senior Foreign Service Officer with 29 years of service. Prior to obtaining his current position in August 2015, Mr. Alsace was an Assistant Professor at the National Defense University (Eisenhower College, 2014-2015). (<https://ca.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/toronto/consul-general-juan-alsace/>)

I am very pleased to be here and delighted that US consulate general had the opportunity to work with Midaynta Community Services, the Mosaic Institute, the University of Toronto and other stakeholders in this conference that will foster dialogue on an issue that is of serious concern both to the United States and Canada, and indeed to the world and that is Youth Radicalization.

I would like to thank all the participants, that have traveled from near and far, including the States, to contribute their expertise, share their insights, and provide lessons learned. It is with dialogues like these, that we are able to make progress on challenging issues.

Our mission in Canada is very proud that we can support this year's youth radicalization conference through our public diplomacy grants program. Amongst the speakers we are supporting we have representatives from Georgetown University, Muslim Public Affairs Council, Pathways to Prosperity, Florida State University, Stanford University, The Somali Action Alliance Education Fund and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

We have learned in the United States and Canada, and around the world how important it is to address extremism threats and multiple dimensions. The issue is not just a law enforcement problem, not just a community problem, indeed not just a family problem. Whatever the roots of hatred and fear maybe that inflame a particular extremism cause. Our best hope for protecting young people from that threat is to work together. So I applaud the educators, religious and community leaders, parents, and police, that have dedicated themselves to helping young people to think critically, forge a sense of identity, and to develop a commitment to constructive causes. Violent extremist and terrorist thrive when they can separate people from one another and shut off voices that do not fit the extremism narrative. We certainly see that with young minds, that are susceptible to sirens songs of extremism. So we need to build and bolster bridges of communication, education and trust. We have learned that local communities are the most powerful asset we have in confronting and

preventing violent extremism. You all have so much influence in our young people's lives. Whether you are a parent, member of the clergy, an authority figure, or just a family friend. When we speak out about our concerns and share our experiences with one another, we are stronger and better prepared to face a challenge. Learning to spot the signs that one's child, student or friend maybe at risk of falling to extremist ideology is a task for all those who care about the health of our community. The Government, us, as seldom in a position to observe the early signals, nor should we be. So we need to work closely with community to understand the warning signs and come together to intervene before an incident can occur. While always respecting our commitment to respecting privacy and civil rights. Collaboration amongst all the stakeholders, community organizations, schools, law enforcement, local and federal governments, is critical to countering violent extremism. No one person can address this problem alone, we all need to work together. We also need to recognize that marginalized and isolated youth are the most at risk. Connecting these youths to education systems, employment opportunities, social and health services, and their communities is the best way to prevent radicalization. This is some of the crucial work Midaynta's youth outreach workers do everyday. As extremist groups ramp up their recruitment we must respond in kind. Canada and the United States share a common history, interest and values. We must stand as we always have, shoulder to shoulder to address this common problem. We must work together to undercut the ideological and rhetorical underpinnings that give violent extremism a foothold in our societies. Formulating effective and appropriate policies requires the joint efforts of the group represented here today. Bringing together government officials from Canada and the United States, law enforcement officers, faith and community leaders, academics, and most importantly youth. To allow us to arrive at new ideas and approaches. The answers are not obvious nor will they be simple but the conversation that you will have and the ideas that you will generate will make vital contributions towards finding a solution.

I am inspired to see so many of you all here today, I know my colleagues are as well. Committed to addressing the problem of youth radicalization. It is only through unity and close partnership that Canada and the United States can commit the necessary resources to our common defense to guarantee an environment where youth radicalization no longer poses a threat to the peace and security to this continent or to the world. So thank you again for inviting me to speak and I wish you a very successful and productive conference. I look forward to learning more from you and the best practises we can all adopt to address this common problem.



Chris Glover

Toronto District School Trustee for Ward 2 Etobicoke Centre. In addition to that Glover is a research consultant and Adjunct Professor at York University. Glover has also taught at the University of Toronto, Centennial College, and East York Collegiate. As a research consultant, his clients have included Public Health Departments, the United Way of Greater Toronto and Parent Action on Drugs. His research projects have included surveys of community education needs and evaluations of student health programs.

“Thanks Midaynta for organizing the conference.”, Glover noted the importance of having these types of conversations. Having initiated similar panel conversations on youth violence in Ward 2 it was evident from those conversations that although we live in the same city our experiences are still so varied. Hearing from youth in that community it became apparent that we all have the same needs – to belong to a community, employment opportunities, access to agencies, and respect.

Glover hopes that these important issues are discussed in the conference including solutions on how we can meet the needs of our youth so they are not involved in any dangerous or harmful activities such as violent extremism.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Keynote Address: Remarks Sophie Kiwala MPP Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services

I am pleased to represent Minister Coteau at this important conference that unites the voices of Ontario's communities, law enforcement and the legal community, as well as experts in youth development, education and youth radicalization.

I am inspired to be among people that share, and work towards, the same goal – supporting Ontario's youth so they can be the best they can be.

And I am encouraged that you have come together to network, to strengthen partnerships, and to find innovative ways to prevent youth radicalization.

As you connect and share ideas over the next two days, I know you do so with enthusiasm and purpose.

Thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here.

I want to applaud Midaynta Community Services for championing this conference.

I want to acknowledge members of the Organizing Committee – OISE, the Mosaic Institute, and The U.S. Consulate General here in Toronto – for their diligent efforts.

And I want to recognize the support provided by the Munk School of Global Affairs and the Canadian Council of Imans.

Thank you all for your ongoing efforts to enhance lives, to build vibrant communities and to make Ontario a place where everyone is supported to reach their full potential.

Like all of these wonderful organizations, and all of you here today, our government is also working hard to help young people enjoy the bright futures they deserve.

Our shared commitment – the desire to help these young people thrive – is what motivates us.

We want all young people in Ontario to succeed.

Among other things, we invest in children and youth to ensure they have the best start and the best education. And we provide supports and services to those who are at-risk or vulnerable, including those with special needs. Every step we take every program we support begins with an idea.

And that's what this conference is all about – sharing ideas that will help young people get and stay on the right path.

We want young Ontarians to be healthy and happy, to succeed in school, to be safe, and to have the opportunities they need to grow into responsible, contributing adults.

Of course we want this for them. But we also want this for us, because the success of our youth is vital to building strong communities and a prosperous Ontario.

That is why we have taken a number of steps, and implemented a number of initiatives through our Youth Action Plan to give young people facing barriers the supports and opportunities they need to succeed I know for a fact that many youths that have participated in or benefit from these programs have gone on to become actively involved and engaged in their communities.

As a member of provincial parliament, I see this generosity of spirit every day – in my home community and across our great province.

I've met young people who advocate for human rights and equity who raise awareness for important causes. Who launch projects to support the vulnerable and who work hard to empower their peers, including those at risk for radicalization.

There is no single trajectory for the process of radicalization.

Early indicators suggest that risk factors for radicalization may include marginalization, alienation, loss of hope, feeling excluded and unimportant, and not having a connection to community resources or government programs.

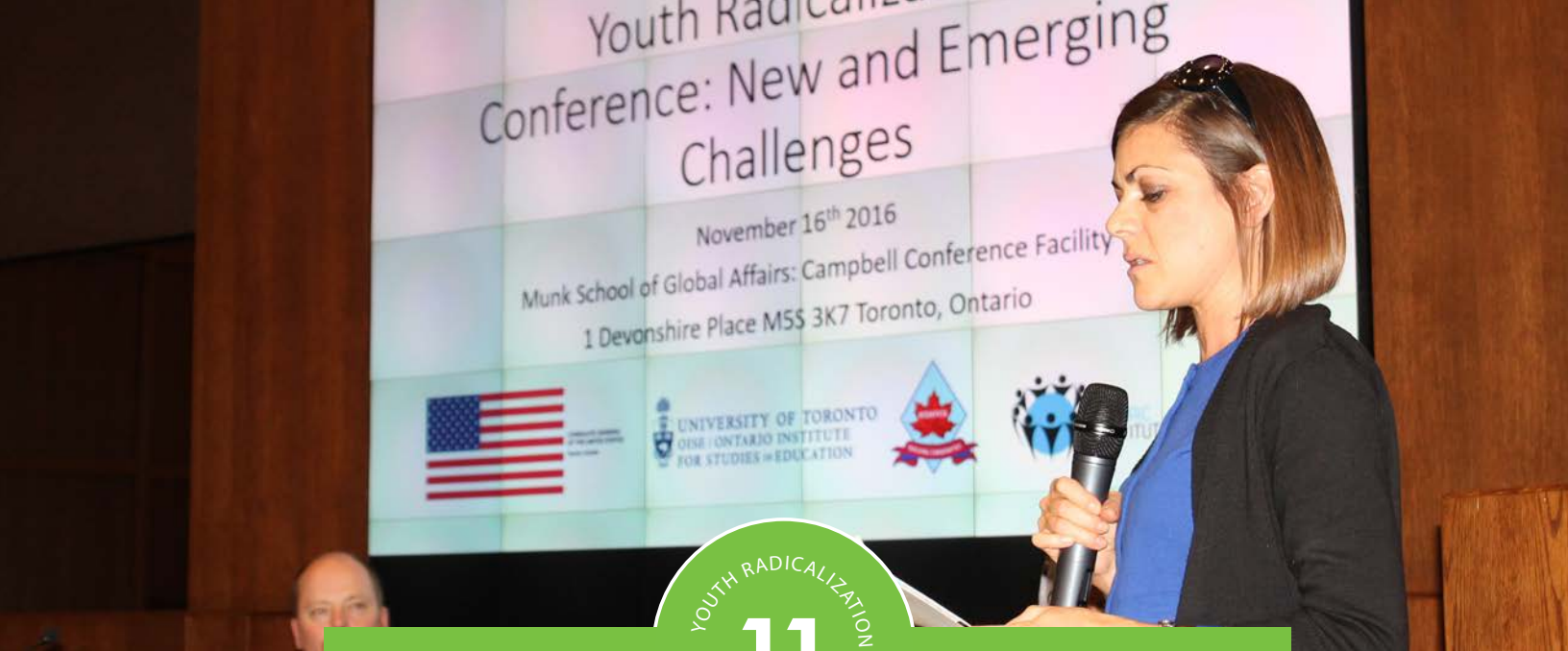
We also recognize that the challenges associated with radicalization are complex and that effectively addressing these challenges requires the collaboration of stakeholders from multiple sectors and disciplines.

We need all hands on deck working together to create an Ontario that is inclusive and diverse.

I want to thank all of you here for caring about our youth and for being partners for progress.

Your leadership sets a great example.

With the ongoing efforts of dedicated people like you we can - together - open the door of opportunity so youth who are at-risk can overcome barriers and thrive.



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Speaker Biographies



Dr. Nazir Harb Michel

Senior Research Fellow -The Bridge Initiative, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University. Nazir Harb Michel holds a Master’s in Public Affairs from Princeton University and a Master’s in Arab Studies from Georgetown University. He completed a Ph.D. in Georgetown University’s Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies. Nazir initiated, organized and led the ‘Islamic Literacy at the Woodrow Wilson School Lecture Series’, which trained future policy makers and analysts to detect and counteract Islamophobia in legislation. Since beginning at Georgetown, Nazir has published several articles and book chapters on Muslims in the West and international Islamophobia.



Salam Al Marayati

Executive Director - Muslim Public Affairs Council, an American institution which informs and shapes public opinion and policy by serving as a trusted resource to decision makers in government, media and policy institutions. Salam written extensively on Islam, human rights, democracy, Middle East politics, and the Muslim American communities. Salam also works as an advisor to several political, civic and academic institutions seeking to understand the role of Islam and Muslims in America and throughout the world



Dr. Aleksandra Nestic

Dr. Aleksandra Nestic is a Senior Faculty of Human Security at the School for International Training, Graduate Institute of World Learning in Washington DC. She is also a Visiting Faculty of Countering Violent Extremism at the Joint Special Operations University (USSOCOM) in Tampa, Florida and a Managing Partner & Senior Researcher at Valka-Mir Human Security, LLC. Her research areas include political violence, revolutionary social movements, ethnic and communal conflicts, psycho-social elements of violent extremist organizations recruitment with a special focus on the Middle East / North Africa and the Balkans / East-Central Europe regions. Dr. Nestic also works on designing global citizenship, peacebuilding and conflict transformation programs for young people in the U.S. and internationally. Dr. Nestic holds a PhD in International Conflict Analysis and Resolution; a Master's degree in Intercultural Communication and International Education, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology.



Hodan Hassan

Hodan Hassan is a mental health practitioner/educator who has 13+ years of experience in behavioral health setting. Currently, Hodan serves as the executive director of Pathways 2 Prosperity, an agency that aims to alleviate the systematic gaps in behavioral health services by educating both providers and community members. She also serves as a chairwoman for Somali American Taskforce and works as a consultant. Hodan has worked as Senior Clinical Social Worker for Hennepin County providing psychotherapy to individuals. In this role, Hodan provided leadership as client advocate, public health educator, service planner, State contracted liaison, and mental health practitioner. Prior to joining Hennepin County, Hodan spent many years advocating for mental health education and awareness and is the founder of the first project that aims to educate both providers and communities about ways to deliver services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate to immigrant communities.

Hodan has a Master's degree from Augsburg College of Minneapolis majoring social work with emphasis on policy development and policy advocacy and minor in psychology. She also has BS from Metropolitan State University and a minor in public health. Hodan is licensed in the state of MN as psychotherapist and is trained as Dialectical Behavior Therapy trainer. She has also earned numerous certificates including train the train on advocacy and leadership, cultural competence and best practices, drug and alcohol coach trainer, and women's leadership and advocacy skill trainings.

Hodan is a dedicated and passionate health educator who has spent the last 10 years advocating for health disparities. Hodan is the one of the founders of Somali Health Coalition, Autism Taskforce, and immigrant mental health awareness group. Hodan provides direct leadership by serving as a board member to many organizations including Somali American Task-force, Pathways 2 Prosperity, Institute of Horn of Africa Studies and Affairs (IHASA), Somali Health Coalition of Minnesota, and Ethnic Leadership Committee.

Hodan has taught women's empowerment courses to immigrant communities in Minnesota. Hodan played an important role in educating the local communities about the importance of civic engagement and community organizing. She took in part of 2008 "We All Vote" project at local and nationwide election. Hodan is highly-motivated community service professional skilled at networking, media outreach and relationship development and flexible and versatile team player who maintains a sense of humor under pressure.



Dr. Sarah Lyons-Padilla

Dr. Sarah Lyons-Padilla is a research scientist at Stanford SPARQ: Social Psychological Answers to Real-world Questions. She studies the psychology of homegrown terrorism and has found that feelings of “cultural homelessness” and discrimination may play a key role in the radicalization of Muslims in the United States. She is also exploring the relationship between acculturation, discrimination, and radicalization processes among Muslims in Germany. Lyons-Padilla received her B.A. in Psychology from the University of Virginia and her Ph.D. in Social, Decision-Making, and Organizational Science from the University of Maryland, where she was involved with the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). Her research has been featured in media outlets such as The Washington Post, PolitiFact, Politico, The New York Times, and The Guardian. She has also reported on her findings to policymakers at the U.S. Capitol and, most recently, at TEDxStanford.



Michelle Shephard

Michelle Shephard stood among the crumbling remains of New York City’s World Trade Center on the night of 9/11 and asked, “Why?” So began her journalistic journey as the Toronto Star’s National Security reporter, looking for answers in the streets of Mogadishu, Sanaa, to the mountains of Waziristan, refugee camps in Dadaab and Peshawar, the corridors of power in Washington and Ottawa, 200 km north of the Arctic Circle and flying to the world’s most famous jail in Guantanamo Bay more than two dozen times.

Shephard has won Canada’s top journalism’s prizes – a three-time recipient of the National Newspaper Award (2002, 2009, 2011) and she was part of a Toronto Star team that won the Governor General’s Michener Award for Public Service Journalism. She has collaborated on various films and was the co-director of Guantanamo’s Child, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and was voted as TIFF’s Top Ten Films. She was awarded the Atkinson Fellowship in 2015 for a series called Generation 9/11, which will look at the recruitment of foreign members for Daesh, the group also known as the Islamic State.

Shephard speaks frequently on issues of national security and civil rights and lives in Toronto with her photojournalist husband Jim Rankin, traveling frequently for both work and pleasure



Jeewan Chanicka

Jeewan Chanicka is currently working as an seconded Education Officer in the Inclusive Education Branch, Ministry of Education. He is seconded from his role as Principal at the York Region District School Board. He has his M.Ed from York University. During his career as an educator, Jeewan was committed to developing Social Justice based Inquiry and practice in the classroom and throughout the school from KG – Gr 8 both locally and internationally.

He Jeewan was involved on the YRDSB steering team in the implementation of the Equity Strategy. He also consulted with the United Nations University of Peace to do curriculum framework development which was implemented across North & Central America and South/East Asia. Jeewan fills his spare time with adventures spanning the ocean, mountains and urban landscapes. He has received an award from the Character Education Partnership for Promising Practices and most recently the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Award.



Fowzia Duale

Fowzia Duale is a Youth Outreach Worker at Midaynta Community Services, which primarily assists the Somali-Canadian diaspora. Her work focuses on poverty, racism and marginalization, which are a few of the major factors that influence youth to commit violence according to the provincially-funded Roots of Violence report. She works on identifying and counseling at-risk and marginalized Somali youth to help them reconnect with the services and institutions.

Ms. Duale is also a key partner for ConGen Toronto in a program related to countering violent extremism, and is a central figure in community-based CVE efforts throughout the Greater Toronto Area. She is passionate youth outreach, intervention, high level civic engagement, and has built strong relationships with Somali-Canadian and Muslim diaspora leaders in order to better assist at-risk youth.



Jasmin Zine

Jasmin Zine is a Professor of Sociology & the Muslim Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her publications include numerous journal articles on Islamic feminism and Muslim women's studies and Muslims and education in the Canadian diaspora. Her books include: "Canadian Islamic Schools: Unraveling the Politics of Faith, Gender, Knowledge and Identity" (2008, University of Toronto Press) the first ethnography of Islamic schooling in North America and "Islam in the Hinterlands: Muslim Cultural Politics in Canada" (2012, University of British Columbia Press). Her co-edited book (with Lisa K. Taylor) 'Muslim Women, Transnational Feminism and the Ethics of Pedagogy: Contested Imaginaries in post-9/11 Cultural Practice' was released in 2014 by Routledge Press.

She has recently completed a national study funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) on the impact of 9/11 and the 'war on terror' on Muslim youth in Canada. As an education consultant she has developed award winning curriculum materials that address Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism and has worked as a consultant for the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (ODHIR/OSCE), the Council of Europe, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on developing international guidelines for educators and policy-makers on combating Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims.



Imam Yasin Dwyer

Imam Yasin Dwyer was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba to parents of Jamaican heritage. He has served as a faith-based chaplain with the Correctional Service of Canada for the past 12 years. During that time Imam Yasin has also worked as a consultant and advisor with the Queen's University chaplaincy team. Imam Yasin lectures extensively on topics of traditional Islamic spirituality, interfaith dialogue and the history of Muslims in the West.



Dr. Myrna Lashley

Dr. Myrna Lashley holds a Ph.D in counseling psychology from McGill university. She was an Associate dean at John Abbott College She is also an assistant professor in the department of psychiatry of McGill University as well as a researcher and project leader at the Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research of the Jewish General Hospital. She is an internationally recognized clinical, teaching and, research authority in cultural psychology, and serves as an expert psychological consultant to institutions, including the juvenile justice system. She has worked both as a consultant to First Nations and the Jewish communities, and as the Cross Cultural Trainer for the Grievance Committee office of the secretariat for McGill University.

She has also conducted training workshops locally, nationally, and internationally and has acted as a consultant to the Brazilian health care system. She was a director of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and has also served on the Comité consultatif sur les relations Interculturelles et Interraciales de la Communauté Urbaine de Montréal. Currently, she is the Chair of the Cross Cultural Roundtable on Security, as well as Vice-chair of the board of the École Nationale de Police du Québec. In addition to conducting research on police matters, she has also been appointed to the Comité expert en matière de profilage racial of the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal. In addition, she has also authored two training manuals on intercultural issues in the workplace and co-authored a chapter in the book *Encountering the Other*. She has received several awards including the 2015 Woman of Merit Award from the Playmas Montreal Cultural Association; the Queen Elizabeth II 2012 Diamond Jubilee award; 2006 Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Award for Holocaust studies; the 2004 Martin Luther King legacy award; as well as the 1995 Merit Award for the Kanawake Native survival school. Her current research focuses on the intersections of culture, terrorism and national security.

She is currently Barbados's Honorary Consul to Montreal.



Mr. Hashi Shafi

Mr. Hashi Shafi is the Founder and Executive Director of the Somali Action Alliance Education Fund, an organization dedicated to civic and social change. He is a professional community organizer, having led several efforts to help global engagement on civic participation electoral organizing and community led countering violence extremism in the United States, Europe, and Canada. He organized and convened a number of high profile accountability public meetings with US Senate officials including the late Senator Paul Wellstone, and Senators Norm

Coleman and Amy Klobuchar. In Minnesota, Mr. Shafi led the effort to build a strong relationship between law enforcement agencies and the Somali and Muslim community by hosting countless meetings between law enforcement agencies and community. These efforts resulted in the formation of a working group of community and faith leaders that engages with law enforcement agencies in an effort to reduce negative perceptions held or perceived by both sides, promote better relationships with each other, and rally the state's new citizens to understand that they are part of the wider American public where entire communities are not put under suspicion for crimes committed by individuals. Hashi also established the Young Somali-American Advisory Council with former Minnesota District US Attorney, Mr. B. Ted Jones. Mr. Shafi organized the first Somali Day at the Minnesota State capitol on 12 March 2009 to encourage Somalis to become civically engaged and involved in the process of democracy. Mr. Shafi has Mr. Shafi is a sought speaker and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management, as well as Executive Director leadership program from the University of St. Thomas and the Civic leadership at University of Southern California. Hashi successfully graduated as a Public Policy Fellow from the University of Minnesota.



Dr. Amarnath Amarasingam

Dr. Amarnath Amarasingam is a Fellow at The George Washington University's Program on Extremism, and Co-Directs a study of Western foreign fighters based at the University of Waterloo. He is the author of *Pain, Pride, and Politics: Sri Lankan Tamil Activism in Canada* (2015). His research interests are in radicalization, terrorism, diaspora politics, post-war reconstruction, and the sociology of religion. He tweets at @AmarAmarasingam



Dr. Rima Berns-McGown

Dr. Rima Berns-McGown is Associate Director of the Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures and a Jack & Doris Shadbolt Fellow in the Humanities. Prior to her arrival at SFU, she was the senior project advisor, research director, and principal author of The Mosaic Institute's recently released study on "The Perception & Reality of „Imported Conflict“ in Canada." She is also an adjunct professor of diaspora studies with the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Toronto at Mississauga and the immediate past-president of the Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs. Dr. Rima holds a PhD from the University of Wales at Aberystwyth, an MA from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of Johns Hopkins University, and a Bachelor of Journalism and Political Science from Carleton University. Her book *Muslims in the Diaspora: The Somali Communities of London and Toronto* compared the political culture of London and Toronto as spaces of integration and explored the renegotiation of identity and religion that Somali refugees undertook in the first years after moving into the West. She has published a number of articles and chapters arising from interviews with Somali Canadians, most recently "„I am Canadian“: Challenging Perceptions about Young Somali Canadians." She publishes in both academic and popular venues, including *Torontoist.com*, most recently on Toronto's racial divide. Dr. Rima was born of a mixed background in Apartheid South Africa, which has fueled her lifelong interest in the creation of socially just diverse societies.



Ms. Saba Husain

Ms. Saba Husain recently graduated from the University of Waterloo with a master's degree in Political Science. During her master's, she wrote a major research paper titled "Countering Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism in Canada: A Root-Cause Approach", in which she examined the root causes of radicalization, assessed Canada's approach to CVE and provided recommendations based on her analysis. She is currently a Junior Research Fellow for the Centre for Security Governance and was also a research assistant for the first-ever empirical study in Canada on converts to Islam. Saba is deeply passionate about countering intolerance and violent extremism and is currently looking to get involved in projects that tackle these critical issues.



Dr. Nkrchinyelum Chioneso

Professionally, Dr. Nkechinyelum Chioneso identifies as a community psychologist. Operating from a social justice and health equity paradigm, she seeks to promote healthy individuals within healthy communities. Earning her doctoral degree at North Carolina State University, Dr. Chioneso's major areas of professional interest include sustaining wellness, promoting psychological sense of community, and building healthy systems. She has primarily consulted with individuals, community groups, and non-profit organizations seeking solutions to better address the social determinants of health.

In 2015, Dr. Chioneso joined University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign Psychology Department as the Assistant Director for Public Engagement. She provides leadership in the development and implementation of community engagement efforts by developing both supportive relationships and relevant services with the campus and larger community. In collaboration with her co-creators, Dr. Chioneso aims to foster community spaces that inspire a greater and more equitable realization of our human potentials.



Sergeant Brian Smith

Sergeant Brian Smith has been with the Toronto Police Service (TPS) since 1989. He has spent his career in a wide variety of front-line and specialized areas such as the TPS Sex Crimes Unit, investigating offences, and assisting the most vulnerable members of our community. Sgt Smith is currently the TPS Coordinator for the Toronto F.O.C.U.S Situation Tables which includes managing the TPS FOCUS Team, and working alongside the two FOCUS partners, United Way and City of Toronto. FOCUS is a successful and collaborative risk-driven intervention model that improves community safety and wellness outcomes through wrap-around supports.

Sgt Smith is also the TPS CVE Coordinator and has been a member since inception of the TPS CVE Project Team. Specific to CVE, this includes working closely with the Project Team on the implementation of the TPS city-wide CVE strategy, training TPS members and FOCUS community partners in CVE, assisting community partners with their CVE efforts, and formulating and conducting CVE 'interventions'.

Sgt. Smith has been certified by the UK Association of Chief Police Officers as a Community Engagement Prevent instructor, accredited by the RCMP as a CVE Instructor, accredited as an RCMP Terrorism Prevention Program Instructor, and certified as an Extreme Dialogue Instructor (Kanishka Project). He has received further certifications from the US Department of Transport, El Paso Intelligence Centre and the RCMP as a Pipeline-Convoy Criminal Interdiction Instructor, and is certified by Psychometrics Canada as a Meyers-Briggs Type I and II Instructor.

As an adjunct faculty member of the Toronto Police College, Sgt. Smith continues to be recognized as the lead instructor in all areas related to Countering Violent Extremism, Anti-Terrorism, Police Powers and Duties, associated case law and legal issues, and Ontario Major Case Management. Sgt. Smith has a Teaching Certificate from Humber College and a Bachelor of Education in Adult Education from Brock University.

Conference Agenda

PROGRAM STARTS AT 9:00 AM

CLASSIFICATION	DAY I: WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 16, 2016
8:30 – 9:00	Registration and Welcome Breakfast
9:00 – 9:15	Welcome & Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mahad Yusuf, Midaynta • Glen Jones, OISE
9:15 – 9:30	Greetings from Dignitaries
9:30 – 10:00	Keynote Address
	PLENARY SESSION
10:00 – 11:20	Panel Discussion I: Youth Radicalization: Lessons Learned Abroad Moderator: Dr. Caroline Manion, Instructor, Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education, Comparative, International and Development Education, OISE/University of Toronto <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salam al Marayati, Executive Director, Muslim Public Affairs Council • Dr. Aleksandra Nestic, Senior Faculty in Human and Inclusive Security, SIT Graduate Institute, World Learning -Washington DC, Visiting Faculty in Psychopathology of Violent Extremism Organizations, Joint Special Operations University (USSOCOM) • Michelle Shephard, National Security Reporter, Toronto Star • Ryan Lenz, Online Editor/Senior Writer, Southern Poverty Law Center
11:20 – 12:50	LUNCH BREAK (Dhuhr Prayer)
12:50 – 2:20	Panel Discussion II: Deepening the Dialogue (Speakers from Public Safety Canada)
2:20 – 2:30	COFFEE BREAK

2:30 – 4:00	<p>Panel Discussion III: The Role of Public, Religious, Peace & Citizenship Education in Countering Youth Radicalization</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Kathy Bickmore, Professor, Curriculum Studies and Teacher Development and Comparative International and Development Education, OISE/University of Toronto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeewan Chanicka, Educator, Former Principal, Education Officer, Ministry of Education • Fowzia Duale, Youth Outreach Worker, Midaynta Community Services • Dr. Jasmine Zine Professor, Graduate Advisor, Department of Sociology Wilfred Laurier University • Imam Hosam Helal Hamilton Mosque
4:00 – 4:05	Closing Remarks & Break for 'Asr Prayer
DAY II: Thursday November 17, 2016	
8:30 - 9:00	Registration and Welcome Breakfast
9:00 - 9:15	<p>Opening Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Stephen Anderson, Director of CIDEC at OISE/University of Toronto
9:15 – 9:30	Greetings from Dignitaries
9:30 – 10:00	<p>Keynote Address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Michael Coteau, Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism
PLENARY SESSION	
10:00 - 11:20	<p>Panel Discussion IV: Ensuring Newcomers are Settled and Fully Integrated: Challenges & Opportunities in (Re)Settlement, Integration, Community Engagement, & Cultural Competency</p> <p>Moderator: Hashi Shafi, Executive Director, Somali Action Alliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Rima Berns-McGown, Lecturer, Department of History, University of Toronto-Mississauga • Dr. Nazir Harb, Senior Research Fellow, The Bridge Initiative, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University • Lina Chaker, Media Coordinator, Windsor Mosque • Dr. Nkechinyelum Chioneso, Assistant Director for Public Engagement at University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign

11:20 – 12:50	LUNCH BREAK (Dhuhr Prayer)
12:50 – 2:20	<p>Panel Discussion V: Trauma and Mental Health as It Pertains to Radicalization: Strategies for Social Inclusion & Well-Being</p> <p>Moderator: Marva Wisdom, Founder, Wisdom Consulting Canada</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Sarah Lyons-Padilla, Research Scientist, Stanford SPARQ: Social Psychological Answers to Real-world Questions, Stanford University • Dr. Myrna Lashley, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, McGill University, Member, Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security • Imam Yasin Dwyer, Chaplin, Office of the Chaplin, Queen’s University • Hodan Hassan, Psychotherapist, Saint Paul, Minnesota
2:20 – 4:00	<p>Panel Discussion VI: Raising Awareness of the Role of (Social) Media and Media Literacy in Youth Radicalization</p> <p>Moderator: Cst. Jesse Riley, Crime Prevention/Graffiti Liaison Officer, Divisional Policing Support Unit, Toronto Police Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sgt. Brian Smith, Divisional Policing Support Unit (DPSU), Crime Prevention: FOCUS Situation Tables Coordinator, Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Coordinator, Toronto Police Services • Dr. Amarnath Amarasingam, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University, Member, Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security • Kamran Bhatti, Co-Founder, North American Spiritual Revival (NASR) • Saba Husain, Researcher in Countering Violent Extremism, M.A., University of Waterloo
4:00 – 4:05	Closing Remarks & Break for ‘Asr Prayer



YOUTH RADICALIZATION
12
REPORT

Acknowledgments

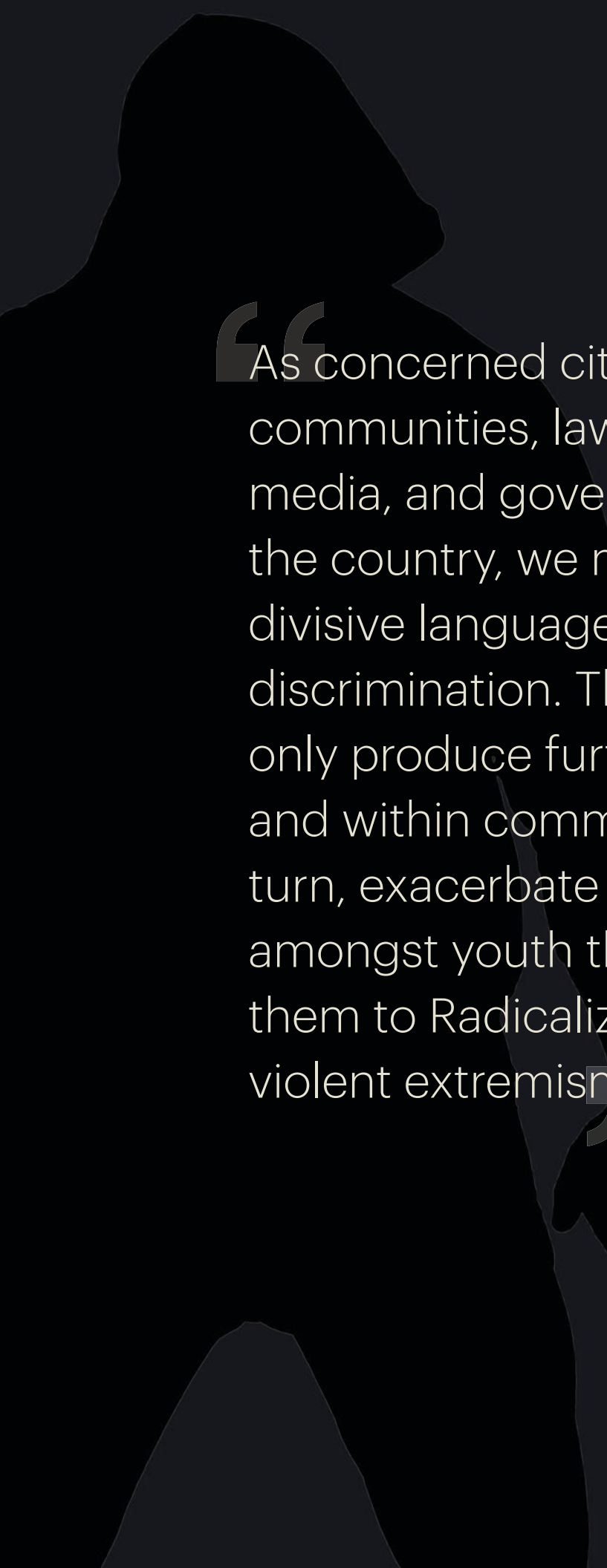
Firstly, we recognize the outstanding contribution of all the speakers and moderators to the Youth Radicalization Conference and their continually commitment to community safety and educational development. On behalf of Midaynta Community Services we sincerely thank you.

We acknowledge the contribution of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ontario Ministry of Education in recognition of their tireless efforts in supporting community services, development and leadership engagement.

With gratitude and appreciation, we thank our collaborators in the conference, the Office of U.S. Consulate General Toronto, the Canadian Council of Imams and the Mosaic Institute for their tireless work in the preparation and success of the Conference. Midaynta Community Services appreciates the contribution of the Faculty, Staff and Graduate Students

of the University of Toronto Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and more specifically the Comparative and International Education Centre (CIDE). We acknowledge the authenticity and sincerity of all your efforts, may you continue to expand your outstanding work building bridges between all communities. Special thank you to our editor Arleen Schenke and Senior Designer Tanwir Anwar, we recognize your outstanding contribution.

We would like to thank the Staff of Midaynta Community Services, Staff of Somali Immigrant Aid Organization, Participants and Volunteers for their commitment, resilience and enthusiasm for the Conference. As we concluded the second annual report we would like to acknowledge the tremendous team effort ensuring the Conference's success and we look forward to the coming year.

A dark silhouette of a person wearing a hooded sweatshirt, positioned on the left side of the page. The person's head is turned slightly to the right, and their right hand is visible near their waist. The background is a dark, solid color.

“As concerned citizens in communities, law enforcement, media, and governments across the country, we must avoid using divisive language, racism, and discrimination. These practices only produce further rifts across and within communities that, in turn, exacerbate the very isolation amongst youth that predisposes them to Radicalization and violent extremism.”







Citizenship Leadership Youth Radicalization

Moderator: Dr. Kathy Bickmore

Jeewan Chanicka

Fowzia Duale

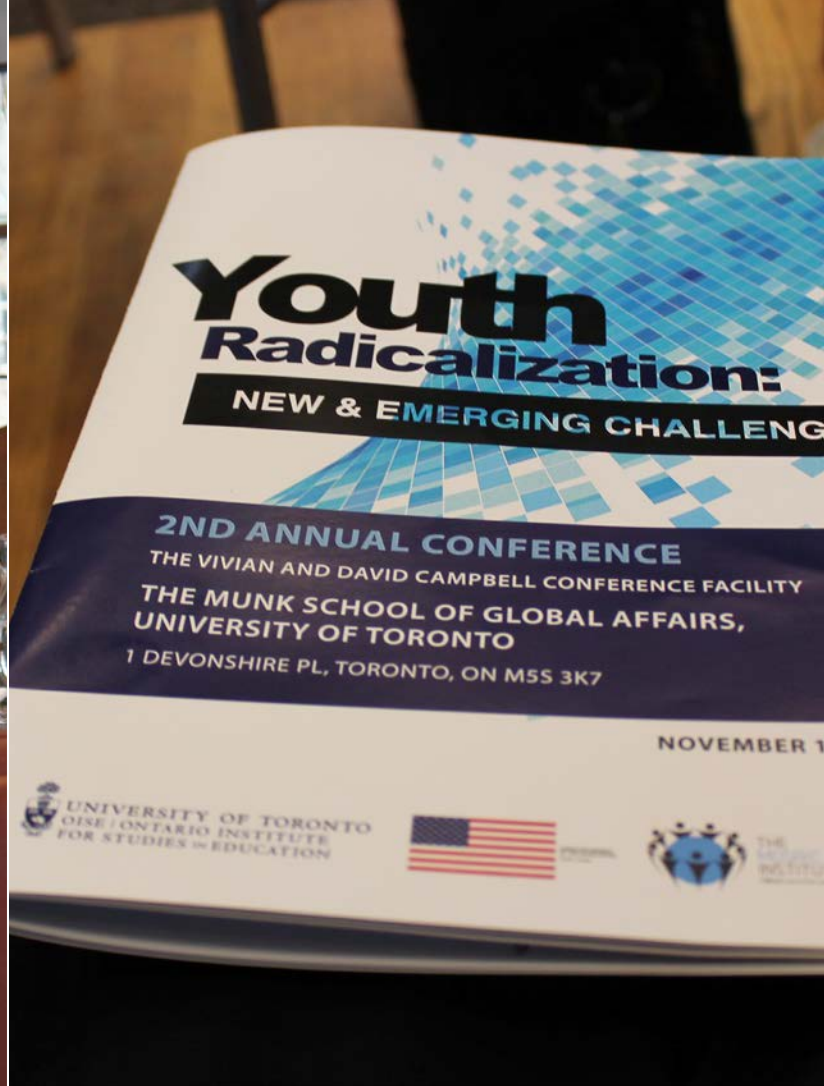
Dr. Jasmine Zine

Imam Hosam Helal









About Midaynta

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 was established in July 1993 as a family reunification project, and incorporated in August 1995 as a non-profit organization committed to identifying and responding to the needs of the community. Midaynta abides by a policy of non-discrimination and equity, and our services are open to everyone and are free of charge. Midaynta has a team of professionals who are committed and passionate about their work. Midaynta's success is built on strong working relationships with their stakeholders. Due to their diversified services, Midaynta is able to assist newcomers from their initial start-up process upon arrival until their full adaptation in the society. They are striving to provide services that promote, accountability, transparency, social justice, equality and equity, partnership and diversity.

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THIS 2ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE WAS HELD AT THE MUNK SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



This conference was sponsored by:

