



**OCIC 35th Anniversary Symposium & Celebration:
'Strength in Community, Collaboration & Solidarity'
September 27, 2023**

PARTICIPANT PACKAGE

Welcome

During the 35th anniversary year of the Ontario Council for International Cooperation (OCIC) we are filled with gratitude for the efforts of so many towards a more equitable and sustainable world for all. We look forward to many opportunities to amplify and celebrate the accomplishments of the Council and our broader community, and to work together with a renewed sense of purpose to redefine what we can best achieve together for many more years to come.

Our Symposium & Celebration: 'Strength in Community, Collaboration & Solidarity' is a key opportunity to expand your knowledge and worldviews, to co-create priorities for collective action, to flex your storytelling and advocacy skills, and to build your network, locally and globally.

On September 27 we'll meet in-person on the traditional territory of the Huron Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishnaabe and the Mississaugas of the Credit River First Nation at the Centre for Social Innovation - Spadina, in downtown Toronto.

In recognition of Truth and Reconciliation Day, September 30, we will begin with an opportunity to reflect and learn with **Jason Carter, Indigenous educator, advisor, Corporate Trainer and Director of Bear Standing Tall Inc.**, about the diverse perspectives, values and beliefs of Indigenous peoples, what reconciliation means, how it can be achieved, and what roles we can each play in our respective communities.

We'll then have opportunities to hear diverse perspectives on our theme, 'Community, Collaboration & Solidarity' from guest contributors: Moderator **Marlen Mondeca** - Vice President of Programs and Partnerships, Canadian Feed the Children; **Shirley Estévez** - Country Director, Canadian Feed the Children in Bolivia and **Jacquelyn Wright** - President and CEO, Canadian Feed the Children; **Renaud Thomas** - Director, Rayjon Share Care Haiti and **Heather Smith** - Executive Director, Rayjon Share Care; **Heather Dicks** - PhD candidate, Department of Sociology, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador and **Andrea Paras**, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Guelph; and **Chris Dendys** - Executive Director, Results Canada and **Ekatha Ann John** - Policy and Advocacy Manager - Global Health, Results Canada.

Our afternoon will include dialogue tables hosted by sector leaders and partners followed by reports-back from Dialogue Rapporteurs, and remarks from special guests **Assistant Deputy Minister Patricia Peña** and **Felipe Mamani - Mayor, Municipio Poroma (Bolivia)**, with translation from **Vladimir Gomez**.

Our evening celebration will include opportunities to enjoy food and drink, **live music with Paula Sofia** and interactive networking activities and [Transformations Stories](#) micro-exhibits in the company of our 35th Anniversary Celebration **members, partners and sponsors, special guests** from **Bolivia and Haiti**, and numerous **OCIC 'Super Hosts'** that look forward to welcoming you!!

Land Acknowledgement

OCIC recognizes and honours the Indigenous peoples who have historically, and do presently, live and work on the traditional, both treaty and unceded territories that we operate on. These include the Huron Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, the Mississaugas of the Credit River First Nation, and many others. We acknowledge that our staff, Board, volunteers, members and broader community operate on the treaty and unceded territories of these and numerous other Indigenous peoples and nations.

As we reflect on our role within a settler-colonial context, we acknowledge the importance of naming the Indigenous peoples and nations on whose lands we live, work and play, and understand the importance of framing our engagement in the international cooperation sector and beyond through the lens of reconciliation and decolonization. We recognize that we have a responsibility to stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples who have and continue to fight for social justice on their own lands.

Health & Safety

The OCIC Symposium will be a mask-friendly environment for all participants. While not mandating the use of masks, Toronto Public Health strongly recommends wearing a well-fitting, high-quality mask in indoor public settings.

The Centre for Social Innovation and OCIC kindly request that all participants pre-screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to attending the Symposium and refrain from attending should you have any symptoms or related concerns.

* Please note that some sessions deal with difficult content, including the unjust treatment of Indigenous Peoples, racial discrimination and violence, systemic injustice, sexual harassment and/or violence, and the disproportionate effects of inequality. While necessary to discuss, we recognize that this may demand (significant) emotional labour or distress, or may trigger participants. We encourage participants to guide their own engagement according to their mental, emotional, and physical well-being, and to seek additional support to process their feelings and thoughts in a safe space, if needed. For information related to emotional support and assistance please refer to Resources noted on page 7.

Getting To CSI - Spadina

We can't wait to see you at the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) - Spadina, located at 192 Spadina Avenue, just steps from Queen Street West.

<p><u>How do I get to CSI Spadina on transit?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 510 Spadina Spadina and Sullivan● 501 Queen Queen and Spadina● 505 Dundas Dundas and Spadina	<p><u>How do I get to CSI Spadina by bicycle?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 11 Minutes Union Station● 21 Minutes High Park● 29 Minutes Queen & Woodbine● 31 Minutes Yonge and Eglinton
<p><u>Where is vehicle parking available?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● There is metered parking all along Spadina.● There is a Green P parking lot approximately 2 blocks north of the Centre for Social Innovation, on the east side of Spadina. Note that Spadina runs northbound so you must approach from Queen St.● There is a public lot on Sullivan St. Note that Sullivan runs westbound so you must approach from Huron St.	

Code of Conduct

OCIC is committed to creating a safe and inclusive space. We ask all participants to commit to the following Code of Conduct, inspired by those of the Inter-Council Network (ICN) and Amnesty Canada, and adapted for OCIC's content and approach to this event.

1 RESPECT, I COMMIT to being respectful to all participants regardless of language, race, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, ability, and any other identity or belief, throughout this event. I understand that any discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated.

2 INCLUSION, I COMMIT to creating space for all to contribute and participate, to give prominence to the voices and stories of those who might be systemically excluded, and to make space for those that are more appropriately positioned to contribute.

3 HUMILITY, I COMMIT to participating with a spirit of openness to learn and a recognition of the broad diversity of participants. I recognize that creating space for lived experiences to inform this space is necessary and that hearing others' stories is a privilege.

4 SAFETY, I COMMIT to ensuring the physical, emotional, mental, sexual and spiritual safety of all participants in the sessions, and reporting any incidents of harassment and discrimination to the organizers.

5 SOLIDARITY, I COMMIT to seeking common ground and inspiration to support collective action.

6 PATIENCE, I COMMIT to being patient with technology, organizers, and each other. I recognize that everyone is on their own journey of learning.

7 OPENNESS, I COMMIT to bringing an open heart and an open mind to my involvement in this event. I commit to being open to caring for others and myself, including taking space to decompress and realign my energy if needed.

Program

September 27, 2023

8:30 - 9:00 **Registration & Fair Trade Café**

9:00 - 9:30 **Welcome**

- **Kimberly Gibbons** - Executive Director, and **Shehara Athukorala** - Learning & Impact Specialist, Ontario Council for International Cooperation

9:30 - 11:00 **Honoring Indigenous Wisdom; Taking Action for Reconciliation**

- **Jason Carter** - Director, Bear Standing Tall Inc.

11:15 - 12:15 **Early Lunch**

12:30 - 2:00 **Perspectives on Community, Collaboration & Solidarity: Armchair Conversation Series**

- **Moderator: Marlen Mondeca** - Vice President of Programs and Partnerships, Canadian Feed the Children
- **Shirley Estévez** - Country Director, Canadian Feed the Children in Bolivia and **Jacquelyn Wright** - President and CEO, Canadian Feed the Children
- **Renaud Thomas** - Director, Rayjon Share Care Haiti and **Heather Smith** - Executive Director, Rayjon Share Care
- **Heather Dicks** - PhD candidate, Department of Sociology, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador and **Andrea Paras**, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Guelph
- **Chris Dendys** - Executive Director, Results Canada and **Ekatha Ann John** - Policy and Advocacy Manager - Global Health, Results Canada

2:20 - 3:00 **Planning for Action Parallel Dialogues**

- Join **Shirley Estévez, Jacquelyn Wright, Alejandro Barrios** - Instituto Politecnico Tomas Katari (Bolivia), and **Felipe Mamani** - Mayor, Municipio Poroma (Bolivia) for a deeper exploration on approaches to partnerships, knowledge exchange and solidarity with and for Indigenous Peoples in Bolivia, Canada and globally.
- Join **Heather Dicks** and **Andrea Paras** to discuss and explore in more detail research conducted by a team from the University of Guelph, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and Memorial University, in collaboration with the Spur

Change program (an initiative of the Inter-Council Network). It identifies different aspects of Canada's development sector that either enable or constrain international solidarity, partnerships, and locally-led development.

3:10 - 3:50 **Planning for Action Parallel Dialogues**

- *Join **Renaud Thomas** and **Heather Smith** to share ideas and experiences around responsive partnership and solidarity, with a particular focus on navigating complex situations of conflict/crisis together. Discuss issues such as: What you think solidarity means to your partners during crisis/conflict? How would you know what they think about solidarity? How might their perspective differ? What are some of the specific crisis/conflict situations that you/your partners have faced, and how were strategies modified in response?*
- *Join **Chris Dendys** and **Ekatha Ann John** for a deeper dive into how to galvanize the political will for change by connecting grassroots and community-based issues and approaches with global policy efforts. Practice communicating a message powerfully and persuasively, in order to motivate others to your 'call to action'.*

4:00 - 5:00 **Sharing & Learning Plenary**

- *With reports-back from Dialogue Rapporteurs, and Remarks from special guests **Assistant Deputy Minister Patricia Peña** and **Felipe Mamani - Mayor, Municipio Poroma (Bolivia)**, with translation from **Vladimir Gomez**.*

5:30 - 8:00 **35th Anniversary Celebration**

- *Join us for an enjoyable evening celebration with food and drink, **live music with Paula Sofía** and interactive networking activities and [Transformations Stories](#) micro-exhibits. Our 35th Anniversary Celebration will be a fantastic opportunity for interaction, networking and fun with OCIC members, partners and sponsors, special guests from **Bolivia and Haiti, Alejandro Barrios, Shirley Estévez, Felipe Mamani** and **Renaud Thomas**, and numerous **OCIC 'Super Hosts'** that look forward to welcoming you!!*

Resources

Click and explore the links below of background readings and other relevant and related resources and recordings related to our Symposium themes this year.

Taking Action for Reconciliation

- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)
- [About the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#)
- [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

For emotional support and assistance:

- LAMATHUT (24/7): 1 (800) 721 0066
- National Crisis line: 1 (866) 925 4419

To connect with a mental health professional one-on-one:

- Call 1-888-668-6810 or text WELLNESS to 686868 for youth
- Call 1-866-585-0445 or text WELLNESS to 741741 for adults

Toronto Distress Centres

- 416 408- HELP (4357)

Indigenous Awareness and Cultural Sensitivity

- [Bear Standing Tall](#)

‘What constitutes an ‘enabling environment for Canadian SMOs?’

- [About Spur Change](#)
- [Spur Change 2023 SMO Report](#)
- [Spur Change 2023 SMO Report \(Executive Summary\)](#)
- [Webinar on key findings, June 19, 2023](#)
- Additional resources: [Spur Change Reports](#)

Local Solutions for Sustainable Community Development

- [Rayjon Share Care, Canada](#)
- [Rayjon Share Care Haiti \(RSCH\)](#)
- [OCIC ‘Tapestry 2023’ Season 1 Podcast & Illustration Series Episode 7 ‘Haitian Women in the Lead’](#)
- [Canadian Feed the Children](#)
- [Instituto Politécnico Tomás Katari \(IPTK\)](#)

Advocacy for Social Justice

- [Results Canada](#)

Contributor Bios

'Honoring Indigenous Wisdom; Taking Action for Reconciliation'

Jason Carter, a proud member of the Nehiyaw community from Onion Lake Cree Nation in Saskatchewan's Treaty 6 territory, serves as Director of Bear Standing Tall Inc. Specializing in Advisory Services and [Digital Indigenous Awareness Training](#), Jason is committed to fostering meaningful connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

Guided by the wisdom of his elders, Jason is deeply involved in leading traditional ceremonies. He is passionate about disseminating authentic Indigenous knowledge, aiming to promote healing, wellness, and reconciliation for both Indigenous communities and their non-Indigenous allies, including newcomers to Canada. His esteemed clientele encompasses a wide range of organizations, including the Government of Canada, Uber, Interac, Yamaha, Aon, TCS, AECON, TD Canada Trust, BMO, Scotiabank, and various food banks, among other national and local businesses.

Known spiritually as "Muskwa Inso Capow," Jason is also a Day Scholar Residential School Survivor, having endured the experience from 1974 to 1987.

'Perspectives on Community, Collaboration & Solidarity'

Chris Dendys has 25+ years of experience working on social justice and impact in Canada and internationally. She is experienced in advocacy, government relations, strategic partnerships, and supporting grassroots movements. As Executive Director of Results Canada, Chris oversees Results Canada's operations, campaign strategy, and grassroots support. Prior to Results, Chris served on the executive team of Nutrition International and has held positions in government and Parliament. Chris is on the Board of Directors for Can-WaCH and the leadership group for ACTION, an international partnership of global health advocates. Chris holds a Master's Degree from Carleton University.

Heather Dicks is a PhD candidate within the Sociology Department at the Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador; her present research is centered on the nexus between International Development and Migration. Prior to starting her PhD, Heather spent over a decade working in the field of International Development. This included work with the Canadian government, the United Nations, and several non-governmental organizations. Heather is currently working with the University of Guelph as a Research Assistant on a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)- funded research project exploring the impacts of COVID-19 on Small and Medium-sized Organizations (SMOs) working in Canada's foreign aid sector.

Shirley Estévez, Country Director of Canadian Feed The Children (CFTC) in Bolivia, has a passion for international development and has dedicated 35 years to the social development of vulnerable communities in her home country, Bolivia. Besides her role with CFTC Shirley has founded along with other Canadian NGOs, the Coalition of Catholics for the Betterment of Indigenous Peoples (COACAB) Canadian Coalition in the country in 2011, and has been President of the Board in two periods. She was

also a member of the CONGI – International NGOs Coalition twice contributing to positioning these coalitions in the country as well as setting the basis of a horizontal dialogue with the public and private sectors.

Shirley has worked at CFTC since 2011 and as a Country Director since 2013, leading the program in Bolivia in partnership with strong local NGOs. She has devoted her knowledge and experience to the exercise of girls and women's rights, especially in the most vulnerable areas of the country. Before joining CFTC Shirley was linked to several well recognized INGOs working in Bolivia such as Plan International for five years as a Communications, Sponsorship & Grants Manager; Christian Children's Fund for 16 years in six different roles; and Save the Children and World Vision as an external consultant.

Shirley holds a Bachelor's Degree in Sciences of Education, a Post grad in Social Development Projects design and evaluation, and is committed to supporting the food security, food sovereignty and integral development of girls and boys of Indigenous communities in her country. Shirley works closely with two local partners to overcome Indigenous communities' vulnerabilities and to create better opportunities to unlock their potential and attain freedom from poverty.

Ekatha Ann John has more than 10 years of combined experience as a multimedia journalist and advocate for health equity in Canada, the UK, and South Asia. Currently she is the Global Health Policy and Advocacy Manager at Results Canada. A Chevening scholar, she completed her Master's in Migration, Culture and Global Health Policy from Queen Mary University of London, UK, and spent time in Geneva undertaking research in gender inequity in global health leadership. She is a published researcher and has also worked with the United Nations Office for Project Services, focused on TB-related programs.

Marlen Mondaca is a feminist leader and strategist with over 25 years of experience leading and supporting organizations working in the international and Canadian aid sector. Marlen has also been a consultant with a focus on supporting organizations in their journeys towards creating more locally led equitable, inclusive and sustainable partnerships. During her career Marlen has worked with Oxfam and Save the Children. During her time with Save, she managed multi-million-dollar, complex development and humanitarian programs where she brought a strong human rights and gender equality lens. In her capacity as Director and then Chief of Programs and Policy Officer, Marlen oversaw both the International and National Reconciliation Canadian programs. During her last two years with Save the Children, Marlen took on the role of Special Advisor to the CEO on Strategy and Thought Leadership, which allowed her to deepen her understanding of external trends impacting the international aid sector. She authored three papers focused on localization, the triple nexus and climate change. Since 2021 Marlen serves as a Co-Chair of Cooperation Canada's Localization Working Group. The group facilitates Canadian CSOs discussions and learning on locally led initiatives in the humanitarian and development sector. Since June 1, 2023, Marlen joined Canadian Feed the Children as the VP of Programs and Partnership. Marlen holds Masters' degrees in political science and in journalism.

Andrea Paras is an [Associate Professor](#) in the Department of Political Science at the University of Guelph. Her research investigates the contributions of SMOs to Canada's foreign aid sector, specifically in relation

to localisation debates, enabling environments and pandemic adaptation. She has previously conducted research on the history and politics of humanitarianism, including her book [Moral Obligations and Sovereignty in International Relations: A Genealogy of Humanitarianism](#) (Routledge, 2019), as well as investigated the history and current practices of faith-based development organisations. She teaches and supervises in the areas of international development, international relations, human rights and humanitarianism, religion and politics, community-engaged research, and intercultural competence.

Heather Smith has been Executive Director and Program Manager for [Rayjon Share Care](#) (based in Sarnia, ON) since 2016. She brings a focus on developing healthy intercultural communication and partnerships internationally, and just and effective approaches to non-profit leadership in Canada. In her current role she facilitates dialogue and cooperation between Rayjon and their partners in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Together they support local solutions to sustainable community development through health care, education, microcredit and the empowerment of women.

Born in Jacmel, Haiti, **Renaud Thomas** attended university in Port-au-Prince where he graduated with an advanced degree in agronomy in 2007. He is an expert in permaculture design and sustainable development, providing consultation to various organizations from farms and local cooperatives to NGOs and universities. Renaud has been Director of [Rayjon Share Care Haiti \(RSCH\)](#) since 2018, overseeing programs in Education, Health Care, Agriculture, and the Empowerment of Women. He is the co-founder of local Haitian organizations Fond Paysans de Fond'Oies, Association Haïtienne de Permaculture, Inisyativ Sante Peyizan, and Zanmi Lagrikilti. Renaud brings a particular focus on finding local and sustainable solutions to complex problems.

Jacquelyn Wright brings a depth and breadth of international development and humanitarian experience to the role of President & CEO for CFTC, where she has been working to support a Board of Directors and to manage the strategic and governance processes of the organization for the past five years. A keen advocate for women and children throughout the world, she believes in upholding human rights and working towards diversity, equity and inclusion. Jackie is passionate about reconciliation, anti-racism, anti-oppression, protecting and upholding Indigenous Peoples rights in Canada and globally, and supporting Indigenous communities and nations in the area of food security and food sovereignty.

For five years at CARE Canada as the Vice President, Partnerships for Global Change, and before that in International Programs, Jackie built a diversified program portfolio by strengthening strategic partnerships and growing revenue through evidence-based best practices, innovation and future-ready programming. Prior to joining CARE in 2013, Jackie spent more than 25 years in humanitarian response and international development with the Canadian Red Cross, and with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) internationally.

Strongly committed to the study and practice of leadership, Jackie has a Master's Degree in Leadership and Training from Royal Roads University in Victoria, BC, where she is past co-chair of the Advisory Council of the School of Humanitarian Studies. She currently serves as Vice President of the OCIC Board of Directors.

'Sharing & Learning' Plenary Special Guests

Patricia Peña, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Partnerships for Development Innovation leads a multi-faceted team at Global Affairs Canada responsible for consolidating expertise and excellence in the delivery of international assistance, and increasing impact, innovation and engagement with a wide range of Canadian partners. She has a rich and long-standing history working with Canadian, multilateral, civil society, private sector, philanthropic and diplomatic partners globally.

Since joining the Government of Canada in 2007, she held a number of senior positions at Global Affairs Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). She served as Canada's Ambassador to Chile (2017-2020), Director General Foreign Policy and Director General Economic Development. From 2007 to 2011, Patricia held various policy and operational positions at CIDA, including as Director Democratic Governance and Human Rights, and Director of the Economic Development and Natural Resources.

Prior to joining the Canadian public service, Ms. Peña lived for almost ten years in London, England and worked in various public sector agencies, including the UK Electoral Commission where she oversaw political financing regulation in the United Kingdom.

Patricia Peña has an undergraduate degree in Political Science from the University of Toronto and a Master's degree at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Alejandro Barrios is a Bolivian economist with two master's degrees in Business Administration and Politics for the Third World. His experience is most focused on issues of food sovereignty, climate change, Indigenous peoples, education and politics, and being a representative of the Bolivian Delegation to COP 19 and Regional Coordinator of IBON International, attending to different international agendas.

Alejandro is passionate about sharing his experience as a professor of sociology in the San Francisco de Asis University and Universidad de la Cordillera in his home country, Bolivia. He has been leading the local NGO Instituto Politécnico Tomás Katari (IPTK) since 2018, where the institutional values and strategic priorities include providing opportunities to Indigenous communities. Alejandro is also a key member of national networks such as Programa de Coordinación en Salud Integral (PROCOSI) and The Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social (UNITAS).

Felipe Mamani has been an Indigenous leader since he was a young man. At the age of 18 he showed his leadership as an authority in his home community for four years, and was elected in several authority positions representing his home community and municipality. In 2020 he participated in the municipal elections and was elected by the communities as Indigenous Mayor of the Municipality of Poroma for the period 2020-2025. Felipe is passionate about the defense of the Indigenous peoples rights and works hard to address and mitigate the effects of climate change in Poroma. Felipe is an open-minded person committed to promoting strategic alliances with other stakeholders. Felipe, as the main authority in Poroma, signed agreements with IPTK, [SOCODEVI](#) and other local and international NGOs to work in the region.

Celebration Live Musician

Paula Sofía is a Guatemalan singer-songwriter based in Toronto. Most of her work is in Spanish, which makes her music and live performances very dynamic where she forms playful connections with the audience from the stage. She is able to convey universal themes through storytelling, imagery, and quirky songwriting. For more information about her work: visit her [Instagram page](#) or [Linktree](#).

‘Super Hosts’

Yin Brown is a disability inclusion advocate with 20 years' experience in community work, including 15 years in international work. She has developed and implemented disability inclusive policies, projects and consultancy to help organizations embed disability-inclusion in all aspects of their work. As a former Board member at OCIC, she has emphasized access for and participation of people with disabilities in international development. Yin is currently working at Abilities Centre delivering accessibility and inclusion consultancy to municipalities.

Amanda Cupido is an award-winning podcast producer, TEDx speaker, author and entrepreneur. She is the founder of Lead Podcasting, a podcast production company that specializes in developing podcasts for thought leaders and organizations. Amanda is the author of the Amazon bestseller, Let's Talk Podcasting: The Essential Guide to Doing it Right. She is also a part-time university lecturer and has helped to redefine the radio courses at both Seneca College and Toronto Metropolitan University. Amanda's expertise in storytelling has led her to train executives and professionals across the globe. Previously, she worked as the program director at AM 640 Toronto and a communications manager with World Vision International. Amanda has a Bachelor of Journalism from Ryerson University and a Master of Professional Studies in the Psychology of Leadership from Penn State University.

Aysha Dawood is an advocate for both local and global scale social equality, with a focus on affordable housing and sustainable finance. This ambition stems from her intersectional identities, and the transformative experiences gained while working with populations made vulnerable in the UK, Southern Africa, and Canada. She is fuelled by research, attempting to unravel the root systemic drivers of poverty. Aysha works as an operational and strategic consultant with non-profits. Her current work includes coordinating the management of the Canada Forum for Impact Investment and Development (CAFIID), and researching the nexus of human rights and the financialization of housing. Aysha's previous positions have been with Oikocredit, the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, South Liverpool Homes and the City of Toronto. Aysha holds a master's degree in Local Economic Development, a bachelor's degree in Urban and Regional Planning, and diplomas in Architectural Technology, and GIS (Geographical Information Systems) and Urban Planning.

Aysha has been a member of the OCIC Board of Directors since 2019, serving on the Finance and Sustainability, Membership and Nominations, Governance, and Executive Committees. She has also been

the Board Secretary for two years, helping to maintain OCIC's governance files. She looks forward to co-hosting OCIC's 35th Anniversary Celebration this year, as one of the special event planners!

Susan James served on the Board founding OCIC as an organization 35 years ago. She has worked with NGOs and Universities in Canada and the US focusing on Africa and the Caribbean. She has volunteered with OCIC on its Board and on the Personnel Committee most recently.

Susan MacGregor is an International Development/Humanitarian Assistance specialist with over 15 years experience in the International Relief and Development Industry. She spent 12 years based overseas providing direct logistics services to victims of natural disasters and conflict. Upon returning to Canada, Susan worked on a consultative basis with World Vision, the Canadian Red Cross, Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, Air Serv International, and the Department of National Defense helping to analyse and improve internal processes and to create in-house manuals and training materials. Since 2009, Susan has been in charge of the International Development Graduate program at Humber College, which trains the next generation of community and international development professionals to respond to needs both internationally and in Canada's underserved communities.

Whilst growing up in Kenya, **Christina Muia** witnessed a clear gap between the haves and have-nots. From those early years to her adulthood in Canada, Christina has been passionate about poverty alleviation. This has led her to work and volunteer with the United Nations and several Canadian international non-profits on women empowerment, youth employment, food security, sustainable agriculture and climate change projects. Her experiences sparked interest in how youth from marginalized and poor communities are involved in poverty reduction, which was explored in her Masters thesis and led to co-founding BiaSHEara, a multifaceted enterprise that showcased stories of Canadian women entrepreneurs of East African descent and engaged youth volunteers to support documentary production.

Christina has worked and volunteered with five Canadian international development organizations: World Renew (OCIC member), Mennonite Economic Development Associates, TakingITGlobal (OCIC member), Canadian Samaritans for Africa, and Paradigm Shift Project. She has also served as a Board advisor for the Canadian Samaritans for Africa. As a part of her Board commitment to OCIC, Christina is serving on the Finance and Sustainability Committee, has served as a co-chair on the Membership and Nominations Committee, and been a Secretary to the Board. Christina was also involved with the OCIC Youth Policy-Makers Hub. Christina is excited to continue serving on the Board to contribute to anti-oppression and anti-racism policies and work, and to contribute to shaping the future of international development work in Ontario.

Christina has a Masters in Strategic Foresight and Innovation from OCAD University, and a Bachelor of Arts Honors degree in Agricultural Economics and Environmental Studies from the University of Guelph. Christina is currently working with Skills for Change as a Manager of Social Enterprise where she manages programs to diversify non-profit funding to better serve immigrants, refugees and underrepresented communities.

Alice Ng Bouwma provides strategic data-driven leadership of locally led programming, and cultivates relationships with donor institutions to further enhance international investment and prioritize localization. She facilitates learning amongst participants across Canada to build relationships with Indigenous communities and promote Diversity Inclusion Belonging Diversity, and support decolonization and localization.

Harshini Ramesh is a recent graduate of McGill University's Master of Public Policy program. She currently works in Environment and Climate Change Canada's International Affairs Branch as a Policy Analyst. Harshini is also the Founder and Executive Director of the YPA Policy Corner, an organization dedicated to publishing youth policy ideas and providing policy skill-building opportunities. Her passion for climate action and creating inclusive decision-making spaces for youth has led Harshini to pursue and implement many initiatives at local, national and international levels.

Dr. Vida Shehada is a Professor and Program Coordinator of the “International Development Postgraduate Program” at Centennial College. She completed her Ph.D. as a Fulbright Scholar at the School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA), Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey (United States). Dr. Shehada held research and teaching positions at Rutgers University and the State University of New York (SUNY). She serves on the Executive Board of the Canadian Association for the Study of International Development (CASID), and previously served on the board of Ontario Council for International Cooperation (OCIC). Her teaching and research interests includes Results-based Management (RBM), human rights, and gender equality.

William (Bill) Sparks is Retired Professor PL Humber College: Post Graduate Certificate Program, International Development Project Management Program and Retired Professor PT Centennial College: Post Graduate Certificate Program, International Development Studies. Bill is a past certified member of the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress and a retired registered member (MSW,RSW) of the Ontario College of Social Workers He is an ASIST Trained safeTALK Trainer and a Compassion Fatigue Specialist trained in CF Education & ARP Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. He is a veteran civil society organization executive director skilled in capacity building and the Retired Executive Director of the John Howard Society of Ontario with over twenty years at JHSO. He is the Retired Program Coordinator Management Advisory Service (MAS) and their current Co-Practice Lead in NFP Governance. He is a guest lecturer, animateur, facilitator in international development, social work, criminal justice and human service administration to various school boards, colleges and universities. He is in demand as a Workshop Leader on Compassion Fatigue Education and Intervention and a frequent contributor, trainer and panelist to many conferences, training workshops. Bill is Past Board President of the Ontario Council for International Cooperation, Past Board Treasurer of CUSO, and a Current Board Member and Past President of Defence for Children International – Canada Section; Current Board Chair Canada Nepal Community Foundation/Diyaalo International Canada-Nepal, and The Bright Future -Afghanistan/Canada, and a Past Board Member of Canadian Feed the Children. Areas of expertise include teaching, training, counsellor supervision, agency and staff Compassion Fatigue education, resilience and recovery and staff suicide prevention/education; voluntary sector board governance, policy development, strategic and annual planning, participatory program development,

implementation, monitoring and evaluation, public engagement and sustainable funding. His continuing interest is the integration of the clinical, organizational and international in holistic inclusive human development. In his retirement, Bill will continue to volunteer and be available as can.

KELEN-GAKU-TELLEGH-PAT!

Tina Sweeney - After volunteer trips to Tanzania and Dharamsala, assisting with experiential learning and development, Tina found meaning in proximity and that closeness voiced a new narrative and a career transition from the private sector into community engagement and international development. "I am passionate about engaging global citizens on Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy and sharing opportunities with Canadian's interested in volunteering their knowledge and partnering with local organizations to build capacity and equity."

For the past nine years Tina Sweeney has been part of Cuso International's communications and marketing team. She creates spaces to strengthen global citizenship and social inclusion while amplifying the voices and stories of those around the world. Tina is an executive board member of the Canadian International Council (CIC) Toronto branch and a member of The Program Advisory Committee for the International Development program at Centennial College. In 2019 Tina was nominated by a diaspora partner and awarded Canada's 100 Black Women to Watch by the Canada International Black Women Event.

With a background in Fashion Design and Content Creation, **Gladys Trinidad** is passionate about sustainability, climate change and workers' and women's rights, specifically within the fashion and textile industry. She also has experience working in communications, which has allowed her to use both her creativity and passion to advocate and share information on various social media platforms to magnify global issues and influence online communities. With her passion for fashion, development and content creation, she hopes to amplify voices and create a safer environment for workers in a more sustainable and ethical future in the fashion industry.

Dr Maggie Zeng has over 20 years of experience working in the international development sector with Ph.D in International Development Policy and Administration from University of Florida, USA. She has worked as gender advisor and program manager for various academic, government and non-governmental organizations in Canada and overseas. Recently she joined World Renew as Grants Program Manager. Prior to that she has worked for a number of Canadian and international organizations including: The Fund for Innovation and Transformation (FIT) - a program of the Inter-Council Network of Provincial and Regional Councils (ICN) funded by Global Affairs Canada and administered by the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC), Children Believe (Formerly Christian Children's Fund of Canada – member of ChildFund Alliance), Canadian government (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canadian International Development Agency), Parliamentary Centre, Oxfam, York University. Dr Zeng frequently speaks on international development issues and approaches including gender equality, child rights and child protection, diversity, equity and inclusion at various international conferences, seminars and workshops. Over the years Dr Zeng has served as board director, organizational representative, technical advisor and volunteer for a number of Canadian and international networks including: Board Director of Ontario Council for International Cooperation (OCIC),

organizational representative for Cooperation Canada, Digna, ChildFund Alliance - a global network of 11 child-focused development organizations, International Child Protection Network Canada (ICPNC), and member of CanWaCH – Gender Equality Working Group.

Najia Zewari is the founder of the Global Women’s Network (GWN). GWN is a grassroots initiative organized out of many consultations with immigrant and refugee women from diverse ethnocultural communities in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. She has a wealth of international experience, working with non-government organizations and the United Nations in Afghanistan and Pakistan on gender equality, advocacy, institutional capacity development, and policy and law reform. She was the Advisor to the Country Director UNWomen Country Office Afghanistan; and provided strategic advice on UN women’s roles within the UN Integrated Strategic Framework to ensure gender mainstreaming. Since she came to Canada nine years ago, she has been transferring the knowledge and experiences she has gained to the communities of the GWN. She has faced many struggles and turbulent experiences as a woman, but she drew her strength from these, sustaining her passion and commitment to peace, social justice, and gender equality. Najia is also the founder of the Women’s Cycling Network grass-root organization and aims to have an inclusive society for those who identify as female to feel safe and enjoy free mobility while working to challenge the concept of what it means to be a cyclist. She won the Queen Elizabeth Platinum Jubilee Award in 2023 for her community work.

Art Activity

Come join us in a meaningful and enjoyable art activity where simple pieces of paper, when folded with care and purpose, become symbols of hope, freedom, and our collective commitment to human rights.

Paper Boats as Symbols of Freedom and Refuge:

The paper boats in this activity represent the journeys of those who seek refuge, safety, and freedom. They symbolize the universal right to seek asylum and the dignity that every individual deserves, regardless of their background or nationality. As you fold your boats, think about the importance of providing sanctuary to those in need, and how we can work together to protect this right.

Paper Cranes as Symbols of Hope and Peace:

The paper cranes we create are symbols of hope, peace, and unity. They have a strong connection to the story of Sadako Sasaki, a young survivor of the Hiroshima atomic bombing, who folded a thousand cranes to symbolize her wish for a peaceful world. They remind us that even in the face of adversity and conflict, we must continue to work toward a world free from violence and division. These cranes carry our wishes for a brighter future, one filled with understanding, compassion, and peace.

Add a short note or wish for the next 35 years in the international cooperation sector. Share your aspirations, your hopes, and your commitment to making the world a better place through international cooperation and solidarity, and the protection of human rights.

As we create these origami symbols of hope and commitment, let's remember that our work doesn't end today. It's a continuous journey, and together, we have the power to make a profound difference.

OCIC Staff Team

Arabelle Arcaina began working for OCIC in June 2022 in a summer Special Events Coordinator role and transitioned to a full-time position as our Membership and Administration Coordinator in early August 2022. A recent postgraduate International Development student at Humber College, she brings significant experience in event management, program planning and mentorship from previous student life related roles, to OCIC's team. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto, with a double major in International Relations and Criminology & Sociolegal Studies, with a minor in Political Science. She is excited to bring these experiences and learnings to her work with our membership. She also started her Master of Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto this September.

Shehara Athukorala is a development professional with over 10 years of experience in the field. She has worked with various donors, government institutions, non-profits, electoral management bodies, civil society, and community-based organizations in areas such as governance and advocacy, human rights, and inclusion of gender, disability, and youth in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Papua New Guinea. Shehara is

a lawyer by profession and holds an Honours degree in Bachelor of Law from the University of Staffordshire, United Kingdom. She recently completed a post-graduate Certificate in International Development from Humber College. Prior to joining OCIC, Shehara worked for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in Sri Lanka in various capacities, including as Program Manager for six years. She is strongly interested in mission-driven work in development and advocacy around global justice, peace and reconciliation, human rights, youth, gender, and disability inclusion. Shehara enjoys watching TV series and movies, traveling, and hunting for great restaurants.

Kimberly Gibbons has been the Executive Director of OCIC since 2005. In her role and life she seeks to support community-led development and an enabling environment for civil society organizations, and innovative efforts to engage and mobilize global citizenship. As an active contributor to the [Inter-Council Network of Provincial and Regional Councils for International Cooperation](#) (ICN) and [Cooperation Canada](#) (formerly CCIC), a member of the Humber College International Programs Advisory Committee, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) Programs Advisory Committee, Knowledge for Change Toronto Hub, and Global Affairs Canada Civil Society Partnerships Policy Advisory Group (CPAG), Kimberly is a vocal advocate for small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) and their potential to strengthen local to global connections, transformative partnerships, and solidarity.

Kimberly has worked in many formal and non-formal education settings in Asia, Central America, Europe and Canada. She holds a Masters of Education in Adult Education and Transformative Learning from OISE, University of Toronto, and studied human rights at the graduate level at the Commonwealth Institute, University of London, England. Kimberly also has a Bachelor of Arts in International Development and Rural Extension Studies from the University of Guelph and completed her final undergraduate year of study at SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, India. She's talented with pruning tools, loves adventures with her daughter and (loud) little dog, and dreams of building a small home and living off the land someday.

Vladimir Gomez has over 20 years experience developing youth programs in international development for Canadian NGOs. He worked with Canada World Youth in various capacities including as Program Manager for 14 years designing and implementing youth-centered projects between Canada and primarily Latin America. Vlad was also involved in the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation (ACGC) as a board member, vice chair and chair. Vlad has a Masters in International Education from the University of Alberta and was an election observer for the 2021 elections in Peru. Most recently Vlad has worked as a technical consultant on youth engagement and civic participation for the GAC funded 'Preventing Irregular Migration Project' in Central America and Mexico (PICMCA / CONFIO), as well as with WaterAid Canada on a HerWash project in Burkina Faso, Liberia and Sierra Leone. This work involved developing regional youth leadership training as well as local and national advocacy forums.

Sarah Judd joined OCIC in November 2022 as the Communications and Content Specialist. Sarah has a Bachelors of International Development from Humber College. During her time at Humber, she led a campaign for Humber to become designated as a Fair Trade Campus by committing to sourcing Fairtrade certified products. She has 5 years of experience working in the fair trade and social enterprise sector, with a focus on communications, marketing and partnerships. She also worked as a Youth Program

Coordinator at a community environmental non-profit, supporting youth and educators to take meaningful action for the environment. She is an advocate for climate justice, human-centered development, and a fair and just economy. She is currently learning how to play piano (and stating it publicly to hold herself accountable). She also enjoys spending time with her two boys, going on outdoor adventures and experimenting in the garden.

Eric Plato has been the Accountant at OCIC since the fall of 2019. Eric is a CPA, CMA who has worked in the charitable sector for nearly 30 years. He has experience working in organizations with budgets ranging from under \$50,000 to over \$100 million. Eric is an excellent trainer, speaker and facilitator in nonprofit financial management. He currently teaches financial management for NGO's at Centennial College. His goal has always been to assist people to feel more confident and comfortable in managing their finances. Eric has served on several boards and is currently the Treasurer at North York Community House. Outside of work Eric enjoys running, travelling and cooking for friends.

Lisa Swainston has worked at OCIC since 2008 in a number of capacities. As Director of Operations she is currently responsible for developing and implementing operational processes and procedures that will better enable the staff and Council to achieve our strategic directions and funded programs. Lisa also supports financial and administrative management of all operations, oversees membership renewal and development, and provides direction on operational and member service activities.

Outside of OCIC Lisa is a Board Director for [Amnesty International Toronto](#), and is an advocate for human rights, social justice, equality and inclusion, with a strong interest in Indigenous rights and corporate accountability. Lisa has an Honours B.A. with majors in Criminology and Sociology and minors in French and Indigenous Studies (formerly called Aboriginal Studies) from the University of Toronto, and Certificates in Project Management from Humber College; Fundraising and Volunteer Management, and Practical Management Strategies from George Brown College. She has taken several courses in Organizational Management and Human Resources, and enjoys camping and hiking, watching films, listening to music, reading, traveling and crocheting.

Pragya Tikku is development professional with 4 years of experience in the sector and has largely worked for the civil society and the United Nations. Her most recent work experience has been with UN Women India as a Consultant for Inter-Governmental processes, Humanitarian Action, Women, Peace and Security. She recently concluded her Masters' in Public Policy from McGill University, where she worked on her capstone project exploring gender and climate change and worked part-time as a Research Assistant for the Research Network on Women, Peace and Security. She also holds a Masters in Human Development and Childhood studies from University of Delhi and a diploma in Child Rights law from the National Law School of India University (NLSIU). Leveraging her educational background and work experience, her interest and expertise lies in the development and policy issues relating to women and children, especially gender equality, women's empowerment, child rights, women/ children peace and security.

35th Anniversary Symposium & Celebration Participants & Contributors

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Hamza Ansari	HelpAge Canada
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Maggie Zeng	World Renew & OCIC Board Alumna
Najia Zewari	Global Women's Network

*35th Anniversary Celebration *only*

Symposium & 35th Anniversary Celebration

Volunteers & CSI Support

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Geoff Doner*	Jahnari Phillip-Rosale*
Maria Espinosa*	Lian Sayno
Hilena Gebregiorgis	Srijain Shrestha
Kendra Lee-Heney	Kiran Singh*
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Kawai Lam*	Ken Wong

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Thank You

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Many thanks to each and every one of you for your engagement with and commitment to our collective efforts towards universal sustainable development for all.

