



# **BUILDING BRIDGES**

Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups

**2017 CONFERENCE**

Final Report

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Hosted at the Circle of Life Thunderbird House  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

# INTRODUCTION

The “Building Bridges Between Canada’s Indigenous and Newcomer Groups” Conference took place in Winnipeg, Manitoba on May 12-13, 2017. The initial idea of a conference focussed on building bridges between newcomer and Indigenous communities resulted from discussions on Canada’s 150th and the conflicting senses of pride, frustration, pain and hope. In light of such a spectrum of feelings and experiences, our guiding objective was to bring together members of Canada’s oldest and newest communities in order to facilitate face-to-face conversations and the sharing of ideas and knowledge.

As we reflect on the past 150 years, and the next 150, strengthening communities, and fostering relationships of respect, solidarity and understanding within and between communities has never been more important. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, in its Calls to Action, mandated revisions to the newcomer information kit, citizenship test and oath, to include information about the treaties and a more inclusive history of Canada that includes Indigenous experiences and the history of residential schools.

This conference was a unique collaboration between the University of Manitoba’s Faculty of Law, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM) and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. We also had assistance from the Immigrant Centre’s Jessica Praznik and Assistant Professor Regine King from the University of Manitoba Faculty of Social Work. Funding was received from the Legal Research Institute of the University of Manitoba, the University of Manitoba, Conference Sponsorship Program and Robson Hall’s Dean of Law. Volunteers from Robson Hall and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba provided on-hand and note-taking support throughout the conference.

This final report is a reflection, summary and synthesis of the key themes and ideas that were discussed during the 4 panels and 2 breakout sessions that took place during the conference. The conference programme can be found in **Appendix A**.

## PARTICIPATION

Over two days, we held four panels, consisting of 20 panelists and four moderators. We were fortunate enough to hear from Elders, artists, community workers, activists, youth and scholars from across the country representing many different communities and backgrounds. In addition, two breakout sessions facilitated networking and dialogue amongst participants. Biographies of our moderators, facilitators and panelists can be found in **Appendix A**.

Participation in the conference was free of charge. Through a series of discussions and outreach with the organizers' networks, 45 organizations and 26 individuals were invited to attend. Beyond this, our funding permitted us to open registration to all those who expressed an interest in attending. While the majority of conference attendees were from Winnipeg, we did have representation from across Canada including attendees from Brandon, The Pas, Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto, Thunder Bay and Kenora. Since we wanted both a local and national perspective on key community issues facing Indigenous peoples and newcomers, and the bridge-building work being done, our budget allowed us to cover the cost and accommodation of four national panelists.

One goal was to engage the perspective of Indigenous and newcomer youth. We are pleased to have had 5 youth in attendance at the conference.

Collectively the organizers decided not to invite media to the event as we were concerned this would distract from the focus and intent of the discussions. On the second day, a local CBC reporter heard of the event and came to Thunderbird House with a cameraman. Panelists agreed to be on camera and some participants and organizers gave interviews. The resulting article can be found here: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/indigenous-newcomers-come-together-winnipeg-1.3827740>

# OPENING REMARKS AND THE KAIROS BLANKET EXERCISE

Elder Harry Bone of Keeseekoowenin Ojibway Nation opened the event with a prayer. The organizers then gave opening remarks highlighting the motivation behind the conference to recognize and encourage a sense of community amongst Indigenous and newcomer communities - those who identify as members of these communities and those who work directly with community members. The conference was intended to be an open, safe space that brought people together in order to better understand the on-the-ground community work being done by various organizations, including the successes and the challenges. The conference was an opportunity to unpack and talk about commonalities and differences between the communities.

Conference organizers stressed the importance of reflecting on the meaning of belonging and home. It was acknowledged from the beginning, and throughout the two days that Indigenous peoples and newcomers share various and sometimes similar experiences with their own identity: of new homes, old homes; lost homes, contested and shared homes.

The day then began with a group exercise known as the Kairos Blanket Exercise. This provided everyone at the conference an important opportunity to move around our conference space, interact with one another and take part in a public education activity raising awareness of the history and legacy of Canada's colonization and assimilation policies, as it specifically affected Indigenous nations. A summary of the Kairos Blanket Exercise cannot fully capture the impact and importance of the workshop. Thank you to Tyra and Allison Cox for creating an interactive space and a visual of the relationship between the founding nations of this land and settlers. The use of blankets, artefacts and story telling was a unique way to educate all participants. It was an emotional and powerful exercise that engaged attendees in thinking and talking about a difficult history and ongoing struggle. More on the Kairos Blanket exercise is available here: <https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/>

## SUMMARY: PANEL DISCUSSIONS

**Four Panels were held during the conference.** The objective of the first panel was to provide some introductory and foundational remarks about history, understanding and rights. This panel merged law and policy perspectives with lived experiences, focusing on how the past can inform the futures of both Indigenous and newcomer groups, and the evolving relationship between the groups. Our second panel brought together a range of community activists and front-line workers to discuss and answer questions about the solidarity work they are part of in the community and what it means to build bridges and make connections with groups from different backgrounds, with different identities.

On Day Two, our national panelists spoke about their work in their own cities and provinces and spoke about lessons learned from their work on empowering and being advocates for Indigenous and newcomer populations, especially youth. Finally, our fourth panel showcased the art, dance and music celebrating various cultures, identities and viewpoints from both newcomer and Indigenous groups and the meaning behind their expressions.

Rather than attempt to capture the detailed nuance of each presenter's thoughts and knowledge, we have taken the material supplied by our industrious note-takers to extract themes that were touched on in different ways in all or many of the panels.

## YOUTH, EDUCATION AND RAISING AWARENESS

***"Relationships get formed when others are invested in one another and change behaviour to maintain relationships, this is a valuable way to build bridges - we are all brothers and sisters."***

*- Alex Garcia, Panel C "What's Happening Elsewhere?"*

During our panels we learned that one important Indigenous teaching is facilitating public education and awareness-building initiatives so that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can understand history and work with one another. Educating newcomers about Indigenous people and their teachings was underscored as an essential element of reconciliation and building strong relationships between the two groups. It was repeatedly stressed that education and raising awareness is a two-way street. Newcomers need to be more aware of the history and traditions of Indigenous people and the contested land they are settling on, and Indigenous people need to share their stories with newcomers and understand newcomer's uprooted pasts. Canada's obligations in both domestic and international law to both groups was also highlighted.

It is not only about teaching and learning the history, but understanding that within both Indigenous and newcomer communities members have different interpretations and perspectives on identity, values and traditions. Thinking towards the future, communities need to ask: how can we make a better Canada? A more inclusive, and engaged Canada?

We learned from all four panels that an important element of the bridge-building work currently being done is creating spaces and opportunities where newcomers and Indigenous people can exchange ideas and knowledge to foster dialogue and understanding. For example, Canadian Roots Exchange holds a leadership conference each year, bringing together Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth to lead workshops, foster a sense of identity, build connections and engage in critical discussions about justice and decolonization.




Michael Champagne, a long time activist and North End Winnipeg advocate talked about his work with Aboriginal Youth Opportunities during Panel B. The youth movement helps coordinate Meet Me at the Bell Tower, a community-building event that happens every Friday in the North End. There have been two Friday gatherings that have welcomed Winnipeg's newcomer and Muslim communities, as a show of solidarity and a way to make connections.

Youth are generally seen as a symbol of Canada's future and communities need to include youth in discussions about how to strengthen communities and in making connections with other groups. Youth are often the most vulnerable to racism and prejudice, and endure the consequences of trauma faced by their families and elders. Youth are also still learning and developing so there is a need to challenge prejudice and stereotypes so these ideas are not perpetuated.

Spaces are needed where youth can feel empowered to participate in critical discussions, and explore difficult questions about one another. Many of our panelists who work with youth shared how, when Indigenous and newcomer youth meet and have the chance to talk with another, common experiences of isolation, racism, and wanting to challenge stereotypes emerge.

Phil Chiapetta of Rossbrook House spoke during Panel B about newcomer and Indigenous youth being involved in a cross-cultural event, where two youth discussed their experiences and found parallels between street life and war-torn life. Panel C presenter Moffat Makuto spoke of his arrival in Thunder Bay, and the realization that he had a lot in common such as experiences of racism, with other Indigenous students.


Sharing 'What's Happening Elsewhere' panelists Vibhor Garg and Diandra Thomas-Hart spoke about encouraging youth of all backgrounds to deconstruct the over-simplified and often mis-understood narratives depicting their identities and their



communities in order to change the mainstream narratives and showcase their diversity. During Panel D, Alex Garcia shared with the group about organizing programs where youth come together to debate and ask questions and learn about common experiences struggling with identity and separation from culture. Out of these conversations, youth began to build authentic, real relationships with one another.

The conference was fortunate to host many youth workers from both communities, and it was encouraging to see the panelists engage with one another and other youth workers throughout the conference. We also had youth at the conference who provided insights into their experiences, voiced their opinions, and shared ideas about how to strengthen relations between the two groups.

One of the recognized barriers was the lack of knowledge in both communities about the other and the lack of exposure to each others' communities. Both the Kairos Blanket exercise that commenced our discussions and the Bread and Borders exercise on Day 2 helped participants explore the need for greater exposure. Panelists likewise stressed the importance of having programming in place that facilitates face-to-face interactions, so that youth can change the narratives that surround their communities; so that real change can occur. Ensuring youth, and adults have opportunities to explore their own identities and learn from one another was seen as a way to build trust between the groups – a fundamental component to the relationship-building process.



## RECONCILIATION


***"Privilege may make you forget the suffering of others"***

*- Moffat Makuto, Panel C "What's Happening Elsewhere?"*

Education and awareness-raising is linked to the ongoing, dynamic process of reconciliation. Panelists expressed that for newcomers, learning about Canada's Indigenous inhabitants is fundamental to building relationships between the groups and to newcomers' integration and participation in their new country.

Many of our presenters on Panel A discussed Calls to Action 93 and 94, which expressly address Indigenous-Newcomer relations. The call to include more Indigenous history and information about treaties and residential schools into citizenship education is also a critical step to acknowledging these elements as being woven into what it means to be Canadian.

Panelists discussed how local groups and communities are individualizing the Calls to Action to reflect their own needs and demographics. Tricia Logan spoke during Panel A about the work of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. She discussed how the Calls to Action are an important guide towards reaching the goal of balancing truth and reconciliation. Other panelists on Panel A acknowledged that for reconciliation to be meaningful, the diversity and unique experiences of both Indigenous and newcomer groups needs to be taken into account. Panelists Elder Harry Bone and Hani Al-Ubeady expressed a hope that through the process of reconciliation, Indigenous peoples and newcomers will find some common ground and be able to live and work together.



Throughout the panels, we also heard from several community leaders and activists about the prevalence of racism, oppression and hostility experienced by people of colour and the legacy of colonization that continues to impact both Indigenous and newcomer groups. Racism was identified as a common experience faced by both groups. One common experience shared by Indigenous and newcomer youth is a feeling of disconnect with their culture and traditions which in turn affects their sense of identity and self.

It was underscored that while coming together for a weekend, or for conferences such as this one to collaborate and network, builds excitement, there still needs to be a recognition that segregation between youth and adults and Indigenous and newcomer groups continues to exist based on means and where one lives (capturing some of the rationales for making our event free and in the downtown core as opposed to the University). Additionally, these processes must be founded in finding common ground. There was a consensus that a key element of building bridges between the communities is a commitment to challenging the systemic inequalities, and racism faced by both groups.

## FILLING THE GAPS

***"We are not what the government has framed us to be. Start from the power of strength - we will talk about our history in a meaningful sense, to build something for the future."***

*- Elder Harry Bone, Panel A "History, Rights and Understanding"*

An objective in convening this conference was to take steps towards filling the knowledge gap in terms of what work is actually being done 'on the ground' to build bridges between Indigenous and newcomer groups in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and nationally.

Beyond the gaps in knowledge about newcomer and Indigenous groups, as discussed in the other sections, other gaps were identified throughout the conference. During Panel B, Shereen Denetto, site director at IRCOM explained that there are resource gaps – lack of housing, extra-curricular activities, employment, health services and mental health support – that tend to exacerbate tensions between Indigenous and newcomer groups.

In the context of youth, panelists believed in investing in jobs for youth, and using education as a way to prepare youth for the future and equip them with the skills they need to succeed.

On the discussion of local connections and building bridges, Panel B speakers including Alexa Joy Potashnik and Mandela Kuet discussed a lack of trust between Indigenous and newcomer groups. In the spirit of building stronger connections and communities, trust was highlighted as a primary pre-condition. One reason for this comes from stereotypes and misconceptions about one another that must be dismantled in a respectful way.

Others expressed the need for more culturally appropriate lenses to understand community issues and information shared with one another: recognizing different languages, cultures and values. Various panelists, moderators and attendees were concerned that the teachings of elders and Indigenous laws were not being adequately listened to and acknowledged within mainstream society. Newcomer and Indigenous panelists, through their work and their art, expressed a desire to create products, music, and opportunities that genuinely and fully expressed and celebrated their own cultures and identities.

## HOME

***"What does it mean to be home, to fight for your home, or lose your home? Or be forced to create a new home? A place where you are safe, and can be protected. It should be where you are a citizen but this is not a reality in all of the world"***

*- Shauna Labman, Panel A "History, Rights and Understanding"*

Throughout the conference, we had many discussions surrounding the meaning and importance of 'home' for both Indigenous peoples and newcomers. In many ways, the idea of home is a difficult one to grasp. Although presenting on different panels, speakers Shauna Labman, Alex Garcia and Shereen Denetto discussed how Indigenous and newcomer groups share experiences of being uprooted, of migration, and struggling to find both physical shelter and a sense of home and safety. The concept of home can also be linked to shared feelings of belonging and not belonging. It is important too, to acknowledge that what some consider to be 'home' may be very different than for others. We must consider many types of homes: traditional territory, reserves, urban spaces, and unknown homelands abroad.

Panels and workshops during the two days served as an opportunity for all conference participants to critically engage with this idea of home in relation to the building celebration and contestation of Canada itself as home. While recognizing this tension in Canada as a place of both welcome and exclusion, these sessions were an opportunity to gain knowledge, awareness and skills to bring back to our own work. The panels also enabled discussions about our own and collective vision for the future of our city, communities and the places we call 'home'.

## LEADERSHIP AND ACTION


***"We are all experts in our own life experience. No one gets to tell us how to feel."***

*- Michael Redhead Champagne, Panel B "Building Bridges and Making Connections"*

A key takeaway from our second panel was the ongoing need to create positive energy by hosting events in accessible places such as Thunderbird House that are open to everybody. Both Michael Champagne and Tricia Logan explained that our communities are not homogeneous and Alex Garcia and Maria Morrison spoke about the many different identities in our communities. From each of the panels, it became clear that while action is required, actions must be tailored to the unique communities where bridges are being built by inclusivity of community members' cultural background, language and literacy skills, religion and gender.

We were fortunate to have panelists from organizations such as Aboriginal Youth Opportunities, Rossbrook House, IRCOM and The Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, who have worked together and are already leaders in building bridges between Indigenous and newcomer groups in Winnipeg. Creating a sense of home, belonging and friendly, safe spaces were underscored as primary objectives of the outreach work of these organizations.


One important driving force of the community work being done in Winnipeg is encouraging community members to take ownership of initiatives – whether that means youth coming together to start their own group, or community members organizing their own demonstrations or bringing food to share with one another. During Panel B, Phil Chiapetta spoke of the origins of Rossbrook House with young people coming together to better serve their community. He noted that the spirit and success of Rossbrook House comes from the work being guided by personal experience.



During Panel C, Alex Garcia spoke about the power of having young immigrants use their skills to coordinate workshops at the Youth Action Gathering. Michael Champagne spoke about the power of a communal meal to bring people together and break down barriers. During her presentation, Maria Morrison spoke personally about her role as the Citizen Equity Committee Coordinator for the City of Winnipeg and how it was a part of her own personal reconciliation process to be an Indigenous woman working in a non-Indigenous specific role.

Linked to theme two, **Racism and Reconciliation**, panelists agreed that while there is much work currently being done to deconstruct the legacies of colonization, bring communities together and educate groups, there is still a long way to go. We heard from panelists such as Janet Dench, Executive Director of the Canadian Council for Refugees, whose organization is campaigning to reform the citizenship test to include more on Indigenous people and treaties and recognizing the ongoing injustices being faced by Indigenous peoples. Alexa Joy Potashnik, Alex Garcia and Panel D artists Destiny Seymour and Leonard Sumner talked about promoting anti-racism, anti-oppression frameworks of knowledge and creating art and music that reflects one's own identity and community.

There was a shared sentiment amongst conference organizers, panelists and attendees that leadership needs to come from the community and that action and initiatives need to be helpful to the community, with community input and guidance in order to be successful.





## BREAD AND BORDERS WORKSHOPS

We closed day 1 of our conference with a powerful newcomer 'myth-busting' workshop organized by Refugee Claimant Public Education Working Group (Winnipeg). The workshop was facilitated by Louise Simbandumwe of SEED Winnipeg and Natasha Mohammed of the Refugee Claimant Public Education Working Group.

The title of this workshop invokes symbols of unity and coming together as well as division and separation. Bread and Borders was an important opportunity for participants to build and reflect on what was discussed earlier in the day by learning about refugee facts and fictions. In randomized, small breakout groups, we exchanged knowledge, newcomer experiences and thoughts on working with and meeting newcomers. Many spoke of efforts to combat misconceptions in our own communities. The discussions on various popular myths created a space to listen to others' perspectives, ask questions and identify some of the underlying fears and real impacts of these myths. Based on the workshop feedback, many wanted more time to unpack the different myths, and many found the topics challenging to discuss. The workshop was a collaborative process that increased our understanding of refugees' past and present and equipped participants with the knowledge and tools to promote positive perceptions of refugees in our communities.

# SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

*An opportunity for sharing experiences across sectors and networking*

One key objective of organizing the Building Bridges conference was to bring together frontline, community workers to identify what work is currently being done to strengthen community relations in Winnipeg, Manitoba and across Canada. We held a "Skills and Knowledge Exchange" that built on feedback from our participants as to what topics they wanted to discuss further. The consensus informed the themes of small group stations set up throughout the conference space. Participants then had a chance to write down and share their ideas, challenges, successes and questions with a small group of other conference participants interested in that theme. The main themes were 'engaging adults and families', 'connecting across Canada', 'sports, arts, culture and collaborative works', 'human rights' and 'youth'. Each of the following sections has a list of resources participants provided relating to the topic.

## ENGAGING ADULTS AND FAMILIES

This small group discussion centred around best practices for working with adults to raise awareness and build bridges between Indigenous and newcomer adults and families. When planning programs or holding outreach events many agreed it is important to do so using a holistic approach. Considering spaces that are central, where youth also have programming available and spaces that can provide adequate child-care is important, as is knowing the background of a target group such as language and literacy levels. Some previously and potentially successful programming ideas included programs using culturally-appropriate pictures/visuals, hands-on workshops, story-telling, multicultural feasts, family fun days, having presentations from members of the different communities to one another, and conversation circles on specific concerns such as housing, rent and money management that may be common amongst both communities.

Some challenges identified were general and long-standing distrust of the system, engrained stereotypes and a reluctance to change views and be open-minded and securing funding.

## Tips from the field

- Canadian Council for Refugees has a comprehensive website
- Immigrant Partnership Winnipeg (IPW) is a valuable network for collaborative projects
- Call up academics to get involved in building bridges work

## Resources

- Share Our World Program
  - Cultural/adaptation literacy
- Aurora Family Therapy Centre (<http://www.aurorafamilytherapy.com>)
  - Drumming and Storytelling
  - Peace Camp
  - Stronger Together Manitoba
- Westman Immigrant Services (Brandon) (<http://westmanimmigrantservices.ca>)
  - World cooking classes
  - Cultural Diversity (competency) training
  - Cultural events ("Winter Festival" pavilions)
- New Journey Housing (<http://www.newjourneyhousing.com>)
  - Free Workshop for newcomers - "Understanding our Hosts on this Land"
- Refugee Claimant Public Education Working Group
  - Bread and Borders - Refugee Myth Busting Toolkit
  - Presentations on human rights and solidarity across communities

- N.E.E.D.S. (<http://www.needsinc.ca>)
  - After-School Program
    - Homework help
    - Study buddy
  - Youth Employment Program
  - When new families arrive and they have kids that are not registered for school yet
  - Mentorship Program
- IRCOM (<http://www.ircom.ca>)
  - After-School Program
  - Homework Program
- Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) Youth Network Youth Engagement Document (<http://www.ccrweb.ca/en/youth/about-ccr-youth-network>)
  - resource for agencies to better engage and involve youth at organizational level
- Spence Neighbourhood Association (<http://www.spenceneighbourhood.org>)
  - FUN After-School Program
  - Sports/Housing/Environment Programs
- Meet Me at the Bell Tower (<https://www.facebook.com/northendbelltower/>)
  - Aboriginal Youth Opportunities
  - Great point for connection and face-to-face with both communities

## CONNECTING ACROSS CANADA

Participants focused on building their networks with many of our national panelists and indicated two major gaps being (1) a lack of coordination and communication across the country, especially with rural areas where there may be less funding, and fewer contacts, and (2) access to resources. Participants were less aware of community work happening in other provinces. They noted inconsistent funding available for building bridges programming in various provinces. Many Indigenous communities lack the transport and financial resources to attend programs. Participants also indicated that access to technology was lacking in Indigenous and newcomer communities across provinces, but all agreed that technology is not a substitute for face-to-face dialogue. Participants spoke about the lack of Indigenous staff involved in providing input for knowledge-building programs. There were shared sentiments on the need for open, safe spaces to learn about one another. Identified areas for improvement included using existing national or large organizations to connect smaller organizations, and placing emphasis on outreach to new participants.

### Resources

- Youth ChangeUp Grant (<https://inspiritfoundation.org/grants-opportunities/>)
  - Inspirit Foundation
  - Winnipeg Foundation
- Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) (<http://ccrweb.ca>)
  - Youth Action Gathering
- YMCA Youth Exchange (<https://ymcagta.org/youth-programs/youth-travel-and-exchanges>)
  - Funding available, predominantly for transportation to and from the exchange
- Canadian Roots Exchange (<http://canadianroots.ca>)
  - Providing letters of support
  - Hosts conferences across the country
- Utilizing the umbrella organizations in different provinces that exist to build connections/share resources
  - (YAA, MANSO) across provinces

## ARTS, SPORTS, CULTURE AND COLLABORATIVE GROUPS

The primary question posed in this group was: how can communities and community organizations use sports, arts, culture and collaborative works to build bridges between Indigenous and newcomer groups, and what work is currently being undertaken? Participants also explored the difference between programming with adults relative to programming with youth. Finally, based on the programs described by representatives of various agencies, groups discussed how current initiatives could be adapted to have a building bridges objective. Programs and events that can be successful are ones that identify and highlight commonalities between Indigenous and newcomer groups.

Participants identified various successful initiatives that have been done to promote community and build bridges already. Inter-agency events within a local context, facilitate awareness and collaboration between organizations which improves inter-organization familiarity and stronger networks. It is also a good opportunity to pool together resources and reach more community members. Community celebrations that showcase the food, art, dancing, and music from different cultures strengthen relationships within and between communities. These types of events are visible and accessible, and bring together whole communities and families.

Competitive sports such as basketball and soccer provide a sense of belonging and leadership for newcomer and Indigenous youth. These sports are internationally known and played, so organizing teams, events and leagues allow more youth and adults to participate more meaningfully. Participants also discussed successful theatre and art projects. These projects include youth from different agencies coming together to create art on a rotating basis so more youth get to participate. Some examples cited were story-telling through photos, theatre, murals, and dancing and DJ'ing workshops. These programs were generally targeted at youth, and allow youth to take ownership of their art and projects.

Looking at including adults or targeting adults for building bridges initiatives, it was acknowledged that youth generally show up for 'something to do' or because they heard from friends it was a good program. In the alternative, adults tend to ask more questions, have busier schedules and more responsibilities. Youth also have more time to develop their ideas, opinions and social circles. It was important to be sensitive and aware of these issues.

## Tips From the Field

### ARTS

- **Cross-cultural drumming and storytelling**
  - Indigenous and African drumming
    - Identity
    - Youth
- **Peace Camp**
  - Indigenous and refugee youth --> connecting people on personal level
- **Tree of Life**
  - Art and history, narrative tradition that has history
  - With young people, and with parents in advance
  - Exploring Roots --> history and background
  - Branches = resources they have
  - Provides a picture for people who think they have nothing
- **Conversation Circles**
  - Suitable for 500+ people
  - Can break them up by groups: men, women, ethnic groups
- **Art Show**
  - Annual program of Youth Agencies Alliance
  - Collaborative project with theme and medium, different every year
  - Stop motion piece of continuing story - different group adds to what last group did
  - Pair various organizations with different neighbourhoods
  - Exhibit in Graffiti Gallery
  - Potential themes: mental health, personal struggles (creates sense of belonging)

### - Playback Theatre

- Sharing little bits of their experience and the actors perform their story live
- All about empathy and experiencing different settings

### - Dance and DJ-ing

- DJ-ing with Like That from Sunshine House
  - Creating own choreography
  - Adults and kids
- Drag performance

### - Filmmaking, media, broadcasting, radio

## SPORTS

### - Basketball

- Tuesdays, Rossbrook House vs IRCOM

### - Space

- Rec-Plex at the University of Winnipeg
- Public Parks

### - Lacrosse

- Having someone teach youth lacrosse, it's an Indigenous sport
- Sport of this land and comes with land teachings
- New sport - everyone playing sport doesn't know how to play --> accessible

### - YMCA

- Donating space

### - SPIN (Sports Programs in Inner-City Neighbourhoods)

### - Boys and Girls Club

- Open to all on drop-in basis
- Vans available to borrow

### - Transportation

- Can be challenging
- Make activities accessible by walking distance/cycling

### - Equipment

- Talk to schools and principals and teachers



## - Non-competitive Sports

- Skating
  - Not competitive, make more accessible money-wise (free)
  - Lessons
  - Utilize outdoor rinks
  - Seeing ice, learning to skate for first time
- Skateboarding
  - Skateboard parks
  - Making your own board
- Laser tag
- Wheelies
  - Tuesday has \$2 deal
- Swimming
  - Finding pool that allows hijabs for Muslims
  - Many don't know how to swim
  - Challenge and opportunity

## CULTURE

- Strong Heart Consultations
  - Sweat lodges, Indigenous awareness training for civic employees
- Involve music
  - sharing and dancing awkward at first but get everyone moving
  - Adults and kids

## Resources

- N.E.E.D.S.
- IRCOM
- Neeginan Centre
- Rossbrook House
- SPIN (Sports Programs in Inner- City Neighbourhoods)
- Robson Hall Community Outreach (University of Manitoba)

- Urban Indigenous at Neechi Commons
- Just TV
- Art Beat
- NSI Voices
- Urban Indigenous Theatre Company
- MTYP (Manitoba Theatre for Young People)
- Broader Winnipeg
  - Aurora: Stronger-Together Manitoba, celebrating 20 ethno groups
  - "Newjourneys.ca"
    - Articles written by youth - Indigenous
- Indigo Arrows, Martha Street Studio
- City of Winnipeg
  - Indigenizing the leisure Guide
  - Indigenizing the libraries

## Partnerships

- Youth Agencies Alliance
  - Network of 16 youth-serving agencies in Winnipeg
  - Space, knowledgeable artists, materials
  - Budget wise - can do what we can
  - BNC, Gap, Art City, Graffiti Gallery

## Websites

- Winnipeg Human Rights Hub
  - Second year anniversary
  - All events related to human rights
  - They have a list of organizations that work in this area
- Creative Manitoba (<https://creativemanitoba.ca/>)
  - Collective of artists in community engagement

# HUMAN RIGHTS

Overarching themes discussed in this group were basic needs, citizenship, justice and colonization and resistance. Participants identified shared experiences of human rights violations and limits imposed on Indigenous and newcomers' freedoms and rights. There are also shared histories of colonization and shared present experiences struggling with housing shortages, job discrimination, access to health care and education. Often Indigenous peoples and newcomers are not aware of their rights and have misconceptions or negative experiences with government agencies such as Child and Family Services and police. Furthermore, experiences with land and resources taken away, language and cultural barriers, and of marginalization were identified as commonalities. Participants acknowledged that these shared experiences need to be talked about because of the unique perspective each group will bring.

The importance of understanding and recognizing Indigenous traditions and history both in mainstream society and within the newcomer community was essential to creating sustainable and meaningful relationships. As new Canadians, it is important that newcomers understand the difficult history and ongoing challenges of the first peoples of their new country. Likewise, it is important for all Canadians to understand Canada's legal and humanitarian commitments to newcomers and the histories that have brought these people to Canada

Linked to justice, was the idea that both newcomer and Indigenous voices need to be heard. In order for both communities to prosper, voices of resistance and voices of those in need of assistance must be heard. Through dialogue and education, newcomers and Indigenous communities can be a stronger, and louder voice against resource extraction and unfair immigration policies for one another.

## Resources

- CBC Market Place episode
  - White, Indigenous and black renters
  - important educational resource on housing rights and housing issues

- **International Law**
  - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - United Nations Declaration Relating to Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
  - United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
- **Teachings of Elders**
  - Recognizing the importance of starting with the Indigenous world view
  - Example, matriarchal society
- ***R v Gladue***
  - Applies to Aboriginal offenders
  - Takes consideration of the individual's life, circumstances in sentencing
- **Come up with an alternate citizenship pledge**
  - Understand which Indigenous land you are on
- **University of Manitoba**
  - Department of Native Studies
  - Faculty of Law
- **IPW (Immigrant Partnership Winnipeg)**
- **National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation**

# YOUTH

In this group, participants shared some of the challenges of working with Indigenous and newcomer youth. It was powerful to see participants share their contact information and find that others in different organizations and cities shared some of the same concerns and issues. This discussion underscored the importance of working and partnering with other communities and creating a network of social supports and knowledge.

One youth in the group spoke about having accessible spaces in high schools to have discussions about diversity, human rights and different communities. For example, Daniel Macintyre Collegiate Institute hosts an African Night to celebrate diversity, culture and identity of its African students, as a means of school-wide inclusion and community-building. It was acknowledged, that these opportunities need to be made available to youth of different ages.

Youth workers agreed that it was critical, and sometimes difficult to support youth to make their own decisions to either seize an opportunity or choose not to by having meaningful conversations to promote positive decision-making. Participants identified "being present" and "being supportive" as important skills needed to engage with Indigenous and newcomer youth.

## Skills and Resources

- Wayfinders (7 Oaks)
  - Health
  - "Masculinity Project"
- Rotary Career Symposium
- Spence Neighbourhood Association (SNA)
  - SNA holds sharing circles sensitive topics impacting youth
- Boys and Girls Club (11 chapters in Winnipeg)
- Canadian Roots Exchange
- City of Winnipeg
  - Indigenous Relations Division
  - Citizens Equity Committee
- The "Power of Snacks" and food to encourage youth to participate

# APPENDIX A



# **BUILDING BRIDGES**

Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups

## **2017 CONFERENCE**

May 12th-13th | Winnipeg, MB

# BUILDING BRIDGES

Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups

## 2017 CONFERENCE

May 12th-13th | Winnipeg, MB

## WELCOME!

### WORDS FROM THE ORGANIZERS

"Building Bridges Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups" the title and theme of this event is meant to encompass ideas, people and partnerships. We hope you have brought energy, future visions and an open-mind as we work to make connections. In this way, the event is also a carry-forward from the 2014 event 'Building Connections: Refugee Research and Community Outreach' hosted by the Migration Law Research Cluster at the Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba. That event focussed on building connections between the academic world and community organizations in Winnipeg. This year, we hope our event will cultivate ideas, identify intersections and explore opportunities for both collaboration and knowledge-sharing between and amongst all of us in Winnipeg and some from across Canada committed to stronger understandings and relationships. We are immensely grateful that you have chosen to share your time with us.

The efforts that have gone into this conference are the contributions of many and we would like to extend a huge thank you to all those who worked to make it a reality, Maddie and Danielle, our hardworking student assistants, in particular did more than was ever asked or imagined.

Shauna Labman, Assistant Professor Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba  
Shereen Denetto, Site Director, Immigration & Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba  
Regine King, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba  
Aimée Craft, Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba

### STUDENT ORGANIZERS

Being part of a visionary team that brought together community heroes and changemakers has been a humbling experience and true honour. As members of the Winnipeg community first, and students at law second, it was an easy answer of 'yes!' when we were offered the opportunity to contribute to such a meaningful and necessary community-building project. We are grateful for the overwhelmingly positive response from all of our registered participants, and especially thrilled to be hosting a stellar lineup of panelists and moderators. Your voices and visions inspire us to do more, be more, and to kick butt in school!

Madison Pearlman, Second Year, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba  
Danielle H. Morrison, First Year, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba

### SPONSORS & VOLUNTEERS

This conference would not have been possible without the generous support from our sponsors and the tireless efforts of our volunteers. Funding from the Legal Research Institute of the University of Manitoba, the University of Manitoba, Conference Sponsorship Program and Robson Hall's Dean of Law (Jonathan Black-Branch) gave early support and encouragement to turn an idea into an event. The time put in by volunteers from Robson Hall and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba is what will make this event succeed. Jessica Praznik from Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc. swooped in when help was needed and we would not be here without her administrative and logistical genius in finalizing details. THANK YOU.

Hosted by:

Robson Hall  
Faculty of Law



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA



National Centre for  
Truth and Reconciliation  
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA



DAY  
ONE  
**AGENDA**

May 12th, 2017

**BUILDING BRIDGES**  
Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups  
**2017 CONFERENCE**

May 12th-13th | Winnipeg, MB

08:30 - 09:00 **Registration & Refreshments**

09:00 - 09:30 **Welcoming Remarks & Opening Prayer**

Organizers  
Elder Harry Bone

09:30 - 10:30 **KAIROS Blanket Exercise**

Tyra & Alison Cox

10:30 - 10:45 **Health Break**

10:45 - 12:00 **Panel A: "History, Understanding & Rights"**

**Speakers**

Harry Bone, *Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba*  
Tricia Logan, *National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation*  
Hani Al-Ubeady, *Immigration Partnership Winnipeg* & Maria Morrison,  
*Citizen Equity Committee*  
Shauna Labman, *University of Manitoba*

**Moderator**

Shereen Denetto, *Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba*

12:00 - 13:00 **Lunch Break**

Catered by Afrik' Douman

13:00 - 14:15 **Panel B: "Building Bridges and Making Connections"**

**Speakers**

Michael Redhead Champagne, *Aboriginal Youth Opportunities*  
Phil Chiapetta, *Rossbrook House* & Shereen Denetto, *Immigrant and Refugee  
Community Organization of Manitoba*  
Alexa Joy Potashnik, *Black Space Winnipeg*, *Canadian Federation of Students*  
Mandela Kuet, *Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba*

**Moderator**

Lenard Monkman, *CBC Indigenous*

14:15 - 14:30 **Health Break**

14:30 - 16:00 **Bread and Borders**

Small breakout sessions and a group conversation exploring the fears, facts and impacts of refugee claimants in Manitoba.

16:00 - 16:15 **End of Day Wrap-Up**

DAY  
TWO  
**AGENDA**

May 13th, 2017

**BUILDING BRIDGES**  
Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups  
**2017 CONFERENCE**

May 12th-13th | Winnipeg, MB

08:30 - 09:00 **Registration & Refreshments**

09:00 - 09:15 **Opening Exercise**

09:15 - 10:30 **Panel C: "What's Happening Elsewhere?"**

**Speakers**

Moffat Makuto, *Multicultural Association of Northwestern Ontario*  
Vibhor Garg & Diandre Thomas-Hart, *Canadian Roots Exchange*  
Alex Garcia, *Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House*  
Janet Dench, *Canadian Council of Refugees*

**Moderator**

Aimée Craft, *Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba*

10:30 - 10:45 **Health Break**

10:45 - 12:00 **Youth-Led Visioning Exercise**

Small group breakout session on visions of Winnipeg's inner-city and Indigenous-Newcomer relations in the year 2027, 2067, and finally, another 150 years from now - 2167.

12:00 - 13:00 **Lunch Break**

Multicultural Feast catered by Neechi Commons with voluntary contributions by conference participants.

13:00 - 14:15 **Panel D: "The Future"**

**Speakers**

Destiny Seymour, *Interior Designer/Architect/Printmaker*  
Leonard Sumner, *Anishinaabe Singer/MC/Songwriter*  
Rwandese Beauty

**Moderator**

Levi Foy, *Like That, Sunshine House Inc.*

14:15 - 14:30 **Health Break**

14:30 - 16:00 **Skills & Knowledge Exchange Bank**

Activity & event end-product of creating a "bank" of speakers and resources to help organizations share information and make issue connections.

16:00 - 16:30 **End of Day Wrap-Up & Closing Prayer**

## PANEL DETAILS

# BUILDING BRIDGES

Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups

## 2017 CONFERENCE

May 12th-13th | Winnipeg, MB

### DAY ONE

#### **Panel A: "History, Rights & Understanding"**

A preliminary panel will provide foundational presentations on treaties and the history of residential schools as well as Canada's immigration and refugee laws and the international legal obligation of non-refoulement.

#### **Panel B: "Building Bridges and Making Connections"**

Community and academic presenters will be invited to discuss their programs and research on Indigenous-Newcomer relationship building.

#### **Bread and Borders**

Small breakout sessions and a group conversation exploring the fears, facts and impacts of refugee claimants in Manitoba facilitated by the Refugee Claimant Public Education Working Group (Winnipeg).

### DAY TWO

#### **Panel C: "What's Happening Elsewhere?"**

Speakers from outside of Manitoba (but in Canada) will be invited to present on the work in their communities to foster Indigenous-Newcomer relationships.

#### **Youth-Led Visioning Exercise**

Small group breakout session on visions of Winnipeg's inner-city and Indigenous-Newcomer relations in the year 2027, 2067, and finally, another 150 years from now - 2167.

#### **Panel D: "The Future"**

Artists working towards building stronger, more inclusive communities through performing arts. A showcase of what the future holds through variety of creative forms (music, art, poetry) followed by a discussion with the panellists.

#### **Skills & Knowledge Exchange Bank**

An activity and product of the conference will be to create a "bank" of speakers and resources to help organizations share information and make issue connections (displacement, violence, access to resources, integration).

# BUILDING BRIDGES

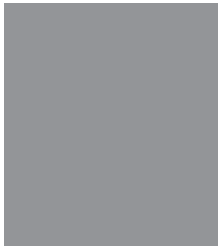
Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups

## 2017 CONFERENCE

May 12th-13th | Winnipeg, MB

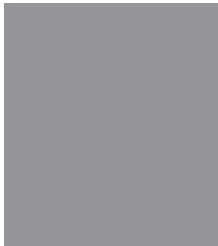
## FACILITATOR BIOGRAPHIES

### KAIROS BLANKET EXERCISE



#### **Tyra Cox, KAIROS**

Tyra Cox is from Winnipeg, Manitoba. She is Sahtu Dene/ Anishinaabe, and Mahkwa Dodem (Bear Clan.) Tyra works within project management for Indigenous relations and consultation. She's a coach, social justice advocate, Indigenous knowledge champion, and volunteer to many Indigenous youth initiatives, such as KAIROS Canada. From Indigenous home fires to non-Indigenous, Tyra has facilitated and watched the impact that the KAIROS Blanket Exercise has for the Next 7 generations!



#### **Alison Cox, KAIROS**

Alison Cox is an Anishnaabe Educator, Cultural and Spiritual Advisor and was born in Sagamok Ontario. She has promoted Aboriginal education, perspectives, history, cultural and Indigenous spiritual knowledge for over 25 years. She presides as Co-chair for the Manitoba Aboriginal Circle of Educators, sits on the Manitoba Aboriginal Directorate Community Schools Provincial Advisory Committee, Manitoba Provincial Education Learning Committee, and the Aboriginal Education Winnipeg Urban Network Team. Throughout her career, she has served the education community as a writer/researcher, communications specialist, consultant, healer, artist and teacher.



#### **Louise Simbandumwe, SEED Winnipeg**

Louise is Co-Director at SEED Winnipeg and has two decades of experience working on Winnipeg inner-city community development initiatives. She has taught innovative courses on financial empowerment, community economic development, and human rights advocacy at the University of Winnipeg. A former refugee, Louise is passionate about human rights and social justice counting Amnesty International, the Immigration Matters in Canada Coalition, the University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation, and the Stop Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls Action Group among her volunteer commitments. Louise has a Bachelor in Commerce from the University of Saskatchewan and a Masters in Comparative Social Research from Oxford University.



#### **Natasha Mohammed, Refugee Claimant Working Group**

Natasha Mohammed has a background in International Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies. In addition to serving as a community counsellor, mediator, group facilitator and Victim Impact Worker, Natasha has taught conflict resolution skills and theory in government, community and university contexts for the past 20 years. For Natasha, relationship is the key to peace in the world, your community, your family and yourself.

# BUILDING BRIDGES

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## MODERATOR BIOGRAPHIES

### ALL PANELS



**Shereen Denetto, *Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCOM)***

Shereen Denetto is a Site Director at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM) an inner-city agency that provides housing and holistic supports to newcomers to Canada. At IRCOM she has worked with the team to help build meaningful connections between newcomer and Indigenous communities, working towards a common goal of building safe and inclusive neighbourhoods that everyone can call home. Shereen has a strong background in community development and community based research and has a Master of Social Work degree from Carleton University.



**Lenard Monkman, *CBC Indigenous***

Lenard Monkman is Anishinaabe from Lake Manitoba First Nation, Treaty 2 territory. He is an associate producer for CBC Indigenous and is one of the co-founders of Red Rising Magazine. He has volunteered as a community organizer with Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO!), and has been building bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Winnipeg. He is also the founder of the annual 100 Basketballs initiative, which to date has given close to 600 basketballs to children in the North End of Winnipeg.



**Aimée Craft, *Adjunct Professor Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba***

Aimée Craft is an Indigenous lawyer (Anishinaabe/Métis), professor of law at the University of Manitoba and Director of Research at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Her expertise is in Anishinaabe and Canadian Aboriginal law. In her decade of legal practice at the Public Interest Law Centre, Professor Craft worked with many Indigenous peoples on land, resources, consultation, human rights and governance issues. Her award-winning 2013 book, *Breathing Life Into the Stone Fort Treaty*, focuses on understanding and interpreting treaties from an Anishinaabe inakonigewin (legal) perspective.



**Levi A. Foy, *Like That, Sunshine House***

Levi A. Foy, Manidoogwiiwizens, Prairie Sky, comes from Couchiching First Nation in Treaty Three territory, but has spent the vast majority of their lives elsewhere, and has called Winnipeg home for the last three years. Since 2014 Levi has been involved with the Sunshine House Winnipeg as a researcher and the program coordinator for Like That @ Sunshine House. Like That is a participant driven program for gender and sexually diverse peoples. All Sunshine House programming practices harm reduction using prevention through recreation as a model. In the last five months the Like That family has also been very active in creating community connections for many queer refugee claimants.

# BUILDING BRIDGES

Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups

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## PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

### PANEL A "History, Rights & Understanding"



#### **Elder Harry Bone, *Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba***

Elder Harry Bone is a member of Keeseekoowenin Ojibway Nation, where he served as a Chief and Director of Education. While a graduate student in political studies at University of Manitoba he was a Student Advisor and Lecturer. Elder Bone and Elder Doris Pratt co-authored Untuwe Pi Kin He – Who We are: Treaty Elders' Teachings Volume One, a book that documents the traditional laws and customs of Indigenous peoples in Manitoba in a way that is accessible to all interested readers. The University of Manitoba honoured Elder Bone with an Honorary Doctor of Law degree for his tireless and trendsetting work that continues to advance Aboriginal education in Canada.



#### **Tricia Logan, PhD, *National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation***

Tricia Logan is originally from Kakabeka Falls, Ontario and completed her PhD entitled 'Indian Residential Schools, Settler Colonialism and Their Narratives in Canadian History' in History at Royal Holloway, University of London. She has worked with the Aboriginal Healing Foundation at the Southwest Region Manitoba Métis Federation as well as the AHF, Legacy of Hope Foundation and National Aboriginal Health Organization research on various projects from 2000 to 2014. Most recently, Tricia worked in Britain as an Archivist and Researcher on an oral history project entitled 'Irish Voices' with Irish diaspora communities living in Britain. She is currently the Education and Outreach Coordinator at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.



#### **Hani Al-ubeady, *Immigration Partnership Winnipeg***

Hani Ataan Al-ubeady is currently working for Immigration Partnership Winnipeg whose mandate and vision is to create a welcoming and inclusive community where Indigenous and Newcomers can fully participate. Hani has been a community activist for nearly 20 years. His goal is to remove barriers on the path of creating a welcoming community for all, and deconstruct negative narratives around newcomers and indigenous communities.



#### **Shauna Labman, *Assistant Professor Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba***

Dr. Shauna Labman is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba. She writes and speaks extensively on refugee law, resettlement and private sponsorship. Her research focuses on the relationship between law and voluntary action in refugee protection. Professor Labman co-founded the Migration Law Research Cluster housed at Robson Hall, is on the Board of Directors at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba and previously worked for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in New Delhi, India. In 2016 she was named one of CBC Manitoba's Future 40. She is the lead organizer of the 'Building Bridges Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups' Conference.



#### **Maria Morrison, *Citizen Equity Committee***

Maria Morrison is the Citizen Equity Committee Coordinator for the City of Winnipeg. She sits as the Chair of Immigration Partnership Winnipeg's newly formed Indigenous Newcomers Sector Table.

# BUILDING BRIDGES

Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups

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## PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

### PANEL B "Building Bridges and Making Connections"



**Michael Redhead Champagne, *Aboriginal Youth Opportunities***

Michael has spent the majority of his life as a leader and community organizer, especially in Winnipeg's North End. He is the founder of AYO! Aboriginal Youth Opportunities and is committed to a variety of community initiatives including Meet Me at the Bell Tower, AYO Politix and 13 Fires. He has spoken out on behalf of his community and worked on a variety of issues, including youth engagement and community mobilization. Michael was recognized in 2015 by TIME Magazine as a Next Generation Leader and as the 2016 Canadian Red Cross Young Humanitarian of the Year.



**Phil Chiapetta, *Rossbrook House***

Phil Chiapetta has made Rossbrook House his life's work since 1980, helping to develop Rossbrook into a respected agency serving children and youth in the Community. Phil has served a variety of roles at Rossbrook House, enjoying his work directly with youth for his first 20 years. Now as Executive Director of Rossbrook House, Phil deeply appreciates his role developing relationships with other agencies and causes that serve children, youth and their families.



**Alexa Joy Potashnik, *Black Space Winnipeg, Canadian Federation of Students***

Alexa Joy Potashnik is the Founder of Black Space Winnipeg, Host of Raw Colours on CKUW 95.9FM, local vocal percussionist known as MC Woke and the Racialised Student Commissioner with the Canadian Federation of Students - MB. Alexa's work is heavily involved in creating safe spaces for people of colour while challenging white/male privilege, dominance and supremacy through grassroots activism. Alexa continues to push against the status-quo by ensuring there are always platforms for the abjected voices in society.



**Mandel Kuet, *Immigration and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba***

Mandela Madit Kuet Immigrated to Canada in 1998 from South Sudan and spent most of his early years in the North-End and West-End of Winnipeg. He is a Community Development Worker with the 'Common Grounds Stronger Voices Project' at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (RCOM) Inc. He is dedicated to building and strengthening relationships between Newcomer and Indigenous community members. Mandela seeks to collaborate with others who are invested in creating a dialogue on a personal, community and organizational levels. He is currently a student at the University of Winnipeg in the faculty of Economics, and holds a diploma in Addiction and Community Service Worker from the Career Development Institute (CDI) College.

# BUILDING BRIDGES

Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups

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## PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

### PANEL C "What's Happening Elsewhere?"



#### **Moffat Makuto, *Multicultural Association of Northwestern Ontario***

Moffat Makuto is the Executive Director of The Multicultural Association of Northwestern Ontario (MANWO) in Thunder Bay, Northwestern Ontario. Mr. Makuto created the Regional Multicultural Youth Council, a group that actively supports First Nations students attending high school in urban centres to launch peer support and advocacy programs. Mr. Makuto's work takes a 'youth-to-youth' approach and has been involved helping newcomer youth resettle and integrate in Canada: creating opportunities for youth from both communities to find common ground, and express themselves.



#### **Vibhor Garg, *Canadian Roots Exchange (CRE)***

Vibhor Garg has been working at CRE since September 2012 as Co-Executive Director. Growing up in Sudbury, Vibhor gained valuable experiences managing youth programs in both Canada and internationally where he focused much energy ensuring programming remained accessible to youth from historically under-represented communities. Vibhor enjoys working alongside young people and in his work has prioritized the need for communities of colour and newcomer communities taking a more active role in bridge building with Indigenous communities.



#### **Diandre Thomas-Hart, *City of Winnipeg Indigenous Advisory Circle***

Diandre Thomas-Hart, Oskinekiskweo Kawechikapaystawat Mikisewak, "Young Woman who stands among the Eagles", is a young Indigenous leader from Winnipeg, Manitoba. A member of the Mayor's Indigenous Advisory Circle, Diandre is a volunteer for the Canadian Roots Exchange's Youth Reconciliation Initiative, and served as one of the National Conference Leads for the Canadian Roots Exchange National Youth Conferences that took place in Winnipeg. Diandre strives to teach reconciliation, promote cultural identity and raise awareness of Indigenous issues throughout Canada.



#### **Alex Garcia, *Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House***

Alex Garcia has worked with children and youth in vulnerable situations across three provinces to develop capacities, overcome barriers, and strengthen communities. He fled the Salvadoran civil war with his mother and father in 1991, and grew up in Winnipeg/Treaty One Territory. He has worked with IRCOM Inc., La Maison des Jeunes Côte-des-Neiges, and currently works with Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House in Vancouver on the unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. Between 2015-2016, he served as Co-chair for the Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network Core Group.



#### **Janet Dench, *Canadian Council of Refugees***

Janet Dench is the Executive Director of the Canadian Council for Refugees, where she has worked since 1990 (as Executive Director since 1997). The CCR is a national non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees and other vulnerable migrants in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada. Janet has a BA (in Classics and Modern Languages) from the University of Oxford and an MA in Religious Studies from Concordia University. In November 2013 she was awarded the degree of Doctor of Sacred Letters, honoris causa, from Regis College, the Jesuit School of Theology at the University of Toronto.



# BUILDING BRIDGES

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## PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

### PANEL D "The Future"



#### **Destiny Seymour, Interior Designer/Architect/Printmaker**

Destiny Seymour is an interior designer living in Winnipeg, Manitoba. After working for a local architecture firm for over 10 years, Destiny struggled to find interior design finishes and materials that reflected local Indigenous cultural history. In 2014, she began to study Indigenous pottery and bone tool fragments collected from sites across Manitoba that were from 400 to 3000 years old. The delicate patterns stamped and carved into these pieces inspired Destiny to create her own line of textiles and home decor, Indigo Arrows.



#### **Leonard Sumner, Anishinaabe Singer/MC/Songwriter**

Leonard Sumner's storytelling flows directly from the shores of Little Saskatchewan First Nation, located in the heart of the Interlake of Manitoba. Sumner's self-determined sound is evidence of his ability to simultaneously occupy landscapes of multiple musical genres including: Hip-Hop, Spoken Word, Country, and Rhythm and Blues. On stage he poetically sings awake the consciousness of audiences may have been unaware of their slumber. In this era of unsettling history and healing wounds of the past, Sumner's music is an expression of medicine that walks the line between fortitude and fragility.



#### **Rwandanese Beauty**

Esperence Shima, Consolee Uyiringira, Beathe-Marie Tuyisenge, and Mujawamariya Ingabire (Louise) are four Rwandese girls who love to showcase their culture at various city events in Winnipeg. The breakout group was formed thanks to encouragement from several community members outside of the Rwandese culture who found their dancing beautiful. They are pleased to share their love of dance for all.

# BUILDING BRIDGES

Between Canada's Indigenous and Newcomer Groups

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## VENUE

### CIRCLE OF LIFE THUNDERBIRD HOUSE



The Circle of Life Thunderbird House opened in 2000 and is located in the heart of Winnipeg at Main Street and Higgins Avenue. It represents the integral part that Winnipeg's Indigenous community plays in the social, spiritual and cultural growth of the urban community. The building itself was designed by acclaimed Canadian Indigenous architect Douglas Cardinal, with a circular form representing traditional teachings of the Medicine Wheel and a copper roof symbolizing the wings of an eagle. The open-air interior was built to accommodate ceremonial practices such as smudging, with an outer-ring of office and meeting rooms for business functions.

Hosting this year's conference in a space like the Thunderbird House allows participants to familiarize themselves with the vision and principles tied to its construction. Upon Thunderbird House's opening, Elder Mary Richard, chairperson of Neeginan Development Corporation, said that "Over thirty years ago, when the Vision of Neeginan first saw the light of day, there was much despair in the community. Today there is hope." Richard adds, "today, we have realized our vision, a vision guided by respect, recognition, opportunity, and by our elders."

- "Circle of Life Thunderbird House" – Grand Opening; City of Winnipeg News Release, March 21, 2000, accessed February 10, 2017 [[http://winnipeg.ca/cal/medialnews/nr\\_2000/nr\\_20000321.stm](http://winnipeg.ca/cal/medialnews/nr_2000/nr_20000321.stm)]

***The Circle of Life Thunderbird House is in need of \$100,000 for building repairs.  
Please consider donating or fundraising for this integral urban Winnipeg space.***

***A multi-faith prayer space will be available in Thunderbird House both days.***