

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



RIBBON **ROUGE**





■ Mayor Amarjeet Sohi, Afya
Event, City Hall, March 2023

RIBBON ROUGE FOUNDATION 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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WHO IS RIBBON ROUGE FOUNDATION?

The Ribbon Rouge Foundation is a grassroots organization registered as a not-for-profit corporation under the Societies Act, focusing on health equity and facilitating social justice through the arts. The foundation facilitates storytelling, community-engaged arts, and intentional, meaningful community conversations to change perceptions, stir social conscience, educate the public, and create positive social change. We are committed to raising the voices of people who experience poorer health outcomes due to racialized health disparities.

Our Vision is to Achieve Health Equity between African, Caribbean, Black people and those who are not African, Caribbean, Black.

The Ribbon Rouge Foundation continues to serve African, Caribbean, and Black people globally by facilitating systemic changes in structural and social determinants that contribute to poorer health outcomes, including HIV-related health issues within African, Caribbean, and Black communities. The foundation is now registered in three countries—Botswana, Canada, and Nigeria—to advance its agenda for health equity.

Our foundation's work is a response aimed at making a meaningful impact on health (gender and racial) disparities represented by these statistics, acknowledging that these figures barely scratch the surface of highly complex socio-economic, political, and cultural drivers behind the identified problems. Specifically, we focus our social justice lens on gender-related and race-related issues. We believe in the liberating power of the arts to promote self-expression, foster community building, and facilitate positive social change.

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As we present the Ribbon Rouge Foundation's Annual Report for 2023, we begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land upon which our organization operates. We recognize and respect the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories. We honor the heritage, culture, and ongoing contributions of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples who have lived in harmony with these lands for thousands of years.

We acknowledge that this land, where we gather, work, and collaborate, is part of a rich history that predates the establishment of our organization. It is a history marked by strength, resilience, and a deep connection to the earth.

As we move forward, the Ribbon Rouge Foundation remains committed to learning, understanding, and respecting the histories, languages, and cultures of all Indigenous Peoples. We recognize that this acknowledgement is but a small step in our journey towards reconciliation, and we pledge to actively contribute to healing and building a more inclusive and equitable society.

In presenting this report, we also extend our gratitude for the opportunity to work and thrive on these lands, and we renew our commitment to ensuring that our actions and initiatives reflect respect, inclusivity, and a shared responsibility towards a better future for all.



RIBBON ROUGE FOUNDATION AT A GLANCE

Comprising 181 volunteer members, our community consists of inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary teams contributing to the work and impact of our foundation. These members primarily serve in two self-organized groups that advise and collaborate with our board of directors.

The African Caribbean Black Leadership Caucus (an informal coalition) which Advises >>

The Board of Directors, Ribbon Rouge Foundation which provides guidance to the work of >>

The Artist Collective is a multidisciplinary group of artists who serve as community animators, listening to diverse African, Caribbean, and Black communities in Alberta. They then provide feedback based on that information to both the Board of the Ribbon Rouge Foundation and the African Caribbean Black Leadership Caucus.

A network of organizations around the Ribbon Rouge Foundation currently maintains loose, informal, and formal relationships. These relationships span from organizations co-existing with the Foundation to those cooperating and even collaborating on various initiatives alongside the Ribbon Rouge Foundation.

The header features a red banner with the title 'A LETTER FROM RRF BOARD CHAIR' in white, uppercase letters. Above the banner is a colorful, abstract geometric pattern. To the right of the banner is a portrait of a woman with dark hair and red lipstick, wearing a black and white patterned top.

A LETTER FROM RRF BOARD CHAIR

As the President of the Board of Directors of the Ribbon Rouge Foundation, I am reaching out to share some updates and express our heartfelt gratitude for your continued support and engagement with our cause.

In 2023, our Foundation took significant strides in advancing health equity. Our initiatives, including the City Hall project, Afruyah, and EFCL, resonated deeply with the communities we serve, sparking conversations about the essence of health equity. It's heartening to see that we are now closer to achieving a state of zero discrimination compared to when we began our journey.

In 2023, we embraced growth and transitioned to a new business location. We were welcomed with love to the Edmonton Intercultural Centre (EIC). This move was motivated by the limitations of our previous office space, which was not conducive to our needs and the nature of our work. We are delighted to report that our new office better supports our organizational growth and aligns more effectively with our operational requirements.

We have been steadfast to advocate for health equity, cultural diversity, and social change. Our journey, marked by significant milestones and challenges, has been enriched by the dedication and passion of individuals like you.

This year, we have made remarkable strides in our initiatives, thanks to the collective efforts of our team, partners, and supporters. Our programs have touched many lives, fostering change and sparking conversations on important social issues. We are proud of the impact we have made, yet we recognize there is still much work to be done.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to our mission and are excited about the new projects and collaborations that lie before us. We believe that together, we can continue to make a meaningful difference in our communities.



We invite you to stay engaged with our work. Whether it's through volunteering, participating in our events, or sharing our mission with others, your involvement is invaluable. If you have any ideas, feedback, or wish to get more involved, please do not hesitate to reach out.

We acknowledge the contributions from the Government of Canada, Government of Alberta, City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Community Foundation, community members, Board members and staff.

Once again, thank you for being a part of the Ribbon Rouge family. Your support fuels our efforts and inspires us to keep moving forward.
With sincere appreciation,

Adaku Uju
Board Chair
Ribbon Rouge Foundation



A NOTE FROM OUTGOING DIRECTOR



As I pen this message in my capacity as the outgoing Executive Director, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude and reflection. The journey with the Ribbon Rouge Foundation has been one of immense growth, learning, and impactful change, both personally and for the communities we serve.

Together, we have navigated challenges and celebrated victories in our unwavering pursuit of health equity and social justice. Our collective efforts have contributed to meaningful advancements in addressing racialized health disparities and advocating for those often marginalized in our society.

I am heartened by the strength and resilience of our community. The work we have done lays a solid foundation for future endeavors, and I am confident that the Foundation will continue to thrive and make even greater strides in the years to come.

Although I am stepping down as Executive Director, my connection to the Ribbon Rouge Foundation and its cause remains steadfast. I look forward to witnessing the continued growth and success of the Foundation under new leadership, and I am eager to support its journey in any way I can.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Executive Director. It has been an honor to work alongside such passionate and dedicated individuals. I am excited to see what the future holds for the Ribbon Rouge Foundation and the communities we serve.

With heartfelt appreciation and best wishes,

Funke Olokude
Outgoing Executive Director
Ribbon Rouge Foundation

OUR WORK

OUR WORK

Research



To enhance system-level impacts on African, Caribbean, and Black individuals living with HIV and



Recommendations for policies



Advocate against systemic racism



Facilitate culturally appropriate and responsive education for practitioners



Multi level access to ACB disaggregated data

Knowledge Hub



Health equity and social justice through advocacy



Community engaged arts



Stir conversations through public education



Change perceptions



PROGRAM UPDATES

BEAR - THE BLACK EQUITY IN ALBERTA'S RAINFOREST

Anti-Black racism significantly impedes the social engagement of African Caribbean Black (ACB) Canadians in civic leadership, arts and culture, and employment, contributing to strained relations between these communities and the criminal justice system, resulting in barriers to justice.

These issues serve as crucial structural factors driving health inequity. To tackle this, our proposed applied research aims to establish an extensive network of key stakeholders to delve into the root causes of health disparities concerning the ACB community.

This project focuses on foundational, comprehensive multidisciplinary research crucial for achieving health equity. Our approach involves transdisciplinary methods, participatory action, and human-centered design research. This effort will culminate in the synthesis of deeply contextualized knowledge and the creation of prototypes and solutions. These outcomes will be compiled into a community field guide, enhancing the capacity of organizations across the province to effectively address systemic hurdles in employment, justice, and social participation.

INITIATIVE

The B.E.A.R. is a holistic, socially innovative community initiative designed to mobilize data and research for meaningful change in Black health equity. The vision is to create a collaborative environment where knowledge, resources, and connections are shared to narrow racial gaps. Through this initiative and in collaboration with researchers and graduate interns at accredited post-secondary institutions, we aim to generate crucial information and research necessary for understanding the impacts of anti-Black racism on health equity. Specifically, the B.E.A.R. is structured to comprehend how resources and existing initiatives in various organizations and institutions across the province can be better aligned to foster positive change, especially in addressing iden-



tified racial disparities in Alberta. Based on the compiled research, we will produce 13 essential interdisciplinary reports, which will be transformed into multimedia documents such as infographics, research posters, and more.

SUB-PROJECTS

Through the B.E.A.R., we have co-created several sub-projects that align with and mirror the goals of our organization as a whole. These sub-projects are outlined as follows:

Sub-project 1: Quantifying and Qualifying Black Health Inequity

Sub-project 2: Evaluation

Sub-project 3: Stakeholder Engagement

Sub-project 4: ArtSpace

Sub-project 5: Community Development for HIV-related Equity

Sub-project 6: Journey Mapping Justice

Sub-project 7: Community Asset Mapping

Sub-project 8: Prototypes for Black Equity

Sub-project 9: Knowledge Synthesis, Incubation, and Embedding Prototypes in the B.E.A.R.

THE ARTIST COLLECTIVE

The Artist Collective consists of talented artists who serve as community connectors, engaging with diverse African, Caribbean, and Black communities in Alberta. Their role entails actively listening to these communities and creatively translating their experiences and stories into art.

We firmly believe in the transformative and healing potential of the arts. We view it as a medium to amplify voices, champion justice, and advocate for health equity.

THE FOUR ULTIMATE GOALS OF THE BEAR PROJECT



BLACK DATA GOVERNANCE



JUSTICE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV



CREATE AWARENESS AND PROVIDE INFORMATION ON SEXUAL HEALTH



JUSTICE FOR BLACK YOUTH AS IT RELATES TO MENTAL HEALTH AND INTERACTING HEALTH/
JUSTICE SYSTEMS NAVIGATION



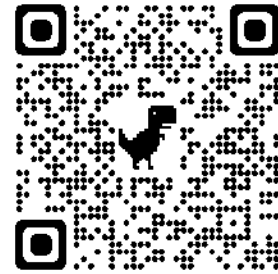
IMPACT ANALYSIS OF COVID 19 ON MENTAL HEALTH OF ACB PEOPLE

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted pre-existing health inequalities and systemic racism that disproportionately impact marginalized communities, especially Indigenous peoples and individuals of African, Caribbean, and Black backgrounds, along with people of color. This underscores the urgency of developing targeted interventions that prioritize the health and well-being of marginalized communities. It also emphasizes the need to strive for a health-care system that is more equitable and just for all.

COVID 19 IMPACT

IN NUMBERS

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a large impact on the ACB community in Edmonton, AB, affecting multiple aspects of their lives. Respondents reported declines in mental health and increased feelings of loneliness and anxiety throughout the pandemic. They also described struggling to meet expenses with the pandemic affecting financial well-being.



SCAN TO VIEW FULL REPORT

294

responses were analyzed using R, a statistical software, with descriptive statistics obtained for each survey question.

39%



of survey respondents reported their physical health as worse off 31% reported no change, and 29% reported improvement.

38%

of survey respondents indicated an increase in feelings of despair, 40% in feelings of fear, and 35% in feelings of loneliness.

59%

of survey respondents indicated that they experienced increased feelings of anxiety and 50% reported increased feelings of stress, particularly related to health, finances, and stability.

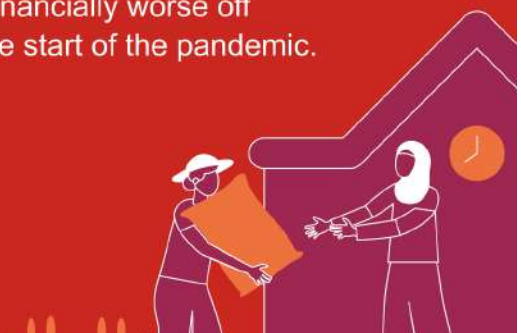
44%



of survey respondents indicated that their mental health was worse off during the pandemic, 27% reported no change, and 28% reported it was better off.

86%

of survey respondents claimed to have been partially financially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and over 40% claimed to be financially worse off compared to the start of the pandemic.



BOARD MEMBERS

Adaku Uju

Board Chair



Adaku Uju, a Barrister and Solicitor in Alberta, Canada, earned her LLB from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and an LLM from Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, Toronto. As Principal of Cynel Law Office, Edmonton, she practices various legal domains. Additionally, she serves as President/CEO at Cynel Global Resources Inc, offering expertise in Investor Relations, International Trade, Business Development, and more.

Adaku excels in diverse sectors such as Healthcare, Agriculture, Education, Energy, and Finance, supporting International, Federal, Provincial, and Municipal Governments. Her achievements include leading Canadian Government Trade Missions, speaking at global forums, and advocating for corporate social responsibility, diversity, and entrepreneurship.

Committed to mentorship, Adaku actively engages with Black Canadian Women in Action, serving on several Non-Profit boards. She continuously seeks opportunities to positively impact others' personal and career development.





Henry K. Aidoo

Vice Chair



Dr. Henry Kweku Aidoo is Canadian but was born and brought up in Ghana. He currently works as a Public Health specialist with the Canadian Red Cross. He attended high school in Ghana and completed the University of Ghana Medical School. He has a postgraduate certificate in occupational medicine from the University of Kent, UK, and a certificate in HIV/AIDS management in the workplace from V.V Giri Institute in India. He has also completed a master's degree in public health from the University of Alberta and a certification in Infection Prevention and Control from the Queens University, Kingston, Ontario.



Kemi Jegede

Treasurer



Kemi Jegede is a Chartered Accountant with more than 20 years of experience working in the corporate setting. She specializes in providing financial consulting services to companies, including financial statements preparation, budgeting, and forecasting and audit review. She is also knowledgeable in financial risk management and cash flow management and has worked with numerous organizations to optimize their financial strategies.

Kemi is a powerful force in the workplace and uses her positive attitude and tireless energy to encourage others to work hard, improve on themselves and succeed. In her free time, Kemi likes to crochet, explore diverse cuisine and cook. She currently lives in Fort McMurray, Alberta with her husband and they have three amazing adult children.





Jackie Foord

Secretary



Jackie dedicated her life to social justice and human rights advocacy. As the Branch Manager of Social Development in Edmonton, she served in leadership roles in non-profit organizations like YWCA Edmonton, Covenant Health, Kidney Foundation, Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Regina and an MBA from Athabasca University. Actively engaged in volunteer work, she's a member of the International Women's Forum, the President of the Good Hearts Transplant Foundation, and formerly chaired Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton (WAVE). Recognized as one of Edmonton's Top 100 Women in Business in 2013, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014.

Emmanuel Alade

Director



Emmanuel, a current member of the Law Society of Alberta practices law as a partner with City Law Offices. A product of the University of Alberta, Edmonton, where he earned a Master of Law Degree, Emmanuel's multi-national and extensive practice has spanned many branches of law. He has garnered significant exposure in Board's membership and management.

He was the Senior Manager (Legal)/Assistant Company Secretary of Odu'a Investment Corporation and has also served as a board member on numerous non-profit organizations and some committees of the Law Society of Alberta in the past. The founder of the Centre for Equity, Education and Justice ('CEJE'), Emmanuel, a passionate advocate of societal egalitarianism, is deeply committed to championing human rights causes including but not limited to: poverty alleviation, public policy, public awareness and education and equitable administration/enforcement of justice for all, through the instrumentality of the law.





Thomas Bankole

Director



The Director for Stakeholder Engagement is a retired engineer who is a passionate social advocate and community organizer. He fervently advocates for socio-economic equity, improved healthcare accessibility, and social justice. Mr. Bankole has worked for several international companies in Canada and the United States, including Coca-Cola, Nestle USA, and SlimFast Foods. He actively volunteers with organizations such as the Canadian Red Cross, Catholic Missions in Canada, and Rhema Chapel Kids Club.

Ima Anugom

Director



Ima's personal and professional journey includes working in health and public health on local, national and global levels. Her unique experiences working with community organizations, not-for-profit organizations, international NGOs, Indigenous organizations and the government has afforded her the opportunity to witness the consequences of social inequity on people's health in her community and around the world; and through her experiences she has come to understand the need to close the inequity gap in Canada and across the world. Using her knowledge, voices from her past, her current public health networks and evidence-based practice, she is committed to advocating for and influencing policies and practices that promote and ensure equitable access for diverse communities, especially vulnerable and marginalized populations, to achieve healthy lives.



STAFF

Tiffany Brown



Tiffany Brown serves as the Director of Operations at the Ribbon Rouge Foundation. With over 15 years of experience in the Foreign Service, she is known for her adaptability and diligence. Tiffany has honed skills in confidential correspondence, records management, customer service, and protocol. Presently, she is involved in research within a grassroots non-profit dedicated to serving African, Caribbean, and Black communities in Alberta.



Michelle Mechetu



Meet Michelle Muchetu, a Zimbabwean-born social worker with 7 years' diverse experience in HIV education and support for African, Caribbean, and Black communities. Her focus includes anti-oppressive strategies, aiding newcomers with HIV through intensive case management, and mobilizing communities for HIV screening in collaboration with educators and stakeholders.



Seyi Awakan



Seyi is a proficient HR Assistant with a strong grasp of human resources practices and adept of-office administration skills. Seyi's expertise encompasses data entry, file management, delivering exceptional customer service, and maintaining confidentiality. Seyi is particularly skilled in organization and time management, capable of creating innovative systems to enhance efficiency.

Seyi has a proven track record in successfully managing a wide range of human resources and administrative functions, consistently adhering to organizational, federal, and state regulations. Seyi's competencies include maintaining up-to-date, confidential, and secure filing systems and information databases. As an effective communicator, Seyi is adept at working cohesively with individuals at all levels and from diverse backgrounds.



Lisette Jerez



I graduated from the Settlement Studies Program at NorQuest College, and I also hold a bachelor's degree in Audiovisual Communication from Chile. I have been working as a project coordinator for Ribbon Rouge for almost one year.



CONSULTANTS

Femi Jegede

Finance

Results-driven and highly skilled Project Manager with over 8 years of experience in managing software development and other projects across government, finance, oil & gas and non-profit sectors with proven results in creating products that meet customer and business requirements. Adept at overseeing project lifecycles, driving cross-functional teams, and delivering successful outcomes. I have a proven track record of successfully delivering complex projects on time and within budget.

My skills cut across requirements gathering, release management, mentoring, coaching, and facilitating cross functional Scrum/Project teams with a track record of working efficiently with internal and external stakeholders to facilitate the successful execution and delivery of solutions in complex environments. Strong leadership abilities, exceptional organizational skills, and a strategic mindset.



Ahmad Sanni

Information Technology

Ahmad Sanni, an accomplished IT professional with over three decades of experience, moved from Nigeria to St. Albert, Alberta, Canada, in 2009. His IT career soared at ATCO I-Tek and Wipro, where he managed projects and application support operations until 2021. Ahmad later founded an IT service management company catering to SMBs and providing training in Project Management certifications.

Passionate about family travel, Ahmad explores historical sites across Canada and 25 U.S. states. He's an avid volunteer, previously teaching "Introduction to Project Management" and holding pivotal roles in community organizations like the Africans and African Descendants Friendship Club of St. Albert. Ahmad contributes as Vice Chairman of the Art and Heritage Foundation of St. Albert and serves on the Board of St. Albert and District Further Education. He's also actively engaged as the Chairman of the Nigeria Canadian Association of Edmonton's Electoral Committee.

Sunkanmi Owolabi

Information Technology



Sunkanmi is a Senior Data Analytics and Application Software Development Consultant with 20+ years of experience in the Information Technology field with expertise in Business System Analysis, Project Management, Data Warehousing, Data Migration, Data Analytics and Visualization, Business Intelligence, Software Development, Database Administration, Cloud Computing (AWS, Azure), Application Support and Training experience in the following industries: Government, HealthCare, Materials Management, Financial Applications, Oil/Gas, Banking, Transportation, Payroll, Human Resource Management and Court Management, United Nations Agencies.



Pei San Chan

Auditor



Pei San Chan graduated from the University of Alberta in 1999, earning a Bachelor of Commerce degree with a major in Accounting. She completed her audit training at Donnelly & Co. LLP, obtaining her Chartered Accountant designation in January 2003.

Rex Efruwhe

Accountant



COMMUNITY AND OUTREACH ASSOCIATES

Ponsiano Niyonsima



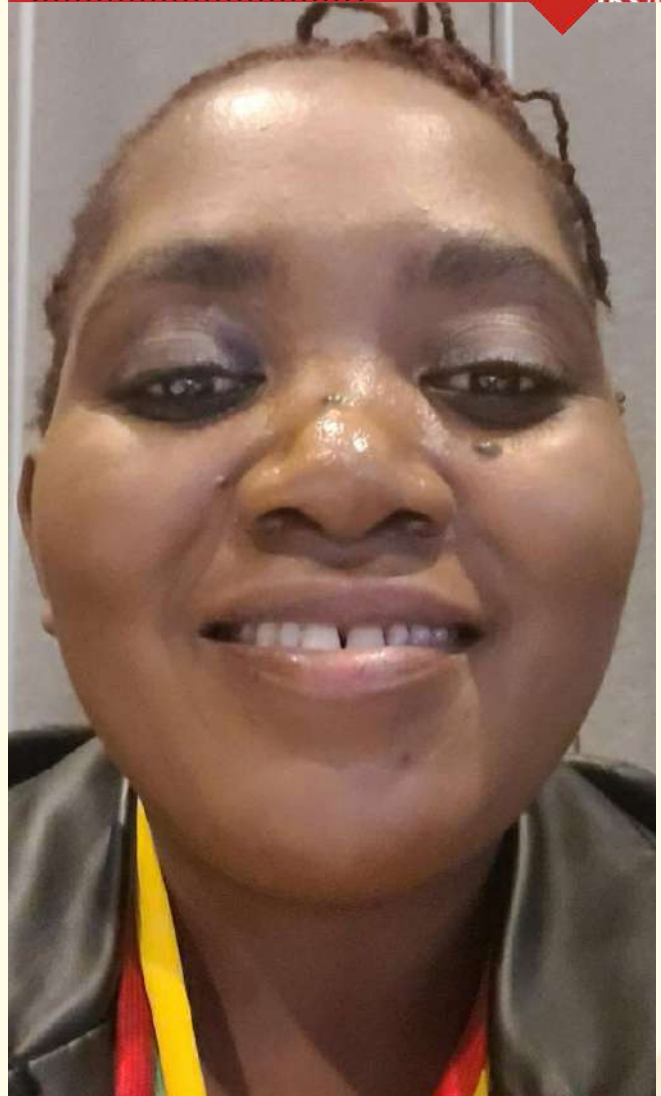
He works as a Community Outreach Associate for Ribbon Rouge Foundation. **Ponsiano is in Brooks AB.**

Oreoluwa Ayelabola



Works as a Community Outreach Associate for the Foundation. **She is based in Fort Mac.**

Dorcas Mazibuko



Dorcas Mazibuko is based in Edmonton where she does work for the Foundation for almost 6 years now. She is a Social work student, wife and mother.

Felix Eshun



Felix Eshun, a determined individual with a passion for innovation and a keen eye for detail. With a background in computer hardware, Felix combines analytical thinking with creative flair, making him a valuable asset in any endeavor. Whether exploring the realms of technology or engaging in community initiatives, Felix brings dedication and a collaborative spirit to every project. **Felix is based in Lethbridge.**



Beshel Francis



Beshel Francis is a current graduate student at the University of Alberta, studying Theatre Practice with Community-Based Theatre as area of Specialization. He is an Ebonylife Creative Academy trained screen Actor and an Alumni of Del-York Creative Academy. He holds a B.A in Theatre and Film Studies. He is an Actor, Choreographer, Singer, Voiceover Artist and a Community Theatre Practitioner. With over a decade in Theatre and Film Industry and Community Development, he has graced the stage in numerous productions, with awards under his belt.

Following his passion for Community Development, He is a Community Outreach Associate with the Ribbon Rouge Foundation- working towards the promotion of social and health equity among the ACB community in Alberta. Beshel is a committed and reliable individual with the zeal and drive to evoke social change. **Beshel is based in Edmonton.**

Mark Audu



Mark Akindimeji Audu is a people oriented activist with over 8 years of experience and commitment in serving vulnerable groups. Mark was born in Benue State of Nigeria in 1989, where he studied Geography in the Benue state university (BSU). Mark in the year 2016 took a turn in his career to follow his passion for humanity and dived right into social work. Mark in the year 2019 worked as a human rights desk officer for Total Health Empowerment and Development Initiative (THEDI) where he handled over 200 gender based violence cases in Benue state and across Nigeria. In 2021 Mark accepted an offer to work for Initiative for Highlighting Equitable Access to Rights (I-HEAR) as the Executive Director. In 2022 Mark relocated to Canada and has continued his passion for serving vulnerable groups. Mark is currently working for Ribbon Rouge Foundation as a Community Research Associate where he has put his expertise and experience into achieving optimal and practical results through strategic alliances with the organization goals.

Vida Airdrie



Vida Azariah is a community nurse based in Airdrie

Thelma Akwei



Thelma Akwei is based in Calgary.



ACB WELLNESS PROJECT

Mental awareness and system navigation improvement

This initiative represents a collaborative effort between Norquest College and the Ribbon Rouge Foundation, forming an advisory group with a broad range of representation. The lead on this project was Viola Manokore (PhD).

Overview

The objective of this project is to enhance awareness of mental health and facilitate more accessible access to social services for the African, Caribbean, and Black communities in Alberta.

Project Description

To examine the barriers and protective factors that impact the mental wellness of ACB individuals across Alberta. One-on-one interviews and focus groups were conducted with individuals and stakeholders.

Project highlights

Initial interviews have been conducted and revealed deficiencies in support for seniors, newcomers, and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals within the ACB (African, Caribbean, and Black) community.

THE HEALTHWISE PODCAST



The Healthwise Podcast, presented by the Ribbon Rouge Foundation, is an innovative and impactful platform dedicated to exploring and addressing health equity issues, particularly those affecting the African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) communities. This podcast stands out as a beacon of knowledge and advocacy in the health sector, offering a blend of expert insights, community voices, and practical advice.

Content and Themes:

Each episode of the Healthwise Podcast delves into a wide range of topics surrounding health and wellness, with a special focus on the social determinants of health such as income, employment, education, social support, and mental health. The podcast sheds light on the unique health challenges faced by minority communities, providing a space for open and honest discussions about racialized health disparities, mental health, and the intersection of culture and healthcare.

Guest Speakers and Interviews:

Healthwise features a diverse lineup of guest speakers including healthcare professionals, social activists, community leaders, and individuals with lived experiences. These guests bring a wealth of knowledge and personal narratives, enriching the conversations with their expertise and first-hand accounts. The podcast serves not only as a learning



resource but also as a platform for empowering voices that are often under-represented in health discourse.

Community Engagement:

At its core, the Healthwise Podcast is about building and nurturing a community. It actively encourages listener participation, inviting questions and topic suggestions, and fostering a sense of belonging among its audience. This interaction ensures that the content remains relevant, engaging, and attuned to the needs and concerns of its listeners.

Impact and Reach: Through its thoughtful content and community-focused approach, the Healthwise Podcast has become a key tool in the Ribbon Rouge Foundation's mission to promote health equity. It aids in raising awareness, educating listeners, and sparking important conversations in and beyond the ACB communities.

RIBBON ROUGE FOUNDATION IN THE COMMUNITY

2023

Since the summer of 2023, the Ribbon Rouge Foundation has spearheaded an aggressive campaign, providing HIV self-test kits to some of the most vulnerable community members.



The Foundation has been present at various locations, including Africarnival, Cariwest, Fort Mac, University of Alberta, Brooks, Calgary, Lethbridge, Airdrie, St. Paul First Nation, ACB Spaces within Edmonton, and numerous other locations, distributing HIV self-test kits.

4000

Total number of test kits distributed since July 2023:
Over 4,000 self-test kits.



THE RIBBON ROUGE FOUNDATION INTERACTIVE THEATRE AT THE EDMONTON FEDERATION COMMUNITY LEAGUE PROJECT

The City of Edmonton's decision to fund the EFCL through its Anti-Racism Community Safety fund has enabled the Ribbon Rouge Foundation to engage in this vital dialogue.

Over the course of this year, the project has brought together four BIPOC organizations in collaboration with the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues. The aim is to cultivate impactful conversations and learning opportunities within these community environments.

Our partners are the Multicultural Coalition, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, Sisters Dialogue, and the Ribbon Rouge Foundation.

So far, the project has seen three successful events centered around animated discussions of anti-racism and real-life community experiences. These events took place at the Alberta Avenue Community League, Strathcona Community League, and the Meadows Community League (SouthHall





THE EFCL PROJECT

Project Description

.....

This project collaborated with four Leagues across the city to foster dialogue and experiential learning beyond conventional anti-racism training. Its goal was to transform Leagues into intercultural spaces that embrace diversity, foster understanding, navigate differences, and mediate conflicts.

By uniting grassroots BIPOC organizations with the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, the initiative facilitated innovative anti-racism and intercultural learning. The project aimed to aid Community Leagues in crafting inclusive spaces through the development of anti-racism policy statements and action plans.

Drawing from insights gained in the Edmonton SafeWalk pilot, the project emphasized the importance of trust and relationship building between League members and BIPOC neighbors.

The endeavor acknowledged Community Leagues' aspiration to be inclusive spaces for neighborhood residents, supporting their engagement, learning, celebrations, and mutual support. However, it highlighted that many BIPOC community members are unsure how to connect with or participate in Community Leagues, perceiving them as unwelcoming spaces that don't cater to their well-being.



AFYA EQUITY HUB

This year, the Ribbon Rouge Foundation hosted its inaugural major event, the Afya Equity Hub, initiated through the Intersectoral Action Fund Project funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. This project united individuals and organizations, both with and without direct lived experience, to tackle four critical social determinants of health: income, employment, education, social support, and coping skills, particularly focusing on mental health. An advisory board was established, drawing interest from 37 individuals and organizations. From this group, three specialized sub-advisory groups were formed, focusing on education, income & employment, and mental health, with 22 dedicated participants committing to the project.

Over a period of five months, these subgroups convened to formulate recommendations. These were informed by personal lived experiences, expectations, and interactions with various organizations, all aimed at enhancing and achieving health equity for the African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) community.

The Afya Equity Hub served as a vital information center, disseminating key findings to the community and our partners. The event featured insightful presentations on Sickle Cell and HIV, diseases significantly impacting the ACB community. In addition to the educational aspect, attendees enjoyed an array of cultural foods, Afrocentric cultural performances, and mental health wellness activities, making the event both informative and culturally enriching.

The RRF ArtSpace Theatre Team presented excerpts of their interactive play “This is Canada,” created through workshops with students in the LINC Program at Norquest College. The artists selected recurring themes from the stories workshop participants shared about their experience settling in Canada. The interactive play consisted of characters who found themselves in crisis and needed the audience’s help to solve the problems that arose.

Over 50 participants attended the event at city hall, including Mayor Amarjeet Sohi and MP Blake Desjarlais. Organizations that participated in the workshop also shared their experiences before the performance.

THE RIBBON ROUGE FOUNDATION OFFICE SPACE

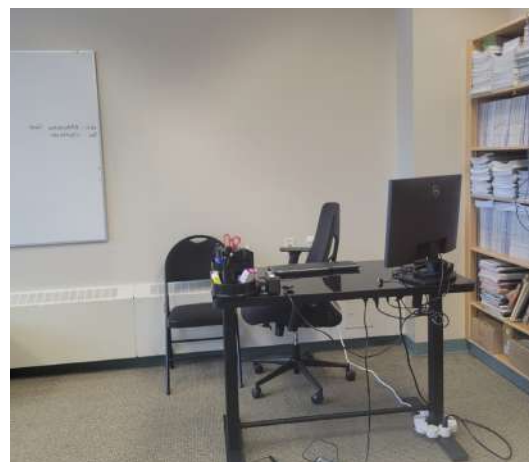


The Ribbon Rouge Foundation is deeply dedicated to a cause resonating across communities and borders. At its core, the Foundation's office goes beyond mere administrative functions. It acts as a vibrant hub for advocacy, education, and community engagement in the fight against STBBIs and HIV/AIDS.

Upon entering, visitors immediately sense the purposeful and passionate atmosphere. Artwork and messages on the walls convey hope, resilience, and the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS, serving as a statement of the Foundation's commitment to awareness through art and dialogue.

The office is always bustling with activity, team members collaborating on community outreach and educational projects. Its open-plan layout fosters unity and shared purpose among the staff, encouraging a collaborative environment.

A key feature is the meeting space, frequently used for brainstorming sessions and discussions with community leaders and health professionals, shaping the Foundation's strategies and initiatives.



Equipped with cutting-edge technology, the office facilitates research, communication, and data management. This integration ensures the Foundation remains at the forefront of the fight against HIV/AIDS, utilizing modern tools for advocacy and education.

Beyond a workplace, the Ribbon Rouge Foundation office is a beacon of hope and a center for change. It embodies the power of collective effort in addressing global health challenges, representing compassion, innovation, and steadfast dedication to a world free of HIV/AIDS.





COMMUNITY ACTION FUND



Program

Community Action Fund (CAF) by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)

Project: Providing culturally appropriate and safe care for African Caribbean and Black (ACB) communities in Alberta affected by HIV, hepatitis C (HCV) and other sexually transmitted blood-borne infections (STBBIs).

AIM: To establish a Provincial STBBI Working Group (STBBI WG) in 6 cities in Alberta to provide support to ACBs impacted by STBBIs.

Goal: To establish and strengthen the ACB community of practice (CoP) in six cities in Alberta:

- Edmonton
- Calgary
- Brooks
- Grand Prairie
- Lethbridge
- Fort MacMurray

Objective

The main goal of the project will be to support the navigation of culturally appropriate and safe STBBI care sys-



tems for ACB communities in Alberta.

Support services will include:

- Support service navigation for ACBs with HIV, HCV, and other STBBI lived experiences to connect to culturally appropriate counselling, testing and treatment.
- Support ACBs at risk of HIV, HCV and STBBIs with culturally appropriate education on prevention, testing; and treatment services.
- Free confidential testing option through the HIV self-testing kit project with information on where to get confirmatory testing if the (test is positive) and connection to specialized HIV treatment.
- In the case of negative test – provision of harm reduction education and support.
- Provide free workshops on HIV, HCV, and STBBIs for service providers and community members through already existing programs.





SIXX-FIVE MEDIA LTD IN CONJUNCTION WITH
RIBBON ROUGE FOUNDATION

FRI. SEPT
29TH
2023

NCAE; NIGERIA 63RD PRE- INDEPENDENCE PARTY

ASAKE

AFRICA ON THE RUNWAY



MUSIC BY DJ YUNG JAAH, DJ SNIPES

DINNER SERVED AT **6PM** | EVENT STARTS AT **7PM**

📍 CANADIAN DRUZE CENTER 14304 134 AVE NW,
EDMONTON, AB T5L 5V8

FOR SPONSORSHIP CONSIDERATION
PLEASE CONTACT -----

780-904-9162.

REGISTER THROUGH QR CODE BELOW TO GAIN ACCESS TO VENUE. DINNER INCLUDED



TWO MEN AND A TRUCK
Movers Who Care.





CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA

Asake, Africa on the Runway Unveils Diversity & Dynamism

“Asake, Africa on the Runway” is a vibrant and culturally rich event that celebrates the essence of African fashion, entertainment, and culinary delights. This event is more than just a fashion show; it’s a fusion of various forms of African art and entertainment, brought to life in a dynamic and engaging way.

The main highlight of “Asake, Africa on the Runway” is its fashion show, which showcases a diverse array of African-inspired designs. These range from traditional attire, representing various African cultures, to contemporary pieces that blend modern style with African motifs. The runway becomes a canvas for designers to display their creativity, innovation, and the rich tapestry of African culture.

In addition to fashion, the event features a variety of entertainment acts. Comedy performances by talented artists bring laughter and joy, often incorporating themes and stories from African folklore and contemporary life. These acts not only entertain but also serve to connect the audience with the rich heritage and humor inherent in African cultures.

The culinary aspect of “Asake, Africa on the Runway” is another integral part of the experience. Attendees have the opportunity to taste an assortment of African cuisine, ranging from traditional dishes to fusion creations that blend African flavors with global culinary trends. This gastronomic journey is a celebration of the diversity and richness of African culinary arts.

Furthermore, “Asake, Africa on the Runway” is more than just a celebration of African culture; it also serves a greater purpose. The event is often organized to support various causes and campaigns. For instance, it can be instrumental in generating buzz and support for initiatives like the “Safety over Stigma” campaign, which aims to address important social issues within the African community and beyond.

The event, typically attended by hundreds of people, not only showcases the beauty and diversity of African culture but also fosters a sense of community and solidarity. It’s a platform for artists, designers, comedians, and chefs to share their talents and for attendees to immerse themselves in the rich and diverse tapestry of African culture. “Asake, Africa on the Runway” is a testament to the vibrancy, resilience, and creativity of the African spirit.



KINFEST 2024: CELEBRATING 'BLACK CREATIVITY IN ACTION'

A Vibrant Showcase of Edmonton's Black Artistry



KinFest 2024, themed “Black Creativity in Action,” is an exclusive celebration dedicated to showcasing the talents of Black artists in Edmonton. Scheduled to take place from May 2nd to 4th, 2024, this festival is set to be a dynamic and powerful display of the diverse and rich artistic expressions within the Black community.

The core of KinFest 2024 is its focus on Black artistry in various forms. Attendees can expect to see a range of performances and exhibits spanning from traditional African arts to contemporary Black culture. This includes music, where artists will present genres deeply rooted in Black culture like jazz, blues, Afrobeat, hip-hop, and R&B, alongside innovative new sounds that continue to shape the music industry.

Visual arts will be another major highlight, with exhibitions featuring works from Black painters, sculptors, and digital artists. These pieces are expected to reflect the Black community’s experiences, history, and aspirations, offering insights into the diverse perspectives and creative prowess of these artists.

Dance performances at KinFest 2024 will likely cover a broad spectrum, from traditional African dances that tell stories of heritage and community to modern styles like street dance, which have been significantly influenced and evolved within the Black community. These performances will not only entertain but also celebrate the rich cultural heritage and innovative spirit of Black dancers.

Poetry and spoken word are also expected to feature prominently, with artists using their voices to express their identity, struggles, triumphs, and visions. These performances will offer a powerful medium for storytelling and sharing experiences that resonate deeply within the Black community.

In addition to performances, KinFest 2024 may offer workshops and talks led by Black artists and cultural experts. These sessions can provide deeper in-

sights into various art forms, techniques, and their cultural significance, offering an educational aspect to the festival experience.

The festival will also likely include a marketplace, where Black artisans and entrepreneurs can display and sell their crafts, artwork, and other products. This not only supports Black businesses but also allows festival-goers to take a piece of the culture and artistry home with them.

KinFest 2024, with its focus on “Black Creativity in Action,” is not just a celebration of art; it’s a powerful platform for the Black community to showcase their creativity, share their stories, and celebrate their cultural heritage. It promises to be an inspiring and enriching event for both artists and attendees, highlighting the vital role of Black artists in shaping the cultural landscape.



RIBBON **ROUGE**



edmonton
arts
council

KINFEST

BLACK CREATIVITY IN ACTION

MAY 2nd - 4th 2024

PLAYS

POETRY NIGHT

DANCE PERFORMANCES

VISUAL ART EXHIBITIONS

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

LIVE MUSIC





BORN OF THE IN BETWEEN

Body of borders, ululating revolution,
caught between lips
Puring life through story.
I am the child born of the in between.
Caught between countries,
Phones cradled in upturned shoulders,
Habos raised us from living rooms
oceans away.
1st born, 2nd gen, 2rd culture kid.
Witch, conjurer of selves, code switcher.
Daughter of duality spinning stories
of becoming.
I am the child born of the in between,
An endless procession of selves,
Caught between realms,
Sinking backwards into myself,
I wean a gentle spirit with stories of
the land of milk and honey,
I am the child born of the in between
Black and agape,
Black and endless,
Black and made again in the image
of self.



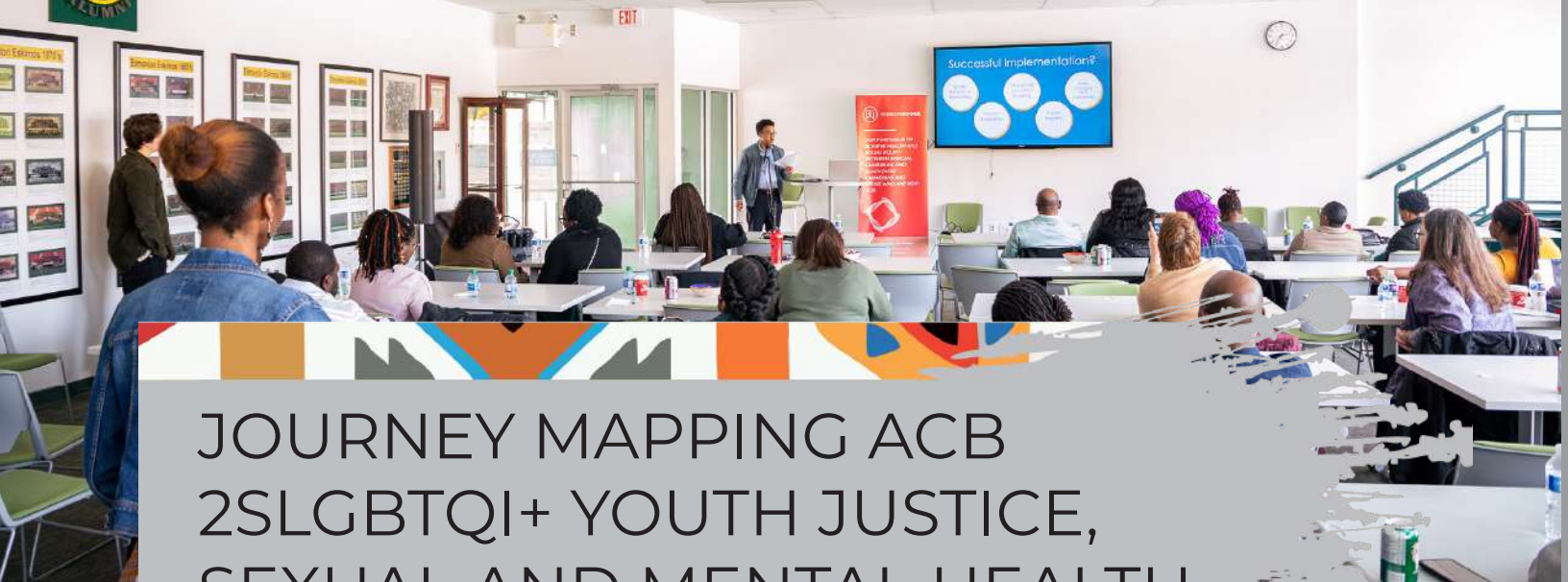
ABOUT TIMIRO MOHAMMED

Timiro Mohamed is a Somali-Canadian spoken word poet, inter-disciplinary artist and community educator inspired by the generations of storytellers who came before her. Timiro has performed on over 100 stages across six cities, has competed nationally at the Canadian Festival of spoken word and has shared the stage with Dr. Angela Davis and Grammy award-winning artist Yasiin Bey.

With over five years of experience in the non-profit sector, Timiro is passionate about the uses of arts-based engagement to create vibrant, thriving communities. She often facilitates arts-based workshops, community talk-balk sessions and performance spaces which center an anti-racist and Black Feminist praxis and prioritize the experiences of African, Black, Caribbean (ACB) and Muslim communities. She has curated performance showcases for artists both locally and beyond, including Grammy-nominated Harvard fellow Amir Sulaiman.

During her tenure as the City of Edmonton Youth Poet Laureate, she developed a spoken word mentorship program for ACB youth, encouraging self-expression, creativity and relationship building. She is the recipient of the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation's Top 30 Under 30 award for her contributions to the UN's sustainable development goals. She believes in the power of the spoken word as a means of activism. She has shared words before the Canadian Senate, where she presented a policy brief for a nationwide strategy addressing Anti-Black Islamophobia. Between 2020 and 2022, she led a grassroots initiative in collaboration with local communities advocating for more inclusive Edmonton Public Schools. Their group lobbied provincial and municipal governments and contributed to the development of the Edmonton Public School Board's first Interfaith Calendar and mandated time off for students celebrating Interfaith and Intercultural holidays.

More recently, as part of the Breaking Ground Art Collective, she co-developed an interdisciplinary theatre performance exploring Blackness on the prairies through poetry, African and Caribbean dance forms and visual art. Utilizing art as a means of research and a tool to educate the broader Edmonton community on the rich histories of Black Canadians. Her multi-media poetry collection *Incantations of Black Love*, created in collaboration with Black musicians and visual artists, is "an unapologetic celebration of Black womanhood beyond ... survival" (Titilope Sonuga, Edmonton's 9th Poet Laureate) and includes an EP, chapbook, and short film.



JOURNEY MAPPING ACB 2SLGBTQI+ YOUTH JUSTICE, SEXUAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

The goal of the Journey Mapping project is to improve the outcomes for ACB 2SLGBTQI+ youth when accessing services within the criminal justice, sexual health, and mental health systems, by increasing cultural awareness and encouraging cultural humility among service providers via a training course that brings awareness to how culture and race influence the identities of ACB 2SLGBTQI+ youth.

The data was gathered from 26 interviews with ACB 2SLGBTQI+ youth, a curriculum fair with 11 participants as well as from 6 focus groups of service providing organizations who may offer services to ACB 2SLGBTQI+ youths. The anonymized analyzed data was then shared with a team of experts from among service providers in Alberta. These experts worked tirelessly to help build the curriculum into 5 modules. The team looked at the reoccurring themes that arose from the interviews and focus groups and chose topics based on how best most of the issues being faced by ACB 2SLGBTQI+ youth could be addressed. The training course will be available in English and French. Piloting of the course will be by end of January 2024 and service providers will be able to access it via our website www.ribbonrouge.com by end of March 2024.

Ribbon Rouge Foundation is grateful to our funders and partners Public Health Agency of Canada, Edmonton Community Foundation, NorQuest College, Fyrefly Institute for Gender & Sexual, Alberta Black Therapist Network, Francophonie Albertaine Plurielle and End of the Rainbow Foundation. This important initiative would not be possible without your collaboration and support.

MOMENTS IN 2023



- The Alberta Development Officers Association generously contributed to the Foundation by presenting a cheque from their silent auction.

2023 IN PICTURES

AFYA EQUITY HUB







ANTI-RACISM PROJECT





CITY HALL EVENT



OUR PURPOSE IS TO
ACHIEVE HEALTH AND
SOCIAL EQUITY
BETWEEN AFRICAN,
CARIBBEAN, AND
BLACK (ACB)

...RE NON-



OUR PURPOSE IS TO
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ACB.



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