

COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF AFRICAN CANADIANS IN ALBERTA
(AFRICA CENTRE)

ANNUAL REPORT

2019/20





A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

This past year has been an important one for our country, our province and our community. We acknowledge the diversity of our cultural background as a source of the strength that brings capacity and competencies to shape our thriving community in Alberta.

The focus for this year has been on strengthening our membership base, enhancing our collaboration and partnerships with community organizations, and advocating for equality and racial justice for all persons of African descent in Alberta.

We started the year with a new strategic plan that outlines key objectives for the next five years. These objectives are guided by our Strategic Directions, each of which has a practical bearing on our undertakings throughout the year. As part of this journey, we invested in our children through holistic, culturally informed and affordable childcare. We delivered diverse initiatives for our youth by providing scholarships, employment and skills training, as well as number of capacity building initiatives. Social isolation among our seniors was identified as an issue in our community and our staff and dedicated team of volunteers went above and beyond to connect our seniors together, create channels for intergenerational wisdom sharing, and provide support services so no member feels that they lack community.

We closed the year with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic which we are yet to see how it will shape our lives, but more importantly how best we can support our communities to get through these uncertain times. We are committed to ensure that through this upheaval, we evolve as an organization to meet every need that arises, ensuring that every community member feels supported and never alone.

It goes without saying that none of our work would be possible without ensuring that the Africa Centre has the financial resources to carry out its mandate. We were extremely fortunate in attracting sponsorships, donations and continued financial support from private donors as well as the City of Edmonton, Alberta Government and the Government of Canada during the past year. Our sincere thanks go to our many supporters in both the private and public sectors.

Let me close by urging you all — Members and “future Members” alike, to be a part of the milestone year ahead of us and engage with us, fulsomely and often.

Engage with us as we strive to raise our game yet again, all to serve you better and improve our programs and community success. Challenge us to better serve you when you see areas where we might improve and celebrate with us once we have reached these milestones together. We are ready for these challenges, both within the board ranks and within the staff ranks.

Thank you for your support over the past few years, and for being such an important part of this journey going forward.

Sincerely,

Kemoh Mansaray
Board Chair

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This past year at the Africa Centre has seen a transformation in a number of initiatives that has informed changes in our policies, strategic priorities as well as a general institutional cultural shift.

We at the Africa Centre feel incredibly grateful for the support and the critical work that we lever through our amazing community of volunteers, stakeholders and partners. Whether our work is focused on developing future leaders of African descent, undertaking initiatives that promote social inclusivity, promoting mental health, or addressing social inclusion among African descent seniors, I am happy to say that we have consistently managed to grow our programs and services.

The 2019-2020 fiscal year has allowed the Africa Centre to enhance its transformative change by laying down strategic priorities that will guide the business of the organization for the next five years. Informed by our foundational strategic pillars, our efforts focused on strengthening community cultural identity, advancing and empowering community building, facilitating integration processes, and strengthening organizational sustainability.

I am so proud of the work we have accomplished throughout the year by putting programs and services in these directions as we strive towards building a diverse province where everyone thrives to their capacity.

I recognize that we have achieved quite a lot with limited resources, but I also acknowledge that we still have quite a lot to accomplish. We just built the foundations of our operational priorities, so a lot still needs to be tracked and reported. We laid out our priorities for organizational sustainability, but more work needs to be accomplished by creating feasible mechanisms that will prepare the Africa Centre for the future sustainability. These transformational changes will yield to fruition in the coming years, nonetheless, I am committed updating our communities of stakeholders annually.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our staff, volunteers and stakeholders for their unwavering support that continues to serve as the source of our energy, hope and our ability to serve the community in new ways. This work is not always easy and the year ahead of us will likely bring even more challenges, but our community energizes us to push forward and see the result of our efforts.

I know that without the help of our donors, funders, board members, consultants, and volunteers, we will not be able to continue providing our programs and services to the community and build a thriving province for all Albertans.

Sincerely,

Sharif Haji
Executive Director

CONTENTS

5	ABOUT AFRICA CENTRE
6	OUR BOARD AND STAFF
8	OUR ACHIEVEMENTS
9	CELEBRATING UNITY IN DIVERSITY
10	STAFF AND BOARD RETREAT FOR STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT
11	AFRICA DAY GALA
13	SOCCER TOURNAMENT 2019
14	BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION
16	PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
17	ROTARY EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PROGRAM
19	SENIORS PROGRAM
21	BOOST - PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS PROGRAM
23	YOUTH MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP
26	AT RISK YOUTH PROGRAM
27	YEGTHECOMEUP
29	OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAM
32	EDMONTON REFUGEE AND EMERGING COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS
34	FINANCIAL SUMMARY
35	FUNDERS AND PARTNERS
36	OUR VOLUNTEERS
37	SPECIAL THANKS

ABOUT AFRICA CENTRE

The Council for the Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta (CAAC), operating as “Africa Centre”, is a non-profit charitable organization that serves the interest of the Albertan African-descent community.

Incorporated in 2006, the Africa Centre offers programs and services that addresses the needs of the African descent community, at all levels, from children to seniors. The Africa Centre’s mission is to promote the full access and participation of community members to ensure a strong, relevant and engaged Albertans of African descent.

We are proud to say that we are a community hub that caters to all aspects of need for the Albertan African-descent community. We enable full participation by building inclusive, diverse, engaged through:

- Spearheading initiatives and services that facilitate a sense of belonging and celebrate cultural heritage and diversity.
- Strengthening capacity-building and support for the city’s African cultural communities.
- Facilitating culturally relevant and affordable Early Learning and Child Care programs that enables family participation.
- Providing programs and services that promotes inclusivity, while strengthening self-expression and strengthens resilience among African Canadian youth.
- Reducing social isolation among African-descent seniors while facilitating intergenerational knowledge transfer and strengthening cultural identity.
- Laying the foundations towards initiatives that centre around Mental Health in the African -descent community, while providing workshops and resources to ensure the holistic well-being of all members of our community is achieved.



OUR BOARD AND STAFF

The Board of Directors of the Africa Centre (Board) is a governance board with plenary authority over the business and affairs of the organization. Each Board member is elected for a 3-year term by members of the Africa Centre at the Annual General or General Members Meeting.

Board members are prominent members of the African-descent community and their unique life experience, education and cultural understanding allows the Africa Centre to benefit from clear and reliable guidance and strategies that move the Centre forward.

Their unwavering direction, hard work, and determination to the Africa Centre's vision of an equitable society is a significant part of the Centre's many successes. We would like to extend a warm thank you to all of our Board for the endless hours of volunteering work to advance our mission!

BOARD MEMBERS

John Gaye

Hilda Fankah-Arthur

Mary Ara Ngembu

Sayid Ahmed

Barnabas Kiliwa

Kemoh B, Mansaray

Dieudonné, Kandolo

Toko Asembe

Philomena Okeke-Ihejirika

Jennifer Maina

Sara N Mwamba

Micheal Lawal

Firmin Guéladé

Imad Satti

Cedric Naoussi



STAFF MEMBERS

Aissatou Bah
Alice Achola
Berlise Youmegni
Blen Kusmu
Diane Conway
Eleonore Tchayam
Elvire Yagoun
Eve Uwamahoro
Farhiyo Mohamud
Firdos Yosuf
Funke Smith
Hayat Merda
Hope Nalubega
Ifrah Hashi
Jeanne D'arc Tcheuffa
Karis Nsofor
Keer Chol
Meme Haile
Naa-Denswa Smith
Naimo Mohamed
Odion Welch
Ofodile E Onah
Proscovia Nabafu
Robyn Taylor
Segen Berhane
Sharif Haji
Steller Lokonga
Tawa Nzekwu
Tereza Dhour



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

24
Students

24 students were awarded EREC scholarships totaling \$50,000!

Programs and Services

Our programs/ services were accessed more than 22,000 times!

50+
Seniors

Over 50 seniors were continuously served!

200+
Youth

Over 200 youth participated in Out of School Program activities.

36
Children

36 children have continuously attended the Rotary Early Learning and Child Care Program throughout the year.

303
ABC
Youth

303 African, Caribbean, and Black youth participated in our Youth Mentorship and Leadership Program.

Mental Health Program

Mental Health Program was launched to undertake mental health promotion among Black youth across the province, a long-time vision!

36
Youth

36 youth were trained in career and skill development, out of which 33 youth secured employment.

CELEBRATING OUR UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Throughout the year, the Africa Centre hosts a series of events dedicated to fostering community, capacity building, meaningful dialogue and creating a genuine sense of belonging.

These events play an essential and important role in the work that we do to create cultural understanding, showcase our rich heritage and celebrate the achievements of our community.

This year, our events featured the Africa Day Gala, Soccer Tournament, a Community Dialogue on Racism, International Women's Day, and Black History Month celebration. Through these events we were able to celebrate as a community while building a sense of belonging.



STAFF AND BOARD RETREAT FOR STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

As part of the Africa Centre's commitment to staff engagement, development and efficiency to deliver the mandate of the organization, our leadership made deliberate efforts to undertake the Staff-Board retreat annually.

The intent of the retreat was to review our previous strategic plan and develop a new plan that outlines priorities for the following five years.

The Executive Director spearheaded the process with a focus on the existing programs, services, challenges, internal capacities and external factors that play a role in the delivery of the mission. Leveraging previous strategic plans, this process informed new priorities and strategies to deliver the mission of the organization.

Based on this, a new strategic plan was developed and approved by the Board for implementation over the next five years (2021-2025). The Strategic Plan is based around four Strategic Pillars:

1. Cultural Identity
2. Advancement and Empowerment
3. Integration
4. Resource Diversification and Organizational Sustainability

1. CULTURAL IDENTITY

Goals:

- Support unity and a sense of community belonging by celebrating cultural heritage and diversity.
- Reduce social isolation and facilitate intergenerational cultural preservation.

2. ADVANCEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

Goals:

- Provide a nurturing environment that fosters healthy relationships, inclusivity, and resilience among African-descent youth.
- Facilitate culturally relevant and affordable Early Learning and Childcare programs.
- Promote gender equality and advancement of women.

3. INTEGRATION

Goals:

- Improve employment opportunities through skills development and career support.
- Influence and improve the settlement experience and outcomes through partnership support.

4. RESOURCE DIVERSIFICATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Goals:

- Strengthen organizational resource diversification and financial sustainability.
- Build and maintain effective and efficient governance systems.
- Ensure sound decision-making throughout the organization.



AFRICA DAY GALA

Africa Day is a global annual commemoration of the foundation of the Organization for African Unity, now known as the African Union.

It is an important day that brings great value to the existence, diversity, and contributions of members of African descent residing in Edmonton, Alberta. The event's objective is to empower communities to share their sacred teachings and worldviews in an innovative, engaging and festive manner.

The gala is grounded in the belief of a universal bond of interconnectedness to preserve the intrinsic worth of humanity through cultural expressions (physically displayed through cultural exhibits), ceremonial gatherings, and traditional teachings.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

We saw 500 in attendance, which included a balance of youth and adults.

The theme of our Africa Day Gala was "The Africa Centre We Want", a testament to the Africa Centre's vision of inclusivity.

Entertainment included live drumming, singing, dancing, as well as numerous vendors and great food all night long!



IMPACT

The Gala saw a celebration of African culture by a mix of ages, from youth to seniors. It fostered principles of inter-generational knowledge by allowing the seniors or “wisdom keepers” in the African community to utilize and share their knowledge and skills to community members.

“I learned that the beads they were wearing were previously associated for Chiefs, which meant they showed great responsibility. It was cool to know that something I had fallen in love with at the store had such great meaning and caused me to research the origins of bead styles and learn more about my heritage.”

Africa Day Gala attendee

NEXT STEPS

- Continue the trend of engaging youth stakeholders in the planning and implementation of future Galas.
- Dedicating more time to advertising and marketing to sustain a strong turn out.
- Have engaging and charismatic speakers of different ages.

SOCCER TOURNAMENT

2019

Africa Centre has always strived to celebrate multiculturalism and diversity in our local African population in a fun and healthy manner. Soccer is a collective passion across African cultures and what better way to bring together community than with a friendly game!

OBJECTIVE

The goal of the Soccer Tournament is to promote active and healthy lifestyle choices while creating a greater sense of collaboration and understanding among diverse communities. Each year, our Soccer tournament succeeds in modelling healthy cooperation, supportive relationships and a greater sense of belonging.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

About 1,200 spectators on June 29th and about 750 spectators on June 30th from Edmonton and neighbouring cities like Calgary

Cultural showcasing that included food, art and craft and clothing

Winning team was Liberia

NEXT STEPS

- Increase community awareness of the tournament across the city.
- Improve female participation in the tournament through the planning, organization and game participation.
- Undertake community outreach and engage sponsors to support the tournament.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

Why we celebrate: During Black History Month, Canadians celebrate the many achievements and contributions of Black Canadians who, throughout history, have done so much to make Canada the culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous nation it is today.

Theme of the event was “What can we morally learn from History” and was held on March 7, 2020.

This year to mark Black History Month, we have partnered with African descent organisations to convene a panel discussion that is aimed to educate the public about the contributions of the Black community in Alberta.

The intent of the Black History Month event was:

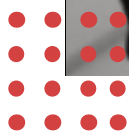
- To bring the African descent community together to learn more about Black History Month.
- To share ancestral history and stories of African and Caribbean peoples, as well as the First Black settlers in North America.
- To apply the learnings gained from these ancestral stories and history to our current lived experiences.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

*Participation of 60
community members.*

*Africa Centre partnered
with a number of
organizations including:*

- *Culture Combination
of Canadians & African
History*
- *Africa Diaspora Historic
Library*
- *Diversity Magazine,
among others*





IMPACT

Various African ethno-cultural and mainstream communities were able to connect through a vehicle of cultural activities and events.

It has helped to interconnect the various ethno-cultural groups with each other and to begin amplifying and articulating each other's needs within the community, potentially leading to future collective action.

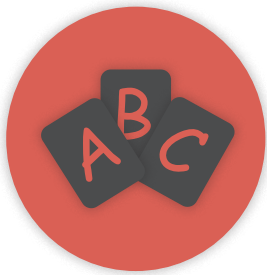
By bringing together people from various groups, public figures, members of main stream agencies and the larger community, the event helped all parties involved to learn more about the achievements of the organization, as well as the programs and services that are offered at the Centre.

NEXT STEPS

- **Build a coalition of African decent organizations and communities to collectively work on Black History Month.**
- **Create a platform where contributions of Black communities are debated and presented.**
- **Showcase Black communities success during Black History Month.**

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

In 2019-2020, Africa Centre focused on serving the community through the following nine areas:



Rotary Early Learning and Childcare



Employment and Skills Development



Community Engagement



YegTheComeUp



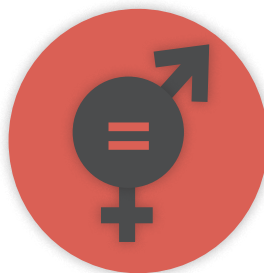
Scholarships



Seniors Wellbeing and Engagement



Out of School Time Program



Gender Equality and Women Empowerment



Mentorship and Leadership Program

ROTARY EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PROGRAM

Finding affordable and holistic childcare is a struggle for most, if not all parents. Pair that with being low-income and a new Canadian, it makes the possibility for childcare very limited. The Africa Centre recognizes that this is an issue that parents face and developed the Rotary Early Learning Childcare Centre.

Africa Centre Childcare partners with organizations across the City to ensure that staff and children have access to the best resources available. These include:

- Intercultural Family Centre
- Norquest College
- GRIT/ASAP Program
- Creating Healthy Eating and Active Environments (CHEERS),
- Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (AECEA)
- Alberta Health Services
- Edmonton Library
- Boys and Girls Club, among others



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Our center was fully accredited on March 2019.

36 children were enrolled in the daycare, an increase in enrollment from the beginning of the year.

A third classroom was opened to accommodate this increase in child enrollment!

OBJECTIVE

The Africa Centre childcare aims to provide care and to promote early learning towards children of all cultural backgrounds. We use an evidence-based child care curriculum framework which caters towards providing holistic care and learning. Selected as one of the 22 Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Centres across Alberta that provides care at a subsidized rate, we empower and enable African-descent families to pursue their goals by providing affordable and high-quality



“The Daycare has amazing programs, where children are encouraged to learn through play and exploration. This instills a positive attitude towards learning which really helps to nurture these children and prepare them to be future leaders.”



“My 2 children have been attending daycare at the Africa Centre for about a year now and throughout the year my children have flourished under the care of the lovely ladies at the Centre. It is a huge relief to know my children are not only just safe, but tended by caregivers who genuinely care about their well-being. Thank you!”

Catherine Morrissey

IMPACT

Creating affordable childcare means that both parents are not forced to sacrifice their educational and career goals to take care of their children. Through the Africa Centre Daycare, parents are able to access affordable and holistic childcare for their children in a culturally diverse and stimulating setting. The play-based learning model ensures that children leave with new vocabulary and skills!

OUR JOURNEY IS FULL OF ACTIVITIES

In programming activities for the children, we follow Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework (FLIGHT). This framework follows play-based learning philosophy, which allows us to create activities centered on stories, songs, mathematics, fine and gross motor skills, circle time, science, music, theatre and arts and crafts. We strive to prepare children for their early school years by exposing them regularly to letters, numbers, colours, shapes, name recognition, and new vocabulary.

A Mighty Learners Play and Playfulness (Possibilities and Participation)

NEXT STEPS

- Increase marketing and community awareness strategies to increase enrollment.
- Increase marketing and community awareness strategies to increase enrollment.
- To extend our capabilities so that we can accept children from the age of 12 months.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Our English-language speaking program allowed seniors to learn and practice their English-language written and speaking skill, allowing them greater independence and the ability to communicate with a wider group of people.

Our Cooking with the Elders event was hosted alongside members of our youth programs, which led to cross-generational knowledge and skill sharing. The event was well-received and both youth and seniors requested more events like this be hosted!

An elder abuse workshop took place, where conversations centered around the physical and mental wellbeing of seniors and the support systems available to them. 51 seniors were in attendance.

SENIORS PROGRAM

With the growing number of African-descent Canadians, the senior population in our community has been growing as well. African-descent Canadian seniors are diverse, have strong cultural ties, and hold knowledge and experience that is beneficial to all of us. Over the year, Africa Centre has been in partnership with the Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE) to deliver services geared to promoting the well-being of African descent seniors.

Overall, the Seniors Program facilitates intergenerational knowledge transfer and provides an avenue for seniors to maintain or improve community engagement and social wellness.

OBJECTIVE

The intent of the program is to enhance and maintain the health and social support of seniors through social and recreational activities. Each year, the program facilitates workshops that allow for seniors to meet new friends from different African countries and share knowledge and skills with volunteers from younger generations.

SENIORS ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

- Elder Abuse Workshop
- Cooking with the Elders Workshop
- Computer Literacy Classes
- Conversational English Classes
- Conversational Workshop
- Story telling with our Afterschool program participants where cultural stories were shared between seniors and youth
- Art and Craft activities

IMPACT

Seniors have improved English language and computer literacy skills, which has resulted in greater independence and confidence. Seniors have identified they experience increased social interaction and a greater sense of community support with not only their age group, but also with youth in the community.

NEXT STEPS

- Continued engagement with seniors in activities that will enable them contribute towards building a cohesive community.
- Undertake more seniors – youth engagement activities that promote heritage transfer and strengthened cultural identity.
- Continue English classes with the seniors and expand the frequency of classes.



BOOST - PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS PROGRAM

The Africa Centre understands the life course impact of inequality that stems from restricted access to employment opportunities.

One of the few approaches of addressing the social barriers to employment in the African community, particularly youth unemployment, is by organizing initiatives that create pathways to success.

Structured over the course of 22 weeks, the Boost - Pathways to Success Program provides youth with 10 weeks of training in valuable skills that will prepare them for the job market, followed by 12 weeks of in-person work experience.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

36 youth enrolled and participated in the group-based employability skills training and were subsequently placed in employment with local businesses.

The Centre received and provided employment and integration support services to Canadian newcomers who were referred through settlement agencies and other social service organizations.

By the end of this 4-year program period, the group-based program has served 96 youth of African descent aged 15 to 30 65 of whom were newcomers to Canada who needed specific multi-layered socioeconomic supports, knowledge and guidance to navigate and integrate successfully into Canadian society.

IMPACT

BOOST program participants are more equipped for their job search after having completed the program. They are able to go into the market with work experience, a reviewed resume and training certificates to ensure a smooth transition into their professional career.

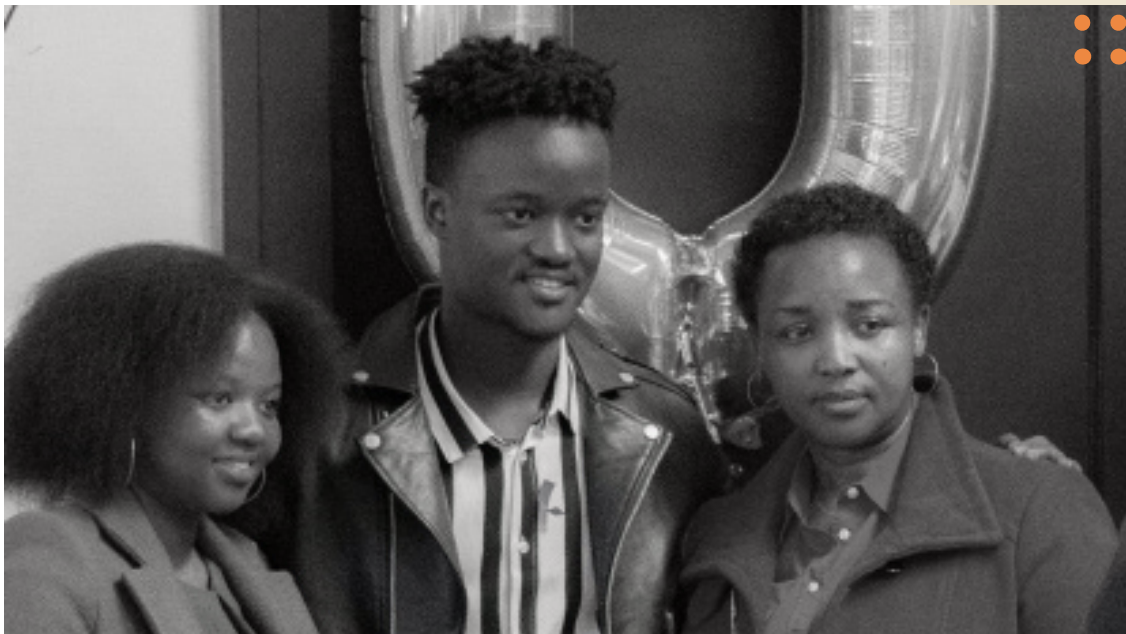
Out of 36 participants admitted to the program:

- 35 completed the skills training
- 33 secured employment

We are happy to report a success rate of 97.2% during this period.

OBJECTIVE

The Boost - Pathways to Success program aims to improve the soft skills of youth who previously experienced barriers to employment. These skills are important for building relationships, gaining visibility, fostering adaptability and creating more opportunities for advancement.



YOUTH MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

Africa Centre's Mentorship and Leadership Program works towards the empowerment of African descent youth through building healthy relationships. The program strives to create and sustain strong relationships that encourage personal, professional and social development for our youth. The program's cultural component focuses on strengthening cultural identity and connection, and sharing knowledge and skills, while our leadership initiative works hand in hand with our mentorship project to provide opportunities for our African-descent youth.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this program is to create mentorship opportunities that enable success pathways in education and employment opportunities.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Numerous collaborations with the Africa Centre Senior Program that involved sharing knowledge and skills to the younger generation. The activities were a platform for cultural connection and bridging the intergenerational gap.

The Mentorship & Leadership program was involved in the Africa Centre's annual summer camp. Programs delivered to the summer camp participants included career exploration, cultural games, arts & crafts (beading & doll making) and storytelling. This was delivered with the seniors as facilitators. A total number of 180 children (ages 13 -17) participated actively.

The program facilitated numerous workshops and events throughout the year, including:

- *Wisdom Keepers Appreciation event*
- *Constitutional Law, Criminal Process Established by the Court Under the Charter of Rights Freedom'*
- *Business, Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation workshop*
- *Beadwork series*

IMPACT

Students leave the mentorship program with confidence and more tools to help in their professional, academic and personal lives. Mentors have noted that they feel a sense of fulfillment as they have directly impacted a youth's life.

“Thanks for the best time we had with the youths, it was amazing. The youth kept the atmosphere very warm and the leadership was extraordinary. Thanks for the great time we had. Keep it up”.

Elizabeth Oloo (cooking workshop)

NEXT STEPS

Recruit support tutors to meet the increasing academic needs of youth in the community.

Professional and career growth through workshops to explore career opportunities and increase chances of career advancement.

Increase the number of mentee and mentors in the program.



BASKETBALL AS A YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

The Africa Basketball platform aims to provide youth with a healthy extra-curricular activity that is culturally sensitive. The program encourages skill development, fosters communication and relationship-building while being fun and welcoming to all youth of all ages and skill levels!

OBJECTIVE

To create a supportive and empowering space for African-descent youth to practice and grow their talents while expressing their thoughts and emotions. This provides youth the opportunity to develop:

- Healthy and trusting relationships
- Communication
- Conflict resolution and anger management skills
- Time management and organization skills
- Teamwork skills
- Leadership skills
- Healthy self-care habits

“I think it'd be great if we had all these opportunities for kids my age, younger and older to get better and get more developed at the sport.”

Salome, basketball participant



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

The basketball platform has been consistent with regular attendance from numerous students.

Coverage by CBC News on February 25, 2020 where two youths were interviewed; Chris Bellard, 15yrs, and Salome Nuako, 14yrs.

The program is proud to have a roster of committed and talented coaches who believe in the potential of our youth.

IMPACT

The ultimate results of the basketball platform have been the improvement of skills and the creation of relationships among youth. Participants reported an improved network of social support and skill development.

NEXT STEPS

- Create more awareness for the basketball program.
- Increase participation and engage more youth from the community.
- Increase the frequency of the program.

AT RISK YOUTH PROGRAM

The At Risk Youth Program is a community safety and crime prevention project that targets youth between the ages of 12 to 24 to enhance their protective factors and increase their circles of support through self-efficacy, interpersonal relations, and cultural reconnection.

IMPACT

Social value was created in cost avoidance to reduction in crime, reduced interaction with the justice system, and improved education rates for at-risk youth. The program also provided interventions for youth requiring counselling, mental health, and recreational services relieving strain on emergency services. The program demonstrates a needed service for the African community and its stakeholders in crime prevention.

NEXT STEPS

This program has improved the lives of African youth, their families, as well as contributed to program stakeholder's knowledge and accessibility to alternative programming that have helped to achieve their crime prevention outcomes. One major observation is a need to focus on the mental health needs of vulnerable communities. Despite the modest social change in the SROI analysis, this project demonstrated value for the stakeholders involved and therefore there is sufficient rationale to continue supporting Youth and Community through a Cultural Enrichment project.

“John* shared that he appreciated the kindness and maturity of those he interacted with at the Africa Centre. The program helped him repair his relationship with family members and he expressed that there are many youths who are like him that could especially benefit from a program such as the Youth and Community Cultural Enrichment Project.”

*Name changed to protect identity of youth

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

The project identified lack of positive relationship between youth and families as a primary source of future criminality. We also found that using skills development recreation is an effective method to engaging youth consistently.

Youth reduced their participation in criminal offenses. Families reported an improved relationship with their youth.

Youth reported having a stronger sense of their own cultural history and traditions. Most youth in the program continue to maintain connection with the Africa Centre and access other programs.

The program received a lot of referrals from the police and probation due to the effectiveness of the program.

YEGTHECOMEUP

YEGTheComeUp (an Africa Centre initiative), is a black youth empowerment program that works towards empowering and sharing the voices of young people of African descent while also addressing challenges, societal issues, and barriers experienced by Black youth in Edmonton. The program is designed for youth aged 15-30 to provide access to educational, career, and personal development, build their social capital, provide a means for socialization and engagement, civic engagement, and focus on team and relationship building.

YEGTheComeUp aims to impact our youth community through five different areas: arts and culture, education and advocacy, social media and outreach, events and community wellness.

In 2019-2020, YEGTheComeUp reached over 1100 youth in a wide range of workshops and events, an immense increase from previous years!

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Collaborated with Dr. Bukola Salami to formally research the access and uptake of mental health services among African, Caribbean and Black youth in Edmonton.

Hosted four conversation cafes with a total attendance of 160 youth, as well as our 5th Melanin Narratives event - our annual event for Black History Month. This year, we focused on promoting healthy relationships within our communities.

Did a social media rebranding on our social media channels. Our focus was on sustainability, featuring more initiatives and work by ABC artists and communities, and deepening our connection with our youth audience.

Created The Business of Art workshop series- the first of its kind in Edmonton, that focused on equipping local creatives with the entrepreneurial skills needed to maintain a sustainable business/brand.





“Being part of TCU, I’ve been able to meet outstanding and inspiring youth from across vast African, Black and Caribbean identities, who are game changers and table shakers. Through the amazing leadership and guidance of Robyn and the mentorship program run by Tawa, I am given the tools for self development in a nurturing community of my peers and community. TCU is great for all who feel led to be actively involved in their community and who are looking to create community for themselves. TCU is what you make it, you’re able to come as you are, explore your roots in a safe environment, meet welcoming people and redefine what community is for yourself and others. Joining TCU was the most amazing thing I have done for myself, 10/10 would recommend.”

Alom Aamanilom Deng



“Prior to joining TCU, I had been in a self-imposed bubble, distant and concerned with maintaining only 2 things: my grades and my comfort zone. After attending TCU, I had not only improved my grades, but also leadership skills, community building skills and several other skills that have improved how I interact with other people in both a business and informal setting. Most importantly, it has given me the opportunity to be surrounded by like minded peers who aim to not only be the best of themselves, but also grow the community and build generational wealth.”

Nife Ajayi

NEXT STEPS

- Increase membership in our task forces.
- Focus on volunteer care and appreciation.
- Create more networking opportunities for members and youth communities.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes of this TCU year were seen in the increased cohesion that the TCU team operated in. Our task forces were able to work more efficiently as well as expand their reach in the community. Also, community relationships were built or strengthened, and more engagement was present in many TCU initiatives. Participants benefited from learning transferable skills, which they could apply to other areas of their lives, and also benefited from a true camaraderie that was built between the members of YEGTheComeUp.

This contributed to a lower turnover rate, as more members are eager to continue the work we’ve achieved this year, as well as higher interest in TCU, as more applications have been received to join the program for the upcoming term.

OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Out of School Time Collaborative (OST) is a partnership of community groups, community leaders, service delivery agencies and local institutions. The formation of the OST was in response to concerns raised by immigrant and refugee families and community groups regarding the increased need for specific supports and programs for their children and youth when they are not in school. The OST has evolved and expanded its focus to include out of school time programs and supports for immigrant and refugee children and youth as well as all children and youth experiencing social vulnerability.

At the Africa Centre Centre, we engage with the OST collaborative through two initiatives:

BGCBIGS AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The BGCBigs Africa Centre Club is a safe and fun place for children and youth to come hang out after school, during spring break and summer break. The club provides kids with opportunities to connect with positive role models and peers. Children and youth enjoy a healthy snack and meal while exploring our core program areas: academic support, arts and culture, physical activity, health and nutrition, personal growth, empowerment, life skills, and leadership. Through this programming and with the club working on achieving academic excellence with our members through our tutoring/academic programming, children and youth learn to engineer their future and reach their full potential. Plus, having access to a gym in our building enables us to foster fun, interactive and engaging in physical, arts and culturally relevant programs.

SUMMER CAMP

The Africa Centre Summer Camp program is a 6-8 weeks program that provides a safe place for children to learn, play, interact, and explore during the summer months. It is a learning opportunity for children while they are out of school to keeps their minds active during the break. Children are able to interact with their friends as well as make new connections with children within the African and Edmonton Immigrant community.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

This year we had a total of 180 registrations and 23 of the children were on the waiting list, with an average attendance of 100 children daily.

The program was divided into different themes for each week; Mystery week, Academic week, Champions week, Art Week, Cultural Week, and Adventure Week.

The camp partnered with different organizations and programs like Edmonton Public Library, City of Edmonton, ASSIST Community Services Centre, Game OVR, Aga Khan Garden, YEGThe Come Up, Africa Centre Seniors Program, and so many more.

There was a mix of recreational and educational field trips for the youth this summer including: Agh khan Garden tour, swimming, Jump 360, Game OVR, among others. The children also participated in three workshops at the camp; Bricks 4 kids, ASSIST, and Soap carving.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this summer camp was to provide support and activities for children and youth in the areas of academics, sports/rec, arts and culture, and leadership.

IMPACT

Staff recognizes the large amount of growth, increased resilience and empathy from the students. Children excelled and there were major growths in their social skills and development.

The participants were able to build on their resourcefulness when handling challenging situations, while staff were able to build new relationships with the youth and help them face situations that they were unable to handle alone.

A Special thank you to our Summer Camp Staff- your enthusiasm and efforts are appreciated!

“I remember sitting down with one of the older kids in division 3 who was having a rough day. We just sat down and I asked him how he was feeling and what I can do to help him out. We ended up getting off track and started talking about life, what his plans were for the school year. He asked about my school and I told him I was in university and he told me that he wishes to be the first one to go to university on his family. I was really touched and started talking to him about different options that he has, especially that he is such a bright kid. We shared few laughs here and there and I could just see his mood brighten and it warmed my heart. This is why I enjoy working with these kids, there is just a level of satisfaction that you get from making a kid's day that you can't get anywhere else.”

Summer Camp Staff

NEXT STEPS

- Increase awareness of the summer camp to increase participant registration.
- Expand the number of locations of the summer camp.
- Partner with more organizations to include more workshops and field-trips for the camp participants.



EDMONTON REFUGEE AND EMERGING COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The Edmonton Refugee and Emerging Community Scholarship Fund was established at the Edmonton Community Foundation to 'enhance the quality of life for refugees and members of Emerging communities living in greater Edmonton. The Emerging Community Scholarship Awards were designed to enable success in post-secondary education by offering monetary support through the form of scholarships to members of Emerging communities.

This year, Africa Centre awarded 24 post-secondary students scholarship awards that totalled \$50,000. We would like to say a heart-felt Congratulations to the recipients for their hard work and dedication in their academic endeavours!

IMPACT

Scholarship recipients identified feeling more supported after receiving the award, with a noted increase in confidence in their academic and professional pursuits.

2019-2020

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

Fatima Yusuf
Anfanuura Mohamoud
Bushara Anjum
Lisa Cyuzuzo
Yar Anyieth
Nebiyu Kedir
Patrice Walker
Zanib Pannu
Zahro Hassan
Rosemary Nnabude
Sali Almabhouh
Ksenia Voronina
Ivan Wilfried Ulrich Ngandjui
Touko
Ademola Adebawale
Asha Bille
Keren Lumbala Tshiala
Idara Effiom
Patrick Cajina Cortez
Keysel Besa
Coralee Thomas
Sophia Qaderi
Ehhsertinay Paw
Areej Alshammiry
Andrew Jimaga





“Receiving the 2019 ERECA offered tremendous support for my 2019-2020 academic term. The scholarship helped relieve the amount of student aid I required for my studies that term. Having people of my own community consider my volunteer-ism as impactful and worthy of reward was highly empowering because it assured me that others see the value in my contributions so much so that they found it worth recognizing. Lastly, as a refugee, it is often easy to get lost in the pursuit of success. The goal of creating something for yourself so that your families, community and self have something to be proud of can be a lot of pressure. Supports like this offer the necessary encouragement to remind people like myself that everything we are doing is with purpose, valued and destined for success. I could not be more thankful for this award for all that it has offered me and others.”

Yar Anyieth



“I am committed to the ideal that it is our ethical responsibility to find the meaning that will sustain us. For me, I find joy and meaning in remaining focused on my studies and in perpetually rekindling my commitment to academic excellence. Community work and volunteering are a two-way street: I found over the years that it benefitted me as much as the cause I chose to help for the meaning it gives into my life that inevitably expanded outwards. The EREC award truly affirms the goodness of such an ideal—particularly the value of giving back to my immediate community in every way possible.”

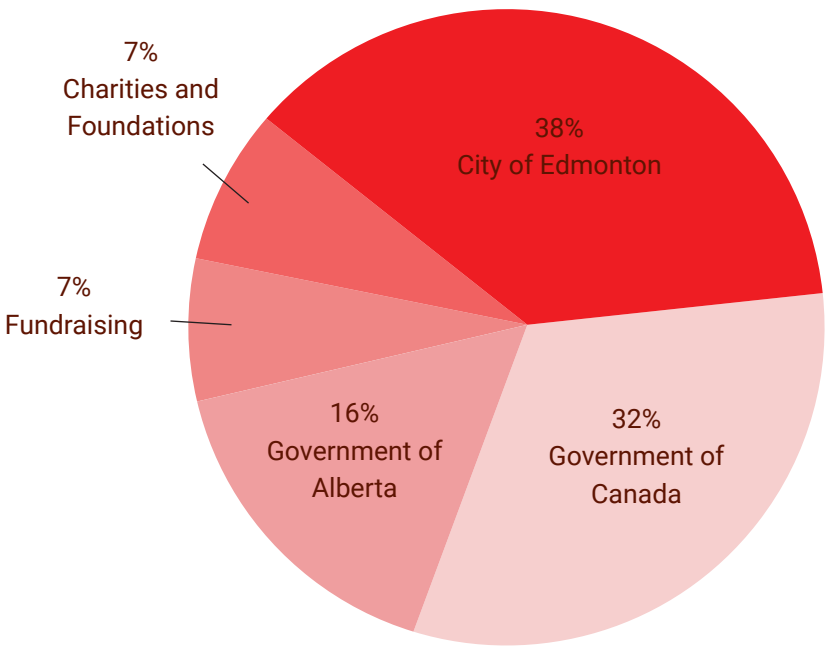
Keyssel Alberto Besa



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

TOTAL REVENUE

1,857,719.00



Charities and Foundations
130,483.00

City of Edmonton
699,386.00

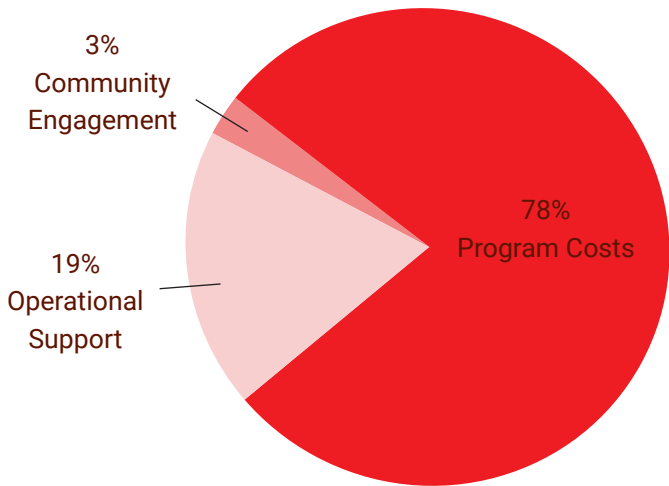
Fundraising
133,551.00

Government of Alberta
291,286.00

Government of Canada
603,013.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

1,792,163.00



Community Engagement
50,000.00

Operational Support
349,440.00

Program Costs
1,392,723.00

FUNDERS AND PARTNERS



Alberta Health Services

APIRG

City of Edmonton



Edmonton Food Bank

Boys and Girls Clubs of
Edmonton & Area



Government of Alberta

Government of Canada

Edmonton Oilers
Community Foundation



The Stollery Charitable
Foundation



Edmonton Community
Foundation

Sage Seniors Association



REACH Edmonton

OUR VOLUNTEERS

The Africa Centre would like thank the dedicated and committed volunteers who took the time and effort to devote themselves towards improving the wellbeing of the African-descent community in Edmonton. It is with their help the Africa Centre is able to continue to do the work that we do!



Aamanilom Deng
Belinda Uwase
Deborah Agube
Eziuchecku Ekwe
Habibo Gelle
Hayat Merda
Kaiha Marah
Karis Nsofor
Kevin Rwigamba
Lasha Zenashe Aytenfisu
Lisa Cyuzuzo
Nife Ajayi
Munashe Maguta
Rose John
Sabrina Muhammed
Tarissa Woolaston
Ver Se Denga
Yawa Idi
Yassanah Nurudeen
Precious Udeh
Seun Afolabi
Kelechi Ekwulugo
Adama Bundu
Abena Osei
Dulu Modi
Sabrina Gebreyesus
Fahad Suleiman
Hamdi Ali
Christina Thompson
Eunice Gatama
Yar Anyieth
Jane Wasika
Jocelyn Nabakoli
Hakima Dengnai
Elizabeth Oloo
Ashley Chinyemba
Tom Ndekezi
Olivia Taylor

SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to say a special thanks to the community of Edmonton. The people of this City have continuously shown us unwavering support, and without it, the Africa Centre and the African-descent community wouldn't be where it is today. We would like to thank everyone who has made a donation to our cause, no matter how large or small, as well as the people who have attended our events, participated in our workshops or who have told their family and friends about the work that we do. Thank you for your generous contributions and support!



Africa Centre YEG



@africacentreyeg



@africacentreyeg

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Hours

Monday - Friday
9am to 5pm

