

Leadership Retreat

CHARTING OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURE

Banff, Alberta | November 24-27, 2025



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Welcome to the Spur Change Leadership Retreat: Charting our Collective Future. Alongside fellow leaders from small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) working in international cooperation and with leaders from the Provincial and Regional of the Inter-Council Network (ICN), we will explore the future of SMOs in a rapidly evolving global landscape, strengthen our collective voice, and work through new ways of promoting a national network of SMOs — ready to mobilize, campaign, and drive meaningful change in Canada and beyond.

This retreat package has everything you need to know as you make your way to Banff. We invite you to read through at your leisure. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

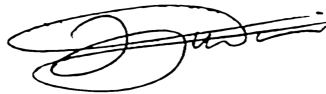
As we make our way to Banff, we would like to acknowledge that we are going to be gathering on Treaty 7 territory. We will speak more on how we can honour these treaty lands on our opening day but for now, I invite you to reflect on how we all have roles to play in righting the historical wrongs that have taken place and are ongoing. Indigenous people's connection to the land teaches us about our inherent responsibility to protect and respect the Earth and to recognize that we are all connected to each other.

Looking forward to welcoming you to Banff.

Warmly,



Sandra Mucchekeza
Executive Director
Alberta Council for Global Cooperation



Jetske Duintjer
Program Director
Spur Change Program



The *Leadership Retreat: Charting our Collective Future*, is an event organized by Spur Change, a program of the Inter-Council Network of Provincial and Regional Councils for International Cooperation, housed by the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation. The program is undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada.

Overview

Purpose of the retreat

To align Canada's small-and-medium international organizations and the Inter-Council Network around a shared reading of this moment, strengthen the relationships and capabilities needed to act together, and leave with clear, practical commitments for coordinated action.

Context

We convene because the landscape is shifting (funding trends, civic-space constraints, geopolitical pressure, and the need to de-colonize practice). The retreat is designed to support a resilient, Canada-wide ecosystem of small-and-medium international organizations and councils that sustains its leaders, moves together with clarity and agility, and realizes coordinated influence to protect civic space and advance de-colonized, locally led partnerships. This ecosystem shares timely information, pools light governance and resources when it matters, centers equity in decisions and funding, and cultivates a replenishing community so leaders can do high-impact work without burning out.

Objectives

- Agree on a shared, practical reading of the moment
- Rejuvenate leaders through rest, reflection, and nature
- Build community and peer support among leaders
- Identify collaborative actions
- Centre equity and decolonizing practice in how we work together

This retreat intentionally balances tangible outcomes with space for rejuvenation and community building. We recognize leaders are stretched; creating time to rest and to deepen peer support is part of strengthening long-term collective capacity—not a distraction from impact.

Creating a safe space

During the retreat we may find ourselves sharing thoughts on our own personal leadership challenges as well as insights into or details about our own organizations. To make this a safe space to share challenges, test new ideas, and be honest about where we are at, we ask that you at all times respect the confidentiality of what is discussed as a group. In the interest of making this a space safe for discussion and sharing, we also ask that you read through and commit to the following statements:

» **Respect:** I commit to being respectful, candid, transparent, and fair to all participants regardless of language, race, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, ability, etc. throughout the retreat.

» **Inclusion:** I commit to creating space for all in attendance to contribute and participate, to give prominence to the voices and stories of those who might otherwise be excluded, and to seek out the wisdom and reflection of those who may feel silenced.

» **Equity:** I commit to encouraging a retreat in which the varied experiences of participants are given equal weight.

» **Humility:** I commit to participating in the retreat with a spirit of openness to learning, and a recognition that the broad diversity of participants includes experience and knowledge that is beyond my own, and through which I can grow.

» **Solidarity:** I commit to the broad goals of strengthening Canada's global leadership and recognize that all participants share those goals. In all conversations and forums, I will remember that we are on the same side and will seek to find common ground and inspiration.

» **Safety:** I commit to ensuring the physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual safety of all participants in the retreat, including by calling out harassment when it is witnessed and reporting incidents to retreat organizers or other authorities as appropriate.



Creating an engaging space

You will not need your laptop or tablet during the program. The room will be set in a flexible, table-free configuration (chairs in circles and small breakout clusters) to support conversation, movement and hands-on practice.

The retreat is designed for listening, peer learning and restorative presence – not slide shows. Being phone-free and away from screens helps us focus, practice leadership skills together, and create the kind of attention and connection that produces useful, collective action.

Please bring:

- A notebook and pen for notes (you are welcome to use your phone if that is your notepad)
- Business cards / a QR contact if you like

If you need a table or other accommodations for accessibility or health reasons, please tell us in advance so we can make a private spot available.



Agenda

Monday, November 24

- | | | |
|-------|---|--------|
| 19:00 | Greetings & Light Networking | Lounge |
| 19:30 | Why We're Here - Purpose, Objectives, Agenda, and Invitations | |
| 20:00 | End of day | |

Tuesday, November 25

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------------|
| 8:00 | Breakfast | Bistro |
| 9:00 | Land Acknowledgement and Welcome to the Land | Kiguli Room |
| 9:45 | Decolonizing Practice Part I : Declaration of Commitment | |
| 10:30 | Break | |
| 11:00 | Decolonizing Practice Part II : Alternatives to Development | |
| 11:45 | Lunch | Bistro |
| 13:00 | Group Photo | Kiguli Room |
| 13:15 | What the Moment Looks Like? | |
| 14:45 | Break | |
| 15:15 | Who Does What - Mapping Canadian SMOs | |
| 16:15 | Paired Walk | |
| 16:45 | Plus / Delta | Kiguli Room |
| 16:50 | Closing and Logistics | |
| 17:00 | Break | |
| 18:00 | Progressive Dinner | Bistro |
| 19:30 | End of day | |

Agenda

Wednesday, November 26

8:00	Breakfast	Bistro
9:00	Welcome and Check in	Kiguli Room
9:20	Review Agenda for the Day	
9:30	Presentation on LIFT: New ICN SMO Program	
10:15	Break	
10:45	Speaking with One Voice: Policy & Lobbying	
12:15	Lunch	Bistro
13:15	Collective Action Labs	Kiguli Room
	> Re-engaging Canadians	
	> Partnerships & Pooled Resourcing	
	> Growth Opportunities	
14:30	Break	
15:00	Presentations by Collective Action Lab Groups	
15:40	Mindfulness Session	
16:10	Plus / Delta	Kiguli Room
16:25	Closing and Logistics	
16:30	Open time: optional outings in Banff	

Agenda

Thursday, November 27

8:00	Breakfast	Bistro
9:00	Welcome and Check in	Kiguli Room
9:20	Review Agenda for the Day	
9:30	Open Space: Leadership in Complexity	
10:30	Break	
11:00	Network Rhythm: How We Stay Together	
12:00	Takeaway Lunch	Bistro



Travel notes

Travel support

If you experience a flight delay or cancellation, please contact our travel coordinator, Taylor taylor.hamilton@acgc.ca, as soon as possible. We will do our best to assist you with rebooking or adjustments. Please note that additional expenses (such as accommodation, meals, or taxi costs) cannot be reimbursed unless pre-approved.

Getting to Banff

Shuttle service has been arranged through the Banff Airporter: banffairporter.com between Calgary International Airport (YYC) and the Juniper Hotel in Banff. The drive from Calgary to Banff takes about two hours but please allow for additional time if taking the shuttle for multiple stops.

Please book directly with Banff Airporter if you haven't done so already using our code *Collective2025*. Check schedules in advance to align with your arrival and departure times.

Banff National Park Pass

A valid Banff National Park Pass is required for all visitors staying in the park. You will need to purchase a pass online before your trip or upon arrival if driving.

You can buy your pass online here: banfflakelouise.com/park-pass-purchase

As a reminder, please keep all your receipts and boarding passes for reimbursement. For more details please refer to our [Travel Guide](#).



Hotel information

Perched above Banff at the base of Mt. Norquay, the [Juniper Hotel & Bistro](#) combines luxury, comfort, and nature. Enjoy mountain views, an outdoor hot tub, e-bike and adventure gear rentals, and inspiring dining at Banff's #3 ranked restaurant. The hotel celebrates Indigenous art and is committed to sustainable, nature-positive practices.

Juniper Hotel

1 Juniper Way, Banff, AB T1L 1E1
(403) 762-2281

Check-In / Check-Out

- A room has been reserved under your name, please be prepared to provide a piece of ID and a credit card for a security deposit.
- Check-in: From 4 PM (early check-in subject to availability)
- Check-out: 11 AM
- Front Desk: 24-hour service

Amenities

- Mountain views & outdoor hot tub
- Easy access to trails
- Locally inspired dining
- Nature-positive & cultural experiences

Transportation

- Complimentary shuttle to downtown and transit hubs (10 AM – 6 PM, request at front desk)
- Cycling, taxi, or driving options available; walking is possible but route is unmarked in sections



Emergency procedures

In the event of an emergency, call 911 immediately.

The Juniper Hotel is located at 1 Juniper Way, Banff AB.
Please contact Jetske (514) 207-5006 when able.

In the event of a non-emergency incident (eg. non-life-threatening illness preventing conference participation) contact Jetske at (514) 207-5006 or via email at jetske.duinjer@acgc.ca, then refer to other relevant phone numbers below.

In the event of an emergency evacuation at the Juniper Hotel, follow the direction of Juniper Hotel staff members. To contact the hotel: (403) 762-2281

Health Link: 811

Get health advice from a registered nurse.

The Support Network: 211

Single access point to health, human services, community resources and government assistance.

Mental Health Support Line: 1-877-303-2642

Get confidential information and referrals.

The closest hospital emergency room is at the Mineral Springs Hospital (305 Lynx Street, Banff | 403-762-2222).

The closest health clinic is the Banff Community Health Centre (303 Lynx St, Banff | 403-762-2990). We strongly recommend calling before going to any medical facility,

Additional notes

Pack smart

Weather in Banff can be unpredictable in late November. Expect cold temperatures and the likelihood of snow. We recommend bringing:

- Warm winter clothing (hat, gloves, scarf, coat)
- Waterproof boots or shoes with good grip
- Comfortable indoor shoes
- Layered clothing for indoor sessions and possible outdoor activities
- Bathing suit & slippers if you plan to use the hotel's outdoor hot tub (robes are provided in your room)

Simultaneous interpretation

Simultaneous English–French interpretation will be available. To keep equipment charged and available for everyone, return your headset at the end of each day.

Activities

If you have some free time, here are a few nearby attractions to explore:

- Banff Avenue: Shops, cafés, and galleries
- Dining: [Top 10 Restaurants in Banff](#)
- Gondola: ascend by gondola to the summit of Sulphur Mountain during the day or for the Nightrise experience. Prices start at \$69/pp. Purchase tickets online. [More info.](#)
- Bow Falls or Tunnel Mountain Trail: Short scenic walks near town



Main facilitator

Ian Prinsloo (he/him)

Founder and Director | Create|Act

Ian Prinsloo is a designer and facilitator of the creative process, dedicated to unlocking the full potential of individuals and groups to tackle complex challenges. As the Founder and Director of Create|Act, he helps leaders and teams harness creativity to take bold, collaborative action in pursuit of systemic change.

Previously, Ian was a senior consultant at Reos Partners, a global social innovation consultancy. There, he led multi-stakeholder projects for organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Ian's expertise in leadership development was honed at the Banff Centre in Canada, where he designed programs that equipped leaders with the skills to collaborate and approach change as an act of creation. He continues to share his knowledge as a guest lecturer at Kaospilot in Denmark, a school for leaders, entrepreneurs, and changemakers.

Before stepping into the world of systemic change, Ian was an award-winning theatre director in Canada. His background in theatre has deeply influenced his work, particularly in ensemble collaboration, metaphorical thinking, and the role of creativity in social transformation. He has also published writings on these subjects, further contributing to the field of creative process facilitation.



Your fellow leaders

Allison Kingston (she/her)

Executive Director | Rayjon Share Care

Born and raised outside of Sarnia, ON, Allison has spent years living around Canada and the world until coming back to Sarnia-Lambton to join the Rayjon team full-time as Executive Director in July 2024! Inspired by Rayjon's work with our partner ASCALA, she completed her master's thesis on statelessness in the Dominican Republic, achieving her MA in Migration and Diaspora Studies from Carleton University. She holds core values of connecting communities, innovative change and strengthening partnerships. In her free time she loves to stay active, whether it's boxing or a walk in the sunshine, but also enjoys settling down with a good book.



Anne Catherine Bajard (she/her)

Executive Director | British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC)

I have been active in solidarity movements since early in life, following in the footsteps of my parents and grandparents. I identify as multinational, having lived equally in Bolivia as in Canada, after a childhood in France and Denmark.

My credentials, my heart, my drive are based on the decades I lived in Bolivia, then later in Liberia and Haiti. The Indigenous Peoples of the Lowlands of Bolivia (Amazon), for one, and the domestic workers of Bolivia, were the drivers that led me to what I would now call a "translocal", "intersectional" and governance-centered approach that leads me to challenge my own "paradigms" continuously. I thrive on being challenged to that end. My core beliefs? Solidarity. Holding hands. Accompaniment.

My challenges: having participated in project-driven "international development" relationships that were overshadowed by norms and systems that neither member of the relationship were happy with.

My joy: relationships, partnerships, alliances amongst equals, where we breathe the air together and celebrate values.

I have a Masters in Geography. That gives me the title required in certain worldviews, and/but I treasure more than anything the validity (and friendship) given to me by the populations I have lived and worked with.



Cat Ross (she/her)

President & Founder | KIDS Initiative Inc.

Cat Ross has devoted her life to turning compassion into action. Raised in a family that valued giving, she discovered early that small efforts can spark lasting change. What began as volunteering with students with exceptionalities evolved into a lifelong commitment to humanitarian work.

Cat has contributed to numerous organizations, including the United Way, Winnipeg Harvest, the Children's Hospital Foundation, CancerCare Manitoba, UNICEF Canada, and the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, focusing on improving lives locally and globally. In 2005, she worked in HIV/AIDS clinics in Nairobi's Kibera slum, an experience that inspired her to found KIDS Initiative Inc. in 2009. Under her leadership, the organization grew into a global force for sustainable development, empowering children and communities through education, healthcare, and economic programs.

Her exceptional service earned national recognition when she received the Meritorious Service Medal (Civil Division) in 2020, presented by Governor General Mary Simon in 2023.

Today, Cat continues to give back as a mentor with the Scotiabank Women Initiative and a board member of Turning Leaf. She believes giving is not merely an act but a way of life, one that inspires others to serve, uplift, and create lasting impact.



Dan Sutherland (he/him)

President and Programming Chair |
Canadian International Council – Saskatoon

Dan Sutherland is a product of the Canadian prairies and currently serves as Programming Chair for the Canadian International Council – Saskatoon. A passionate advocate for the power of in-person engagement, Dan has witnessed firsthand how speaker events can inspire students to pursue international careers, spark interdisciplinary research collaborations, and foster lifelong friendships. Since 2009, Dan has organized more than 150 internationally-themed events in Saskatoon, along with numerous multi-city speaker tours across Western Canada. His work has brought together diplomats, academics, youth leaders, and community members to explore global issues through meaningful dialogue. He has also facilitated workshops at the national level, contributing to Canada's broader conversation on international affairs.

Dan's favourite topics include the evolution of personal and multinational goodwill, particularly in the formation of common-cause organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization of American States, La Francophonie, and CARICOM.

Beyond his work with the CIC, Dan has produced events for the Saskatchewan Youth Network and the Swift Current Film Society, further demonstrating his commitment to community engagement and youth empowerment.

When he's not building bridges between people and ideas, Dan enjoys dogs, live music, good jokes, and witnessing others achieve what once seemed impossible.



Eliza MacLauchlan (she/her)

Collective Member | Cooper Institute

Eliza MacLauchlan is a Director with the Atlantic Council for International Cooperation and is a Collective Member with Cooper Institute in Prince Edward Island. She has had the opportunity to work and live in Guatemala as an International Human Rights Accompanier with Breaking the Silence, a Maritimes-Guatemala Solidarity Network. She currently works with the PEI Human Rights Commission as a Human Rights Officer.



Evelyne Seraphin (she/her)

Co-director | Caravane Philanthrope

I have been co-executive director/administrative and financial director of Caravane Philanthrope for eight months. I studied political science and taught elementary school for several years. My organization, based in Quebec, offers therapeutic/humanitarian clowning and circus-based social services. Circus is an art form that I love because it offers everyone the opportunity to express themselves, regardless of their background, physical health, socio-economic background, or preferences, etc. Therapeutic and humanitarian clowning has an innate magic that helps people understand each other on an emotional level: transcending language barriers. On a personal level, I am a mother of three daughters. My husband, our eldest daughter, and I immigrated to Canada in 2013. I am Creole, born on Reunion Island (I will be celebrating my 40th birthday on November 25 ;)), and so, like most people from Reunion Island, I am the result of 400 years of mixing between populations from three continents and several religions (European sailors, Africans who had been enslaved, Indians, South Asians, and Arabs who left their countries in search of a better life). International cooperation is literally in my DNA!



Janice Hamilton (she/her)

Executive Director | Manitoba Council for International Cooperation

Janice has been with the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC) since 1987, serving in a variety of roles before becoming Executive Director in 2000. A committed leader in the international cooperation sector, Janice has served at the national level as a Director of Cooperation Canada for many years since 1996. She is also an active member of the Inter-Council Network of Provincial & Regional Councils for International Cooperation.

Provincially, she has participated in several Roundtables and most recently was on the Curriculum Advisory Panel for Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning. Janice received the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal (Manitoba) in 2022.

Janice is passionate about Public Engagement. She is dedicated to creating meaningful and creative ways to involve more people in international cooperation and seeing the connections between global and local issues, with the goal of nurturing engaged, informed Global Citizens. She has participated in several committees, both nationally and provincially, regarding Public Engagement. MCIC has earned a reputation for delivering innovative and engaging programming in the formal education sector and the larger community.



Jennifer Sloot (she/her)

Executive Director | Atlantic Council for International Cooperation

With over 25 years of experience in international cooperation, community organizing, and global peacebuilding efforts, Jennifer has built a successful career dedicated to fostering positive change. As Executive Director of the Atlantic Council for International Cooperation (ACIC) for more than a decade, she leads a network of over 70 organizations, institutions, and individuals in the international cooperation sector, overseeing capacity building, strategic planning, and engaging youth in programs focused on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, as host of the Inter-Council Network (ICN), Jennifer collaborates with Canada's eight Provincial and Regional Councils for International Cooperation to advance collective priorities for more than 350 diverse civil society organizations (CSOs) from across Canada. Prior to her work with ACIC, Jennifer held previous roles as a community organizer with the United Way and worked with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva. Jennifer holds a Master's in Development Studies from the University of the South Pacific, a Bachelor's in International Development from the University of Guelph, a diploma in Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution from Chulalongkorn University, and a certificate in Feminist Leadership from the Coady Institute, further reinforcing her expertise and commitment to global sustainable development.



Jetske Duintjer (she/her)

Program Director | Spur Change

Jetske is the Director of Program for Spur Change, a capacity building and knowledge-sharing initiative supporting Canadian SMOs, implemented for the Inter Council Network (ICN) and managed by the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation (ACGC).

Prior, Jetske worked as program manager in international development and humanitarian assistance with organizations such as Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders), Oxfam-Quebec, Canada World Youth and the European Union. She managed a variety of development projects and emergency health care interventions in Peru, El Salvador, Angola, Mozambique, Indonesia and Colombia. In Canada, as Program Manager of Netcorps Canada International, she steered a Coalition of 9 Canadian NGOs building capacity in Information and Technology (IT) of local partner organizations in South- and Central America, Africa and the Middle East. In her previous position as National Association Manager with Doctors Without Borders Canada, working closely with the Board of Directors she established the Association Unit fostering an engaged, dynamic and well-informed membership community equipped to raise awareness on global issues and to guide the future direction of the organization.

Upon delivery of her final thesis on 'Empowering Women & Poverty Alleviation', Jetske obtained a MSc in International Relations at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands.



Karen Hudson (she/her)
Connecting to Africa (CTA)

Karen Hudson comes from one of the historical Black communities of Nova Scotia, Cherry Brook Lake Loon. She is a dedicated educator and principal at Auburn Drive High School with over 28 years of experience. Her greatest influence is her family that ground her in the work she does everyday. She has chaired, co-founded, and participated on boards, community, and church, including the African Nova Scotian Freedom School, Connecting to Africa (CTA), Black Educators Association of Nova Scotia (BEA), and many more. Her passion and experience is evident in the work she does with youth and within her community. Her early teachings of African culture and history began with her involvement with the Cultural Awareness Youth groups where it created a space for her to explore and learn about her rich history. In 2019, she was recognized as a National Principal by the Learning Partnership for embedding Africentric principles in the creation of the Africentric Math Cohort in the public school system. She received honorary Doctor of Civil Law from Saint Mary's University in 2024 and Dalhousie University in 2025 for her educational and community work. She was recognized as one of the ABC 500 women. She is a mother.



Kimberly Gibbons (she/her)
Executive Director | Ontario Council for International Cooperation

Kimberly Gibbons has more than 20 years experience working to inspire global citizenship, facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity strengthening, and foster collaboration and engagement of people in Ontario and beyond, in international cooperation and solidarity. Since 2005 she has served as the Executive Director of the Ontario Council for International Cooperation (OCIC), working closely with a vibrant and diverse community of organizations and individuals to increase the visibility of partnerships, experiences, perspectives and priorities in the sector through initiatives like OCIC's Transformations Stories and Youth Policy-Makers Hub, and the Inter-Council Network (ICN) policy and research, capacity strengthening, and funding programs for SMOs.

She holds a Masters of Education in Adult Education and Transformative Learning from OISE, University of Toronto, and studied human rights at the graduate level at the Commonwealth Institute, University of London, England. She has a Bachelor of Arts in International Development and Rural Extension Studies from the University of Guelph, and completed her final undergraduate year of study at SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, India.



Kristin Ignacz (she/her)
Community Engagement Manager | Right to Learn Afghanistan

Kristin Ignacz is a communications leader with 15+ years of experience driving strategic initiatives that advance women's rights and social change. Since transitioning from law to communications in 2022, she has spearheaded international campaigns, led organizational rebranding of Right to Learn Afghanistan, and implemented strategies that doubled organizational engagement. With her work published in Public Relations Case Studies: Strategies and Actions, Kristin uses her diverse experience to prepare perceptive, results-based strategies that harness the power of effective communication and community building. She holds a BA in Sociology and English and a PDD in Professional Communications focused on gender equality.



Leonard Boniface (he/him)

President | TELIYA International Society

Leonard Boniface is the president of the TELIYA International Society and the founder of both the Yukon African Music Festival and the Yukon International Conference on Diversity and Inclusion. He is a human rights advocate, artist, entrepreneur, international speaker, former member of the Oxfam International Youth Parliament, and a former journalist. Leonard holds a Master of Science (MSc) degree. Leonard also founded and hosts a popular weekly radio program, "Diversity World Radio Show," on CJUIC-FM in Yukon.

In addition to his various roles, Leonard works full-time with the Yukon Government. Leonard is an exceptional community organizer, an international figure, and an accomplished musician with extensive experience in singing, songwriting, and drumming. Over the years, he has travelled to more than 40 countries around the world. Originally from Tanzania, Leonard currently resides in Yukon, Canada.



Lorraine Swift (she/her)

Executive Director | Change for Children (CFC)

Lorraine is the Executive Director of Change for Children where she has worked since July 2002. Originally as Projects Coordinator and now as Executive Director, Lorraine leads the organization's ambitious fundraising program, as well as manages Change for Children's communications and overseas development programs. Working to build and strengthen partnerships that evolve between communities across Canada and communities throughout the developing world, Lorraine has led the organization through a process of growth and specialization in themes such as technological innovation, sustainable resource management, gender equality and indigenous rights.

Previous to her work with Change for Children, Lorraine lived in Managua, Nicaragua for almost four years where she worked as a CUSO Co-operant on various initiatives promoting territorial rights and self-government with the Miskito and Mayagna indigenous peoples of the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve, (which they have since obtained).

Lorraine has a bachelor's degree in Native Studies from the University of Alberta and previously held various positions with groups working in Alberta's environmental movement, and also worked with the Little Red River Cree in northern Alberta on cultural cartography and land management research.



Malcolm Toland (he/him)

Executive Director | Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation

Malcolm Toland is the Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation. He brings over 30 years of global development experience in 30 countries across the 3 continents of Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, implementing projects for the World Bank, GAC, USAID, EU, GIZ and FCDO focused on economic reform, business regulation, public private dialogue, gender equality and livelihoods transformation. A highlight of his international experience was as Country Director for Global Affairs Canada (GAC) leading a transformational business skills/vocational training project in Iraq. He has an undergraduate degree from the University of Manitoba and a MBA from the University of Western Ontario Ivey School of Business.



Michèle Asselin (she/her)

Executive Director | Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale



Michèle Asselin has been involved in the Quebec feminist movement for over 30 years and has been working in international solidarity since 2010. As Executive Director of the Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI) since 2015, she has collaborated in the development and implementation of a strategic vision focused on the defense of human rights, women's rights, gender equality, the environment, and peace.

Under her leadership, AQOCI created the Fonds d'investissement solidaire international du Québec (FISIQ), strengthened global citizenship education, and orchestrated the États généraux québécois de la solidarité internationale (2025), mobilizing the Association's members, Quebec social movements, and international partners.

From 2010 to 2015, she headed the Centre international de solidarité ouvrière (CISO), bringing together Quebec unions around issues of decent work internationally. Previously, after nine years coordinating the R des centres de femmes, she chaired the Fédération des femmes du Québec (2003-2009), where she established a historic protocol of mutual solidarity with the organization Femmes autochtones du Québec.

As co-founder of the World March of Women, her career illustrates a consistent feminist commitment to equality, social justice, and international solidarity.

Mohammad Akib Hossain (he/him)

Director of Communication | United Nations Association in Canada – Regina Branch



My name is Mohammad Akib Hossain, and I'm honored to join this leadership retreat as a representative of the United Nations Association in Canada (UNAC) – Regina branch, in partnership with SCIC. I'm a passionate youth advocate, community leader, and international student at the University of Regina, pursuing a degree in Computer Science.

Since moving to Canada, I've been dedicated to amplifying youth voices, promoting social justice, and advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through community engagement and innovation. My journey with UNAC began as a delegate for the Building Young Entrepreneurs program and the UNDRIP conference, where I developed a deeper commitment to inclusion and sustainability.

Beyond UNAC, I've collaborated with several national organizations including UNICEF Canada, Movember, the Students Commission of Canada, jack.org, and CBC, focusing on youth mental health, anti-racism, and community storytelling.

I'm passionate about creating inclusive, sustainable spaces that empower young people to share their stories and lead change. I look forward to learning, connecting, and growing alongside everyone during this retreat.

Owen Lupien (he/him)

Vice President | Together for a Strong World

I'm a former University of Winnipeg student who has worked alongside Isaac Kabuha in helping build 'Together for a Strong World' after we met and became close friends during our time at school in Winnipeg. I strongly believe in Isaac's approach to NGO work as it is a 'from the ground up approach' and also has direct connections to individuals and specific communities on the ground both in DRC and Winnipeg itself. A few other facts about myself is I live and work full-time in Edmonton AB but am originally from Eastern Canada and I currently work in Emergency Response Services.



Rano Mansurova (she/her)

Country Representative | Acted Canada

Rano Mansurova is the Country Representative for Acted Canada, with over 20 years of experience in international assistance, including humanitarian response, development, and peacebuilding. She leads Acted's engagement with Global Affairs Canada and other partners, helping secure funding and build strategic collaborations. Rano is a co-chair of the Canadian CSO Nexus Working Group, where she promotes integrated approaches to humanitarian, development, and peace efforts (Triple Nexus). Rano is also a certified trainer with CanWaCH Academy and a member of the Humanitarian Response Network of Canada's Executive Committee. She holds a Doctor of Medicine and a Master's in World Economy, and is fluent in English, Russian, and Tajik.



Ryan Siemens (he/him)

Executive Director | Mennonite Central Committee Alberta

For the last three years, Ryan has served as the Executive Director of MCC Alberta. Prior to MCCA, Ryan served seven years as Executive Minister of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and for nine years as pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert, SK. Ryan is passionate about seeing the work of MCC extend from the life of the church community and enjoys connecting with local congregations. When he's not out visiting a church or Thrift Store, or working with the MCCA Leadership Team, he can be found riding his motorcycle somewhere in Alberta!



Sandra Muchekeza (she/her)

Executive Director | Alberta Council for Global Cooperation

Sandra Muchekeza is a dedicated and passionate leader deeply committed to justice and sustainable change both in her local community and globally. Originally from Kenya, she pursued her Bachelors studies in Psychology in Australia before moving to Canada, where she began her career in International Development. Her professional career evolved to managing programs, projects, and enhancing systems and processes within the social profit sector.



As the Executive Director for the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation, Sandra Muchekeza oversees programs that seek to raise awareness on global issues, mobilize Albertans to become global citizens engaged in sustainable development and provide capacity building support to international development organizations.

Prior to this role, Sandra was the Director of Programs at Africa Centre, where she oversaw programs and spearheaded various initiatives, notably the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative program, funded by the Government of Canada, aimed at empowering grassroots not-for-profit organizations serving Black communities across Canada.

Passionate about issues affecting Black communities, Sandra contributes her knowledge and lived experience to the Canada Black Justice Strategy as a member of a Steering Group tasked with providing recommendations and developing a framework that will shape the government's strategy in reforming the criminal justice system.

Sara Michel (she/her)

Director | Kenoli Foundation

Born in Alexandria, Egypt, Sara Michel immigrated to Canada in 1995 with her family. She has over twenty years of professional experience in global relations working in and with government, international, multilateral and civil society organizations, in and outside Canada. She is fluent in English, French, Arabic, and a working level proficiency in Spanish. She is a Qualified Mediator and has training in conflict analysis and resolution, facilitation, emergency preparedness and human resource management.



Sara currently works with the federal government where she manages Canada's partnerships and contribution to mediation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. She is participating in this retreat in her personal capacity as a Director for the Board of Directors for the Kenoli Foundation, a small organization based in Vancouver, which works on food security and early childhood education in Central America.

Sara currently lives with her partner and son in Vancouver, Canada--the traditional, ancestral, and unceded Indigenous territories of the x məθk əyəm (Musqueam), Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

Sean Irwin (he/him)

Board Member | World Fisheries Trust

Dr. Sean Irwin is an Associate Professor of International Political Economy in the School of Business at Royal Roads University. His research explores strategies and innovations that address systemic challenges to sustainable social and economic development in the global South, particularly Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. His work spans themes of food systems, rural development, women's empowerment, food security, international trade, water-sanitation-hygiene (WASH), and global health.



Sean is director of the Development Action Innovation and Research (DAIR) group and serves on the boards of the NGOs World Fisheries Trust and Transform International Canada. He has led numerous international development initiatives as principal investigator and is the 2024 recipient of the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA BC) Distinguished Academics Early in Career Award.

Sean holds a PhD in Geography from the University of Victoria, a Masters of Rural Development from Brandon University, a Masters of International Trade from the University of Saskatchewan, and a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science from the University of Manitoba.

Solange Mudahogora (she/her)

National Program Manager | Inter-Council Network (ICN)

Solange Mudahogora is the co-founder of two Canadian non-profit organizations: Uzima Network Inc. and Le Mimosa du Quartier. She holds a Master's degree in Sociology with a specialization in Women's Studies from the University of Ottawa.



A bilingual community development professional, Solange brings extensive national and international experience in program management, research, evaluation, capacity building, gender-based violence prevention, and health promotion. She has developed strong management expertise in international cooperation, gained through her leadership role with the Inter-Council Network for Provincial and Regional Councils for International Cooperation (ICN). Her work lies at the intersection of advocacy and social justice, focusing on settlement and integration, women's and children's protection, HIV/AIDS awareness, reproductive and sexual health, public policy consultations, and human rights.

Solange served on the Advisory Committee of the National Alliance for Racialized Refugee and Immigrant Women, co-chairs the Canadian Council for Refugees' Immigration and Settlement Working Groups, and is an active member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Halifax's Private Sponsorship of Refugees program. She has collaborated with numerous non-profit organizations, UN agencies, and academic institutions, contributing her expertise to initiatives that empower marginalized communities and promote equitable access to opportunities.

Taryn Russell (she/her)

Executive Director | Results Canada

Taryn has 15 years' experience working on global development issues with experience in the non-profit sector, the UN and the Canadian Government. She has expertise in advocacy, government relations, coalition building, facilitation and supporting grassroots movements.

Prior to her current role as Executive Director at Results Canada, Taryn held numerous positions at the organization including Deputy Executive Director. She has previously worked as Head of Policy and Advocacy at Save the Children Canada and has also held positions with Global Affairs Canada and the United Nations Development Programme. She is passionate about the power of advocacy to tackle systemic inequities in the world and really enjoys sharing her experience and knowledge of advocacy with others.



Tracey Wallace (she/her)

Executive Director | Northern Council for Global Cooperation

Tracey works in spaces where education, community, and global solidarity meet. Based in Whitehorse, Yukon, she has spent over 25 years supporting learning and advocacy efforts across northern Canada and southern Africa. Since 2013, she has served as Executive Director of the Northern Council for Global Cooperation, supporting collaborations that explore more relational, reciprocal ways of engaging in global cooperation—often asking what lies beyond the frame of “development” as it’s commonly practiced. Her path has also included work with the Yukon Human Rights Commission, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, and community-led education initiatives. Tracey holds a Master of Education from OISE at the University of Toronto. She continues to be shaped by the people and places she works alongside, as well as by the ongoing practice of showing up with curiosity and a willingness to learn.



Vincent Roy (he/him)

International Projects Director | Engineers Without Borders Quebec

I have been working as International Projects Director at Engineers Without Borders Quebec for 6 years. Before that, I volunteered for several months in India and Democratic Republic of Congo in 2016 and 2018. These experiences truly sparked my passion, and I decided to reorient my career to turn that passion into a profession.

My background is in civil engineering, with a specialization in environmental and project management at the graduate level. I have also been a lecturer for several years, sharing my passion for international projects. The values of equity, solidarity, and sharing drive me in my work. I like to say that I practice social and engaged engineering and I could not see myself working in a traditional engineering field.

The issue closest to my heart is climate change mitigation and adaptation. I aim to continue collaborating with our international partners and the communities where we work to implement sustainable solutions that meet their needs. I am also convinced that we have much to learn from these communities when it comes to climate change adaptation and mitigation here in Canada.

In my everyday life, I’m a fan of combat sports, outdoor activities, and music—especially rock and metal.



Zehra Rizvi (she/her)

Director of Operations | Northern Council for Global Cooperation

Born in Pakistan and having worked in Japan, the Philippines, and Guatemala, Zehra brings a global perspective to her leadership and community engagement. She holds a Master of Science in Integrated Water Resources Management from McGill University and an Honours Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from the University of Saskatchewan.



[We invite you to learn more about the Spur Change program on the Inter-Council Network's website.](#)

