



**AFRICA  
CENTRE**

**2020/21**

**ANNUAL REPORT**



## MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Over the past year, Africa Centre joined the world to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this period, we experienced changes which presented us with opportunities for growth and service to our community.

In 2018, the City of Edmonton undertook a governance and management audit that provided recommendations to streamline our governance and operations. This year, we can proudly say that we addressed all these recommendations and made these recommended processes as part of the organizational practices. We have amended our bylaws and reformed our membership through community consultations for inclusivity and diversification.

We recorded changes on several levels in both our service delivery and organizational capacity. We are happy to report that we increased our staffing to meet the needs of our growing community and established a communications department – a long term goal of our organization. One of the goals for the organization has been strengthening our communication, and the department came to fruition at an essential time when the world was forced to shift to a digital platform.

During the year, our board also experienced some changes. We gladly welcomed Edna Wakene, Noora Badr and Siba Khumalo as board members and look forward to harnessing their wealth of knowledge to build upon our achievements thus far! We sadly bade farewell to Jennifer Maina, Sara Mwamba, and Toko Assembe. We are grateful for the energy and dedication they brought to bear in the course of their service. Together, we have steered a steady course and their impact has been immeasurable.

Over the course of the year, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement held the world's attention and called for joint efforts to address the racial disparity in the availability of social and economic resources. Several organizations and individuals made donations towards this call which we have channelled into intensifying our programs and made services available to a larger client base. The generosity from donors was truly heartwarming.

The year wound down on a note of hope and determination for progress as we open our minds to new possibilities and improved ways to support our communities, while evolving through the changing times.

We appreciate the financial and capacity building support that Africa Centre has received from sponsorships, collaborations, private donors, the City of Edmonton, the Government of Alberta, and the Government of Canada.

Africa Centre upholds its pledge to press forward towards fulfilling its mandate and remains poised to serve through programs that are aimed at fostering progress in the African descent community. Our doors remain open to you all and we invite everyone to join us on this journey. We have come a long way, yet there are grounds ahead to cover. We have enjoyed coming thus far with you and we are delighted to continue this journey with you.

Thank you.

Kemoh Mansary

## BOARD MEMBERS

**Kemoh B. Mansaray**  
*Board chair*

**Toko Assembe**  
*Director*

**Philomena Okeke-Ihejirika**  
*Vice-chair*

**Jennifer Maina**  
*Board Chair*

**Sara N Mwamba**  
*Secretary*

**Firmin Guéladé**  
*Secretary*

**Cedric Naoussi**  
*Treasurer*

**Micheal Lawal**  
*Director*

**Imad Satti**  
*Director*

**Noora Badr**  
*Director*

**Edna Wakene**  
*Director*

**Sibangukuhle Khumalo**  
*Director*



## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to share that Africa Centre recorded a remarkable year through its programs and service delivery which underwent rapid adaptations to meet the demands of unprecedented changes created by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been a year with unprecedented ramifications at both economic and social levels of our communities. It was also a year that witnessed one of the most notable racial discussions as a result of Black Lives Matter (BLM).

The Africa Centre has played a role in response to both the pandemic phenomena as well as the race relations and equity in the face of COVID-19. The pandemic highlighted the cracks in our systems and the need for community cohesion to flatten the curve and mitigate the impact. I am proud to say that we, as a community came together to find innovative solutions for issues heightened by the pandemic, like the African Diaspora COVID-19 Response Taskforce; a collaboration between African Diaspora Partner Organizations, community leaders, and prominent scholars from academia to provide culturally inclusive food hampers to those in need. We also joined numerous community-serving organizations calling for the release of COVID-19 related race-based data to track the impact of the pandemic on members of our community: a show of our commitment to enhance our program delivery models to achieve greater results and consolidate our progress thus far.

One of the notable highlights was the launch of our mental health support system that included psychosocial support, educational sessions, and the establishment of a Counselling Clinic: the first of its kind in Western Canada offering culturally inclusive free therapy sessions with registered therapists targeted specifically for African descent Albertans. The impact of this program was timely as it was profound; it broke the barriers of cost and accessibility, and addressed mental health support at a time when Albertans needed it most.

The BLM movement last summer highlighted the need to bridge the gap in disproportionate opportunities for racialized folks and saw Albertans come together to support the Black community. More than 600 Albertans visited our website and donated to the organization over the year. I was touched by such an outpouring of support that came in the form of donations and community collaborations which has allowed us to lay the foundations for more expansion and growth in our programming for the year to come. For this, we are thankful to our donors whose contributions have accelerated the growth of our organization in a historic manner.

I would also like to thank our staff, board members, and the communities who have tirelessly worked with the Africa Centre to provide the services and programming that it has. Without all of you, the Africa Centre would not have seen the success and accomplishment that it has this past year.

Thank you.

Sharif Haji

## STAFF MEMBERS

Belinda Abudu

Berlise Yougmeni

Daqo Abdulle

Duniya Mohamed

Eleonore Tchayam

Elvire Yagoun

Eve Uwamahoro

Gina Davis

Firdos Yesuf

Jenaya Wiebe

Kusi Ampofo

Laurel Sabur

Melissa Uwera

Musah Mohammed

Nasra Warsame

Odion Welch

Ofoadile E Onah

Proscovia T. Nabafu

Richard Furama

Riyah Lakhani

Robyn Taylor

Sabrina Gebreyesus

Samira Salifou

Senait Araya

Sharif Haji

Steller Lokonga

Tanya Nguyen

Tawa Nzekwu

Tereza Dhour





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## WHO WE ARE

We are the largest pan African non-profit organization in western Canada, serving as a community hub that provides programs and services from a place of cultural awareness and competency to the families in our diverse community.

We acknowledge the diversity of our cultural background as a source of the strength that brings capacity and competencies to shape a thriving community in Alberta. We have a strong African indigenous cultural foundation incorporated across our programs and services.

## OUR APPROACH

We strive to create opportunities for full access and participation of all Albertans in all aspects of society including economic, social, cultural, and educational endeavours and contribute to the holistic development and wellness of individuals, family, and community.

We use the following four pillars in carrying out our mission:

**Cultural Identity:**

Promoting and maintaining the unique cultural Identity of African heritage, intergenerational cultural preservation and a sense of belonging.

**Advancement and Empowerment:**

Reduce inequality by improving the quality of lives of the communities through the empowerment of the diverse demographics and cultural heritages.

**Integration:**

Improving the economic and social participation of the African descent population into Canadian society and culture.

**Resource Diversification and Organizational Sustainability:**

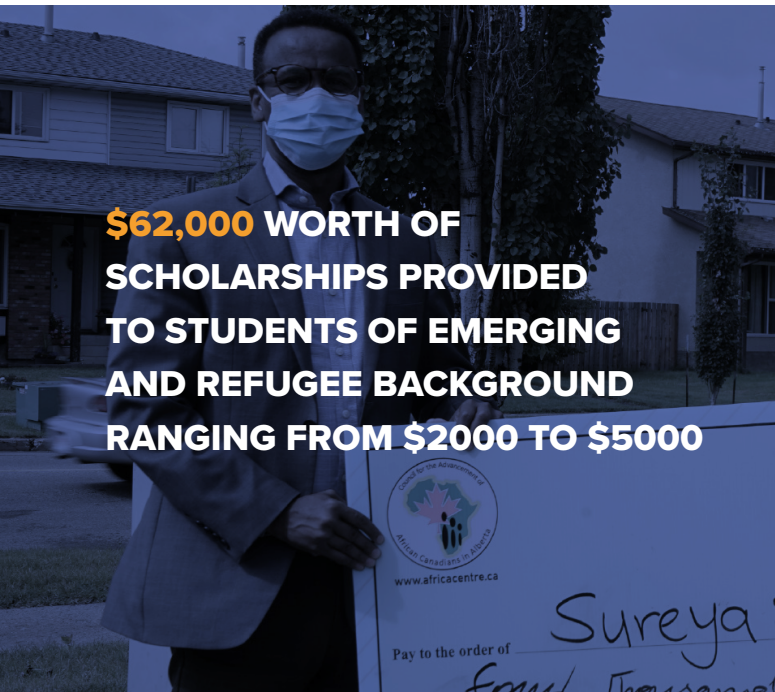
Prioritize the development and integration of a detailed sustainability vision into its long-term strategic plan in a way that will create lasting value while also creating public trust.

## OUR PROGRAMS

- COVID-19 RESPONSE
- BOOST - PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS PROGRAM
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE
- FOOD BANK
- GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPORWERMENT
- MENTAL HEALTH
- MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING CLINIC
- MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP
- OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAM – SUMMER CAMP
- SCHOLARSHIPS
- SENIORS WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT
- YEGTHECOMEUP



## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



**\$62,000 WORTH OF SCHOLARSHIPS PROVIDED TO STUDENTS OF EMERGING AND REFUGEE BACKGROUND RANGING FROM \$2000 TO \$5000**



**600 HOURS OF IN-CLASS AND ONLINE JOB-READINESS TRAINING PROVIDED TO YOUTH THROUGH OUR BOOST PROGRAM**



**PROVIDED OVER 1300 CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE FOOD HAMPERS TO FAMILIES**

**OVER 40 MENTOR PAIRINGS**



**OUR MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC SERVED CLIENTS FROM A WIDE RANGE OF BACKGROUNDS, INCLUDING:**

- ERITREA, TRINIDAD, GHANA, NIGERIA, RWANDA, UGANDA, SOUTH SUDAN, SOMALIA, JAMAICA, ZIMBABWE, GUYANA

## PROGRAM UPDATES

As the world shifted to a digital landscape, so did our youth programming. At a time when concern over isolation and mental health was at the forefront of conversation, we adjusted our programming to ensure it was accessible to youth across the province. Our programs quickly pivoted based on community needs, and we turned our focus on mental health and wellness, self-care, academic support, and food security.

We amped up our mentorship programming, pairing youth with support tutors to provide one-on-one academic support to ensure that students weren't falling behind as they navigated their home schooling brought on by lockdowns. We also developed a mental health mentorship program, which created a safe space for youth to work with individuals who could provide culturally inclusive relatable experiences and solutions to their mental wellness journey. Both programs were a success, with 94.4% of participants reported having a sense of community support due to the Mentorship program.

As the world shifted digitally, so did our basketball sessions. The in-person sessions moved online to continue creating a safe space for youth to connect with their teammates and work on their physical conditioning. Sessions were led by our basketball coaches, who led at-home workout routines to ensure that youth were getting their exercise in during the lockdowns.

Our youth collective from YEGTheComeUp facilitated a successful seminar that explored the silent epidemic that is substance use and addiction within the ABC community. The goal of this timely seminar was to better equip our community with knowledge and to create community discussion on ideas and outlets for support and recovery.

Our first ever Mental Health Conference was held in February of 2021. The two-day conference hosted a wide range of speakers from the African, Black and Caribbean community across Canada, whose intention was to educate, share resources and tackle the stigma around mental health in the Black community.

This year was momentous as we were able to distribute a total of \$62,600 worth of scholarships through our Emerging and Refugee Communities Scholarship Program to students from racialized and emerging communities. Scholarship Program, where students of racialized and emerging communities. We would like to thank our esteemed partners Edmonton Community Foundation and Canadian Western Bank for making this possible!

## IMPACT

94.4% reported having a sense of community support due to the Mentorship program.

40 active participants from Edmonton's ACB youth community make up YEGTheComeUp

Launched our Mental Health Mentorship program — 12 youth were paired with mentors to help them with their mental health journey over the period of six months

## TESTIMONIAL

*"The tutoring came at a time during which my child was home struggling to do the homework. She stated that the tutor was patient and helped her complete her homework"*

— Amal Abukar, parent.

*"Thank you for making this service accessible! I have been wanting to see a therapist for a while but as I do not have insurance, the cost of doing so was unimaginable. Thank you again!"*

— Client from Counselling Clinic





## PROGRAM UPDATES

To address the immediate impact of the pandemic, our resources were balanced between meeting the needs for the most vulnerable and building resilience for continuity.

Throughout the last fiscal year, priority was placed on supporting our seniors, with food hampers delivered to their homes regularly to allow them to safely isolate themselves in their homes with minimal exposure to the public. As they are more susceptible to contracting the virus, we ensured they were safe and not isolated, with regular check-ins conducted to support them in navigating the ever-changing safety measures.

The pandemic also brought to light the economic disparity within society, and how disproportionately women in the workforce were affected by restrictions and lockdown measures. Our daycare was there to support parents in the workforce, offering affordable, flexible, and culturally inclusive childcare, allowing parents to balance work and not have to worry about childcare as the world opened and shut down again.

With an eye on the future, the BOOST Pathways to Success employment program continued to equip youths with skills and training towards attaining economic self-reliance. We are happy to say that the program was able to train two cohorts of youth, as we seamlessly switched our classrooms online to accommodate digital learning. Students were provided with laptops to take home to ensure that access to a computer was not a barrier to their learning.

We believe that a mentally healthy population is a prerequisite to securing a prosperous economy. The effects of social isolation and the anxiety of uncertain times created a national concern for the mental health for all Canadians. This concern was amplified within the African descent community, which led to the creation of our Counselling Clinic. The first of its kind in western Canada, the clinic provided free mental health counselling sessions with Black-identifying registered therapists. Access to multilingual Black therapists is just one of the ways the program aims to reduce barriers identified during consultations to accessing mental health support. The therapists also have an understanding of diverse African and Caribbean cultures, systemic racism, microaggressions, pre-migration or intergenerational trauma clients may face.

*“Making friends with other seniors at the Africa Centre during activities was a great source of companionship, and mental health support for me. The knowledge sharing activities were exciting and a breath of fresh air”*

— Seniors Program Participant

## IMPACT

Daycare: **Lowest** childcare rates in Edmonton

**BOOST:** Participants have gained employment across 7 different industries

Foodbank: **3194** unique individuals served **788** families served

Mental health: **374** appointments booked with **121** clients served

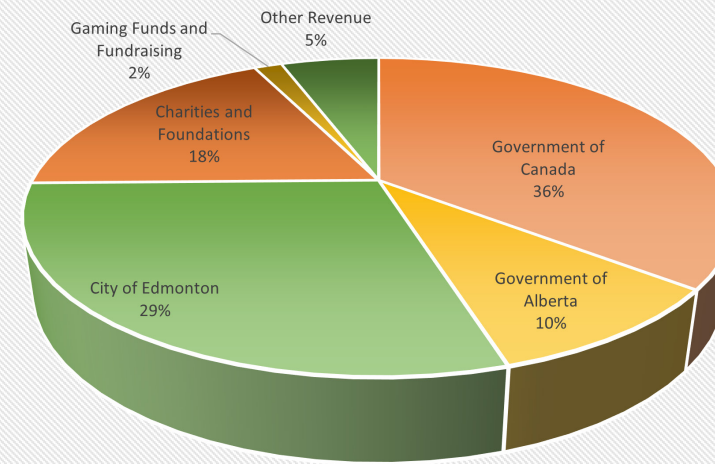
## TESTIMONIAL

*“Thank you for making this service accessible! I have been wanting to see a therapist for a while but as I do not have insurance, the cost of doing so was unimaginable. Thank you again!”*

— Counselling Clinic Client

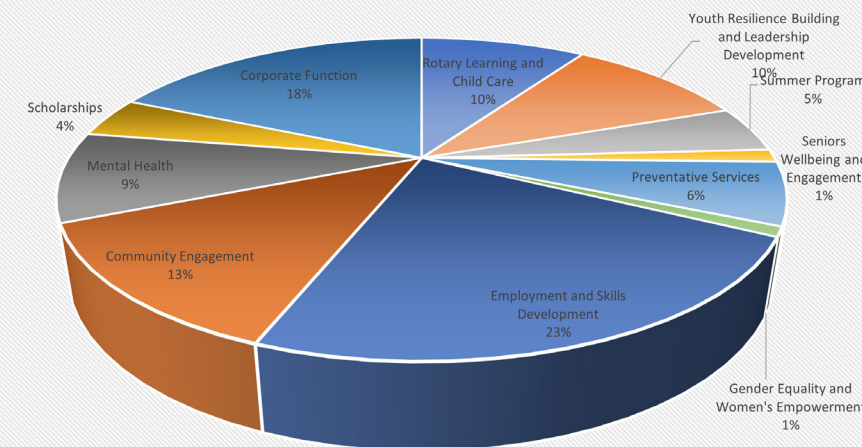
## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CANADIAN DOLLARS  
**REVENUE**



Government of Canada	588,089
Government of Alberta	158,352
City of Edmonton	484,466
Charities and Foundations	299,223
Gaming Funds and Fundraising	25,893
Other Revenue	91,465
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,647,488</b>

CANADIAN DOLLARS  
**EXPENSE**



Rotary Learning and Child Care	148,472
Youth Resilience Building and Leadership Development	161,220
Summer Program	74,772
Seniors Wellbeing and Engagement	20,776
Preventative Services	100,000
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	15,320
Employment and Skills Development	369,408
Community Engagement	204,154
Mental Health	143,909
Scholarships	65,372
Corporate Function	291,169
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,594,572</b>

## NET OPERATING RESULTS

**52,916**

**1,594,572**





## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

During Black History Month, people in Canada celebrate the many achievements and contributions of Black Canadians and their communities who, throughout history, have done so much to make Canada the culturally diverse, compassionate, and prosperous nation it is today. This Black History Month, Africa Centre doubled its program activities and its engagement with stakeholders, funders, and community members.

To commemorate the month, we held a series of mental health awareness events aimed to highlight the importance of mental health and wellness within the Black community which garnered hundreds of views online.

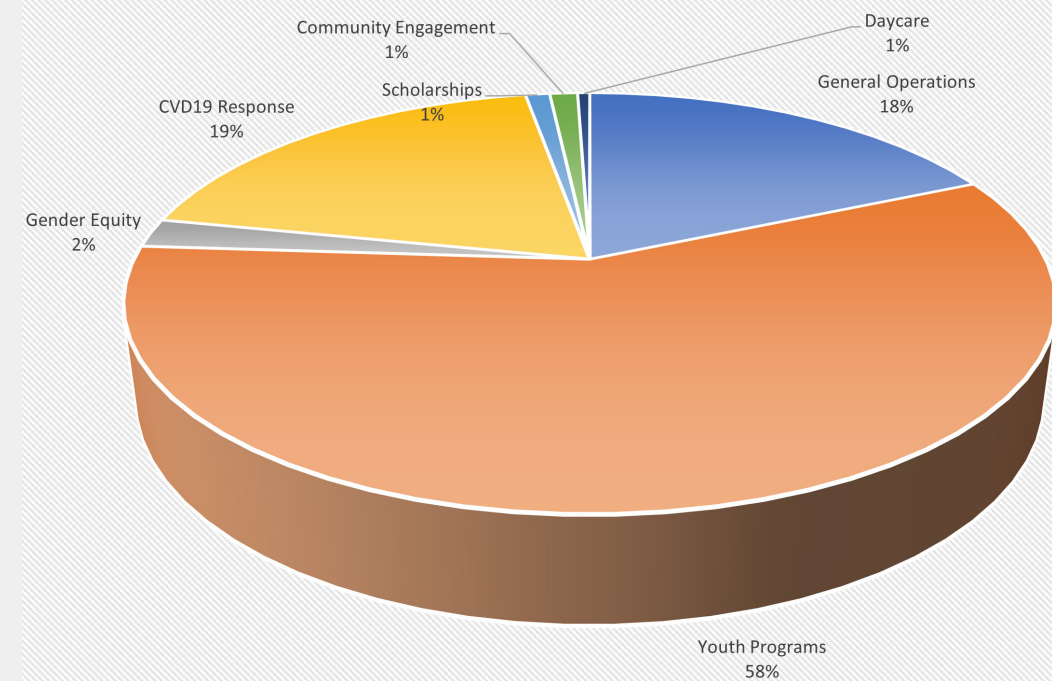
We were also honoured to partner with IKEA and the Art Gallery of Alberta to showcase Black art from local youth throughout the month of February. The art show gave the platform for youth to display their art to a wide audience, an opportunity that many had never had before.

While having an in-person celebration of Black history was not a possibility due to the pandemic, Africa Centre produced a documentary series showcasing the contributions of Black youth making history in Alberta. In collaboration with Media 21 production, Africa Centre used the documentary to highlight the people in the community who have made their mark being the first Albertan of African descent community members in their field.

## DONATIONS

2020 was a historic year with the Black Lives Matter movement impacting the entire world, highlighting the racial injustices Black individuals experience. Edmonton was no different, and saw communities come together to show solidarity to affirm Black existence and support healing. With this, Africa Centre was honoured to have seen an outpouring of support and donations from individuals, companies and organizations totalling almost \$270,000. Donations were diverted to different program areas indicated by donors, and the funds are used to further develop our programming and capacity to better serve the African, Black and Caribbean community in Alberta and beyond.

Donations Received By Programs



• General Operations • Youth Programs • Gender Equity • CVD19 Response • Scholarships • Community Engagement • Daycare



# FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

Thank you to all our donors, partners, staff, volunteers, and program participants who have contributed to the Africa Centre in a meaningful way. Your contributions have shaped the direction of the Africa Centre to ensure that we are able to continue meeting the needs of the African descent community in Alberta and beyond!

The 2020 / 2021 year reflects the organization's pivotal direction towards its strategic goals, namely, cultural identity, advancement and empowerment, integration, resource diversification and organizational sustainability.

Through community collaboration and partnership, we were able to restructure our programming to meet the unique needs of the pandemic, and meaningfully contribute towards the conversations around race, equity, and diversity highlighted by the Black Lives Matter Movement.

This year was momentous as we were able to distribute a total of \$62,600 worth of scholarships through our Emerging and Refugee Communities Scholarship Program to students of racialized and emerging communities. We would like to thank our esteemed partners Edmonton Community Foundation and Canadian Western Bank for making this possible!



## CONTACT INFORMATION

### WEBSITE

www.africacentre.ca

### PHONE

Office: 780 455 5423

Fax: 587 773 3531

### EMAIL

info@africacentre.ca

### ADDRESS

Suite 106, 6770-129 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5C 1V7

### HOURS

Monday - Friday  
9AM — 5PM

africacentreyeg

@africacentreyeg

@africacentreyeg

africacentreyeg



