

ATTENDEE PACKAGE

THE FUTURE WE WANT

ACGC Annual Conference 2025

September 12, 2025 | Calgary



Alberta's Role in International Cooperation
in a Rapidly Changing World



In partnership with

Canada

Welcome and Greetings

Greetings from the ACGC Executive Director

I am delighted to welcome you to ACGC's 2025 Annual Conference, "The Future We Want: Alberta's Role in International Cooperation in a Rapidly Changing World." We convene on Treaty 7 Territory, on the land known as Mohkinstsis, also referred to as Calgary. As we consider Alberta's role moving forward, let us not forget that history guides us. Let us honour the culture, traditions, knowledge, and languages of the Îethka Nakoda Wîcastabi, Siksika, Piikani, Amskaapiikani, and Kainai, and the Tsuut'ina First Nations, to name a few, as well as the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, in the work that we will do on this land and on lands around the world.

This year has brought dramatic shifts in the global landscape, from the breakdown of feminist and equity, diversity, and inclusion policies by our neighbours to the south to monumental reductions in aid and development funding by several global donors. Canada also welcomed a new government into power, and we await to see where their priorities lie for our sector. I acknowledge that this may be a challenging time for many in our sector, marked by uncertainty about what the future holds and where we will go next. Meanwhile, there is no question of the importance of international cooperation. Whether it be combating oppression or providing disaster relief, our sector is needed, now more than ever.

This year's conference, "The Future We Want," is a way for Alberta's international cooperation and social justice practitioners to learn, collaborate, and begin to determine our priorities moving forward. It is also intended to foster meaningful dialogue and critical thinking about how we can maintain our values in the face of adversity.

Having served as ACGC's Executive Director for over a year now, I have had the privilege of getting to know many of the people in our network, and I am in awe of all you have accomplished here and around the world. I am confident that Albertans will continue to make our world a better place for all.

Sandra Muchekeza

ACGC Executive Director

ACGC Annual Conference 2025 Agenda - September 12, 2025

SPEAKER	SESSION	TIME	VIRTUAL
N/A	Breakfast	8:15 AM - 9 AM	N/A
MC: Rumbi Zinyemba, Senior Manager Grant Programs, <i>Canadian Red Cross</i>	Opening Remarks	9 AM - 9:15 AM	Livestreamed
Dr. Ruby Dagher, Assistant Professor, <i>University of Ottawa</i>	Keynote Address: <i>Me, You and Them: Reimagining our Role as Global Citizens</i>	9:15 AM - 10 AM	Livestreamed
Rochelle Ignacio, Director – Equity, Anti-Racism, and Reconciliation, <i>Tamarack Institute</i>	Workshop: <i>From Intention to Action: Navigating Equity in Planning and Partnerships Workshop</i>	10 AM - 11 AM	Livestreamed
Health Break	Break	11 AM - 11:15 AM	Break
Patricia Peña, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister – International Assistance Partnerships and Programming, <i>Global Affairs Canada</i> • Moderated by Karen Joe, Knowledge and Research Advisor, <i>Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology</i>	Global Affairs Canada Fireside Chat	11:15 AM - 12 PM	Livestreamed
Aditya Chaudhuri, President, <i>Engineers Without Borders - Calgary Professional Chapter</i> and Chair of Board of Directors, <i>ACGC</i>	ACGC AGM and Lunch	12 PM - 1:15 PM	Livestreamed
Paige Reeves, Director of Research and Social Innovation, <i>Skills Society (Action Lab)</i>	Workshop: <i>The Future Triangles Workshop</i>	1:15 PM - 2:45 PM	Not livestreamed (interactive workshop)
• Lindsey Machona, Executive Director, <i>Expand Hope</i> • Sarah Flynn, Executive Director, <i>Centre for Global Education</i> • Kevin Melanson, Vice President, International Health and Social Impact, <i>The Brenda Strafford Foundation</i>	Member TED Talks	2:45 PM - 3:45 PM	Livestreamed
MC: Rumbi Zinyemba, Senior Manager Grant Programs, <i>Canadian Red Cross</i>	Closing Remarks	3:45 PM - 4 PM	Livestreamed



MC: Rumbi Zinyemba

Senior Manager Grant Programs, *Canadian Red Cross*

MC Biography

Rumbi Zinyemba has worked with the not-for-profit organizations in Canada, Zambia and Zimbabwe for a decade, building capacity and monitoring and evaluation projects in the human rights, peace and reconciliation, gender equality and humanitarian emergency management sectors.

Currently, Rumbi manages grants administration, design and programming at the national Canadian Red Cross and promotes equity and diversity in granting practices for the not-for-profit sector in Canada through her consulting work.



Rumbi is also devoted to promoting African literature, and is the founder of the Harare Book Club, an online, international book club that connects readers to authors across African countries and diasporas.

Keynote Address: Dr. Ruby Dagher

Me, You and Them: Reimagining our Role as Global Citizens

9:15 AM to 10 AM

Speaker Biography

Dr. Ruby Dagher is an International Development Professional, Researcher, Consultant, and an Assistant Professor (Replacement). She is also a co-founder of ADEV (Analyzing Development - think tank and advocacy group) and the lead content contributor and events organizer. Ruby's work experience in international development and her research over the last decade have given her significant expertise in decolonization, donor-recipient relationships, power dynamics, public policy, state capacity, evaluations, and economic development.

Ruby has a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration from Carleton University, a Master's degree in Public Policy and Administration from Carleton University and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Economics from McGill University. She has several publications in reputable journals and books with notable publishers related to decolonized approaches to understanding development, evaluation practices, state legitimacy, policy spaces for developing countries and small island states, post-conflict development, and donor-recipient relationships.

She is also the sole author of *Building Locally Recognized State Legitimacy in Post-conflict Countries* (2021) and co-author of *The Role of Monitoring and Evaluation in the UN 2030 SDGs Agenda* (2021). Her research interests are focused on decolonization, foreign aid and donor programming, evaluation, post-conflict development, fragile states, post-conflict legitimacy, decentralization, the role of civil society in non-Western cultures, the Middle East, and the Caribbean.



Session Overview

We often think about how we would feel if we were in the position of those who are suffering. Many of us act on these feelings of injustice. But, what if how we feel and what we see as injustice is not what those we intend to support feel and see? What if what we understand about the situation is far from what the situation actually is?

For decades, the development field has tugged at the hearts of people in the Western world, put their emotions at the centre, and designed, understood, and implemented development initiatives based on the Western understanding of the world and of societies. Yet, it is not about us, the development actors. It is about those whose lives are being impacted by our actions.

This keynote will guide us through ways to decentre ourselves and our views of the world, center those we intend to help, and reassess our relevance as development actors in a world where the dominance of the Western understanding of development is in question. It will also inspire a redefinition of what we consider our impact to be.

Workshop: Navigating Equity in Planning and Partnerships

Rochelle Ignacio, Director – Equity, Anti-Racism, and Reconciliation, Tamarack Institute

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Facilitator Biography

Rochelle Ignacio (she/her) is an equity strategist, facilitator, public speaker and community builder who guides organizations and individuals through meaningful equity and anti-racism journeys. Grounded in an intentional, relational, and care-based framework, she fosters environments where belonging, reconciliation, and transformative change can take root.

Since 2021, she has led Tamarack Institute's inaugural Equity & Reconciliation team, spearheading the Seeds of Transformation, a loving framework for equity, belonging and reconciliation. Rochelle embeds equity into organizational culture by shaping policies, leading training programs, and coaching teams. She is experienced in developing equity strategies and coaching teams on developing disaggregated employee engagement dashboards.



Beyond consulting, Rochelle advances Black mobility and belonging through developing economic opportunities for Black entrepreneurs in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

She specializes in:

- Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy Facilitation, Leadership and Support
- Equitable Systems Transformation
- Policy Review and Development
- Anti-Black Racism & Intersectional Frameworks
- Engaging with Diverse Communities
- Equitable Data Collection and Management Practices

Session Overview

In a shifting global landscape, organizations engaged in international cooperation must navigate complex relationships, shifting funding landscapes, and diverse stakeholder perspectives. This hands-on workshop offers practical tools to help you integrate equity, anti-racism, and reconciliation into each stage of your planning and partnership development.

Grounded in Tamarack Institute's Equity, Anti-Racism and Reconciliation (EAR) Analysis Tool, you'll explore how to centre those most impacted by your work while managing relationships with peers, funders, and overseas partners. Participants will learn to assess and categorize partner dynamics using the Champion–Neutral–Detractor framework and identify strategies to advance their work, regardless of where their organization or collaborators are in their equity journey.

Global Affairs Canada Fireside Chat with Patricia Peña

11:15 AM to 12 PM

Speaker Biography

Patricia Peña, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister – International Assistance Partnerships and Programming, Global Affairs Canada



Patricia Peña leads a multi-faceted team at Global Affairs Canada responsible for the delivery of Canada's international assistance, and increasing impact, innovation and engagement with a wide range of partners, including in the areas of development finance, and social and economic development.

She has a rich and long-standing history working with Canadian, multilateral, civil society, private sector, philanthropic and diplomatic partners globally. Since joining the Government of Canada in 2007, she held a number of senior positions at Global Affairs Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

She served as Canada's Ambassador to Chile (2017-2020), Director General Foreign Policy and Director General Economic Development. From 2007 to 2011, Patricia held various policy and operational positions at CIDA, including as Director Democratic Governance and Human Rights, and Director of Economic Development and Natural Resources.

She served as Canada's Ambassador to Chile (2017-2020), Director General Foreign Policy and Director General Economic Development. From 2007 to 2011, Patricia held various policy and operational positions at CIDA, including as Director Democratic Governance and Human Rights, and Director of Economic Development and Natural Resources.

Prior to joining the Canadian public service, Ms. Peña lived for almost ten years in London, England and worked in various public sector agencies, including the UK Electoral Commission where she oversaw political financing regulation in the United Kingdom. Patricia Peña has an undergraduate degree in Political Science from the University of Toronto and a Master's degree at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Moderator Biography

Karen Joe, Knowledge & Research Advisor, Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology (CAWST)



Karen joined the Research and Learning team as a Knowledge and Research Advisor in November 2019. She holds a master's degree in International Public Health from the University of Queensland and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Western Ontario.

Karen has over 10 years of experience in international development and public health, specializing in knowledge management, program design, gender equality and social inclusion, monitoring and evaluation, and results-based management. She is an experienced evaluator and has worked across Sub-Saharan African and the South Pacific regions.

Prior to joining CAWST, she worked at the University of Calgary, coordinating the Tanzania Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Initiative (Mama na Mtoto). She has previously lived in both Nigeria and Ghana where she worked on Global Affairs Canada funded Maternal and Child health programs. She currently sits on the Board of ACGC.

Workshop: The Future Triangles Workshop

Paige Reeves, Director of Research and Social Innovation, Skills Society (Action Lab)

1:15 PM to 2:45 PM

Facilitator Biography

Paige consults, designs, facilitates and leads workshops & innovation labs around complex challenges. She brings deep knowledge of participatory research methodologies, and has diverse experiences with facilitating human-centred design approaches. Paige has a unique perspective in being in both the academy and grounded in community based research for systems change.

Her recently completed doctoral research centered around ways of fostering communities of belonging. Paige has also been mentored by some of the best in the world (Mark Cabaj) in developmental evaluation and applies this in longer term labs she stewards to help collectives ensure learning and outcomes are helpful and relevant for our clients. Paige is passionate about making real systems change happen for people and communities that need it.



Session Overview

2025 has been a pivotal year for international cooperation and development. As we continue to navigate the shifting global landscape, this workshop will guide participants through The Futures Triangle activity, designed to surface and explore tensions and relationships amongst actors in our international cooperation space, historical legacies, present day trends and future visions.

Through this hands-on interactive workshop, conference participants will identify priorities for Alberta's international cooperation sector and together map out the future we want.

Member TED Talks | 2:45 PM to 3:45 PM



Lindsey Machona, Executive Director, *Expand Hope*

Lindsey Machona is a Zimbabwean-born Canadian leader and Executive Director of Expand Hope, advancing education and equity through international cooperation. She is a passionate advocate for feminist leadership, amplifying women's voices in shaping a just and sustainable future.



Sarah Flynn, Executive Director, *Centre for Global Education*

Sarah Flynn is the Executive Director of the Centre for Global Education (CGE), where she leads initiatives to foster innovative educational practices and promote global awareness among learners. With over a decade of experience in leadership, Sarah has dedicated her career to enhancing access to high-quality education for diverse communities worldwide.



Kevin Melanson, Vice President, International Health and Social Impact, *The Brenda Strafford Foundation*

Kevin Melanson is a global health and social impact leader passionate about ensuring that every person—especially those living in disadvantaged situations—has an equal opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilling life. As Vice President of International Health and Social Impact at The Brenda Strafford Foundation in Calgary, Kevin leads impactful initiatives locally and across the Caribbean, including as Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Caribbean Eye Health Alliance.

In-Person Logistics

Venue

cSPACE Marda Loop: 1721 29th Avenue SW, Suite # 125 Calgary, Alberta T2T 6T7

Studio Theatre: On the 1st floor, on the West side of the hall

The building has three entrances: one off of 30th Ave, and two off of 29th Ave

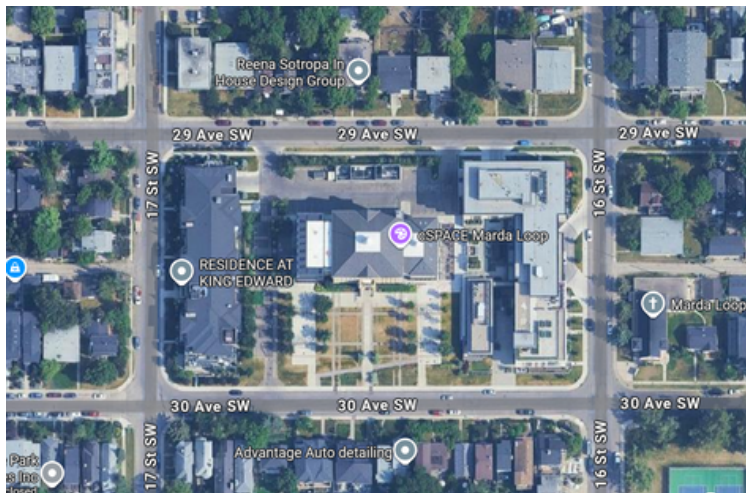


Image description: Aerial Google Maps capture of venue

Accessibility

The NE (glass) entrance is wheelchair accessible, and there is elevator access to all levels. There are 2 accessible parking spots in the North parking lot. On the first floor, there are separate men's and women's stalls, as well as a shared sink area. Additionally, several large, gender-neutral stalls offer wheelchair access and baby changing stations.

Hospitality

Breakfast (8:15 am - 9:00 am) and Lunch (12:00 pm - 1:15 pm) will be served buffet-style outside the Studio Theatre, along with refreshments at 11:00 am. There is a café, Aroma Café Bar, on site for attendees who would like to purchase additional refreshments.

Accommodation & Transportation

Unless prior arrangements have been made with ACGC, all attendees will be responsible for their own transportation, accommodations, and subsequent costs. The venue has 35 parking stalls on the North side of the building, as well as ample street parking.

Covid-19 Protocols

ACGC will comply with all current provincial guidelines in force at the time of the events. Hand sanitizer and disposable masks will be available to all attendees.

Main Contact

For any questions or concerns, please get in touch with a member of the ACGC team at 780-988-0200.