



**ACGC** ALBERTA COUNCIL FOR  
GLOBAL COOPERATION

Seventh Annual 2018

**TOP**  
**30**  
**UNDER**  
**30**

Youth Partnering to Achieve the  
Sustainable Development Goals

The cover design by Amanda Ozga takes the hopeful symbol of “fingers crossed” and infuses it with a spirit of collective strength and togetherness. With bold SDG colours and expressive lines, these crossed fingers signal the agency of youth working locally and globally in partnership for a better world.

#### EDITORIAL TEAM

Leslie Robinson  
Brenna Ward

#### DESIGN

Amanda Ozga:  
amandaozga.com

#### PUBLISHING



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## Top 30 Under 30

ACGC's seventh annual Top 30 Under 30 magazine features 30 outstanding young people who were chosen by a selection committee from a competitive pool of candidates. The 2018 Top 30 Under 30 truly stand out as remarkable; we are thrilled to share their achievements in impacting change in Alberta and around the world. This year's magazine highlights how youth are partnering to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and endeavours to offer readers tangible ways to join these youth in impacting our local and global communities. **A connecting element across the magazine is the Call to Action featured on each page, a takeaway piece each Top 30 was asked to write to leave the reader with a sense of how to get involved in change-making.**

Many of the Top 30s encourage us in some way to think about one or all of the following: the importance of diverse teams, the importance of making space for and hearing marginalized voices, and the importance of access to education. Our efforts to feature youth from the “Global South” align with a shared emphasis on amplifying underrepresented voices. The stories, experiences, and Calls to Action offered by the youth in Peru, Chile, Uganda, Ghana, Zambia, and Haiti, highlight the particular challenges they face and promote change through trust-based partnerships and reciprocal approaches to skill sharing, training, and teaching. The message of diversity and reciprocity is repeated throughout the magazine and, we believe, speaks to the very heart of meaningful partnerships.

## About ACGC

The Alberta Council for Global Cooperation (ACGC) is a coalition of voluntary sector organizations located in Alberta, working locally and globally to achieve sustainable human development. ACGC is committed to international cooperation that is people-centred, democratic, just, inclusive, and respectful of the environment and Indigenous cultures. The Council works towards ending poverty and achieving a peaceful and healthy world with dignity and full participation for all. Members of the Council pursue these goals through supporting global citizenship programs and participatory projects with international partners. The Council supports the work of its members through networking, leadership, information sharing, training and coordination, and representing their interests when dealing with government and others. The objectives of the Council are to promote and mobilize greater Albertan participation in assisting international development.

# International Development Week 2018

**February 4 to 10, 2018**

The Top 30 Under 30 magazine is part of ACGC's program for International Development Week (IDW), which takes place this year from February 4 to 10, 2018 across Canada. For 28 years, IDW has provided a unique opportunity for Canadian organizations and individuals to share their successes and achievements in international development. This year's theme, **Partners for a Better World**, reflects the core values of the work Canadians and Canadian organizations do in international assistance, linking to both the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy**. ACGC and member organizations host events across Alberta to mark the occasion.

Visit the Global Affairs Canada website to learn more about International Development Week and nation-wide events: [www.international.gc.ca](http://www.international.gc.ca)

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## Message from Honourable Rachel Notley Premier of Alberta

*On behalf of the Government of Alberta, it is my pleasure to send congratulations to the recipients of Alberta Council for Global Cooperation's (ACGC) Top 30 Under 30.*

*This recognition celebrates the real difference each of you are making in Alberta and around the world. You have proven that, together, we can make a positive difference in helping Alberta build a sustainable, global future. We must never lose sight of the international picture and continuously work together to achieve global goals, building a more sustainable, innovative world for our future.*

*I hope you take great pride in your many accomplishments. Given what you have done under the age of 30, I cannot even imagine what you will achieve over the next 30 years. Thank you for your passion, dedication, and vision. You have raised the bar for excellence, and I know the best is yet to come.*

*Congratulations once again to everyone featured in ACGC's Top 30 Under 30.*

Rachel Notley

*February 2, 2018*



## Message from ACGC Executive Director, Heather McPherson

On behalf of the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation Board of Directors and staff, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the remarkable young people selected and profiled in the 2018 Seventh Annual Top 30 Under 30 magazine. Individuals featured in this magazine are amongst the most impressive, accomplished, and committed youth anywhere in the world. Every year, as I read the profiles in this publication, I am both humbled and overwhelmed by each young recipients' commitment to making the world a better, more just place for all people and our planet. These young people are truly inspiring and their individual stories give me great hope for the future.

The adoption of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 signaled Canada's commitment to end poverty and inequality, and combat climate change by 2030. It is now our responsibility as citizens to work together to implement the agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and address some of the biggest issues we face today. Young people will have an integral role to play if we are to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Around the world, young people are accepting the challenge of achieving the SDGs and are mobilizing, innovating, communicating, and creating better solutions. The 30 youth profiled in the magazine have been chosen for their passion, talent, and energy used to make a difference in Alberta and around the globe. As we enter a new period of development with the Sustainable Development Goals, it gives me great hope to see the outstanding work these young people are doing to achieve the goals. Over the next 12 years, these 30 young people will be leading the charge to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. With their efforts, our world is in good hands.

Congratulations again on your amazing achievements and we look forward to hearing about the amazing things we know you will achieve in the future.

All the best,

Heather McPherson  
Alberta Council for Global Cooperation



# GET INVOLVED



## LEARN

### READ UP

Find books and articles that explore issues of social justice and human rights. Scour the web for articles and perspectives that offer critical insight to local, national, and international issues. Connect with mainstream media as well as alternative media and critically analyze the information that is being presented by both sides. Learn media literacy and remember that all media has bias!

### UNLEARN

Challenge the supposed “universal truths” we are taught and recognize that there are multiple ways of being, doing and knowing, and that multiple truths can co-exist. Though the process of unlearning can be painful, it opens new opportunities and channels for re-learning through experience, compassion, empathy, and connection.

### FOCUS YOUR KNOWLEDGE

There are many issues of global concern, and learning about all of them can be overwhelming. Reflect on which issues you feel most passionate about, and focus on learning as much as you can on that topic. A deeper understanding about an issue can lead to more appropriate and meaningful action.

### UNDERSTAND CANADA'S ROLE

Visit the Government of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) website at [international.gc.ca](http://international.gc.ca) to learn about Canada's position and action on a number of international policy, trade, and development issues. Stay informed of upcoming forums and Canada's position at them, like the 2018 G7 Summit and the upcoming High-Level Political Forum 2018.

### FACILITATE DIALOGUE

What are you passionate about? Talk about the issues and brainstorm innovative ways to be a part of the change. Talk to your family, friends, and colleagues, ask questions, and start the conversation.

### CONNECT ONLINE

Build positive online connections using social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Social media is a powerful platform to connect and build solidarity with people across the globe. It provides you with a unique tool and more balanced perspective for global issues. Be sure to connect with @acgcnw on Facebook and Twitter.

### VOTE

Have a voice and make a choice. Voting is an expression of a citizen's right and responsibility to influence decisions made at every political level and is fundamental to a healthy democracy.

### REFLECT

Take time to reflect on your actions and approaches. What histories, systems of power and privilege, and contemporary circumstances shape current ways of living and thinking as well as your own position in the world? How can we ensure that our efforts to bring about positive change don't have the reverse effect? Remaining mindful of the impacts—both positive and negative—of our actions through self-reflection will contribute towards nurturing a constantly growing and compassionate self.



## SHARE

### SHARE STORIES

Invite people to share their experiences and stories with you. This can help you understand the perspectives of others, the challenges they face, and allow you to empathize with them. Engaging in storytelling will help you to learn more about the world and the people around you. Start by reading the stories featured in ACGC's *Together 2017: Alberta's Notebook for the Global Goals* at [together.acgc.ca](http://together.acgc.ca).

### BUILD NETWORKS

Tap into the existing networks in your community and build alliances with individuals, communities, groups, and organizations. Whether you're good with computers, art, music, editing, mobilizing and recruiting others, or organizing logistics, there is a group that could put your skills to good use!

### ENGAGE

Be an engaged global citizen by expressing your ideas and concerns about what is happening in your local and global world. Write letters to your MP or MLA to express your concern about, or to vocalize your support for, a particular issue. Write a Letter to the Editor for your local or national newspaper. Take part in a rally or protest. Sign a paper or online petition. Remember joining forces with others is an incredibly impactful way of being heard, a message repeated and demonstrated by all of this year's Top 30s!

### VOLUNTEER

Donate your time, money, and skills. Do some research and find out which organizations match your interests and values. Then give them a call, an email, or even a tweet! Tons of local organizations are looking for committed and engaged volunteers.



## ACT

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



End poverty in all its forms everywhere.



Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



Reduce inequality within and among countries.



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



# TOGETHER 2018

Collaboration, Innovation, and the Sustainable Development Goals

Join us in Edmonton this coming October for our 2nd annual Together symposium!

Details coming soon at [acgc.ca](http://acgc.ca)

# TOGETHER

Alberta's Notebook for the Global Goals

Learn more about how Albertans are partnering to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in

**Together: Alberta's Notebook for the Global Goals**

[Together.acgc.ca](http://Together.acgc.ca)



# TOP 30 UNDER 30

Youth Partnering to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

I challenge Canada's future leaders to act as disruptors and challenge the status quo. Only then can we push for innovative ideas and begin to solve the world's biggest problems.



# Nabaa Alam

Age: 24

Hometown: Lethbridge, Alberta

Lives In: Calgary, Alberta

Affiliations:

Imperial Oil, Calgary, Alberta

World Economic Forum, Global Shapers Calgary Hub

There are political, financial and environmental implications to energy production and I want to be part of the solution for better decisions regarding sustainable energy.

### What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

When it comes to tackling the SDGs, an "all hands-on deck" approach is required. We can no longer consider ourselves on different teams, rather we must work collectively towards the success of the goals. An excellent example of this is right here in Alberta where an alliance between Canada's largest oil sands companies exists to share ideas and innovations. It is almost unprecedented for competing companies of this magnitude to share technology with each other, but they do so to tackle together crucial issues such as climate change, water conservation, and the development of affordable clean energy.

I once thought my opportunity to impact the world ended with an injury I sustained while playing for the Canadian Men's National Soccer Team. Initially, this made me consider an engineering career designing medical devices for sports injuries. Once I entered the engineering program at the University of Alberta, however, my career goals and trajectory shifted. I was afforded internships in the oil sector where I became inspired to make an impact in the energy field. As an engineer grounded by a passion for ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, I work towards improving current oil technologies and evaluating renewable energy options.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy. In my opinion, energy will become the most important issue in the 21st century. Energy is intrinsically connected to all parts of our lives and I believe that everyone must have equitable access to sustainable energy.



# Zayed Almansoori

Age: 24

Hometown: Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Lives In: Edmonton, Alberta

Affiliations:

Engineers Without Borders, University of Alberta Chapter

University of Alberta Energy Club, Edmonton, Alberta

Sustainability Scholars, Edmonton, Alberta

### What or who is your greatest inspiration?

As an adolescent, I went to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Washington, DC. The quote: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that," has stayed with me ever since. I am inspired by individuals who believe in doing the right thing in the right way, no matter the struggle or how long the process might take. It can often be easy to dismiss another person's opinion and get frustrated when it is different than yours but getting upset with that person will not lead to a solution. I believe that you need to listen and understand each other first. If you truly want to help people you need to come from a place of love.

I come from a country where a bottle of water costs more to produce than a bottle of oil. Despite this, I have been fortunate to never feel the impact of water scarcity. I consider myself a privileged individual who has had a lot of opportunities, which I recognize is not the situation for many people. I find this frustrating and incredibly disheartening. Becoming aware of this at a young age is what drove me to try to make the world a better place by volunteering. I am also an optimist and I believe that if you smile, the world will smile back. I strive to give to others, show empathy through my everyday interactions with people, be friendly, listen to others, and care about the world.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. To me, this goal is inextricably connected to all other goals. Working to remove socioeconomic barriers that are stopping people from having access to basic needs like water is something that drives me. Equal and equitable opportunity is the change I want to see in the world.



There are so many opportunities with amazing clubs and people who are trying to make an impact. I encourage youth to seek out those that spark their passions and get involved.





As an Indigenous woman, I have a positive attitude and an adventurous spirit. I believe in nurturing the mind, body, and spirit with positive self-talk. My work explores the creative arts through a holistic approach to inspire confidence in youth so they can dream big, accomplish goals, and become sustainable leaders for the next generations. I have worked with more than twenty Indigenous communities across Alberta through workshops, artist showcases, and summer literacy camps. I truly feel as though my purpose is to empower Indigenous youth to find their passion.

**Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?**

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being. I am a huge believer in the power of positive thinking and visualization. I believe the impacts of having a positive attitude benefit all areas of life and allow youth to see possibilities beyond their environment and build self-worth. My goal is to empower fellow Indigenous youth and women to take control of their lives. Having a healthy mind, body, and spirit is essential to breaking down cultural barriers, and exploring new experiences and interests.

**I encourage all Indigenous youth to believe fiercely in themselves and to create a mantra that lets nothing stand in the way of their dreams: visualize it, feel it, and achieve it.**

# Saige Arcand

**Age:** 28

**Hometown:** Alexander First Nation, Alberta

**Lives In:** Edmonton, Alberta

**Affiliations:**

Frontier College, Edmonton, Alberta

Bearwoman and Associates, Edmonton, Alberta

Iyiniw Education and Training Institute Inc., St. Paul, Alberta

**What or who is your greatest inspiration?**

My grandmother is the matriarch of my family and I look to her when I need guidance and wisdom. For 30 years she has worked with thousands of Indigenous peoples across Canada and continues to share her gift of healing today. I have been so blessed to observe and participate in her practices, which I carry with me throughout my community work.

**What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?**

I would love to see more cross-cultural events where we can showcase the best of our people and change stereotypes that Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples may carry about each other. Hosting forums and focus groups to hear youth voices and address their concerns is vital in my work as we move towards making positive and sustainable change for the next generations.



**Support art, support artists: art helps us tell stories that might not survive otherwise because art transcends.**



I define myself as an "Artist" because I use art as a tool for social transformation. My work is the transmutation of the things that I lived through growing up gay in Venezuela. Homophobia in Venezuela is deadly. When I was fifteen, I survived a hate crime committed against me for being gay. All my drawings were destroyed and I spent six years not drawing after that. When I heard the story of another boy in my city who was brutally attacked for being gay, I decided to draw again—to use art to transform violence into a message that connects me with others. My work is the reflection of my inner universe and my rebellion against violence. I decided to transform hate into stories, to fill my hands with colours and not with blood. Art saved my life: using it as a tool to fight back connects me with the world.

**Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?**

SDG 5: Gender (and I would add Sexual) equality because in Latin America, identifying as an LGBTQ person means being treated as a second-class citizen and being vulnerable to hate crimes. The violence committed against LGBTQ folks is not usually covered in the media and ends up being invisible in society.

# Daniel Arzola

**Age:** 29

**Hometown:** Maracay, Venezuela

**Lives In:** Santiago, Chile

**Affiliations:**

University of Alberta International, Edmonton, Alberta\*

\*ACGC Member

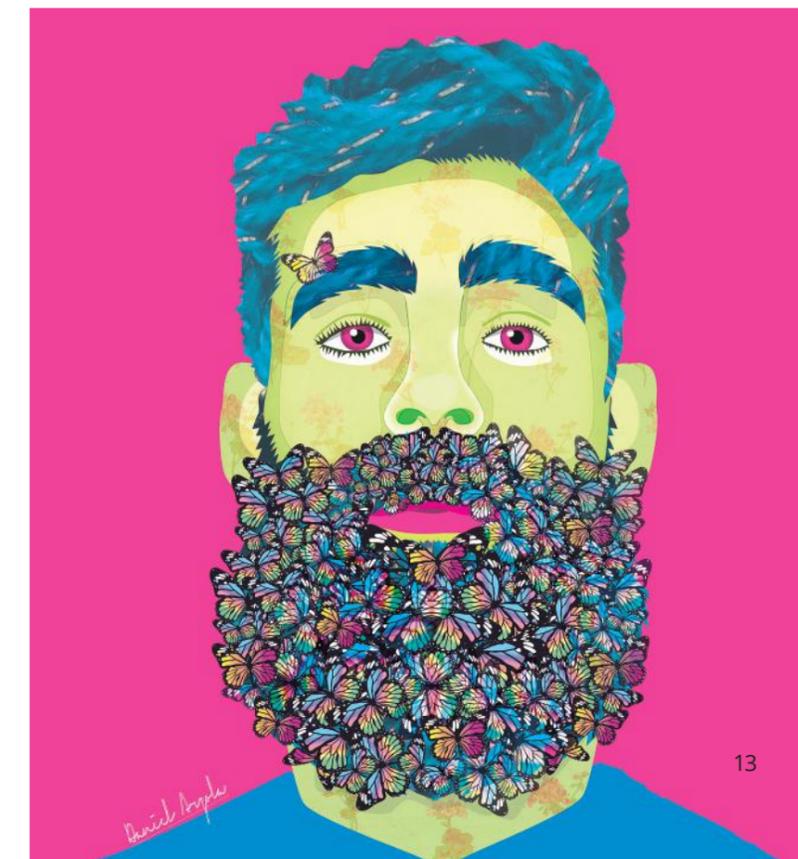
**What or who is your greatest inspiration?**

The colours and happiness of Keith Haring; the scream of the poetry of Federico García Lorca; the story of Reinaldo Arenas; the voice and the pain of Chavela Vargas; and the courage of Carlos Jáuregui.

**What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?**

I think it is essential to learn to value the richness of the stories that are out there, especially those that do not sound much like our own. Pay attention to those stories, listen to what others have to say and, above all, avoid defending an idea more than a person. Stay human!

Profile photo by: Ernst Coppejan



Integrate walking, cycling, and taking public transportation into your daily routine. We must integrate sustainable life choices into our daily actions while advocating for more and better sustainable transportation options to reduce our carbon footprint and live healthy lives.



# Niko Casuncad

Age: 21

Hometown: Calgary, Alberta

Lives In: Calgary, Alberta

Affiliations:

The Bike Share, Calgary, Alberta  
Office of Sustainability and Sustainable Development  
Goals Alliance, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta

## What or who is your greatest inspiration?

Growing up, I was inspired by David Suzuki's efforts towards environmental and climate change advocacy through big-picture thinking and a compassionate approach. The David Suzuki Foundation's policy advocacy work on active transportation, such as cycling, walking, and accessible pathways and infrastructure has given me valuable knowledge and solidified my mission to make cities more sustainable.

## What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

Collaborate with people from different backgrounds and think big! There is an immense learning opportunity when you work towards a challenge with people who have different perspectives and knowledge.

An avid (sub)urban cyclist, I have supported and advocated for more sustainable transportation options in Calgary. In October 2016, I was struck by a car while cycling. Since then, I have dedicated both my academic and extracurricular efforts towards ensuring that all citizens have access to safe and inclusive sustainable transportation. As an Urban and Sustainability Studies student, I am working on a "Campus as a Learning Lab" project assessing current cycling infrastructure and resources and expanding the campus-wide Bike Share program.

## Which SDG are you most passionate about?

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. Better urban planning and management are needed to make the world's urban spaces more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. During the summer of 2016, I went to Iceland, Scandinavia, and Western Europe to learn about urban and environmental sustainability. I encountered progressive approaches to sustainable transportation through cycling, walking infrastructure, and efficient transit systems. Immediately, I began to ask how similar policies and initiatives could be applied in the Canadian urban context.



# Haiqa Cheema

Age: 21

Hometown: Sialkot, Pakistan

Lives In: Edmonton, Alberta

Affiliations:

Edmonton World Health Organization Simulation,  
Edmonton, Alberta  
Centre for Global Education, Edmonton, Alberta\*  
International Institute, Washington, D.C., USA

\*ACGC Member

ethnicity or religion. Our world is in dire need of good leadership to address very complex issues. International law must evolve to address the threat of drone attacks and non-state actors. Our national and international institutions need to be more transparent and hold perpetrators accountable.

## What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

The SDGs are linked with one another and are all moving towards one effort: creating sustainable change. You have to listen to others and make them feel included. **The best teams are not the strongest or the smartest; they are the ones where all members help and support each other.**

Profile photo by: Mark Guerrero, photo below by: Adrian G de la Peña

My experience as a first-generation Pakistani-Canadian has profoundly shaped the work I do. My parents immigrated to Canada to give me a better life. They have worked day and night to make sure I have opportunities to succeed. I am privileged to have food on my table every night, a home to sleep in, and access to postsecondary education. I ask myself regularly: What can I do to not let my parents' sacrifices go in vain? How can I uplift my community and give back to the people around me? I have centred my work around creating spaces for marginalized voices and advocating for progressive policies in Alberta. My work has pushed for better climate change policy, health accessibility and diversity in leadership. My passion for social justice led me to study political science and economics.

## Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. I firmly believe that peace and rule of law lays the foundation of progress and stability in our society. Strong institutions are the key to ensuring equal access to justice for all. I want to live in a world where one's life is not deemed unimportant based on the colour of their skin,



**If you are in a position to make decisions, you are in a position of privilege and power. You must understand power dynamics, critique systems of oppression, and create space for marginalized voices to speak for themselves.**



# Eric Christenson

Age: 24

Hometown: Edmonton, Alberta

Lives In: Edmonton, Alberta

Affiliations:

Mata Jai Kaur Maternal and Child Health Centre, Rajasthan, India  
Office of Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson, Edmonton, Alberta



Who I am is informed by my belief that individuals who occupy positions of privilege—such as myself—rarely know as much as we think we do. I strive to seek out and listen to the insights others offer. I integrate this belief into the work I do, both in India and at home, researching how to better serve vulnerable populations from the perspectives of public health and policy-making.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. Volunteering with vulnerable mothers at a prenatal clinic in the region of Sri Ganganagar, India has allowed me to witness firsthand inequalities that exist within countries. Here, women marginalized through extreme poverty and geographical isolation continue to experience a high rate of maternal death, despite recent local health improvements for wealthier and more urbanized mothers. At home, I have contributed to the Office of Mayor Don Iveson's efforts towards developing gender-neutral parliamentary practices that internally dismantle the barriers preventing women and sexual minorities from participating in civic politics.

### What or who is your greatest inspiration?

I am inspired by the vulnerable mothers I serve. Their resolve in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles is profoundly moving and is what pushes me to try to make whatever small change I can in the communities where I work.

### What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

The prenatal clinic where I volunteer is run almost exclusively by local volunteers. This enables the clinic to operate sustainably despite few financial resources. While the clinic was founded in Alberta, we recruit local expertise almost exclusively for clinic operations and ensure that villagers represent the majority of the clinic's governance structure. Most importantly, we actively engage mothers in a dialogue about their care and use their suggestions to drive operational change. **Building partnerships that emphasize community empowerment means providing tools for individuals to take control of their own health outcomes, leading to better, more sustainable, and more context-sensitive care.**



I encourage those of us who occupy positions of privilege to learn to step aside and open up more space for marginalized people to speak and be heard.

Youth must comprehend that designing and promoting innovative programs in their own communities is crucial for achieving sustainable development at a larger scale.



# Felipe Civita Ferreira

Age: 25

Hometown: São Paulo, Brazil

Lives In: Calgary, Alberta

Affiliations:

Calgary Immigrant Educational Society, Calgary, Alberta  
Bow Valley College, Calgary, Alberta\*

\*ACGC Member

### What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

**Understand that even the smallest contributions matter.**

We often think that to make a difference, we need to impact a large number of people. While this can be true, it is often not a realistic goal. Initiatives that target a small number of individuals can create meaningful impacts in other's lives. Finding individuals or organizations that share the same vision is also crucial for building these partnerships. By collaborating with others, one can benefit from collective knowledge and have access to expertise in complementing areas.

In Brazil, I often participated in various initiatives in the community with my parents, which began my passion for volunteering and working with capacity building projects. As a young and new immigrant to Canada, I was provided with the necessary tools to pursue higher education and other interests. I have come to see how valuable education and settlement services are. This experience motivated me to help other newcomers as they adjust to life in Canada. Understanding some of the challenges that newcomers face has helped me in designing the Wandering in Wilderness Program, which provides immigrants opportunities to access a safe and inclusive outdoor experience and ultimately mental and health benefits that can be carried through to other parts of their lives.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being. I am most passionate about this SDG because without a healthy body and mind it is extremely difficult to find gainful employment, pursue higher education, and provide for one's family. I am passionate about empowering individuals with the appropriate resources and tools to ensure a healthy lifestyle.



Start putting energy towards solutions that match the scale of the climate problem: work to alter energy, transportation, food and consumption systems, they are the level of change we need.



# Chelsea Donelon

Age: 25

Hometown: Edmonton, Alberta

Lives In: Edmonton, Alberta

### Affiliations:

Electricity and Sustainable Energy, Government of Alberta  
Edmonton Folk Music Festival, Edmonton, Alberta  
Centre for Development Studies, University of Cambridge,  
United Kingdom

more harmoniously integrated with the natural world around us. Climate change threatens too much, but also requires that we make change for a better world; that's my wicked problem.

### What or who is your greatest inspiration?

I am inspired by the contradictions inherent in our solutions to climate change. While oversimplification makes challenges easier to solve, contradictions make them interesting. I am attracted to the nuance that electric cars are a solution and, when not powered by renewables, as polluting as traditional vehicles. I think about the challenge that wind energy is clean energy but taking too much from one jet stream changes the climate. I am conscious of the difficulty that we must reduce consumption while maintaining the jobs currently designed to support it. These contradictions keep me coming back to read more, to do more to ensure the carbon transition is robust and well thought-out.

While I know that I cannot solve every problem, I aim to move the needle of change on a few key issues, namely gender equality and climate change. Gender equality because I am a woman with a strong feminist mother who taught me I can play like the boys in both sports and boardrooms. My passion for climate action is fueled by my realization that progress made towards other goals is threatened by our changing weather, and that the systems that underpin our emissions, like overconsumption, are not making people happier.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 13: Climate Action. The world faces many big and important challenges and for a long time, I didn't know which challenge I wanted to contribute to solving. At Cambridge something clicked within me and I became obsessed with all things climate change. It's a horrible but true prospect that today, lives around the world are threatened by climate change and we fight only to minimize the damage. Simultaneously, it is an exciting prospect that in the unprecedented changes that climate challenge demands, there is space to build healthier livelihoods with stronger communities



# Fatme Elkadry

Age: 21

Hometown: Edmonton, Alberta

Lives In: Edmonton, Alberta

### Affiliations:

Islamic Family and Social Services Association, Edmonton, Alberta  
The Palestine Solidarity Network, Edmonton, Alberta  
Edmonton Food Council, Edmonton, Alberta

powerful social justice platforms that can grow and change. I commit my time and effort to services that rectify the disparity experienced by minority communities in Edmonton.

### What or who is your greatest inspiration?

My parents were refugees and immigrated to Canada with nothing, and have spent their lives working tirelessly for the success of our family. They strive to provide their children with opportunities that they were not granted. Their altruism is matched only by my siblings, who are selfless leaders that continuously advance my growth. The work ethic and compassion exhibited by my family inspires me to stay true to myself, my commitments, and my ambitions.

Photos by: Khayre Farah

In my life, I have often felt as though I had to drop a portion of myself to belong within a community. I have sought to understand how the identities Muslim, Palestinian, female, artist, and activist could possibly coalesce, especially since minority identities and experiences are often concealed in the media. I now combat against the under-representation of minority voices by working to create safe, public platforms where diverse individuals can speak for themselves and share their own stories while working to demolish stereotypes. The importance of such spaces where everyone is accepted for every part of themselves should not be undermined.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. Many people within cities lack basic needs, like proper shelter and nutrition, which hinders them from leading healthy and prosperous lives. This reality is compounded by prejudice against people of certain ethnicities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic status. Recurring instances of xenophobia fuel my passion for SDG 11, which portrays cities as dynamic and



Ask someone for their input or story and listen intently: engaging with others in compassionate and meaningful conversations is the foundation of creating a more inclusive city and community.



# Esiru Paul

Age: 24

Hometown: Opiin Village, Atiira Parish, Serere, Uganda

Lives In: Opiin Village, Atiira Parish, Serere, Uganda

Affiliations:

Action for Peace and Development (APED), Soroti, Uganda

Mennonite Central Committee Alberta (MCC), Alberta\*

\*ACGC Member



My childhood in Opiin Village was challenging. The second last born of 9 children, the last born on the side of the boys, my parents struggled to pay for my education. They sold all our animals so I could complete my ordinary level certificate. My siblings were all married early, but I refused because I dreamed of finishing my education. After my refusal, my parents withdrew their support and I faced limited options. I was miserable and only began feeling hope again when APED came to my village to train youth on various skills including peace and conflict resolution, entrepreneurship, animal husbandry, agricultural farming, micro-finance, and teamwork. After this, I put into practice the skills I learned by working tirelessly to assist vulnerable people in my community. This allowed me to become a leader in peace and development in my area.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 2: Zero Hunger. APED trained us in sustainable projects including apiary, piggery, raising goats and sheep, and modern farming methods. Sustainable farming is a solution to the food security crisis faced by the rural poor. The agricultural training

enabled me to come out of the burden of poverty because I can now plant my crops on a small piece of land and get a high yield out of it. I sold six bags of sweet potatoes, which helped me take out a loan to purchase solar panels since my village does not have power. Using local materials like grass and papyrus, I built and opened the first salon in my village where I earn money cutting hair and charging cell phones. I have already paid my loan in full and can now provide basic needs to my family. My parents are very happy with me and they say they don't regret my decision not to marry early.

### What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

I hope that my story of hard work will motivate others. I have learned that it is important to start with what you have locally and that small steps contribute towards long term success. I now use my skills to train others in my community and am providing these skills freely since I was also given these skills freely. Teaching and training are important parts of meaningful partnerships because it removes our dependency on others and enables our communities to prosper together through hard work.



Share your knowledge and skills with others as you go because through hard work, teamwork, and love of God, we can challenge dependency syndrome and turn Africa from begging bowl to bread basket.

Think critically about diversity within your institutions and organizations, ask yourself who is not being represented and why, and take meaningful action to change it. This can be uncomfortable, but is necessary for a sustainable and equitable future.

# Derek Fehr

Age: 26

Hometown: Nipawin, Saskatchewan

Lives In: Edmonton, Alberta

Affiliations:

Edmonton Men's Health Collective, Edmonton, Alberta

Sexuality and Gender Identity Advocacy Committee,

Medical Students' Association, University of Alberta



LGBTQ+ people face significantly higher rates of mental health issues, violence, HIV, and many other chronic health problems like cardiovascular disease, asthma, and obesity.

### What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

There is so much diversity within the LGBTQ+ community that I, a cisgender white gay man, cannot speak to from my own experience. I represent a very privileged part of this community. To be an advocate and ally for marginalized peoples you must listen to and centre your message on their lived experience. This listening was key for the human library session I led for the MD program. We invited LGBTQ+ people to come to the medical school and share their experiences of discrimination and stigma with small groups of students. It was successful because we prioritized collaborative partnership.

Growing up in rural Saskatchewan I was pretty sure I was the only gay kid in town, and I was certain I would have to stay in the closet forever. Things changed quickly when I moved to Edmonton to study music. I met a bunch of other queer people and learned about resilience and the value of community. These experiences inspire me to address the health disparities facing LGBTQ+ people. As a medical student, I am passionate about building relationships between the medical profession and the LGBTQ+ community to create equitable opportunities for good health. I work with my faculty to reform our curriculum on LGBTQ+ health issues.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, starting with addressing the health disparities faced by marginalized folks including the LGBTQ+ community. I understand firsthand that LGBTQ+ people face stigma, and as a result, worse health outcomes. Reading literature on minority stress and LGBTQ+ health disparities has helped me appreciate the magnitude of the problem.





# Juanita Gnanapragasam

**Age:** 24  
**Hometown:** Edmonton, Alberta  
**Lives In:** Edmonton, Alberta

**Affiliations:**  
University of Alberta Sustainable Food Working Group,  
Edmonton, Alberta  
Community Economic Development Committee,  
Edmonton, Alberta

I have been facilitating dialogues around food and running cooking classes for international students. These classes support students to feel confident in preparing ethnic meals on their own, and they foster an environment for building social networks. I am keen to help people recreate their own ethnic dishes, which supports cultural sustainability at large.

### What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

Partnerships are vital to ensuring that the changes you advocate for and create are sustainable. Learning from mentorship opportunities and dialogues with others with a vested interest in your topic is invaluable. Sharing your findings and listening and learning from others helps you to gain partners and amplify the impact of your actions towards the SDGs.

Profile photo by: Richard Siemens

As a first-generation Canadian, eating Sri Lankan food helps me connect with my heritage. For my parents, food was one way to help with their feelings of homesickness and help maintain their cultural identity while adjusting to life in Canada. Many newcomers view food as an expression of cultural identity, so when I learned that my international peers were struggling with cooking their ethnic dishes in Edmonton, I knew I had to help. As part of my undergraduate certificate in sustainability, I conducted research to better understand the problem. I concluded that there are many barriers newcomer Canadians face to cooking nutritious meals, like setting up a kitchen or navigating a grocery store. My mission is to help alleviate these barriers.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 2: Zero Hunger. Hunger is a symptom of greater poverty. **When we understand why individuals and families are food insecure, we can begin to create targeted interventions that can drastically improve their quality of life.** I am working to help newcomer food-insecure families gain additional sources of meaningful employment so they can sustainably meet their nutritional needs. With the Sustainable Food Working Group



**Youth must be vigilant in identifying whose voices aren't being heard and why. Work with communities to understand barriers and actively seek out partnerships to instigate change.**

**I call on youth in Canada to leverage local and national partnerships to ensure that the access to medicines we are privileged to have is extended around the world.**



# Asha Hollis

**Age:** 22  
**Hometown:** Calgary, Alberta  
**Lives In:** Calgary, Alberta

**Affiliations:**  
Universities Allied for Essential Medicines  
Canadians for Safe Syrian Healthcare, Calgary, Alberta  
Alberta Children's Hospital, Calgary, Alberta

### What or who is your greatest inspiration?

My greatest inspiration is my mother who was a refugee from ethnic violence in Sri Lanka and had to start a new life in Canada. Her experiences taught her compassion and she puts the needs of others before her own by helping other refugee families. I am also inspired by the work of Médecins Sans Frontières, an international team with an unparalleled impact on the welfare of people in the most difficult circumstances.

### What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

Nelson Mandela said that when people are determined they can overcome anything. This is true for teamwork. We have all experienced the challenges of teamwork when group members have conflicting opinions and approaches. **It is important to be determined to work through these differences, because it is diversity in ideas and in skills that helps advance projects and achieve goals.**

Photo below by: Danylo Moussienko



I have always been passionate about health, which inspired me to study health and neurosciences. My research at the Alberta Children's Hospital on strokes in babies and kidney disease in children led me to recognize how easily health can be undermined. I aspire to take a proactive, team-based approach to addressing health issues, such as by campaigning for laws to prevent the sale of menthol cigarettes targeted at young people, advocating for the protection of Syrian hospitals, and collaborating to help ensure that life-saving medicines are priced affordably in developing countries.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being. The impairment of health affects not only individuals but entire families, and can extend to the community. Acting to improve health can have far-reaching effects. In many ways, we are living in a golden era of healthcare: scientific innovation has opened up myriad possibilities for improving health for everyone. However, inequalities in access to healthcare seriously undermine the realization of SDG 3, which we can take steps towards addressing through effective partnerships.





# Michou Joissaint

**Age:** 22  
**Hometown:** Breslienne, Haiti  
**Lives In:** Jacmel, Haiti

**Affiliations:**  
 Junior Global Citizen Club, Edmonton, Alberta and Jacmel, Haiti\*  
 Sant d'A Jacmel, Jacmel, Haiti  
 \*ACGC Member

## What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

In my experience in the arts, meaningful partnerships allow for the expression of stories of girls and women to be heard beyond borders. Through partnerships, Canadians can learn more about the Haitian experience and the lives of women and girls, and appreciate the creative and artistic talent of the country. My participation in the productions of the Junior Global Citizen Club—through illustration, photojournalism, interviews, and narration—has allowed me to share my story across boundaries while learning from the Canadian experience.

I am a feminist, artist, seeker of stories, lycée student, and proud Haitian. The many challenges faced by women and girls in Haiti inspire my work. In my society, women are often regarded as inferior and girls and women are often mistreated both physically and emotionally. Our value is often limited to domestic roles: doing the cooking, the cleaning, and the laundry. The first time I ever saw a man cook or do laundry was in Edmonton! In Haiti, some parents do not see value in sending their girls to school. Opportunities for school, work, and the arts are primarily given to boys. When I was younger, I decided that I have two hands, two feet, and a brain so I can do whatever boys do. I believe that through arts and media, women and girls can be empowered to tell their stories, which have the capacity to erase borders, build awareness, and promote change.

## Which SDG are you most passionate about?

SDG 5: Gender Equality. My work is inspired by the inequality that I see happening in daily life. The project *My Life as a Girl, So Far* spotlights the rest-avek issue, where rural children, usually girls, are forced to leave their homes to live with and work for wealthier families in the city. I am passionate about participating in the change towards more equal rights between women and men through creative expression and the full use of my talents.



Girls and young women should be empowered to tell their stories and use art to express what is in their hearts.

I encourage everyone to start or contribute to a Sustainable Development Goals network or alliance on their campus or in their community to bring people together under the banner of the Sustainable Development Goals.

# Patrick Jones

**Age:** 23  
**Hometown:** Cochrane, Alberta  
**Lives In:** Calgary, Alberta

**Affiliations:**  
 The Calgary Branch of the United Nations Association in Canada, Calgary, Alberta\*  
 \*ACGC Member



other's existence. I have sought out to create a better sense of community at the University of Calgary by bringing together a wide range of student organizations to form the Sustainable Development Goals Alliance. This alliance aims to serve as an intersection between students, faculty, NGOs, industry and government and is a concept that is replicable on campuses across Alberta and Canada.

## What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

The biggest lesson that I have learned is that the degree of separation between individuals is often much smaller than what we tend to believe. As I have learned over many conversations, we are closer to a common community than we often imagine, however, without building partnerships and incorporating people together towards common goals such as the SDGs, we will continue to fall short of our full, united potential.

In my life, I have had the privilege of traveling abroad and living all over Canada. Throughout this journey, I met a diverse array of people who have helped guide my energy and fuel my passion to help others and embrace change. My journey over the last five years has developed a powerful desire to become a global citizen invested in bettering the world wherever I can. As the first person in my family to attend university, I take full advantage of my time at the University Calgary through involvement both on campus and in the larger community.

## Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals because without collaboration change-making is slow and disjointed. While there are hundreds of campus clubs working towards similar goals, they often do not collaborate with each other and are often unaware of each



If you care about an issue and want to see change happen, know that you can help see it through. Take action, capitalize on resources available to you, garner support, and show key decision-makers why they should care too.



# Jeenan Kaiser

Age: 21

Hometown: Toronto, Ontario

Lives In: Calgary, Alberta

Affiliations:

The ONE Campaign, Ottawa, Ontario  
Women's Resource Centre, University of Calgary, Alberta

### What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

There is strength in numbers: Mobilizing support for your cause and partnering with others who share your values will maximize your impact. Collaboration is vital to creating a just and sustainable future for everyone, and necessitates working alongside diverse community members, organizations, and governments. This lesson was reinforced when I persuaded my Member of Parliament to present a petition in the House of Commons calling on the Canadian government to double investment in development aid, particularly towards funding for girls' education around the world. **Canada's contributions through development aid are vital to ensuring that all children have access to quality education.**

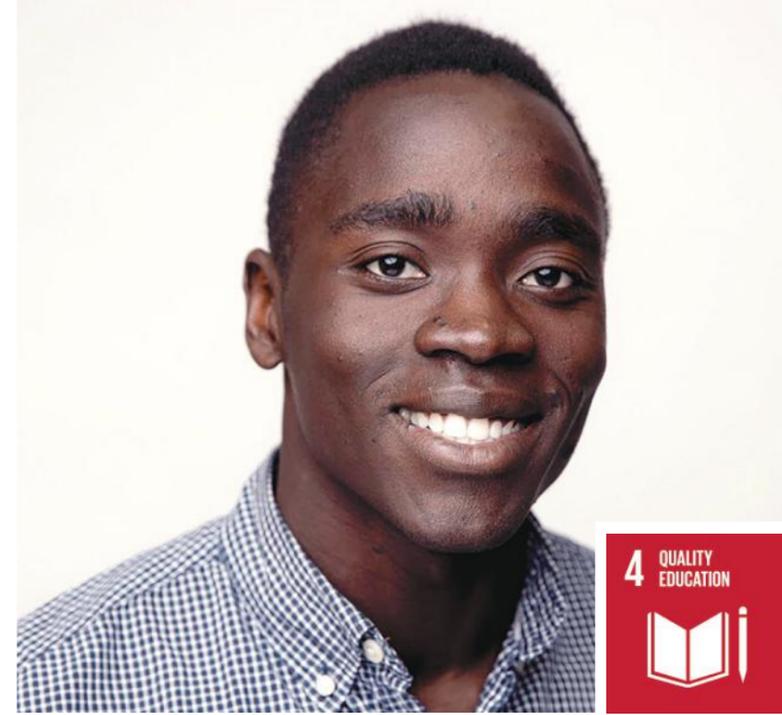
Profile photo by: Mariah Wilson, The Gauntlet



When I was six years old, I had a friend named Luna whom I met in Bangladesh. Despite both of us being young girls of Bangladeshi descent, we lived very different lives. Unlike me, Luna could not go to school due to financial constraints. Meeting children like Luna living in poverty in Bangladesh guided my passion for advocacy, activism, and community service. My strong interest in local and global sustainable development led me to found ONE UCalgary, a club that lobbies and petitions the Canadian government to enact policies that promote the sustainable global development agenda.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 4: Quality Education. My experiences in Bangladesh helped me realize how fortunate I am to have the opportunity to go to school. Providing children with access to quality education increases employment opportunities and income, improves health and well-being, and promotes gender equality, thereby strengthening and empowering families, entire communities, and economies. It is one of the most effective ways to break the cycle of poverty, and supports individuals to realize their full potential and make meaningful contributions to the world. For these reasons, I am committed to helping create a world in which every child is granted the same opportunity as I was.



# McNiel-Inyani Keri

Age: 23

Hometown: Kosti, Sudan

Lives In: Edmonton, Alberta

Affiliations:

Bionic Limbs for Improved Natural Control Lab, Edmonton, Alberta  
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Edmonton, Alberta  
Neighborhood Bridges, Edmonton, Alberta

### What or who is your greatest inspiration?

I have had the luxury of meeting many people that have greatly impacted my journey. Their vigor, energy and mentorship have had a great effect on my life. My father, however, has been my greatest source of inspiration. Losing his vision to glaucoma early on in life, he continues to be a leader in the community. As an elder in both the general Southern-Sudanese community and his specific tribe, Madi, my father has helped with the settlement of many immigrant families across the country and advocates to end the conflict in South Sudan.

Photo below by: Riley Dawson



Born in Kosti, Sudan during the second civil war, a childhood spent upstream the Nile in Cairo, Egypt, and roots that lay down stream to Juba, South-Sudan, my journey traversing the longest river ended when I immigrated to Canada as a refugee near the end of the second millennium. Throughout my journey, I have witnessed the impact of the stories we cultivate and share, which provide the world with meaning and can bring us together. My work with the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers as a tutor, and at Neighborhood Bridges (an agency supporting people with developmental disabilities) as an interpreter and motivator, centre on listening to individuals who have experienced tremendous adversity and are working to rewrite their stories. Also, as an engineering graduate student in the Bionic Limbs for Improved Natural Controls Lab, I am passionate about contributing to the ever-developing story of innovation and vision in Alberta and Canada.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 4: Quality Education. We cannot alter the stories that segregate society without education. Education is substantially more than textbooks, papers and examinations. Education is emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and a drive for equity. **Education is the means for creating new stories of inclusion, reconciliation, and hope.**

**I encourage open dialogue about stories propagating within society. We have the power to do more than just listen. Together we can generate new stories emphasizing inclusion, diversity, and mutual respect among individuals.**



# Natasha Kornak

Age: 21

Hometown: Calgary, Alberta

Lives In: Kingston, Ontario

**Affiliations:**

Right2Know Alberta, Calgary, Alberta  
Alma Mater Society, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario  
Daughters of the Vote, an Equal Voice Initiative, Ottawa, Ontario

is an unforgiving, uphill battle. If we truly want equity for all genders, we must hold our institutions accountable for protecting the rights, safety, and well-being of all.

**What or who is your greatest inspiration?**

I have been fortunate to have my MLA Leela Sharon Aheer as a mentor. Leela is a fierce protector of human rights and is unafraid to speak out against injustice. She is an advocate dedicated to using her voice to fight for others. Watching her has shaped how I carry myself as an advocate and leader.

**What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?**

It is important to be strong in your convictions. Know what your core values and principles are as well as what you're fighting for. Allow this vision to serve as your motivation to keep going, even when things get tough.



When I was young, my father told me: "nothing changes if you don't speak up." This advice shaped me into an outspoken person who isn't afraid to speak out against things that are unjust. When I started university, I became aware of the prevalence of sexual violence on campus after supporting several friends who were coping with its aftermath. I noticed that not enough was being done by the University to prevent sexual assault and provide support to survivors. In 2016, I launched the campaign Right2Know, which calls on the Government of Alberta to reform the health and wellness curriculum to teach about consent, what to do following an assault, and how to support a friend who has been assaulted. Through this advocacy work, I have put my father's advice to work and proven that our voices are our most valuable assets.

**Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?**

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. My work emphasizes and reinforces the importance of consent in our classrooms, in our justice system, and in our everyday activities. Ensuring that our institutions uphold the rights of survivors

**We all have a powerful gift: our voices. Find your voice, speak up, and follow through with action.**

Never underestimate the power that you have to reduce inequities in your community or anywhere in the world. Start with the resources available to you, and others will join.



# Azalea Lehndorff

Age: 30

Hometown: Fitchburg, Massachusetts, USA

Lives In: Calgary, Alberta

**Affiliations:**

A Better World Canada, Lacombe, Alberta

**What or who is your greatest inspiration?**

I am most inspired by the individuals who act to improve their communities with whatever resources they have available. One excellent example is Malala Yousafzai, who, as a child in Pakistan, became an advocate for the basic right to education. Malala's story is a reminder that we should never underestimate the power that we have to make a positive impact.

**What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?**

Many people imagine that building schools in Afghanistan would be difficult and dangerous. We never enter a community uninvited and each school we build is at the request of a community, built with local labour, and guarded by those in the community who value education. We have succeeded by working with the community in collaboration towards achieving their own situated goals.

Before I left home to boarding high school at 14, my family had moved 29 times in 11 different states. My parents were unsupportive of my desire to attend school, so I took matters into my own hands. I have always felt that education is a privilege and having access to it has opened a new world of opportunity. As an undergraduate student in 2010, I founded the 100 Classroom Project to address the need for basic educational infrastructure in Afghanistan, a country that has faced war for more than thirty years. The goal was simple: to build 100 classrooms in 10 schools to provide Afghan children, especially girls, a safe place to learn.

**Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?**

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities because it is values-based and responds to inequalities that lead to poorer outcomes for underserved communities throughout the world. Recognizing education and gender equality as important social determinants of health, I plan to spend my life working to decrease inequalities and inequities for populations I serve as a future doctor.



Youths must take bold steps on matters of water and sanitation by advocating for change: hold dialogues with civic leaders and others where everyone can air their views and devise plans together.

# Innocencia Tikho Lungu

Age: 17  
 Hometown: Ndola, Zambia  
 Lives In: Ndola, Zambia

**Affiliations:**  
 Seeds of Hope International Partnerships (SoHIP), Ndola, Zambia  
 Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technologies (CAWST), Calgary, Alberta\*  
 \*ACGC Member

## What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

As we collectively seek to build a better world, it is equally important that we build meaningful partnerships to achieve our set goals. Even with my little experience, I have observed that life is complementary in that one aspect of life affects the other. **The lesson I can share is that we should strive to make sure our partners are true partners, which requires humility and, above all, trust.** We should also search for effective innovations that can start small and then develop partnerships to expand reach and impact, along with a commitment to testing, documenting, and sharing successes and failures.

I live in a community where there are a lot of issues with water and sanitation, and our access to improved water and sanitation facilities is limited. When I was eleven, SoHIP visited our school with a water, sanitation, and hygiene awareness (WASH) program sponsored by CAWST where we created a group action plan for the school and it was successfully implemented. The program triggered my interest when I realized how badly we were affected by sanitation issues. I became motivated to take measures that would help change our community, so from then on, I started sharing what I learned with other kids my age. All this is possible because I am an action-oriented girl who is inspired to take little steps.

## Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation because these are basic human rights. Our day to day lives are dependent on them. I am faced with a situation where we collect water from shallow wells and people in the neighbourhoods share pit latrines. I had the opportunity to learn about the adverse impacts this has on our health and well-being, which has made me become even more passionate about improving my community's access to water and sanitation.



# David MacTaggart

Age: 19  
 Hometown: Lacombe, Alberta  
 Lives In: Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

**Affiliations:**  
 4-H Alberta  
 Peer Assisted Learners, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
 University of Saskatchewan Horticulture Club, Saskatoon



A young adult with roots in rural Alberta I am able to develop as a leader because of the strong support network in my home community. Through the Grow 4-H Gardening Project, I lead with hands-on experience and facts to engage youth and the public about how plant science improves the quality of their food. My interest in plant technology has evolved from growing gardens to summer research with Agriculture Canada. My experience motivates me to mentor the next generation of rural leaders through the 4-H program.

## Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 2: Zero Hunger requires sustainable agriculture and food security as key pillars. Since 1912 my family has farmed in Alberta implementing sustainable agriculture. Zero tillage and wetland conservation allowed my family to grow food through drought. I believe the principles of sustainable agriculture can be researched and applied around the world to build resilient food systems. Access to nutritious food brings security to the lives of vulnerable people. Some citizens in my community do not have food security despite being surrounded by bountiful lands and

economic vitality. This motivates me to supply the Lacombe Food Bank. My long-term goal, however, is to develop sustainable practices for farmers who strengthen global food security.

## What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

When designing projects, I recruit people who share common goals and vision. Partnerships begin with sharing a clear and achievable objective then recruiting people who respond with enthusiasm. It takes courage to communicate a fledgling idea without knowing whether others will join in. My community gardening project brought together government, industry and community. A common vision grounded in youth development and food production tied us together. **By incorporating the ideas of others, the impact is magnified.** Finally, the greatest lesson my parents taught me is that everyone has potential. As young leaders, it is our responsibility to find those talents and foster their development.



**I challenge Albertans to get involved in food production and ask tough questions. Support equitable innovation in agriculture because it benefits farmers in the developing world who need it most.**



# Emilie Maine

Age: 22

Hometown: Fort McMurray, Alberta

Lives In: Calgary, Alberta

Affiliations:

Fair Trade Calgary, Alberta

Fashion Revolution, Calgary Chapter, Alberta

Engineers Without Borders, University of Calgary Chapter, Alberta

in businesses and projects that care about people and the planet so that the future is not wrought with exploitation, slavery, and environmental degradation.

### What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

I always ask people “what issue makes you angry, frustrated, or fired up?” This question helps get to the core of what drives people—their passions—and where to invest their energies. It is the amalgamation of our responses to all of the things that we are individually passionate about that will help change the world. **To build a meaningful partnership, we need to leverage our strengths and passions together.** We can’t all be knowledgeable about all issues, but we can partner together to achieve social justice.

Profile photo by: Mecoh Dixon



I have had the privilege to travel extensively and learn about the world in a way that no classroom could ever teach me. This exposure led me to anti-oppression work including feminist and queer activism. I strive to dismantle systems that continue to oppress marginalized groups. Passionate about fair trade and worker rights, my activism work is a way for me to channel my anger towards the injustices in the world into positive impact and change. I do this through volunteering with organizations that advocate for fairer business practices.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. We live in a global society that consumes so many resources—from materials to labour—often in an exploitative or unsustainable way. By advocating for sustainable infrastructure, energy efficiency and labour rights, we are taking action towards a better future. As consumers, we have the power to influence how products are produced and used. I believe we should use this power to invest

**Your daily actions carry an enormous amount of power. As sustainable food advocate Anna Lappe says, “every time you open your wallet, you are casting a vote for the kind of world you want.” Choose what you invest your money and time in ethically, sustainably and consciously.**

Challenge the current limitations of your healthcare systems. Be innovators and leaders with your community by promoting initiatives that call for the well-being of all people.

# Athiang Makuoi

Age: 23

Hometown: Cairo, Egypt

Lives In: Edmonton, Alberta

Affiliations:

MacEwan United Nations Club, Edmonton, Alberta

Sustainability Leadership Council, MacEwan University

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada Edmonton Chapter



the focus of my work is on youth access to health information and services. My work with youth focuses on identifying and responding to the health obstacles they face in relation to such topics as social media and cultural expectations. **For a truly healthy society, we must ensure that all vulnerable groups have equitable access to healthcare.**

### What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

Fostering partnerships begins by listening, and being open to different forms of communication and connection. I have learned the importance of appreciating and understanding different cultures and perspectives. These differences provide viewpoints that we may not have considered, and allow for inclusivity during the solution seeking process. Whether it be through a partnership or mentorship, allowing yourself to be vulnerable—and accept and share feedback—fosters meaningful connections.

Moving from Egypt to Canada allowed me to grow up in an environment filled with opportunity. This transition encouraged me to engage with my new community and pursue my passions. In Egypt, I witnessed the barriers communities face to accessing adequate healthcare and health information. In Edmonton, I discovered my greatest passion to be addressing health-related obstacles, both locally and globally. In my volunteer work with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, I share with youth the importance of living healthy lifestyles through proper nutrition and personal well-being. Through the Sustainability Leadership Council, I have become dedicated to global connection and youth engagement on the social issues surrounding healthcare.

### Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being. Ensuring that everyone is living a healthy life is essential to human development. Studying nursing, I began to notice the areas where we can improve our healthcare system. While there are many components to ensuring everyone is receiving adequate access to healthcare,



I want to call on others to address the contamination of water because access to potable water is a fundamental need for our survival.



I am a person with great curiosity and enthusiasm, which has led me to study civil engineering in Huaraz, Peru. I am studying engineering so that I can achieve a better quality of life and strive for better development for my community. Moving forward in my professional life, my vision is to be innovative and active in addressing the needs of my community by fostering a more just distribution of opportunities. My goals are to improve the quality of life of members of my community by reducing poverty, improving access to potable water, sanitation and irrigation systems, and increasing access to great education.

**Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?**

SDG 2: Zero Hunger. My goal with the Sombrilla Food Security Project is to improve local practices of agriculture. I am very enthusiastic about working with the greenhouses, which are benefiting many families in my community. By sharing my knowledge about plants and how to care for them with the

# Jaime Caururu Oropeza

Age: 19

Hometown: Tuquepayoc, Ancash, Peru  
Lives In: Tuquepayoc, Ancash, Peru

**Affiliations:**

Andean Alliance, Yurac Yacu Community Project, District of Independencia, Province of Huaraz Sombrilla International Development Society, Central America and South America\*

\*ACGC Member

families, I am able to see how, with time, each family develops an understanding of sustainable agriculture, and in turn, benefits from improved access to food.

**What or who is your greatest inspiration?**

The greatest influence in my life is my family who is always there to motivate me and provide the support I need. My second influence is my mathematics teacher from secondary school, who did all he could to help me become a good student and a person with ability in the sciences and engineering. The final inspiration is the principal of my school, whose advice and jokes helped me to see my strengths and my true potential. I have all that I have because of the support of my community.



# Zeel Patel

Age: 17

Hometown: Aghar, Gujarat, India  
Lives In: Calgary, Alberta

**Affiliations:**

Operation Med School, Calgary, Alberta  
OmniScientific, Calgary, Alberta  
Global Vision, Ottawa, Ontario

earliest stages of disease development is crucial because at this point, patient survival rates are the highest. Developing nations face additional burdens because conventional diagnostics are incredibly expensive. Recognizing this, I am motivated to engineer simple, early-stage, point-of-care diagnostics to detect atherosclerosis that are extremely inexpensive, minimally invasive, and ultra-rapid—presenting the most applicable solution to overcoming this worldwide disparity.

**What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?**

Through my experiences collaborating with industry, leading non-profit organizations, and serving as an active citizen of Alberta, I have learned that collaboration and resilience—when coupled together—yield powerful outcomes. Society as a whole is constantly becoming increasingly interconnected and only by embracing this change and fostering innovation can we maximize our global impact.

Profile photo by: Hibah Syed

Hailing from rural India, I witnessed the stark disparity that exists between developing and developed nations regarding healthcare infrastructure and accessibility to pharmaceuticals. This disparity results in countless preventable deaths from cardiovascular disease. I aim to utilize the lessons learned from my upbringing to engineer practical innovations for the future. As a scientific researcher, I have developed an ultra-low-cost, rapid, portable, and early-stage diagnostic device for atherosclerosis called CADSense. In staying true to my original vision for its application, I sold CADSense to a multinational pharmaceutical who shares my values and will commercialize CADSense at a low-price for consumers to ensure its ethical, widespread implementation in developing nations.

**Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?**

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being. Cardiovascular disease takes more lives than all forms of HIV/AIDS and cancers combined. In my travels across rural India and China, I witnessed people suffering from medical epidemics first-hand. Often, families must choose between paying for expensive medical treatments or putting food on the table. Early diagnosis is critical for managing cardiovascular disease. Detection in the



Age is not a barrier to action and there is no prescribed formula or series of steps for making a difference. As millennials and high school students, we have a responsibility to invest in addressing imminent social issues for future generations.



# Nicola Paviglianiti

Age: 23

Hometown: Calgary, Alberta

Lives In: Calgary, Alberta

Affiliations:

Lift4Life, Harare, Zimbabwe

Network on International Humanitarian Action, Dublin, Ireland

## What or who is your greatest inspiration?

My inspiration comes from the “champions” I meet around me who remind me that strength comes in many shapes and forms; a lifter who gets under the barbell to lift a weight despite doubts and insecurities; or, Audrey, a female lifter in Zimbabwe, who takes on the spirit of sport to mentor youth and women in her community, despite limited access to equipment and resources.

## What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?

In powerlifting a support system is crucial, and likewise, in development projects collaboration fosters more sustainable outcomes. **Never underestimate how small actions put together can make a difference, just as adding a little bit of weight to the bar week after week leads to a significantly larger total.**

In Zimbabwe, I support locals to take ownership of the sport by hosting their own classes and workshops, and continuously building each other up.



My desire to make a positive impact in the world took shape from a young age through travel with my family. In 2015 I discovered strength sports, and as a current Team Canada powerlifter, my passion and niche combines my humanitarian heart with sport. I conducted my master’s degree in Zimbabwe studying how grassroots weightlifting activities can address humanitarian needs through women’s empowerment, community development, and sustainable livelihood programming. Now I am putting my research into action by supporting sports for development programming in marginalized communities.

## Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 5: Gender Equality. As a female athlete, I am passionate about Gender Equality. Powerlifting is an activity that people can do regardless of gender, age, and size. It has been transformative in my own life and I want to share this with others locally and globally. For women in particular, I have witnessed how the sport is breaking down gender barriers and stereotypes, cultivating confidence, fostering community, and providing sustainable opportunities including employment.

**How will you uplift the world? Find your inner strength and embrace the gifts you have been given to fight the good fight and leave your own positive legacy.**

**Youth need to become advocates for each other and for our professional capacity as a collective. We must not allow ourselves to be tokenized.**



# Kate Pundyk

Age: 20

Hometown: Crowsnest Pass, Alberta

Lives In: Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Affiliations:

Little Devices Lab at MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts

The Commonwealth International Youth Task Force, London, United Kingdom

the tokenization of youth in global dialogues. In addition, a recognition of glaring global healthcare inequalities catalyzed my interest in joining the policy work of the Little Devices Lab.

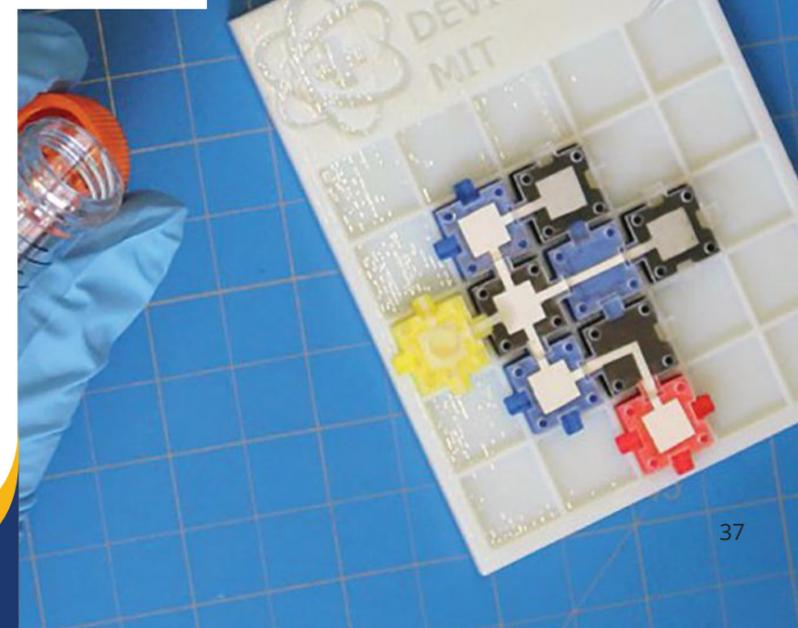
## What or who is your greatest inspiration?

I am motivated by the image of a rural kid feeling like they do not have a place in the world and that it wasn’t designed to include them. Those kids whose names we don’t know because no one has reached out to them to ask what they think about the issues facing their community, country, or world. **There is so much potential in the voices we are systematically excluding from decision making fora.** I hope that I am able to build a platform for youth who are normally left out of global development that gives them the resources needed to share their opinions and change policy.

I am currently studying at Wellesley College, Massachusetts focusing on youth and technology policy. My work is guided by a conviction that no one should be excluded from decision-making processes and my desire to move to a form of policy-making that is more inclusive of youth and rural communities. This shapes my current work as a co-lead of the Commonwealth youth policy team for the London 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and in the MIT Little Devices Lab where I research do-it-yourself medical devices. Prior to this, I worked on a start-up at MIT that uses lab analytics and robotics to fight the opioid epidemic.

## Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. For me, the common thread underlying the work that I do is that every person is deserving of equal opportunity to have their concerns taken into account at the local, regional, national, and international level. This has shone through in my advocacy for rural youth where I challenge



Youth must make it their mission to start or join an initiative working against poverty. Contact officials in all jurisdictions of government urging them to make poverty reduction policies a top priority.



When I started volunteering in my community, I gained a strong sense of purpose, meaning, and fulfillment. After a trip to India opened my eyes to inequalities in our world, I co-founded an international humanitarian and development organization called House of Dreams. In response to global disparities, we have raised over \$50,000 for our initiatives including building an orphanage and providing other vital resources and services.

**Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?**

SDG 1: No Poverty. I believe the most immediate issue facing our world today is poverty, in all of its forms. Humanity is logistically capable of eradicating poverty, yet it continues to exist today. Through my involvement with House of Dreams, I have been able to work towards this goal by constructing an orphanage in Faisalabad, Pakistan and building a water well, pump, and filtration system that now provides clean water to many communities.

**What or who is your greatest inspiration?**

Humanity's progress is my greatest inspiration. The positive changes and meaningful differences that have resulted from

# Mohammed Moin Tinwala

Age: 23

Hometown: Calgary, Alberta

Lives In: Calgary, Alberta

**Affiliations:**

House of Dreams, Calgary, Alberta  
 Science Students' Society, University of Calgary, Alberta  
 The Brenda Strafford Foundation, Calgary, Alberta

the work of individuals around the globe prove that a sustainable future for everyone is possible. Whether it is providing basic human needs, empowering someone to act or donate, or putting a smile on someone's face, the act of giving to others opens a powerful pathway within me to personal growth and happiness.

**What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?**

While it can be intimidating to reach out and take the first step to connect with others, you will notice that it reaps incredible benefits. Working together helps to cultivate strong mindsets for positive change, empowering us to work harder and greatly increasing efficacy and efficiency. Now, more than ever, the world needs to reap the benefits of meaningful partnerships to accomplish far more than what might be possible working alone.



# Fayudatu Yakubu

Age: 26

Hometown: Tamale, Ghana

Lives In: Tamale, Ghana

**Affiliations:**

Lively Minds, Ghana  
 Net Organisation for Youth Empowerment and Development (NOYED-Ghana)  
 EQWIP HUBs Ghana

**What or who is your greatest inspiration?**

In Ghana, our educational system does not provide the kind of skills that are relevant for the job market. This skill gap is one of the major challenges hindering youth development. Yet, seeing the youth I mentor acquire relevant knowledge and skills and ultimately empower themselves to find jobs and start businesses is my greatest inspiration.

**What lesson can you share about building meaningful partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals?**

Understand each other's perspective, build trust, develop clear agreements and be flexible, and learn from your partners.

Since high school I have always felt motivated to work. I took up every internship opportunity to develop myself and that is how I became who I am today. As a youth, I experienced firsthand the skill gap deficiency, which is defined as a lack of fundamental reading, writing, mathematical or communication skills required for the job market. Wanting to contribute towards bringing an end to this skill gap has made me very passionate about youth development. I have a Graduate Diploma in Management Studies from the Institute of Commercial Management United Kingdom. I work at EQWIP HUBs Ghana as a training facilitator providing youth the opportunity to find jobs and start their own businesses.

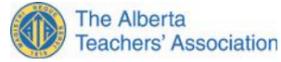
**Which SDG are you most passionate about and why?**

For me SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals is the only way to implement and achieve all the other goals. Developing strong and sustainable partnerships enables us to pull resources together and build the capacities of different countries. The scale and complexity of the economic and social transformation required to achieve the Goals is such that no one sector, government, business, civil society or academic field will be able to manage the transformation alone. We need strong partnerships that bring different sectors together if we are to overcome our challenges.

**I extend an invitation to the youth to join the mission to bridge the skill gap by taking the opportunity to train, mentor and share skills.**



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**Alberta Teachers' Association**  
www.teachers.ab.ca



**Bow Valley College, International Education**  
www.bowvalleycollege.ca/schools-and-centres/international-education



**Bridges of Hope International Network of Dev Agencies**  
www.thebridgesofhope.com



**Calgary Board of Education**  
www.cbe.ab.ca



**Canadian Center for Ethnomusicology (CCE)**  
www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/ccewiki



**Canadian Global Care Society**  
www.canadianglobalcare.com



**Canadian Humanitarian Organization for International Relief**  
www.canadianhumanitarian.com



**Canadian Peacemakers International**  
www.canadianpeacemakers.org



**Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan**  
www.cw4wafghan.ca



**CAUSE Canada**  
www.cause.ca



**Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology (CAWST)**  
www.cawst.org



**Centre for Global Citizenship Education and Research**  
www.ualberta.ca/education/centres-institutes/global-citizenship



**Change for Children Association**  
www.changeforchildren.org



**D. Keith MacDonald Foundation**  
www.dkmfoundation.org



**Development and Peace**  
https://www.dev.org/en



**Edmonton Public School Board**  
www.epsb.ca



**Engineers Without Borders Calgary City Chapter**  
www.calgary.ewb.ca



**Four Worlds Centre for Development Learning**  
www.fourworlds.ca



**Giving Hope to Children Society**  
www.givinghopesociety.org



**Global Education Program, University of Alberta**  
www.ualberta.ca/global-education



**John Humphrey Centre**  
www.jhcentre.org



**Junior Global Citizen Club**  
www.juniorglobalcitizen.org



**Keiskamma Canada Foundation**  
www.keiskammaCanada.com



**Light Up the World Foundation**  
lutw.org



**MacEwan International**  
www.macewan.ca/wcm/International/MacEwanInternational



**Mahatma Gandhi Canadian Foundation for World Peace**  
www.gandhifoundation.ca



**Marda Loop Justice Film Festival**  
www.justicefilmfestival.ca



**Mennonite Central Committee Alberta**  
www.mccab.ca



**Micah Center, The King's University**  
www.micahcentre.ca



**Nafasi Opportunity Society**  
www.nafasi-opportunity.org



**One Child's Village**  
www.onechildsvillage.org



**One! International Poverty Relief**  
www.one-international.com



**Operation Eyesight Universal**  
operationeyesight.com



**Optometry Giving Sight**  
www.givingsight.org



**Oxfam Canada**  
www.oxfam.ca



**Rainbow for the Future**  
www.rainbowftf.ngo



**Rainbow of Hope for Children**  
www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca



**Rotary District 5370**  
www.rotary5370.org



**Samaritan's Purse Canada**  
www.samaritan.ca



**Somali-Canadian Education and Rural Development Organization (SCREDO)**  
www.scerdo.org



**Sinkunia Community Development Organization**  
www.sinkuniacommunity.org



**Sombrilla International Development Society**  
www.sombrilla.ca



**Trebi Kuma Ollennu Foundation for Community Development**  
www.tkofcd.org



**United Nations Association in Canada - Calgary Branch**  
www.calgary.unac.org



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