

SISTER²SISTER

SUMMIT

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON GENDER EQUALITY

June 12, 2021



LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

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WELCOME

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our societies and economies, of which women, especially women of colour, Indigenous women, and low-income women, have been disproportionately impacted. Women both on the frontlines and at home have faced significant challenges, and those living in societies impacted by conflict even more so. COVID-19 reminds us of the important need to respond to the pandemic using an intersectional gendered lens in building a resilient world in the interest of everyone but most importantly with women and girls at the centre of recovery. The Sister2Sister program supports the journey to recovery. The women in this program are learning about gender-based violence, human rights, which are women's rights, community activism, the importance of mentorships and self-advocacy. This Summit invites all of us to join in this journey; to support our Sisters who COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted by unlocking ideas, intelligence and passion. Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee calls on us to become a warrior in today's world by refusing to align with the status quo, by sacrificing our comfort to speak for the comfort of others, to walk loud and leave footprints that last. Join us on June 12. Let's walk loud and leave footprints that last!

LAVEZA KHAN
Summit Co-Lead

SARA ASALYA
Summit Co-Lead &
Senior Program Manager,
Sister2Sister

JUDY FANTHAM
Executive director

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"For every minute spent planning and organizing for the Summit, there was a new lesson learned. We all acted as leaders whose voices mattered and were considered! This feeling alone was enough for us to give more than our limits!"

NEVIN AL QISHAWI
Sister2Sister program
participant and Summit
committee member



Judy joined NEW in November 2018. She is always in pursuit of the story having graduated with a journalism degree from Carleton University. Judy worked for 26 years at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as a television reporter, producer, Regional Director for Alberta and Saskatchewan Television and finally as Director of the national Learning & Development department. A Masters in Leadership & Training opened up a new pathway to organizational development and strategic planning. Before NEW she was the Senior Executive Officer for the Ontario Nurses' Association. Judy is an avid volunteer for a variety of causes.

JUDY FANTHAM
OPENING REMARKS ADDRESS

The vision of Newcomer Women's Services, Toronto (NEW) is that "strong women build strong communities." And realizing that vision has never been more important than during COVID. We need to enable and empower women—especially immigrant women who have become victims of Gender Based Violence during social isolation. Besides Sister2Sister, NEW offers Sisters Prosper which is a two-week boot camp to accelerate professional immigrant women back into the workforce with training, counselling, internships, and corporate mentorships. SistersatthecentrE is a new collaboration with WomenatthecentrE to create six forums on Gender Based Violence. Last year Newcomer Women's Services, Toronto won an award from the Institute of Change Leaders for supporting immigrant women to tell their stories and use them as tools for social change. We hope events like this Summit invite others to share in our bold vision to transform communities and advocate for equity and justice.

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES



MP HEATHER MCPHERSON
KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Critic for Foreign Affairs, Women and Gender Equality, Canadian Heritage and Deputy House Leader. Heather is the only non-Conservative Member of Parliament in Alberta. Prior to the 2019 election, Heather spent over 20 years working on sustainable development and international cooperation efforts through the non-profit sector, including ten years as Executive Director of the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation. Heather has worked closely with the Canadian and international community, focusing on sustainable development, good governance, and human rights. Heather has a master’s degree from the University of Alberta in Educational Policy Studies in Theoretical, Cultural, and International Studies in Education, with a focus on incorporating indigenous knowledge in the achievement of sustainable development. Heather lives in Edmonton, Alberta, with her partner and two children, where she takes full advantage of the proximity to lakes, forests, and mountains.



JASKIRAN SHOKER
CLOSING REMARKS

Jaskiran is a mentor with the Sister2Sister program. As a community driven leader, she is passionate about creating opportunities to empower young women to take on leadership roles in their communities and is involved with initiatives focused on advancing gender equality and empowering women through mentorship, personal development and networking. Most recently, she was selected to be on Equal Voice’s Steering Committee for the Toronto Chapter. She also dedicates her time as a mentor and volunteer for the following organizations: Laadliyan, World Sikh Organization, McMaster Alumni Association and the Ontario Legislature Internship Programme. Jaskiran was a Senior Consultant for almost 3 years at Counsel Public Affairs, a public affairs agency specializing in government relations and strategic communications. Prior to Counsel, Jaskiran was selected as a part of the 2017-2018 Ontario Legislature Internship Programme (OLIP) cohort at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Jaskiran holds a Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and a Master of Arts Degree in Political Science from McMaster University, where she graduated as Valedictorian.

AGENDA

TIME	DESCRIPTION	SPEAKERS/PANELISTS
9:30 - 10:15 am	Welcome and Land acknowledgment Opening remarks	Sara Asalya Judy Fantham
10:15 - 10:26 am	Keynote MP Heather McPherson	MP Heather McPherson
10:30 - 11:30 am	The World Needs More Women Leaders A panel discussion on representation in public policy and politics.	Moderator: Shireen Salti Ruby Latif Keren Tang Anjum Sultana Aya Al-Shalchi
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	BREAK	
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Intersectional Feminism and Social Justice	Moderator: Laveza Khan Arezoo Najibzadeh Paulette Senior Debbie Douglas
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	BREAK	
2:00 - 3:00 pm	The Shadow Pandemic: Combating Violence Against Women	Moderator, Olivia McIntosh Jessica Ketwaroo-Green Maryam Pandi Margarita Pintin-Perez
3:00 - 3:30 pm	Breakout discussion	3-5 breakout rooms with Sister2Sister facilitators
3:30 - 4:30 pm	Women’s Mental Health in the Time of COVID-19 - Best Practices for Self-Care & Healing (workshop)	Facilitator Dr. Susan E. Murray
4:30 - 4:45 pm	Closing remarks Jaskiran Shoker	Jaskiran Shoker

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MEET THE SUMMIT ORGANIZERS

CO-LEAD



LAVEZA KHAN

"Without doubt, women and girls have been **deeply impacted by the COVID-19** pandemic. This summit is an opportunity to think about the many challenges faced by women, particularly those from marginalized communities and to envision a world post-pandemic where we learn from the challenges and shift the dialogue, so our communities are more inclusive for all."



JIYA GUPTA

Jiya is a Sister2Sister program participant and a Summit committee member. "As an immigrant to Canada, I have accepted change as a way of life, and I am inspired by the words of Mahatma Gandhi: "Be the change you want to see in the world." The Newcomer Women's Services and the Sister2Sister program embody this mantra, and it has empowered me as an immigrant woman. The event planning committee promotes solidarity, courage and freedom. Engaging in candid conversations with the Sisters has enlightened me to so many community issues. Together, we can provide positivity and resources to the sisterhood to stave off oppression and leverage privileges to grow as a community. I feel the committee is organized and rooted in the issues. This forum also provides avenues for connections and confidence through public speaking. I am so honoured to be a part of this community, and I feel that we can make an impactful change as a sisterhood."

“

Women, in particular, racialized and immigrant women, are feeling the **brunt of this pandemic**. Covid-19 has heightened the existing and ongoing challenges and inequities faced by this segment. Investing in women and girls is key to **post-pandemic recovery**. The challenges and barriers faced by women are multi-layered and complex, and this

Summit will offer an opportunity to address the root causes of **gender inequality** and tackle these barriers at the systemic level with real policy recommendations.

CO-LEAD



SARA ASALYA

Sara is a Palestinian immigrant and award-winning leader who was born and raised in a war-torn country. Sara witnessed first-hand the impact of violence, displacement, and trauma on war refugees' lives, which guides her work as an award-winning leader and human rights advocate. She was named one of Canada's Top 25 Canadian Immigrants and Women of Influence for being a champion for immigrants' rights and her leadership and dedication to advancing their civic, democratic, and political engagement. From promoting civic engagement to empowering women, Sara works to mobilize, activate and galvanize immigrant communities to take action for social change and impact. Sara is the Founder and Executive Director of The Newcomer Students' Association, a grassroots non for profit organization working at the intersection of migration, education, and social justice, and a platform committed to promoting inclusion and equity for post-secondary immigrant and refugee students. Sara is also the Senior Manager of Programs and Strategic Initiatives at Newcomer Women's Services Toronto.

THE WORLD NEEDS MORE WOMEN LEADERS

The need for gender balance in positions of power and influence within our societies has been evident through the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges of the 21st century require a multi-dimensional style of leadership, and the adoption of more comprehensive and inclusive solutions. Only 22 countries have elected a woman head of state or government, while 119 nations have never had a woman leader, according to U.N. Women, which said gender parity would not be achieved for another 130 years at the current rate of progress.



SHIREEN SALT I
MODERATOR

Shireen is a fluently bilingual, first-generation Palestinian woman, and the Executive Director of the Canadian Arab Institute (CAI), where her strategic leadership is amplifying the voices and policy priorities of Arab-Canadian youth. Shireen's own lived experience is complemented by a Master's in Public

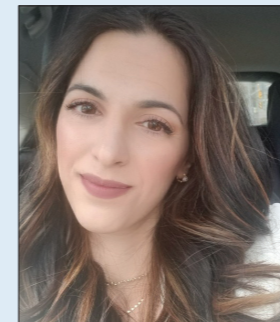
Policy, Administration and Law and a Graduate Diploma in Judicial Administration from York University. These academic pursuits have fueled her passion for meaningful reform of the systems and policies meant to support the "Arab" experience in Canada—including newcomer resettlement, social capital, education, and labour market access. Some past successes include managing Ontario Public Service programs that reduced systematic barriers to education for marginalized students; leading advocacy strategies on Indigenous, mental health, cannabis, and accessibility policies for the Council of Ontario Universities; and working across party lines to write private members' bills and learn about governance at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario's non-partisan Internship Programme (OLIP).



KEREN TANG

Keren is a mom, community organizer, and a political candidate for the upcoming City Council election in Edmonton. She merges her background in public health, community development, human-centred design, and the social determinants of health, and is a firm believer in the power of peer-to-peer, neighbour-to-neighbour networks. Currently, she is working with the McConnell Foundation and

partners across the country and overseas, building robust social infrastructures at the neighbourhood level. Previously, she managed Recover, the social innovation initiative at the City of Edmonton to improve urban wellness in the downtown core. She is passionate about working with ethnocultural communities in civic engagement and health promotion. A Top 40 Under 40, Keren also serves on the board of the Edmonton Community Foundation and ASSIST Community Services (for newcomers), and is active with the Edmonton Multicultural Coalition. Beyond her community involvement, Keren is an avid skier and loves spending time with her family in the mountains.



AYA AL-SHALCHI

Shireen is a fluently bilingual, first-generation Aya works at the Office of the Prime Minister, focused on Public Service Renewal and Public Appointments. She is leading the government's efforts to reform the Public Service to make it more diverse and agile. She is also responsible for supporting the government's efforts in appointing qualified Canadians through an open,

transparent and merit-based appointments process. Previously, she was an Ontario Regional Advisor to the Minister of International Trade diversification, and she played a lead role in the 2019 election campaign of The Hon. Omar Alghabra in Mississauga Centre. She has a master's degree in international public policy from the Balsillie School of International Affairs and a BA from Mount Allison University. Aya was born in Iraq and became a Canadian citizen in 2015, cast her first vote in 2015, and is proud, as an immigrant, to have this opportunity to contribute to Canadian democracy and the Canadian government.

THE WORLD NEEDS MORE WOMEN LEADERS



RUBY LATIF

Ruby has over 15 years of experience leveraging research and strategic partnerships in service of community initiatives. As Principal Consultant with Milieu Strategy and Consulting and a previous political staffer with the Offices of Premier Dalton McGuinty and Mayor John Tory, Ruby has collaborated with over 1,000 community groups to ensure better and more responsive policymaking. She has also engaged with

hundreds of ethnic media outlets and has organized over 300 community and political events. Ruby believes that today's policy challenges require creativity, building bridges, bringing diverse stakeholders together, and applying an intersectional lens to inform policy decisions by those most impacted. Her research on workplace diversity and organizational change management has been published in academic journals, including the *Journal of Management and Organization*. In her spare time, Ruby is a contributing columnist for the *Toronto Star*, a mentor to numerous young racialized leaders, and an avid wearer of sparkly sneakers.



ANJUM SULTANA

Anjum Sultana is an award-winning public affairs strategist, accomplished public speaker, and published researcher with expertise in gender equity, public health, and civic engagement. Anjum is the National Director of Public Policy & Strategic Communications at YWCA Canada, the country's largest and oldest gender equity organization. Anjum is the Co-Author and Operations Lead for 'A Feminist Economic

Recovery Plan: Making the Economy Work for Everyone,' the first nationally-focused recovery plan of its kind. Currently, Anjum is a member of Canada's W20 official delegation providing recommendations to G20 countries. Anjum serves on the Boards of the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA), Regent Park Community Health Centre and Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA). Anjum holds a Masters of Public Health from the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. In 2020, Anjum was named one of Canada's Top 30 Under 30 in Sustainability by Corporate Knights.

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U.N. Women, which said **gender parity** will not be achieved for another **130 years** at the current rate of progress.

INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Intersectional feminism offers a lens and perspective through which we can better understand one another and work towards a more just future for all. An intersectional approach to social justice shows the way that people's social identities overlap and create compounding experiences of discrimination and inequality. Our way for a just and equitable recovery is through applying an intersectional feminist approach that doesn't leave anyone behind.



LAVEZA KHAN
MODERATOR

Laveza Khan is a political staffer for the New Democratic Party of Canada. She is passionate about gender equality, social justice and community development. Laveza

completed her postgraduate studies at Humber College in International Development and has an Honours BA from McMaster University in Labour Studies and Sociology. Laveza previously worked in the development sector where her portfolio focused on policy and advocacy, public engagement, and advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals. She was selected as an official representative for the Canadian delegation at the High-Level Political Forum at the United Nations in July 2018. Laveza is an alumnus of the Women Deliver Young Leaders program. As a woman of the South-Asian diaspora, Laveza is eager to support other immigrant and refugee women and hopes to change the discourse on gender and cultural norms. Laveza serves on the board of the Mosquers Film Festival and is an advisor to a start-up called Spontivly.



AREZOO NAJIBZADEH

Arezoo Najibzadeh is a social innovator, communicator, and a curator of authentic con-

versations and spaces. She is the founder and managing director of Platform, a non-profit organization that builds civic leadership capacity among Black, Indigenous, and racialized young women and gender-diverse youth. Through her work at Platform, Arezoo is advancing the conversation on gender and politics beyond representation to promote meaningful inclusion and prosperous futures for marginalized communities. Arezoo is a recognized civil society leader and is the 2020 YWCA Toronto Young Woman of Distinction, and a Women Deliver Young Leader.



PAULETTE SENIOR

Paulette Senior is President & CEO of the Canadian Women's Foundation. She has devoted her career to empowering women and girls to overcome barriers and reach their full potential. Paulette started her career on the front lines of social service organizations in some of Toronto's most economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods. She saw how social resources and systemic change could transform women's lives. Through

her work and advocacy with shelters, as well as employment and housing programs, she has earned numerous awards and become one of the most respected women leaders in Canada. Paulette joined the Foundation in 2016, after ten years as CEO of YWCA Canada. Her work with the Foundation is guided by the vision of an inclusive, national movement toward gender equity that will strengthen all Canadians.



DEBBIE DOUGLAS

Debbie Douglas is the Executive Director of OCASI - the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. Through her work in the NGO sector and particularly at OCASI, Ms. Douglas has highlighted issues of equity and inclusion including race, gender and sexual orientation within the immigration system and promoted the creation of safe, welcoming spaces within the settlement and integration sector. Ms. Douglas is a member of

the Immigration and Refugee Advisory Committee of Legal Aid Ontario and the federal government's National Settlement & Integration Council. She co-chairs the City of Toronto's Newcomer Leadership Table and was appointed as a member of the provinces round-table on Violence Against Women, and co-chaired the provincial Anti-Black Racism sub-committee. She is also currently on the Toronto Community Housing Corporation Board of Directors, and was most recently appointed to the Stephen Lewis Foundation Board of Directors. She is the recipient of several awards including the Women of Distinction from YWCA Toronto (2004); the Amino Malko award from the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (2008) and the Urban Alliance on Race Relations Anti-Racism Award (2014).

THE SHADOW PANDEMIC COMBATting VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence. Globally, one in three women will experience abuse or be subjected to gender-based violence in their lifetime. In Canada, on average, every week, a woman is killed by her intimate partner. According to data released by Statistics Canada, during the first four months of the COVID-19 pandemic, police services reported a 12% increase in domestic disturbances and domestic disputes calls. More needs to be done to prioritize and respond to violence against women in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.



OLIVIA MCINTOSH
MODERATOR

Originally from Jamaica, Olivia is a Certified Nursing Assistant, and she volunteered with various groups helping young girls and domestic violence survivors find hope and regain their strength to make it back into society. "It was and is my great pleasure to work with the sisters and Sara on this Summit. I was flattered that I got the opportunity to facilitate one of the panels on gender-based violence as I am very passionate about this topic. I gained, learned, and shared great insights on how we can shed light on these issues and help other women overcome their challenges. I don't plan to stop here! This is the beginning of a journey to help and empower other immigrant women who are survivors of gender-based violence. Together, we join forces, and we can create such a dynamic impact that others will see and be magnified to join as we build and strengthen the sisterhood."



MARYAM PANDI

Maryam is a first-generation Canadian. After completing her undergrad in Iran, she moved to Canada to continue her graduate studies. She then joined Toronto Rehab Institute (TRI), where she collaborated closely with local, provincial, and national partners to provide educational programs for underserved and marginalized youth. Currently, Maryam is the Executive Director at Sexual Assault Centre Kingston. She is passionate about social justice and grounds her work in intersectional feminism

and anti-oppression values. She uses her skills to advocate for gender equality and in her daily work, Maryam uses her experience in community building and outreach to advocate for gender equality and work towards a future free of sexual violence.

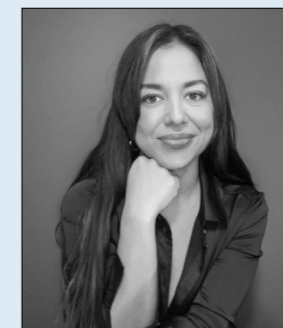
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**JESSICA
KETWAROO-GREEN**

Jessica is the Director of Advocacy and Public Policy at the Canadian Women's Chamber of Commerce. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Politics and Governance from Ryerson University focused on social justice, gender equity and policy studies. Throughout her professional career, she has worked primarily in the non-profit sector, coordinating programs to advance the social, political and economic position of women and gender diverse peoples in Canada. As a principal consultant, Jessica has supported

private, for-profit organizations and the public sector to strengthen individual and organizational capacity to address racism and gender inequity. She is the Director of Advocacy and Public Policy with the Canadian Women's Chamber of Commerce. Her work has spanned from sexual violence, intimate partner violence and women's economic security. As an independent consultant, she has delivered keynotes, workshops, and training on anti-black racism, gender, equity, and inclusion to strengthen individual and organizational capacity.



MARGARITA PINTIN-PEREZ

Margarita is Senior Coordinator of the Initiative to End GBV against Immigrant and Refugee Communities at OCASI – Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. Margarita earned a PhD (2019) in Sociology from El Colegio de la Frontera Sur, Mexico and a Master of Social Work (2011) from the University of Toronto. Her research is interested in violence, specifically examining the role of discourse and space in securing racial and gendered violence against migrant

communities. She has completed research in Canada and Mexico with published work on feminist research methods and different forms of symbolic and structural violence. Returning to Canada in 2019, she started her position at OCASI coordinating a national project focused on supporting an infrastructure of advocacy leadership among survivors of GBV and communities long time working to support non-status, refugee and immigrant women.

WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

BEST PRACTICES FOR SELF-CARE & HEALING

COVID-19 pandemic has affected women more profoundly than men in several areas, especially as many juggle responsibilities of the workplace and the home with an increased workload due to lockdown measures. A lack of adequate domestic and emotional support can have consequences on women's health. Talking about mental health, addressing stigmas, and knowing what resources and practices can help us navigate and take care of our mental health is important now more than ever.



DR. SUSAN E. MURRAY

Dr. Susan Murray is an internationally recognized researcher, speaker, and expert on leadership. She designs and leads programs and workshops across the public and private sectors across the globe. She is an Adjunct Professor at Memorial University, Newfoundland. She teaches in Rotman School of Management's custom executive programs and Humber College School of Business. She is the team lead for government excellence program assessments in the United Arab Emirates,

focusing on leadership, human capital, and innovation. Susan firmly believes in giving back and devotes significant time to non-profit organizations. She is the Kids Eat Smart Foundation chair, a charity that serves over 35,000 meals every day at no cost to families. She is a mentor and coach with national and international organizations, including Women in Leadership (WIL), UNTOLD and the Canadian Arab Institute (CAI). She is a coach for G(irls)20, a renowned global non-profit that aims to mobilize girls and young women for economic advancement locally and worldwide. In 2021, she was the operational lead researcher for a ground-breaking report, "Experiences of Racialized Communities During Covid-19- Reflections and a Way Forward", coauthored by CAI and Brock University. As a researcher, she draws on the power of the stories shared with her from people around the globe to influence her work and inspire others to take "Bold Steps." Susan is a fine balance of calm diplomat and passionate advocate, making a powerful connection with everyone she meets. She is the mom, wife, sister, and friend that you want in your corner.

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