



UNIVERSITY OF  
**TORONTO**  
SCARBOROUGH



2021

**COMMUNITY IS  
COLLECTIVE ACTION**

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS &  
ENGAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT





“Community is preparing,  
and has been this whole time.”

**Liben Gebremikael**  
Executive Director, TAIBU Community Health Centre  
at the National Dialogues & Action for Inclusive  
Higher Education & Communities



The last year has been an enduring test of community strength and adaptability, we have seen and felt that sociocultural and systematic injustices still have deep roots in our institutions and beyond. However, above all, communities are constantly changing, constantly built and rebuilt, and constantly prepared for action.

The initiatives and partnerships featured here in the 2021 Community Partnerships & Engagement annual report, entitled Community is Collective Action, are an inspiring example of our capacity to act quickly, responsibly and together. This last year, we have also

seen that globally, racism, sexism, classism, xenophobia, and all other forms of targeted discrimination and violence must be met with robust systematic change. It reminds us that the time is long past due to build and mobilize our capacity as an institution, with access to a diverse and talented university community, and turn our gaze inward while supporting the advancement of socio-economic priorities.

**COMMUNITY IS  
COLLECTIVE ACTION**





# Pandemic Response

CARES (Collective Action and Response for Everyone in Scarborough)

## INITIATIVE

In response to the pandemic, the U of T Scarborough, the City of Toronto and Global Medics got together and created an emergency relief organization to facilitate food and hygiene kit packing and redistribution program called Collective Action and Response for Everyone in Scarborough (CARES). For many communities in the Eastern GTA and Durham Region, food security has been a local priority that was amplified during the pandemic. This initiative was an immediate response to those experiencing barriers to accessing food and basic supplies by providing packed dry ingredients (red and green lentils, green peas, rice, barley, chickpeas and kidney beans) and hygienic supplies (deodorant, soap, shampoo and conditioner, toothbrush, toothpaste and feminine products). The CARES initiative was jointly supported by the City of Toronto's Office of Partnerships and Councillor Jennifer McKelvie Office, and Business Operations and Strategic Affairs at U of T Scarborough. All operational and logistical support including volunteer recruitment and screening, site safety protocol and daily program management was led the Community Partnership & Engagement Department, Retail Conference Services and Facilities Management of U of T Scarborough.



## COLLECTIVE ACTION

With the help of 164 local volunteers, we produced 170,000 lbs. of food and 14,000 hygiene kits to 56 food banks, community organizations/initiatives supporting local residents. CARES took place daily in U of T Scarborough's Highland Hall Events Centre from May-August. Several government officials visited the site including local councillors, MPs and MPPs, the Mayor, and Lieutenant Governor. CARES also partnered with local food initiatives such as Hands Up Toronto (HUT) to host their Feed the Six drive through food pick-up and delivery program. The Feed the Six program hosted a drive-thru food distribution event that allowed registered residents to safely receive food packages from their vehicles.



**164** LOCAL VOLUNTEERS

**170,000** LBS. OF FOOD

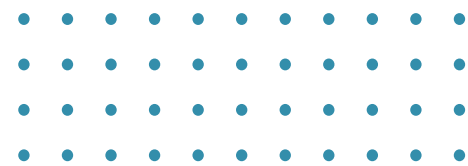
**14,000** HYGIENE KITS

**56** FOOD BANKS & ORGANIZATIONS

## WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The CARES initiative strengthened local food outreach programs through collaboration with community organizations and food banks that have longstanding relationships with local people. U of T Scarborough continues to advocate alongside community partners to collectively address food insecurity priorities through panel discussions, food network meetings and resource sharing.

In response to evolving pandemic priorities, Highland Hall, the facility that was hosting the CARES initiative has been repurposed as a COVID Assessment Centre. CARES is currently not in operation.





# COVID Assessment Centre

A partnership between U of T Scarborough & Scarborough Health Network

## INITIATIVE

As the winter of 2020 loomed, the Ontario government encouraged hospitals to move their COVID-19 Assessment Centres indoors to continue testing. The partnership between U of T Scarborough and Scarborough Health Network (SHN) provided a vital space for safe testing in Scarborough's communities. There are many front-line and essential workers living in multigenerational homes in the surrounding region. The U of T Scarborough location provides easy access to testing, transportation, and assists in helping protect the community and reduce the risk of spread.



## COLLECTIVE ACTION

The University of Toronto Scarborough partnered with SHN to provide new, indoor facilities for COVID-19 testing from Tuesday, December 1, 2020, until April 2021. SHN's Centenary Assessment Centre was relocated to U of T Scarborough, which allowed increases in testing capacity through the provision of safe, secure and warm COVID-19 Assessment Centres.

The assessment centre operates daily from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm, accommodating up to 900 patients daily, by appointment only. The centre includes a dedicated entrance and exit separate from the rest of Highland Hall. Its air circulation is also separate from the rest of the building, as it has a dedicated air system just for the testing centre.

## WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The COVID-19 Assessment Centre will continue to operate on the U of T Scarborough campus until April 2021. U of T Scarborough will continue to be responsive to pandemic priorities. The testing centre will be repatriated back to the hospital and repurposed to a vaccination centre.

Andrew Arifuzzaman, U of T Scarborough's Chief Administrative Officer, expressed that it is "imperative" that UTSC partner with organizations like SHN "to utilize... resources to help get through this difficult time for [the] community and the region" and also noted that the eastern GTA region has been "hit harder" by COVID-19 than other parts of the city.



# Find Dining

Scarborough Restaurant Recovery Project



FIND DINING  
SCARBOROUGH

**“The Scarborough restaurant community is hungry – hungry for a solution – and that hunger is being demonstrated and put to work.”**

– Bill McConkey

Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream & Academic Director,  
The BRIDGE, U of T Scarborough

## INITIATIVE

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many independent restaurants succeeded due to word-of-mouth promotion by loyal customers, without the need for a website, regular social media presence or partnerships with third-party delivery providers. With reduced tourism and neighbourhood foot traffic, as well as limits on social gatherings, the City of Toronto partnered with U of T Scarborough and Centennial College to develop an initiative to celebrate the diversity of Scarborough restaurants, while encouraging capacity building among restaurant owners and increasing the number of customers through local restaurant doors. Restaurants in Scarborough needed help to identify who was the audience and how to reach them.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

The BRIDGE, a research and innovation centre at U of T Scarborough, worked with Centennial’s School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts on The Scarborough Restaurant Recovery Project. Students played an important part in the multi-media initiative that will bring community leaders together to share the stories (and the food) of establishments in Scarborough. The project initially supports businesses that register on To Go Toronto, an online delivery resource created by Tourism Toronto. It also helps restaurants register to Ritual ONE, a commission-free online ordering website, and work to develop websites with ShopHERE, a city initiative assisting independent businesses and artists to open a free online store.

“We were evaluating how COVID-19 has changed things, and how our students can jump in to help local businesses,” says Bill McConkey, academic director at The BRIDGE, who along with Dave Fenton, leads the project at UTSC. The BRIDGE, a partnership between U of T Scarborough’s department of management and the UTSC Library, fuses research and experiential learning opportunities in entrepreneurship, finance and business. The Scarborough Restaurant Recovery Project involves three summer courses, as well as co-op and work-study students.

**“Many of our community members want to support their local restaurants and that’s because they’ve supported us in the past; it’s our turn to be there for them.”**

– Councillor Jennifer McKelvie

Scarborough-Rouge Park, City of Toronto

## WHAT’S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

With a list of approximately 100 restaurants, the city is currently contacting local businesses to inquire about their interest in To Go Toronto’s website. Through experiential learning opportunities, co-op placements, co-curricular activities students’ involvement will include: field research, digital asset mapping and web development. Additional communication supports will be leveraged from Councillor McKelvie’s office through a student intern position.

**“What you get is a cultural ecosystem where we can tell the stories of these restaurants, their chefs and how they learned to cook; it’s a broad celebration of Scarborough food and dining.”**

Bill McConkey

Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream & Academic Director,  
The BRIDGE, U of T Scarborough





# Hong Fook Mental Health Association & The BRIDGE



## INITIATIVE

In order to help Hung Fook serve their communities right away under the unique conditions of the pandemic, UTSC's student-led Management Consulting Group, with the supervision of The BRIDGE, analyzed online conferencing platforms in order to put together training modules and resources for service providers and patients. The Team also conducted a series of onboarding sessions, compiled a report and training manual with a compilation of training resources for specific tasks the users (both organizations and patients) might benefit from.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

The Management Consulting Group, The BRIDGE, and Hong Fook Mental Health Association have collaborated to adapt to the changing needs and conditions of community service. UTSC students who spearheaded the project are Brayden Choi (Management), Kajal Musadilal (Management), and Barira Siddiqui (Alumna, Mental Health Studies).

## WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Hong Fook continues to support service providers and patients during the pandemic offering virtual and in-person resources.



# United Way/City of Toronto Cluster Meetings

(North and South Cluster Calls)



## INITIATIVE

As the largest non-government funder of community services in the GTA, United Way Greater Toronto reinforces a crucial community safety net. United Way's network of agencies and initiatives in neighbourhoods across Peel, Toronto and York Region works to ensure that everyone has access to the programs and services they need to thrive. COVID-19 is having significant health, social and economic impacts on all Torontonians, but there is a greater and disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities including Black, Indigenous, and other equity-seeking and vulnerable populations. Community agencies that support vulnerable residents have also been adversely impacted, including through a loss of revenue, office closures, cancellations of programs and services, and significant human resource challenges.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

The Community Coordination Plan activates 10 community clusters across Toronto neighbourhoods. These clusters enable communication, coordination and resource sharing at the local level between community organizations, the United Way, City of Toronto Councillors' offices, and the City of Toronto. Across the GTA, United Way is working with its network of over 270 agencies, the City of Toronto, Peel Region and York Region to identify and respond to the gaps, needs, trends and opportunities that may be emerging locally. U of T Scarborough has representation on both North and South Scarborough clusters, where members work collectively to address community priorities such as food security and distribution, online and technology supports and COVID Assessment Centre mobilization.

## WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The Cluster meetings for North and South Scarborough continue to support collaboration across organizations and sectors to responsibly respond to the fast-evolving COVID-19 trends and longstanding community priorities.





# Office of Student Experience & Wellbeing

International Student Centre Food Program

## INITIATIVE

The International Student Centre in the Office of Student Experience & Wellbeing aims to provide support to the international student community. The support includes events to help support international students' transitions, which is essential for their success. These events do not limit to workshops/seminars, but also community building activities.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

During the winter break, the International Student Centre invited the food tour guide, Howard Tam, who collaborated with the Department of Community Partnerships & Engagement, International Academic Programs & Initiatives, Student Housing & Residence Life (SHRL), and Scarborough Campus Student Union (SCSU) to host a food delivery event for students who were staying in Residence Centre. The event was a huge success as we worked as a community to support students affected by the pandemic. In addition to the food delivery event, we also invited a home chef from the community to teach students how to cook cultural foods. The essence of these events is not just for the sake of cooking, but also to help students understand the story, history, and the chef's lived experience behind the food scene. The session included the practical and the educational components.



**“I want to use a phrase, ‘unity in diversity’, to describe my perspective about community. We are members in a community with different strengths, weaknesses, failure, and achievements; however, we work together to fill the gap and support each other, so that we are empowered.”**

**Betty Lui**

Program Coordinator and Administrator,  
International Student Centre, U of T Scarborough

# East Scarborough Boys & Girls Club

## INITIATIVE

During the pandemic, the East Scarborough Boys & Girls Club (“the Club”) continued to provide emergency support services during unprecedented circumstances. In addition to traditional services, the Club offered virtual after-school programs and early age programming.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

The Covid-19 Emergency Food Response Program is a weekly delivery service that provides families with the essential foods they need to avoid food insecurity in the East Scarborough community wards 22-24. The boxes are personally delivered to every registered participant in the program; also offering those who prefer, the option to pick up their box from our main site. The program also served free hot meals cooked by our Club staff to families every Friday during the first half of the pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic, we wanted to be sure we were giving our community what it needed most. We launch a Community Needs Assessment Survey which indicate that food was the dire need. Our Club staff alongside our volunteers began packing less than 200 boxes at the start of the pandemic and now pack up to 500 boxes each week.



## WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The East Scarborough Boys & Girls Club will continue to be responsive to community priorities by providing virtual programming and emergency food supports throughout the pandemic. The Club will work alongside local families to advocate for healthy and strong community.





# TAIBU Community Health Centre

A partnership between U of T Scarborough & Scarborough Health Network

## INITIATIVE

TAIBU sought to address the diverse priorities of its community, and the changing conditions by providing services in the context of the pandemic. As many organizations did, TAIBU quickly shifted its services and programs online. In efforts to consider all members of the community including those with little to no access to the internet, multilingual information cards highlighting accessible resources were shared in the North Scarborough community. Based on the social determinants of health and Public Health data, TAIBU knew that the pandemic would disproportionately affect marginalized communities while only be exasperated pre-existing inequities for these communities such as food securities, access to healthcare and wellness.

**“Every colour of the rainbow is occupying space, our community is broad, we have a unique strategy of engaging with the Black population...it encompasses people from around the world, with varying languages and religions”**

**Phil Johnson**

Manager, Community Services & Systems Change, TAIBU Community Health Centre



## COLLECTIVE ACTION

TAIBU collaborated with local food programs like CARES to distribute food and personal hygiene packages to families that would benefit from additional support. The organization ensured care packages distributed to its diverse community would be supplemented with culturally appropriate resources such as cook-a-long videos and recipes. TAIBU also continues to provide wrap-around supports to peer-led community engagement initiatives like the Ubuntu Writers Group who completed and published a book of short stories, poems and pictures of art pieces.

## WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Throughout 2020 and beyond, TAIBU made staying connected with the community to develop appropriate and responsible support a priority. Through the City of Toronto's Equity Plan, TAIBU's outreach workers and a caseworker manager connect with community members to provide support around food, income, childcare, available community resources, voluntary isolation centres. TAIBU will also host culturally relevant town hall meetings to discuss COVID vaccinations.





# Anti-Black Racism Response

## Office of Student Experience & Wellbeing

### INITIATIVE

The Imani Academic Mentorship Program shifted to online programming and supports. For the Imani Academic Mentorship Program, the community has been focused on meeting communal priorities, and adapting to the needs of the Black youth that it serves. The Imani Academic Mentorship Program is dedicated to Black youth in the East Scarborough community. The focus of this program is to connect Black youth to opportunities which allow them to explore post-secondary education (university, college, other) while engaging in a racial justice curriculum. Each week involves mentoring time, homework/studying support and a workshop exploring Black identity through an anti-oppression lens. In addition to the U of T Scarborough site days, the program engages mentees in experiential education programs, engages parents and provides co-curricular supports for our U of T Scarborough student volunteers and staff.

### COLLECTIVE ACTION & RESPONSE

This year the program has faced a major hurdle with the inability to have in-person, on site, at partner affiliated schools for the mentorship program. Through the summer of 2020, the program development team crafted an online Imani program to continue engagement, education and impact of our programming online in an accessible way. Facilitating the programming online provided us with a unique opportunity to have Black students from multiple schools meet in one space to explore topics on academic success and racial justice. In consideration of the regulations, the program hopes to develop their programming and curriculum to integrate more of a focus on online academic success and achievement for students, while bridging gaps in our racial justice curriculum.

### WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

After completing its first year online, the program may transition to a hybrid approach as COVID-19 regulations begin to offer opportunities for groups to meet/gather in person – providing the opportunity for youth and undergraduates involved in the program to connect meaningfully and safely.





## U of T Scarborough Academic Advising & Career Centre

The Academic Advising & Career Centre recruited an Academic & Learning Strategist to support Black students' engagement and retention and will provide services that will empower and provide support to achieve academic excellence. This new role will engage in specific outreach initiatives in partnership with other campus stakeholders to ensure wraparound supports are readily available and continue contributing to the conversation around addressing the unequal educational outcomes for Black Students on campus.

## Health & Wellness Centre

### INITIATIVE

The UTSC Health and Wellness Centre (HWC) has prioritized the mental and physical health of its students. Services are now offered with safety at their forefront. The COVID-19 pandemic and increasing racialized violence have presented unique and intersectional challenges for the physical and mental health of students and staff alike. HWC developed a number of programs and workshops for UTSC students in order to address the unique and compounding effects of the pandemic and encourage anti-racism in the student body and faculty.

### WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Health and Wellness continues to offer supports for UTSC students in the form of culturally appropriate and inclusive workshops and peer support and mental health services, delivered virtually.

### COLLECTIVE ACTION

In March of 2020, Health and Wellness hosted a Health Promotion Event in honour of Black Mental Health Day; the event provided a space to relax and connect with one another. In collaboration with UTSC's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office, a facilitated session called Providing Cultural-Relevant Care was hosted by Cam Litchmore and Natalie Elisha of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion office. The team examined relevant case studies and discussed improving the provision of inclusive care to U of T Scarborough students. In a similar vein, the Equity Project involved research and case studies related to health equity, and was facilitated through to May, 2020. HWC provided services such as, Cultural Connections, which took place from May until June 2020, and created a safe space for racialized students to discuss impacts of racism and oppression, build community, and enhance wellness. Another example is the Self-Compassion Practices for COVID which took place from May until June of 2020, and emphasized Maintaining Resilience. Responsive services included a COVID LGBTQA2S Support Group, and Combatting Racism: From Bystander to Upstander, facilitated by Dr. Tayyab Rashid & Dr. Kosha Bramesfeld (guest presenter: Chanda Chandalala). The program aimed to create a safe and inclusive space to explore how inequities create psychological distress, impact physical health and maintain cyclical deprivation. The psycho-educational group also explored the ways these inequities are embedded in cultural ideas, artifacts and symbols of the superiority of a specific culture and a race. They discussed the will and practical ways that can help one to move from bystander to upstander—taking purposeful and impactful actions to combat anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia, and other forms of oppression.

**“Community is empowered,  
and that has taken time, work,  
and energy in all aspects.”**

**Kimberley Tull**  
Director of Community Partnerships & Engagement,  
Community & Learning Partnerships and Access Pathways  
University of Toronto Scarborough



# National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities

## INITIATIVE

The University of Toronto and Canadian universities and colleges across the country came together to facilitate a national conversation to develop concrete actions for change in higher education and in our communities. The [Dialogues and Action](#) focused on sharing experiences and ideas, exploring and learning best practices, and contributing to the formulation and implementation of concrete actions to resolutely reject anti-Black racism and drive meaningful, enduring Black inclusion within individual universities and colleges, the higher education sector, in general, and our community. Participants had the opportunity to choose from amongst nine interactive online dialogues with panelists from academia and beyond to address student, faculty, and staff access and success; inclusive teaching, learning and curricula; inclusive decision-making structures; responsibilities and obligations of non-black peers; mentorship and more. The Inter-Institutional Advisory Committee, a steering body, consisted of faculty from numerous post-secondary institutions, such as, Carleton University, Montreal University, McGill University, Brock University, the University of British Columbia, Dalhousie University, University of Calgary, Centennial College, Saint Mary's University, MacEwan University, and Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Toronto.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

The Dialogues are a series of forums focused on addressing equity and inclusion in Canadian post-secondary education and institutions. Coordinated by Professor Wisdom Tettey, U of T vice-president and principal of UTSC and Karima Hashmani, U of T's executive director, equity, diversity and inclusion, it is a partnership with universities and colleges across Canada; the first in a series of *National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities* took place on October 1st and 2nd virtually. The forums emphasized pathways to systematic change, Black inclusion and identity. Topics covered included best practices, the formulation and implementation of concrete actions that reject anti-Black racism, and Black inclusion within university campuses, education, and communities. Panelists held discussions on student, staff, and faculty access and success, inclusive decision-making structures, inclusive teaching, learning, and curricula, responsibilities of non-Black peers and supervisors, mentoring, support networks, and wellbeing, race-based data collection and use, and engaging alumni and external partners/communities.

## WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The message that emerged was clear: The time to act on anti-Black racism and to promote Black inclusion is now. Committing to a national plan of action that will be reflected in a document called the *Scarborough National Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions, and Accountabilities*. More than 60 post-secondary institutions from coast to coast are currently committed to engaging with the National Dialogue and incorporating the Scarborough National Charter. The outcome of the deliberations will inform the co-creation of the *Scarborough National Charter on Anti-Black Racism and*

(cont'd) *Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions, and Accountabilities*, which will support the implementation of the actions identified, and help to sustain an enduring culture against anti-Black racism and in support of Black inclusion in the Canadian higher education sector.

# Transitional Year Programme

## INITIATIVE

Celebrating fifty years, the Transitional Year Programme continues to support equitable access to post-secondary education for underrepresented students. Founded by Black activists and educators in Toronto, the program started as two summer programs preparing a small cohort of students for entry at York University. One of the administration locations was Innis College, which would become the base for the program at U of T with Karen Brathwaite as the founding faculty member. The Transitional Year Programme (TYP) is a full-time, eight-month access-to-University program. It is intended for adults who do not have the formal qualifications for university admission and who did not have an opportunity to finish high school because of financial problems, family difficulties or other circumstances beyond their control. The TYP actively encourage applications from members of the Native Canadian, African Canadian, and LGBTQ2S+ communities, sole-support parents, persons with disabilities, and low socio-economic backgrounds of all ethnicities. TYP has a committed and highly qualified faculty who prepare students for university degree studies by upgrading their skills and knowledge in academic courses and by providing intensive supportive counselling.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

In fall 2020, UTSC welcomed its own cohort of ten students from diverse communities. TYP students become part of a cohort of students who studies and socializes together as they make the transition to becoming degree-seeking students. They take courses in sociology, writing, Indigenous and Black literature, and quantitative and scientific reasoning, along with a seminar that introduces them to university life. Students work closely with UTSC staff in the Academic Advising and Career Centre, AccessAbility Services, Financial Aid, Student Life, and the Registrar's Office to ensure they have the wrap around supports necessary to succeed.

## WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

This spring, the 2020 cohort is finishing coursework and preparing to enter U of T as degree-seeking students. Meanwhile, TYP @ UTSC faculty and staff are actively recruiting the next TYP cohort, aiming this time for fifteen students prepared to make the transition to university studies. U of T Scarborough is eager to welcome the students—not only to support change in their lives but also to act on our commitment to making educational opportunity accessible to all.



# African Impact Initiative (The BRIDGE)

## INITIATIVE

Co-founded by Efosa Obano, the African Impact Initiative is a Toronto-based non-profit that works to accelerate sustainable development across Africa by investing in local youth-driven innovation — Obano and his diaspora team recognized the need to improve health outcomes for mothers and their newborn babies in the rural community of Ikot Eko Ebon in Obano's home country, Nigeria.

In collaboration with The BRIDGE, U of T Scarborough's business research centre and applied learning space for entrepreneurship and innovation housed within the Department of Management and UTSC Library, Efosa Obano (BBA 2018, Strategic Management, UTSC) and the African Impact Initiative have pledged CAD \$50,000 to create an accelerator fund, which was matched dollar-for-dollar by the University of Toronto's True Blue Fund, for a total investment of CAD \$100,000 to bolster entrepreneurship in Africa. Over the course of five years, the grant supports the African Impact Challenge, a joint project between African Impact Initiative and The BRIDGE, to partner with local entrepreneurs who are committed to driving social development and long-term economic growth in their home countries—beginning with the Ghana Challenge.



**“It was like an ‘Aha!’ moment when I realized there were lots of young people [across Africa] just like us who had the same type of passion and drive and ideas, but they didn’t have the resources or capital, or the guidance.”**

**Efosa Obano**  
Alumnus, U of T Scarborough



**“It is about activating what U of T does and has, and combining that with local mentorship in ways that are local, regional, national.”**

**David Fenton**  
Industry Partnerships, Innovation and WIL Lead,  
U of T Scarborough

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

As of April 2020, three proposed innovations were selected for amplification based on the merits of sustainable business impact and scalability among more than 100 applications from Ghanaian youth. The successful startups went on to participate in the 12-week Summer Incubation Program delivered by the African Impact team in partnership with The BRIDGE and its New Venture Program, Meltwater Entrepreneurial School of Technology (MEST), Arielle for Africa, Casa Foundation for International Development, and The Christensen Institute. During their time contributing to the project, students are able to exercise learned skills in order to help communities and are mentored by local professionals.

## WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The first class is complete and students are now working on their products with local universities to support other initiatives. The next initiative will take place in Kenya in 2021. Obano says that the path forward depends on continuing to build and enhance partnerships with organizations and thought leaders who recognize the value of investing in African youth and empowering them to solve problems through impact entrepreneurship.



## Black Governance and Leadership Project (BGLP)

### INITIATIVE

Working in, and representing the needs of, the Black Community requires an understanding of the inherently anti-Black racist challenges that exist. Black leaders require knowledge of how they can be allies to other Black leaders as they join decision making tables and the Black community at large. BGLP participants are exposed to the intersectionalities of the Black community and learn to remain supportive of those with specific needs for equitable access. The program discusses opportunities for Black directors and leaders to prioritize the healing of historical trauma and manage current exposures to racial challenges. Providing assurance that boards are curating space for their directors to practice self-governance and care which should add to an equity-based board culture.

### COLLECTIVE ACTION

In 2019, TAIBU Community Health Centre, in partnership with the University of Toronto Scarborough, East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club, and Alpha Alpha Delta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., have devised a method of dismantling anti-Black racist barriers hindering the participation of Black Canadians at imperative decision-making tables. To that end the BGLP has created a Black focused curriculum grounded in Africentric values and principles for a Governance and Leadership Project, funded by the City of Toronto, Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit. Afrocentric governance sessions were offered to Black-led community organizations and broader members of the Black community. In 2020, BGLP expanded to the third phase of the project which was to identify and work with mainstream organizations that have an impact on the lives and wellbeing of Black communities with the aim of 1) increasing the representation of Black Torontonians on their Boards, 2) assisting with their approaches to and success in their recruitment strategies and 3) building their awareness and capacity around anti-Black racism. BGLP also, launched its website. This digital platform would house curriculum resources, available board opportunities, access to a networker of Black leaders, mentors and organizations.

### WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

BGLP alongside a community consultant is currently engaging in a youth pathway program to governance - adapting the BGLP governance and leadership training material for the purpose the capacity building of youth in governance and leadership. The overall goal of the pathway is to build the next generation of governors, directors and leaders to continue the effort of confronting and addressing the impact of anti-Black racism from a strategic perspective.



## Modern-Day Griot Project

### INITIATIVE

In response to the murder of George Floyd and the heightened awareness of anti-Black racism, community partner, Sweet Lime Communications recognized the need to shift deficit perspectives of the Black community. In the spirit of resistances, the Modern-Day Griot Project presents the opportunity to discuss and explore what excellence looks like through an Afrocentric lens and to disrupt the stereotypes that are used to describe Black communities. The project goal is to give Black students the skills and ability to showcase the strength and beauty of the Black community, while healing and sharing, through the principles of Nguzo Saba: Imani (spiritual), Kuumba (creative), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Nia (purpose), Ujima (responsibility), Umoja (unity), and Ujamaa (cooperative).

### COLLECTIVE ACTION

Starting in August 2020, Sweet Lime Communications worked with several departments at U of T Scarborough (Arts, Culture and Media, Health and Society, Office of Experience and Wellbeing, Community Partnerships & Engagement) to curate culturally appropriate materials and engagement to engage Black U of T Scarborough students to participate in the Modern-Day Griot Project. In early 2021, the Modern-Day Griot Project launched. Founder, Shellene Drakes, also attended the Imani Professional Night, hosted an Art of Afrocentric Storytelling session and facilitated one-on-one application support for interested students. Fourteen Black U of T Scarborough students participated in five workshops where they will begin to unlearn colonial mindsets and learn through an Afrocentric lens, what Black stories are and what Black excellence is.

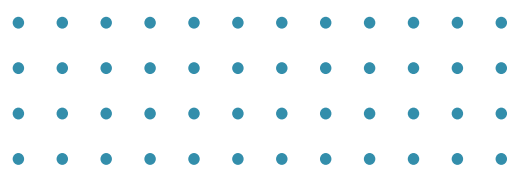
**“The definition of Nguzo Saba principle Kujichagulia (self-determination) is to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.”**

**Shellene Drakes**  
Founder, Sweet Lime Communications

### WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE ARE WE NOW?

By the end of spring 2021, U of T Scarborough students will partner with a group of Black Durham District School Boards students to explore the principles and Nguzo Saba, share their lived experiences and elevate Black excellence in their school and communities. In the summer of 2021, stories from the Modern-Day Griot Project will inform the digital platform which will provide sustainable opportunities for Black voices of all ages and backgrounds to be amplified and elevated within the University of Toronto Scarborough community and beyond through various mediums and methods. The Modern-Day Griot Project is also working with a Black knowledge gatherer who will document and evaluate the process and learning outcomes.





## Moving Forward

U of T Scarborough students, staff, faculty, and alumni continue to make significant contributions to the University of Toronto’s mission independently and in partnership with others within our tri-campus system and across a variety of public and private sectors, international agencies, and community organizations. Those partnerships have demonstrated that enduring collaborations and networks create mutually beneficial opportunities and outcomes for participants, as individuals and as institutions, which they could not have generated on their own.

These relationships also challenges us to consider how are we fore fronting the histories, stories, and talents of the community? How are we contributing to the equitable and sustainable growth of our local communities and community partners? How are we actively critiquing our own dated frameworks in order to do so? This is the necessary turn in institutional culture that is happening right now, as directed by our Strategic Plan: Inspiring Inclusive Excellence and that we ought to encourage as individuals, scholars, and a community that extends far beyond the university.

We are proud to be embedded in the region that we serve and we embrace our role as anchor institution that is committed to the social and economic development of its immediate communities. Grounded in our values of intentional inclusion, students as partners, reciprocity, and accountable stewardship, we look forward to advancing our collective work.

## Contributor

Annually, the Department is one of several community-engaged learning opportunities for students in the City Studies course taught by Professor Susannah Bunce. In the Winter 2021 term, the placement student, Estrella Marquez supported the creation of a data collection framework, met with internal and external stakeholders and, led the development of this year’s annual report.

## Additional Contributors

- Dave Fenton, Industry Partnerships, Innovation, and Work-Integrated Learning Lead, The BRIDGE & Management
- Phil Johnson, Manager Community Services & Systems Change;
- Adrian Leckie, Coordinator, Community Engagement Programs, Office of Student Experience and Well-being;
- Betty Liu, Program Coordinator and Administrator, International Student Centre;
- Bill McConkey, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream & Academic Director, The BRIDGE;
- Marilyn Mills, Imani and Black Student Support Facilitator, Office of Student Experience and Well-being;
- Howard Moriah, Director of Operation, Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough;
- Varsha Patel, Assistant Dean, Student Success, Academic Advising & Career Centre (AA&CC); and
- Stephanie Perpick, Liaison Librarian and Coordinator, The BRIDGE
- Shari Russell Opara, Manager, Health & Wellness Centre

