



4th Annual Canada-Caribbean Institute Research Symposium

Securing Canada - Caribbean Futures: Repositioning Traditional and Emerging Challenges

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



Securing Canada - Caribbean Futures: Repositioning Traditional and Emerging Challenges

4th Annual Canada-Caribbean Institute Research Symposium 2026

FOREWORD



Dr. Talia Esnard

Chair, Research and Scholarship Committee
Canada-Caribbean Institute
March 17, 2026

The Canada-Caribbean Institute was established on February 20, 2020, to recognize and deepen a rich heritage of cross-institutional exchange, global cooperation and resilience across both regions.

The Research symposium represents a signature event of the Canada-Caribbean Institute, which started in February 2020, with an inaugural meeting at the Regional Headquarters of The University of the West Indies, Mona campus. Through the symposium, presenters, not only captured some of the socio-economic, cultural, educational, and environmental issues facing Canada and the Caribbean, but also reflected on ways to strengthen long term industry and academic partnerships. Overtime, these

discussions have been framed within examinations of “Decoloniality: Past, Present and Future Directions,” (The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, 2023) and “Climate Crisis, Resilience, and Alternative Energy” (Mc Master University, October 2024).

This year, we address aspects of “Securing Canada-Caribbean Futures: Historical and Emerging issues” (The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus) with deliberations that expand beyond traditional notions of “security”, and that cut across diverse issues of:

- (i) biodiversity and climate resilience
- (ii) economic and social security
- (iii) politics of identity, representation and human rights and relatedly,
- (iv) trauma, mental health and wellbeing.

We balance these dialogues with people-centered engagements that also tease through the possibilities within (i) artificial intelligence, citizenship and institutional practice, (ii) gender-diverse educational reform, (iii) youth engagement, as well as (iii) resistance, solidarity and reparation.

This book of abstracts offers a full view of these insights and record of contributions across these key areas. We share with you this keepsake and hope that you can join us at future symposia.

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Securing Canada - Caribbean Futures: Repositioning Traditional and Emerging Challenges

4th Annual Canada-Caribbean Institute Research Symposium 2026

DAY 1 EVENT SCHEDULE

DATE: Thursday February 19th, 2026

TIME: 9:00am – 5:30pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

TIME	TOPIC
8:30am – 9:00am	Registration
9:00am – 11:30am	Opening Ceremony
11:45am – 1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm – 2:30pm	Panel 1: Biodiversity, Natural Capital and Climate Action Location: CLL Auditorium
	Panel 2: Boosting Economic and Social Security Location: CLL Lecture Room
2:30pm – 3:00pm	Performance
3:00pm – 4:30pm	Panel 3: Cultural Reparation and Preservation as Strategies for Securing Canada-Caribbean Futures: Intergenerational Perspectives and Lived Realities Location: CLL Auditorium
	Panel 4: Politics of Identity, Representation and Human Rights Location: CLL Lecture Room
4:30pm – 5:30pm	Youth Forum (Livestreamed) Location: CLL Auditorium



Securing Canada - Caribbean Futures: Repositioning Traditional and Emerging Challenges

4th Annual Canada-Caribbean Institute Research Symposium 2026

OPENING CEREMONY



DATE: Thursday February 19th, 2026

TIME: 9:00am – 12:00pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL) Auditorium, The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

LINK: <https://sta-uwi-edu.zoom.us/j/91747116009?pwd=lc8Z4iTIS7sj6nXaoW2Vk1duA37rH5.1>

Co-Chairs: Pro Vice-Chancellor Sandra Maynard and Dr. Talia Esnard

WELCOME REMARKS

Dr. Talia Esnard

Head, Department Behavioural Sciences,
The UWI, St. Augustine Campus
Chair, CCI Scholarship and Research Committee

REMARKS

Prof. Rose-Marie Belle Antoine

Pro-Vice Chancellor and Campus Principal
The UWI, St. Augustine Campus

REMARKS

Dr. Rhonda McEwen

President and Vice-Chancellor,
Victoria University, University of Toronto
Co-Chair, Canada-Caribbean Institute

REMARKS

Prof. Erica Sturridge representing

Prof. Lincoln Edwards

President,
Northern Caribbean University
Co-Chair, Canada-Caribbean Institute

REMARKS

Honorable Senator Dr. Natalie Chaitan-Maharaj

Parliamentary Secretary
Ministry of the People, Social Development and
Family Services

REMARKS

Prof. Sir Hilary Beckles

Vice-Chancellor,
The University of the West Indies

CULTURAL ITEM

UWI Dance Group

REMARKS

Dr. Gervan Fearon

President,
George Brown Polytechnic

REMARKS

His Excellency Michael Callan

High Commissioner of Canada to Trinidad and
Tobago

KEYNOTE

Ambassador Bob Rae

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of
Canada to the United Nations

MUSICAL ITEM

Ms. Kendra Hope

VOTE OF THANKS

Ms. Sandra Maynard

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Global Affairs
The University of the West Indies



Securing Canada - Caribbean Futures: Repositioning Traditional and Emerging Challenges

4th Annual Canada-Caribbean Institute Research Symposium 2026

DAY 1 PANELS

DATE: Thursday February 19th, 2026

TIME: 1:00pm - 2:30pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

PANEL 1 Biodiversity, Natural Capital and Climate Action

Chair: Dr. Ronald Roopnarine, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

Location: CLL Auditorium

- Seaweed and Survival: Socio-Economic and Gendered Impacts of Sargassum Invasions in Barbados - Carol Sutherland, Toronto Metropolitan University
- The Extraction of Cellulose from Bambusa vulgaris (Bamboo) Biowaste for the Synthesis of Useful Products for Environmental Purposes - Bhanumattee Ramdhanie, Dhurjati Prasad Chakrabarti, Faisal Mohammed, Sharad Maharaj, Khadir Manwah and Oshaine Blake
- Resource acquisition, competition, or conservation? The influence of ecosystem type on tree weight allocations of South American mangroves - Sabrina Dookie*, Sirpaul Jaikishun and Abdullah Adil Ansaric, University of Guyana
- Climate Change, Climate Policy and Macroeconomic Analysis: The Case of Jamaica - Samuel Braithwaite, The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

PANEL 2 Boosting Economic and Social Security

Chair: Dr. Kegan Farrick, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

Location: CLL Lecture Room

- Opening Speaker - Dr. Gervon Fearon, George Brown Polytechnic
- Bridging Black Economic Futures: Lessons from Canada's Black Communities for an Inclusive Canada - Nancy Mitchell and Tamara Thermitus, The Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University
- Driving Formalization "From Below": Domestic Worker Organizing in the Caribbean - Simon Black, Brock University
- Old Wine, New Bottles? An Analysis of Budgetary Promises for the Agricultural Sector in Trinidad and Tobago - Fareena Alladin and Anand Rampersad, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus
- Findings from a wine and chocolate pairing event - John Belgrave, Vice President, St. Catharine's Twinning Association



**Securing Canada - Caribbean Futures:
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DAY 1 PANEL

DATE: Thursday February 19th, 2026

TIME: 2:30pm - 3:00pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

MUTTERTONGUE: A Performance

Performers:

- Lillian Allen - Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD)
- Gregory Betts - Brock University

Location: CLL Auditorium



**Securing Canada - Caribbean Futures:
Repositioning Traditional and Emerging Challenges**
4th Annual Canada-Caribbean Institute Research Symposium 2026

DAY 1 PANELS

DATE: Thursday February 19th, 2026

TIME: 3:00pm - 4:30pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

PANEL 3

Cultural Reparation and Preservation as Strategies for Securing Canada-Caribbean Futures: Intergenerational Perspectives and Lived Realities

Chair: Trecia McLennon, Ethicul Group Inc.

Location: CLL Auditorium

Presenters: Clelia Kimana; Trecia McLennon; Richard Ndayizigamiye; Jean Ntakirutimana, Brock University

PANEL 4

Politics of Identity, Representation and Human Rights

Chair: Dr. Timothy Affonso, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

Location: CLL Lecture Room

- Invisible Inequalities: The Overlooked Reality of Fat Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago - Keisha C. Samlal, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus
- Securing Deaf Childhoods in Trinidad and Tobago: A Canadian-Caribbean Collaboration - Kristin Snoddon, Toronto Metropolitan University and Ian Dhanoolal (Deaf Empowerment and Advancement Foundation of Trinidad and Tobago)
- Tanty Pedagogy in Fugitive STEM Spaces: Canadian-Caribbean Kinship, Care, and Rigor in Montreal - Sabi Kamilah Hinkson, Mc Gill University
- Negotiating Identity and Advocacy: Indo-Caribbean Canadian Ethnic Media as Sites of Social Interaction - Sujaya Devi Rampersad-Singh, University of Toronto
- The Qoolie Mundane: The Politics of Everyday Queer Fête-Making and the Cultivation of Queer Caribbean Home(s) - Ryan Persadie, University of Toronto



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4th Annual Canada-Caribbean Institute Research Symposium 2026

DAY 1 PANEL

DATE: Thursday February 19th, 2026

TIME: 4:30pm - 5:30pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

LINK: <https://sta-uwi-edu.zoom.us/j/91747116009?pwd=1c8Z4iTIS7sj6nXaoW2Vk1duA37rH5.1>

YOUTH FORUM



The forum aims to center the experiences and perspectives of young people across Canada and the Caribbean, while creating opportunities for collective dialogue, exchange and action. This is framed as a strategic initiative to drive regional and international collaboration and to co-produce youth-lead recommendations to drive gender-responsive educational reforms.

Chair: Dr. Colwick Wilson, President, University of Southern Caribbean

Location: CLL Auditorium

Presenters: Dr. Beverly Jean Daniel (Toronto Metropolitan University), Prof. Carl James (York University) and Dr. Lisa Edwards (University of Guyana)

Participants:

- Nikita Cruickshank - Trinidad and Tobago
- Lachelle Gopaul - Trinidad and Tobago
- Shanique Joseph - Trinidad and Tobago
- Nickayala Inglis - St. Lucia
- Lorenzo Gunter - Jamaica
- Harriet Foster - Jamaica
- Kien Azinwi - Canada
- Anjalique Raghunauth - Canada
- Kwame Owusu-Ansah - Canada
- Sadia Bajwa-Canada



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DAY 2 EVENT SCHEDULE

DATE: Friday February 20th, 2026

TIME: 9:00am – 7:30pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

TIME	TOPIC
8:30am – 9:00am	Registration
9:00am – 10:15am	Opening Presentations
10:15am – 10:30am	Break
10:30am – 12:15pm	Panel 5: Artificial Intelligence, Citizenship and Institutional Practice Location: CLL Auditorium
12:15pm – 1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm – 2:30pm	Panel 6: Celebrating, Complicating and Reframing Black Caribbean Womanhood in Canada Location: CLL Auditorium
	Panel 7: Children and Adolescents Location: CLL Room 8
	Panel 8: Trauma, Mental Health and Wellbeing Location: CLL Lecture Room
2:30pm – 3:00pm	Presentation
3:00pm – 5:00pm	Panel 9: Resistance, Solidarity and Reparations Location: CLL Auditorium
5:00pm – 5:25pm	Closing Ceremony
5:30pm – 7:30pm	Networking Event



**Securing Canada - Caribbean Futures:
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DAY 2 OPENING PRESENTATIONS



DATE: Friday February 20th, 2026

TIME: 9:00am – 10:15pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

LINK: <https://sta-uwi-edu.zoom.us/j/91747116009?pwd=1c8Z4iTIS7sj6nXaoW2VklduA37rH5.1>

Chair: Prof. Juliet Daniel, McMaster University

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Understanding the Interregnum: Challenges to the Existing World Order

Prof. Andy Knight

University of Alberta

MUSICAL ITEM

Mr. Emmanuel Joseph

PRESENTATION

Securing Caribbean Futures: Regional Security Cooperation in an Age of Competition, Geopolitical

Mr. Callixtus Joseph

Assistant Director for Policy, Strategy, and Innovation,
CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS)

CULTURAL ITEM

Colors of Guyana: Rooted and Rising

- **Mr. Keon Heywood** - University of Guyana
- **Mr. Marshall DeSouza** - University of Guyana
- **Ms. Safira-Abraham-Williams** - University of Guyana



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DAY 2 PANELS

DATE: Friday February 20th, 2026

TIME: 10:30am – 12:15pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

PANEL 5

Artificial Intelligence, Citizenship and Institutional Practice

Chair: Dr. Letetia Addison, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

Location: CLL Auditorium

- Opening Speaker – Mr. Ed Watal, World Digital Governance (WDG)
- Bridging the Divide: A Framework for Sustainable AI-Driven Agriculture in the Caribbean – Mithra Ramoutar, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus
- Artificial Intelligence in Caribbean Social Work Practice: Emerging Threats and Ethical Risks for Human Service Organizations – Cheryl-Ann Sarita Boodram, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus
- Handling Challenges of Generative AI Disruptions in Education – Xavier Fernando, Toronto Metropolitan University
- Combating Disinformation in Canada and the Caribbean through Citizenry Engagement–Amit Ramkissoon–The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus



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DAY 2 PANELS

DATE: Friday February 20th, 2026

TIME: 1:00pm – 2:30pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

PANEL 6 Celebrating, Complicating and Reframing Black Caribbean Womanhood in Canada

Chair: Dr. Marsha Myrie Obi, University of Guelph

Location: CLL Auditorium

Presenters: Myrtle Henry Sodhi, Marsha Myrie Obi, Orlando Thompson, Tatiana Walters and Kristin Vanderpool and Sonia Lewis

PANEL 7 Children and Adolescents

Chair: Dr. Christine Descartes, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

Location: CLL Room 8

- Rethinking the Rehabilitation of Adolescents with Behavioural Challenges in Trinidad and Tobago – Mala Ramesar, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus
- Building Capacity for Inclusion in St. Vincent and the Grenadines – Margo Horne (Brock University), Monique Somma (Brock University), John Freer (St Clair College), Sheila Bennett (Brock University)
- Collaborative Futures: Two-Eyed Seeing and Indigenous Youth Resilience in Canada-Caribbean Contexts – Zaida Rahaman, Brock University

PANEL 8 Trauma, Mental Health and Wellbeing

Chair: Dr. Katija Khan, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

Location: CLL Lecture Room

- Exploring Mental Well-being and Psychological Distress in Caribbean EMS/Fire Providers: A Cross-Sectional Study – Dr. Hezedeane A. Smith, Global Emergency Services Consulting Group
- Systems Mapping Mental Healthcare: Applying Lessons from a Project with Black Caribbean Youth in Ontario, Canada – Fatimah Jackson-Best, McMaster University
- Trauma and Mental Health – Tyehimba Salandy, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus
- Decolonising Systemic Policing Entanglements: The “Frame Case” as a Counternarrative in 21st Century Trinidad and Tobago – Nathan Chapman, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus



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DAY 2 PRESENTATION

DATE: Friday February 20th, 2026

TIME: 2:30pm – 3:00pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

Blood Hole Archives – Trauma and the Embodied Record

Presenters: Kalinda-Rondell Benjamin and Jamie J. Philbert, Bois Academy

Location: CLL Auditorium

DAY 2 PANEL

DATE: Friday February 20th, 2026

TIME: 3:00pm – 5:00pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

PANEL 9 Resistance, Solidarity and Reparations

Chair: Dr. Heather Cateau, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

Location: CLL Auditorium

- Opening Speaker: Prof. Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice Chancellor of The University of the West Indies
- Haiti as Policy Testbed: From Broker to Connector- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, CERLAC; Schulich School of Business, York University
- The Racial Contract and Philosophy (as Resistance) – Dr. Laura Mae Lindo, University of Waterloo
- The emergence of Bwa Kale, a grassroots community defense movement in Haiti – Magdalee Brunache, University of Toronto
- Community-driven Initiatives and Local Culture as Mediating Factors for Effectiveness of Collective Reparation Process – Remberto De La Hoz Reyes, Universidad Simón Bolívar



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CLOSING CEREMONY

DATE: Friday February 20th, 2026

TIME: 5:00pm - 5:25pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Center for Language Learning (CLL), The UWI, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago

Chair: Pro Vice-Chancellor Sandra Maynard

Thinking Through the Way Forward

Dr. Rhonda McEwen

CCI Co-Chair & President and Vice Chancellor,
Victoria University in the University of Toronto

CCI NETWORKING EVENT

DATE: 5:30pm - 7:30pm AST/GMT-4

VENUE: Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) Lounge, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

PANEL 1: BIODIVERSITY, NATURAL CAPITAL AND CLIMATE ACTION

Seaweed and Survival: Socio-Economic and Gendered Impacts of Sargassum Invasions in Barbados

Carol Sutherland, Toronto Metropolitan University

Since 2010, recurring Sargassum seaweed invasions along the eastern coastline of Barbados have created urgent socio-economic, environmental, and public health challenges. This study investigates how these influxes disproportionately affect women, fishing households, and tourism workers, with particular attention to links between economic hardship, reduced livelihood opportunities, and rising domestic stress.

Using a mixed-methods design, the research combines household surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups with fishers, small-scale tourism vendors, and community leaders. Quantitative data capture changes in income, employment, and food security, while qualitative methods explore lived experiences, coping strategies, and perceptions of government adaptation measures. Remote sensing and secondary economic data are also employed to contextualize the scale and persistence of Sargassum influxes since 2009.

Preliminary findings suggest that seaweed events exacerbate financial instability by disrupting fishing and beach-based vending, while also deterring tourism activity. Women are particularly affected due to their concentration in informal economies and caregiving roles, often facing increased household tensions and risks of gender-based violence as economic stress intensifies. These findings highlight the intersection of environmental degradation, social inequality, and climate vulnerability in small island developing states.

The study contributes to scholarship on Caribbean climate justice by centering marginalized voices and identifying gaps in policy response. It underscores the urgent need for community-driven adaptation strategies that strengthen resilience, protect livelihoods, and address gendered dimensions of climate impacts. Insights also hold relevance for Canadian and Caribbean partnerships on climate adaptation and coastal sustainability.

PANEL 1: BIODIVERSITY, NATURAL CAPITAL AND CLIMATE ACTION

The Extraction of Cellulose from *Bambusa vulgaris* (Bamboo) Biowaste for the Synthesis of Useful Products for Environmental Purposes

Bhanumattee Ramdhanie¹
Dhurjati Prasad Chakrabarti¹
Faisal Mohammed¹
Sharad Maharaj¹
Khadir Manwah¹
Oshaine Blake¹

¹The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

Cellulose is a natural polymer which is widely available from lignocellulosic biomass that has no adverse effects on health or the environment. The degradability, sustainability and ability to form self-supporting structures makes cellulose an ideal compound to be explored, as a possible solution to satisfy the increasing demand for biodegradable and environmentally safe solutions to existing, and growing issues. This research aims to investigate extracting cellulose from waste *Bambusa vulgaris* bamboo biomass by using physical extraction techniques (autoclave, pressure vessel, and supercritical fluid extraction), this study seeks to understand how to recover cellulose from waste bamboo biomass at reduced reagent concentrations. Increasing the accessibility of cellulose through size reduction was part of the biowaste preparation process. An autoclave creates a wet, hot environment by using steam under pressure. Although it is usually used for sterilization, the autoclave can help extract cellulose by disrupting the lignocellulosic structure because it operates at 121°C and 15 psi of pressure. A vessel used to securely contain pressures higher than the atmospheric pressure is known as a pressure vessel. The biowaste, in this study, was exposed to pressures ranging from 30 psi to 90 psi using a pressure vessel. Temperatures between 70°C and 90°C were used to observe the changes. Supercritical extraction uses supercritical fluids (a fluid which exhibits both gaseous and liquid properties at temperatures and pressures beyond the critical point) to extract the compound of interest. Supercritical extraction in this research was used to subject the sample to the changes in temperature and pressure, enough to fracture the biomass structure. The effects of the autoclave, pressure vessel and supercritical fluid extraction on the biowaste was explored over a sodium hydroxide concentration ranging 1.5% to 20%. In summary this research aims to valorise biowaste into sustainably derived, ecologically friendly products from cellulose obtained using a combination of physical and chemical extraction.

PANEL 1: BIODIVERSITY, NATURAL CAPITAL AND CLIMATE ACTION

Resource acquisition, competition, or conservation? The influence of ecosystem type on tree weight allocations of South American mangroves

Sabrina Dookie, University of Guyana
Sirpaul Jaikishun, University of Guyana
Abdullah Adil Ansaric, University of Guyana

Cellulose is a natural polymer which is widely available from lignocellulosic biomass that has no adverse effects on health or the environment. The degradability, sustainability and ability to form self-supporting structures makes cellulose an ideal compound to be explored, as a possible solution to satisfy the increasing demand for biodegradable and environmentally safe solutions to existing, and growing issues. This research aims to investigate extracting cellulose from waste *Bambusa vulgaris* bamboo biomass by using physical extraction techniques (autoclave, pressure vessel, and supercritical fluid extraction), this study seeks to understand how to recover cellulose from waste bamboo biomass at reduced reagent concentrations. Increasing the accessibility of cellulose through size reduction was part of the biowaste preparation process. An autoclave creates a wet, hot environment by using steam under pressure. Although it is usually used for sterilization, the autoclave can help extract cellulose by disrupting the lignocellulosic structure because it operates at 121°C and 15 psi of pressure. A vessel used to securely contain pressures higher than the atmospheric pressure is known as a pressure vessel. The biowaste, in this study, was exposed to pressures ranging from 30 psi to 90 psi using a pressure vessel. Temperatures between 70°C and 90°C were used to observe the changes. Supercritical extraction uses supercritical fluids (a fluid which exhibits both gaseous and liquid properties at temperatures and pressures beyond the critical point) to extract the compound of interest. Supercritical extraction in this research was used to subject the sample to the changes in temperature and pressure, enough to fracture the biomass structure. The effects of the autoclave, pressure vessel and supercritical fluid extraction on the biowaste was explored over a sodium hydroxide concentration ranging 1.5% to 20%. In summary this research aims to valorise biowaste into sustainably derived, ecologically friendly products from cellulose obtained using a combination of physical and chemical extraction.

PANEL 1: BIODIVERSITY, NATURAL CAPITAL AND CLIMATE ACTION

Climate Change, Climate Policy and Macroeconomic Analysis: The Case of Jamaica

Samuel Braithwaite, The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

The economies of Small Island Developing States (SIDs) are especially vulnerable to extreme weather events and increasingly so given the increased intensity of these events. These events can have significant adverse macroeconomic implications. The IMF estimates the average annual cost to be in the region of two per cent of GDP for SIDs. While SIDs are more likely to have less fiscal space to engage in climate mitigation and adaptation, the urgency of their vulnerability to natural disasters calls for action. This study calibrates a dynamic general equilibrium model (Debt Investment Growth Natural Disasters – DIGNAD) for Jamaica, a small island development state with a perennially low rate of growth and exposure to extreme weather events. The model provides insight into appropriate policy choices especially as regards financial (insurance and self-insurance) and structural protection (investment in adaptation). Indeed, given Jamaica's stellar performance as regards reducing its national debt, structural protection is expected to be superior to financial protection. This model is likely to be the first of its kind for Jamaica.

PANEL 2: BOOSTING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Bridging Black Economic Futures: Lessons from Canada's Black Communities for an Inclusive Canada

Nancy Mitchell, Toronto Metropolitan University

Tamara Thermitus, Toronto Metropolitan University

In both Canada and the Caribbean, small businesses are the backbone of the economy, and women entrepreneurs are critical to economic and social development. While contexts between Canada and the countries of the Caribbean differ, the broad experiences of women, particularly Black women in Canada and women across the Caribbean remain similar. In addition to similar profiles, they experience similar challenges related to entrepreneurship, including gender biases and discrimination, access to capital, and the need for targeted support.

Issues affecting women entrepreneurs globally include socio-economic barriers and cultural stereotyping. Women entrepreneurs in the Caribbean are gaining ground in agriculture, trades, and creative industries. In Canada, many Black women entrepreneurs are service-focused, alongside unpaid care work, which are areas that receive less attention.

In some contexts, women entrepreneurs working in health and beauty sectors have higher margins, faster growth rates, and lower failure rates. In Canada, these businesses may have greater export potential than tech companies. While many governments and investors focus on high-risk tech ventures seeking the next "unicorn," they overlook solid opportunities in other sectors.

Additionally, women's pathways to entrepreneurship are often different. While many men are involved in startups and spin-offs early in their careers, women are more likely to grow their businesses from self-employment or "side hustles," yet much of the focus remains on youth startups rather than mature businesses. Another critical opportunity critically important in both Canada and the Caribbean is succession planning, particularly in smaller communities where basic businesses, especially family businesses have not planned for retirement.

There is ample evidence worldwide that women entrepreneurs face systemic barriers at every step, including access to capital, support programs tailored to their needs, procurement and customer acquisition, and critical skills development for an evolving environment. Additionally, there is a need to address gender equity gaps in some Caribbean countries where gender discrimination is embedded in law.

PANEL 2: BOOSTING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Grounded in a deep understanding of the impact of colonialism, enslavement and indentured servitude, as well as contemporary anti-Black racism, and particularly misogynoir and colourism this panel will compare and contrast the state of women's entrepreneurship globally, with a focus on Canada and the Caribbean, through an intersectional lens. It will explore the barriers and enablers to promoting inclusive innovation, developing potential programming, upskilling, and using AI to support women entrepreneurs.

PANEL 2: BOOSTING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Driving Formalization “From Below”: Domestic Worker Organizing in the Caribbean

Simon Black, Brock University

Informal employment is an obstacle to inclusive and sustainable development and the achievement of decent work for all (see UN SDG 8). Informal workers lack access to social security and labour protections and generally experience economic precariousness. While states have a responsibility to address informality by developing formalization pathways for informal workers, and by enhancing social protection regimes and strengthening labour standards enforcement, informal workers’ organizations can drive formalization “from below”. In the Caribbean, domestic work is one sector of the economy in which there are both high levels of gendered informality and of innovations in worker organizing and collective representation, led largely by women, that seek to drive formalization from below. Drawing on quantitative and qualitative data, I examine the case of the Jamaican Household Workers’ Union, the largest of union of domestic workers in the English-speaking Caribbean. Like many informal workers, domestic workers in the Caribbean are isolated and geographically dispersed, posing challenges to organizing and collective representation. However, by leveraging international labour standards, and through creative approaches to organizing, representation and collective action, I find that the JHWU enhances labour standards enforcement and pushes for social protection and decent wages in Jamaica’s domestic work sector. Furthermore, survey findings indicate a positive relationship between unionization, i.e., being a member of the JHWU, and indicators of formalization. While not a substitute for state-led formalization strategies, the case study illustrates the potential of informal worker organizing and collective representation to address high levels of informality in Caribbean labour markets, and thus contribute to inclusive and sustainable development in the region.

PANEL 2: BOOSTING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Old Wine, New Bottles? An Analysis of Budgetary Promises for the Agricultural Sector in Trinidad and Tobago

Fareena Alladin, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

Anand Rampersad, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

Since independence, successive regional governments and institutions such as CARICOM have attempted to address the Caribbean's food and nutrition challenges. More recently, discussions have included attaining food sovereignty through policy intervention. The region's food security and nutrition challenges, rooted in colonial legacies of dependency, are manifested in nations' high food importation bills, increasing incidence of diet-related diseases, and heavy reliance on external markets. Attempts to combat these issues through policy are presented in annual budgets with the promise of strengthening the agricultural sector and food systems. Despite this, the agricultural sector in many countries such as Trinidad and Tobago often suffer from a lack of investment and unimplemented policies. Moreover, the political narrative which frames agricultural policy and intervention is often problematic and reflective of the tendency towards monocrop economies and neo-colonialism. At the same time, solutions for developing a diversified economy with a dynamic agricultural sector appear prominently in the budget speeches of several governments. Against this background, this study critically examines agriculture-related budgetary plans and policy measures presented in Trinidad and Tobago's national budget statements from 2010 to 2025. Through document analysis, and in light of regional directives on food and nutrition security, it evaluates the framing of these policies in relation to agriculture, food security, and development. The extent of their implementation will also be interrogated. In so doing, the study aims to advance understanding of how policy shapes local and regional responses to food and nutrition insecurity.

PANEL 2: BOOSTING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Findings from a wine and chocolate pairing event

John Belgrave, St. Catharine's Twinning Association

I would like to present on findings from a wine and chocolate pairing event that I am planning just before the symposium along with some insights on a chemical analysis on some Trinidad chocolate done by Validating, Prototyping and Manufacturing Institute (VPMI) at Brock University. I am currently collecting samples of various brands of Trinidadian chocolate produced in different regions, taking them to wine experts to pair them with Niagara wines and then at my event, I will be observing general consumers consume the wine and chocolate pairing, getting their written feedback and use that data to inform the feasibility of doing further research into developing a market in Niagara Canada for Trinidad Chocolate while pairing it with our wine.

PERFORMANCE

Muttertongue: A Performance

Lillian Allen, Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD)

Gregory Betts, Brock University

Muttertongue: what is a word in utter space (Toronto: Exile Editions, 2025) by Lillian Allen, Gregory Betts, and Gary Barwin, is a collaborative poetry collection that crackles in its exploration of land, language, and page space. Combining the intensity of Dub Poetry with the intricacies of experimental poetics, this collection presents a sonorous soundscape echoing with the question of where (and why) is here (hear). As Tracie Morris has said, “The layerings of sounds, languages, embodiment and reconfiguration of meaning, poetics, beingness is at the heart of an endless reshaping, refashioning of the world. This is what we have done, this is what we will always do.” The poems explore the residue of a displaced mother tongue in our exiled speech, probing the trace of tongues from our different diasporic experiences of being unlanguage. We came together to explore the space between oral cultures, orality, language, dub, and semiotic-sonic play, working from a provocative premise that postcolonial forces in/against Canada can be aligned with avant-garde experiments and games with language. We explore sound and sense: the space between language and sound, the field between noise and music. We set our thinking about language and its role in shaping who we are to music, thinking about how words help and hinder us as we struggle to become ourselves, how we end up muttering ourselves into being, uttering ourselves from mud, from mothers, from so many things only partially heard, partially mapped. We propose bringing the *Muttertongue* performance to the Canada Caribbean Institute’s 2025 symposium, the length of which is flexible 20–45 minutes.

PANEL 3: CULTURAL REPARATION AND PRESERVATION AS STRATEGIES FOR SECURING CANADA-CARIBBEAN FUTURES: INTERGENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVES AND LIVED REALITIES

Securing Canada-Caribbean Futures Through Cultural Reparation and Preservation: Culture as a Protective Factor Across Generations

Clelia Kimana

Trecia McLennon

Richard Ndayizigamiye

Jean Ntakirutimana

This panel brings together scholars, practitioners, and community voices from Canada and the Caribbean to explore cultural reparation and preservation as transformative strategies, redefined here as deliberate recovery, preservation, and transmission of African cultural practices as a form of cultural security and intergenerational resilience for addressing historical trauma and repositioning emerging challenges in diaspora and regional relations. Anchored in the belief that culture is a protective factor, the panel will examine how cultural loss—through forced migration, colonial disruption, and systemic erasure—continues to impact identity, belonging, health and safety across generations of equity seeking communities in the global South.

Panelists will share personal narratives, research insights, and community-based approaches that highlight the role of cultural recovery in healing from historical trauma, resilience-building, and future-oriented governance. Topics will include:

- The importance of intergenerational transmission of language, philosophical values, and cultural practices
- The role of cultural reparation in diaspora cultural safety and education in ensuring cultural flexibility and maximal cultural adaptation
- Ethical frameworks for reparation rooted in Caribbean and Afro-Indigenous traditions
- Strategies for embedding cultural intelligence in Canada-Caribbean partnerships, policy innovations for integrating cultural reparation and preservation into governance education systems, and diaspora engagement strategies

The panel will invite dialogue on how cultural reparation and preservation can be operationalized in policy, education, and community development, offering a forward-looking vision for securing futures that are inclusive, ethical, and culturally grounded.

This session is designed to foster interdisciplinary exchange and will be of interest to researchers, policymakers, educators, and community leaders committed to reimagining Canada-Caribbean relations through the lens of sociocultural justice and generational continuity.

PANEL 4: POLITICS OF IDENTITY, REPRESENTATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Invisible Inequalities: The Overlooked Reality of Fat Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago

Keisha C. Samlal, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

The Equal Opportunity Act of Trinidad and Tobago (2000) is the guiding legislative framework for arbitrating cases of discrimination in areas of employment, education, and the provision of goods, services and accommodation. Enforced through the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC), the Act identifies key areas of discrimination, including race, ethnicity, religion, marital status, gender, geographical origins, and physical disabilities. While all valid areas when dealing with prejudicial and discriminatory practices, the lack of inclusion of weight and body size as sources of fat stigma and mistreatment is of notable concern, but not unsurprising. Within the Caribbean, the longstanding history of colonialism and forced and coerced migration centred around the plantation system has left a legacy of stratification along lines of race, class, colour and gender. The intersections of these axes have also been highlighted in Caribbean scholarship, making evident the often invisibilised experiences of discrimination and stigma in everyday interactions. Similar to existing discriminatory frameworks however, there is a paucity in research and data that reflects the presence and impact of weight and stigma on differential treatment and experiences locally and regionally. This paper therefore offers a critical exploration of the historical and contemporary absence of weight and body size stigma in existing scholarship and legislative frameworks. Central to this discussion is the argument that the absence of fat stigma in policy and research frameworks does not indicate its lack of occurrence but rather the paper calls for a nuanced approach to identify the multiple ways in which fat stigma manifests within wider sociocultural contexts, and how predominant social discourses on the issue contribute to a lack of seriousness around experiences of stigmatisation and discrimination. As such, there is need to recognise, interrogate and reframe negative experiences of fatness outside of current cultural underpinnings that pathologises and moralises fatness.

PANEL 4: POLITICS OF IDENTITY, REPRESENTATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Securing Deaf Childhoods in Trinidad and Tobago: A Canadian-Caribbean Collaboration

Kristin Snoddon, Toronto Metropolitan University

Ian Dhanoolal, Deaf Empowerment and Advancement Foundation of Trinidad and Tobago

In the postcolonial anglophone Caribbean context of Trinidad and Tobago, deaf young childhoods are particularly contested forms of citizenship, and young deaf children and their families are among those most deeply affected by the ongoing effects of colonialism. Unlike primary school-age deaf children who generally have more access to education, and despite the region's strong emphasis on early childhood care and education, there is no formal requirement for education for young disabled children. Deaf young children face exclusion within their own communities and education and service systems, and also within research, policy, advocacy, and professional practice. As a result, their core linguistic needs are not being met, especially in terms of access to Trinidad and Tobago Sign Language (TTSL) education and services. Trinidad and Tobago, like most anglophone Caribbean nations, has signed and ratified human rights instruments including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which calls on governments to recognize sign languages and promote their use in early intervention and education for deaf children. However, it has not fully implemented the rights guaranteed by the Conventions. Without a fully accessible language, children are less favourably positioned to express themselves and make their own choices, which are cornerstones of the CRC as well as Trinidad and Tobago's 2021 National Child Policy.

Related to the theme of Individuals, Communities and Institutions and sub-theme of Human Rights and Social Protection, this presentation outlines and reports findings from the process of developing and field-testing a TTSL curriculum for parents of deaf children. This project was undertaken as a community-based initiative with collaborative teamwork involving Canadian and Caribbean researchers and community organizations. Findings will benefit researchers, policymakers, educators, and the general public by building awareness of the needs of young deaf children and their families, and informing policy and planning to support accessibility and inclusion for young deaf children in the Caribbean and other marginalized and remote communities.

PANEL 4: POLITICS OF IDENTITY, REPRESENTATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Tanty Pedagogy in Fugitive STEM Spaces: Canadian-Caribbean Kinship, Care, and Rigor in Montreal

Sabi Kamilah Hinkson, McGill University

Black students remain underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) across Canada, including in Quebec, where systemic exclusions such as racial streaming and linguistic marginalization limit access to advanced pathways. For many, these barriers intersect with other dimensions of marginalization—being children of immigrants, anglophone in a francophone province, or navigating gendered expectations—compounding alienation and unbelonging. These conditions communicate to Black youth that STEM is not for them, undermining confidence, identity, and belonging.

Research has shown that having Black teachers can be an antidote, fostering students' sense of efficacy, belonging, and achievement. Yet in Montreal, Black educators are scarce, and those who do enter the profession often confront hostility in formal spaces, making retention difficult. In these contexts, Black educators feel pressure to align with Eurocentric norms of professionalism, which often means leaving significant parts of our authentic selves—our language, traditions, and ways of teaching—at the classroom door. I often felt pushed out, or like there was no room for all of me. This experience led me to create STEM with Miss Sabi (SMS), a Black-centered tutoring centre in Montreal where I can show up fully and authentically.

This paper introduces what I coin Tanty pedagogy, a diasporic approach to teaching that emerges from my positionality as a Canadian-born daughter of Trinidadian parents. Central to this approach is the cultural expectation that elders are “aunty” or “uncle,” extending kinship beyond bloodlines and reinforcing respect, accountability, and belonging. At SMS, where I tutor Math and Science to students in grades 5–11, Tanty pedagogy transforms tutorials into spaces where kinship, cultural resonance, and rigor affirm students' engagement with STEM. By theorizing Tanty pedagogy as a community-level intervention, this paper highlights diasporic traditions as vital resources for strengthening communities and reimagining institutions toward inclusive, sustainable educational futures.

PANEL 4: POLITICS OF IDENTITY, REPRESENTATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Negotiating Identity and Advocacy: Indo-Caribbean Canadian Ethnic Media as Sites of Social Interaction

Sujaya Devi Rampersad-Singh, University of Toronto

This study investigates Indo-Caribbean Canadian ethnic media as a critical site for negotiating identity, community-building, and civic engagement within Canada-Caribbean relations. The research intervenes in scholarship on ethnic media and multiculturalism by focusing on the underrepresented Canadian Indo-Caribbean population, addressing how digital platforms shape cultural production and challenge existing assimilation narratives. The methodology employs a multi-method approach. Analysis focuses on three digital platforms: *Brown Gyal Diary*, *Cutlass Magazine*, and *Indo-Caribbean Canadian*. The approach uses qualitative content analysis and visual methodologies to examine patterns of engagement, identity negotiation, and community formation regarding migration, post-indenture heritage, and gendered cultural experience. This core analysis is supported by principles drawn from the Digital Ethnic Media Hub (DEMH), which is crucial for studying participatory spaces and audience interaction across diverse digital communities. The paper demonstrates how Indo-Caribbean Canadian media mobilizes affective ties, fosters collective memory, and advances advocacy for social inclusion and policy dialogue in both Canada and the Caribbean region. Findings suggest these platforms sustain transnational solidarities and support resource-building necessary for diasporic cohesion. This work contributes to understanding the role of ethnic media in fostering sustainable, inclusive, and cooperative Canada-Caribbean futures, offering a new perspective on platform studies and diaspora communication.

PANEL 4: POLITICS OF IDENTITY, REPRESENTATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Qoolie Mundane: The Politics of Everyday Queer Fête-Making and the Cultivation of Queer Caribbean Home(s)

Ryan Persadie, University of Toronto

In cities such as Toronto, Canada, a developing scene of queer soca fêtes, or what I refer to as “queer fetes” in this paper, have become significant spaces of queer diasporic Caribbean celebration, belonging, and community-building. Queer fêtes refer to LGBTQI+-affirming and -led party-spaces that are inextricably linked to practices of Caribbean Carnival and soca music. In the fête, participants perform legacies of anti-colonial resistance, feminist erotic autonomy, and reclamations of the post-colonial Caribbean body linked to such rites. While the dominant fête scene in the Caribbean is largely structured through heteronormative paradigms, the queer fête emerges as a LGBTQI+ re-orientation of the mainstream fête scene in the diaspora. In the queer fête, singing and dancing to soca music operates as the embodied archive by which participants perform a transgressive politics of belonging within Toronto. Particularly in relation to nationalist ideologies of racism, xenophobia, and homo- and transphobia that circulate in North American cities, the queer fête functions as a Carnavalesque geography that uses music, dance, and the voice to mobilize fête politics to enact resistance and critique to structural forces of neo-colonial power. Yet, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many physical spaces and community networks produced through queer fêtes became unavailable.

Following ethnographic fieldwork with thirty queer Indo-Caribbean participants of queer fêtes (inclusive of performing artists, DJs, party organizers, and partygoers) between 2020 to 2023, this presentation explores how new queer practices of fête were made possible during times of social isolation and precarity. I explore how queer Indo-Caribbean communities re-located the dynamics of the queer fête to everyday spaces (such as during long car rides, in moments of sexual intimacy, and on digital platforms such as Zoom and Twitch) to cultivate networks of queer Caribbean belonging and resistance, especially against xenophobic, racist, and homophobic ideologies of Canadian nationalism that always-already position the white, heterosexual subject as the “naturalized” and “proper sexual citizen” of Canada. I develop the framework of the “qoolie mundane” (queer coolie mundane) to demonstrate that acts of queer home-making made possible through the queer fête functioned to cultivate transgressive queer Indo-Caribbean geographies of care and community, and by extension, new readings of queer Caribbean diasporas, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PANEL 5: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, CITIZENSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE

Bridging the Divide: A Framework for Sustainable AI-Driven Agriculture in the Caribbean

Mithra Ramoutar, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

This research addresses the critical gap between the potential of AI for Caribbean agriculture and its practical, on the ground adoption. The primary objective is to propose a sustainable framework for AI tools that are not only technically sound but also economically viable, culturally acceptable, and accessible to local farmers, thereby mitigating the threat of a widening 'digital divide'. The study adopts a multi-phase approach. First, a technical review will assess existing open-source AI models for crop prediction and soil analysis, evaluating their adaptability to Caribbean conditions. Second, a qualitative analysis will be conducted through structured interviews with local farmers and agricultural stakeholders in Trinidad to identify key barriers to adoption, such as cost, digital literacy, infrastructure, and data security concerns. Finally, a management focused case study will model the total cost of ownership and potential return on investment for implementing a selected AI tool. Preliminary analysis anticipates that the largest barriers are not technical, but socio-economic and managerial. Findings are expected to show that success hinges on low-data AI models, community-centric training programs, and clear business models that demonstrate value to farmers. The conclusion will stress that without a management strategy that addresses real-world constraints, even the most advanced AI solutions will fail. This work is significant because it moves beyond pure technical development to offer a holistic, implementable and secure strategy. By incorporating a Cybersecurity lens, the proposed framework directly addresses critical risks related to data integrity, privacy, and system vulnerability, which are often overlooked in agricultural tech proposals. It directly empowers Caribbean policymakers, agricultural agencies, and developers with a practical framework for deploying AI. By leveraging a UWI student's perspective in Computer Science and Management, this research provides a crucial on the ground assessment to ensure AI acts as a tool for empowerment, not exclusion, in the region.

PANEL 5: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, CITIZENSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE

Artificial Intelligence in Caribbean Social Work Practice: Emerging Threats and Ethical Risks for Human Service Organization

Cheryl-Ann Boodram, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across various professional sectors is growing rapidly, with the social work profession being no exception. Despite these movements, there is widespread scepticism around the use of AI which includes the ethical implications of AI use and the possible threat to job security or job-shifting.

Emerging literature on the use of AI in social service industries has been rooted in the global North. Given that social work is a culturally embedded profession and that access to and proficiency with technology differ across regions, it is essential to assess the potential role and challenges of using AI in Caribbean social work practice.

The objective of this study was to fill this conceptual gap by examining the possibilities, threats and challenges of integrating AI into Caribbean Social Work practice. This exploratory study used a general qualitative research design, and data was collected using semi-structured interviews with 15 social work practitioners from the English-speaking Caribbean. Data was analysed using thematic analysis. Findings show the emergence of several themes, including growing interest in integrating AI in social work practice, digital inequalities, the threat of digital colonisation, marginalising of Caribbean client realities, and ethical concerns in AI usage.

The study is significant as it draws attention to the threats in integrating AI into the social services in the Caribbean which, if unmanaged, can disrupt professional practice and client well-being in the region. The study underscores the need for robust capacity-building and the development of ethically grounded and culturally relevant policies and frameworks to guide responsible use of AI in the Caribbean social work context.

PANEL 5: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, CITIZENSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE

Handling Challenges of Generative AI Disruptions in Education

Xavier Fernando, Toronto Metropolitan University

The transformative potential of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education is profound, presenting both opportunities and challenges that necessitate urgent discourse among educators, policymakers, and researchers. This presentation will explore various dimensions related to the integration of generative AI tools in educational settings. Firstly, we will address the ethical implications stemming from the use of generative AI, including concerns about data privacy, academic integrity, and the regulation of AI-generated content. The need for clear guidelines and frameworks for the responsible implementation of these technologies is paramount to mitigate risks associated with misuse and to uphold educational standards.

Additionally, the presentation will delve into pedagogical strategies for effectively incorporating generative AI into existing curricula. This involves not only understanding the potential of AI to personalize learning experiences but also examining how it can foster critical thinking and creativity among students. By assessing current literature, we will highlight innovative instructional practices that leverage generative AI as an empowering educational tool, promoting engagement through tailored content delivery and interactive learning environments.

The discussion will further encompass the implications of generative AI on teacher roles and student interactions within the learning ecosystem. As AI continues to evolve, educators must adapt their teaching methodologies to accommodate an increasingly tech-driven classroom landscape. The necessity for professional development and training for educators to utilize AI tools proficiently will also be emphasized.

Finally, we will outline future research directions needed to explore the long-term effects of generative AI on education, ensuring a balanced approach that embraces technological advancements while safeguarding the educational framework. Through these discussions, we aim to provide insights into navigating the complex interplay between generative AI and education, ultimately charting a path forward that embraces innovation while prioritizing ethical considerations.

PANEL 5: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, CITIZENSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE

Combating Disinformation in Canada and the Caribbean through Citizenry Engagement

Amit Ramkissoon, The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

In both Canada and the Caribbean, social media has become a mainstay of the lives of the citizenry. Many citizens of these two regions spend hours of their daily lives scrolling social media and consuming their content for news, entertainment and information purposes. The emergence of social media has also driven the rise of the contemporary threat of disinformation. Disinformation is the process of supplying deliberately inaccurate and false information to users of the social media networks to convince the users that an alternative story is the truth. Disinformation is a severe problem that has sinister motives. The spread of disinformation is meant to cause panic and hysteria amongst the citizenry of Canada and the Caribbean. Mass chaos is achieved by disinformation by feeding the citizenry with inaccurate information that causes them to have distrust in societal institutions, pursue actions that can cripple society and encourage them to become the victims of crime. As such the objective of this work is to discuss ways the joint region can address this threat to democratic institutions. A technological approach can be pursued such as knowledge, style, propagation, or credibility-based detection however the most effective method is Citizenry Engagement. To address this issue a two-pronged approach is proposed. The first method to combat the threat of disinformation spread via social media, is public education. Institutions in the regions of Canada and the Caribbean need to educate their citizenry about how to identify valid and fake news and the harms of spreading such messages. The second arm of this two-pronged approach is to establish a culture of verification and validation of social media posts prior to sharing them with others. This encourages citizens of the region to ensure that they are consuming and disseminating legitimate news as opposed to fake or invalid news. If these methods are followed, then the region can help to reduce the effect of disinformation on our democratic institutions.

PANEL 6: CELEBRATING, COMPLICATING AND REFRAMING BLACK CARIBBEAN WOMANHOOD IN CANADA

Celebrating, Complicating and Reframing Black Caribbean Womanhood in Canada

Marsha Myrie Obi, University of Guelph
Myrtle Henry Sodhi, York University
Orlando Thompson, Attorney-at-Law
Tatiana Walters, Attorney-at-Law
Kristin Vanderpool, Attorney-at-Law
Sonia Lewis

As much as women's political involvement has expanded in the region, one of the major challenges that remains in the Caribbean policy space is the absence of gender analysis and narratives in policy development. This panel centers women's and girl's experiences in Caribbean Canada migration. Canada's Caribbean Diaspora has been built by ebbs and flows of migration, one of the most notable moments of which was the forced deportation of maroons from Jamaica to Canada in 1796. Since then, Caribbean people generally and women in particular have found both freedom, and extreme racism in the bosom of Canada. This panel uses quantitative and qualitative methodologies to contemplate Black womanhood and how it copes with and survives the Canada crossing. The papers consider their subject matter from historical, contemporary and futuristic vantages. While Marsha Myrie Obi in her paper acknowledges and celebrates the space that Canadian societies have offered Black Caribbean women to escape plantocratic patriarchal culture and be rewarded for their performances of strong womanhood, Myrtle Henry Sodhi reminds us of the complexity that Black women tropes create for Caribbean women in care-related educational employment in Canada. Sonia Lewis deepens the analysis of Caribbean women's work experiences through understanding their relationships with education and training opportunities in Canada while attorneys-at law at the Barbados bar, Orlando Thompson, Tatiana Walters and Kristin Vanderpool examine Canada as a safe haven for Barbadian women fleeing domestic violence and the tensions and challenges of this particular crossing.

PANEL 7: CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Rethinking the Rehabilitation of Adolescents with Behavioural Challenges in Trinidad and Tobago

Mala Ramesar, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

Despite legislative enforcement and implementation of control measures, juvenile delinquency remains an unabated challenge in Trinidad and Tobago. Immediate responses address the occurrence of delinquency in public spaces such as schools however, there are concerns surrounding the efficacy of these measures, and whether adolescent interests are prioritised. Removing adolescents from public spaces must be followed with appropriate rehabilitation to reduce further delinquency. Interventions must be aligned with the circumstances surrounding the emergence and sustenance of delinquent behaviour. This calls for the recognition of within subjects' variances among the group of adolescents who engage in delinquency. These variances can be explained by differences in exposure to psychosocial risk factors and predispositions of the adolescent (Callous Unemotional traits (CU), that develop because of early adverse life experiences. The existence of this trait affects cognitive processing, emotion recognition, moral reasoning and amenability to rehabilitative change efforts. These adolescents are likely to be trapped in criminal snares which reduces their overall quality of life and increases the chances of becoming life-course persistent offenders. Interventions that do not consider the presence of this trait can be inadequate in fulfilling its objective of behavioural change. Using a mixed method explanatory sequential research design, data collected in Trinidad and Tobago between 2022 and 2024 from 76 male adolescents detained for delinquency found moderate and high levels of CU traits. These adolescents demonstrated a positive evaluation of delinquency and a justification for their behaviour based on survival within the criminogenic nature of their communities of residence. Rehabilitation strategies must therefore be tailored to accommodate for the unique effects of CU traits in adolescents as this affects the likelihood of changing. Furthermore, equal prioritisation should be given to reintegration strategies, which includes funding and stakeholder partnerships. This better positions the rehabilitated adolescent to have an improved quality of life.

PANEL 7: CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Building Capacity for Inclusion in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Margo Horne (Brock University),
Monique Somma (Brock University),
John Freer (St Clair College),
Sheila Bennett (Brock University)

Between 2021-2023, our team was asked to provide professional development Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) that focused on evidence-based practices for students with special education needs. Over the course of 3 years, this service work evolved into a multi-faceted pilot of inclusive education, whereby students with special education needs transitioned from a segregated school into mainstream schools. This project involved three phases. Phase one included specialized PD with teachers. Phase two continued this specialized PD with educational assistants. Finally, phase three involved parents, community members, educators, ministry officials and students within the catchment of a specific elementary and high school.

PANEL 7: CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Collaborative Futures: Two-Eyed Seeing and Indigenous Youth Resilience in Canada-Caribbean Contexts

Zaida Rahaman, Brock University

Indigenous youth in Canada and the Caribbean face disproportionate mental health challenges, rooted in colonial legacies, intergenerational trauma, and inequities in access to culturally safe care. These difficulties have been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and widening social disparities, leaving many young people vulnerable to disconnection, poor health outcomes, and cycles of violence. Yet, when supported through approaches that nurture identity, belonging, and holistic wellness, Indigenous youth steadily demonstrate resilience, agency, and leadership.

This paper explores collaborative futures for Indigenous youth mental health through the principle of Two-Eyed Seeing (Etuaptmumk in Mi'kmaq), which integrates the strengths of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems. Community partnerships in Canada highlight the role of land as medicine, creative expression as healing, and intergenerational storytelling as protective factors that foster resilience and strengthen community connections. These lessons resonate strongly in the Caribbean, where young people also navigate cultural displacement, migration-related stress, and climate vulnerability.

By positioning youth as leaders and co-researchers, this work advances inclusive and decolonizing models of mental health promotion. It highlights the importance of equity, cultural safety, and self-determination in shaping programs that are meaningful, sustainable, and rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. Canada-Caribbean collaborations guided by Two-Eyed Seeing provide a transformative framework for addressing public health inequities. Such collaborations generate innovative, culturally informed responses while fostering resilience, belonging, and justice for future generations.

Aligned with the symposium theme of Individuals, Communities, and Institutions, this research contributes to advancing human rights and social protection through collaborative, equity-driven action.

PANEL 8: TRAUMA, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Exploring Mental Well-being and Psychological Distress in Caribbean EMS/Fire Providers: A Cross-Sectional Study

Dr. Hezedeane A. Smith, Global Emergency Services Consulting Group

Overview: EMS professionals and firefighters face high stress due to trauma exposure, long hours, and critical decision-making, increasing their risk for PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Despite global evidence linking these conditions to poor job performance and absenteeism, Caribbean-specific research remains limited. The objective of the study was to examine mental well-being and distress among EMS/fire personnel in the Caribbean. The aim was to inform evidence-based strategies that promote mental health and resilience in this essential workforce.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted using validated self-report instruments. The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) and WHO-5 Well-Being Index measured psychological distress and well-being among EMS professionals and firefighters in the CARICOM region. Three hypotheses were examined: (1) no association between well-being (WHO-5 <50 = poor) and psychological distress (K10 thresholds); (2) no significant gender differences in psychological distress; and (3) no significant differences in well-being between fire-related roles (Firefighter or Fire & EMS) and non-firefighter roles (EMS Attendant, EMS Provider, EMS Driver).

Findings: The study included 88 EMS and fire professionals, representing diverse roles, experience, and demographics. A Chi-square test showed a significant association between well-being (WHO-5) and psychological distress (K10), $\chi^2(3, N = 84) = 34.55, p < .001$, with higher distress linked to poorer well-being. An independent t-test revealed females ($M = 26.15, SD = 10.83$) reported greater psychological distress than males ($M = 21.19, SD = 7.52$), $t(61.30) = 2.386, p = .020$; 67% of females were in the "Likely severe disorder" group versus 33% of males. No significant gender difference was observed for well-being (WHO-5), $t(82) = -1.035, p = .304$, and no role-based difference was found between frontline and non-frontline providers, $t(82) = -.315, p = .754$.

Conclusion: This first Caribbean study on EMS professionals and firefighters highlights the significant impact of public safety stressors on long-term workforce sustainability. Findings underscore the need for peer support, counseling, and team building to strengthen mental health. A key outcome was the association between gender and psychological distress, emphasizing the importance of targeted, organization-wide strategies that address psychosocial demands, reduce distress, and promote overall well-being among all groups.

PANEL 8: TRAUMA, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Systems Mapping Mental Healthcare: Applying Lessons from a Project with Black Caribbean Youth in Ontario, Canada

Fatimah Jackson-Best, McMaster University

Mental health is at a crisis point for Black Caribbean youth across Canada. Factors like Anti-Black Racism, the Covid-19 pandemic, and inequitable access to services exacerbate existing mental health challenges Black youth face and contributes to their disproportionate mental health distress in comparison to other Canadian youth (Fante-Coleman & Jackson-Best, 2020; Williams et al, 2019; Kids Help Phone, 2022).

To explore solutions to bridging gaps and interventions to improve mental healthcare access for Caribbean youth in Canada, the findings from a systems mapping project called Pathways to Care are presented as a potentially useful strategy for Caribbean nations to assist in identifying and addressing the mental healthcare needs of youth. Systems mapping is defined as “the creation of visual depictions of a system, such as its relationships and feedback loops, actors and trends. [It] is intended to provide a simplified conceptual understanding of a complex system that, for collective action purposes, can get partners on the same page (Gray and Bloch, 2020).

The research question guiding this work is: how can systems mapping, as a technological and conceptual intervention, be used to visualize access points and barriers to mental healthcare sites for people in Caribbean nations? The presented project findings are mixed methodological and include data from a systems mapping project conducted across Ontario, Canada. The presentation will include tangible recommendations for the systems, organizational and practitioner levels of society

PANEL 8: TRAUMA, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Trauma and Mental Health

Tyehimba Salandy, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

In recent years there have been new appreciation for understanding the significance of adverse childhood experiences in shaping personality, cognition, behaviour and even neurological structures of the brain. This provides new ways of understanding how experiences of neglect, abuse and family dysfunction can be embodied and lead to lifelong challenges including dysfunction, chronic diseases and mental health problems. Yet within the neoliberal impulse that centers the individual, the structural underpinnings of early childhood experiences often remain unaddressed. Trauma is seen largely as the outcome of individual actions with little consideration to adverse societal experiences emanating from plantation logics, coloniality, capitalism, neoliberalism and related deep-seated inequalities that characterizes the Caribbean. This individualist focus continues within western frameworks of mental health where mental health issues are perceived mainly as a crisis of the individual who has to be returned to the state of 'normal' through individual treatments such as therapy or medication.

This exploratory study draws upon a qualitative methodology to engage how the individual is positioned within frameworks of trauma and mental health. In addition, it harnesses decolonial theory to understand how these individual experiences of trauma and mental health can be understood within what scholars (Quijano 2000) refer to as the colonial matrix of power. The relevance of this study can be understood within what Davies (2022) has called the global mental health crisis, where the rates of mental illness and medication have been increasing despite the institutionalization of psychology and psychiatry. It aims to contribute to a growing body of literature that aims at rethinking dominant frameworks.

PANEL 8: TRAUMA, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Decolonising Systemic Policing Entanglements: The “Frame Case” as a Counternarrative in 21st Century Trinidad and Tobago

Nathan Chapman, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

This study trans-historically explores how narratives of the Frame Case exemplify and resist colonial entanglements in contemporary Trinidad and Tobago. Central to this study is the concept of the Frame Case, a culturally specific term used by typically African, Indian and Mixed residents in criminally labelled communities in Trinidad and Tobago to describe how and why they are falsely accused, targeted, and arrested for crimes they did not commit. Emerging from working-class communities, this emic (insider) term signals the underlying dynamics of criminalisation, stigmatisation, and dehumanisation that are rooted in racialised, classist, militarised and spatial systems of colonial power. Grounded in decolonial theory, the Frame Case situates within multiple state apparatuses, including the Judiciary, Executive, Legislative, Media, Penal and Police Service and serves to dismantle and deconstruct these institutions that uphold systemic policing practices. To investigate this, I utilise narrative inquiry, integrating qualitative approaches with culturally relevant methods, which include examining archival data and conducting Caribbean-centric "online" sessions. These virtual sessions, which incorporates fifteen semi-structured interviews and one chat-based focus group, serves as a safe space during the coronavirus pandemic where participants felt comfortable to share their experiences. Following data triangulation, the findings reveal that the post-colonial present is, in fact, a neo-colonial reality as demonstrated through the intertwining of colonial epistemes and material conditions that persist in the form of criminalisation, dehumanisation and stigmatisation as articulated in the experiences of the Frame Case. These patterns continue despite the formal end of political colonisation and through the leadership of neo-colonial elites. To address this problem, my research crafts a study up participatory approach, proposing recommendations that offers practical insights into confronting systemic policing entanglements in the neo-colonial present.

BLOOD HOLE ARCHIVES – TRAUMA AND THE EMBODIED RECORD

Rondel Benjamin and Jamie J. Philbert, Bois Academy

BLOOD HOLE ARCHIVES: Trauma and the Embodied Record is a participatory closing of the CCI conference with Rondel Benjamin and Jamie J. Philbert that maps how the living martial tradition of Kalinda articulates evidence of sacrifice and redemption in and through the body, holding a shared method for healing, meaning-making, and human security that is oriented toward the futures we are collectively tasked to build

PANEL 9: RESISTANCE, SOLIDARITY AND REPARATIONS

Haiti as Policy Testbed: From Broker to Connector

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, CERLAC; Schulich School of Business, York University

Canada's identity as a middle-power broker—once sustained by mediation, trade integration, and multilateral consensus-building—is under visible strain. UN Security Council defeats, a shrinking trade share, and a hollowing branch-plant economy illustrate diminishing returns from brokerage. Simultaneously, BRICS consolidation and CARICOM's deepening represent new structuring poles that bypass traditional middle-power functions. Canada's relevance now depends on evolving from broker to connector—leveraging diasporas, bilingual identity, and niches in climate adaptation and AI governance.

Long a focus of Canadian foreign policy, Haiti faces overlapping crises of governance, violence, and migration, yet it also incubates innovative practices: diaspora mobilization, grassroots experimentation, and emergent frameworks of justice and reconciliation. Drawing on research and practice in Canada, Haiti, and the wider Caribbean, this panel situates Haiti as both a site of acute fragility and a laboratory for reimagining Canada-Caribbean futures.

Objectives. (1) Examine Haiti as a testbed for Canada's transition from broker to connector; (2) assess how diaspora knowledge diplomacy, environmental governance, and transitional justice contribute to inclusive innovation; (3) highlight policy levers where Canada-Caribbean collaboration can deliver durable outcomes.

Haiti as Policy Testbed: From Broker to Connector

Examines how Haiti's crisis exposes the failure of Canada's broker model and illustrates the potential of a connector strategy. Draws on the Lekòl Ayiti A (Toronto Haiti Summer School) policy-lab to show how diaspora engagement and fairness-seeking approaches (via Rawlsian reflection) can reshape Canada's Haiti posture.

PANEL 9: RESISTANCE, SOLIDARITY AND REPARATIONS

The Racial Contract and Philosophy (as Resistance)

Laura Mae Lindo, University of Waterloo

The act of “re-positioning” knowledge requires the harnessing of a radical imagination both on and off university campuses. This is especially true for People of African descent. For us, the shifting of our focus from national understandings of “Blackness” to Pan-African explorations of the same requires a similar radical imagining that was often central to how Black solidarity movements were historically grown and, some might argue, subversively undermined (Kelley, 2022). And yet, without reigniting this aspect of our ancestral knowledge, our ability as a global People to escape the patterned exclusion(s) from global political discourses that help us move beyond one-dimensional narratives of “survivors / resisters of enslavement” and towards active participants in the co-creation of a kinder and gentler world will remain elusive (Biana, 2021; hooks, 2018). This paper argues that state Education in general and philosophy in particular must be claimed and re-claimed as powerful sites for such radical imagining. Bringing the work of Charles W. Mills (2017, 1997) into conversation with Gloria Ladson-Billings (Ladson-Billings, 2021a, 2021b) and Annette Henry (Henry, 2017, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Henry, 1990), this paper imagines new epistemologies by questioning the exclusion of Pan-Africanism in conversations of Black youth, arguing that dismissing Black people’s ties to each other across international boundaries serves to undermine efforts to support future generations. Using critical race theory as a guide through this discussion, this paper argues that national politics in Canada and, provincial educational policies like those being proposed in Ontario, if not resisted, challenged, and epistemologically “re-positioned” through a lens of love, care, and compassion for People of African Descent, we will once again be excluded from global discussions impacting future generations of our people.

PANEL 9: RESISTANCE, SOLIDARITY AND REPARATIONS

The emergence of Bwa Kale, a grassroots community defense movement in Haiti

Magdalee Brunache, University of Toronto

Across the Caribbean, security debates are often framed through state-centric logics that emphasize institutional weakness, state failure, and external intervention. Haiti is emblematic of this framing. Since the 2021 assassination of its president, armed groups have expanded control over Port-au-Prince, producing unprecedented displacement and violence. International narratives overwhelmingly portray Haiti as a site of collapse. Yet these framings obscure the creative strategies of protection that Haitian communities and diasporas are actively forging.

This paper examines the emergence of Bwa Kale, a grassroots community defense movement that began in 2023 after public acts of vigilantism against gang members. Commonly dismissed as “mob violence”, I argue instead that Bwa Kale should be situated within a wider repertoire of community-led security practices across the Caribbean, that operate alongside, or sometimes in place of, formal state institutions. Similar practices exist in Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, and the Dominican Republic, where communities take active roles in managing insecurity.

By foregrounding local and transnational diaspora networks, this research demonstrates communities actively shape community security, advance political agency, and complement formal governance. Using a multi-method approach combining media analysis, archival research, and interviews in Haiti and key diaspora sites (Quebec, Florida, New York), the study traces historical continuities, reveals silenced narratives, and maps cross-border dimensions of protection and advocacy, situating community leadership and grassroots knowledge at the center of security discussions.

Findings highlight locally grounded strategies for community safety that can inform regional and international policy. By tracing these networks of defense and solidarity, this paper intervenes in regional debates on Canada-Caribbean security futures. It demonstrates how Haiti’s struggles are not isolated but entangled with broader histories of colonialism, migration, and external intervention. By documenting grassroots practices of security, this research provides actionable insights for policymakers, regional organizations, and international actors interested in collaborative, community-centered solutions.

PANEL 9: RESISTANCE, SOLIDARITY AND REPARATIONS

Community-driven Initiatives and Local Culture as Mediating Factors for Effectiveness of Collective Reparation Process

Remberto De La Hoz Reyes, Universidad Simón Bolívar

The study focused on the limitations and challenges of the Collective Reparation Process (CRP) in the Colombian Caribbean region, particularly regarding its capacity to contribute to territorial peacebuilding and respond to victims' expectations. Its objective was to analyze the experience of Caribbean Subject to Collective Reparation (SRC), assessing their perceptions of the implemented measures and evaluating the CRP's contribution to moral and material restitution, as well as to peacebuilding in their territories.

A phenomenological-hermeneutical approach inspired by the epistemology of the Greater Caribbean was employed. The study involved six SRC in the departments of Córdoba, Bolívar, Magdalena, and Atlántico. Through in-depth interviews with social leaders, data were collected and after processed using NVIVO® content analysis, enabling the identification of analytical and emerging categories from an intercultural perspective.

Findings highlight that the CRP is perceived as overlapping with individual reparation, with limited institutional support and coordination. Comprehensive Collective Reparation Plans (PIRC) reveal low territorial sensitivity, weak integration with social policies, and insufficient incorporation of gender, ethnics and diversity approaches. For victims, acceptance of measures does not equate to satisfaction; they express mistrust toward the State and demand greater attention to their specific needs. No direct link between CRP and territorial peace was identified; however, categories such as 'local culture' and 'community-driven initiatives' emerged as mediating factors for effectiveness and as alternative pathways to peacebuilding and meaningful reparation, emphasizing reconciliation and territorial recovery.

The study underscores gaps in the relevance and legitimacy of the CRP in the Colombian Caribbean and stresses the need to incorporate intercultural, ethnics, gender, and local approaches into PIRC. Its main contribution lies in demonstrating how community initiatives and regional culture can enhance collective reparation as a genuine pathway toward territorial peace.



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