

# Global Leadership to Meet the Moment

Global Framework  
2020-21 Partner Impact Report Update

**QUEEN  
ELIZABETH**  
*Scholars*



# Investing in a new type of leader, for a just and equitable future

We are at an inflection point. Precarious work, housing affordability, the urgency of climate action – every sector of our economy is in transition. The pandemic has had particular consequences for young people and their futures, from missed school and milestone moments, isolation and negative impacts on mental health, to the implications of COVID-19 in perpetuity and its long-tail effects.

But we have reason to be optimistic. Young people are expressing an intolerance for the problems of today and the piecemeal, gentle steps that aren't solving them. One recent example: last month's COP26 climate summit, where thousands of young demonstrators showed up to state their dissatisfaction with decades of delay and slow climate action.

It's this generation's intolerance and drive for real solutions that make us optimistic about a future that can be just and equitable. And philanthropy has a mechanism to play a supporting role: investing in youth.

## **A Visionary Scholarship Program**

Long before the pandemic brought these conversations to greater prominence, one program demonstrated foresight

about the issues we're grappling with today: the Queen Elizabeth Scholars program.

The idea for this scholarship initiative traces back to a desire to mark a meaningful celebration of the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. The program was generously supported by Victor Dahdaleh, a leading Canadian entrepreneur and global philanthropist, who had the foresight and vision to invest in global scholars, citizens and contributors who can solve the world's pressing problems.

The magic ingredient of the Queen Elizabeth Scholars program is a recognition that while education and learning are fundamental, experiences shape who you are. By taking students outside of their home communities, the Queen Elizabeth Scholars program has been able to provide life-shaping experiences rooted in innovative international projects designed by Canadian universities. To date, 2,231 scholars at 46 Canadian universities have been funded through the program, giving us an intersectional, robust, and science-driven lens to explore a wide range of challenges.



Here are just a few examples:

- Addressing climate change in coastal communities
- Working to protect Indigenous languages
- Decolonizing knowledge through the lens of gender equality
- Developing screening tools for maternal mental health
- Ensuring greater urban community sustainability and food security

In addition, Queen Elizabeth Scholars have directly contributed to the world's body of knowledge of COVID-19, mental health and other related consequences. Examples include projects exploring the pandemic's impact on food security in China, establishing wellbeing indicators in small island states as part of crisis and pandemic preparedness, and research in Ghana on COVID-19 and water, sanitation and hygiene issues.

One Scholar played a leadership role in evaluating the rapidly expanding and evolving COVID-19 evidence during the crisis and making it easily accessible in real-time to decision-makers worldwide.

### **Expectations are changing**

Today's young people face a future that might not be as economically or socially prosperous as their parents' and grandparents'. Macro trends like globalization, ubiquitous technology and shifting demographics are affecting every sector. The model of capitalism that got us here, pursuing profits without consideration of social and ecological issues, won't work going forward (a point acknowledged in the U.S. Business Roundtable's 2019 statement redefining the new purpose of a corporation).

In 2015, the United Nations articulated 17 global goals to combat humanity's greatest challenges by 2030. The same year, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission released 94 Calls to Action. In 2019, the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was released alongside 231 Calls For Justice. We are grappling with many issues, but we have frameworks for doing so, and we must act.

To form a better, more prosperous future, we need a new type of thinking and leadership: people with global education and experiences who can bring their values into daily decision-making. We need leaders who understand culture and identity, are equipped to lead diverse groups, and are prepared to address inequality, inequity and climate change. We need leaders who focus not just on creating wealth but on how their businesses and organizations are creating a better world – or not – and taking action.

### **Continue investing in tomorrow's leaders**

Years ago, supporters like Victor Dahdaleh applied their foresight and vision to invest in a new type of leader.

The pandemic has shown us that this vision has played out. As a result of programs such as the Queen Elizabeth Scholars, the leaders we need are arriving; young people with an impatience with incremental change and cultural sophistication to develop and pursue innovative, relevant solutions.

We know that young people, supported by the right conditions, are the key to leading us toward a just and equitable future. It's up to us to trust in the next generation's leadership and continue making meaningful, tangible investments in youth.

### **A year of resilience and impact**

In this year's *Partner Impact Report*, we are proud to share stories, reflections and impact data for Community Foundations of Canada's Global Framework programming, highlighting the specific impacts of the Queen Elizabeth Scholars program for 2020-21. Through a global pandemic, the stories captured in this report showcase global leadership in action, as a growing network of scholars activate their knowledge, expertise, and determination to strengthen communities at home and around the world.

While scholars continued their critical work through 2020, navigating the many shifts and challenges of a global pandemic, global travel restrictions and their impact on program delivery, from convening and community engagement to partner stewardship, resulted in reduced expenditure in 2020 as is outlined in the Financial Update.

With Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee approaching in 2022, we look forward to activating new opportunities to come together, whether virtually or in person, and to growing our investment in critical programs like Queen Elizabeth Scholars.

As we do so, we remain deeply appreciative of the support of our program partners, the Rideau Hall Foundation and Universities Canada, university partners in Canada and globally, and the funders and philanthropists who have made this program possible: the Victor Dahdaleh Foundation, the International Development Research Centre, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and many supporting partners.



**Andrew Chunilall**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Community Foundations  
of Canada



**Andrea Dicks**  
President  
Community Foundations  
of Canada

# Advancing a Global Framework through Queen Elizabeth Scholars

## A Network of Global Leaders

The Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarship program was born from the desire to celebrate and honour the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the Throne. This prestigious scholarship initiative was created in 2012, under the leadership of the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada (1993-2003) and the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada (2010-17), as well as with remarkable contributions from the philanthropists, the Government of Canada, provincial governments, and the private sector.

Through private and public sector support, funds are made available annually to the Canadian university community to submit proposals particular to their areas of expertise, and in response to the Queen Elizabeth Scholars funding priority themes. Universities compete by articulating the scope of student involvement at the undergraduate and graduate levels; the country and partner institution involved; and the global challenge will be addressed.

Winning universities select students to take part as "Queen Elizabeth Scholars". They will engage with communities across the globe, learn about cultures and work together on projects with global impact across a range of fields including climate change, maternal and child health, food security, and supporting children and

youth. They join a global community of Queen Elizabeth Scholars to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and collaborate on meaningful initiatives.

## A Catalytic Contribution

In 2016, at the invitation of Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Gordon Campbell, and the CEO of Community Foundations of Canada (CFC), Andrew Chunilall, the Victor Dahdaleh Foundation made a catalytic contribution to young leaders from across Canada and around the world through the Queen Elizabeth Scholars program.

Through the championship of Governor General David Johnston, Prime Ministers Jean Chrétien and Steven Harper, and Business leader Victor Dahdaleh, the Queen Elizabeth Scholars program has become a globally recognized initiative with a growing cohort of young leaders who are harnessing their international education to advance critical outcomes in fields spanning global health, food security, sustainability, governance and justice, employment and innovation.

Through the Victor Dahdaleh Foundation's catalytic \$15M contribution, the Queen Elizabeth Scholars program has unlocked an additional \$85M in leverage and continues to expand its reach and impact across Canada and globally.

*"QEScholars who have successfully completed their placements have trained other faculty members at AKU and have increased their capacity through advanced research activities. The diversity within the QES has enabled AKU to look at various projects and strategies through a different lens and aspects that have ultimately improved project outcomes. The scholars have had an impact on the partnership, building capacity and mentorship between the Universities and expanding the research agendas between both institutions for joint opportunities."*

### Fareena Feroze

Manager, University Partnership Office,  
The Aga Khan University, Pakistan,  
University of Calgary partner

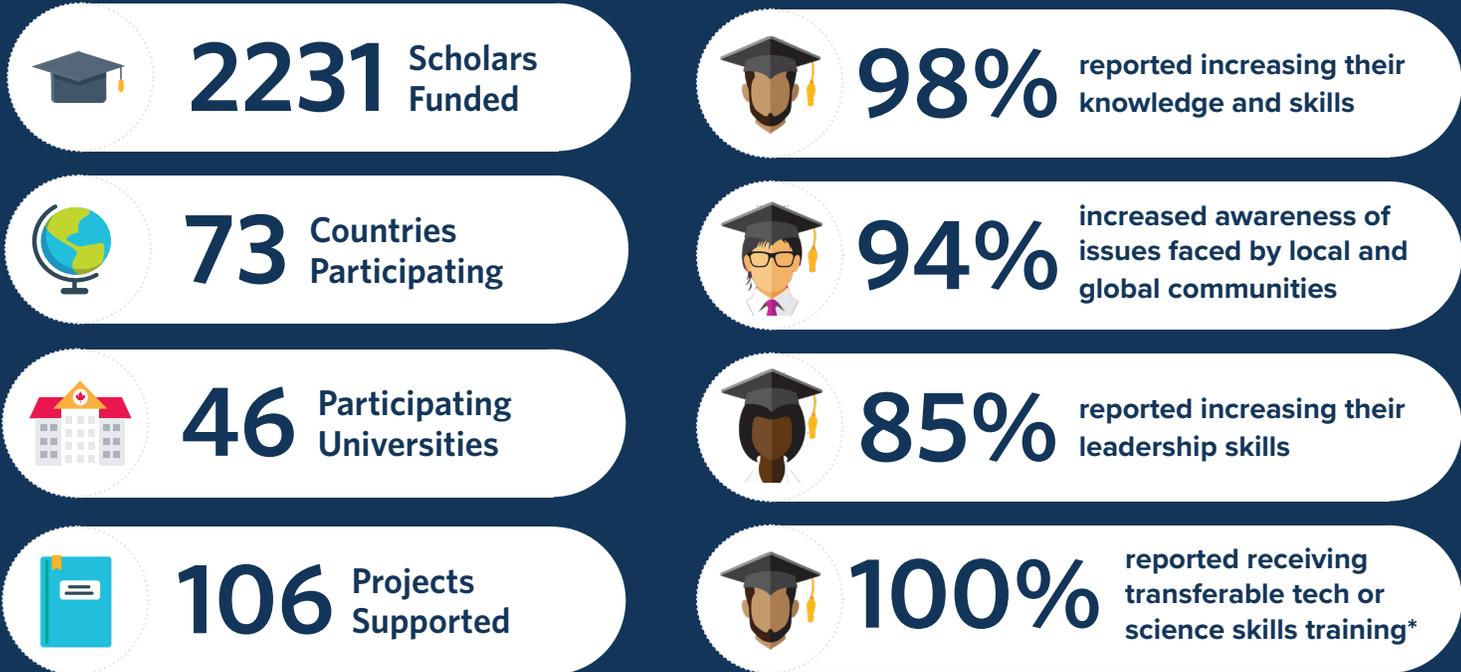


Global philanthropist Victor Dahdaleh meets with Queen Elizabeth Scholars to learn about their research and discuss global leadership

# Reach and Impact

The Queen Elizabeth Scholars program, having just completed its sixth year, continues to build a track record of success in supporting and developing global leaders.

**By the numbers, since 2015 (up to March 31, 2021):**



\* Reflects QES Advanced Scholars

# The Pandemic Pivot



The QES Advanced Scholar (AS) program was no exception to the tumult caused by the COVID-19 pandemic within higher education and research communities this past year. Some research activities were temporarily shelved. Other plans shifted in scope and methodology. At the same time, creative thinking and innovative solutions opened up new opportunities and revealed a few silver linings.

## THE CONFERENCE CONUNDRUM

Seminars and conferences are fundamental to knowledge sharing and networking among QES-AS funded researchers. But this year in-person events weren't an option.

"For some of them it was just so smooth," says Ellie Perkins, project lead at York University. "[Scholars] just said, 'okay we'll do this online.'" York's three-year project brings together scholars from around the world to research climate justice and democratic commons governance in the context of an innovative ecological economics partnership.

Dr. Perkins says some scholars made special efforts to share their webinars within the QES-AS network. In the case of York's Brazilian scholars, they created the QES Climate Justice Webinar: Open Science and Citizen Science to Promote Climate Justice, where several QES Climate Justice scholars and collaborators presented on their respective QES Climate Justice projects.

## SCHOLARS GO THE DISTANCE

Despite the more limited bandwidth and extreme pressures on many African researchers, one of York's South African scholars organized an entire webinar series on climate justice, "with big name speakers," she says. With Dr. Perkins' help,

he reached out to other QES-AS scholars and universities to invite their participation.

Several QES-AS scholars with the University of Ottawa's project, Open African Innovation Research: New and Emerging Researchers in West Africa, found creative ways to keep their research going, including using part of their QES-AS funding to pay for consultants in another country to conduct field work. Others created new collaborations within the project to complete their work. For example, a scholar living in Nigeria collaborated with another who was unable to travel there for her field work.

"Almost everyone else couldn't do field work or was significantly delayed so several had to change their topic," says Victoria Schorr, project lead at the University of Ottawa. "Some reformulated their scope of work."

## EXTERNSHIPS CHALLENGE

Many project leads found externship placements challenging during the pandemic. "In one case, I spent eight months trying to find people places and getting no response or a yes and then they backed out," says Ms. Schorr.

Others had an easier time transitioning to an online placement. Grace Marquis, project lead with McGill's LINKIN-Ghana project, says one scholar was supposed to work at a partner's offices, but since it involved computer work the placement easily transferred to a virtual placement. The McGill University-University of Ghana partnership project seeks to improve the lives of adolescent girls and women farmers in rural Ghana through expanding knowledge and skills, and improving access to services and markets.

Scholars at Ryerson University's QES-AS project, Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change in Colombia, had finished computer modelling and were ready for field work on the intrusion of saline water into Colombian coastal aquifers, where residents normally get fresh water, when the pandemic arrived. The team was looking at the problem of flooding and rising sea levels, which causes salt water to go through soil and sand and eventually reach aquifers, causing contamination. "Most of these aquifers are now contaminated with saline water," says Mehrab Mehrvar, project lead. "It's a danger."

But the field work was impossible in a country hard hit by COVID-19. "There were also protests against the governments and lockdowns," says Dr. Mehrvar. "I've never seen Colombia in such a situation."

To secure externships amid these challenges, Dr. Mehrvar reached out to research partners to find ways scholars could work remotely to address problems the partners were having.

"They listed all these problems and with the help of some other professors from Colombian universities, we broke down the problems and came up with solutions and projects. For example, one of our QES-AS scholars was responsible for writing two manuals: "Guide to the Formulation of Plans of Sanitation and Management of Discharges" and "Handbook for Management and Handling Solid Waste" for the City of Cartagena, Colombia. She did not have to go to the place; she did it on computer."



“Most of our scholars are women, most have children. When schools are closed... and most are doing post-doc or PhD at the same time [it’s very difficult],” says Ms. Schorr. “A number of them or their partners work at jobs or they [lost their jobs], so they are also having financial burdens that they were not expecting. This caused delays in their research.”

Dr. Marquis has seen delays as well. “There are multiple levels of delay. At the University of Ghana there are delays because of changes in schedules. Faculty are teaching twice as much because of split classes. It puts limits on going out into the field for some.

“One of our scholars has three young girls and they are at home,” she says. “So trying to get everything done is a challenge.”

### **REMOTE LEADERSHIP**

The same kinds of university issues affected project leadership and administration in Canada. “I would say there was a delay with all York staff working from home,” says Dr. Perkins. “It has made the bureaucracy a little more challenging for things such as transferring funds.”

On the bright side, Dr. Perkins says communicating with international scholars has still gone smoothly.

“They answer me so quickly,” she says, adding that she is also mindful to pass along “anything that sounds like an interesting webinar or conference that they might be able to participate in” during the pandemic.

“Some respond that they don’t really have the bandwidth to participate,” she says. “There are differences in access to technology and the hardships they face.”

For Dr. Marquis, not being able to travel to Ghana and work with scholars on the ground has been a big setback. “Ghana is the centre of my research, so I am regularly there. I have great colleagues in Ghana but for me it’s a challenge because I can’t be there. So we do the best we can.” That means having regular project conferences and conversations online with all the scholars, but she says, “it’s not the same as being able to get out in the field.”

Project leadership during the pandemic has meant finding new ways to add value. At Ryerson, Dr. Mehrvar gave all the scholars access to the university library for e-books and journals. “They are very productive,” he says. “And they love this project.”

Last-minute travel problems were also a major challenge for project leads. At Ryerson, “it was really challenging because they closed the airports in Colombia,” says Dr. Mehrvar, noting that some international scholars were stranded in Toronto.

“Some had to stay longer than they were supposed to.” That meant additional emails and budget analysis. “Sometimes hundreds of emails in one day...We had to squeeze [funds] from here and there to support them.”

Waterloo also worked to support scholars stranded by border shutdowns. “A number of students were stranded here when the pandemic hit,” says Kevin Boehmer, managing director of the university’s Water Institute and project co-ordinator. “We really had to ensure their health and safety first and foremost. Some were here so long that they wrote extra research papers that weren’t originally planned.”

Other QES-AS scholars with Waterloo’s project, Water Security as a Foundation for Healthy Communities and Sustainable Livelihoods, were unable to travel to the university. “The mobility issue put a stop to a fundamental building block of the whole QES program,” says Mr. Boehmer. “We still haven’t been able to change that, other than getting students home eventually.”

### **SILVER LININGS**

In most aspects of life during the pandemic, there have been a few silver linings – and the QES-AS program is no exception.

At the University of Ottawa, new externship opportunities opened up with more virtual work options. “The one advantage was you no longer had the residence requirement,” says Ms. Schorr. “So I did get people placements in other locations that would not have worked otherwise.”

For one Waterloo researcher, the pandemic enriched her findings. Before the pandemic, she had collected field data on emergency preparedness for water

and sanitation at Kenyan health facilities. She wanted to investigate the resiliency of these facilities. When COVID-19 struck, she decided to revisit her interviewees virtually and collected a second set of data.

“It was a live experiment,” says Mr. Boehmer. “A comparative analysis... This is going to make for a much stronger piece of research.”

In another example, a Waterloo professor was able to recruit more female scholars because the usual requirement of spending 90 days in Canada – a barrier for some women – was dropped during the pandemic.

With conferences going virtual-only, Waterloo found their African and Asian scholars were able to participate in more events that would have been prohibitive in cost if physical attendance was required.

Mr. Boehmer also reports that some scholars found being stranded in their home community gave them more time for meaningful community engagement. One Waterloo scholar said the extra time allowed him to help youth groups and primary schools write proposals for infrastructure improvements to the school system. “People put the extra time to good use,” says Mr. Boehmer.

“The pandemic hurts, yes, but we learned a lot of lessons too,” says Dr. Mehrvar. “Before we didn’t have Zoom calls. Now we have weekly virtual meetings that even include QES alumni scholars because they are interested in continuing this project. Some of them are professors now. So that is the positive impact that came out of the pandemic.”

Two of these QES alumni were awarded Emerging Leaders in the Americas Program (ELAP) scholarship to come back to Dr. Mehrvar’s Ryerson University Laboratory to continue the experimental research work they missed during pandemic. They will return to Ryerson University in January 2022.

# Queen Elizabeth Scholars Phase 3

Through the third phase of the Queen Elizabeth Scholars program, an estimated 650 Canadian and international students are undertaking internships and research in Canada and abroad at organizations including:

- Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence in India
- Makerere University Field Station in Kibale National Park, Uganda
- Bahir Dar Institute of Technology, Ethiopia
- Caribbean Public Health Agency, Trinidad and Tobago
- Partnership for Sustainable Development, Nepal
- Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, Thailand

With support from the Victor Dahdaleh Foundation, who provided a catalytic \$15M overall contribution to this program, \$1M was utilized to support and seed the latest \$13M+ scholarship round. Through this support, University partners are advancing impactful projects across Canada and globally alongside a growing cohort of young global leaders.

## Winning project proposals from Phase 3 include:

### University of Victoria

ASEAN Internship:  
Experience, Networking and  
Community (ENC) Program

### University of the Fraser Valley

Capacity Building for Policy and  
Planning in Kenya, Tanzania  
and India: A Focus on Food  
Systems and Urban Growth  
Management

### Simon Fraser University

Interns and Scholars for a  
Sustainable World

### Vancouver Island University

Building Resilience in Coastal  
Communities (BRICC)  
Knowledge Network

### University of Alberta

Securing Our Shared Global  
Future: Student Leadership for  
Change

### Mount Royal University

Sport Leaders International  
Internship Program

### University of Calgary

Young Leaders in International  
Development

### University of Saskatchewan

Experiential learning for  
the One Health/Planetary  
Health professional: A focus  
on Canadian and African  
communities-at-risk

### University of Manitoba

Promoting Community-University  
Partnerships in Global and  
Indigenous Health

### University of Ontario Institute of Technology

Incubating Global Careers as  
Queen Elizabeth Scholars

### Wilfred Laurier University

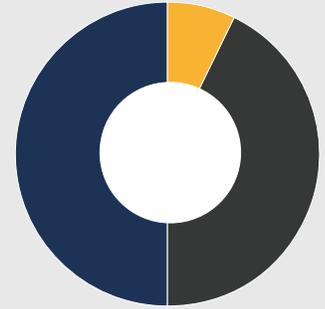
Laurier-Ghana Partnership for Human  
Rights, Criminology, and Social Justice

### University of Toronto

Building Collaborative Learning  
Communities for Global Development  
and Justice

## Queen Elizabeth Scholars: Phase 3 Contributions

	<b>Catalyst Funding</b> Victor Dahdaleh Foundation	\$1,000,000
	<b>Leverage Funding</b> QES Partners	\$5,872,887
	<b>Match Funding</b> University Partners	\$6,817,612
<b>Total Funding (Phase 3)</b>		<b>\$13,690,499</b>



*\* As Phase 3 is currently on-going, figures represent Phase 3 projections.*

**St. Francis Xavier  
University**  
Immersion Service  
Learning in Ghana

**University of Prince Edward Island**  
Integrating Innovative Research &  
Training for Improved Sustainable  
Livelihoods of Smallholder Dairy Farms

**University of New Brunswick**  
Addressing Health and Environmental  
Challenges from a Youth Perspective in  
Malawi and the Caribbean

**Université de Montréal**  
Renforcement d'un réseau mondial  
de jeunes leaders engagés pour le  
développement des communautés

**Université du Québec à Trois Rivières**  
Formation scientifique d'étudiants  
indiens pour la recherche en énergie  
durable et en sciences biomédicales

**McMaster  
University**  
Queen Elizabeth  
Scholars in  
Strengthening Health  
and Social Systems

**Queens University** Building  
innovative, community-driven  
solutions for people with  
disabilities

**University of Waterloo** International  
Internships for University of Waterloo  
Students in Energy Access Social  
Enterprises

# Scholar Profile

## Internship in elite sports brings undergrad out of comfort zone

Joshua Fernandes heard about the QES during first year in sports management at Brock University. He was keenly interested, but thought, “there is no way I’m going to get this.” He saw it as a dream at the time, but that dream came true in fourth year.

He was a big track and field fan at the time, and his favourite athlete was in Botswana – one of the host countries for Brock’s QES placements. Brock’s QES project was a collaboration with Commonwealth Games Canada, which oversaw all placements.

Joshua says he had always played it safe in life, so traveling to Botswana for research was a big step outside of his comfort zone.

“I said, ‘I have this opportunity in front of me and I need to take it.’”

In Botswana, he joined other students in work on Long-Term Athlete Development for the country’s badminton federation. They met with national team coaches, administrators and clubs in gathering the information they needed to develop a strategy.

“We found a lack of communication from top to bottom,” he says. “So we wanted to develop those communication lines.”

Along the way, Joshua and the other scholars learned that solutions in one country don’t necessarily transfer to another.

“I think we were very ignorant at first,” he recalls. “We thought everything would work like in Canada.”

After learning that lesson, they set about making modifications that would suit the country. For example, the job of head coach of a national team is not necessarily full-time in Botswana, so coaches may not be able to communicate at all times.



“I think for me it gave me perspective,” he says of the QES experience. “I thought it was just going to be sports all the time in Botswana, but it wasn’t like that...I met so many people outside of the sports industry who were able to provide guidance on my future career path.

“QES is life changing.”

In particular, he was moved by the sense of community he encountered. “I felt that in Botswana and it really stuck with me.”

That community experience fit well with Joshua’s first job after graduation, as programs and outreach coordinator with the Toronto Inner-City Rugby Foundation – an organization dedicated to building community through rugby. The foundation works in 31 of Toronto’s underserved, low-income neighbourhoods to reduce the financial, geographical, and cultural barriers that prevent children and youth from participating in the sport.



# Project Profile

## Exploring Indigenous language protection in Canada and Belize

The challenge of preserving and protecting Indigenous languages is shared around the world.

A new QES project at the University of Manitoba aims to create a community of education scholars from Canada and Belize and support them to become leaders and advocates in global Indigenous language vitality and related issues, such as Indigenous food sovereignty and learning from the land.

The project – Engaging Indigenous Languages, Knowledges, Learning and the Land – led by Distinguished Professor, Faculty of Education, Sandra Kouritzin, will see 19 scholars engage in both community-driven and higher education approaches to these pressing issues. Sixteen scholarships are for Canadian graduate or senior undergraduate student interns, and three for visiting international graduate students selected by Belize partner organization, the Center for Engaged Learning Abroad, who will complete two-year master's degrees in Manitoba.

In 2019, project lead Dr. Kouritzin and colleagues at the university responded to the QES call for proposals for projects in Latin America and the Caribbean that focus on education, social services and health, made possible through funding from the Waugh Family Foundation. “The Foundation’s Board believes cross-cultural learning is key to the advancement of communities in the region, and to the growth of Canada-Caribbean relations for the long term,” said Rick Waugh, founder of the Waugh Family Foundation, at the time of the announcement.

After learning of the new QES opportunity, Dr. Kouritzin says her team quickly engaged with their partners in Belize to discuss areas of research that would be mutually beneficial. “One of the areas was around teaching English as a second language,” she says. “Mayan is the language in many communities in Belize. How do you ensure children keep their Mayan language while also learning English?”

The project will bring graduate and upper-year undergraduate students from Canada studying second language education or related areas, such as food



sovereignty and soil sciences, to Belize for internships where they can see how these challenges are being addressed in the Caribbean country, and provide the same opportunity to scholars from Belize.

“We thought that perhaps the best thing was to have our students go there and learn from the land and understand another context of British colonialism, and at the same time... provide two-year scholarships for three Mayan students to come here and complete a master’s degree in one of these areas.” There are current no graduate programs in Belize.

“They will have experiences outside of the city of Winnipeg,” she says of the Belizean researchers. “They will be able to travel up North to look at food security there. It’s about mutual learning experiences that tap into those grounded experiences.”

The Canadian and Belizean scholars will all take a University of Manitoba course called Global Indigenous Knowledges. Dr. Kouritzin says the team is hopeful the internships will begin in 2022.

In addition to Dr. Kouritzin, the project team at the university includes Dr. Clea Schmidt (education) and Dr. Satoru Nakagawa (arts). Their partner at the Center for Engaged Learning Abroad is Dr. Filiberto Penados.

# Scholar Profile

## Scholar helps inform climate-smart agriculture in Pakistan

Through the University of Waterloo's QES-AS project, Sajida Sultana – enrolled in a PhD program in Social and Ecological Sustainability – was able to provide valuable research insights related to technological advancements in agriculture to organizations on the ground in Pakistan.

In particular, the United Nations Development Program – GEF Small Grants Program (UNDP GEF-SGP) proved to be an excellent Research Placement Partner on the ground in Pakistan, in collaboration with partner institution Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam (SAUT).

“They provided me all the right connections,” she says. Dr. Sultana was guided by local stakeholders in selecting the five areas within Sindh province that would be the focus of her research.

“It was very interesting to see comparisons among the study districts, where climate-smart practices and technologies were already being used.”

Most striking was the disparity between resources and facilities in the different study districts. In some communities the urgent need for basic resources like clean water and food understandably took priority over any exploration of CSA technological advances and practices in agriculture.

“Even if we introduced a new policy [for climate-smart agriculture (CSA)] it wouldn't help because there was no water there, in some areas,” she says. “We compared that with areas where there is plenty of water, and good facilities. What I saw was that adaptability is easier there, compared to other areas where there are so many social and economic issues involved.”

The timing of Dr. Sultana's QES-AS research was fortunate, as the government of Pakistan was just starting to develop a CSA policy for the country. The concept was fairly new there, and Dr. Sultana explained to many stakeholders what



CSA means. During her research, she attended International Agriculture Conference organized by SAUT in Pakistan, where she shared her research experience with participants from different countries. She later shared her research findings at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference - 2018 in Katowice, Poland, which was well received by the Ministry of Climate Change in Pakistan. After her research she worked for UNFAO for one year as a Climate Smart Agriculture Specialist. Her results expertise helped inform the work of the UNDP and UNFAO.

Her findings highlighted the disparities she found, and their impact. She stressed that “some communities were not talking about agriculture; they were talking about other issues like having no electricity and no water and health issues. We have to be very sensitive to these other issues people are suffering from.”

Dr. Sultana proposed that interventions focus on developing a package of supports before going into a community to introduce new CSA practices and technologies



# Project Profile

## Advancing gender equality by empowering healthcare professionals in West Africa

It's difficult to empower women if the professionals trying to help them are not themselves empowered. That's a challenge facing efforts to advance gender equality in West Africa, and one that Marie Hatem, professor at the School of Public Health (ESPUM), plans to address through a new QES-Advanced Scholars West Africa project. The initiative is rooted in the university's Hygeia network, led by Prof. Hatem. The network aims to strengthen gender equality and equity in global healthcare and combat violence against women, female adolescents and girls.

Benefiting from a close collaboration between the ESPUM and the faculties of medicine, nursing, law, arts and sciences, the QES-AS West Africa project will also rely on important African partners: the West African Health Organization (WAHO) and its network in 15 countries; the ICART-PANZI Center, directed by the renowned gynecologist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Dr. Denis Mukwege; the Denis Mukwege Center of Excellence of the Evangelical University in Africa; the Higher Institute of Nurses and Midwives (ISSI-Kinshasa); and the Civil Society Health Network of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Twenty Francophone scholarship holders from West Africa and Canada (at least 60% of whom are women) will enhance their skills through research activities, community internships, webinars, conferences and workshops. These formative activities will be offered in social-health and legal settings from an experiential, transformational and interdisciplinary perspective.

Prof. Hatem and her team plan to launch the first scholar competition in summer 2021, so that host organizations and supervisors can receive the first candidates during the 2022 winter and spring semesters.



She plans to travel to West Africa this summer to help launch the project there, and has been in discussions with partners about potential externships in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

“We are confident we will have the partners in place for welcoming and supervision of the scholars,” she says.

Community partners and supervisors are already in place in Montreal for incoming scholars.

Initial research will include a review of all nursing and midwife programs in 15 countries. Programs for physicians will be reviewed next, all with an eye to developing a culture of research and evidence-based thinking and practicing in healthcare professions.

The QES-AS West Africa project has the potential to build a strong network to support the continuation of this work, says Prof. Hatem. “It’s a small number of scholars but it will be a starting point to develop the network. These people will be connected to both the QES network and our own network around the world.”

“The big project idea is to help empower all health resources and institutions working with women to reinforce what exists, develop what doesn’t exist and make them a model for the region and other programs and countries,” says Prof. Hatem. “So, in the long run, mutual aid would take place among the resources of the African network, essentially.”

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OF CANADA**  
*all for community*