

2020 -
2021

Five Good Ideas

for racial justice change-making



Lesa Francis, Interim Executive Director
Black Legal Action Centre

Avvy Go, Clinic Director
Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic

Samya Hasan, Executive Director
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians

Shalini Konanur, Executive Director,
South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario

Thursday, March 25, 2021 - 1:00 to 1:45 p.m.

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How do we best address growing colour-coded inequality – for Indigenous Peoples and peoples of colour, including Black Canadians? What are the institutional, structural, and systemic impacts of racism, faithism, and related inequality in education, housing, justice, health, and employment? How can individuals, groups, and organizations engage in effective trust-building, allyship, partnership development, and advocacy – to build on our successes, maintain hard-won gains, and bring about needed change? By highlighting examples of the real economic, health, and social impacts of racism and faithism, Lesa Francis, Avvy Go, Samya Hasan, and Shalini Konanur will break down five good ideas for better “walking the talk” on racial equity and delivering more effectively on racial justice in Ontario.

Resources

- Colour of Poverty Fact Sheets (2019) - <https://colourofpoverty.ca/fact-sheets/>
- Count Me In - Collecting Human Rights Based Data (OHRC) http://www.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Count_me_in!_Collecting_human_rights_based_data.pdf
- COP-COC Disaggregated Data Collection Survey Tool-Template – <https://colourofpoverty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/cop-coc-disaggregated-data-survey-template-colour-of-poverty-colour-of-change-december-2019.pdf>
- Measuring Health Equity - Demographic Data Collection in Health Care - <http://torontohealthequity.ca/>
- Employment Equity 101 (COP-COC) – https://colourofpoverty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/en_employment-equity-1-pager.pdf



Five Good Ideas

1. Collect disaggregated race-based (and other socio-demographic) data.
2. Incorporate a racial equity and racial justice lens in the development and evaluation of policies, budgets, programs, practices, and cultures – both internally and externally.
3. Adopt an intersectional approach to your anti-racism and racial equity and racial justice work and apply it in the hiring and promotion of staff, as well as in the recruitment of board members.
4. Build effective ally-ship among and across peoples of colour, Indigenous Peoples, and others, as it is critical in the promotion of racial equity and racial justice in all of our partnership building and advocacy, within and across organizations, communities, and society.
5. Lobby governments for systems level changes that promote racial equity and racial justice, and build internal organizational capacity to actively advocate for and support such change-making efforts.

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This Five Good Ideas session is organized in partnership with Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change.



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Lesa Francis is the Interim Executive Director at the Black Legal Action Centre, which is a specialty legal aid clinic in Ontario that works to develop access to justice and combat individual and systemic anti-Black racism. Over the past 20 years, Lesa has worked as a Law Clerk for personal injury, family law, and estate law firms in Toronto and as a provincial program coordinator and administrator for multiple specialty legal clinics in Ontario. As an entrepreneur, Lesa also operates a grant writing consulting company specializing in acquiring diverse funding for local and international artists, as well as grassroots, medium-sized, and national non-profit organizations. As an author, Lesa has published literature on topics related to the Black Feminist Theory, Critical Race Theory, Black motherhood and families, and anti-Black racism.



Samya Hasan has been working with the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) since 2015 in different capacities including as a Project Coordinator and Project Manager; she has been the Executive Director of CASSA since 2017. Samya attained her Masters of Public Policy degree from the University of Toronto's School of Public Policy and Governance in June 2013. Prior to her Masters, Samya attained an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Political Science from the University of Toronto. She has written policy papers on transportation, immigration and race relations, child care, housing, international development, economic development and innovation, and health care. Prior to her employment at CASSA, Samya worked at the Affordable Housing Office at the City of Toronto as a Research Associate and Policy Consultant. During her time at the Affordable Housing Office, she worked on various housing-related portfolios supporting low-income and marginalized communities, including Toronto Community Housing and Affordable Homeownership. As a Toronto Urban Fellow for the City of Toronto, Samya worked at the Municipal Licensing and Standards division, conducting by-law reviews of business industries in Toronto.



Avvy Go is the Clinic Director of the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic and a founding steering committee member of Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change. Since her call to the Bar in 1991, she has worked exclusively in the legal clinic system, serving the legal needs of low income individuals and families. Immigration, human rights, and employment law are some of the main areas of law that she practices in. Between 2001 and 2019, Avvy served as a benchler of the Law Society of Ontario. She also served on the LSO's Access to Justice Committee, the Equity and Aboriginal Issues Committee and the Human Rights Monitoring Group. Apart from her legal practice, Avvy spends much time doing community organizing and advocacy work. Avvy has received numerous awards, including OCASI Life Time Achievement Award, Senate of Canada 150 medal, SOAR Medal, Order of Ontario, the Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers' Lawyer of Distinction Award, City of Toronto's William P. Hubbard Award for Race Relations and President's Award of the Women's Law Association of Ontario.



Shalini Konanur is the Executive Director and a lawyer at the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO). She has worked in Ontario's legal aid clinic for the past 20 years and is actively involved in several areas of poverty law reform. Her advocacy has focused on the impact of systemic racism on racialized people in Ontario, and its intersection with poverty, gender, disability, violence, and other areas. Shalini provides direct legal services for clients facing issues of racism and discrimination. In addition, her advocacy includes appearances at the United Nations, including the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, to address domestic issues of systemic racism, consultations for Legal Aid Ontario's Racialized Communities Strategy, and consultations and submissions to the provincial Anti-Racism Directorate and the federal Anti-Racism Secretariat. Shalini also spearheads SALCO's test case work, challenging issues of racial, gender, and religious discrimination at the Supreme Court of Canada, the Ontario Court of Appeal, and the Federal Court. SALCO is a founding and steering committee member of the Colour of Poverty Campaign, which advocates for the collection of disaggregated data and the inclusion of a race equity framework in legislation, policy, and decision-making at all levels.



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Edited by **ALAN BROADBENT AND RATNA OMIQVAR**

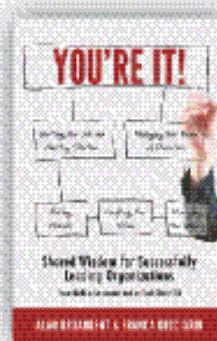
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