



## **RACIALIZED RURAL ONTARIO WORKSHOP, MAY 8 AND 9 2025**

**University of Guelph, MacKinnon Building Room 103 (Arts Hub)**

### ***Registration***

Please register your attendance on the PARO events website ([www.ruralontario.org/event-list](http://www.ruralontario.org/event-list)) so that we can plan accordingly, including avoiding food waste.

### ***Guide for Poster and Oral Presentations***

- **Oral panel presentations** should be carefully timed to be no more than 12 minutes (about 6 double spaced pages of text if read). A good tip is to prepare for a slightly shorter presentation that you can adjust to at the time of presentation. The moderator will alert you about time availability and when to stop.
- **Posters** should be approximately 36" x 48" (92 cm and 122 cm). They can be landscape or portrait orientation. Please choose colour contrast and font sizes suitable for maximum readability. Refer to the [Yale Academic Poster](#) information for guidelines on colour contrast and font sizes that are appropriate for accessibility.
- **Roundtable discussion formats** will be determined and communicated by the organizer.

### ***Recording***

PARO staff will be recording all sessions and discussions with the primary objective of facilitating the work on follow-up activities. We will *always* obtain your consent before any recording is made available on the PARO website.

### ***Accessibility***

The workshop venue (MacKinnon 103) is fully accessible. Detailed accessibility information will be available on the PARO events website or contact Belinda ([bleach@uoguelph.ca](mailto:bleach@uoguelph.ca) or [paro@uoguelph.ca](mailto:paro@uoguelph.ca)) with any questions or for more information.

### ***Directions***

Use the [U of G campus maps](#) for directions. The MacKinnon Building is on the main U of G campus, between College Ave and Stone Rd. E. and just east of Gordon St. City buses and Go buses serve campus at the University Centre. Parking lots are identified on the map and you can pay using [HONK mobile](#).

**Thank you for participating in the Racialized Rural Ontario Workshop 2025!**

# Racialized Rural Ontario Workshop

University of Guelph

## THURSDAY May 8th

8:30 am	<b>Coffee, tea and breakfast snacks</b>
8:45 am - 9:15 am	<b>Welcome and introduction</b> Belinda Leach Shayan Sharif, Interim Vice-President (Research and Innovation)
9:30 am - 10:15 am	<b>Keynote Presentation</b> <b>Claudine Bonner</b> Beyond the Backroads: Issues and Challenges in Researching Rural Communities
10:30 am - 12:00 pm	<b>Panel</b> <b>LIVED EXPERIENCES</b> Chair: Amy Kipp <i>Safoorah Forde</i> (Junctian Community Initiatives). Learning in the Margins: Reflections from Both Sides of the Desk – Stories on Racism, Resilience and Reform <i>Rana Telfah</i> (Huron County Immigration Partnership). The Social and Cultural Early Experiences of Syrian Refugee Families in Southwestern Ontario <i>Rebecca Beusaert</i> (Guelph). A Terrible Bane: Race, Abortion, and a Late Nineteenth-Century Rural Community <i>Silvia Sarapura et al.</i> (Guelph). Invisible and Precarious: A Scoping Review of Gender-based Violence in Agricultural Streams of Canada’s Temporary Foreign Worker Program <i>Laila Harris</i> (Guelph). Narratives of Life “Up North”: Navigating Race, Community and Identity in Rural Ontario
12:15 pm - 1.30 pm	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>OVER LUNCH</b>	<b>Meet the Poster Presenters</b> <i>Salah Alhajsaleh, Mehtaab Dhillon et al.</i> (Windsor). Understanding Moral Distress Among Healthcare Workers Treating Critically Ill International Agricultural Workers in SW Ontario <i>Chelsea Ymana et al.</i> (Windsor). Enhancing Healthcare Access for International Agricultural Workers (IAWs) through Student-Led Clinics: A Qualitative Study <i>Rachel-Ann Dixon &amp; Joshua Garcia-Barrios</i> (Western). Implementation of a Medical Education Service-Learning Program Centred on International Agricultural Workers (IAWs) in SW Ontario
1.45 pm - 3.15 pm	<b>Roundtable</b> <b>RESEARCH INTO ACTION</b> Moderator: Shauna Rae <i>Hallie Abram, Gabriel Allahdua, Amy Kipp, Karli Longthorne, Laila Harris, Salah Alhajsaleh</i>
3:25 pm - 3.45 pm	<b>Wrap up day 1</b>

# Racialized Rural Ontario Workshop

## University of Guelph

May 9th

**FRIDAY May 9**

8.30 am	<b>Coffee, tea and breakfast snacks</b>
8:45 am - 9:30 am	<b>Keynote Presentation Philomena de Lima</b> Challenging Whiteness: Centering Diverse Voices and Their Lived Experiences in Rural Spaces
9:45 am - 11:00 am	<b>Roundtable CURATING STORIES OF RACIALIZED RURAL ONTARIANS</b> Moderator: Sharada Srinivasan <i>Laila Harris, Sawyer Thompson-Brown, Varun Joshi</i>
11.15 am - 12.30 pm	<b>Panel DATA GAPS, FRAMEWORKS AND EXPERIENCES Chair: Silvia Sarapura</b> <i>Taku Mundenga (ROI), Tiwalola Alabi (Guelph) &amp; Oluwaponmile Fapohunda (Africa Women's Alliance of Waterloo). Black Farmers in Ontario: Land Access, Practices and Policy</i> <i>Alexandra Siberry (Fanshawe College). Dismantling Whiteness in the Workplace: Toward Exploring the Professional Lives of Racialized Midwives in Rural Spaces</i> <i>Lindsey Thomson (Guelph) &amp; Mark Nonkes (Huron County Immigration Partnership). Huron-Perth Immigrant Survey: Insights and Community Action</i>
12:45 pm - 2:00 pm	<b>Working lunch</b> In small groups discuss themes, gaps, ideas for research, funding sources, etc.
2:00 pm - 3:15 pm	<b>Brainstorming</b> Collective generation of ideas for research and action
3:30 pm - 4:00 pm	<b>Next steps and wrap up</b>

Thank you for participating!

Hosted by the People's Archive of Rural Ontario (PARO) [www.ruralontario.org](http://www.ruralontario.org)



# Racialized Rural Ontario Workshop

## Keynote Speakers



### **Challenging Whiteness: Centring Diverse Voices and Their Lived Experiences in Rural Spaces**

Dr. Philomena de Lima is Professor Emerita of Applied Sociology and Rural Studies and previously Director for Centre for Remote and Rural Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands, Scotland. Her research focuses on developing an understanding of how places/spaces intersect with diverse communities. 'Rural' provides a lens through which she has framed topics (social exclusion/poverty, racism, migration, mental health, wellbeing) in relation to diverse groups (low-income, minorities, young people/carers, women, migrants). Recent publications include: *The Rural-Migration Nexus: Global Problems, Rural Issues* (co-editor); editor for special issue on 'Race

and Racism in Scotland' in Northern Scotland; co-guest editor for special issue on 'The Wellbeing of International Migrants in Rural Areas' in *Frontiers in Sociology*. She pursues her commitment to social injustice through collaborative research nationally and internationally and serving on expert committees including membership of the Scottish Government Expert

# May 8 and 9 2025 University of Guelph

Advisory Group on Population and Migration and the Scottish Government Strategic Review of Funding for Violence Against Women and Girls Services.



### **Beyond the Backroads: Issues and Challenges in Researching Rural Communities**

Dr. Claudine Bonner (she/her) is the Canada Research Chair of racial justice and African Diaspora migration in the Atlantic region and an Associate Professor in the Sociology Department at Mount Allison University. Her forthcoming publication "The Black Press: A Shadowed Canadian Tradition" is a collection of essays co-edited with Drs. Nina Reid-Maroney and Boulou Ebanda de B èri. This collection, spanning the period from the 1850s to the early twentieth century, is the first in the field to bring together original historical and Communication Studies research that position pioneering Canadian Black journalists as effective intellectual activists. Her current research explores early twentieth century African-Caribbean and Canadian migration networks.

## Presenters

Salah Alhajsaleh (University of Windsor), Mehtaab Dhillon, Ryan Palazzolo, Chelsea Ymana, Rosa Mikheil, Joshua Barrios, Rachel-Ann Dixon & Caroline Hamm.

*Understanding Moral Distress Among Healthcare Workers Treating International Agricultural Workers in Southwestern Ontario*

International Agricultural Workers (IAWs) in Southwestern Ontario face healthcare access challenges, leading to moral distress among healthcare workers (HCWs). This study aims to explore HCWs' experiences. Participants included social workers, physicians, and nurses. Barriers such as health coverage tied to work permits, transportation issues, and language barriers heightened moral distress. Emotional impacts, including guilt and helplessness, were pervasive. Ongoing analysis shows no significant differences in distress levels across HCWs. Recommendations for systemic reforms are guiding a policy paper presented to stakeholders and government officials to drive change.

Rebecca Beausaert, (University of Guelph).

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/arts/history/people/rebecca-beausaert>

*'A Terrible Bane': Race, Abortion, and a Late Nineteenth-Century Rural Community*

In 1882, an abortion trial rocked the community of Woodstock, Ontario and its surrounding rural area. A formerly enslaved midwife and healer, Letitia Munson, was accused of performing an abortion on a White hotel waitress, leading to her death. Though acquitted, Munson was maligned by local and far-reaching newspapers for her race, her medical knowledge, and her reputation for being a "terrible bane" for law enforcement officials. This paper will examine how Munson's trial and her marginalization as a Black woman was further complicated by her alleged involvement in an illegal and intimate act. While abortion trials were commonplace in smaller communities in late nineteenth-century Ontario, when a person of colour was identified as the perpetrator, considerably more attention was paid to the case and the vulnerability of the victim.

Rachel-Ann Dixon (University of Windsor), Joshua Garcia-Barrios, Rosa Mikheil, Salah Alhajsaleh, Mehtaab Dhillon, Dr. Caroline Hamm, Chelsea Ymana

*Implementation of a Medical Education Service Learning Program Centred on International Agricultural Workers (IAWs) in Southwestern Ontario*

International Agricultural Workers (IAWs) are vital to Canadian agricultural systems. Despite this, IAWs face significant barriers to healthcare and social resources due to language and cultural differences. To address these challenges, the Schulich School of Medicine launched a service learning program in Leamington, Ontario, pairing medical students with IAWs for English language conversations.

Our study will describe the program development and implementation (e.g. participant recruitment, program protocols) and explore its effectiveness, through interviews and surveys. This initiative aims to strengthen IAWs' community integration, medical community engagement with IAWs, and inform future initiatives to better support this population.

Safoorah Forde (JunCtian Community Initiatives).

<https://junctianci.com/>

*Learning in the Margins: Reflections from both sides of the desk - stories on racism, resilience, and reform.*

As a Black, Muslim woman, I know all too well what it feels like to face discrimination. As a young student, I constantly felt the pressure to prove them wrong—the invisible constraint of not being too much, too loud, too vibrant, too Black. "Make yourself small. Fit within the lines. Stay behind the desk." Now, as an educator, I witness that same struggle in the eyes of children navigating systems not built for them—the pressure of being seen as not enough, not capable, not equal.

This presentation explores my journey from a small rural town—where I stood out like a sore thumb—to returning decades later, walking the same halls with new purpose. Through personal stories and professional insights, I reflect on racism, resilience, and the need for meaningful reform. It's a call to reimagine education that truly sees, hears, and values every child.

Laila Harris (University of Guelph).

*Narratives of Life "Up North": Navigating Race, Community & Identity in Rural Ontario*

<https://www.ruralontario.org/whoweare>

This presentation will discuss my experiences navigating race, community and identity in rural Ontario. In particular, I will highlight the ways in which experiences of racism and discrimination impacted my sense of identity and belonging as a young, biracial woman growing up in the Ottawa Valley, and will also highlight the importance of advocacy and education so that rural communities are able to integrate and celebrate change and diversity. Importantly, this presentation will also assert that the realities of racialized

people in rural Ontario must also be understood as existing outside of the confines of racism & prejudice, to include lived-experiences which celebrate the natural environment, the peace of “country living,” and the beauty of rural landscapes.

Takudzwanashe Mundenga (Faces of Resilience) Tiwalola Alabi & Oluwaponmile Fapohunda

[https://www.roiconnect.ca/project/faces-of-resilience/?et\\_fb=1&PageSpeed=off](https://www.roiconnect.ca/project/faces-of-resilience/?et_fb=1&PageSpeed=off)

*Black Farmers in Ontario: Land Access, Practices and Policy*

This study examines Black farmers' systemic barriers in Ontario, focusing on land access, agricultural practices, and policy impacts. Using an intersectional framework, the research explores challenges including limited land accessibility, financial constraints, and contributions to sustainability. The qualitative survey methodology interviews Black farmers across Ontario to gather firsthand accounts of their experiences. Key areas include historical context, demographic representation, policy impacts, resource access, entry barriers, and traditional practices. The study highlights the need for targeted policies to address these barriers and promote inclusivity, providing insights for policymakers, agricultural organizations, and community leaders.

Silvia Sarapura-Escobar (University of Guelph), Charlotte Potter; Margarita Fontecha, Regan Zink and Nicole Cupolo  
[silviasarapura.com](http://silviasarapura.com)

*Invisible and precarious: A scoping review of gender-based violence in agricultural streams of Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program*

Temporary Foreign Agricultural Workers (TFAWs) are essential to Canada's agricultural sector but face complex vulnerabilities due to systemic inequalities within the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). These vulnerabilities are shaped by intersecting identities—such as gender, race, age, nationality, and socio-economic status—which influence experiences of gender-based violence (GBV) and discrimination. This study presents a scoping review of academic and grey literature on GBV affecting TFAWs in Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia. Guided by four objectives, the review explores: documented evidence of GBV, variations in experiences among diverse TFAWs, the role of policy, and available support infrastructure. From 1,273 sources, 128 were reviewed in full, with 62 meeting criteria for in-depth analysis. A Gender-Transformative Approach and Systems Thinking framework were used to examine how formal and

informal structures perpetuate inequalities and shape systems that either address or overlook GBV. The study advances conceptual and practical insights into GBV in Canada's agricultural TFWP.

Alexandra Siberry (Fanshawe College)

[www.linkedin.com/in/alexandra-siberry-phd-952b7128b](https://www.linkedin.com/in/alexandra-siberry-phd-952b7128b)

*Dismantling Whiteness in the Workplace- Towards Exploring the Professional Lives of Racialized Midwives in Rural Spaces.*

There exists an increasing emphasis on equity and justice within the profession of midwifery (AOM 2020); however, scant research has focused on the experiences of racialized midwives in Canada or in Ontario (Aseffa et al. 2023). Past scholarship has illuminated the discrimination and bullying of racialized nurses in Ontario, in the workplace (Boateng and Adams 2016). However, research on racialized midwives working in rural spaces is lacking due to an urban bias in healthcare literature (Leach & Joseph 2011; Leipert, Leach and Thurston 2012). Further complicating matters, the midwifery profession in Ontario is relatively small and disproportionately occupied by white practitioners. In 2019, 159 of a potential 990 Ontario midwives identified as BIPOC (Aseffa et al. 2023). Thus, this research focuses on the professional experiences of racialized midwives in rural locales and employs an intersectional approach that includes race, gender and rurality. Future research directions will need to consider, among other things: (a) the high prevalence of interprofessional and intraprofessional conflict in the workplace and its impact on midwives revealed in my research with midwives practicing in rural and urban communities in Ontario (Siberry 2021); (b) how the effects of colonialism and racism shape the professional lives of racialized midwives and (c) the insights and lived experiences of racialized midwives.

Rana Telfah (University of Guelph)

*The social and cultural early experiences of Syrian families in Southwestern Ontario*

My research examines the early settlement of Syrian refugee families who moved to rural, small and mid-sized towns in Southwestern Ontario since 2016. This research draws on interviews with 38 Syrian families. It uses a feminist social reproduction framework to highlight the marginalized voices of women. This paper focuses on Syrian families' experiences building relationships with local communities and the resources needed to support those relationships, including local schools, transportation, social services, language services, places of worship, Arabic schools, and cultural foods.

Lindsey Thomson (University of Guelph) & Mark Nonkes

<https://www.huroncounty.ca/economic-development/immigration-partnership/>

<http://www.cesinstitute.ca>

*Huron-Perth Immigrant Survey: Insights and Community Action*

This presentation details findings from the 2023 Immigrant Survey led by the Huron County Immigration Partnership (HCIP) and supported by the Community Engaged Scholarship Institute (CESI). The research aimed to understand key demographics of immigrant communities, the needs and priorities of newcomers, and the impacts of the collective work of HCIP partners. Findings are already being used to better inform how service providers, government, businesses, and our broader community may foster welcoming and supportive spaces in which diverse immigrant communities may thrive. We will share key findings and examples of how we are putting our learning into action.

Chelsea Ymana (University of Windsor), Kailyn St. Pierre & Caroline Hamm

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/chelseaymana/>

*Enhancing Healthcare Access for International Agricultural Workers (IAWs) Through Student-Led Clinics: A Qualitative Study*

Despite their critical contributions to Canada's farming industry, International Agricultural Workers (IAWs) are one of several vulnerable populations who encounter significant challenges to accessing healthcare. A notable advancement in healthcare delivery is the emergence of Student-Led Clinics (SLCs). SLCs are healthcare facilities run by students under the supervision of physicians. These clinics are proven to be more accessible to underserved populations, playing a critical role in reducing barriers to healthcare. To understand the challenges and facilitators to implementation, the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) was utilized to guide semi-structured interviews with directors of Canadian SLCs.

