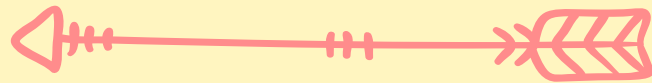




Caribbean African Canadian Social Services, better known as CAFCAN, came out of the Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA). The JCA was formed in 1962 after Jamaican independence in order to provide social services for Jamaican, Caribbean & African Canadian communities within the Greater Toronto Area. After 20+ years CAFCAN was created in order to take over all of the social services once provided by JCA in May of 2014. Since then, it has “expanded and changed its name to represent and serve a more diverse group of people of continental diasporic Africans.”

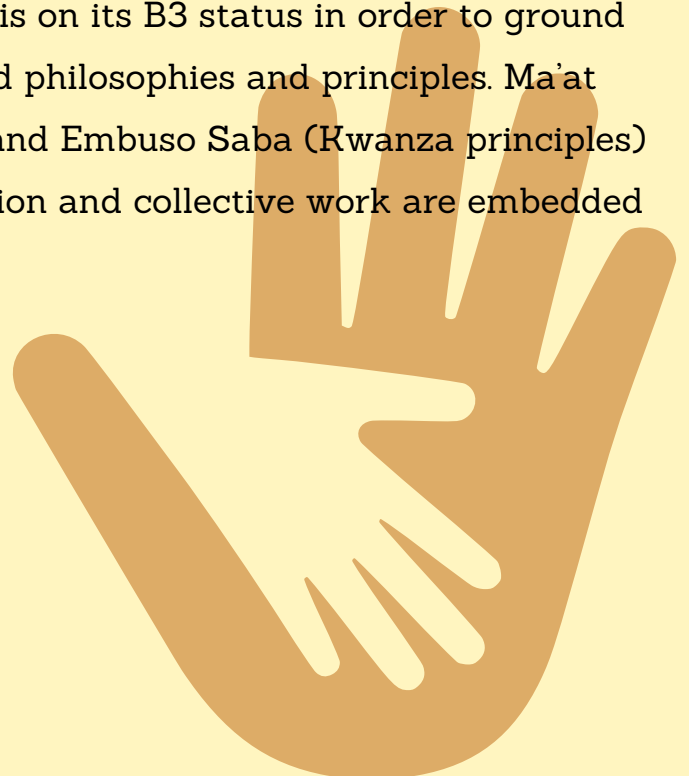




# An Organization with a Black Focus

CAFCCAN is a B3 organization; that is, it is Black led, Black serving and Black mandated, fitting into all three categories of the Black Organization Spectrum. It is an organization with Black Beneficiaries, “support[ing] causes that impact the Black community and, respond[ing] to the community’s unique cultural identities, history and needs.” As a Black-focused organization, CAFCCAN “delivers culturally responsive programming / services, [its] organization leadership table includes leaders who identify as Black and [CAFCCAN] regularly collaborates with Black-led organizations.” Finally, CAFCCAN’s governance is “mandate[d] to serve [the] Black Community, identity is at [the] center of services and all programs/services are delivered through and Anti-Black racism lens; and [there is] Black leadership at all levels.”

While CAFCCAN understands that there are people from the Caribbean and Africa who are not Black, CAFCCAN’s focus is on its B3 status in order to ground its work in Black-centered, African-centered philosophies and principles. Ma’at (truth, justice, righteousness, and balance) and Embuso Saba (Kwanza principles) like cooperative economics, self-determination and collective work are embedded in the work done by CAFCCAN.

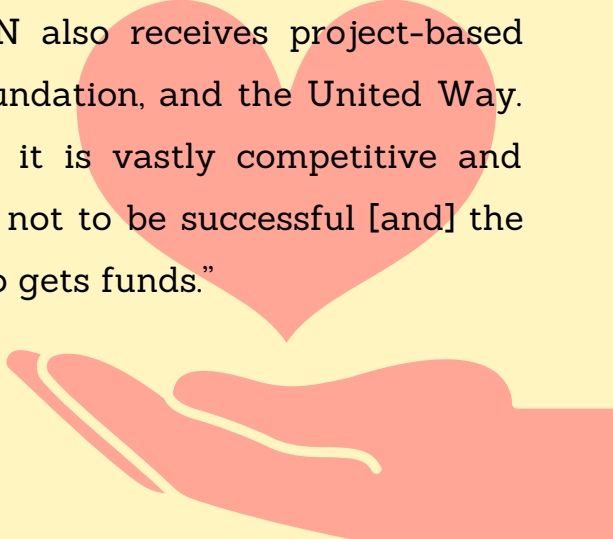


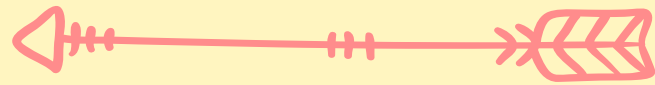


# Governance & Funding at CAFCAN

At the time of this writing, CAFCAN is in the process of strategic planning, which is under the purview of the board, who sets the strategic direction of CAFCAN. The board is elected by the membership and is responsible for fiduciary oversight and ensuring that their policies and practices are in adherence to the legislation of the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. Since 2017, CAFCAN has been very successful at securing funding, generating approximately \$3.3 million each year under the leadership of its current Executive Director. This allows for a staff of 24, which will increase with the new funding as well as a Black walk-in mental health clinic.

As a result of its relationship with JCA, CAFACAN has completed its second year of providing audited financial statements. Although it has received less donations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Way continues to be a large source of base funding for CAFCAN, having expressed a commitment to supporting Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) led organizations. CAFCAN's largest funder is the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Other funders include the Ontario Ministry of Skill, Labour and Training Development, the Ontario Ministry of Health, Catholic Children's Aid Society, and the Children's Aid Society. CAFCAN also receives project-based funding from the City of Toronto, the Toronto Foundation, and the United Way. Securing funding can be an onerous process, as it is vastly competitive and requires a great amount of reporting; "it is normal not to be successful [and] the government has an interesting way of deciding who gets funds."



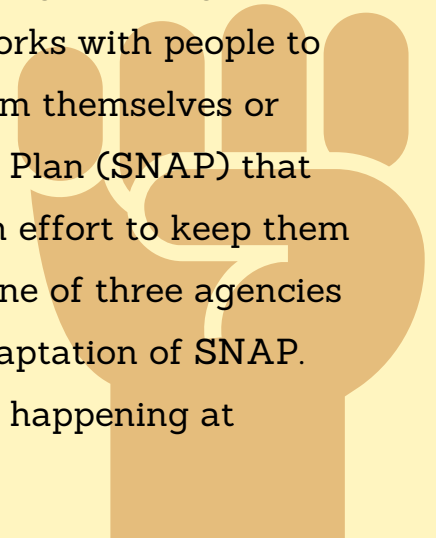


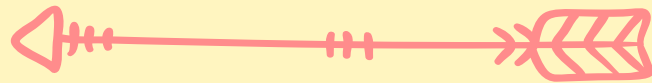
# Floydeen Charles-Fridal

Floydeen Charles-Fridal has been the Executive Director and the driving force behind CAFCAN since 2017 and the strategic plan itself is carried out, operationalized, and directed by her. Floydeen has a vision being a hub for providing client-centered social services, hoping to help the overall well-being of the Caribbean African diasporic population in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Before CAFCAN, Floydeen was a consultant in organizational development and capacity building and demonstrates the kind of passion and energy needed to be the leader of the innovative B3 organization that CAFCAN is.

## A Wide Scope of Innovation

There are many innovations happening at CAFCAN serving a wide scope of Black people in the GTA with programming in employment, mental health support, violence against women, youth mentorship, youth outreach, and youth who are transitioning to high school, ensuring academic success and completion. For example, CAFCAN recognizes that Black men are disproportionately represented among those mandated to “anger management,” offering a program in its stead called “express yourself,” which discerns that “anger management tends to be very punitive in its approach.” The program works with people to learn how to express themselves in a way that doesn’t harm themselves or others. CAFCAN also has a program called Stop Now and Plan (SNAP) that works with children to stop and plan before they act, in an effort to keep them out of the criminal justice system. In fact, CAFCAN was one of three agencies that were fast-tracked by the province to do a cultural adaptation of SNAP. These are a few of the tremendously innovative programs happening at

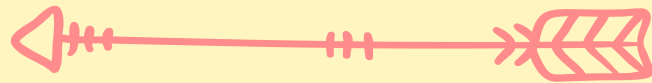




CAFCAN, which recognize the needs of Black communities and works in culturally relevant models of prevention instead of a reactionary model. They serve to exemplify the innovative work happening for and by people in the Black diaspora and help to identify and appreciate the innovations and contributions of the Black social economy to the social economy as a whole.

An initiative of CAFCAN, the Canadian Institute for people of African Descent started “Meeting of the Minds,” designed to bring together Black leaders to work as a think tank about issues impacting Black people. The group submitted a concept paper about the idea of an institute, under the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent. The group was then invited by the Federal Government to do a feasibility study which resulted in \$348,000 in additional funding. In keeping with their prevention models of programming, CAFCAN also has a small team who works with families to support them in ensuring that children stay home. Called “Conconya,” and in partnership with the Children’s Aid Society (CAS), the program’s focus is on parenting through trauma for Black women. The capital funds two workers to work with their intake in avoiding being referred to remove the child from the home. The manual for the program was designed to be from a Black perspective.





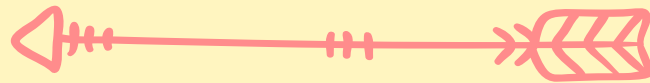
CAFCAN's innovation also comes through...

*"...this idea of serving. We don't want to be an agency where people just see Black [people] working. We also have to be where people come to understand what we mean when we say we work from a culturally safe lens or we're using various principles to guide our work. We have spent time helping the staff to develop in those areas as well as looking at healing and racial trauma."*

CAFCAN intentionally supports other black entities by buying Black, and hiring Black. They "have been very successful at mobilizing community, in terms of other agencies. "I really push the concept that when we cross the river together, the crocodiles can't eat us". Such collaboration is building capacity in other organizations and is bringing together other B3 organizations. This grounds the work of CAFCAN and emphasizes its drive to be, and position as, a thought leader in how to provide social service delivery to Black communities from a best practice perspective.

Floydeen also notes the innovation in the intentional use of the arts in mental health and wellness programming. Recognizing dance, music, rhythm, and writing as viable interventions in people's lives has kept CAFCAN alive, with buy-in from funders. Programs such as "Baking While Black" look at the things that are inherent to the cultures of Black people and acknowledge that culturally specific programming is an innovation in the provision of social services.



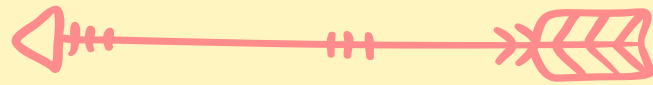


# CAFCAN'S Value: Deep & Wide

While Floydeen has received recognition as a community leader through the United Way, CAFCAN has yet to be recognized for its contributions and innovations in the Black community or the GTA in general. They did however receive recognition for their culturally palatable food hampers during the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering 125+ food hampers per week to households in need.

CAFCAN not only brings value to the GTA, but to the rest of Canada as well, through its “Meeting of the Minds” initiative already discussed. There is some recognition of the work being done by CAFCAN given that the government approached them regarding the feasibility study, asking the group to challenge some of the processes in place. CAFCAN also formed the Black reference group to look at where the funding came out for the pandemic and to advocate for the importance of dedicating funding to Black communities. As Floydeen puts it, “we are known.” Apart from her roles as Executive Director of CAFCAN and as a sitting member of “Meeting of the Minds,” Floydeen also sits on an advisory committee to Service Canada, with the intent of coming from the lens of equity and diversity.





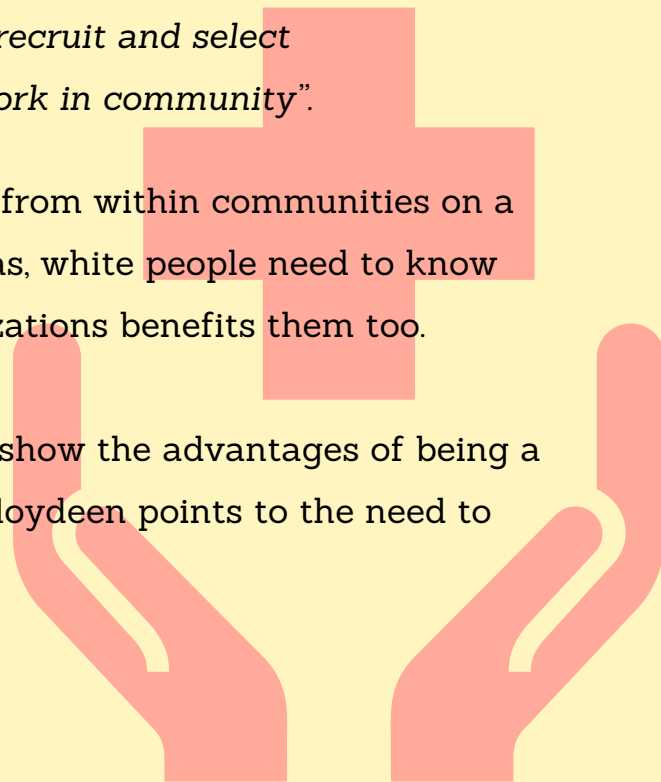
# Things can be Better

CAFCAN impacts communities and civil society by doing work that helps reduce barriers and increase awareness. They look at the social determinants of health, food and unemployment, and make culturally and socially informed decisions about programming. According to Floydeen, this work can be strengthened by the province by better funding organizations that exist to serve racialized people and immigrants:

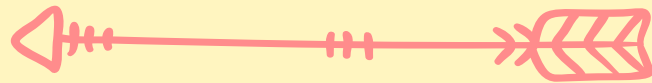
*“ We are often underfunded. Even with all the work that CAFCAN is doing, the administration is not full time. We must do more base funding and provide salaries that are competitive so people will stay, so we can do better work. All the work that we’ve done is possible because of who we are as African peoples, Black people. That’s just how we are. Staff are grossly underfunded even though we have the same qualifications. We are losing people to bigger organizations [and it is] harder to recruit and select people who will stay and do the work in community”.*

More space must be created to hire people from within communities on a permanent (not project-based) basis. As well as, white people need to know that the work of Black social economy organizations benefits them too.

In terms of research and how it can better show the advantages of being a racialized person leading work in the sector, Floydeen points to the need to look at the history of African peoples:

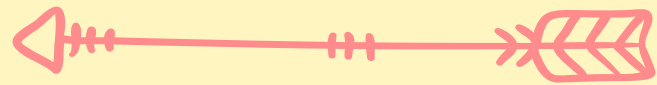






*“We have been leaders since time immemorial. So why are people surprised at our excellence in leadership? Americans got their military tactics from the continental African practices– they got their shields from the Zulu. Why are people surprised at our leadership when it was the Africans who took Spain out of the dark ages? I think our history is the foundation that is the consistent thread that shows our leadership in terms of finance, business, [and] gender issues. To do that justice, we must use the principles and look into historically, the way we manage resources; looking at Susus. Not-for-profits need to start their own, so that if we end up in a crisis, we have resources to support our clients. The evidence is there. The work that has come out of the Association of Black Psychiatrists and the Black Social Workers and the National Black Child Development Institutes. It should not be a surprise. It’s a surprise because of how people view us [and] because of how we view ourselves – internalized racism.”*

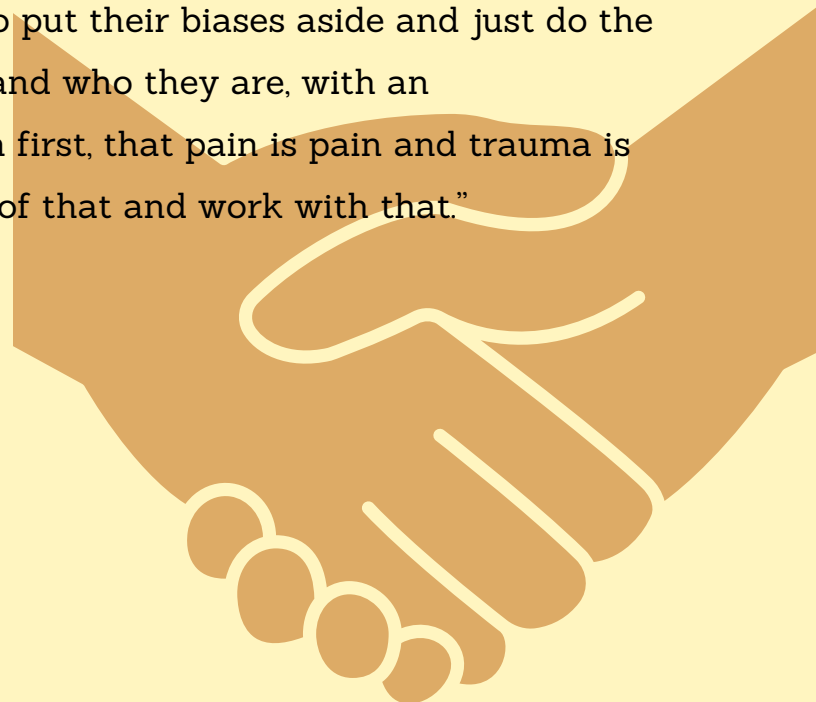


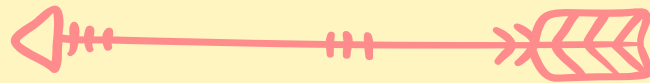


# The Power & Perils of being Black

As a leader and a Black identifying person, Floydeen's identity allows her to "name racism straight up; anti-Black racism." For Floydeen, it's not just about being a person of colour, it is also easier to do advocacy in a way that may be uncomfortable for people to hear, when you are leading an organization, whose mandate is to serve the Black diasporic community. As a Black leader in the social economy sector, Floydeen feels a responsibility to name racist viewpoints as well as create an understanding around the power in being Black and how to use it to get the outcomes being sought by CAFCAN.

There is still work to be done in terms of bias in the sector. Floydeen gives the example of diversity in the community and uses gender identity as an illustration; "Homophobia," she contends "is a real thing in the Black community." Floydeen works with the staff on their own biases and minces no words about the need for people to put their biases aside and just do the work. CAFCAN starts with a person and who they are, with an understanding that people are human first, that pain is pain and trauma is trauma: "Our job is to get to the core of that and work with that."





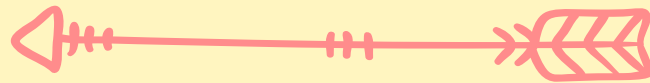
# Conclusion

CAFCAN is an innovation leader not only in the Black Social economy, but in the social economy as a whole. Its work and programming within the African and Caribbean diaspora serves as a reminder of the innovation taking place in Black-led social economy organizations and the importance they hold in the social economy sector. Black-led and B3 organizations need to continue to be profiled to continue to shed light on the work being done in the Black Social Economy. It is important work that makes change through solidarity practices that politicize and racialize the social economy and call on community and collaboration between organizations to make lasting change in the sector. CAFCAN's collaborative and culturally relevant approach to social services, benefits not only the African and Caribbean Black Diaspora, but all people.

More information on CAFCAN can be found here: <https://cafcan.org/>

This case study was led by Professor Caroline Shenaz Hossein of the University of Toronto Scarborough with generous funding by the Province of Ontario through the Ontario Early Researcher Award. These research assistants deserve credit: Megan Pearson, Semhar Berhe, Arushi Dahiya, Jamar Grandison, Reena Shadaan, Ola Osman, and Ranbir Singh Mangat. Completed 2022.





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