



Edmonton Folk Music Festival Society
The Don Snider "Go Wildly Forward"
Scholarship Committee Report
Submitted by Alex Draper
Annual General Meeting: April 26, 2020

April 21, 2020

2019 was the sixth year of the Don Snider "Go Wildly Forward" Scholarship. The committee considered eight complete applications. No conflicts of interest were declared. Six applications were not recommended for awards.

Zahro Hassan was awarded two years of funding, with payments of \$5,000 scheduled in the autumns of 2019 and 2020. Some details about Zahro:

- *"Zahro Hassan is an activist, a community worker and a researcher. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. Zahro's research involves understanding the barriers youth adult refugees face in accessing postsecondary education in Canada. She has an extensive community and youth development experience within the multi-racial and multi-cultural immigrant communities of Toronto, Ottawa and Edmonton. Zahro is passionate about education and literacy. She is the founder of Buugaag, a charitable organization that helps schools in Somalia establish school libraries through the shipment of children's reading books. Zahro is trilingual; speaking English, Somali and Arabic. She is a big fan of the Edmonton Folk Music Festival and has been a volunteer since her first year in Edmonton in 2014."*
- Regarding their studies: *"Refugees struggle to find employment and pathways to postsecondary education. In Canada, "relatively little is known about refugees' entry into Canada's higher education system" (Ferede, 2010, p.79), particularly young adult refugees (YAR). For those YAR with postsecondary education, a common barrier they face is the lack of recognition of their education and work experiences (Lamba, 2003). This process of deskilling and devaluing the experiences of refugees and other immigrants creates a racialized hierarchy of education and skill recognition (Guo, 2015). One of the ways the process of racialized skill is conducted is through the credential system that evaluates and categorizes newcomers based on factors such as accredited education, Canadian experience, Canadian values, and the right accents, amongst other factors, thus devaluing what newcomers, particularly refugees, have to offer. In Canada, the recognition rate for education and employment for refugees is less than 15%, the lowest amongst any immigrant class (Houle & Yssaad, 2010). Furthermore, a "refugee's capital power is significantly dependent upon a range of additional factors, such as gender, age, region of origin, length of residence in Canada, foreign credential recognition, and/or experiences of discrimination" (Lamba, 2003, p. 46). This research project seeks to go beyond credentialism and looks at barriers YAR face in accessing postsecondary education.*

The following research question guides the study; what pathways to postsecondary education are available to young adult refugees in Canada and how do they make meaning of their current situation in relation to the barriers they encounter? The research project will focus on the experiences of YAR between the ages of 20-30 from two countries that experienced mass population displacement due to civil war, Syria and Somalia. This research hopes to expand the existing body of the literature by shedding light on the challenges and barriers YAR experience. My hope is that by documenting their experiences and struggles, we may be better able to inform policy solutions at government and institutional levels."

In 2019 funds were again available to provide a second award. Samuel Geisterfer was selected for a \$2,000 one-time award. Some details about Samuel:

- *“Samuel is an avid learner, taking in teachings from the books he studies, the people he surrounds himself with and the environments around him. He has been involved in grassroots international development work in Edmonton through Sombrilla International Development Society, worked with student organizations ranging from political engagement to advocating for trauma-informed approaches to university responses to sexual violence. He is always looking for book recommendations and can be found rock climbing wherever he goes, whether in a gym or the mountains.”*
- Regarding their studies: *“Samuel is currently a student in the JD/JID law program at the University of Victoria. This program is the first of its kind in the world, offering students legal training in Canadian common law and Indigenous Legal Orders concurrently. This program is seen as a direct response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 27 and 28 and has seen international interest from scholars and communities looking to articulate the laws of their peoples and lands. The program is led by scholars Dr. Val Napoleon and Dr. John Borrows.”*

In 2018 the committee recommended to defer the second payment of Cheyenne Shubert’s 2017 award (a two year award with payments in 2017 and 2018) until 2019. In spring 2019 we received word that Cheyenne would not be returning to school, therefore that award commitment was ended.

A recap of the Don Snider “Go Wildly Forward” Scholarship Committee adjudication process is as follows:

- Copies of all the applications are provided to each Committee member and the Edmonton Folk Music Festival Manager of Volunteers through the online portal.
- The Manager of Volunteers looks over the list of applicants and flags any concerns regarding a volunteer’s status for the Committee to discuss.
- Any conflicts of interest are declared and the Committee member abstains from participating in any conversations or providing any recommendations regarding that applicant.
- Each Committee member provides an initial recommendation of “Yes,” “No,” or “Maybe” for each applicant.
- The recommendations are compiled and the applicants are organized into tranches based on the number of “Yes” votes they have received. This process allows the Committee to focus its discussion in the adjudication meeting on the few applications that received mostly “Yes” votes.
- A discussion at the Committee meeting determines the final recipient(s).

This process was followed to the satisfaction of the Committee in 2019 and is the plan for the 2020 adjudication. Following the success of online applications in 2018, that process continued in 2019, and is expected to continue going forward. Based on recommendations from the committee, and to reduce the unnecessary collection of applicants’ information, the financial information collected through the application will be reduced for 2020.

The award’s online launch page can be found here: <https://ecf.getopenfield.com/efmf-snider/>

In 2019 the committee consisted of:

- Alex Draper (Committee Chair)
- Laurel Allison (Snider Family Representative)
- Gerrit Bjalek (Board Representative)
- Al Burant
- Marigold Kinley
- Katherine Goertz Thompson
- Linda Brenneman-Snider

Marianne Stover served as a resource to the committee.

In 2020 the panel anticipates selecting one recipient to receive a two-year award of \$5,000 annually, and a one-time \$2,000 award. The application deadline for the Scholarship will be April 30, 2020. The Committee will meet shortly afterward to determine a recipient.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alex Draper', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alex Draper
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