

SCSC FELLOWS IN SOLIDARITY

FINDING JUSTICE.

A zine created by the 2020 Social Connectedness Fellows on the intersections of the Black Lives Matter movement, amplifying BIPOC voices, and making positive change.

ACTIVIST
COMMUNITY

WHAT IS THIS ZINE?

As each Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness (SCSC) Fellow focused on their research in the Summer of 2020, it was impossible to ignore the powerful wave of worldwide rallies happening both online and in the streets in support of Black Lives Matter.

We felt compelled to not turn away from the global phenomenon in response to the unjust killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, and many others. Instead, we wanted to come together, to position ourselves within this pivotal global movement (the largest in U.S. history), and to utilize our platform as Social Connectedness Fellows in solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

Although each of us come from different places – geographically, culturally, socially, and ancestrally – together we forged an online alliance, **Fellows in Solidarity**, to discuss how we can commit ourselves to the movement. This zine is part of our commitment to hold each other accountable. As recent graduates, current students, and researchers, we wish to utilize this platform to raise awareness about equity, allyship, and social and racial justice. We would also like to thank former Fellows who contributed as well.

2020 FELLOWS



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"I can't breathe" **Race & Environment**

By: Hannah Melville-Rea, 2020 Social Connectedness Fellow

Organizations

Environmental justice is a matter of race. Today, black and non-white neighbourhoods have systematically higher exposure to air pollution, fracking waste, urban heat, and other environmental hazards. The term, "I can't breathe" that mobilized Black Lives Matter protests simultaneously captures the wider environmental inequalities that affect black communities.

Intersectional environmentalism

advocates for the protection of people and the planet. It seeks to bring diverse voices to the table and social justice to the forefront.

The following resources can act as an introduction to these ideas.



- Intersectional Environmentalist
- Indigenous Climate Action (Canada)

People

- Leah Thomas (@greengirleah)
- Isaias Hernandez (@queerbrownvegan)
- Latricea Adams (@bbw_oshun)
- Mikaela Loach (@mikaelaloach)



Books

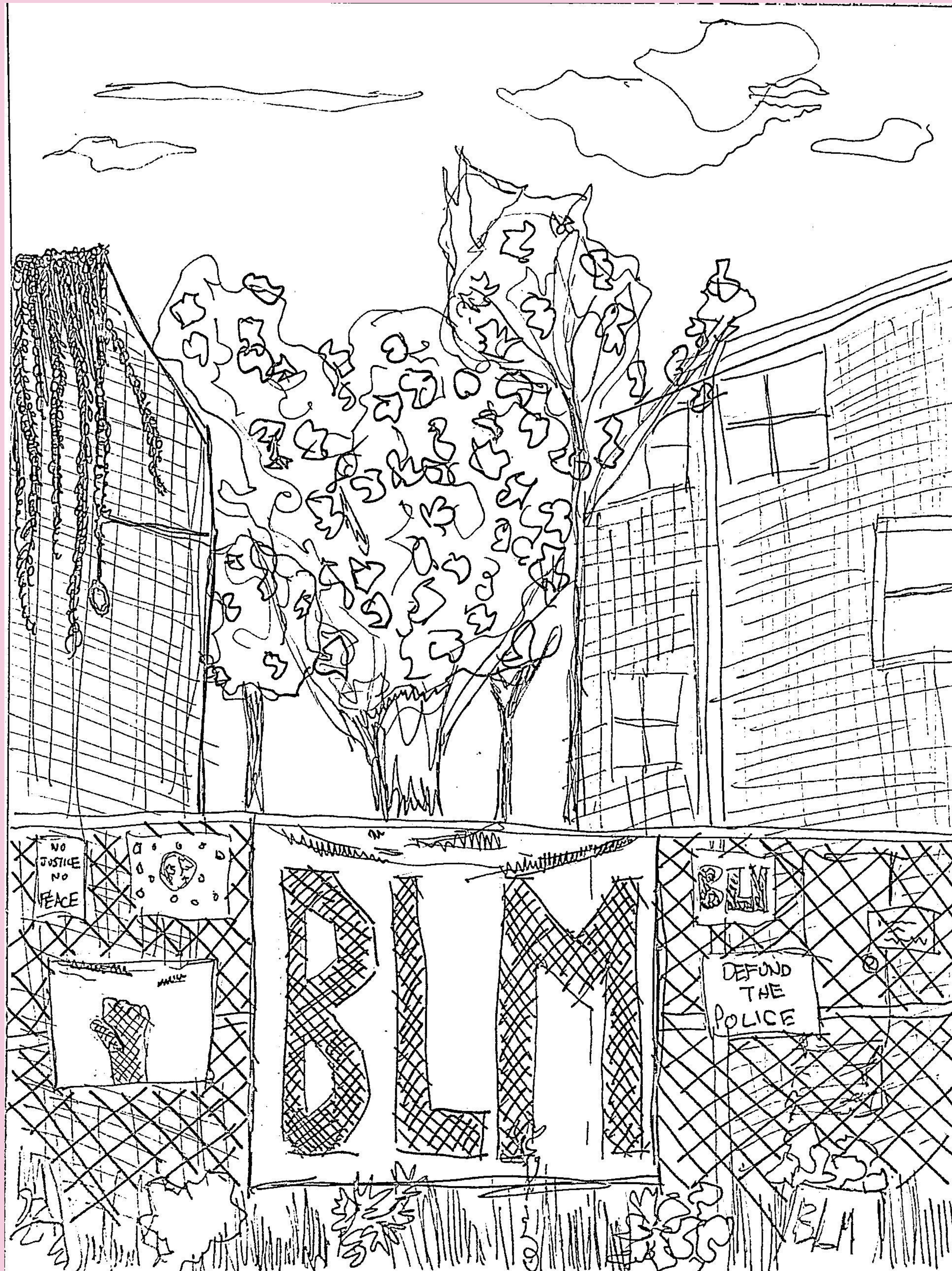
1. *All We Can Save* by A. Johnson and K. Wilkinson
2. *A Terrible Thing To Waste* by H. A. Washington
3. *Toxic Communities* by D. Taylor
4. *Black Nature* by C. T. Dungy



GOTTINGEN STREET

By Sarah Roberts, 2020 Social Connectedness Fellow

Its hard to write about Gottingen street without extrapolating on hundreds of years of Black history in Nova Scotia, Canada. The street, located in the north end of Halifax and settled on Mi'kma'ki land in the 1700's, transitioned from a military ground to a cosmopolitan hot spot, to a place of gentrification. The street has had a diverse range of occupants, most recently being an influx of refugees from the Syrian Refugee Crisis. That being said, the impact of the Black community on Gottingen has remained constant for many years. During its cosmopolitan era, Gottingen was known as a place where Black people and white people shared the bounty of the street. In the 60's, there was an increase in Black people settling around Gottingen after the Nova Scotian government unjustly dismantled a Black community known as Africville and Gottingen was identified as a place to build low income housing units. When the province built bridges across the Halifax harbour, traffic into the city was no longer directed down Gottingen street, isolating many.



Drawing of a photo of the signs recently placed on Gottingen in 2020 by the author

This resulted in a rapid decline of residents and became a reminder of the province's continued neglect of Gottingen Street and those who lived around it. By the 1970's, the street became a collection of low income housing, rooms for rent and social services. There was a distinct decline in commercial spaces as banks vacated, theatres shut and the grocery store left. With these changes, and persistent stigma and racism against those in the area, Gottingen was perceived as dangerous and was often seen by white people as "the ghetto". With essential stores non existent and social services increasing, Gottingen remained neglected by the province throughout the 90's as willing investors were nowhere to be found. But in the past 20 years, Gottingen has seen new changes, as young students, members of the LGBTQ+ community and artists found their place amongst the lower rent buildings on the street.



Drawing of a 1960 photo of Gottingen by the author



Original photo of the drawing. Source:
<https://www.thecoast.ca/halifax/the-black-lives-matter-sign-on-gottingen-street-is-a-form-of-resistance/Content?oid=24782599>

This initial wave of gentrification spurred another, as established professionals started buying older homes in the area. This in turn, drove up the prices of housing, so much so that lower income tenants, mostly Black, are being pushed out of the community that they have remained in for so many years. Nova Scotia has a long history of relocating Black people and although not blatantly obvious to the onlooker, the gentrification of Gottingen street serves as another example of modern day relocation as the developers move in and Black people are forced to move out. The residents of Gottingen do not remain unaware of this. Organizations like Gamechangers 902, the North End Business Association and events like Taking BLK Gottingen continue to counteract racial inequalities and support the needs of Black people in the area. It is not time to be naïve about this phenomenon and it is important not only for the residents of the area, but everyone to be cognizant of the changes that are happening in the community. It's time for leaders and decision makers to prioritize the needs of those within Nova Scotia's Black communities to ensure that they are not once again removed from the places they have established and call home.

RESOURCES



Original photo of the drawing. Source: unknown

MAIN SOURCE:

- [Roth and Grant](#) "Growth, Decline and Gentrification of Gottingen Street"

ARTICLES:

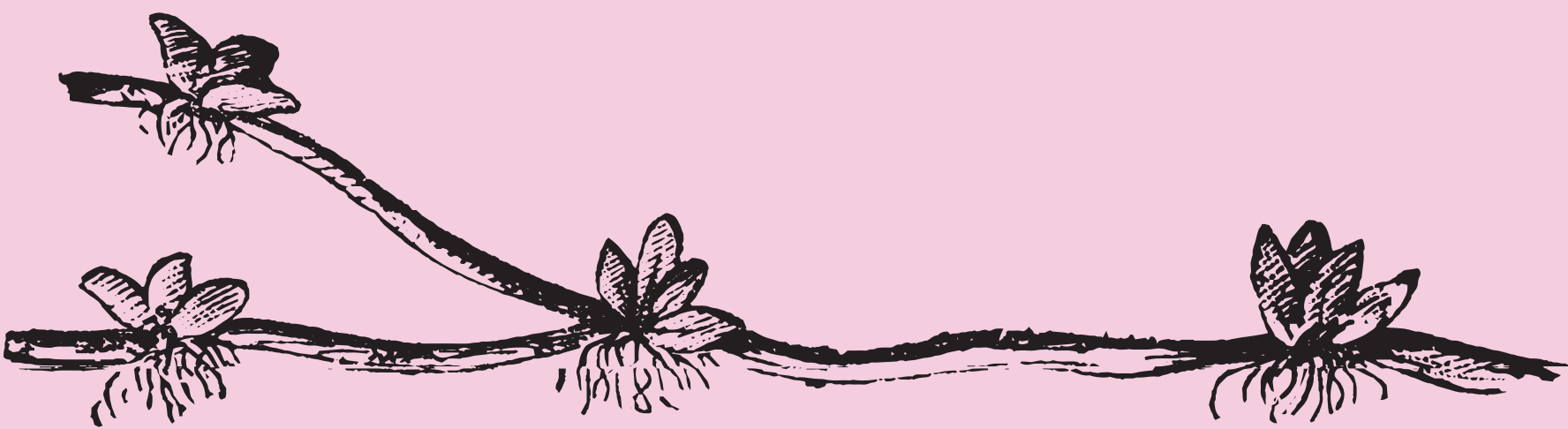
- [Jackie Barkley](#) "Racism and Gentrification"
- [CBC News](#) "Call it what it is"
- [Robert Devet](#) "Ted Rutland"

OTHER:

- [Walking Gottingen: An Immersive Storytelling Experience](#)
- [Podcast: My Blackness, My Truth](#)
- [Counteracting Racial Inequalities in NS: Gamechangers 902](#)
- [Black Cultural Centre of NS](#)

Small Acts of Solidarity

Written by: Priya Nair, 2019 Social Connectedness Fellow

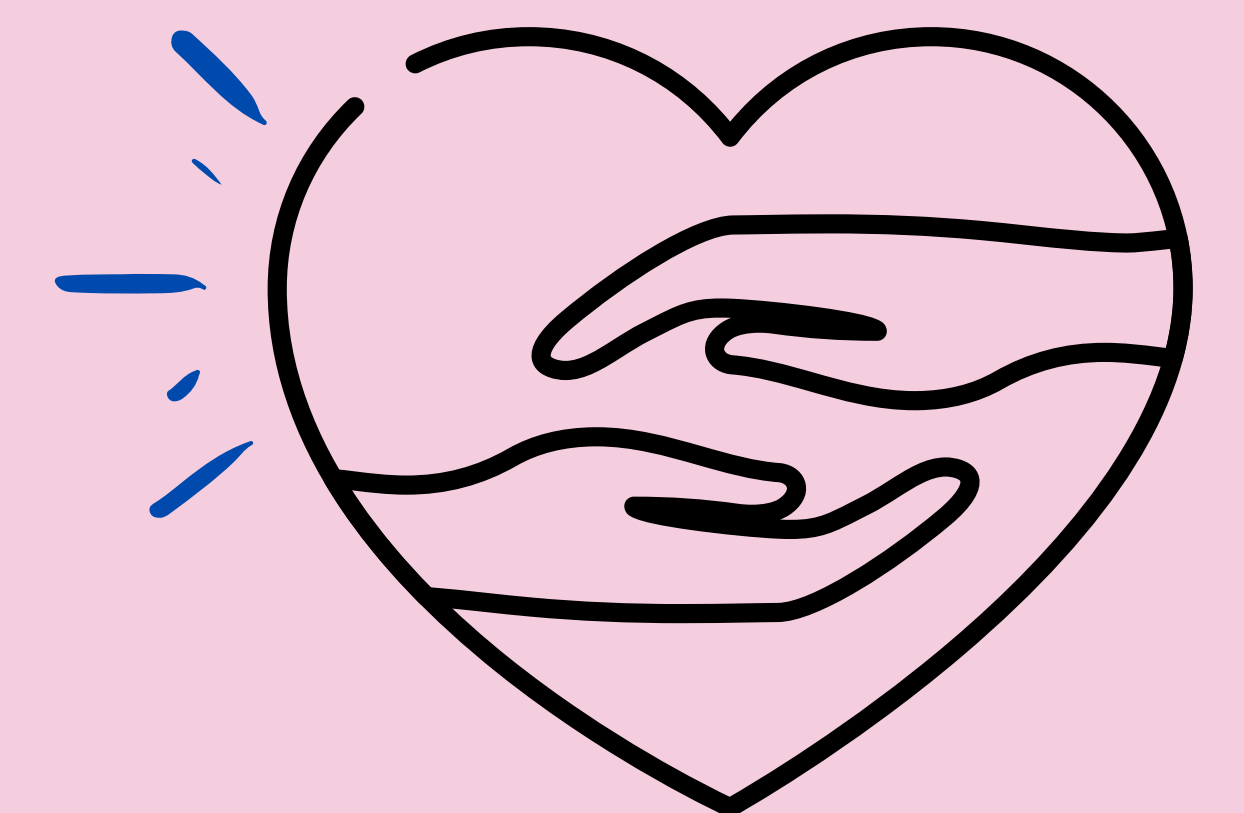


During my Fellowship I had the chance to hear the stories that never make it to mainstream media. The extraordinary tales of the ordinary facets of refugees' lives before they were forced to flee – the friends they had, the schools they went to, the streets they explored, the jobs they held. These humane mundanities spoke volumes about our shared sense of connection to people, places, and memories, regardless of where we may be from or where we may be going.

When describing arriving in Canada, I remember one woman from Zimbabwe telling me, "The fears that had me paralyzed were made a little easier, ironically, by the officers at the border, who were very welcoming. Of course, they had to do their jobs and be forceful how they had to be forceful, but at the same time, there was still a human touch that they offered, which made the landing a little bit softer."

We often overlook the importance of the small gestures and acts – a smile, a greeting, a word of comfort – that convey solidarity, that create spaces where people feel as though they can belong.

In the past year, we have witnessed racial violence, polarizing rhetoric, and inequities laid bare as the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted marginalized communities. These events have re-emphasized the importance of recognizing the common threads that bind us and acting in solidarity to bridge divides. We are facing systemic injustices that require long-term institutional change. On a more day-to-day basis, however, it is important to remember that each of us can take action to foster change. Each one of us have the capacity to offer that human touch that can make someone's landing just a little bit softer.



Building solidarity

Written by: Mayumi Sato, 2020 Social Connectedness Fellow



The summer of 2020 was a period full of paradoxes. On one hand, it marked a time wherein governments globally closed their borders and ordered support bubbles to isolate. On the other hand, it marked a time wherein global solidarities around social justice seemed stronger than ever. While COVID-19 offered an opportunity to interrogate our life priorities and the importance of community on an individual level, the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless other Black, Brown, and Indigenous people, brought us back to the wider realities of structural inequities and the disposability of racialized life under State violence and white supremacy.



A digital library for social justice.

A space for learning and knowledge sharing

Enter



**THE
SOLIDARITY
LIBRARY**

My participation as an SCSC Fellow allowed me to link the connections between social justice and social connectedness. Inspired by the the teachings and writings of the Fellowship Cohort, Kim, Celine, Priya, and Vino, I decided to apply the principle of social connectedness to create an organization of my own called [The Solidarity Library \(TSL\)](#), to address issues around knowledge production, educational access, and social injustice.

This organization seeks to address the 'digital-divide' that prevents people of colour from accessing knowledge and producing narratives in the public sphere, and to re-shape our understanding of society from marginalized epistemologies.

To date, TSL has distributed hundreds of COVID-19 solidarity study kits, with essential school materials, to low-income communities of colour across the UK, US, and Canada. We have launched a mentorship program to assist under-resourced students to apply to post-secondary universities, and are developing mini-documentaries of stories told by marginalized folks to raise new narratives around justice to the fore.

It is interesting how fleeting discussions around social justice in our Fellowship can spur on long-term commitments. For most people in positions of power, it is possible to live one's life unaware and unconcerned over the suffering of others. It is important for all of us to introspectively examine the ways in which we can be excluded ourselves, but also how we may be reaching higher mobility at other people's expense. I hope to use this opportunity to keep learning and re-learning how I can become a better ally in and contributor to, the movement for justice.



One of the most valuable lessons I learned during my summer of research with Human Rights Watch was the importance of knowing how to allow your priorities to shift in response to unforeseen developments whilst still honouring the initial goal of the project.

allyship, research, & advocacy.

*WRITTEN BY: VINO LANDRY, SCSC RESEARCHER AND
2018 SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS FELLOW*

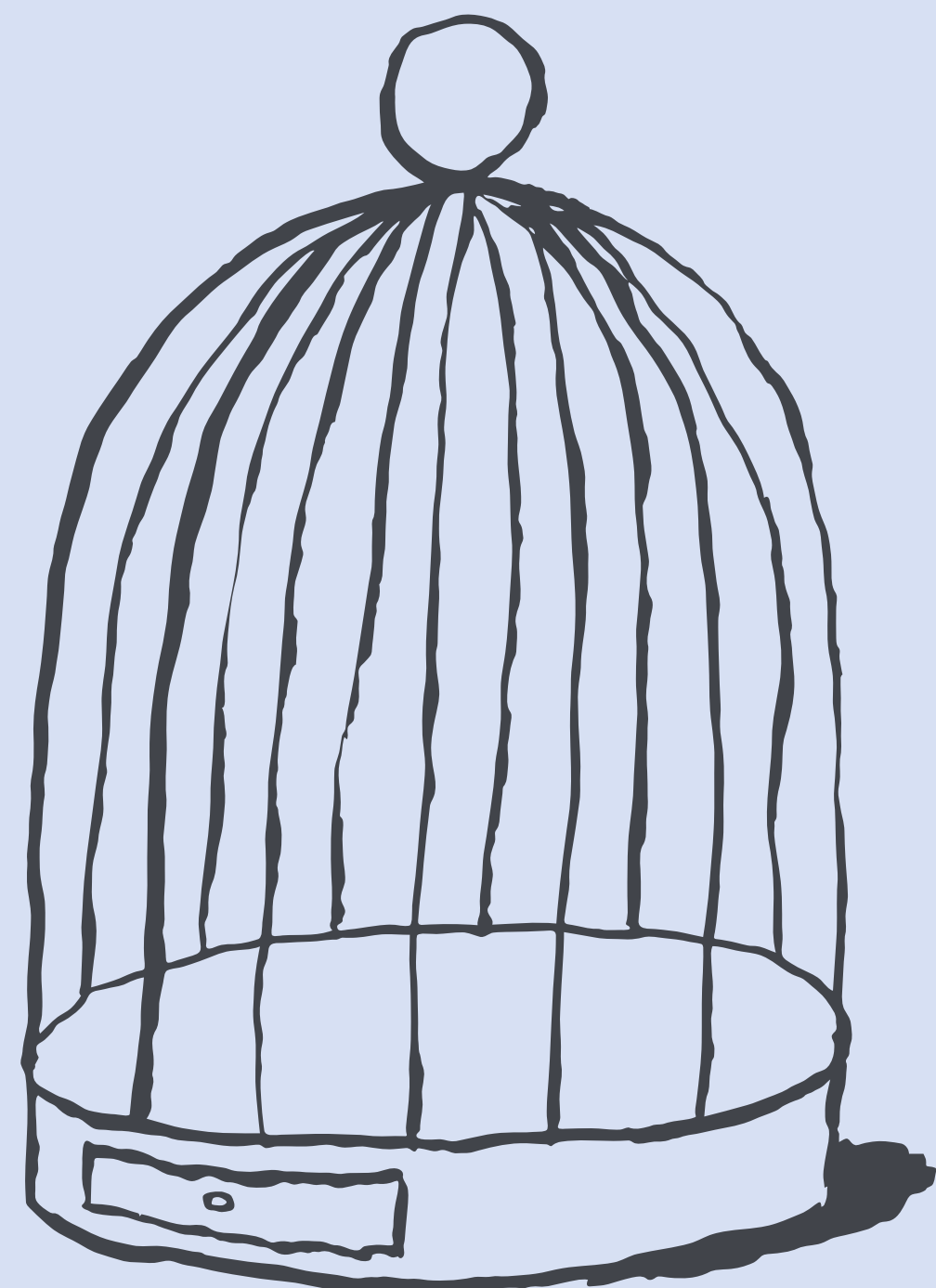
I had been prepared to research alternatives to migrant detention, but when summer of 2020 introduced us to a powerful grassroots movement that was long overdue, HRW reimagined the objectives to reflect and amplify the message of the Black Lives Matter movement. Instead of merely looking at global examples of alternatives to detention, the project introduced a new angle to examine the role of structural racism in detention decisions.



It is important to be conscious of the difference between simply stating our allyship and actually acting in solidarity by letting those values inform our work and drive demonstrable change within the community.



By analyzing the relationship between detainees' countries of origin and detention durations processed by the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), the racial biases that shape the perception and criminalization of migrants are made starkly evident.



Structural racism is engrained in our institutions, where they serve to perpetuate inequalities and marginalize entire communities. The work of undoing these harms rests with each one of us.

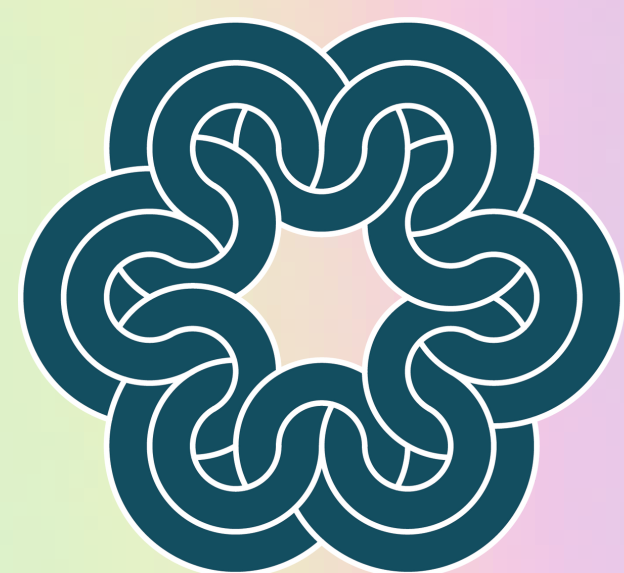
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GET IN TOUCH.

Email: scfellowship@scscglobal.org

Website: <https://www.socialconnectedness.org/fellowship-program/>

Instagram: [@asconnectedness](https://www.instagram.com/asconnectedness)



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