



Youth Association for Academics, Athletics and Character Education (YAAACE)

45 Norfinch Dr, North York, ON M3N 1W8

Year 2 Practicum

September 2024 – April 2025

Practicum Description

[Youth Association for Academics, Athletics, and Character Education](#) (YAAACE) is a Black-led, Black-focused, and Black-serving organization, operating in the Jane and Finch community since 2007, providing culturally reflective programs and services to mitigate the opportunity gap for racialized and under-resourced communities. YAAACE serves 1000+ families and clients annually in a range of programs related to academics, athletics, expanded opportunities, employment, and violence prevention and intervention. YAAACE has extensive experience working with multiple partners, stakeholders, and all three levels of government to deliver programs and services, as well as engage in data-driven knowledge mobilization and publications. YAAACE staff include 21 full-time members as well as other part-time practitioners and coaches.

Vision: Thriving communities free from systemic barriers and inequities.

Mission: YAAACE uses strength-based approaches to advocate for and create safer communities through programs and services that are accessible and culturally reflective.

Core Values: Awareness, Advocacy, Accountability, Action, and Access

Key Issues YAAACE is Addressing:

- Challenging stereotypes and biased narratives about Black families and communities.
- Addressing the risk factors that contribute to the school to prison pipeline
- Advocating for innovative solutions to address the roots of violence.
- Creating and promoting best practices to ensure institutional accountability and transparency in the social service sector.

YAAACE is committed to dismantling systemic barriers and nurturing equitable opportunities for all. Positioned at the forefront of Black-led organizations, YAAACE embodies its vision of flourishing communities liberated from the grip of inequity through culturally reflective practices and inclusive initiatives. Engaging in practicum activities at YAAACE offers students a multifaceted experience, encompassing diverse roles and responsibilities aimed at fostering professional growth and community impact. Students have the opportunity to shadow social workers, gaining firsthand insights into client interactions and the intricacies of providing support to individuals in need. Moreover, they shadow key personnel such as the Founding and Executive Director and case workers, actively participating in programs like "[TO Wards Peace](#)" and "[New Narrative](#)" aimed at violence prevention and intervention, particularly supporting justice-involved youth and adults. In addition to direct involvement with clients, students engage in research and literature reviews, delving into topics surrounding firearm-related homicides, injuries, and serious violence, with a focus on understanding their disproportionate impact on Black and under-resourced communities. This research not only enriches their understanding of systemic challenges but also informs YAAACE's advocacy efforts and program development initiatives as part of its [Centre for Community Safety and Roots of Violence](#).

Further, students partake in community outreach activities and community-asset mapping, particularly in the Jane and Finch community. Through these endeavors, they actively engage with community members, identify existing resources, and assess community needs, contributing to the development of tailored programs and services that address the unique challenges faced by residents.

Under the mentorship of seasoned professionals deeply rooted in YAAACE's core values, students emerge from the practicum experience equipped with a holistic understanding of social work practices, a commitment to advocacy, and a profound appreciation for the transformative power of community-driven initiatives. Their contributions not only advance YAAACE's mission but also empower them to become catalysts for change within their own communities, embodying the spirit of equity, diversity, and social justice.

Learn more by watching this 2-minute video which provides an overview of YAAACE:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oGUOQBRMQ4>

Practicum Requirements.

- Police Reference/Vulnerable Sector Check
- Comfort working with the population being served
- Comprehensive report writing and documentation
- Lived experience/Current member of the community being served
- Evening attendance (sometimes)
- Weekend attendance (sometimes)

Fields(s) of this Practicum:

- Children and their Families
- Social Justice and Diversity
- Mental Health and Health
- Human Services Management & Leadership

Does your practicum require any previous experience? If yes, please specify.

Yes, experiencing supporting Black or other equity-deserving groups. We prefer students from equity-deserving groups.

Please indicate whether this practicum will be in-person, remote or hybrid.

Mainly in-person with some days being remote or hybrid.

Please indicate whether this practicum will involve direct work or a mix of direct and indirect.

Mix of direct and indirect.

Field Instructors: Sally Abudiab MSW, Greg Leslie BSW & Augustine Obeng MSW

Accessibility Considerations:

- Will the student have access to a private space for notes or computer use? Yes
But not the case everyday.

- Are there breaks between clients/patients/meetings? Yes
- Is the practicum considered fast-paced? Medium
- Is there a high noise level in the practicum? Medium
- Is the site wheelchair accessible? Yes
- What are the physical demands of the practicum?

The social and emotional labour of doing advocacy and activism work from a social justice lens. Also, some days are jam packed with programming and supporting clients where others are not. You must be adaptable to change and varying experiences. It would be expected to come out of your comfort zone and you are willing to show initiative, yet us supporting you every step of the way to grow in new ways and support client and community needs.

- Are there any other accessibility considerations that potential applicants with disabilities should be aware of?

No.

Students registered with University of Toronto Accessibility Services may receive appropriate accommodations for practicum settings. To register: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departments/accessibility-services/> or call 416-978-8060

If you are interested in this practicum, please send a cover letter (1 page max.) and resume to miri.ben.dat@utoronto.ca by March 14, 2024. Applications will be forwarded on to the site.