

# NIA Summit Workshops

## **IMANI: Protest Poetry** - *It takes faith to write authentic poetry*

**(Note: This is the only workshop that will be livestreamed)**

### **FACILITATED BY DAMINI AWOYIGA & IBRAHIM YAFFA**

Welcome to IMANI: Protest Poetry! In our transformative workshop, we aim to inspire discussions on authentic and impactful poetry. Our focus is on empowering youth to use spoken word poetry as a tool to advocate for positive change. Poetry is an overlooked strength, one that does not see color or gender and allows the writer to express themselves in ways unlike any other. In our workshop, we will provide a safe space to channel thoughts into powerful verses. We hope that the Nia youth will learn the importance of poetry, techniques of articulation, challenge injustice and shed light on pressing issues in the form of protest poetry.

### **ABOUT THE FACILITATORS:**

#### **DAMINI AWOYIGA**

Damini Awoyiga is a 16-year-old high school student. She is an activist, spoken word poet and Halifax's Youth Poet Laureate. Damini is the founder of Damini Creatives and the Afro-Indigenous Book Club, a book club created to encourage young people to read books written by Black and Indigenous authors and to share the realities and experiences of Black and Indigenous Canadians. Damini was the Junior Artist in Residence for Wellness Within, a community organization working for reproductive justice, prison abolition and health equity; CBC's artist-in-residence for the Michaelle Jean Foundation's Canadian Black Summit held in July 2022, where she hosted an interactive community poetry booth; and a youth freelance journalist for CBC's Mainstreet. Damini has received multiple awards including the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. As a spoken word poet for over five years, Damini loves to write, sing, and perform poems that bring attention to social justice issues - <https://www.daminicreatives.com/>

#### **IBRAHIM YAFFA**

Ibrahim Yaffa is a 17-year-old Sierra Leonean, born and raised in Halifax NS. While in high school Ibrahim accomplished many things. As Student Council president of his senior year, he organized events such as clothing and food drives, fundraising galas, and more. However the business did not take away from his studies as he graduated as valedictorian of his class. Ibrahim has been volunteering from a young age, first with the Sierra Leone Canadian Association (SLECA) as they raised money to combat Ebola, and later on with organizations such as Islamic Relief and Somali relief. Helping organize and coordinate a multitude of events to raise money for wells, food, and clothing for those in need around the world.

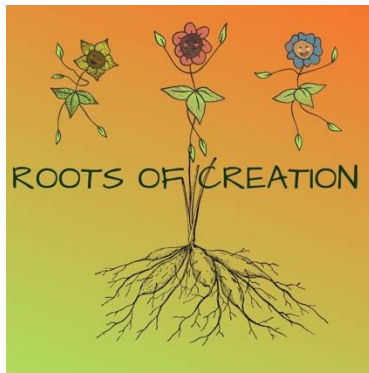
As a poet the first piece he performed was at the tender age of 11, which sparked a love for language and writing in him. Since then, Ibrahim has continued to write and perform at weddings, galas, festivals and many more. Through his spoken word Ibrahim wishes to convey meaningful messages, expressing emotion and bringing light to issues involving the Black community and society as a whole.

# Joy Through Movement

## FACILITATED BY ROOTS OF CREATION

Joy through movement is a workshop that looks at how we as Black folk can turn our thoughts and feelings into movement and how we can find joy through using our voices that way. We will take you through a variety of dance exercises and dance creations allowing participants to find joy through moving and being in community!

### ABOUT THE FACILITATORS:



Roots of creation is an emerging collective currently made up of Black Nova Scotian artists and educators; we strive to provide Black and other BIPOC youth with alternative ways of learning about self and community through accessible arts training and experiences. The collective was founded in spring of 2022 and currently has three core founding members: Riel Reddick-Stevens (theatre artist and educator), Alondrea Johnston (arts organizer, community activist) and Brianna Willis (Educator, Student Researcher). The collective also has rotating collective members, who work with us once and a while to facilitate; this workshop will be facilitated by local artist Kiana Josette: African-Nova Scotian actor, discovered a passion for performing at a young age. Kiana spent most of her summers traveling with a dance troupe, and her winters singing in a choir. Community, art, and compassion have always been the most important things to Kiana, and it shows through the work she does, her engagement and participation in various boards, and by advocating for other disabled, neurodivergent, BIPOC artists and young adults like herself. Starting in social media and marketing with small theatres after finishing her education at NSCC, Kiana has now stepped into the world of administration and producing with Halifax Theatre for Young People, while still continuing to help local theatres with marketing and communications.

# Statements of Identity

## FACILITATED BY IMOVE

*Statements of Identity* explores the power of how individual sources of empowerment can impact society. Change begins at “home”. The things you believe about yourself can change the world.

## ABOUT THE FACILITATORS



iMOVE is a nonprofit organization that has been a formal organization since 2013, but the unique programming iMOVE offers goes back much further and was pioneered by Executive Director Sobaz Benjamin using the arts for healing and self-expression, to enhance participants (including youth at risk) ability to make a living, and to develop their leadership skills.

iMOVE has been working on these programs for many years, but the organization has grown significantly in the last couple of years due to some important funding and support from the Nova Scotia Departments of Justice, Communities Culture and Heritage, and Labour and Advanced Education.

The goal is to develop iMOVE’s programming and document its impact so in the next few years iMOVE can expand to teach other organizations about the work they’ve been doing, further enhance participants abilities to find decent and meaningful work, develop participants leadership skills and ability to contribute to systemic change in their own communities, and build bridges with other communities.

To accomplish this, iMOVE is working to develop itself as a social enterprise with a variety of revenue streams to enhance its sustainability for the future. iMOVE’s approach is based fundamentally on meeting participants where they are at, developing community support around them, holding them accountable for their actions but also not judging them.

A key component is also helping program participants to understand the ‘systems’ in society that have had an impact on their lives and how they can build skills to help them address these challenges in positive ways. Another key component is teaching them about how they can work together to increase economic benefits for themselves, each other and their communities.