

WEBINAR SERIES

LET'S CHAT GENDER EQUITY

Engaging Men & Boys



**Darcy Ataman,
Founder and
CEO**



About the speaker

As an artist and founder and CEO of Make Music Matter, Darcy Ataman has dedicated his work to bringing an alternate form of music therapy to survivors of conflict and trauma. He developed the innovative Healing in Harmony music therapy program in partnership with Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege and continues to scale the innovation that has served over 17,000 individuals in 9 countries around the world including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Guinea, South Africa, Turkey/Syria and Peru. Most recently, he has worked closely with Indigenous leaders in Canada to further develop the unique model of therapy and help address generational trauma.

He has also worked internationally as a music producer, collaborating with countless artists such as Levon Helm and DJ Jazzy Jeff's production company, resulting in several Juno nominations. In 2019, Darcy co-founded A4A Records and Publishing with legendary producer David Bottrill, creating a groundbreaking publishing model for artists living in extreme poverty and conflict zones. A contributor to the Huffington Post and other publications, he has been a guest lecturer at Oxford, the University of Winnipeg, and a range of international events, speaking to the long-lasting impact of music and its ability to re-stitch the soul. Learn more about Darcy by checking out the [Make Music Matter team page](#).

About Make Music Matter

[Make Music Matter](#) uses the creative process as a therapeutic tool to heal trauma and empower marginalized voices. Its innovative Healing in Harmony music therapy model has been clinically proven to reduce PTSD, anxiety, and depression, helping over 19,000 people worldwide regain a sense of agency. Participants' original songs are professionally produced and released globally, serving as advocacy tools to combat stigma and shame.

Healing in Harmony engages men and boys through a gender-transformative approach that helps them process trauma, redefine masculinity, and build healthier relationships. Through the program, they not only experience personal healing but also begin to challenge harmful gender norms, embracing emotional expression and the value of gender equality as essential to a thriving and prosperous community.



**Kamilla Pinter,
Project &
Communications
Officer**



About the speaker

Kamilla Pinter is the Project & Communications Officer at HealthBridge Foundation of Canada. She has worked with HealthBridge for more than three years, managing the Improving reproductive health and preventing child marriage in Nepal and Vietnam project. Within this role, Kamilla coordinates with partners to guide the project and plan activities that improve gender equity and improve sexual, reproductive, maternal and child health. Kamilla holds an MSc in Global Health from Duke University and has previously lived and studied in South and Southeast Asia. Now at HealthBridge she continues her passion to work hard to improve health outcomes in remote and marginalized communities.

About HealthBridge

[HealthBridge](#) is an international, non-profit, non-governmental organization that has been working since 1982 in Asia, Africa and the Americas. Their mission is to work with partners and communities worldwide to improve health and reduce health inequities through research, policy and action. HealthBridge works with local partners to identify priority issues, develop and implement appropriate solutions, apply innovative and sustainable practices, and promote effective policies. The organization has four core programs including Livable Cities, Tobacco Control & NCD Prevention, Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health and Rights, and Nutrition & Food Security.

HealthBridge's approach to improving sexual, reproductive, maternal and child health (SRMCH) outcomes includes male engagement. While SRMCH is often viewed as a women's issue, HealthBridge recognizes the important role that men can play in improving the health of their families. Men are frequently the main decision-makers in households and can influence access to health services and economic resources for women which impacts the health outcomes of women and children. Often little information and education about SRMCH is shared with men, yet they can have a positive influence when they are engaged in the SRMCH of their partners and their families. Knowledge can lead to engagement, and men can play an important role in ensuring women's access to health services, decision-making power, and economic opportunities, in addition to reducing gender-based violence. Healthbridge also work to address and challenge the underlying gender inequities that contribute to poor health outcomes by promoting shared decision-making, encouraging open communication between partners, and challenging harmful gender norms, roles, and stereotypes.



**Caroline Pugeni,
Program Director**



About the speaker

Caroline Pugeni is the Program Director of Score Against Poverty, a grassroots organization in Zimbabwe that is transforming rural communities by working with men and boys to challenge and change harmful gender norms.

A daughter of Mwenezi, Caroline brings both lived experience and academic expertise to her leadership. She holds a Degree in Urban Planning and Development, a Master's in Gender and Policy Studies, and a Certificate in Monitoring and Evaluation. With deep passion for gender justice, Caroline has been at the forefront of SCORE's bold and culturally grounded movement to redefine masculinity—not by rejecting tradition, but by reclaiming indigenous knowledge and customs to build more just, caring, and equitable relationships. Through initiatives such as community cook-offs, men's dialogue circles, and partnerships with traditional and religious leaders, she has inspired lasting shifts in household and community dynamics—encouraging men to take pride in shared domestic roles while rejecting violence, dominance, and silence.

About Score Against Poverty

[Score Against Poverty \(SCORE\)](#) is a grassroots, community-led organization in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe—founded to foster sustainable livelihoods and equitable development. Through conservation agriculture, nature based solutions for climate change adaptation, access to clean energy, nutrition and WASH programs, and innovative gender equity initiatives, SCORE empowers local farmers and families to lead their own development. SCORE is deeply rooted in local culture and evidence-based innovation in partnership with MCC and other supporters.

The Men Can Cook initiative, developed by SCORE with inspiration from Vurayayi Pugeni and support from Mennonite Central Committee and Global Affairs Canada (through the Fund for Innovation and Transformation), uses indigenous knowledge and cultural practices to involve men and boys in household nutrition and care. By reframing cooking as a shared responsibility and culturally affirming practice, the program created tangible shifts in behavior: men openly took on cooking, extended care, and household tasks in ways previously unheard of in Mwenezi villages. Within ten months, communities observed measurable improvements in gender equity, emotional wellbeing, income generation, and reductions in household violence.

This transformative approach, anchored in cultural respect, safe community dialogue, and role modeling, has grown into a replicable, scalable model of engaging men and boys toward gender justice. It demonstrates how deeply rooted cultural frameworks can be harnessed to dismantle harmful norms and foster lasting social change.