

## Biography



### Facilitator: Gilary Massa

Gilary Massa (She/Her) is a proud Afro-Latina Muslim who lives in Toronto Canada with her husband and two young children. She has a long-standing history in community engagement, public education, and activism related to equity, human rights, and social justice. With roots in both the labor movement and Student movement, Gilary has spent the last 15 years supporting school boards, advocacy organizations, labor unions, government agencies, and private enterprises through organizational change work that centers on human rights, equity, and inclusion.

She has worked as the Equity and Campaigns Organizer, and Executive Director of Communications and Outreach at the Ryerson Students' Union - one of the largest student advocacy organizations in Ontario, where she played an integral role in establishing the organization as the equity and human rights advocate on campus and was successful in pushing the university to adopt several policies to rectify issues of racial profiling, gender-based violence, and student poverty.

Gilary spent 3 years working with the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), supporting their efforts to respond to the rise in racism, white supremacy, and Islamophobia across Canada. Through her work, she successfully secured a grant from Ontario's Ministry of Education to train and support educators across the province in better understanding and supporting the needs of Muslim Students in Ontario. She trained over 3000 educators, principals, and superintendents in anti-oppression and challenging Islamophobia, and has supported over 15 public and public Catholic school boards in Ontario in developing best practices concerning human rights and equity legislation, and has advised on policy positions and programming priorities. In addition to working directly with school board administrations, Gilary is the author of a community-based research project focused on amplifying the voices of Muslim students in public schools- the report that came out of this project has been used system-wide to inform teacher training and changes within the school boards across Ontario.

Gilary is driven by her own experiences as a black, immigrant, Muslim woman, and her practice is rooted, first and foremost in the community. She has a deep commitment to creating institutional and government policies and programming that are informed by the people that are impacted the most.

Gilary has served as the equity officer for CUPE 1281, is a founding board member of the Black Muslim Initiative, an organization that supports the needs of communities living at the intersection of Muslimness and Blackness. She sits on the board of the Parkdale Centre for Social Innovation, an incubator focused on developing entrepreneurship and leadership amongst marginalized communities. Gilary holds a Masters in Leadership and Community Engagement where she completed a major research project entitled: Beyond Diversity Training: Road Map for Human Rights and Equity Organizational Change Work.

\*This document is available in alternate formats upon request.