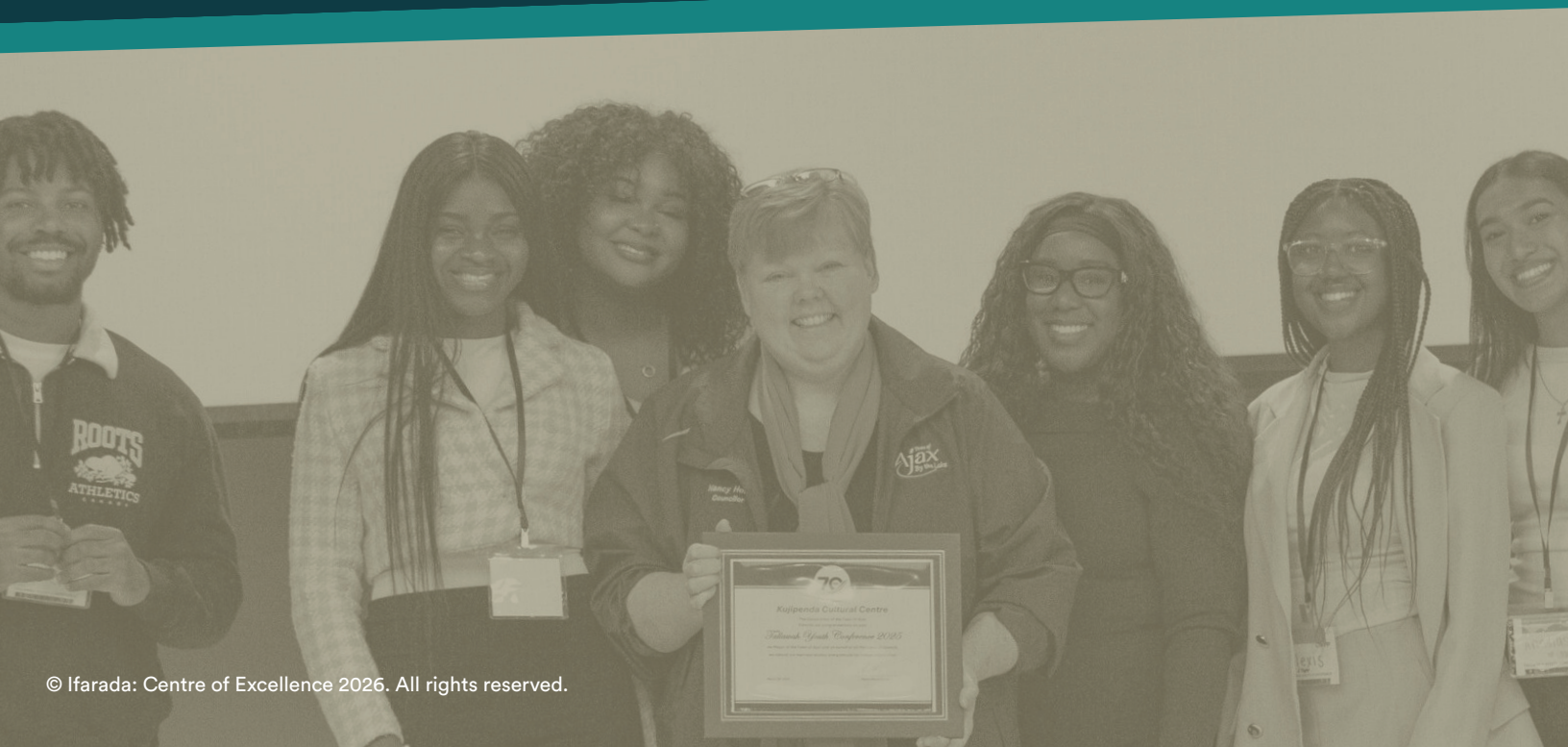
IFARADA

Centre for Excellence

Healing From The Roots



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About Us

Ifarada: Centre for Excellence is a charitable, non-profit organization. Founded in 2017, Ifarada provides equitable, holistic, and trauma-informed family and social services to children, youth, adults, and families.

Ifarada aims to support the community to **heal from the roots, thrive in the present, and shape their futures.**

Mission

To build foundations rooted in **kumbukumbu**—the memory and wisdom of our ancestors. Guided by **ubuntu** and **wahkohtowin**, we cultivate strength through collective knowledge, cultural pride, and shared healing. Through leadership, empowerment, and wellness programs, we strive to uplift communities—honouring the teachings of the past as we shape liberated futures.



Vision

A thriving community guided by ubuntu and wahkohtowin, where wellness, belonging, and connection flourish; where our roots are honoured, our stories affirmed, and our collective resistance blooms into vibrant community life.

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Ifarada Historical Timeline

2017

Founding and Early Development



- Ifarada: Centre for Excellence is established as a non-profit organization.
- Practicum students provide therapeutic groups, to youth under the Executive Directors' supervision.

2019–2021

Building Partnerships and Expanding Reach



- Forged strong partnerships with organizations such as Durham Black Educators' Network, Durham Community Health Centre, Durham District School Board, and Durham Catholic School Board.

2022

Program Launch and Centre Opening



- Collaborated with Durham Children's Aid Society to create a referral process reducing barriers for Black families, with a three-year funding contract of $720,000 to develop a team of wellbeing workers, contractors, and services for Black children, youth, and families

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2023

Growth and Community Impact



- Expanded to a team of 20 full- and part-time members with an annual operating budget of $800,000.
- Strengthened community partnerships and expanded reach to thousands of service users.

April 2024

Strengthening Outcomes for Families



- Hosted the Kujenga Family Wellness Fair (May 2024) for the second year with a continued commitment to build relationships and community connections for families. Over 150 people attended.

2025 - Present

Strengthening Outcomes for Families



- Hosted the first Tallawah Youth Conference, March 28 for young people and showcasing over eight facilitators/presenters. The Conference was attended by 120 youth.

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Seven Guiding Principles

These seven principles affirm that Ifarada's work is grounded in **reclamation, compassion, and community transformation**—ensuring that all people feel seen, safe, and supported.

Grounded in the teachings of **Ubuntu** ("I am because we are") and **Sankofa** ("to go back and fetch what is good"), and guided by Indigenous understandings of All My Relations and 7 Grandfathers, we honour the interconnectedness of people, spirit, and land and the importance of living in harmony with all.



01 Sankofa
(Roots and Identity):

"Se wo were fi na wosankofa a yenkyi" — It is not taboo to go back for what you have forgotten. We remember who we are by honouring our past, reclaiming culture, and carrying forward our resistance.



02 Usawa
(Equity and Collective Liberation):

We commit to dismantling systemic racism and the legacies of trauma that harm individuals and families. Through equity, justice, and trauma-informed care, we invest in healing and generational transformation.



03 Uongozi wa Maono
(Transformative Leadership):

We lead with vision, integrity, and courage-grounded in the wisdom of our Elders, ancestors, and the deep roots that sustain our communities. Leadership grows from connection, not position.



04 Sawubona
(Self-Determination and Belonging):

We live the spirit of sawubona—"I see you." We honour the right of every person to be seen, to define their own path, and to belong fully within the community. Through mutual recognition and care, we strengthen dignity and connection.



05 Mate Masie
(Lifelong Learning and Wisdom):

"What I hear, I keep." We honour Mate Masie as the practice of deep listening and understanding. Learning is a lifelong journey—rooted in ancestral knowledge, lived experience, and the stories that shape our collective wisdom. Through reflection and attentive presence, we bridge generations and nurture growth.



06 Kina Gchi Nishnaabe N'dowaa
(Inclusion and Interconnection):

We honour the sacred worth of every being. Through Kina Gchi Nishnaabe N'dowaa—All My Relations—we affirm that inclusion is not an act of accommodation but a recognition of our shared humanity, interdependence, and the gifts each person brings to the circle.



07 Uponyaji / Mino Bimaadiziwin
(Healing in Community):

We heal together, restoring balance and harmony through uponyaji and walking in Mino Bimaadiziwin, the good life. Healing emerges from love, relationship, and our shared responsibility to one another.

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Strategic Goals & Priorities

Ifarada's strategic direction for 2026-2031 builds on our foundation of equity, collaboration, and community resilience. Together, the following five Strategic Priorities translate Ifarada's seven Guiding Principles into focused areas of action.

Each priority is informed by one or more guiding principles, recognizing that our values are interconnected and often expressed together.

Guiding Principles Reflected

01

Haki, Usawa na Uwajibikaji wa Kitamaduni

Justice, Equity & Cultural Accountability

Ifarada will advance equity and social justice by embedding anti-racism, anti-oppression, and culturally affirming practices across all programs, partnerships, governance structures, and leadership pathways.

We will center communities most impacted by systemic inequities and work to dismantle barriers within service delivery, policy, and decision-making systems.

- **GP1 Sankofa** (Roots & Identity)
- **GP2 Usawa** (Equity & Collective Liberation)
- **GP6 Kina Gchi Nishnaabe N'dowaa** (Inclusion & Interconnection)

02

Afya Kamili Yenye Msingi wa Utamaduni

Holistic, Culturally Grounded Wellness

Ifarada will strengthen access to integrated mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual wellness supports through culturally grounded therapeutic services, crisis response, and healing-centered community initiatives.

Programming will reflect Africentric and Indigenous worldviews that honour the whole person and promote long-term wellbeing.

- **GP1 Sankofa** (Roots & Identity)
- **GP5 Mate Masie** (Lifelong Learning & Wisdom)
- **GP7 Uponyaji / Mino Bimaadiziwin** (Healing in Community)

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03

Uwezeshaji wa Jamii na Kujitawala

Community Empowerment & Self-Determination

Ifarada will empower individuals, families, and youth to lead their own healing and development journeys by grounding all programming in cultural identity, intergenerational wisdom, and community connection.

We will ensure community members are active co-designers of programs, services, and solutions.

- **GP3 Uongozi wa Maono** (Transformative Leadership)
- **GP4 Sawubona** (Self-Determination & Belonging)
- **GP5 Mate Masie** (Lifelong Learning & Wisdom)

04

Ushirikiano kwa Athari ya Pamoja

Relational Partnerships for Collective Impact

Ifarada will deepen reciprocal partnerships with grassroots organizations, schools, health agencies, and local governments to strengthen coordinated responses to community wellness, equity, and resilience.

Guided by relational accountability, we will co-develop initiatives that create shared impact.

- **GP3 Uongozi wa Maono** (Transformative Leadership)
- **GP4 Sawubona** (Self-Determination & Belonging)
- **GP6 Kina Gchi Nishnaabe N'dowaa** (Inclusion & Interconnection)

05

Uendelevu, Kujifunza na Kujali

Organizational Sustainability, Learning & Care

Ifarada will strengthen organizational sustainability by investing in inclusive governance, financial resilience, staff and volunteer wellness, and continuous learning. Rooted in ancestral wisdom and reflective practice, we will build systems that support long-term community stewardship and organizational excellence.

- **GP3 Uongozi wa Maono** (Transformative Leadership)
- **GP5 Mate Masie** (Lifelong Learning & Wisdom)
- **GP7 Uponyaji / Mino Bimaadiziwin** (Healing in Community)

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Our Team



Ifarada's strength comes from a diverse circle of community members who guide and support our work within the community. Together, we design, deliver, and evolve programs that reflect the voices and needs of those we serve.

Guided by shared leadership and community accountability, Ifarada embodies healing through connection —where everyone contributes, and wellness grows from the roots.

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Leadership & Governance

Ifarada uses a strength-based, holistic approach to organizational culture, development, and sustainability. The holistic approach is grounded in Africentric and Indigenous ways of knowing and highlights the importance of drawing upon knowledge, science, intuition, and spirituality towards creating a healthy working culture. As an organization, we search for the strengths within our community, and the people that serve the community.

Our strengths help carry us through the painful process of change, growth, and development. It is within our strengths, we demonstrate our personality, our resiliency, our desires, passions, and our interests.

Ifarada's work is rooted in community voice, shared leadership, and collective accountability. The community stands at the center of our decision-making—guiding Ifarada's direction through our Parent and Youth Advisory Councils, which identify key priorities and emerging needs. Elders, cultural leaders, and community members are highly regarded as keepers of wisdom and tradition.



Their perspectives shape how we approach healing, programming, and advocacy. Decision-making is guided by the principles of Ubuntu—"I am because we are"— and the spirit of for us, by us, ensuring that actions are relational, strength-based, and grounded in holistic care.

Our volunteer Board of Directors provides strategic guidance, supports accreditation and governance, and ensures fiscal responsibility. Together, the Board, Executive Director, and community advisors uphold Ifarada's mission to advance culturally grounded, equity-focused wellness through collaboration, transparency, and shared purpose.

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Our Team In Action

Each member of our team plays a vital role in nurturing wellness, leadership, and belonging — bringing care, creativity, and compassion to every interaction with the individuals and families we serve :



- **Child & Youth and Adult & Family Wellbeing Professionals** specializing in trauma-informed, Africentric, and culturally grounded wellbeing supports.
- **Program facilitators, Workshop Facilitator Contractors, and Elders** who lead, guide and facilitate specific project activities within the organization.
- **Interns and practicum students** from colleges and universities across Ontario, representing diverse cultural identities and lived experiences, participating within the organization.
- **Parent and Youth Advisory Council, community members, and Board Team,** which inform, guide, and support Ifarada's initiatives.

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Our Programs

Ifarada's programs and services include:



Leadership and Mentorship

programs for youth and young adults.



Educational Support

for children and youth.



Equity-centered

conferences and professional development



Wellbeing Services

for children, youth, adults, couples, and families, which consist of assessments, crisis responses, psychotherapy/counselling, life coaching, family reunification, outreach, resource navigation, mediation, and more.



Therapeutic Support

circles and groups, in community and in schools designed for children, youth, and adults.



Educational Webinars

and resource library centering on parenting and family services.

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Our Impact

Ifarada's growth reflects our deepening connection to the community and our commitment to equity, inclusion, and systemic change. Here are just a few examples of our impact to date:

2000+

Community Reach

2000+ community members (individuals, families, youth) serviced annually, and growing.

82%

Mental Health & Wellness

82% of service users report reduced race-related trauma and stronger mental, emotional, and family wellbeing after 3–6 months of support.

200+

Youth Empowerment

200+ black and racialized youth served annually through in school programs that reduce isolation and build cultural pride, emotional regulation, and relationship skills.

+14

Community Partnerships

14 active collaborations and multiple formal MOUs with community organizations (e.g. Durham Family and Cultural Centre, Durham Community & Health Centre) advancing culturally grounded mental health support.

$500k+

Sustainability Growth

$500,000+ annual funding increases since 2018 enabled major capital upgrades, a 5-room office renovation, and strengthened governance and leadership capacity



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Funding Needs

Ifarada seeks continued investment to sustain and strengthen its operations, with four key funding priorities:

01 **Program Expansion:**
Increase therapeutic, mentorship, and leadership program capacity.

02 **Staff Development:**
Recruit and retain diverse wellbeing professionals, project facilitators, and team leads.

03 **Facility Growth:**
Maintain community space at the Harmony Wellness Centre in Pickering.

04 **Research & Evaluation:**
Engage in ongoing research and policy development to measure impact, evaluation, and inform best practices. Share knowledge through journal publications and conference presentations.

Current Budget: **$2 million annually**

Funding Goal: **$2 million annually**

AREA	ASK	DESCRIPTION
Staffing and Salaries	$1,000,000	Executive Director, 3 Team Leads, 6 Youth & Family Wellbeing Professionals, 4 Youth Interns/Administrative roles, 1 Project Facilitator, and 10 Summer Youth Interns.
Administrative Costs	$225,000	Subscriptions, financial monitoring, human resources, office expenses, and general operational supports
Building Maintenance, Utilities, and Taxes	$60,000	Ongoing upkeep, municipal fees, and essential facility-related costs.
Contractors	$250,000	Honoraria and fees for Elders, facilitators, cultural practitioners, specialized trainers, and professional development providers.
Program & Project Costs	$465,000	Materials and supplies, meals and participant support, annual retreats, venue rentals, youth community grants, and an emergency support fund.
TOTAL:	**$2,000,000**	

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Our Ecosystem

Ifarada is home to a constellation of interconnected programs and initiatives that embody our commitment to cultural identity, healing, and equity. Each initiative contributes to a shared vision of wellness, belonging, and generational strength.



Together, these initiatives form a wraparound ecosystem of care —**rooted in community, guided by culture, and dedicated to collective healing and transformation.**

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Kujipenda Cultural Centre

A social enterprise celebrating Africentric culture and identity through the cultural arts, professional development, and holistic healing.

Wonderfully Made Girl

Empowering young women to lead with confidence, self-worth, and purpose through workshops, sister circles and mentorship, rites of passage, and self-empowerment retreats.

Kujenga Family Wellness Project

Advancing the social and emotional wellbeing of Black, parents, caregivers and guardians within Durham Region.

Together, these initiatives form a wraparound ecosystem of care—**rooted in community, guided by culture, and dedicated to collective healing and transformation.**

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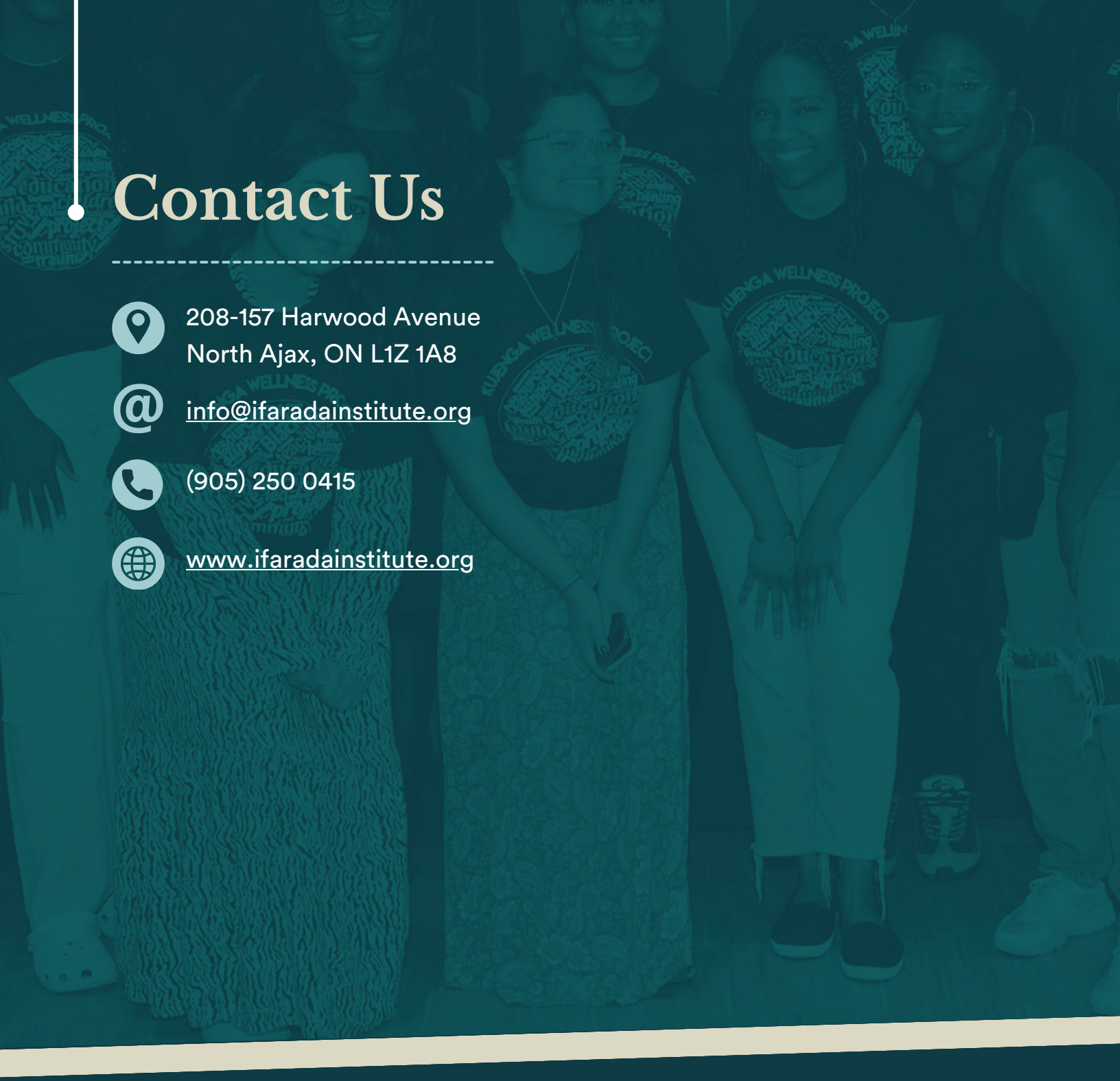

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