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MATTHEW COUSTOU FONDATION

From continent to continent

Disability does not define destiny

presents

FMC-AUTIS

1st Edition

CONFERENCE

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AND IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES: REALITIES, CHALLENGES AND ACCESS TO RESSOURCES



Host

Marie-Flora Coustou
Pdt. Fondation Matthew Coustou

MAY 09 | HÔTEL ALT
QUARTIER DIX30, BROSSARD

2026 3:00 PM - 6:30 PM (MONTREAL TIME)

S P E A K E R S



Dr. Theo Gossou
Autism Spectrum Disorder Consultant (ASD)



Sosthène Houmey-Hakeh
Behavior Analyst - Founder Autysme Æcho



Schwab Mulopo Bakombo
PhD student in population Health at the University of Ottawa

Moderated by



Léonard Afanou



LIVE STREAMING

@matthewcoustou

Free Event
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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT



WCF-AUTIS 2026 marked an important milestone for the Matthew Coustou Foundation from continent to continent.

For this first edition, we wanted to create a space for listening, information and exchange around autism, in order to help families better understand the realities of ASD and to know the resources available.

The theme highlighted the challenges experienced by some immigrant communities, while being part of a broader vision: to make FMC-AUTIS an event open to all families affected by autism and disability.

The testimonies, interventions and exchanges confirmed the importance of continuing this work. This first edition encourages us to prepare an even more inclusive and mobilizing follow-up.

Marie-Flora Coustou
President
Matthew Coustou Foundation from continent to continent

I. PRESENTATION OF THE CONFERENCE

On May 9, 2026, the Matthew Coustou Foundation from continent to continent organized the first edition of FMC-AUTIS 2026 at the Alt Hotel in Quartier DIX30, in Brossard. The event was held in a hybrid format, with in-person participation and live streaming on YouTube.

The objective of this conference was to help families better understand autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and to know the resources that can support them in their journey.

The discussions focused on early signs, avenues for intervention, cultural, social and family barriers, as well as the importance of strengthening ties between families, professionals, organizations and partners.

II. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Some immigrant families face particular obstacles when a child shows signs of autism. Diagnosis may be delayed by lack of information, fear of stigma, cultural beliefs, language barriers, or difficulty navigating health services, social services, and the school environment.

WCF-AUTIS 2026 was designed as a concrete response to these realities. The conference provided a space for listening, understanding and guidance. It also served as a reminder that a better-informed family is one that can act sooner, with more confidence.

III. SCHEDULE AND CONTENT OF THE DAY

The day began with a word of welcome from Marie-Flora Coustou, President of the Foundation. The presentations then addressed the understanding of ASD, intervention approaches and the challenges experienced by families.



Dr. Theo Gossou explained that autism spectrum disorder can affect communication, social skills and certain behaviours, while reminding us that each child has a unique profile.



He also stressed the importance of early identification and appropriate support, in particular through recognized approaches such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Her intervention also highlighted barriers that can delay access to services, such as cost, bias and cultural realities.



Sosthène Houmey-Hakeh brought a social and educational perspective on the realities experienced by autistic people and their families.

He deconstructed several preconceived ideas, including those that associate ASD with poor education, screens, vaccines or certain mystical beliefs. He also warned against false remedies and unfounded promises.

His speech recalled the importance of respectful support, based on listening, the needs of the child and recognized practices.

Finally, he stressed that each child has his or her own value, abilities and place in society.

Schwab Mulopo Bakombo presented the lived realities of Black children and youth with autism spectrum disorder in Canada.

Her intervention highlighted inequities in access to diagnosis, treatment and services. He spoke in particular of delays, high costs, lack of data and the difficulties encountered by many families in the health and social services system.

He also recalled the importance of culturally sensitive professional practices, in order to offer fairer support to families.





Miv and Henri's testimony was one of the most touching moments of the conference. With sincerity, they shared the journey of their son living with autism spectrum disorder, from the first signs to the progress made over the years.



They spoke of their concerns, the progressive loss of language, the difficulties in obtaining a diagnosis and the lack of listening they encountered at the beginning of their process.

Their experience also showed the importance of parental involvement, family support and early support. Despite sacrifices, prejudices and social outlook, their message remains hopeful: with support, each child can move at his or her own pace and develop his or her abilities.



The day ended with a question period, exchanges with the public, a moment of networking and thanks to the people who contributed to this first edition.

IV. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The conference was aimed at between 40 and 60 participants. It brought together 33 people in the dining room. This number fostered a climate of proximity, with direct exchanges between families, workers, organizations and partners.





The online broadcast made it possible to reach people who could not be present.

Indicator	Result
Indoor participants	**33**
YouTube Live Views	**110**
Average watch time	**38:19**
Maximum concurrent viewers	**26**
Messages in the chat	**32**
New YouTube subscribers	**5**
YouTube Likes	**7**

YouTube replay helps extend the reach of CME-AUTIS 2026 and raise awareness of the realities of ASD among a wider audience: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jl2XTtXPgdc

V. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

The Foundation used TikTok, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and Mailchimp to promote the event, share awareness messages, and maintain connection with attendees.

Platform	Main results
TikTok	118,834 video views, 117,555 people reached, 1,268 likes, 165 shares, 23 comments, 688 profile views, 192 new followers, a net growth of 189 followers during the campaign period.
LinkedIn	7,427 impressions, 2,672 views, 30 clicks, 4 reposts, 10 likes.
Facebook	15,000 views, 8,200 people reached, 201 interactions, 313 clicks, 236 page visits, 18 new subscribers.
Instagram	2,600 views, 2,300 accounts reached, 36 interactions, 84 clicks, 102 profile visits.
Mailchimp	Open rate up to 76%, open and clicked, no unsubscribes or complaints

These results confirm the interest generated by the conference and the Foundation's ability to mobilize its audience through digital tools. This visibility will be able to support future awareness-raising, training and partnership actions.

VI. CHANSON DE SENSIBILISATION



The original song " Ensemble, on s'elevation ", created by Gloire Junior Bidias for the Foundation, brought a human and accessible dimension to FMC-AUTIS 2026.

Disseminated on social networks, it has helped to raise awareness among a wider audience of the realities of autism, inclusion and support for families, while carrying a message of hope and solidarity.

VII. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The initial estimated budget was $2,950. Actual spending was $8,960, a variance of $6,010.

This discrepancy can be explained first of all by the decision to bring Sosthène Houmey-Hakeh in person, while his intervention was initially planned by videoconference. It is also related to the technical requirements of the hybrid format, including sound reinforcement, video recording, online broadcasting and audiovisual equipment.

These expenses contributed to better reception and participation conditions, both for those present in the room and for those who followed the conference online. The equipment acquired can also be reused by the Foundation for its future awareness, training and community mobilization activities.

VIII. SPIN-OFFS AND IMPACTS

This first edition generated several concrete benefits:

- Families have been provided with clear information about ASD and the resources available.
- Professionals and organizations were able to interact directly with the public.
- Miv and Henri's testimony brought a message of hope to the families.
- Online broadcasting and social media expanded the reach of the event.
- The conference created a solid foundation for future collaborations.

Beyond these results, the main impact remains human: FMC-AUTIS 2026 reminded us that no family should move forward alone in the face of the challenges related to autism and disability.

IX. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

This first edition also made it possible to identify several areas for improvement. For future conferences, the Foundation wants to better structure the program, improve time management, streamline transitions and strengthen the experience of participants, both in the classroom and online.

Digital broadcasting will also need to be optimized, including better video framing and content that is easier to share after the event.

X. OUTLOOK FOR CMF-AUTIS 2027

The Foundation wishes to make FMC-AUTIS a sustainable initiative, open to all communities concerned by autism and disability.

For the next edition, the aim will be to strengthen partnerships, mobilise more experts and organisations, and continue to raise awareness beyond the event.

The Foundation also wishes to develop simple resources to better inform families and support them in their journey.

XI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Matthew Coustou Foundation from One Continent to Another sincerely thanks all those who contributed to the realization of CMF-AUTIS 2026.



Speakers and Parents

Henri and Miv; Schwab Mulopo Bakombo; Théo Gossou; Sosthène Houmey-Hakeh.

SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

Lionzon; Café Dépôt; Le Berger; AFIRI EKANG; Miv Groupe Le Rocher; NkulBeti; Securis Technologies; SendRate; Délice d'Afrique; Geo Délices.

Collaborators

Marie-Flora Coustou; Léonard Djanta Afanou; Gloire Junior Bidias.

Volunteers

Adam Patrick; Hilda; Marko Lagneble ; Grace; Fabiola Afanou; Stéphane Hinze.

Technical team

Adam Patrick; Marko Lagneble; Gloire Junior Bidias; David Brevil.



Thanks to their commitment, availability and support, this first edition was able to see the light of day and lay the foundations for a mobilization that will continue.

XII. CONCLUSION

WCF-AUTIS 2026 marked an important first step in the Matthew Coustou Foundation's outreach efforts from one continent to another.

This conference showed that families need to be listened to, accessible resources and support that is better adapted to their reality. The interventions, testimonies and exchanges also confirmed the importance of creating spaces for dialogue around autism and disability.

With the support of committed partners and donors, the Foundation wishes to continue this initiative, reach more families and contribute to a more inclusive society, where each child and each family can be better informed, better supported and less alone in the face of the challenges of disability.

APPENDICES

- ***Official program of CMF-AUTIS 2026.***
- ***Photos of the event.***
- ***Testimonials and feedback from participants.***
- ***Song "Together, we rise".***
- ***FMC-AUTIS 2026 financial report.***

Official Program of CME-AUTIS 2026

Time	Activity	Speaker
3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Welcoming participants	Organizing Team
3:15 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.	Welcome	Organization
3:20 p.m. – 3:25 p.m.	Opening remarks	President – Matthew Coustou Foundation from one Continent to another
3:25 p.m. – 4:25 p.m.	**Conference** : Autism Spectrum Disorder in Immigrant Communities.	**Dr. Theo Gossou**, ASD Consultant
4:25 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.	Exchange with the public	Invited Contacts
4:45 p.m. – 4:55 p.m.	Intervention of the contact persons	Contacts and participants
4:55 p.m. – 5:50 p.m.	Question Period	**Sosthène Houmey-Hakeh**, Behavior Analyst - Founder Autysme Ækho
5:50 p.m. – 5:55 p.m.	**Conference** : Deconstructing preconceived ideas about autism spectrum disorder: scientific insights and clinical realities.	**Schwab Mulopo Bakombo**, PhD student in population health at the University of Ottawa and research assistant at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Black Health
5:55 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Exchange with the public	Organization
6:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	**Conference** : Autism Spectrum Disorder in Black Children and Youth in Canada: A Mixed Study of Diagnosis, Treatment, and Cultural Sensitivity	All participants
6:30 p.m.	End of the Conference and Family Photo	

PHOTOS OF THE EVENT















TESTIMONIALS AND FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

A viewer noted that the conference was "very uplifting" and that the testimonies were encouraging for families living with ASD.

A viewer thanked the Foundation, the speakers and Miv and Henri for the richness of the exchanges and the sharing of experience.

Sosthène Houmey-Hakeh praised a humane, useful and dialogue-promoting initiative, while underlining the quality of the interventions and the real interest of the public.

Suzanne said she enjoyed the conference, which she described as a success, while opening the door to future collaborations.

Schwab Mulopo Bakombo expressed his pleasure at participating in this important event and offered to share information related to his research in order to continue the collaboration

A viewer who followed the online conference also shared several areas for improvement regarding punctuality, the framing of the broadcast and the experience of virtual participants.

Song "Together, we rise"

COUPLET 1

Ils voient le monde autrement
Avec des couleurs différentes
Des silences qui parlent fort
Et des regards pleins d'or

Garçons, filles, cœurs sensibles
Des univers invisibles
Mais derrière chaque regard
Il y a de l'espoir

PRÉ-REFRAIN
Et si on prenait le temps
De comprendre vraiment…

REFRAIN
Ensemble, on s'élève
Au-delà des différences
Chaque voix, chaque rêve
A sa place, a son sens

FMCAUTIS2026
Unis pour l'inclusion
Avec Matthew et les enfants malade
On construit l'avenir ensemble

COUPLET 2

Chaque pas est une victoire
Chaque sourire, une histoire
Des défis, du courage
Qui nous rende plus forts

Ils n'ont pas besoin qu'on change qui ils
Sont Juste qu'on ouvre nos horizons

On veut un monde…

Où chacun a sa place…

Où chaque enfant peut rêver…

"On est là… on existe… écoutez-nous…"

REFRAIN FINAL

Ensemble, on s'élève
On écrit une nouvelle histoire
Fondation Matthew Coustou
Pour un monde sans frontière

FMC-AUTIS 2026
Un message d'espoir
Avec Matthew et les enfants malade
On ne lâche rien… jamais

FMC-AUTIS 2026 FINANCIAL REPORT

MATTHEW COUSTOU FOUNDATION FROM ONE CONTINENT TO ANOTHER				
Provisional budget Conference 9 May 2026				
OVERALL SUMMARY				
Position	***Amount (CAD)***	**Real**	**Variance**	
BUDGET Total Project	***$16,450***	***$22,460***	**$6,010**	
Actual Financial Expenditures	***$2,950***	***$8,960***	**$6,010**	
In-kind contributions	***$13,500***	***$13,500***	**- $**	
Projected balance (Balanced budget)	***- $***	***- $***	***($0)***	
CASH INCOME				
Category	**Description**	**Anticipated Amount (CAD)**	**Real**	**Variance**
Individual cash donations	Public Donations	$450	CA$ 400.74	CA$ (49.26)
Government Grants	Municipal/Provincial/Federal Grants	$0	- $	- $
Private subsidies	Foundations and philanthropists	$500	CA$ 150.00	CA$ (350.00)
Corporate Partnerships	Local businesses	$1,000	CA$ 150.00	CA$ (850.00)
Fundraising Events	Gala, campaigns	$200	CA$ 190.00	$(10.00)
International Funding	UN, agencies, cooperation, CMF members	CA$ 800.29	CA$ 8,069.18	$7,269
Total cash income		**$2,950**	**$8,960**	**$6,010**
IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (NON-CASH)				
Category	**Description**	**Anticipated Amount (CAD)**	**Real**	**Variance**
Keynote Speaker	Dr. Theo Gossou	$6,000	$6,000.00	$0
Guest speaker	Sosthène Houmey-Hakeh, Behavior Analyst	$2,000	CA$2,000.00	$0
President	Marie-Flora Coustou	$4,000	$4,000.00	$0
Member of the Board of Directors	Comlan Afanou	$1,000	$1,000.00	$0
Speakers	_____2	$200	CA$ 200.00	$0
Reception Volunteers	_____2	$150	CA$ 150.00	$0
Outreach Volunteers	_____2	$150	CA$ 150.00	$0
Total in-kind contributions		**$13,500.0**	**$13,500.0**	**$0**
EXPENSES (actual only)				

Category	Description	Anticipated Amount (CAD)	Real	Variance
Logistics	Conference room	CA$ 771.77	CA$ 771.77	- $
Refreshment Fee	Snacks, drinks	CA$ 339.25	CA$ 257.26	CA$ 81.99
Purchase of equipment	Console, mixer, microphones, tripods, accessories, USB wires.....	CA$ 584.27	CA$ 4,969.35	CA$ 4,385.08
Volunteer Field Staff	Sound recording	CA$ 100.00	$0	CA$ (100.00)
Communication	Communications Consultant	CA$ 500.00	CA$ 1005.40	CA$ 505.40
Paid volunteer field staff	Photographers	CA$ 400.00	$400	- $
Other project expenses	Transport & Hotel	CA$ 100.00	CA$ 1,383.91	CA$ 1,283.91
Other project expenses	Other contingencies	CA$ 155.00	CA$ 172.23	CA$ 17.23
Total		**$2,950**	**$8,960**	**$6,010**
VALUATION OF IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS				
Category	**Description**	**Anticipated Amount (CAD)**	**Real**	**Variance**
Human Resources, Expertise	Contributions of time, skills and volunteerism	$13,500.0	$13,500	$0.0
Total		**$13,500.0**	**$13,500.0**	**- $**