



NETWORKS FOR CHANGE AND WELL-BEING

Girl-led 'From the Ground Up' Policy Making to Address
Sexual Violence in Canada and South Africa

Issue 9: October 2019

Content

Dear Partners, Colleagues and Friends of *Networks4Change*

When we first embarked upon a large multi-year two country project with the phrase 'girl-led 'from the ground-up policy-making' in the title, it was hard to imagine the range of policy-making, policy-dialogue, and community dialogue outcomes that would be possible. Now six years later we can see how much is possible.

We have seen girls and young women creating their own declarations and 'girlfestos' and presenting them at conferences, to different stakeholders and in numerous languages. In these documents and presentations the girls and young women are saying what they need in order to be supported in this work. We are also seeing in a recent example of a *Networks for Change* site in South Africa where, as a result of the girls' artistic productions and mobilizing of marches, the parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders are coming together to develop a policy related to addressing and preventing early marriage. The Nelson Mandela University campus where the original *Girls Leading Change* began is just launching its brand new Centre for Women and Gender Studies. But each of these 'successes' also points to so much more than needs to be done and why 'girl-led' or 'youth-led' needs to remain a priority and why policy-making, policy-dialogue and community dialogue are so important.

The ongoing creation of land art, girl-produced and youth-produced books, girlfestos, cellphilms, videos and so on continue to spark dialogue, and as we see throughout the site reports in this issue of the newsletter, actions are all around.

Warm regards,
Claudia and Lebo

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Networks4Change at South African AIDS Conference

On 11 June 2019, Zee Ngcobo, co-founder of the Leaders for Young Women's Success delivered the Nkosi Johnson Memorial Lecture at the opening ceremony of the 9th South African AIDS Conference held at the International Convention Centre in Durban.

Zee's powerful speech, which was extremely well received, focused on her experiences growing up as a transgirl in rural South Africa. With her permission, we reprint Zee's speech here.



Above: Zee delivering her speech

Below: Zee's speech generated a lot of attention on social media



After her success at the conference, Zee was invited to deliver her speech at assembly at her school. Afterwards, she said:

"Some people were crying and others came to apologise."

Nkosi Johnson Memorial Lecture 2019 | Zee Ngcobo

Sanibonani and greetings to you all. My name is Zee Ngcobo. I am 19 years old and I come from a small, rural village called Khethani near Winterton in the Drakensberg in KwaZulu-Natal. I am a proudly trans girl.

I was born a cute little boy and had a happy, carefree childhood, playing with other children in my neighbourhood. Then the hormones arrived! My life was never the same after that. I started to realise that I was attracted to other boys. I also started to feel feminine. I wanted to cook, clean and do all the things that girls my age were doing. So, the questions in my head started. Why am I different? Why do I feel like I am a girl? Why am I in a boy's body? There was no one that I felt I could go to to ask questions or get advice. I was confused and unhappy. I even tried to cut off my penis so that I could feel normal. If my mother had not come into the room that day, I would have done it! At first I thought I was gay, but later on, I realised that I am trans.

Growing up being trans in a rural village is difficult. It is not easy to get information about how you feel and what is happening to you. There is no library and it is difficult to access the internet. There aren't any organisations near where I live that deal with LGBTI issues. I had to find out all the information I could on my own and educate myself about what it means to be trans.

Few people understood me and many people in my community responded badly to me. Some people called me a curse and a disappointment to my parents. Even my own family did not always accept me and wanted me to stop dressing and acting like a girl. Some people, even other learners at my school, call me hurtful names and threaten me with violence. I remember once I was at church and the pastor called me to the front to pray for me to cast out the 'demons' inside me. He began praying and I knew that he would not stop until I fell down proving that the demons were out. But, I was getting tired and the time was going, so I just pretended to fall and the pastor and the congregation celebrated with many hallelujahs. The truth was that I felt nothing. I was still the same—feeling trapped in a boy's body.

It was hard, but with the support of my mother and my friend Lihle things were not too bad and I decided to accept who I am and face my life head-on. Instead of pretending to be someone I am not, or getting angry with my community for the way that they treat me, I decided to be myself and be patient and educate my community about LGBTI issues. I started to dress and do my hair the way that I feel comfortable. I went to the Learner Support Agent at my school, and the Life Orientation Teacher and Principal and asked them if I could wear the slacks that are part of the girls' uniform instead of the trousers that are part of the boys' uniform. They agreed. When there are talks at school that are only for boys or only for girls, I go to the talks for girls even though some of the teachers and other learners disagree. I have also educated myself about how to protect myself from HIV and other STIs, and now I do workshops at my school to educate other young people about gender and sexuality.

There is a lot of gender-based violence in my community. Girls especially are not safe. So, in 2016, I co-founded a girls' group with some peer educators from school which we call the Leaders for Young Women's Success. As a group, our aim is to support one another as well as other young people in the community to stop gender-based violence and to prevent HIV. We organise events in the community like marches and dialogues to raise awareness about gender-based violence and HIV.

As young people living in a rural community, we face many challenges. We do not have any resources that help us live our lives positively. For example, there is no clinic in my community, only mobile clinics. The closest hospital to us is at Emmaus which is 20 kms away. It costs R 18 to get there by taxi. It might not sound far away or like a lot of money, but it is to some people. The clinics and hospitals are not very friendly to us as young people. For me, as a young trans woman, I get very little help from the clinic. The nurses don't know what to do with me or for me. For example, when I ask for condoms they give me both male and female condoms. When I ask how I can protect myself from STIs, they tell me that I can't get infected because I am in a same-sex relationship. This means that I get no help about how I can protect myself from HIV, for example.

Another challenge that we face as young people in rural areas is a lack of safe spaces for us to spend our free time. The only available form of entertainment is going to taverns or shebeens. Everybody knows what happens to us as girls in these taverns. "I buy you booze, you give me some..."

*So, as a young, proudly trans woman, who is a youth leader in my community, this is what I have to say: **First**, as young people generally and especially for LGBTI youth, we need correct information in our schools and our clinics about our sexuality and how to protect ourselves from unwanted pregnancy and STIs like HIV. We also need to be taught about how to have happy, healthy relationships so that we can recognise when we are in unhealthy or abusive relationships. **Second**, youth need a safe space in which we can be young and develop ourselves, for example, youth centres with facilities where we can play games and make art and do other things that will help us develop. And **third**, I call on parents, caregivers, teachers and other adults including all of you to really listen to young people about who we are, what we need, and what will work for us. Only when you work with us will you be able to provide us with the information, care, support and resources that we really need to be safe, healthy and happy.*

— Ngiyabonga! Thank you!

Networks4Change Fieldsites

Here we present updates on fieldsites set up in Canada and South Africa.

Eastern Cape (South Africa)

Young Girls Leading Change

It is always a treat to have a retreat to do some work and to enjoy each other's company. The YGCL spent the day at a lovely venue in Addo, on 25th May 2019. The girls have been talking about starting a Gender Club for several months and were pleased to scrutinize the draft Briefing Paper for Gender Clubs/Girl Groups and comment on it.

Such a Briefing Paper, they felt, would help them to explain to the community the purpose of establishing a Gender Club. While they liked the Briefing Paper, they pointed out that they did not understand all the big words, and so they identified those and asked that they be changed to simpler words in the final Briefing Paper. They also suggested 'thumbnail' pictures for the list of the Girl Groups, to add a more personal element. They are hoping to recruit their peers to join them in establishing a Gender Club in their school.

The girls were fascinated to see the Montebello Girlfesto, which they had commented on and added to at a previous retreat, now translated in isiXhosa, to enable rural township

people to read and understand it. They are looking forward to sharing the Girlfesto with their classmates and families and tell them about the kind of work they are doing. They appreciated the idea that the Girlfesto had also been translated into isiZulu!

We also shared information about post-school opportunities as they do not know which courses to choose after high school. An interesting *Ikigai* (Japanese for meaning and purpose in life) exercise was introduced to the girls to enable them to find their own meaning and purpose in life. The facilitator explained what the exercise was about and how the girls could discover their *Ikigai*. They then worked on what they loved doing, what skills they have, what they want to change in the world, and then how these three

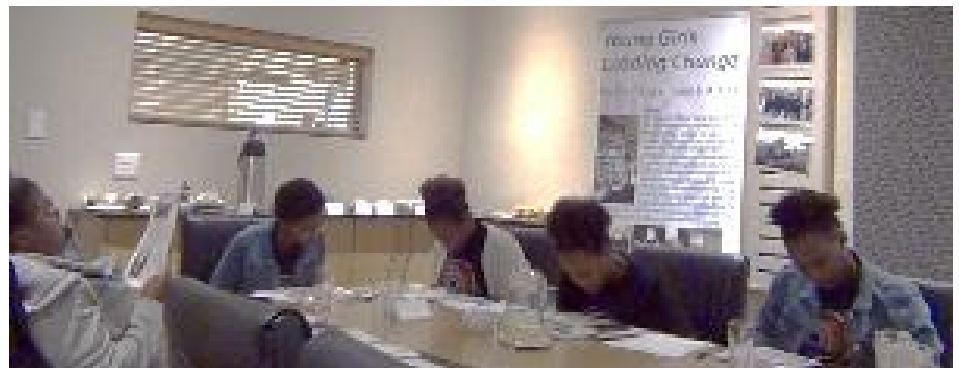
might inform choosing an appropriate profession to earn an income. We discussed going to university or a Technical and Vocational Education College and the programmes of each. One of the girls said:

"When you are living in a rural township no one thinks you might study at a college."

In view of that, the girls were excited about finding their own professional journey. Toward the end of the day, each girl was able to figure out where her passion, skills and values align and could begin dreaming about possibilities.

Ntomboxolo Yamile

.....
YGCL reading the draft Briefing Paper on Gender Clubs/Girl Groups
.....



Girls Leading Change

Writing Retreat in Port Elizabeth
26-28 July, 2019

Melissa Lufele

Girls Leading Change held their annual retreat on 26-28 July 2019 at the Kelway Hotel Conference Centre in Port Elizabeth. Four of the young women were able to attend the event. Zethu, Bongwiwe, Takatso and Melissa met with Professors Naydene de Lange and Relebohile Moletsane to catch up with each other and do some gender work!

The weekend took off with a catch-up session where we had the opportunity to share our experiences as new teachers, personal challenges, and navigating adulthood. This particular session was therapeutic and it also became a chance for us to share powerful words of encouragement with each other.

We were then presented with a copy-edited version of our latest publication titled *Dear Nosizwe: Conversations About Gender Inclusive Teaching in School*. This was an exciting moment which became an opportunity to reminisce about the process of putting

the publication together, the state of mind of each individual during that time, what had changed since then, and how this book could be useful in our current teaching practice.

The experience of going through the book page by page was fun and enlightening as it took us to a time when everything seemed simple and less challenging! We had identified the audience for our book, the needs it would address, and how each story would speak to the diversity of needs faced by both educators and learners in schools.



(L to R): Melissa, Zethu, Bongzi, and Takatso cutting the ribbon for the GLC's new book, *Dear Nosizwe: Conversations About Gender Inclusive Teaching in School*

On the second day of the writing retreat, we were introduced to **Music Elicitation**, where we were asked to trace back our memories as teenagers in high school, through choosing a song which was central in our adolescent years, a song that carried us through those times. Identifying only one song was very difficult for all of us but eventually, everyone managed to settle on one. We said something about the song and then played the song to the group. After listening to our four songs, we had to respond in writing to the following prompts:

- ▶ When listening to this song I feel ...
- ▶ When I listen to this song, I remember growing up in my rural area ...
- ▶ I remember growing up as a girl in my family ...
- ▶ I remember my mother and my grandmother ...
- ▶ I remember my friendships ...

Welcome!



I enjoyed this session a lot although it was emotionally challenging; it compelled us to trace back to moments during adolescence that were not exactly the best in our lives. We remembered how they felt but most importantly this session helped us release through writing. I feel that we no longer carry that remembrance as a burden, but as acceptance and acknowledgement of where we have been as well as how hard we fought to be where we are now. I felt like this would fuel our drive even more because even when we feel defeated by life's challenges, hearing that particular song will remind us of our history while strengthening us to never drop the ball.

The whole weekend retreat experience challenged us both psychologically and emotionally to reconnect with our inner strength, to become our audience, and to let our own messages of strength and hope motivate and refill us. The journey of giving is a fruitful one that requires one to be at one's best emotionally. We cannot give from a half-empty cup, so I learnt the importance of refilling, re-energising, reconnecting, and revisiting, so that we can emerge more powerful than we were. I remain humbly grateful for the opportunities we continue to have as *Girls Leading*



Melissa sharing her response to her song

Change to continue our work as change agents with each other, and within our different communities. We have grown and so has our love for community building. It is our hope to continue this journey one step at a time recognizing that change can never be achieved overnight but it is through constant little strides that we will eventually see our impact in our society.

(L to R): Professor Moletsane, Takatso, Bongzi, Melissa and Zethu in discussion about what the music elicited



Dr. Sadiyya Haffejee, Research Fellow, University of KwaZulu-Natal

We are so pleased to welcome to the team Dr. Sadiyya Haffejee who has joined us as a post-doctoral research fellow! Dr. Haffejee completed her Ph.D. with Professor Linda Theron as part of the *Networks for Change* project and has now joined the team at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

(L to R): Dr. Haffejee, Dr. Astrid Treffry-Goatley, Prof. Lebo, Mr. Mpembe (Ward Councillor) at the Community Dialogue on forced and early marriage in Loskop on 17 April 2019

Loskop (South Africa)

Social Ills Fighters

Following a series of stakeholders meetings in Loskop about the practice of forced and early marriage in the area, a community dialogue was held on the 17th of April 2019. The dialogue was well-attended by members of the community including the *Inkosi* (Chief) of the area. During the dialogue, the Social Ills Fighters presented their digital story on forced marriage to their community.

One of the outcomes of our stakeholders' meetings in Loskop was a request that we assist with the development of a reporting and response protocol on early and forced marriage. We are in the process of collaboratively developing this protocol with stakeholders including the Social Ills Fighters, the traditional leadership of eMangweni, members of the community, Thembaletu Care Organisation, the South African Police Service, the National Prosecuting Authority, and the Commission for Gender Equality. On 15th July 2019, we presented the first draft of this protocol to stakeholders for feedback at the stakeholders meeting in Loskop. A second draft, incorporating feedback from this meeting will be translated into isiZulu and presented to stakeholders for further feedback in the coming months.



Two of the Social Ills Fighters presenting one of their digital stories to the community

The mother of one of the Social Ills Fighters speaking out against the practices of forced and early marriage



On 13th July 2019, the Social Ills Fighters met to finalize their Policy Posters and Action Briefs. Professor de Lange also did an exciting career guidance exercise with the group based on the Japanese concept of *ikigai* (below).



Khethani (South Africa)

Leaders for Young Women's Success

On 14th July 2019, the Leaders for Young Women's Success met to finalize their Policy Posters and Action Briefs. The Leaders for Young Women's Success will use their policy posters and action briefs to raise awareness in their community about rape, substance abuse and LGBTI rights, and to advocate for safe spaces for young people to spend their free time. Guided by Professor de Lange, they also went in search of their *ikigai*.



The Leaders for Young Women's Success editing their Policy Poster

Treaty 6 (Canada)

Young Indigenous Girls' Utopia

Update from Jen, Kari, & Sarah

Tansi/Taanishii from Treaty 6, Traditional Homeland of the Metis.

The spring and summer months have brought many lessons and memories for The Young Indigenous Women's Utopia and we are thankful to Creator and our kin for the love and resilience we continue to exuberate.

The highlight of our work together during these seasons has brought us to a point where our young women were able to share their learnings and stories with our community. With great nervousness and excitement YIWU launched the first edition of our very own book, inspired by our sisters in South Africa, we spent much of the winter and early snowmelt, writing, peer editing, and working with the fabulous Indigenous Graphic Designer Gabrielle Giroux and Encore Graphics. Within this time together our girls journeyed through the discipline and dedication it takes to self-publish and launch what Utopia has meant to us, not just as girls but as a collective of resisters, matriarchs, and survivors. Our book is an exciting collection of poetry, prose and photography that documents our journey and celebrates the girl's resistance to colonial and gender-based violence. It stresses that self-love and pride are the first steps in creating a safer world for Indigenous girls. The compilation also includes love letters from project facilitators and prominent local Indigenous feminist artists, activists and community leaders.

On April 28th, in a cozy dark room at Paved Arts Studio on 20th Street in Saskatoon, YIUW took pride in inviting their Kokums, Mooshums, Mothers, Fathers, Aunties, Brothers, Sisters,

Mentors and friends. Sarah and Claudia joined us to celebrate this amazing accomplishment and we were pleased to show them how we do things in T6/TMT. At the tender age of 13 and 14, our 7 brave, courageous and kind young women each read a piece of their work which brought, laughter, tears, and pride to a packed house of over 100 people. Words cannot describe the power and magnitude that filled Paved Arts that night. These young women organized a night to remember with a yummy spread of appetizers, the smell of cedar and sage lingering in the air, the powerful lyrics of *For Women by Women Aunties*, *Eekowl* and *T-Rhyme*, and a book cover cake made for these Queens. The girls rode home under the moonlight and were left feeling uplifted, empowered, and most importantly loved.

The 200 copies of YIWU sold out within a month! We couldn't believe it and we spent this summer re-editing and will have our second edition available for the fall of 2019. The girls of Utopia's stories are now in the hands of Kokums, Professors, educators, little sisters, and many proud family members. It is quite incredible what can happen when you give young iskwewak a pen and paper and the courage to speak their truth.

Through the evening of the book launch, we wanted to create a space where families could speak back to our

work and share their voices on how they felt about the evening and the girl's involvement with *Networks4Change* and the impact Utopia has had on the girl's lives. Kiyari McNab, an Indigenous filmmaker from our community, engaged in the process of ethical storytelling with our families and the girls infused with Indigenous research methodologies and fun. Kiyari has been producing a video that will capture the impact of YIWU and what it means to our community. Our video is set to launch again in Treaty 6 in late August. We will gather families and friends together to screen this powerful piece of our voices in a visual storytelling project.

As we catch our breath, resist our oppressors and pick Saskatoon berries and medicines over these next weeks of the warm summer months, we are excited to continue the next wave of our work together and though we still face the hardships and challenges that everyday life may bring, we know we are never alone and have group of girls and a larger network of sisters worldwide, who stand beside us each day fighting the gendered and colonial violence we are left to resist, and we never forget that:

We are strong, We are smart, We are girls.

***With much love and respect!
Aho! Peace out from Treaty 6/TMT!***



Rankin Inlet (Canada)

Marnina Gonick

In July, the Rankin Inlet group ran a week-long media workshop, "Girls Talk Back." The workshop took place at the Rankin Inlet Spousal Abuse Counselling Program which is part of the Pulaarvik Kablu. There were approximately 10

participants. The week-long program consisted of two parts:

1. Making a short video entitled *Struggling for a Happy Life*, and
2. Creating a Girlfesto

The video recounts the experience of a young couple living in Rankin Inlet who have a new born baby. It focuses on the consequences of drug addiction and physical abuse and how the couple navigate community support services, including a women's shelter and addictions counselling. The girls collaboratively created the story, acted it out, provided narration, edited the video and did the camera work.

For the second activity the group created a girlfesto—drawing on the Girlfesto that was created as part of the *Circles Within Circles* event. While the Rankin Inlet girls, saw many similarities to the demands in the prior Girlfesto they also saw some differences. They created a Girlfesto that spoke to the life conditions of girls living in the far North. It lists the need for adequate housing, safety, and freedom from bullying.



Time to Teach About Gender-Based Violence in Canada

Treaty 6 Student Workshop
Catherine Vanner

The Time to Teach research project uses qualitative and participatory visual methods to examine experiences teaching and learning about gender-based violence in Canadian secondary schools. It is led by Catherine Vanner, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at McGill University, with Claudia Mitchell's supervision, and involves curriculum analysis, teacher interviews, and participatory workshops with students and teachers.

In June 2019, the first participatory student workshop was held in Treaty 6 Territory (Saskatoon) with organizing partners Jennifer Altenberg, Kari Wuttunee, and Dynelle Wolfe from Young Indigenous Women's Utopia. The two-day workshop brought together 10 Indigenous girls ages 11-17, including girls who were experienced members of Young Indigenous Women's Utopia, as well as some who were new to the group.

The workshop emphasized the importance of traditional Indigenous knowledge and self-love and worked with the girls to understand what colonial and gender-based violence is and invite their views on how it should be addressed by teachers in school. The workshop opened with the blessing of Elder Marjorie Beaucage, followed by an introduction on gender, healthy relationships, colonial violence, and gender-based violence led by community leaders Leigh Thomas and Breanna Doucette-Garr. Following these

group discussions, the participants wrote letters to someone they knew who has experienced gender-based violence. Their messages were then transferred to a red broadcloth and signed with handprints, pictured below. We then used a series of art-based activities to explore experiences learning about gender-based violence and solicit suggestions for how teachers could best address gender-based violence issues in school contexts. Activities included letters to teachers, cellphlms, and 'carousels' where students responded to questions on large sheets of paper, rotating between papers to build on and respond to each others' comments.

Key messages from the workshop participants are that girls continue to experience colonial and gender-based violence and discrimination in school,

and that few have learned about gender-based violence issues in the school context. Participants stated that if it had not been for Young Indigenous Women's Utopia, they never would have learned about gender-based violence, and that they should be taught about it so they know how to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, which particularly targets Indigenous girls during their adolescence. They encourage teachers to teach about gender-based violence with support of Indigenous community leaders, while always providing students the choice to leave a lesson about gender-based violence, making sure they feel loved and supported, and creating an opportunity for students to do something about it, such as helping to spread knowledge and awareness within their communities.

A Time to Teach art piece. With workshop participants' handprints and messages to survivors of gender-based violence.



**Sisters Rising
(British Columbia, Canada)**

University of Victoria,
Unceded Lkwungen Territories



Team: Sandrina de Finney
Chantale Adams Kathryn McLeod
Shantelle Moreno Amber Lewis
Anna Chadwick Kyla Elliott

Our Final Year!

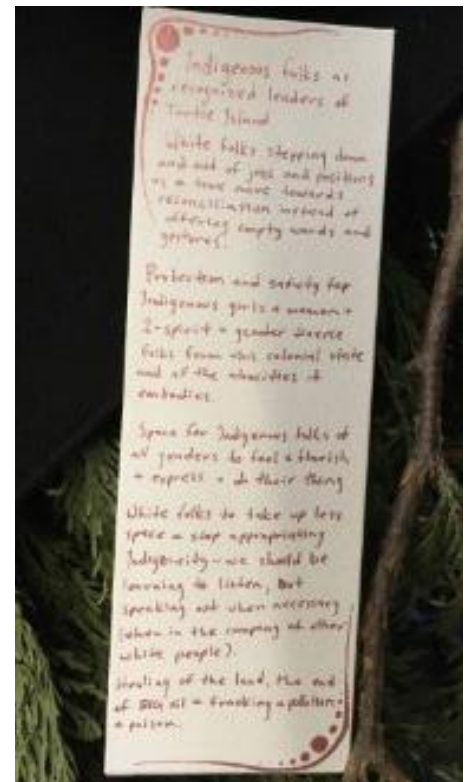
Greetings from Canada's west coast! Sisters Rising has had a very busy year so far, as we continue our work in diverse Indigenous communities across BC. We are well into our final project year, focused on knowledge mobilization and translating outcomes into broader action.

This past year, we have followed in the footsteps of our 2018 international forum that brought together over 100 youth, Elders, community members, researchers and service providers from Canadian and South African Indigenous communities. The forum provided an interdisciplinary platform for scholarly and community exchange related to gender wellbeing.

Since then, we have focused on growing our community partnerships, and widely sharing and translating our research findings and outcomes. We continue to host workshops and activities, including in new communities, and with a few new research facilitators. Our network still includes youth, knowledge keepers, community partners, practice and policy stakeholders, post-secondary students and academics.

In March we held an inter-generational Sisters Rising Open House to report back on the outcomes of our forum, show our digital stories, and engage in further art-making and community building. We were grateful to host many of the participants and stakeholders who attended the forum, as well as babies, children and youth participants, and some new partners. One important outcome of the forum and Open House was to pursue three new themes and two new community partnerships.

In addition to continuing land-based workshops and activities, we also co-wrote publications and reports, presented at several conferences, and did numerous guest lectures and public presentations. Finally, two of our amazing students, Shantelle Moreno and Anna Chadwick, will be completing their MA degrees with Sisters Rising this fall, and two others, Shezell-Rae Sam and Keenan Andrew, received MA SSHRC awards and were invited to present their work at the University of Toronto sexual health forum in Toronto.



Future Work

Over the next year(s), we hope to continue to build on our community-led intergenerational mentorship model, adhere to community-specific land-based protocols, and include youth-engaged and community-based multimedia knowledge mobilization. As always, we raise our hands in gratitude to our amazing team and network, and to all the knowledge keepers, young people, community members, families, practitioners, and to the *Networks4Change* team.

Networks Events

More Than Words Dialogue Event

October 3-4, 2019 | McGill University

This two-day event, an initiative of the WAGE (Status of Women Canada)-funded project *More than Words in Addressing Sexual and Gender based Violence: A Dialogue on the Impact of Indigenous-focused Youth-led Engagement Through the Arts on Families and Communities*, a 4-year project (2019-2023), will focus on the impact of youth-led arts and visual practices on families and communities in addressing SGBV.

7th International Cellfilm Festival

Submission Deadline:
November 18, 2019

Submissions should be no more than 90 seconds and should be uploaded to YouTube. Along with your YouTube link, we ask that you also submit a 200-300 word write-up that includes:

- ▶ title of your cellfilm
- ▶ country of origin
- ▶ names of all the cellfilm's co-producers
- ▶ short description of how your group went about creating the submission
- ▶ film's connection to this year's theme

Send submissions to:

thecellfilmfestival@gmail.com

How to make a cellfilm:

<https://vimeo.com/138321705>

Website:

internationalcellfilmfestivalblog.wordpress.com/

Central to this work is the idea of looking both at the impact on young people themselves, and on their families and communities, particularly as guided by trauma-informed and cultural safety and healing in Indigenous communities as overarching principles.

An integral feature of the project is to contribute to expanding a national network on the arts in youth-led approaches to support SGBV survivors and their families, building as it does on the international partnership project *Networks for Change and Well-being: Girl-led 'from the ground up' policy making to address sexual violence in Canada and South Africa*. See Briefing Paper *Girls Groups to Address Sexual Violence* (p. 12).

Day 1: What Are We Learning

Setting the Context for *More Than Words* Dialogue

Networks for Change and Well-being: What Have We Learned?

Legacy: Trauma, Story and Indigenous Healing

Getting to Impact: Integrating Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Making and Reflecting: Arts-based Dialogue

Day 2: Studying Impact

What Matters Now

Sohkeyimowin: Studying the Impact on Families


Digging In: Part 1

Digging In: Part 2

Speaking Back Exchange

Reflecting Forward

Conference Closing



7th McGill International Cellfilm Festival

PICTURING CHANGE

Grounded in participatory video and mobile media, cellfilm production allows groups to come together to highlight critical issues in their lives through the use of cellphones.

With this in mind, the organizers of this year's festival invite submissions that explore how you and your community (a small group of friends, members of a project or class, research colleagues, a global community, etc.) picture change in your neighbourhood, your community, your country or your planet. You may choose to do this in view of a particular critical issue, or, alternatively, to consider what 'picturing change' might mean in a context where people often struggle to envision a different way of being in the world.



Submissions should be no more than 90 seconds and should be uploaded to YouTube. Along with your YouTube link, we ask that you also submit a 200-300 word write-up that includes the title of your cellfilm and its country of origin, the names of all the cellfilm's co-producers, and a short description of how your group went about creating the submission as well as the film's connection to this year's theme.

All submissions should be sent to thecellfilmfestival@gmail.com by Monday, November 18, 2019. Winners of the festival will be announced through a virtual screening which will be held in December 2019. Prizes will be awarded.

For more info, visit us online!

Call for submissions

Submissions due November 18, 2019 | thecellfilmfestival@gmail.com

internationalcellfilmfestivalblog.wordpress.com | McGill |  |  | 

Congratulations!

Learning to Live our Language Zapotec Elders and Youth Fostering Intergenerational Dialogue Through Cellfilms

Joshua Schwab-Cartas | February 5, 2019



Joshua Schwab-Cartas of the Department of Integrated Studies, McGill successfully defended his thesis on February 5th, 2019

My study examines how mobile technologies—specifically cellfilms (cellphone videos)—can facilitate intergenerational dialogue between youth and elders on ancestral language and cultural practices. As English and Spanish cultural productions become more dominant in the global mediasphere, a more multifaceted approach that combines culture and technological elements offers productive possibilities for overcoming this increasing crisis of language loss.

Accordingly, my study is rooted in two distinct but complementary methodologies. The first is an Indigenous Oaxacan methodology/practice known as *communalidad*, which is a multi-voiced community process rooted in a commitment to strengthening the future of communal lifeways. In particular these lifeways reflect the values of our Zapotec ancestors and community and local Indigenous identity by asserting strategies of cultural praxis that do not perceive education in terms of formal classroom curriculum. Rather they engage cultural process of learning, when making tamales, planting corn crops or “doing” other embodied ancestral Zapotec practices. This *communalidad* method was merged with a participatory cellfilm methodology in the form of a series of workshops adapting mobile technologies. Making and sharing videos about embodied ancestral Zapotec practices (i.e. making tamales) brought together elders and youth in an engaged learning practice. The results included a dialogue about how new technologies can inform the transfer of Indigenous ancestral knowledge, language and embodied practices in the 21st century, while continuing to find innovative ways to make relevant to our youth the teachings of our elders.

Linguists estimate that approximately 90% of the world’s languages will

disappear before the end of this century with Indigenous languages, such as Isthmus Zapotec language—*diidxazá*—spoken in my maternal grandfather’s community of Union Hidalgo in Southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, being most at risk. According to the 2010 census of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography Mexico, of a population of approximately 13,970 people, only 7,453 in Union Hidalgo spoke Zapotec, an alarming contrast to twenty years ago when our elders’ tell us that the entire community spoke Zapotec. Indigenous languages such as *diidxazá* are rich repositories of thousands of years of accumulated knowledge that have developed from intimate relationships with a specific land-base and local ecology and encompass: cultural rituals and practices, family lineages, community, physical, and spiritual knowledge of wellness. If we are unable to engage new generations as active speakers, *Diidxazá*, our language and way of life is at risk of becoming extinct over the next two or three generations.

Founding my approach on ancestral models of experiential learning from my community, I have developed alongside my community an approach that centres on youth and their use of technology in order to support the transfer of Zapotec language and culture from elders to the new generations.

Picturing a Community-Informed Bystander Intervention Approach Addressing Sexual Violence in Public Transport Spaces and Outdoor Concert Venues in Montreal

Lukas Labacher | September 5, 2019



Lukas Labacher, from the School of Social Work at McGill University, successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on September 5th, 2019. His study was supervised by Dr. Myriam Denov from the School of Social Work, Dr. Claudia Mitchell from the Department of Integrated Studies in Education, and Dr. Shanly Dixon.

When I first began this study six years ago, I was startled by a growing pattern I saw in several reports that highlighted

a pervasive problem of sexual violence occurring at a number of universities across Quebec, in and around transit spaces in Montreal more centrally, as well as at outdoor concert venues. Six years later, as highlighted in the recent *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women-Quebec Supplementary Report*, Indigenous women continue to find themselves doubly marginalized; because they face a great deal of homophobia and racial discrimination, this has led

Girl Groups to Address Sexual Violence is the newest briefing paper in the series of briefing papers authored by doctoral students, community scholars, and other researchers, released by the *Networks4Change* partnership.

The briefing paper offers insights into the importance of Girl Groups to address sexual violence and provides tools to create Girl Groups based on their experiences. By sharing this work, we hope to inspire others to start Girl Groups with goals of improving the lives of all young people, particularly girls and young women.

Girl Groups are generally extra-curricular clubs in a school or a community where adolescent girls can come together to think about, learn about, and talk about issues related to gender. Many groups have evolved to challenge the gender binary and include trans-folk, 2 spirited, gender fluid, boys and gender non-conforming individuals.

The briefing provides the context and history of Girl Groups, speaking to their importance, value and the ability to create social change through Girl Groups. The themes of safe spaces, social change, community and cultural relevance and activism as they relate to Girl Groups are addressed. The briefing also provides the initial steps for creating a group, topics to cover and several suggested activities for a Girl Group to do.

The briefing paper is available as a hard copy and PDF. For more details, visit:

<http://www.networks4change.ca/briefing-paper/>

Other Briefing Papers:

1. Cash Transfer Programs for Female Students
2. Using Everyday Media Making Tools to Address Gender-based Violence: Participatory Visual Methods and Community-based Technologies
3. English Language Support and Academic Literacy in ATVETs
4. Ethics of Participatory Visual Research to Address Gender-based Violence



Girl Groups is one of the best things that happened to me. I feel so much stronger as a woman. I can be myself and I can share my struggle without being judged.
 Andraya Daniels, Young Indigenous Women's Utopia

(L) Young Girls Leading Change leading a march they organized to raise awareness of gender-based violence in the town of Potchefstroom, South Africa.

(R) A scene from Young Indigenous Women's Utopia's play. It addressed discrimination against and stereotypes of indigenous women.

Upcoming Briefing Paper

Transnational Perspectives on Girl-Led Community and Policy Dialogue

We are currently in the process of producing a briefing paper on *Transnational Perspectives on Girl-Led Community and Policy Dialogue*.

Drawing on the experiences and insights of *Networks4Change* and our partnership with the Trudeau Foundation, this briefing paper will provide tools for engaging young people “from the ground up” with communities and policymakers.

The work will cover the challenges of engaging young people with policymakers, using participatory visual methods and feature examples of youth engaging with policymakers from around the world.

Partners



Current Stakeholders



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