

# NETWORKS FOR CHANGE AND WELL-BEING



July 15, 2021



We are so grateful to the many folks involved in *Networks for Change and Well-being: Girl-led 'From the Ground Up' Policy-making to Address Sexual Violence in Canada and South Africa (N4C)* fieldwork, advocacy, academia, administration, partnerships, knowledge mobilisation and publications.

First and foremost, we thank the youth leaders of N4C, whose wisdom, leadership, and activism are at the heart of this work. We also acknowledge the dedication and support of the many adults, scholars, Elders, Aunties, community leaders and mentors that work with Networks' youth on a day-to-day basis, amplifying voices and creating safe spaces for youth to realise their potential, explore their culture and pursue their passions.

N4C is made possible with funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) project number 865- 2013-3007 & the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) project number 107777-001.

*More Than Words: Studying the impact of arts-based survivor engagement on families and communities*, continues to build on the work of N4C, with the support of Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE). *Pathways2Equity: Youth-Led, Indigenous-Focussed, Gender-Transformative, Arts-Based Approaches to Challenging Gender Norms in Addressing Gender-Based Violence*, also supported by WAGE, widens the circle further still.

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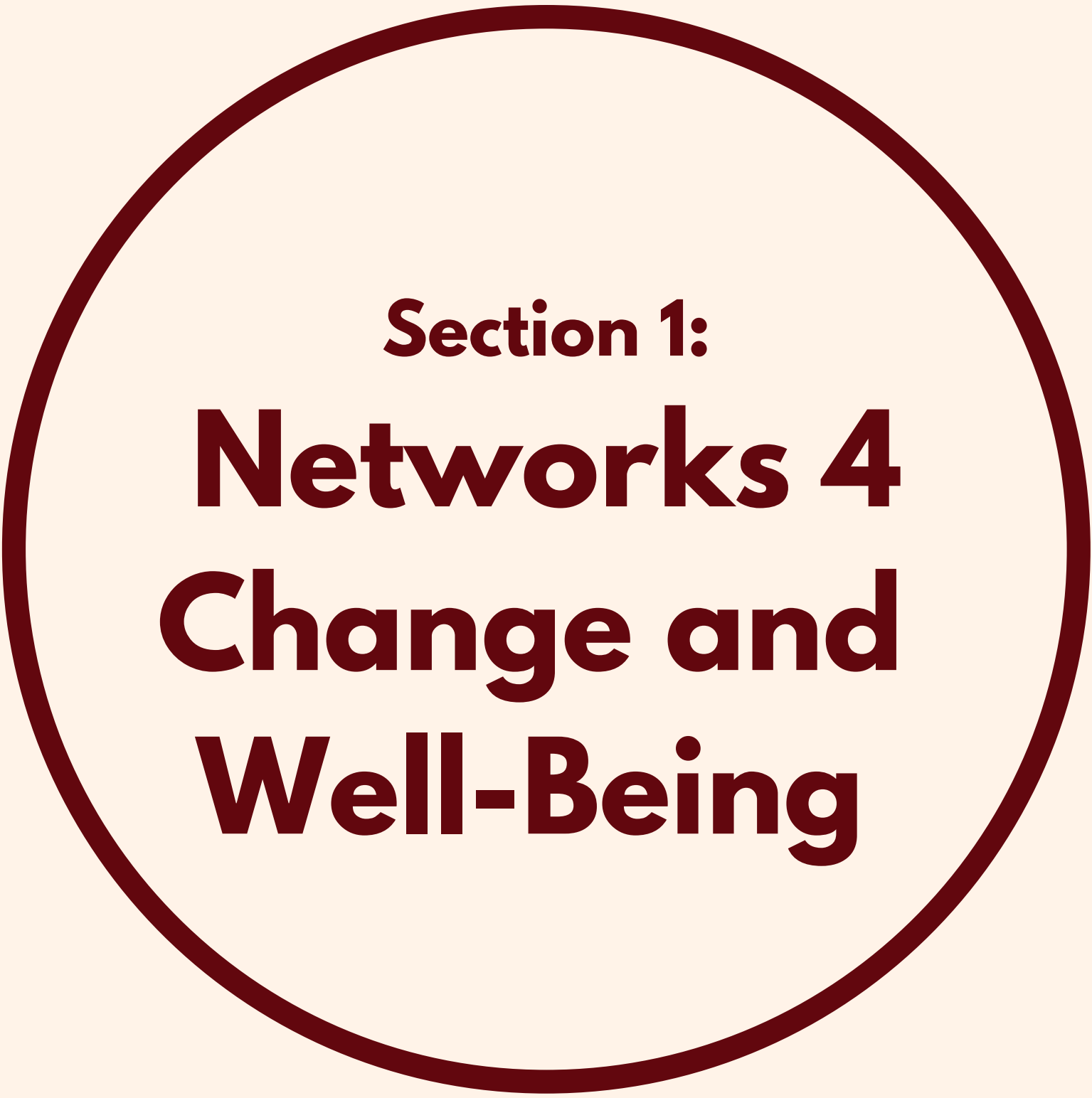
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**Section 1:**  
**Networks 4**  
**Change and**  
**Well-Being**

# N4C Objectives

**To build knowledge and understanding from disciplinary, interdisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral perspectives on sexual violence through support for leading researchers in both Canada and South Africa.**

**To build the capacity of girl-focused community structures to combat sexual violence.**

**To deepen an understanding of Indigenous knowledge (in relation to methodologies, ethics and well-being) in the context of a transnational study of Indigenous girlhoods.**

**To advance the application of digital and social media tools in participatory research, and the development of innovations in communication networks in addressing sexual violence.**

**To study the impact of participatory policy-making in relation to sexual violence in local, national and international communities.**

**To create a transnational platform for raising awareness and advocacy on sexual violence.**

**To provide high-quality research training to undergraduate, masters, doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows and junior faculty members (as new scholars) in working with the development of digital tools, youth media, and girls themselves in both local and international contexts.**

## GIRLS LEADING CHANGE

### REWRITING THEIR NARRATIVE THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND STORYTELLING

Girls Leading Change (GLC) is a group of women who were first-year education students at Nelson Mandela University (NMU) at the time an open invitation for the group was made in 2013. This group was initially intended to be an 18 month project with the title of **"Digital media making for change and well-being"**—soon becoming N4C's very first field-site. At the centre of their work, GLC has explored critical issues related to gender-based violence (GBV), especially on campus. They have since worked together, presenting their findings to elicit dialogue with various policy makers within the faculty and university, but also at a variety of local and international forums. Now teachers, these women are committed to rewriting the narrative of gender-based violence in their classrooms to further build change and awareness.

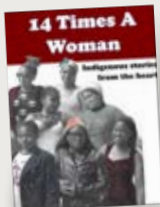


#### ETHOS

BE AGENTS OF CHANGE BY ENCOURAGING GIRLS TO REVISIT THEIR OWN HURTFUL EXPERIENCES IN ORDER TO RECONNECT WITH THEIR INNER STRENGTH AND EMERGE MORE POWERFUL

#### PUBLISHINGS

GLC HAVE PUBLISHED MULTIPLE BOOKS, INCLUDING **"DEAR NOSIZWE: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT GENDER INCLUSIVE TEACHING IN SCHOOL"** AND **"14 TIMES A WOMAN"** AMONGST OTHERS.



#### CENTRE FOR WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES

GLC SAW A NEED FOR A CENTRE FOR WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES WHERE GENDER SCHOLARSHIP COULD BE PROMOTED. FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND DISCUSSION WITH LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES, THE UNIVERSITY BEGAN CONCEPTUALIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRE FOR WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES. THE LAUNCH OF THE CENTRE REFLECTS A NEW COMMITMENT BY NMU, PROVIDING FRAMEWORKS AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND ACADEMICS, AND A COMMITMENT TO CREATING A SPACE FOR PROMOTING GENDER SCHOLARSHIP AND ACTIVISM.

#### AREAS OF ACTION!

#### TRIP TO THE US

IN 2016, 13 OF THE GLC EDUCATION STUDENTS WERE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL TO **ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY** IN MINNESOTA. WHILE THERE, THE GLC MEMBERS NOTICED HOW THE UNIVERSITY IMPLEMENTED PRACTICAL AND EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ACCOMMODATE ITS DIVERSE STUDENTS. THEY FOUND IT REFRESHING THAT CLASS WAS DIALOGUE/DISCUSSION BASED, AND HOW LECTURERS ACTED AS FACILITATORS RATHER THAN SOLE SPEAKERS. GLC LEARNED WHAT EDUCATION COULD LOOK LIKE WITH THIS FRAMEWORK, AND HOW THE ACCOMMODATION OF ACTIVISM ON GBV ISSUES ARE NECESSARY IN SUCH SETTINGS.

#### PRESENTING THEIR WORK

GIRLS LEADING CHANGE HAS CONTRIBUTED TO MANY CONFERENCES AND PRESENTED THEIR WORK. SOME OF THE MOST NOTABLE EVENTS INCLUDE **THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESEARCH INITIATIVE CONFERENCE, THE INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS PRE-CONFERENCE ON HIV & AIDS, THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE SYMPOSIUM, THE INTERNATIONAL PATHWAYS TO RESILIENCE IV CONFERENCE** HELD IN CAPE TOWN, AS WELL AS FACILITATING MULTIPLE N4C CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS THEMSELVES.

### GQEBERHA, SOUTH AFRICA

NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY, GQEBERHA, EASTERN CAPE

Girls Leading Change is based at Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape. The principal languages spoken in the Gqeberha area include Afrikaans, English, and isiXhosa. Although Gqeberha is the most populous city in Eastern Cape, the women of GLC come from rural areas. Their dual experience in both small communities and large cities has given them the awareness to address GBV in grassroots rural contexts in addition to urban areas such as a university campus. Navigating these issues has given GLC perspectives on how GBV is prevalent and can be addressed in both settings.



## YOUNG GIRLS LEADING CHANGE



### BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH AWARENESS AND ACTION

Young Girls Leading Change is a group of girls who started working together in 2015 to address gender-based violence in their rural school and community. The girls have participated in many forms of visual work, including drawing, photovoice, cellphilm, and making policy posters and action briefs to better understand gender-based violence in their rural context and to spread this awareness to the community at large.

#### ETHOS

TO BE AGENTS OF CHANGE BY ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF GBV IN THEIR SCHOOL AND THEIR COMMUNITY AND GIVING THEIR PERSPECTIVE ON HOW THIS PROBLEM SHOULD BE ADDRESSED

#### CELLPHILM AWARD

WINNERS OF THE 3RD PRIZE AT THE 2020 INTERNATIONAL CELLPHILM FESTIVAL FOR THEIR PIECE "OUR EXPERIENCES DURING THE LOCKDOWN" WHICH ADDRESSED THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE DURING THE PANDEMIC. THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO CREATE CELLPHILMS EVER SINCE.

#### HIGHLIGHTING THEIR WORK

THE GIRLS HAVE PRESENTED THEIR WORK "WE ARE UNSAFE OUT ON THE STREETS, AT HOME, WE ARE NOT SAFE AT ALL: YOUNG RURAL SCHOOL GIRLS TAKING ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE", AND HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO "SEEING THINGS: SCHOOLGIRLS IN A RURAL SETTING USING VISUAL ARTEFACTS TO INITIATE DIALOGUE ABOUT RESISTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE" AMONGST OTHER COMMUNITY-BASED AND UNPUBLISHED WORKS.

#### INITIATING A GENDER CLUB

YGLC DECIDED TO CREATE THEIR OWN GENDER GROUP WITH GIRLS FROM OTHER SCHOOLS THAT WERE WILLING TO JOIN YGLC. THEY ARE WORKING ON EXPANDING TO ESTABLISH MULTIPLE CLUBS.

#### AREAS OF ACTION!



#### COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

YGLC HAVE MARCHED TO RAISE AWARENESS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE. FOR EXAMPLE, ON WOMEN'S DAY IN AUGUST 2018, THE YGLC, THEIR PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS, AS WELL AS OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS, GATHERED IN FRONT OF THE POLICE STATION IN THE SMALL TOWN OF PATERSON, TO MARCH TO RAISE AWARENESS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.



### PATERSON, SOUTH AFRICA

SANDISULWAZI SECONDARY SCHOOL, PATERSON, EASTERN CAPE



Young Girls Leading Change is based in rural Paterson, Eastern Cape. Led by Nelson Mandela University, work at this site involves rural school girls at Sandisulwazi Secondary School in Paterson, between the ages of 15 and 18. The principal languages spoken in the Paterson area include isiXhosa (66.7%), Afrikaans (23.2%) and English (5.9%). Much of the work done by the girls is informed by their rural context, where issues related to GBV are often silenced and awareness is not widespread.

## SOCIAL ILLS FIGHTERS

### ADDRESSING EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE IN RURAL SOUTH AFRICA



#### ETHOS

“CREATE CHANGE IN THEIR COMMUNITY BY ENGAGING IN DIALOGUES AND EXPLORING SOLUTIONS WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS: POLICE, SCHOOLS, TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP, AND THE COMMUNITY”

*Social Ills Fighters (SIFs) is a group of girls and young women contributing to create change in their community. They use visual methods to show how cultural practices and traditional gender norms, including early and forced marriage (EFM), are experienced by girls and young women as violence. Their efforts ignited dialogue with **traditional leadership, police, schools, and other stakeholders** to address this in their community. The SIFs' creative work led to the adoption of the “**Reporting and Response Protocol on early and forced marriage in eMangweni**” in March 2020, by which eMangweni authorities committed to address EFM and provide ongoing support to the victims.*

### LOSKOP PROTOCOL

#### BEGINNINGS

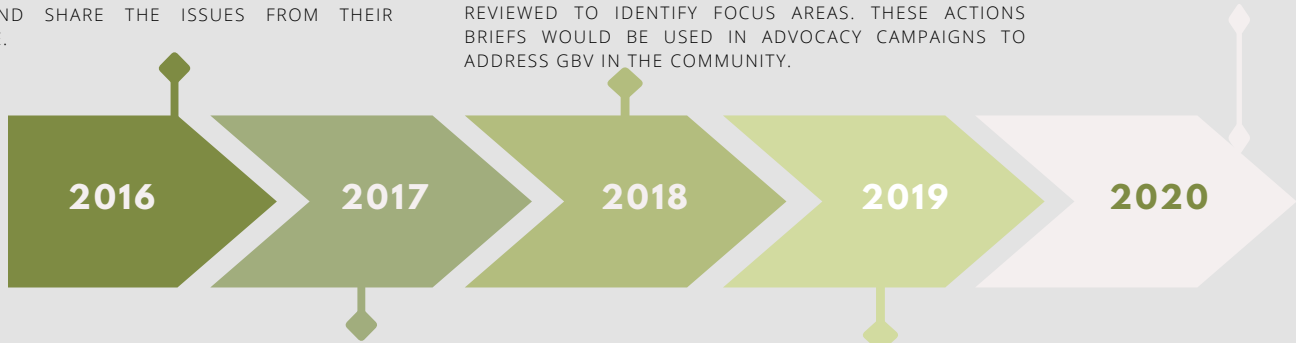
RESEARCHERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS RECRUITED A GROUP OF HIGH-SCHOOL GIRLS AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 19 WHO CHOSE TO NAME THEMSELVES THE SOCIAL ILLS FIGHTERS. THE SIFs WERE INTRODUCED TO STORYTELLING METHODS, SUCH AS PHOTOVOICE AND CELLPHILMING. THE USE OF PARTICIPATORY VISUAL METHODOLOGIES WOULD ALLOW THEM TO IDENTIFY AND SHARE THE ISSUES FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE.

#### BUILDING AWARENESS

IN EARLY 2018, THE SIFs ORGANIZED A COMMUNITY AWARENESS MARCH AND CREATED POSTERS WITH SLOGANS SUCH AS “**STOP EARLY MARRIAGE**” AND “**NO MORE VOWS FOR COWS.**” LATER IN THE YEAR, THE SIFs ENGAGED IN WORKSHOPS TO CREATE ACTION BRIEFS. THE VISUAL OUTPUTS PRODUCED IN PREVIOUS WORKSHOPS WERE REVIEWED TO IDENTIFY FOCUS AREAS. THESE ACTIONS BRIEFS WOULD BE USED IN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS TO ADDRESS GBV IN THE COMMUNITY.

#### FINALIZATION

THE PROTOCOL WAS FINALISED IN EARLY 2020, AND SIGNED BY THE INKOSI ON BEHALF OF THE AMANGWE COMMUNITY ON MARCH 11, 2020.



#### WORKSHOPS

THE SIFs PARTICIPATED IN A SERIES OF WORKSHOPS AIMING TO UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITY, AND ITS IMPACT ON GIRLS. **EFM** WAS IDENTIFIED AS A PREVALENT ISSUE IN THEIR COMMUNITY, AND THE SIFs OPTED TO CREATE 4 CELLPHILMS AND ONE DIGITAL STORY TO RAISE AWARENESS ON THE SUBJECT.

#### REALITY OF RISK

IN THE FIRST EIGHT WEEKS OF 2019, EIGHT GIRLS FROM LOSKOP WERE ABDUCTED AND NEVER RETURNED TO SCHOOL. IN RESPONSE TO THE RECENT EVENTS, THE ADULT RESEARCH TEAM HELD A SERIES OF WORKSHOPS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND THE EMANGWENI TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY TO RAISE AWARENESS ON EFM AND ADVOCATE THE END OF THIS PRACTICE. THE SIFs WERE NOT PHYSICALLY PRESENT AT THESE MEETINGS FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY.



### LOSKOP, SOUTH AFRICA

#### LOSKOP, KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE



The issue of EFM has been neglected in much of rural South Africa, and continues to be a key barrier to girls' education and well-being. In the context of the SIF's community, eMangweni (Loskop), these issues are very linked to the context of their rural setting, and some of the practices and traditions that promoted such barriers. Given the high levels of violence in rural communities in South Africa and the unequal traditional practices, “calling out social injustice may expose girls and women to further aggression and persecution” (Haffejee, et al : 25). As for the languages in the region, the large majority speak isiZulu, with some speaking English, and a small fraction who speak isiXhosa.



## LEADERS FOR YOUNG WOMEN'S SUCCESS

### A CRITICAL EYE ON SOCIETAL FORCES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Leaders for Young Women's Success (L4YWS) is a group of girls and young women from Khetani who create forms of visual expression to portray the reality of girls and young women in their community who bear the extremely harsh consequences of GBV. Their work touches on how social issues, such as poverty, substance abuse, gender norms and hegemonic masculinity, make girls and young women vulnerable to GBV.



ETHOS

“  
**CREATE CHANGE IN THEIR COMMUNITY BY INDUCING COLLECTIVE ACTION**  
”

### A NEW VISION

**ZEE NGCOBO**, CO-FOUNDER OF L4YWS, AND PROUD TRANS WOMAN, GAVE A PROFOUND SPEECH AT THE 9TH SOUTH AFRICAN AIDS CONFERENCE HELD AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE IN DURBAN. IN HER SPEECH, ZEE DISCUSSED HER TRIBULATIONS GROWING UP BEING TRANS IN A RURAL SOUTH AFRICAN VILLAGE. THE LACK OF PROPER INFORMATION, SUPPORT LINES, AND SAFE SPACES MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR HER TO NAVIGATE HER YOUTH. NOW AS A YOUTH LEADER, SHE SHARES 3 POINTS OF ACTION HIGHLIGHTED IN HER SPEECH THAT ARE PILLARS TO THE WORK OF **L4YWS**:



### ORGANIZING CHANGE

ON BOTH INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AND WOMEN'S DAY (SOUTH AFRICA), L4YWC HELD A MARCH THAT WAS FOLLOWED BY A COMMUNITY DIALOGUE SESSION. THEY ALSO HAD THREE WORKSHOPS TO SHIFT THEIR WORK TO **'SPEAKING BACK', COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND SOCIAL & POLICY CHANGE**. ALONG THE WAY, THEY HAVE INCORPORATED THE USE OF ACTION BRIEFS, POLICY POSTERS, AND EXPRESSIVE FORMS SUCH AS CELLPHILMS TO EXTEND THE REACH OF THEIR POWERFUL MESSAGE.



1

**CORRECT INFORMATION ON SEXUALITY, PROTECTION, SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED ILLNESSES, AND ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS NEEDS TO BE PROVIDED IN SCHOOLS & CLINICS**

**PROPER EDUCATION**



**YOUTH NEED SAFE SPACES TO BE YOUNG AND DEVELOP THEMSELVES. WE MUST BE COMMITTED TO CREATING THESE SPACES**

2

**CREATE SAFE SPACES**



3

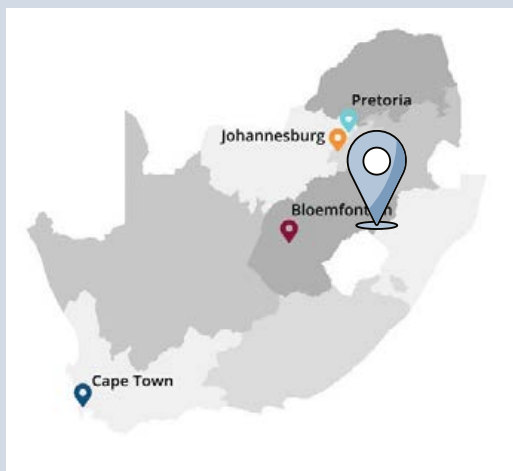
**PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, TEACHERS AND OTHER ADULTS NEED TO DO THEIR PART BY FIRST LISTENING TO YOUNG PEOPLE: WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE NEED, AND WHAT WILL WORK FOR US**

**LISTEN TO YOUTH**



### FINDING "IKIGAI" (DIRECTION)

FINDING DIRECTION IS INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT FOR SOCIAL CHANGEMAKERS. FOR L4YWS, THEIR WORK WITH POLICY POSTERS AND ACTION BRIEFS HELPED THEM REFINE THEIR PURPOSE AND CREATE A FOCUS. TO THEM, THIS MEANT RAISING AWARENESS AROUND **RAPE, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, LGBTQIA2S+ RIGHTS, AND TO ADVOCATE FOR SAFE SPACES** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO SPEND THEIR FREE TIME.



### KHETANI, SOUTH AFRICA

KHETANI, WINTERTON, KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE



Leaders for Young Women's Success is based in Khetani, South Africa. Khetani is a rural township that lies on the outskirts of the small farming town of Winterton and is a resource-poor area where people living there face a number of daily challenges. These struggles, which include poverty & unemployment, substance abuse, inadequate healthcare, and a lack of infrastructure, are of interest to L4YWS as they take a look into how these factors contribute to GBV in Khetani. As for the languages in the region, the large majority speak isiZulu.

ESKASONI, NOVA SCOTIA



## BREAK THE SILENCE: BE THE CHANGE

Since 2016, Break the Silence: Be the Change site in Eskasoni, Nova Scotia has activity aimed at changing the dialogue and awareness surrounding sexual and gender-based violence, specifically within their own community. This site is led through Dalhousie University, originally a partnership with boys and working with girls aged 18-23, however now containing a younger generation program with mentees and mentors.

### Workshops

- Using PVM of collaging, body maps, community maps and cellphlms
- Working with traditional Indigenous activities to address violence in their community
- Addressing the historical structures of colonialism, systemic racism and context surrounding the mechanisms in place to report sexual violence

### FEAR-LESS IN THE FACE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The research team partnered with Eskasoni Mental Health Services in 3-staged research working with young women to express themselves through art on what their want for their daughters, the role of media in the sexual victimization of women, and working with LGBTQ+ and 2 spirited youth.

This work addressed broad themes racial stereotyping, media discourse, the representation of Indigenous women.

### HEALING WITH THE SEVEN SACRED TEACHINGS

Created a colouring book to help sexual violence and gender-base survivors heal

### MEMORIAL GARDEN FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS (MMIWG) AND 2 SPIRIT INDIVIDUALS

The site worked together to create an interactive and educational memorial part that integrates a ceremony space to honour their Elders, and MMIWG



### HOSTED A "LESSONS LEARNED" COMMUNITY EVENT

This event, in November 2019, was attached to the creation of the community-based memorial garden for MMIWG

### YOUTH SPACE

Created a youth focused space in order to demonstrate the importance of creating cultural community resources



### LOCATED ON CAPE BRETON ISLAND WITHIN THE UNAMA'GI DISTRICT OF MI'KMAQ TERRITORY



Break the Silence: Be the Change in Eskasoni, has been in place since 2016 working with Dalhousie University. However, it is now working with a new generation of women and girls. They have now received their second group to be their mentees. This is the largest Indigenous community in Atlantic Canada. Their work is continued through numerous arts-based initiatives from painting and collage making, to body mapping and demonstrating how many young Indigenous men and boys feel similarly to the women in their communities.

## RANKIN INLET: GET ART

GET ART began in July 2017 led by Mount Saint Vincent University working with Spousal Abuse Counselling Program (SACP). Working with girls 8-13, Rankin Inlet uses PVM through producing cellfilms and music videos on the linkages between food insecurity and SGBV. Through group activities it allows for a space for girls and young women to provide support and be in charge of expressing themselves and their day-to-day experience of poverty, bullying, housing crisis, and domestic violence.

### Workshops

- Group discussions on day-to-day life
- Cellfilm creation (both regular videos and music videos)
- Painting the northern lights, creating collages, and PSA poster creating
- Inuit tattooing workshops and Inuit jewelry making, and throat singing workshops



### "THE PRICE IS TOO HIGH" MUSIC VIDEO 2018

Addresses the extremely high food prices in the North and the relation between food and social insecurity, and the links between social structures of violence that contribute to sexual violence



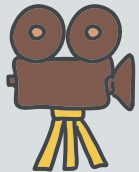
### "GIRLS TALK BACK": LOCAL GIRLFESTO AND CBC RADIO INTERVIEW

Created a Girlfesto specific to the Rankin Inlet context after the Circles within Cicles Girlfesto. This included what the girls wanted for the community and ongoing need for safety.



### GET ART PROGRAM

A program which focuses on anti-bullying workshops, creation of a cellfilm and listening to an Elder speak on bullying



### "STRUGGLING FOR A HAPPY LIFE" VIDEO

Video about addiction and physical abuse. The story was designed by the girls, filmed on cellphones and then presented in a community setting.



### "SAFETY AUDIT" MAPPING EXERCISE

The girls partook in a mapping exercise where they went around their community and took pictures of areas they felt safe and unsafe. Then the girls created posters about the change needed in their community



### GET ART IS PART OF THE INUIT COMMUNITY LOCATED ON THE KUDLULIK PENINSULA ON THE WEST COAST OF THE HUDSON BAY IN NUNAVUT

The area of Rankin Inlet where Get Art is located is the second largest community in Nunavut with a population of 3000, with 97% of the population being Inuit. The girls within Get Art are able to gain control and be in charge of expressing their issues and concerns based in their community. Activities are through the combination of PVM, empowerment and the learnings of their culturally significant activities such as Inuit tattooing workshops and learning the significance of Ulus.



## SISTERS RISING (KINSHIP RISING)



Sisters Rising, now Kinship Rising is an art-based initiative of Indigenous girls, young women and youth of all genders. This site is an Indigenous-led response to gender-based violence on the West Coast of what is colonially known as British Columbia. Sister's Rising supports young people's dignity, healing and strengths in relation to historical sexualized violence

### Workshops

- Challenging the victim-blaming climate of racialized gender violence
- Working with multimedia artwork, digital collage
- Workshops with storytelling, photography and video
- Workshops draw links between body sovereignty, decolonization and land sovereignty
- Host workshops with Elders, knowledge keepers, and youth in Indigenous communities across western Canada



### The Sisters Rising logo.

The face in the centre symbolizes the recognition for all genders and honouring and giving back to Mother Earth.

The mountains represent return to their own spirituality, and the open hands provide the message of compassionate care when others reach out.

MARGARET BRIERE,  
SKWETU ART



### ENGAGING YOUTH AND COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE CONFERENCE: OCTOBER 2018

It was an event to facilitate the mobilization and connection of knowledge. Hosted at the First Nations House on the unceded Lekwungen and W̱SÁNEĆ homelands in Victoria, British Columbia. 7 different First Nations communities across BC met, shared research findings and created new artwork and a video story



### AREAS OF EFFECT

#### DIGNITY CONSENT, SOVEREIGNTY AND BODY SOVEREIGNTY, LAND SOVEREIGNTY

Workshops through Sisters Rising focuses on the restoring and rebodging colonial violence through land-based materials. Sisters Rising uses the land-based medicines and materials in order to honour the link between land and body sovereignty.

#### MURAL PROJECT 2021

The "Fearless Sisters Rising" Mural was collaboratively created by youth participants and First Nation artists to celebrate the power and presence of Indigenous girls and women.

#### SHAPE SHIFTING VIOLENCE THROUGH ART AND LAND RETELLINGS FORUM

A way to engage youth and the community response to sexualized violence. This involved an art exhibition that was centred on the strengths and knowledge system of Indigenous nations. It explored how youth experience the historic and systemic colonial roots of sexualized violence.

### SISTERS RISING ON THE UNCEDED Lək̓ʷəŋən AND W̱SÁNEĆ HOMELANDS IN WHAT IS COLONIAALLY KNOWN AS BRITISH COLUMBIA



Sisters Rising, located on Lək̓ʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ homelands brings together Indigenous youth of all genders as well as community members, knowledge keepers and Elders in Indigenous communities on B.C.'s west coast. Sisters Rising creates Indigenous-led responses to gendered and sexualized violence by challenging the victim-blaming climate of violence, and linking issues of body sovereignty to decolonization and land sovereignty. Their project engages land and water-based workshops, art-making, multimedia storytelling and collective action to re-center Indigenous concepts of gender and sexual health, wellbeing, and resurgence.



## YOUNG INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S UPTOPIA



Started by the National Indigenous Young Women's Council and York University. The girls that began in 2016 were 12, partaking and leading activities exploring colonial and gendered violence that exist in their area. Activities emphasize self-love as a form of resistance and female empowerment deeply rooted in Indigenous Methodologies.

### Workshops:

- Led a workshop online, "Community Arts as a Source of Resistance" creating ribbon skirts
- Have had Auntie teachings for the Indigenous girls
- Mural making
- Workshops addressing GBV in their own lives and how to harness self-love and enforce consent
- Work on cellphilm, art-based projects, writings and teachings on the land

## SELF-LOVE AS THE FIRST FORM OF RESISTANCE

### INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S UPTOPIA BOOK 2019

Inspiring poetry, prose, and photography dealing with sexism, racism and the lives of girls in Treat 6

### OVER 25 ARTS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

The activities and initiatives are supporting SGBV survivors and their families through cellphilm, storytelling, medicine teachings, a walk of life activity, ribbon skirt making, smudging, berry picking, being a community and Land Teachings

### AWARD-WINNING CELLPHILM

The cellphilm won an award at the 7th International cellphilm festival. Young Indigenous Women's Utopia now has over 3000 views

### AWARDED THE INDSPiRE: 2020 GUIDING THE JOURNEY AWARD

A National Award



### WON THE 14 AND UNDER CATEGORY AT THE 2021 CELLPHILM FESTIVAL

AREAS OF EFFECT

### CREATOR! SAVE THE MATRIARCH! MURAL



### GIRLHOOD STUDIES: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL


A co-authored article between girls and researchers published through Berghahn Journals.



## IN THE TRADITIONAL HOMELAND OF THE MÉTIS, TREATY 6, SASKATOON

The girls involved in this Young Indigenous Women's Utopia have worked with the University of Saskatchewan to conduct in-service training and taught classes at York University. As well, what the girls learn is deeply tied to the Indigenous Methodologies coming from Cree and Métis women and a settler accomplice working together. The foundational values have been strengthened through summer workshops of Land Teachings and helping girls speak back against injustices.





**Section 2:**  
**Imbizo 2021**  
**Event**

# Imbizo Introduction

Imbizo 2021 reports on a key fieldwork event in the life of Networks for Change and Well-being: Girl-led 'From the Ground Up' Policy-making to Address Sexual Violence in Canada and South (hereafter N4C). N4C a Partnership Grant funded by IDRC and SSHRC as part of IPaSS programming dates back to 2014, although, through an NRF grant, the Girls Leading Change activities at Nelson Mandela University began in 2013.

The Imbizo was initially planned to take place face-to-face over 5 days in Durban, South Africa at the Imbizo Intergenerational, June 29-July 3, 2020.

Over 60 individuals from across Canada including 40 Indigenous youth participants were preparing to travel to South Africa and connect up with 90 more researchers, community scholars, activists and youth members in Durban. The event was planned to be a mentoring retreat, bringing together Indigenous girls from Canada and South Africa to share and learn from one another. Unfortunately, due to the global pandemic of Covid-19, we have had to adapt and host an online Imbizo.

After 7 years of powerful work with Indigenous girls and young women in Canada and South Africa, N4C celebrated the work of the youth involved with the project with an Imbizo commemoration on July 15, 2021. The Imbizo brought together the youth from sites in Canada and South Africa, as well as the supporting partners, community members aunties and other family members. While we were sad to not be in Durban together, over Zoom, we laughed, cried, connected and celebrated the amazing accomplishments of the youth involved.

# Coming Together

**July 15, 2021**

**09:30 - 11:15 AM  
CST**

**11:30am - 1:15 PM  
EDT**

**12:30pm - 2:15 PM  
ADT**

**5:30pm - 7:15 PM  
SAST**



Starting at 9:30am CST, 5:30pm SAST, 11:30am EDT people started to join the zoom meeting. Quickly the screen filled with different faces and groups joining from across South Africa and Canada. People joined on their phones, laptops and computers. Some of the fieldsites were able to get together and join collectively while other girls and their supporters joined from their own homes.



# Welcoming Words

## **Claudia Mitchell and Relebohile Moletsane**

Dr. Claudia Mitchell started the event by acknowledging we were coming together on zoom two years after the original Imbizo was planned to take place in South Africa. She acknowledged what challenging times and circumstances had arisen for the groups including the riots, death and destruction in South Africa exasperating the already devastating effects of Covid-19 and the uncovering of nearly 2000 unmarked graves of Indigenous children on former residential “school” grounds. Meeting over zoom, people were joining from the lands and territories of many different Indigenous Nations and peoples. Claudia acknowledges she is joining from Mi’kmaq territory in Prince Edward Island, and noted that the team from McGill University is joining from unceded Kanien’kehá:ka land, she then invited everyone in attendance to reflect on the territories they were joining from.

Finally, it was recognized that as a platform zoom privileges some voices over others. For example, individuals without access to reliable internet or technology, or who struggle with technology literacy were unable to participate in this virtual conversation.

# Introduction Video

*Leann Brown & Darshan Daryanani*



**Click to play!**

The video travelled between the sites, highlighting the different accomplishments of each site and showcased how much of the world has been positively impacted by N4C. Some sites that collaborated with N4C or ran shorter projects within the time of N4C were not included in the video, but Claudia acknowledged their participation in the larger project.



# South Africa Showcase

## Girls Leading Change & Young Girls Leading Change Cellphilm

Nayden DeLange introduced the Girls Leading Change. The group started in 2013 with work addressing sexual and gendered-based violence in South Africa. The women from the group have taken forward this work into their new positions as teachers. Young Girls Leading Change is a group of younger girls who have been mentored by Girls Leading Change, creating a beautiful relationship between the two groups. At an event in May, before the third wave of Covid in South Africa, the groups came together for a celebration event and to create this cellphilm. Melissa from Girls Leading Change introduced the cellphilm, she noted that the group has always loved creating cellphilms because it gives them a chance to express their creative sides. The cellphilm shared the journey the girls and young women were all on together in N4C. The cellphim was based on these prompts: Who is a girl leading change? What does she stand for? What do you want her to represent and be remembered for going forward? The cellphilm highlighted how the girls from both groups had grown to be more confident, stronger, more comfortable with themselves, how they had gained knowledge on gender-based issues and passions to address those issues. The cellphilm ends with the poem by Asisipho Montonga.

# South Africa Showcase

## Asisipho Montonga

*Her name is Girl Leading Change*

*She was still*

*She was voiceless*

*Unheard and unrecognized*

*She was content*

*Or so she thought.*

*Until awakening came then her world was shaken up*

*She became wise*

*Now loud*

*Some say she is rebellious because she speaks her mind*

*But I say she is intention, critical and sensitive*

*She is a fighter yet she is compassionate*

*Her fire burns deep in her because she has a message to deliver*

*She needs to be heard! She must be heard!*

*She will be great*

*She will be a healer, a helper and a voice to the voiceless*

*She will touch lives and give birth to a new generation of leaders*

*She will be great*

*And she will be remembered for her strength, her resilience and her  
ability to*

*enlighten and transform*

*She is you and I*

*Her name is Girl Leading Change*

# South Africa Showcase

## Girls Leading Change and Young Girls Leading Change Song: Ilanga

A video played showing the Girls Leading Change and Young Girls Leading Change singing and dancing together. Elethu Ntsethe explained that the first song in the video is called Ilanga (Zulu) which means Sun. She explains that it is a song about a journey, where you get to explore, see new things and gain new knowledge. It highlights the value of travelling and getting to gain new knowledge and skills from different experiences and bringing that all home to the benefit of your community. Ntsethe explained that in South Africa, music is life and brings people together when they are in pain, celebrating or mourning. It is also a way of bringing people together even if they have different backgrounds or don't speak the same language.

## Words from Social Ills Fighters and Leaders for Young Women's Success

Zee Ngcobo, Lihle Shange and Amanda Hlongwane from Leaders for Women's Success, joined together to speak about their work. They highlighted a recent initiative working with different community programs and organizations like the police, health services, teachers, businesses and municipalities, teaching them LGBTQI topics. They also announced a new member joined their group and that they have had many different people reach out wanting to work with them in the future. They are excited to spend the next year starting work with young men on building healthy relationships. Unfortunately, girls from Social Ills Fighters were unable to connect to the zoom to share their poetry.

# Canada Showcase

## Young Indigenous Women's Utopia

### *ohpikihcik okawiyimaw onikanewa: Raising Matriarchs*

Generation 1 and 2 of Young Indigenous Women's Utopia (YIWU) joined together from the Sky Up youth drop-in centre. They presented *ohpikihcik okawiyimaw onikanewa: Raising Matriarchs*, a film created in collaboration with Choke Cherry Studios. The film chronicles the mural-making journey YIWU generations 1 and 2 embarked on together to share their message and leave a lasting legacy in Saskatoon. Working with local Métis artist Michelle Pritchard, they decided on the message "Creator Save the Matriarch". The film is a celebration of the girls, how far they have come and how much they have grown and their communities as a whole. The film features the girls painting the mural and reflecting on their experiences in YIWU, noting how they have grown, seen each other come into their own and become more confident and their hopes for the group to continue with the generation 2 girls and beyond. While creating the mural the girls also got to work with Gabriella Lee, who shared star blanket teachings with the group and helped them design and sketch star blankets. The film follows the smudge walk organized by YIWU to honour the Indigenous children who were stolen and sent to residential schools, mourn the Indigenous children uncovered in mass graves on residential school grounds, and speak back against continued violence. After the smudge walk, the mural was publicly unveiled. The public unveiling brought together families and community members to honour the girls' visions, growth and graduation. Five of the original YIWU members were wrapped in star blankets; a traditional way of showing honour, respect and love while marking an exceptional achievement.



# Canada Showcase

This screening was the first time the YIWU got to see the film themselves! After the screening, Jenn explained how important it was for the group to be able to continue to meet once restrictions were lifted in Saskatoon. It had been an incredibly challenging year and getting to be together got them through the pandemic. Jenn also explained that during the mural unveiling, it was a sad time in the community as the genocide of residential schools was coming more to light. She noted that this was something survivors always knew about and that everyone in the group had family members that attended residential schools. Unveiling the mural was a way of speaking back to that genocide and the intergenerational trauma they live with. The mural was unveiled on June 27, the name “Creator Save the Matriarch” is tongue and cheek to “God Save the Queen”, as Indigenous people do not need a great white mother to come and save them, when these girls are saving themselves and their families. The family impact at the mural unveiling was profound.

## Words from Rankin Inlet

The girls in Rankin Inlet were out on the land with their families and not on Zoom. Marnina Gonick, was there representing the group. She said she knew the girls would have loved the event and that was so amazed by the work showcased from South Africa and Canada.

## Words from Eskasoni

The group joined together in Eskasoni. Throughout the event, they had been commenting on how beautiful the showcases were. After the Imbizo they were heading to a party in the Memorial Garden for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls that the youth created.

# Discussion

## Facilitated by Sarah Flicker

Sarah Flicker posed two discussion questions to the youth in attendance. The youth joining were asked to take 2-3 minutes to think about their responses or if they were with their groups or members of their groups to discuss their responses. After a few minutes, they were invited to write their answers into the chat or share them aloud.

*First Discussion Prompt: "what do you think has been the most significant change for the group?"*

Some girls shared their responses verbally, while most posted in the chat. Sarah invited the girls to speak and read the messages from the chat aloud. Girls noted major positive changes in themselves, including increased confidence in their identities, greater knowledge surrounding sexual and gender-based violence and increased strength and feelings of empowerment. In addition, girls noted how participating in N4C had given them the tools and the motivation to make changes in their communities, advocating for gender equality, starting a gender empowerment club at university, carrying this work into their teaching careers and planning an Indigenous week for their school.

Before the group I didn't talk about anything, I wouldn't bring up the fact I was Indigenous, but after coming to group, I got really comfortable and became proud of where I come from and my family, especially because we have a lot residential school survivors. I got to use my voice, I planned the Indigenous week. It made me proud that I got to lead it because without group I wouldn't have spoken out or planned it.-

**Gaby Daniels**, Young Indigenous Womens Utopia

As a member of the Gender Activists, The most significant change in my life after joining Networks for change and well-being was coming to the realization that I could be a part of the change that we always preach we want to see. I now no longer fear speaking out about issues facing women more especially gender-based violence and condemn it without any fear or favour. I've worked with university students to raise awareness about gender-based violence amongst students.-

**Sinenhlanhla Amanda Ngcobo**, Gender Activists



# Discussion

## *Second Discussion Prompt: "What advice would you give your younger self?"*

Some girls shared their responses verbally, while most posted in the chat. Sarah invited the girls to speak and read the messages from the chat aloud. Girls shared a wide variety of advice they would like to give their younger selves. Some of the core messages in the advice included:

- *Practice self-love and be kind to yourself*
- *Be your authentic self regardless of social pressures or expectations*
  - *Follow your dreams*
  - *You are strong*
  - *Be proud of all you have accomplished*
- *Don't be afraid to take up space; use your voice*
  - *Get involved*

*"Be confident; you're braver than you think! Be more involved; get out there and make some change"*

**The Team in Eskasoni**

*"Advice I would like to give to my younger self is , not to be scared to speak out and to be fearless"*

**Phelokazi Mahashi**

*"It doesn't get easier but you get stronger"*

**Young Indigenous Women's Utopia**

# Book Launch

## Circle Back: Stories of Reflection, Connection and Transformation

The youth editors were invited to introduce *Circle Back: Stories of Reflection, Connection and Transformation*. This book is the first publication from Networks 4 Change that brings together the work of Indigenous girls and young women in Canada and South Africa in a single publication. This publication includes beautiful artwork, poetry and prose addressing the main theme of transformation. The book is split between three main sections of transformation, reflection of personal spaces, and connections. These themes are portrayed through the tellings of the women and girls in South Africa and Canada, as well as their artwork and own experiences. Transformation is constantly occurring, yet these past few years have brought more change than ever and with that more transformation on not only the personal level but in the form of social change. Through their stories, we can hear their voices, connect to their experiences, and understand the transformations they hope to see in the future.

Bongiwe Maome was with us live but experienced power-cuts, so she joined with audio and played a pre-recorded introductory video. In the video, she explained bringing together youth voices for a book, starting with a newsletter segment that received submissions from youth in the project. Following the newsletter publication, there came the idea of building on these submissions by creating a book. In March, there was a call for youth editors; they would be responsible for gathering material for the book, reviewing submissions, and encouraging participation by making youth more comfortable sharing their work. Bongiwe emphasized the most significant work came from the youth who contributed to the book and how proud all the youth should be for their accomplishments and hard work over the last 7 years.

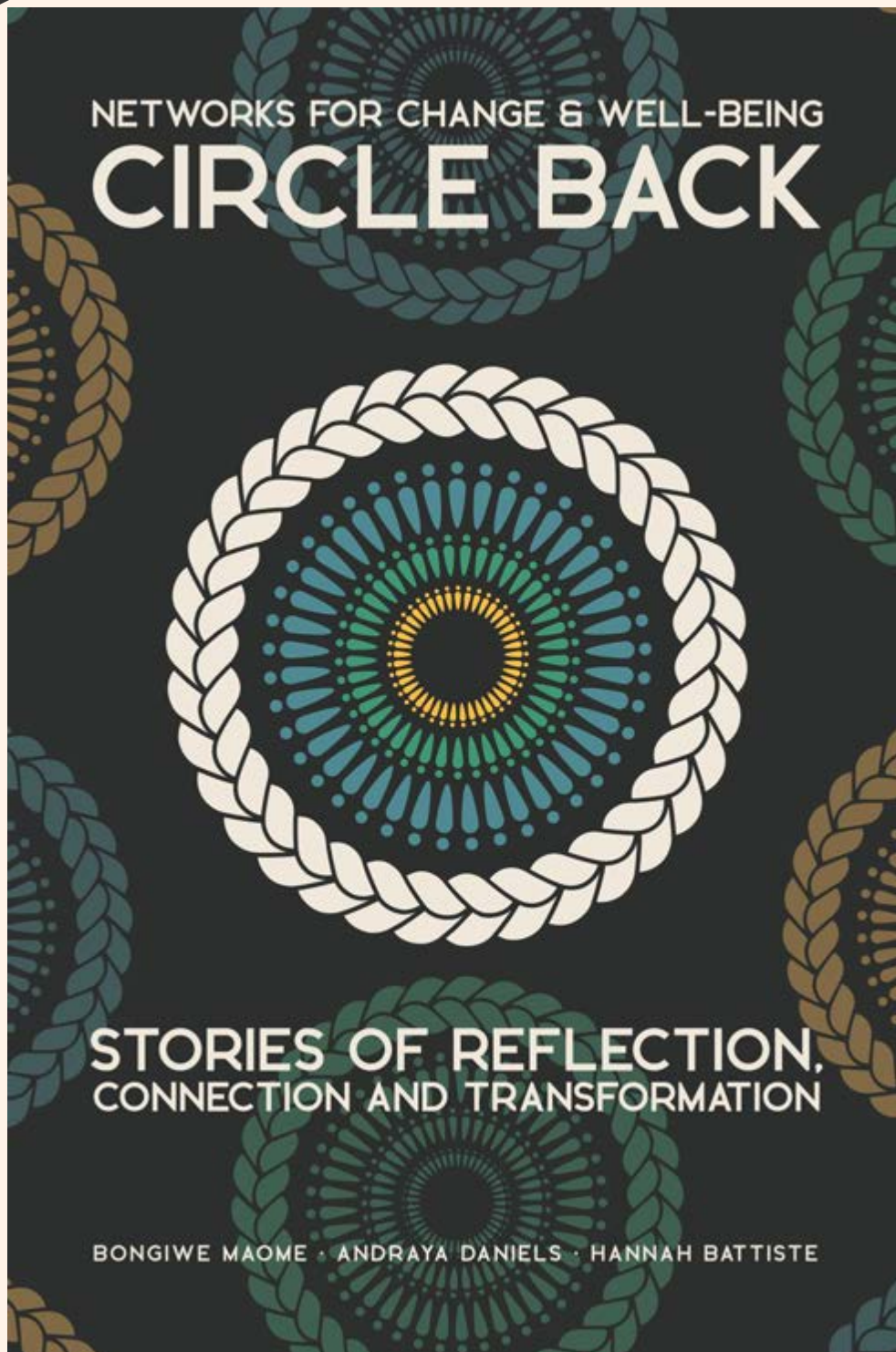
# Book Launch

## Circle Back: Stories of Reflection, Connection and Transformation

Hannah Battiste from Eskasoni spoke next. She joined N4C in 2016; since joining the group, she started writing more and being more open with her poetry. The position of youth editor seemed like a perfect fit for a writer like Hannah. She discussed the fears and pressures associated with taking on this new role and the importance of taking on challenges. While Hannah spoke openly, messages in the chat were pouring in from South Africa and Canada. Other youth said Hannah's honest and vulnerable words resonated with them, and they applauded her strength. It was important for Hannah to encourage youth from her community to contribute to the book. She knows how talented, smart and amazing the youth in her community are. Hannah said that taking on the role of youth editor was not just for her but for her community, the youth and their futures, noting that the group in Eskasoni is amazing and how proud she is of their hard work.

Andraya (Andie) Daniels, the third youth editor, was the last to speak. Growing up Andie always wanted to be some type of writer and have people read her work. However, before joining Young Indigenous Women's Utopia, she was shy and scared to share her work. When she joined YIWU, she found her voice and was encouraged to use it. After the publication of their first, self-titled book Young Indigenous Women's Utopia, Andie was so proud of herself and the accomplishments of her group. The move from author to editor has been exciting. Andie noted that through the group YIWU and the opportunities from N4C she was part of something amazing! The experience of being a book editor and working with other youth from N4C was highly positive and she found great support in her co-editors. She thanked her co-editors and the others who supported the creation of the book.

Read the book here



# Podcast Launch :

## Circle Back: Stories of Reflection, Connection and Transformation

**Jonathon Cruikshank, Catherine Dillman & Sumaya Soufi**

*Youth Interns, Participatory Cultures Lab*

Catherine and Sumaya introduced the podcast Circle Back: Stories of Reflection, Connection and Transformation. The podcast presents the pieces from the book in an accessible audio format, further amplifying youth voices in creative ways.

In the podcast, you can hear recordings of the girls reading their written work aloud. The process of creating the podcast was designed to be as easy and stress-free as possible for the youth. Youth were asked to make recordings of themselves reading their poetry, prose or discussing their art.

Through this process, youth were able to take time to record themselves and go through the process at their own pace until they were happy with the final product. From there, youth submitted their recordings to the team and Jonathon Cruikshank lead the work to combine all of the audio segments and create the final episodes.

The first episode is an introduction to the Circle Back book featuring the youth editors and Claudia and Lebo. A short clip of the podcast was played, in the clip featured Elethu Ntsethe from Girls Leading Change reading her poem "Enough is Enough". The podcast is available on all platforms podcasts are usually found and on YouTube.



**[Listen to the Podcast here](#)**

# Closing

In closing, Lebo and Claudia congratulated all the youth who have built the Networks 4 Change movement. Through their generosity, creativity, hard work and activism these young people have made huge contributions and steps towards making their communities safer and more inclusive for young people. All the achievements of the young people are amazing. Secondly, they thanked the site leaders, the coordinators and planners, the researchers, the aunties, the mentors, the mothers and fathers, the guardians, the Elders and traditional leaders, the teachers and others for supporting the youth in this project and in their various passions and pursuits. Finally, the academic partners were thanked for supporting and coordinating the work in Canada and South Africa. Lebo also took a moment to give thanks to the event organizing team at McGill. Finally, she noted that for the young people, their work is not done, today is a pause to celebrate the amazing work that has happened so far and we are very excited to see what great work happens in the future.



# Congratulations Video

A final video was played, featuring messages of congratulations for the youth from project leaders, support staff and researchers from Canada and South Africa.



**Click to play!**

*Thanks to the team for their messages and to Darshan Daryanani for putting them together so beautifully!*



**Section 3:**  
**Reflections**



# Mentoring

The Imbizo Event originally scheduled for June 2020 in Durban, South Africa was planned to have a focus on mentoring and creating mentoring opportunities between the girls and young women from South Africa and the Indigenous girls and young women from Canada. While it was disappointing to not have this face to face mentoring opportunity take place, it was exciting to see mentoring appear in the showcases from South Africa and Canada. The Girls Leading Change and Young Girls Leading Change came together to create a cellphilm reflecting on their time in N4C and the growth they experienced individually and collectively. Ohpikihicik okawiyimaw onikanewa: Raising Matriarchs featured the Generation 1 girls and the Generation 2 girls of Young Indigenous Women's Utopia coming together to create the mural. Interviews with the Generation 1 girls highlighted their roles as mentors to the younger girls and the bond created between the two generations of girls. Finally there was also 'behind the scenes' evidence of mentoring in the co-edited youth produced book Circle Back, something that the editors highlighted as 'learning from each other'.



# Graphic Notes

## Tatianna Sitounis

We explored different ways to make 'what happened' at the Imbizo accessible to those that couldn't attend and also create recaps for those who were able to take part. Tatianna, joined us to create graphic notes using what was shared and shown during the Imbizo. These notes were thoughtfully created with our youth participants in mind, but have been appreciated by the whole team.

**SHOWCASE: SOUTH AFRICA**  
YOUNG GIRLS LEADING CHANGE / GIRLS LEADING CHANGE  
CELLPHILM  
WHAT DOES SHE STAND FOR?  
WHAT IS A GIRL LEADING CHANGE?  
SHE IS...  
Independent  
Beautiful  
Powerful  
Activist  
Unapologetic  
Fearless  
SHE REPRESENTS... AND EVEN MORE!  
The art of listening  
Unique identity as a woman AND individual  
Claiming power back as a woman  
Transformation from ignorance to liberty  
Redefining emotion → STRENGTH  
Comfortable in her space  
Challenging norms  
Engaging community  
YGLC • GLC • SONG: ILANGA = SUN  
Journey about exploring  
Seeing new things  
Gaining new knowledge  
Use for advancement of community?  
MUSIC = LIFE  
Form of therapy  
Brings together  
Across moments of celebration & mourning - open

**SHOWCASE: TREATY 6 METIS TERRITORY**  
EVERY CHILLO MATTERS!  
Ohpikihicik okawiyimaw onikenewak: Raising Matriarchs  
Mural: **CREATOR SAVE THE MATRIARCH**  
Message: Mounted under CREE RIVER + Sky Syllabics on Saskatoon Craft Council Wall  
In the heart of the Broadway Ave  
HOPE in the CREATOR and CULTURE!  
ANCESTORS STAND BEHIND YOU  
Be proud of what you are from  
Take care of yourself  
Use your voice  
Finding confidence  
First part: Meeting all the girls  
You are: RESILIENT, BEAUTIFUL, BRAVE

**DISCUSSION TIME**  
Q: what was the most significant change for yourself and your group during IMBIZO?  
Q: what advice would you give to your younger self at the start of your institution with IMBIZO?  
CONFIDENCE  
... does NOT hold you back!  
LIFE is beautiful?  
Dreams, be greater  
Everything is POSSIBLE  
You are braver than you think  
It does get easier. YOU. SELF-SAVING!  
... is waiting for you  
TO MANIFEST your TRUE SELF!

**CIRCLE BACK** (Publication)  
WORDS FROM EDITORS:  
Finding faith from within to pursue writing  
Finding strength from the group  
PODCAST: Born from the book  
Meant to amplify voices  
Empower others  
You should be SO PROUD!

# Virtual platforms for transnational dialogue: Lesson learned

Hosting a transnational Imbizo Event over zoom, with people joining from over 8 different time zones, most certainly had its challenges. In the process of planning the event and bringing everyone together virtually we learned many lessons. We found great success in take a “low-tech” or “lower-tech” approach to the event and prioritized creating a relaxed and friendly environment, allowing the youth participants to share comfortably and putting less stress on the presenters.

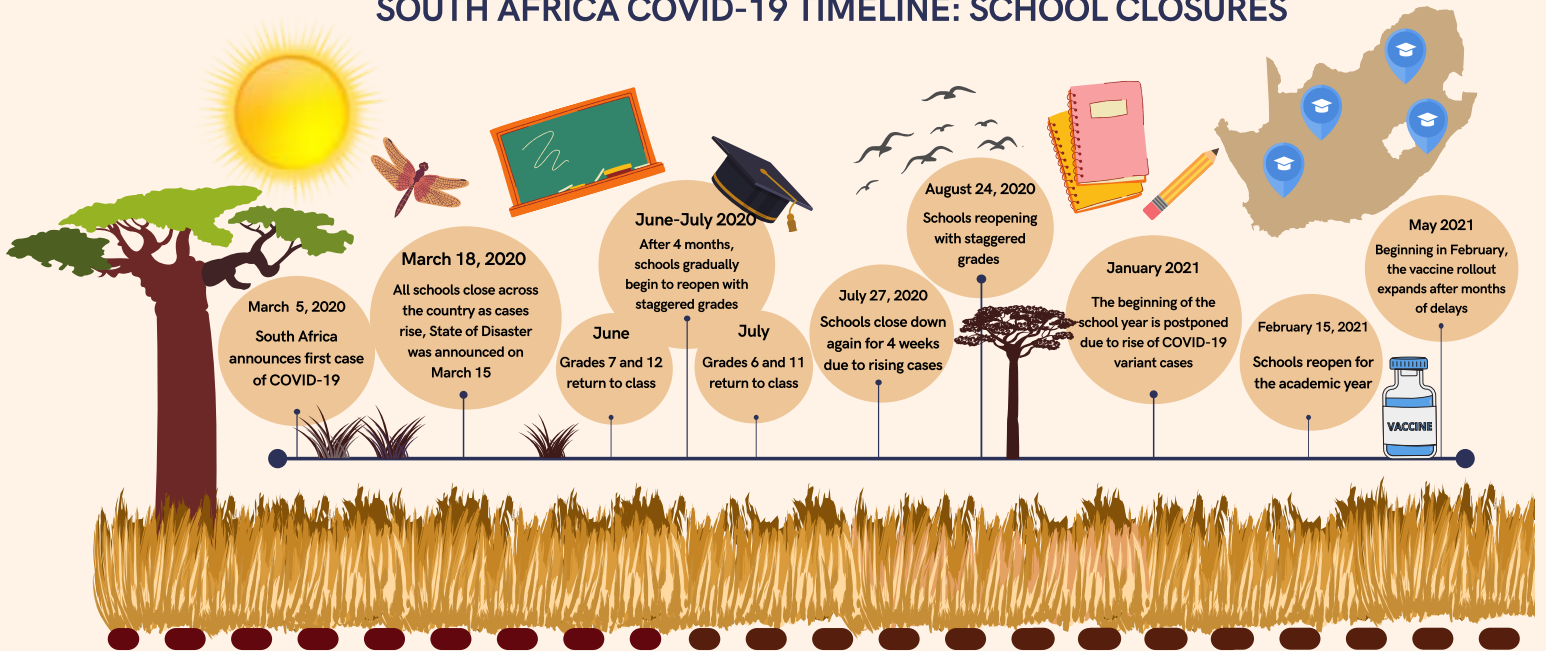
## Place Specific Realities

Bringing together youth, family members, community scholars, supporters, researchers and others from all over Canada and South Africa it was essential to acknowledge the different realities each individual and the groups were joining from. While the event was taking place on a virtual platform, it was not detached from the lives of the youth, their families and communities. In both Canada and South Africa Covid-19 has had, and continues to have devastating consequences, deepening existing social inequalities, resulting in the loss of loved ones and challenging mental health and wellbeing. At the time of the event in South Africa riots and civil unrest were taking place in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces. This meant that with the exception of two sites, none of the participants could be together. In Canada, at the time of the event close to 1,000 unmarked graves of Indigenous children had been found at residential “schools”, to date this number is over 3,000 and over 5,000 including the Indigenous children named in the Truth and Reconciliation report. The uncovering of these graves was confirming what Indigenous communities already knew about the abuse Indigenous children suffered in residential “schools” and the death that was a core part of these institutions

# Place Specific Realities: Covid

Jonathon Cruickshank & Saruul Khishigjargal

## SOUTH AFRICA COVID-19 TIMELINE: SCHOOL CLOSURES

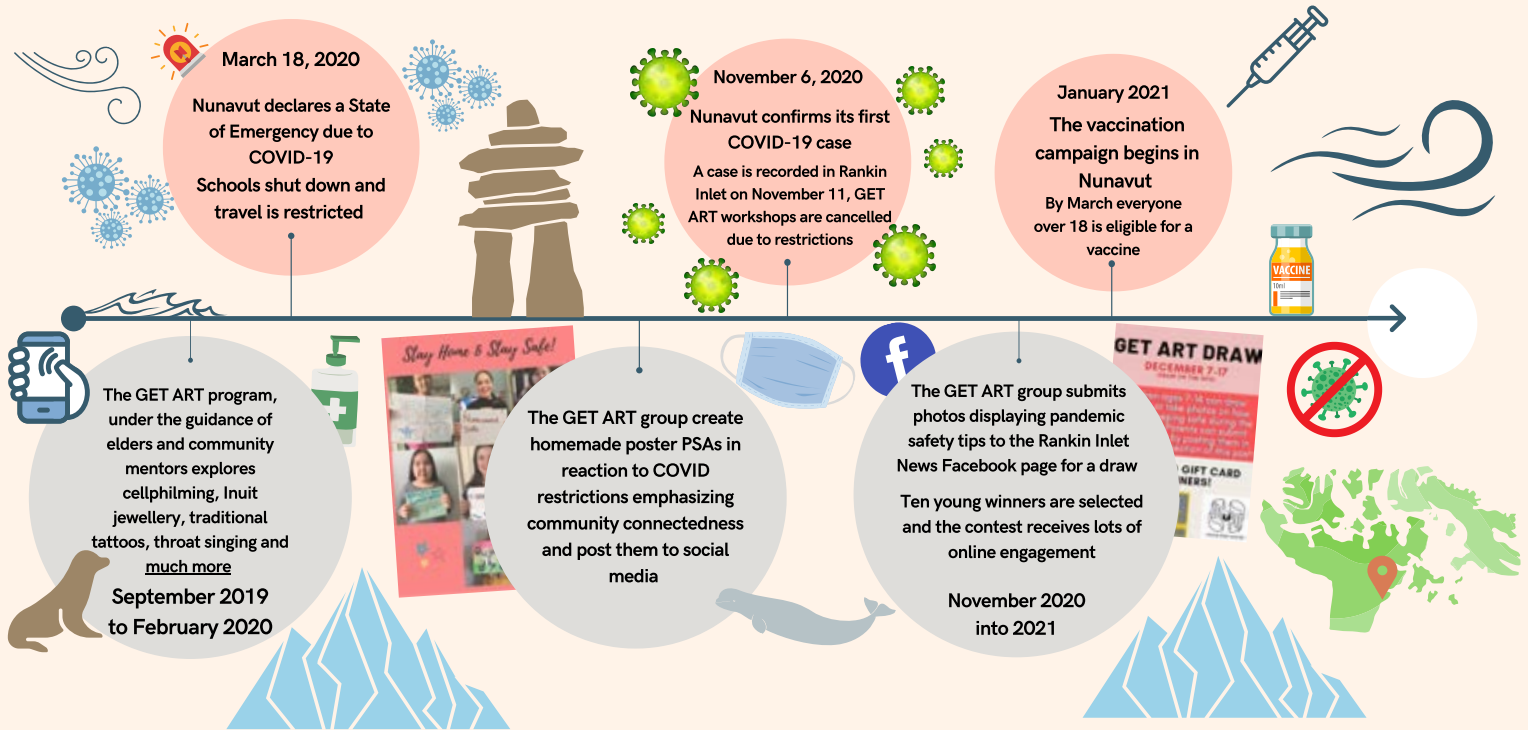


## COVID-19 TIMELINE: ESKASONI (NOVA SCOTIA)

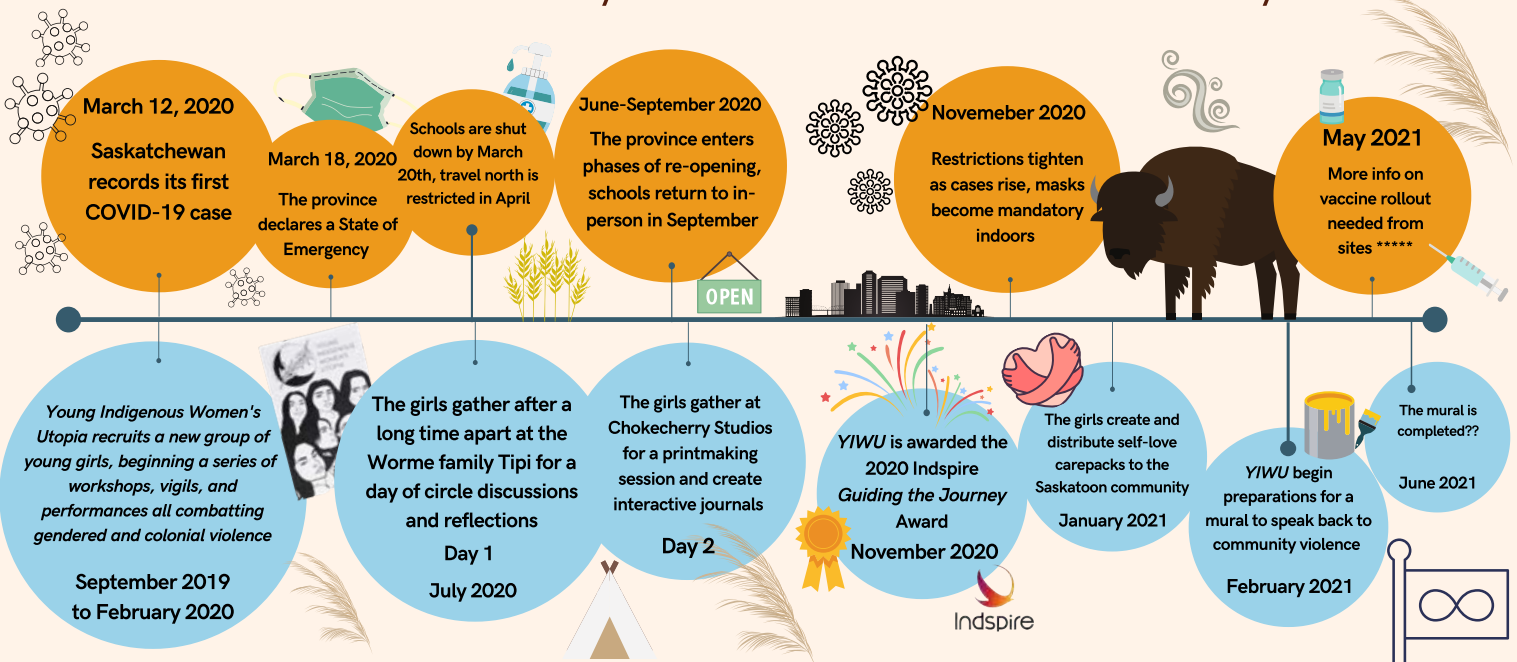


# Place Specific Realities: Covid

## COVID-19 TIMELINE: RANKIN INLET (NUNAVUT)



## COVID-19 TIMELINE: TREATY 6 / TRADITIONAL HOMELAND OF THE MÉTIS / SASKATOON



# Virtual platforms for transnational dialogue: Lesson learned

## Supporting Connections

Unfortunately, Zoom is a platform that privileges some voices over others.

Notably, individuals without access to technology or reliable internet connections and with lower levels of technology literacy are often left out of events and discussions taking place on zoom. In order to make the event as accessible as possible, we worked with each site to figure out how to best support them getting on zoom for the event. For some of the sites in South Africa, data plans were purchased for the participants, so that they could join the zoom without it costing them money and without concerns of internet blackouts impacting individuals' ability to participate. For Break the Silence Be The Change in Eskasoni and Young Indigenous Women's Utopia in Treaty 6, the groups wanted to get together and join the Zoom calls as groups. Seeing the groups together on Zoom was so exciting during a virtual event and a time of physical distancing. In order to best support groups joining together, we opted not to use breakout rooms for the discussion period. With groups joining on single Zoom accounts, it did not make sense to use breakout rooms, where the numbers of participants would be unequal. Finally, during the event, the girls from Rankin Inlet were unable to attend. At the time of the event, they were out on the land with their families, where they did not have internet access. In order to make the event accessible to everyone involved in the project who was unable to attend we have also created an asynchronous event, sharing the showcases, videos and presentations.

# Virtual platforms for transnational dialogue: Lesson learned

## Low-Tech Video Sharing

In place of screensharing videos for the event, we had one person point their camera at a separate laptop where the videos were played. This person was pinned on zoom, so that everyone in attendance could see their screen. This low-tech approach to sharing videos was chosen for a number of different reasons. Foremost, we determined this method was the simplest way for us to play videos, with the fewest possibilities of things going wrong or being outside of our control. In previous work we had run into issues with playing videos over a shared screen. This sometimes resulted in videos lagging or zoom freezing for attendees. This method was better for the connection of youth and adults joining either on data on their phones or from other locations with poorer or unreliable internet connections. Additionally, for youth who were giving presentations, they had the option to pre-record a video of their presentation. If they had internet issues or were not comfortable presenting live, the pre-recorded video was presented using the same method of showing a separate laptop screen on zoom. One issue we ran into, in this method of video sharing, was there was a small amount of glare on the videos being played reflecting of the laptop screen.

# Virtual platforms for transnational dialogue: Lesson learned

## Low-Tech Discussions and Chat Features

During the discussion portion of the event, we opted not to use breakout rooms. By not using breakout rooms people could join in whatever way was most convenient or enjoyable for them, either by phone, as a larger group sharing a computer/ screen or as an individual. Youth were encouraged to take a few minutes to reflect on the questions asked, either with the people they were surrounded by or by themselves if they were joining alone. After a few moments of reflection, youth were encouraged to share their responses out loud or to write them in the chat. The chat feature allowed all youth to have their voices and perspectives heard even if they were not comfortable speaking out loud. This made participation accessible and not intimidating for everyone involved. Additionally, by not splitting the group up into breakout rooms everyone in attendance was able to hear what all the youth shared during the discussion, creating more opportunities for the youth to connect with one another. The chat feature was used throughout the entire event. Over chat youth were able to connect with one another and voice support for each other during presentations. The chat feature facilitated easy participation during the discussing and throughout the entire event.

What **CHANGED** for yourself and your group during N4C?

What have you **LEARNED** from Aunties and mentors?

What advice would you give other youth about mentorship?

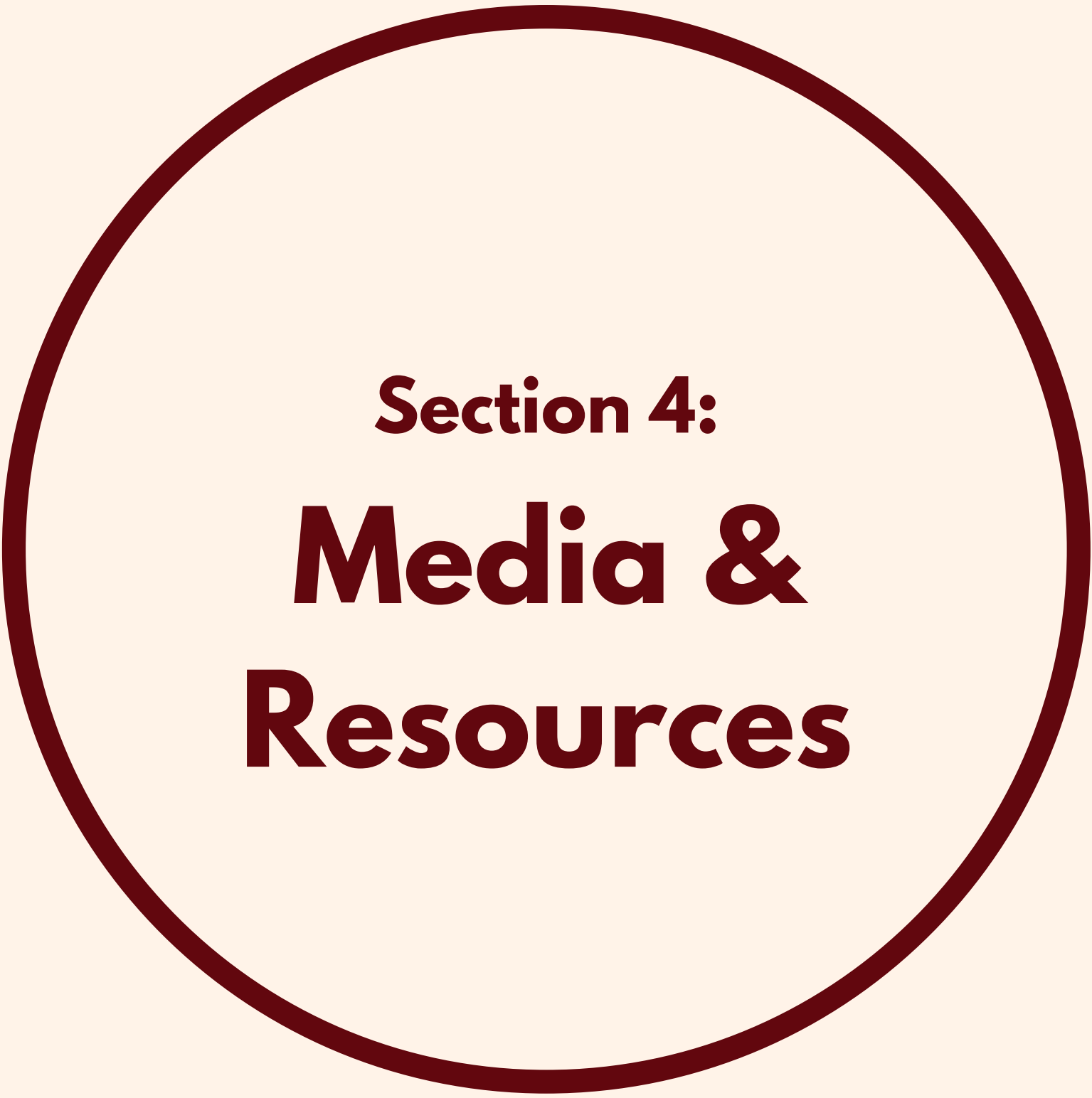
What are your best memories during N4C?



# Virtual platforms for transnational dialogue: Lesson learned

## Preparing synchronous & asynchronous material

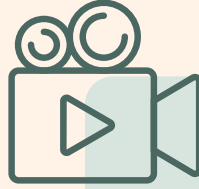
Preparing for an online event like this that included both 'live' zoom features and pre-recorded videos brought with it challenges around final planning. Although the event was months in the planning, the ever-changing landscape because of Covid-19 and various lockdowns meant that attention had to be given to all eventualities and last-minute changes, including the possibility of load-shedding practices in South Africa where perhaps no one would have been able to log in. The solution came in the form of what might be termed 'the cast of 1000s' approach, a large team of interns and project staff in both countries creating videos ahead of time, planning out distribution measures, and communication, ultimately ensuring that there would be a variety of ways and platforms for participants to access all the amazing material including on the new Imbizo section of the [N4C website](#) and through a document with all the links created ahead of time and circulated to the participants.



**Section 4:**  
**Media &  
Resources**



# IMBIZO MEDIA LINKS



[Welcome Song\\_ \(GLC/YGLC\)](#)

[Travel to N4C Sites!](#)

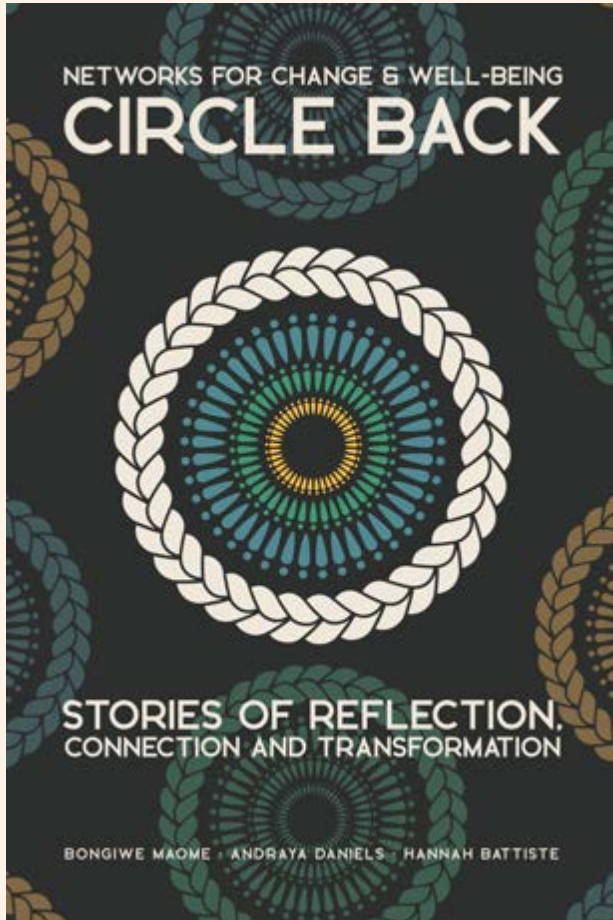
[Showcase: GLC/YGLC Song](#)

[Showcase: GLC/YGLC Cellphilm](#)

[Showcase: YIWU Film: Raising Matriarchs](#)

[Podcast Clip](#)

[N4C Celebratory Video](#)



[Read](#)



[Listen](#)

