



# NETWORKS FOR CHANGE AND WELL-BEING

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

## Dear Partners, Colleagues and Friends of Networks4Change

Welcome to what we term 'the *Imbizo* Edition' of the newsletter. The word *imbizo* in isiZulu means 'a gathering,' and that is exactly what we held on July 15, 2021 in the form of a virtual coming together of girls and young women from sites in Canada and South Africa to celebrate their achievements in *Networks for Change and Well-being*. The *Imbizo* had been postponed due to COVID-19 from 2020 when it was meant to happen, and reconfigured from an event where everyone would convene face to face in Durban, South Africa to become what could only be termed a hybrid: everyone on Zoom but with some groups in small face to face clusters, other girls, unable to gather because of lockdown, in their own homes, and some only getting to experience the event asynchronously. But it took place, organized around testimonials, screenings of newly created videos, song, poetry, a book launch of a collection co-edited by young women across Canada and South Africa, and the launch of a new podcast series. The preparation for the event sparked so much creativity with this issue of the newsletter offering some of the highlights.

We thank the girls and young women themselves who participated in building the *Networks4Change* movement to what it has become today. Through their generosity, creativity, hard work, and activism, as you witnessed in the work we shared in previous newsletters of the *Network*, these young people have made a huge contribution towards making their communities safe and inclusive for young people. We celebrate them!

We acknowledge the tremendous contributions of the site leaders, coordinators, researchers, aunties and mentors, the mothers, fathers, guardians, and significantly the elders and traditional leaders, the teachers and others, for supporting the young people in the important work they engaged in across Canada and South Africa. We want to appreciate the support of our academic and community partners in the project for coordinating and supporting the work in the various sites in the two countries. A special thank you goes to the McGill interns whose planning, coordination, and support in our many activities was simply outstanding throughout.

In keeping with this year's theme for International Day of the Girl, October 11, 2021—"Digital Generation. Our Generation" we of course celebrate what seemed like a feat to get so many groups of girls together virtually on July 15. We acknowledge though that our work is not done, not only in terms of access, but in relation to what needs to be done to address gender-based violence. Our aim in this newsletter is to celebrate our international partnership, and especially the hard and creative work and achievements of the young people in the project. What they started—the *Networks4Change* movement—is a powerful initiative that not only needs to continue, but also needs to grow to other parts of our two countries and beyond!

A LUTA CONTINUA!

Claudia and Lebo

## Issue 13: October 2021

### Content

<i>Imbizo</i>	2
Circle Back Book Launch	3
Circle Back Podcast Launch	5
<i>Networks</i> Fieldsites	6
Timeline of Youth-led Work	6
Biographies	7
COVID-19 Timelines	15
Updates	17
Announcements & Celebrations	22
Recent & Future Graduates	22
9 <sup>th</sup> McGill Cellphilm Festival	27
Orange Shirt Day	28
New Publications	29
The Circle Expands	32
Thank You McGill Summer Interns	34
Partners & Stakeholders	35



# Imbizo 2021

Special Report: Emily Booker, Pathy Scholar



The *Networks for Change and Well-being Imbizo 2021 Report*, summarizes the virtual *Imbizo 2021* event that took place on July 15, 2021. 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 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 COVID-19 pandemic, we had to adapt and host an online *Imbizo*.

After 7 years of important work with Indigenous girls and young women in Canada and South Africa, *Networks4Change* celebrated the work of the youth involved with the project with an *Imbizo* commemoration. The *Imbizo* brought together the youth from sites in Canada and South Africa, as well as the supporting partners, community members, aunts and other family members. Over Zoom, we laughed, cried, connected and celebrated the amazing accomplishments of the youth involved. During the event showcases were presented from South Africa and Canada, highlighting the incredible work being done at all the sites. A new book and podcast *Circle Back: Stories of Reflection, Connection and Transformation* were launched, and the discussion period created space for the youth to reflect on their time in *Networks4Change* and share and learn from one another. The report summarizes the various aspects of the *Imbizo*, includes links to the media that was presented, and finishes with reflections on hosting a virtual event.

We explored different ways to make ‘what happened’ at the *Imbizo* accessible to those that couldn’t attend and create recaps for those who were able to take part. Tatianna Sitounis created graphic notes using what was shared and shown during the *Imbizo*. These notes were thoughtfully created with our youth participants in mind.



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

At the *Imbizo*, the book *Circle Back: Stories of Reflection, Connection and Transformation* was officially launched! The youth editors Bongiwe Maome, Hannah Battiste and Andraya (Andie) Daniels introduced the book and spoke about their experiences working on the book. *Circle Back* is an empowering book that has been created through the combination of works from women and girls in sites located in both South Africa and Indigenous communities in Canada. 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 are able to hear their voices, connect to their experiences, and understand the transformations they hope to see in the future.

**Bongiwe** spoke about how the book came to be. She explained that bringing together youth voices for a book started with a newsletter request for 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 who 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.

**Hannah** from Eskasoni spoke next. 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.

**Andie** was the last to speak. Growing up, she always wanted to be a writer and have people read her work. However, before joining Young Indigenous Women's Utopia (YIWU), 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 proud of herself and the accomplishments of her group. The move from author to editor has been exciting. Andie noted that through the YIWU and the opportunities from *Networks4Change* she was part of something amazing! The experience of being a book editor and working with other youth from *Networks4Change* was highly positive and she found great support in her co-editors. She thanked them and others who supported the creation of the book.

*Circle Back* is beautifully designed by Gabrielle Giroux, proud Dene woman from Hatcher Lake, First Nation and founder of [Encore Graphics](#).



## BOOK EDITORS



Hannah Battiste

**BREAK THE SILENCE, BE THE CHANGE**  
ESKASONI, NOVA SCOTA, CANADA

My name is Hannah Battiste and I am a young Mi'kmaq woman from Eskasoni, First Nation. I was first introduced to *Networks4Change* back in 2014. I was a client in mental health services, and my worker at the time asked me if I would like to join. I liked the sound of it so I signed up.

I got to know a lot of the youth in the program and developed good friendships. Our focus was the community, what we would want to see in the community and what we can do to change our community. We did many things and experiments, we came up with youth building programs, we learned more about safe places within our community, and much more.

The first time I had showed anyone my poetry was when I was in the program. I was not confident in my writing, but I found people who were. These amazing people published me and made me feel important; whatever I said mattered, and I finally had a voice. I was more open to writing and public speaking. I did many performances, and I was published numerous times after the first publication. It changed my life forever.

Growing up the way that I had to grow up, left a huge scar inside. I did not understand why I would feel and think the way I did, until I discovered what a mental illness was. I was finally able to write about what went on in my head, and the traumas I went through growing up. I was finally able to use my voice, and what shocked me the most, is that people were listening.

*Networks4Change* was not just changing our views and community, it was changing ourselves and our outlook on life, and it was making us feel like we

were important. I have spent the last few years as an advocate for mental health. I have educated many people about mental illness and change within our community. To this day, I am just as passionate about writing and mental health. I have always wanted to experience what it felt like to be a youth worker and a crisis worker because many times they were the people who helped me, and I have always wanted to give back to my community by being that resource, I am proud to say I have experienced both.

Mental health and writing are going to be a part of my life forever; it is something that has saved my life. My top goal in life was to write my own poetry book, to share my story, and to inspire. I am finally living that reality. My inspiration is Rita Joe; I aspire to be as big as her one day. She inspires me to keep going, and to never lose my voice. I lost my voice before, and I will never lose it again.



Bongwiwe Maame

**GIRLS LEADING CHANGE**  
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

My introduction to the *Networks4Change* (*N4C*) is a story of me stumbling upon my own courage at a time when I had least expected it. And in many ways, it marked the beginning of my journey to becoming who and what I am today. My very first 'encounter' with the *N4C* was in 2013; I was in the first year of my undergraduate Education degree at the then Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (now Nelson Mandela University). I was fresh out of the small rural town of Matatiele, in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, where the general pace of progress was particularly slow. This was contrary to the fast pace at which the list of challenges that came with the town's rurality would continue to expand. Be that as it may, this community forms the backdrop of my upbringing as a young teenage girl. In addition to the challenges that came with growing up in a rural community, I had my share

of challenges in the most personal areas of my life, which contributed to me harbouring a lot of anger and frustration at the world and at myself. I was angry because I wanted things to change, I wanted things to get better, I wanted out of the frustration, and I wanted all of it to happen fast. However, it was becoming increasingly frustrating for me to come to terms with the fact that nothing was going to change—at least not at the pace that I wanted—and not until something within me had changed first.

It was through engaging with the *N4C* and through the relationships that we formed as *Girls Leading Change* that my perspective began to change. Being a part of the *N4C* encouraged me to view my intra- and interpersonal goals through a fresh lens—one that was not muddied by anger, frustration and in some ways, self-loathing. I needed to learn to hear and see myself first—by confronting my own negativity, my own silence, biases, misconceptions, and personal convictions.

Through the sessions that we would have, the projects that we would undertake and our engagements in general—I learned to find and recognize myself as an individual. And most remarkably, I also learned to exist and participate as a part of something that is so much more than just myself. I learned how to be a part of a community in a positive way, and instead of allowing myself to be restricted and frustrated by the variety of personal, social, and political difficulties that form our lived experiences. I learned how to activate and channel my agency with the intent of challenging the status quo. Ultimately, I began to recognize and appreciate that I, too, have a social duty to be an active part of the reimagining of a type of rurality that is conducive to the individual and collective progress of its people. Essentially, the most remarkable take-away from being a part of this community is the gift of being able to first look inwards for positive change before expecting it to manifest outwardly. Because it is not until we hold ourselves accountable to the collective realization of positive social transformation, that we can begin to see the meaningful and sustained manifestation of social change in the world around us. Finally, we all occupy varying spaces in which we can inspire and affect meaningful and lasting change—for me, that space is in the classrooms that I teach—in the hearts of every child whose life I am privileged to share the gifts that the *Networks4Change* community has so generously shared with me.



Andie Daniels

YOUNG INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S UTOPIA  
TREATY 6, THE TRADITIONAL HOMELANDS  
OF THE MÉTIS, SASKATOON, CANADA

My name is Andraya Daniels and I am a Cree Indigenous woman from Saskatoon Saskatchewan in Treaty 6. I am 16 years of age and I was first introduced to *Networks4Change* back in 2018 at a conference in Montreal. I have been working with the group Young Indigenous Women's Utopia (YIWU) since 2017. Since then, we've had all of our focus on gender-based violence and on how to help the community. Since I joined YIWU and worked with *Networks4Change*, my life has changed. I started in grade 6 when I was 12 and I didn't think much of it. I was a very shy person who didn't know much. I am now in grade 10 and I can publicly speak and speak on things that need to be spoken

on. I use my voice when necessary and when I know what I am talking about. All the work on gender-based violence has shaped me into the hardworking and independent woman I am today.

My mental health and my struggles have changed tremendously over these past years with ups and downs, but at the end of the day, I was a part of something that was amazing. Knowing I could teach younger girls about the world and what's to come was truly inspiring, and the work I have done by myself has been truly amazing. I can use my voice in so many places and I am so thankful for that and the opportunities *Networks4Change* has given me.



At the *Imbizo* 2021 "[Circle Back: The Podcast](#)" was officially launched! Jonathon Cruikshank, Catherine Dillman and Sumaya Soufi, youth interns for *More Than Words* and *Networks4Change*, worked with youth to create "[Circle Back: The Podcast](#)." The podcast presents the pieces from the book, [Circle Back: Stories of Reflection, Connection and Transformation](#) in an accessible audio format, further amplifying youth voices in creative ways.

At the *Imbizo*, Catherine and Sumaya explained the process of creating the podcast and shared a powerful clip of "[Enough is Enough](#)" by Elethu Ntsethe. 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 led the work to combine all of the audio segments and create the final episodes. In the first episode meet Claudia and Lebo, and hear from the editors of *Circle Back*, Hannah, Bongsi, and Andie to learn about the outstanding work they have done on the podcast and in *Networks4Change* as a whole. More episodes will be coming out soon!

### More Spoken Word Work!

Following their experience recording for the *Circle Back* podcast, Nokulunga Mazibuko, a member of the Social Ills Fighters (Loskop, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa), has created a [YouTube channel](#) to share her spoken word poetry.

She shares her poem "[My Culture, My Roots](#)" dedicated to Heritage Day (24 September, 2021) and performed at the Avenue Road Res Talent show.

The line "*I am not an African because I was born in Africa, but because Africa is born in my heart*" rings out powerfully.



# Networks4Change Fieldsites

## TIMELINE OF YOUTH-LED WORK

Summer interns at McGill spent time reviewing the history of *Networks4Change* and they were inspired to create visual timelines and biographies to communicate the evolution of youth-led work at the sites. The **Timeline of Youth-led Work** (created by Saruul Khishigjargal) shows the history of the *Networks4Change* youth groups, and the **Site Bios** (developed by Johnathon Cruickshank and Saruul Khishigjargal) introduce the different active groups working in Canada and South Africa, highlighting their accomplishments.





# 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) are 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.

# 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 (YGLC) 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.



“  
**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**  
”

### ETHOS

### 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.



### 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!

### 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.

### 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.



# LEADERS FOR YOUNG WOMEN'S SUCCESS

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

### ETHOS

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

Leaders for Young Women's Success (L4YWS) is a group of girls and young women from Khethani 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 gender-based violence (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.

### 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 CHALLENGES 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), L4YWS 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.



### 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.

1

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

**PROPER EDUCATION**



2

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

**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**



### KHETHANI, SOUTH AFRICA

**KHETHANI, WINTERTON, KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**



Leaders for Young Women's Success is based in Khethani, South Africa. Khethani 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 and 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 Khethani. As for the languages in the region, the large majority speak isiZulu.



# 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

## FEARLESS 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.

# YOUNG INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S UTOPIA



SELF-LOVE  
IS OUR  
RESISTANCE

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 cellphlms, art-based projects, writings and teachings on the land

#### INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S UTOPIA BOOK 2019

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

#### 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

#### CARRIED OUT OVER 25 ARTS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

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

#### 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.

#### MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT

YOUNG INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S UTOPIA IS ONE OF NETWORKS4CHANGE'S FIELD SITES ACROSS SOUTH AFRICA AND CANADA, LED BY PROJECT PARTNERS, CO-INVESTIGATORS AND LOCAL COLLABORATORS. EACH SITE IS FOCUSED ON YOUTH-LED MEDIA MAKING, COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH, PARTICIPATORY VISUAL RESEARCH, RESEARCH AS INTERVENTION, AND RESEARCH AS SOCIAL CHANGE.



# 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 cellphlms 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
- Cellphilm 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.



### "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 PROGRAM

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



## 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. Kinship 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 WSÁNEĆ 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 restorying and rebodying 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 W̓SÁNEĆ HOMELANDS IN WHAT IS COLONIAALLY KNOWN AS BRITISH COLUMBIA

Sisters Rising, located on lək̓ʷəŋən and W̓SÁNEĆ 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.



## MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT



SISTERS RISING, NOW KINSHIP RISING, IS ONE OF NETWORKS4CHANGE'S FIELD SITES ACROSS SOUTH AFRICA AND CANADA, LED BY PROJECT PARTNERS, CO-INVESTIGATORS AND LOCAL COLLABORATORS. EACH SITE IS FOCUSED ON YOUTH-LED MEDIA MAKING, COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH, PARTICIPATORY VISUAL RESEARCH, RESEARCH AS INTERVENTION, AND RESEARCH AS SOCIAL CHANGE.

# COVID-19 TIMELINES

In the run up to the *Imbizo*, we found ourselves navigating very different local circumstances at each field site, especially related to the ever changing challenges, safety measures and government protocols. As we engaged with these challenges and the different capacities of youth and community scholars at each site, Summer Interns Saruul Khishigjargal and Johnathon Cruickshank mapped out some of the major milestones of work and restrictions under COVID-19.

These beautiful visual timelines have highlighted the determination and resiliency of youth within the *Networks4Change* movement, who have continued to make artwork and be involved in activism during some of the most challenging moments of their lives. You can see a selection of timelines below reflecting the situation in South Africa and specific Canadian sites as part of [More Than Words](#).



# COVID-19 TIMELINE: TREATY 6 / TRADITIONAL HOMETLAND OF THE METIS / SASKATOON (BOOK)

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

**September 2019 to February 2020**  
Young Indigenous Women's Utopia recruits a new group of young girls, beginning a series of workshops, vigils, and performances all combatting gendered and colonial violence

**July 2020**  
**Day 1**  
The girls gather after a long time apart at the Worme family Tipi for a day of circle discussions and reflections  
**Day 2**  
The girls gather at Chokecherry Studios for a printmaking session and create interactive journals

**November 2020**  
YIWU is awarded the 2020 Indspire Guiding the Journey Award  
The girls create and distribute self-love carepacks to the Saskatoon community

**January 2021**  
YIWU begin preparations for a mural to speak back to community violence

**February 2021**  
CREATOR! SAVE THE MATRIARCH mural is unveiled  
June 27, 2021

**March 12, 2020**  
Saskatchewan records its first COVID-19 case

**March 18, 2020**  
The province declares a State of Emergency  
Schools are shut down by March 20th, travel north is restricted in April

**June-September 2020**  
The province enters phases of re-opening, schools return to in-person in September

**November 2020**  
Restrictions tighten as cases rise, masks become mandatory indoors

**May 2021**  
More info on vaccine rollout needed from sites \*\*\*\*\*

**September 2019 to February 2020**  
The GET ART program, under the guidance of elders and community mentors, explores cellphilmimg, Inuit jewellery, traditional tattoos, throat singing and much more

**April 21, 2020**  
The GET ART group create homemade poster PSAs in reaction to COVID restrictions emphasizing community connectedness and post them to social media

**November 2020 into 2021**  
The GET ART group submits photos displaying pandemic safety tips to the Rankin Inlet News Facebook page for a draw  
Ten young winners are selected and the contest receives lots of online engagement

**March 18, 2020**  
Schools shut down and travel is restricted  
Nunavut declares a State of Emergency due to COVID-19

**November 6, 2020**  
Nunavut confirms its first COVID-19 case  
A case is recorded in Rankin Inlet on November 11, GET ART workshops are cancelled due to restrictions

**January 2021**  
The vaccination campaign begins in Nunavut  
By March everyone over 18 is eligible for a vaccine





## Girls Leading Change & Young Girls Leading Change (South Africa)

Naydene de Lange

### Imbizo Preparation, Eastern Cape, South Africa, 2021

COVID-19 has become the great disrupter of plans! We were all looking forward to meeting our colleagues and sisters from the Global North here in the Global South, imagining it to be as great a gathering of girls and women as we had in Montabello, Canada a few years ago. However, the COVID-19 pandemic also taught us to regroup, rethink, and re-energize in a new way!

In preparation for a virtual *Imbizo*, the girls and young women from *Networks4Change* from the Eastern Cape agreed to gather in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth), carefully adhering to all COVID-protocols, and to wrap up the work in preparation for the *Imbizo*. We gathered over the weekend of 21-23 May at the lovely conference venue of the Beach Hotel, just opposite Hobie Beach, with the intention of celebrating our achievements and sharing the outcome of participating in the *Networks4Change* through a final video project. The two groups, Girls Leading Change (GLC) and Young Girls Leading Change (YGLC) had not seen each other in a while and so the reunion was a joyful one!

With a full programme planned for the weekend we made an early start where each one spoke about their happiest memory of being part of the project. We then focused on hearing from each other what being part of the *Networks4Change* project meant; here we made drawings of the most significant change experienced. Each one reflected on their lives and what had changed, but some also pondered on what their lives would have been like without *Networks4Change*. Their drawings reminded of the power of arts-based research and how it enabled a deep exploration of the topic and opened up an organized sharing with the audience. A happy outcome was that all the drawings were taken up in the beautiful girl-led edited book, *Circling Back*.



Some girls making their drawings

We wanted to make a video for future generations in which to show what *Networks4Change* taught us and what knowledge we wanted to pass on. This turned into a beautiful generative process where the YGLC and GLC put forward their ideas, talked about it, engaged in a democratic process to streamline their message, and then filmed it. In the video they asked three questions:

- ▶ What is a girl leading change?
- ▶ What does she represent?
- ▶ What does her future look like?

Each girl responded in the way they chose. With lots of laughter and lots of redoing the video was made and Vimbiso and Takatso did the final editing thereof. It can be found on *Networks4Change*'s YouTube channel:

[GLC & YGLC Cellphilm](#)



Siya explaining her drawing



An exciting moment, at the end of a productive day, was connecting to the girls in KwaZulu-Natal and sharing what each group had done.

After a weekend of preparation, we were ready for the virtual *Imbizo*! Each girl received a certificate of participation for the amazing work done over the many years! There was much merriment as usual, and the girls sang some of their (and my) favourite Indigenous songs—harmonizing with their beautiful voices leaving us resonating with each other. A wonderful weekend!

Left: Screenshots of the GLC & YGLC cellphilm.

### Life After the *Networks4Change* Project

It is 2021, a year of gratitude! The *Networks4Change* fieldwork has officially come to an end, but what happens when we leave the project?

#### GIRLS LEADING CHANGE (GLC)

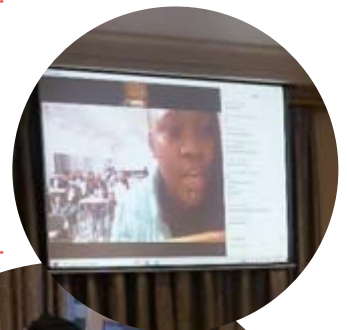
All thirteen GLC have full-time teaching positions: Asisipho, Thina, Zikhona, Takatso, Zamahlubi, and Sandisiwe teach in Gqeberha, Melissa in Patensie, Bongwiwe in Peddie, Zethu in Butterworth, Lelethu in Mount Fletcher, Wandiswa in Bizana, Elethu in Lusikisiki and Happy in Piet Retief in Mpumalanga Province. Six of the girls are busy with or have completed a B. Ed. Honours Degree, and two are enrolled for an M. Ed. Degree.

#### YOUNG GIRLS LEADING CHANGE (YGLC)

The seven YGLC have finished Grade 12: Siphosethu has upgraded her Grade 12, Xabisa is working and hopes to study at a TVET college, Phesh is studying at a TVET college, Amahle is studying at a Culinary Studio, Nozinga has secured an internship with Transnet, and Siya is earning her BA at the University of the Western Cape.

Ntomboxolo Yamile is submitting her doctoral thesis in December 2021 and Vimbisio Okafor intends to submit her doctoral thesis in 2022. Dr. Robin Notshulwana has returned to the USA and has taken up a position as Director of the Kiddie Academy, Smyrna, Georgia. Dr. Naydene de Lange has become a new member of the 'Grandma Club'!

Takatso and Melissa (right) talking to the girls in KZN. Amanda (below) talking back to us in Gqeberha.



Our group photo

## Young Indigenous Women's Utopia

The Young Indigenous Women's Utopia (YIWU) Girls Group speaks back to gender-based and colonial violence. Since 2017 they have been making films, sewing ribbon skirts, leading workshops, winning awards and writing a book. To ensure sustainability they welcomed a new generation of younger sisters into their circle (2.0). Together they embarked on a mural-making journey to share their message and leave a lasting legacy in Treaty 6/ The Traditional Homeland of the Métis/ Saskatoon. Experience YIWU's process in their beautiful [film](#):

**ohpikihicik okawiykaw  
onikanewa: Raising Matriarchs**

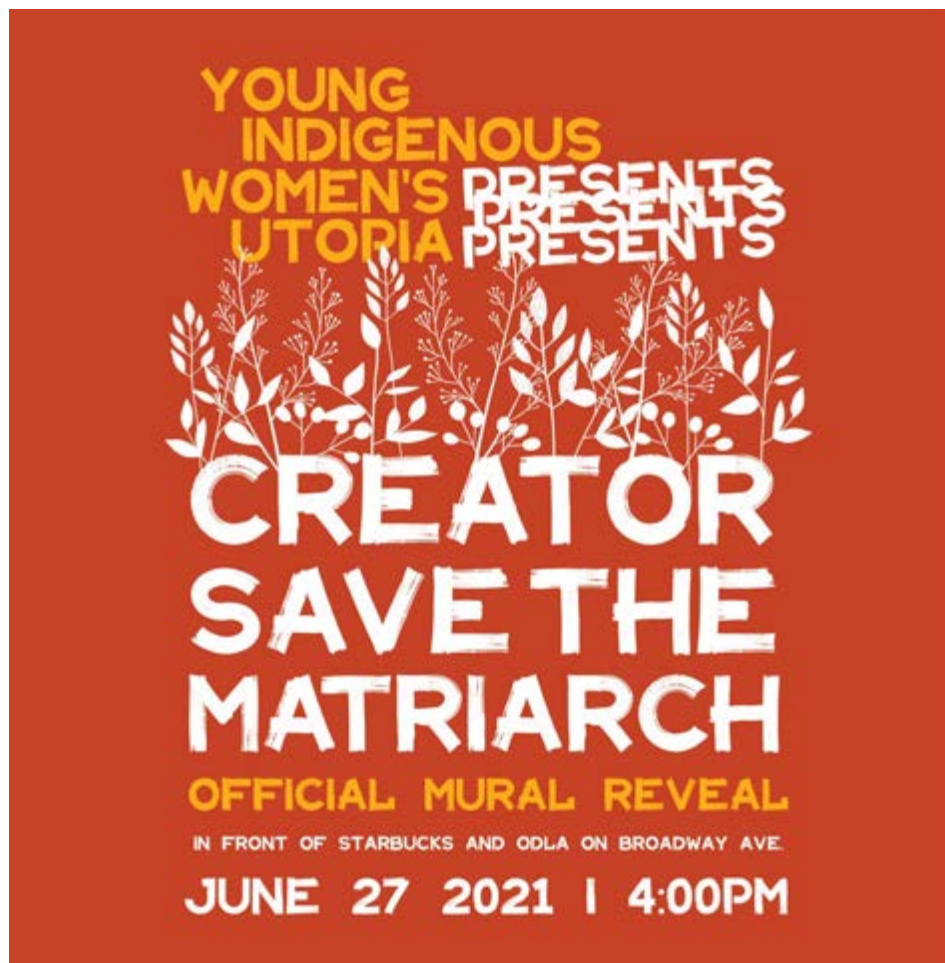
ohpikihicik okawiykaw onikanewa  
Raising Matriarchs


Above & Below: Screenshots from the film.



A mural reveal event took place on June 27, 2021 bringing together the girls, aunties, family and community members. This was a very emotional and meaningful celebration. The older girls in the group were gifted with Star Blankets to mark their graduation, on so many levels of life.

The CREATOR! SAVE THE MATRIARCH mural (see next page) was unveiled on Broadway Avenue, in a wealthy and predominantly white area of Saskatoon. YIWU hope their work will inspire thoughtful conversations and engagement around the issues of safety and freedom of Indigenous youth in Treaty 6/The Traditional Homeland of the Métis/Saskatoon and beyond.








**YOUNG INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S UTOPIA**

Young Indigenous Women's Utopia presents "Creator Save The Matriarch", as we continue to speak back to Colonial and Gender Based Violence in our community!

The mural will find its home under the River and Sky Syllabics on the Saskatchewan Craft Council wall in the heart of the Broadway Bid!

Please join us on June 27th at 4PM in front of Starbucks and Odlá on Broadway Avenue, Saskatoon, for the big reveal!

Private reception for YIWU Gen 1 + Gen 2 and their families to follow at Oskyak High School. We would like to send a special shout out to Michelle Pritchard, all our Moms and Aunties, SCYAP, Chokecherry Studios, the team at York University and More Than Words at McGill University.



Creator Save the Matriarch Mural

## Eskasoni (Canada)

Linda Liebenberg

**Expanding connections: An update on our memorial garden for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and news of more exciting projects**

Gwe' everyone!

Warm greetings from Eskasoni. It's been quite the summer, and our memorial garden for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls continues to grow well! Our plans for the Grand Mother Moon Ceremony space have been approved and work will begin on it shortly. Together with this building, our signage is about to go up. We have also started adding live edge garden benches. They are individually hand made and reflect the individual people who have been lost

over the years, and the beauty that they have left behind, but that we also miss in their absence. We will also be building more benches from cinder blocks and wood. These strong seats for reflection will honour the strength of our collective community as well as the strength we can find in our collective humanity when we are mindful of our engagement with one another and with nature.

In the spring we also mentioned Hannah's first collection of poetry. We have an exciting update in this regard: she has a publishing agreement in place and we hope to see the book in press in time for Christmas! It will be available for purchase on many online retail stores, but once it has been published, we will definitely share the link. The book will be called **Out of Darkness**. The poems are grouped to tell Hannah's life story so far. The book includes poetry prompts for readers, and many wonderful sketches by the poet herself. Her work on this volume

is inspiring other youth on the team to engage with their own talents and produce similar products ... so watch this space! In this interim, here is a sneak peak of an early version of the cover.

## Out Of Darkness



HANNAH BATTISTE

## Kinship Rising (Canada)

Formerly known as Sisters Rising

**Fearless Sisters Rising Mural** was created and unveiled in 2018. Based on Fearless Collective methodologies developed by Shilo Shiv Suleman, the mural was created by bringing together BIPOC youth, students and mentors in partnership with Sisters Rising and the Innovative Young Indigenous Leaders Symposium. The *Fearless Sisters Rising* mural honors the presence and fearless resistance of Indigenous bodies, vital connections to land, and the brilliance of Indigenous artists.

Inspired by these gatherings and stories, the mural was created by Lekwungen, Kwakwaka'wakw, Mowachaht and Nuuu cha nultl artist Brianne Bear and Diné Nicole Neidhardt, and the Kinship Rising Network. At the 2018 Sisters Rising for Wellbeing Forum youth in *Networks4Change* from South Africa, Saskatchewan and others throughout British Columbia participated in a fearless methodology workshop. They were: *What replenishes you?* In response, they painted their reflections on the mural.

In 2020, the mural was hung in the McPherson Library at the University of Victoria. The blessing on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, took place over zoom and honored the artists, the stories and relationships that are integral to the ongoing stewardship of the mural and its story.



For more information, visit Kinship Rising's website [here](#).

# Announcements and Celebrations

## Celebrating Recent Graduates & PhD Students About to Graduate

**Milka Nyariro**  
May, 2021, McGill University



### Using Photovoice to Explore Barriers to School Continuation and Re-Entry for Pregnant Adolescent Girls and Young Mothers Living in Low-Income Urban Contexts in Kenya

Adolescent pregnancy and motherhood are major contributors to the persistent gender gap in education, especially in middle- and low-income contexts. Unplanned early pregnancy and motherhood among adolescent girls between the ages of 13 and 19 has several consequences on the life and well-being of teenage girls and on the lives of their children in terms of education and health.

In Kenya, as is the case in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the national government has ratified the international treaties on gender equality and education for all. One of the strategies that the Kenyan government is using to address gender inequality in education is the formulation of girl-centered policies; among them are school continuation and re-entry policies for pregnant girls and young mothers. Despite the existence of such a policy for pregnant girls and young mothers, many adolescent girls who become pregnant drop out of school and fail to return. The challenge with which the Kenyan government and other governments in SSA continue to grapple is how to incorporate or re-integrate pregnant girls and young mothers back into school. This study employed Photovoice methodology—a participatory, arts-based, visual approach—to explore the challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers in the presence of a school continuation and re-entry policy that has existed in Kenya since 1994.

A key component of *Networks4Change* is training and support for new scholars. In this section we feature 3 new graduates from McGill University and 4 'almost there' doctoral candidates from McGill, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and Nelson Mandela University. Congratulations to all!

I conducted the fieldwork study in Korogocho, one of the largest urban informal settlements in Kenya's capital city, Nairobi. Fifteen pregnant girls and young mothers aged between 13 and 19 years who were out of school because of unplanned pregnancy engaged in a Photovoice activity. I conducted the study in two phases, the first of which was conducted between July and September 2017; it focused on exploring, through Photovoice, the challenges to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers despite the existence, since 1994, of the school continuation and re-entry policy in Kenya. The participants produced over 100 photographs during the Photovoice workshop which they later curated into an exhibition. I conducted Phase Two between July and September 2019; this focused on using the Photovoice exhibition created by the 15 pregnant girls and young mothers to engage with education policy makers during a validation workshop for school continuation and re-entry policies at the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. I adopted participatory and feminist epistemological frameworks to analyze the data. Key findings from this study showed that:

- a. multiple social, economic, and cultural factors interact to create barriers to school continuation and re-entry for pregnant adolescent girls and young mothers and policy makers need, therefore, to adopt an intersectional approach to identify needs when formulating a school continuation and re-entry policy;
- b. education policy making is still closed and hierarchical and is not flexible enough to incorporate the marginalized voices of the policy beneficiaries; and,
- c. the umbrella application of the current ethical principles by Institutional Ethics Review Boards (IERBs) when reviewing all studies including those that apply arts-based participatory and visual methodologies with marginalized groups can perpetuate marginalization against these groups by making researchers avoid doing research with them.

Drawing from the findings and the analysis, the study concluded that:

- a. the policy making landscape needs to include the voices of the target beneficiaries and alternative forms of knowledge like the studies from arts-based participatory and visual studies; and,
- b. IERBs need to be progressive and expand the current ethical principles to accommodate participatory and visual methodologies that seek to empower and give voice to participants through the research processes.

I acknowledge the intellectual, financial, and moral support of my supervisor Dr. Claudia Mitchell throughout this study.

**Seyed Mohammad Hani Sadati**  
August, 2021, McGill University



### **Participatory Digital Serious Game Development to Address Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Agriculture Colleges in Ethiopia**

Considering the high rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Ethiopia, particularly in the country's post-secondary institutions, this project aimed to contribute to the capacity building of Agriculture college instructors in addressing SGBV issues of their campuses. Working within the transformative paradigm and participatory action research perspective, this project applied the participatory arts-based game design (PAGD) method to design an educational or serious game (called Mela, which means "find a solution" in Amharic) that is meant to be a self-educating tool for college instructors. By playing Mela, instructors learn more about campus-based SGBV issues and the potential ways of addressing them.

This project sought to answer the question: *How can a user-responsive learning experience within a digital serious game be created to contribute to improving Ethiopian agriculture college instructors' capacity to address campus-based SGBV?* It focused on three objectives:

1. To study the use of participatory arts-based and visual methods in designing serious games and the possible techniques to involve the game users as design partners;
2. To identify how a participatory serious game design practice is understandable within a research-creation approach; and,
3. To deepen an understanding of how instructors might imagine themselves as agents of change within this serious game design project.

The fieldwork involved 20 instructors from four agricultural colleges in different regions of Ethiopia. The findings show that a research-creation approach provides a robust background for participatory serious game design practices. Also, the study suggests a framework, PAGD, that contributed to the genuine participation of instructors in Mela's design process. Finally, it highlights the role of narrative imagination in designing intervention programs that aim to support the idea of instructors as agents of change. Overall, this study responds to the global need for participatory problem-solving and action for empowering the local community and a deeper understanding of the interplay between SGBV and serious games in low- and middle-income settings. For more information about the Mela game, please visit: <http://melagame.com>

**Haleh Raissadat**  
August, 2021, McGill University



### **Participatory Visual Researchers Reflect on Youth-Led Policy Dialogue**

Recognizing youth as "knowers and as actors" (Oakley, 1994, p. 23) calls for including them in policy dialogue and in finding solutions to social issues that impact them. In recent decades, participatory visual methodologies (PVMs) have been acknowledged for their value in engaging youth participants in the research process, including the analysis of visual data, empowering participants, addressing sensitive and stigmatized issues, democratizing the research process, including participants in policy dialogue, and addressing social issues.

To date, there remains a gap in tracking the outcomes of participatory visual research projects, particularly in the context of the question "Does anything change?" My research question specifically asks, *"How might participatory visual methods contribute to youth-led from-the-ground-up policy dialogue?"* In an attempt to respond to this research question, I framed my literature review within two broad areas of study: grassroots from-the-ground-up policy dialogue; and, PVM.

As part of my methodology, I used purposive sampling to work with six academic scholars who carry out participatory visual research with young people in both the Global North and Global South across a variety of policy areas such as improving the mental health of youth; improving the living, educational and medical condition of the young people's lives; and the right to sexual health education. I conducted in-depth interviews with them using Mitchell et al.'s (2017) go-ask approach, drawing on Gubrium and Harper's (2013) notion of talking with experts in the field of participatory visual research. Adapting Miller et al.'s (2017) approach of being in conversation with, I worked with the interviews through a process I termed creating compositions. The compositions are meant to capture the nuances of the interactions between and among the researchers, the participants, the participatory visual research process, and the desired change itself. Three features emerged from the compositions that could inform existing efforts to build a more comprehensive approach towards engaging young people in policy dialogue and social change: youth engagement; the idea of making public; and, the notion of from-the-ground-up policy dialogue.

This research sheds light on the importance of alternative approaches to knowledge sharing and knowledge production.

It also calls for the development of methodological frameworks that allow for monitoring the “afterlife” (Mitchell et al., 2017, p. 184) of participatory visual research projects and their long-term impacts on the lives of young people. To ensure the sustainability of the impact of participatory visual research projects, frameworks need to include the ways in which young people can practice activism and can practice it safely. Based on my study, I conclude by recommending that researchers:

1. broaden their group of participants in the research inquiry to include young people who have had previous experience of working with PVMs;
2. involve participatory visual researchers with a more diverse background, like, for example, those who work outside the academy (such as in NGOs, schools, and community organizations); and
3. include policymakers or stakeholders who have viewed artifacts produced by young people in participatory visual workshops.

**Pamela Lamb | McGill University**



### **A Reflexive Analysis on the Significance of Affect in Learning from and Responding to Participatory Media**

In my PhD research, I take a reflexive stance as an audience member to consider the significance of affect in learning from and responding to participatory media created by young people from marginalized communities. Affective learning is an often-overlooked domain that includes the learner’s feelings, values, assumptions, and motivations. The purpose of my study is twofold:

1. to explore the role of affective learning in participatory arts-based research, and its relationship to changing attitudes and behaviours; and
2. to develop a framework for reflecting on the affective dissonance or difficult feelings evoked when confronting and challenging one’s cultural beliefs, biases, and privileges.

Participatory media addressing critical issues like violence against Indigenous women and girls can elicit strong affective responses that can leave audience members feeling motivated to confront or to avoid the issues. The meanings and effects derived from participatory media vary according to the viewer’s sense of self, others, and context. For example, Indigenous

youth and non-Indigenous policymakers may have similar feelings about colonial legacies but may have very different relationships to those feelings. Policymakers, educators, and healthcare and social service providers—as audiences to this work—play a critical role in addressing systemic issues like the pandemic of sexual and gender-based violence. The question of affect is in this way critical: An encounter with participatory media during which the viewer experiences a moment of affective dissonance—for what they thought they knew no longer feels true—can activate transformation.

Reflecting on difficult feelings and why these feelings matter can inform teaching and learning to reduce implicit bias in service providers working with marginalized communities. I am exploring this reflexive work through the concepts of ‘cultural safety’ and ‘affective solidarity’. While both concepts involve a critique of power imbalances and critical self-reflection, affective solidarity requires one to reflect on the affective dissonance of confronting and challenging one’s own culture, biases, and privileges.

Finally, I employ expressive writing as a tool of reflexivity to create a space of non-judgement in which to investigate affect. This is a decidedly different approach from critical forms of self-study and autoethnography in that I am interested in what we might learn if we extend our attention from studying structures of power to studying structures of feeling. Writing about emotional experiences can cultivate greater attunement to affective dissonance by examining perceptions of self and others, in all their complexity and contradiction. Rather than disavowing difficult feelings, allowing for affective dissonance may afford opportunities for transformative learning and affective solidarity.

**Lisa Wiebesiek | University of KwaZulu-Natal**



### **Using Participatory Visual Methodology to Explore the Construction of Femininities with Adolescent Girls in Rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

My study was located within the ambit of the Networks for Change project in South Africa. The main research question that I set out to answer throughout this study was: *How might participatory visual methodologies (PVM) be used to explore the construction and reimagining of femininities among girls and young women in a context of poverty, rurality, and GBV?*



Over a period of approximately three-and-a-half years, we worked with the Social Ills Fighters (SIFs), a group of 15 girls and young women in a deep rural area in the Drakensberg region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. We used participatory visual methods including cellfilms, digital story-telling, and policy posters and action briefs to co-produce knowledge and create visual products to be used as tools for advocacy and awareness-raising. Building on and using this co-produced knowledge and using the visual products created by the SIFs, we engaged with the traditional leadership, community members, and other stakeholders in a process of girl-led community-based policy-making through a number of community engagement meetings and a community dialogue.

The findings of the study suggest that girls and young women construct their gendered identities as they navigate the precarity of girlhoods shaped by poverty, gender inequality, and ideas about culture and tradition that silence, commodify, and devalue girls and young women. In combination, these

factors shape the options available to girls and young women to cope with, manage, or respond to adversity. Importantly, however, the findings of the study also suggest that, as social constructionist theories of gender contend, formed as they are in particular social and historical contexts, specific idealised constructions of gender and hegemonic gender relations can and do change over time. Further, the findings and outcomes of the study also suggest that PVM enabled the SIFs to challenge gender and cultural norms that were previously thought of as unassailable, and imagine alternative identities and futures in which their health and well-being is not always at risk. PVM was also crucial to the process of girl-led community-based policy-making that ultimately led to the development and signing of a community reporting and response protocol to address early and forced marriage. The findings of this study have important implications for the development of sustainable, holistic, responsive, and context-relevant policy, programming, and interventions to effectively support and promote the health and well-being of girls in the global South.

**Ntosh (Ntomboxolois) Yamile**  
**Nelson Mandela University**



**Girl-led Intervention to Address Gender-based  
Violence in Rural School Community**

The study sought to explore how schoolgirls might lead a dialogue as intervention to address gender-based violence in a rural school community. There are several gender-based violence (GBV) interventions in South Africa, but they do not seem to be able to curb the rise in GBV. The study context is a rural school community where GBV is a constant part of the schoolgirls' lives. The rural secondary school was conveniently selected and the seven schoolgirls who were in Grade 9 were purposively selected. The work is also located in girlhood studies since it acknowledges the importance of the full participation of girls in mapping out the issues in their lives.

The qualitative study using participatory visual methodology is located within the critical paradigm. It drew on critical audience engagement as a theoretical framework to make meaning of the

participants' experiences of engaging with the audiences in the community dialogues. The data was generated through girl-led dialogues and focus group discussions which were recorded, transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. The themes in response to how the schoolgirls might create and use a digital dialogue tool in a dialogue, show that the schoolgirls overcame the fear of technology and being in a dialogue in addressing a sensitive topic like gender-based violence. In so doing, the schoolgirls also realised their own capacity to create a digital dialogue tool and share their knowledge and experiences of gender-based violence across generations.

The themes in response to what the schoolgirls' experiences of using the digital dialogue tool in engaging rural school community in dialogue to address gender-based violence, show that the schoolgirls were motivated to use their new technological skills to engage in dialogue with others in the school community in tackling gender-based violence. A generative space for dialogue was created where the school community members felt safe, where they could engage and learn from each other, and where the girls felt they could lead with authority. The themes in response to how the rural school community members' responses to the schoolgirls' using a digital dialogue tool in engaging in dialogue with them to address gender-based violence, reveal that the schoolgirls were seen in a new light were viewed with new respect, as the girls spoke up with the school community responding with commitment to step up their role.

The findings, in responding to the main question, indicate that the schoolgirls positioned themselves as socio-political actors in their rural school community, which has implications for policy makers and how they might respond to rural school communities, as well as for community-based researchers seeking to expand the 'reach' of the research.

Informed by critical audience engagement theory, I argue that schoolgirls, when finding a space to make their voices heard in a community dialogue using a digital dialogue tool and to engage in a dialogue with the community, could change how the community sees them and could position them as leaders in addressing gender-based violence. The use of the digital dialogue tool enabled audience engagement, reflexivity and political listening, which could advance the community's efforts of addressing GBV. Schoolgirls could then take up their agency to address GBV in their rural school community.

**Samke (Samkelisiwe) Luthuli**  
**Year 3, University of KwaZulu-Natal**



### **Understanding Adolescent Girls' Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Needs in Rural KwaZulu-Natal Schools**

My study is premised on available evidence which suggests that adolescent girls in South Africa are facing a high unmet need for sexual and reproductive healths and rights (SRHR) education and services. Reasons for this include social and cultural norms that view discussions about sex and sexuality between young people and adults (including parents, teachers, and nurses) as taboo. This is one of the reasons why teachers are reluctant to implement sexuality education in the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum despite it being part of the formal curriculum framework. This lack of access to SRHR education and services puts adolescents in these contexts at risk of, among others, unsafe abortions, and childbirth, STIs (including HIV), and at social risks such as decreased educational and employment opportunities, poverty, and stigma. The high incidence of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies among adolescents and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV among this population, are a major concern that needs urgent and collaborative attention from all stakeholders and partners.

The study, therefore, involves a total of 30 adolescent girls (aged 16-19) enrolled in grade 10-11 in one rural school in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Data generation involves working with this group of adolescent girls to understand their SRHR needs and identify and develop strategies for addressing it. Following the methodology adopted in the larger *Networks4Change* project, to respond to this aim, the study uses participatory visual methodologies (PVM), including collage making, photovoice and letter writing. From my analysis of the data I am generating, in addition to understanding the SRHR needs of adolescent girls in this community from own perspectives, I hope to engage them in identifying strategies that will be effective and contextually relevant for addressing these needs and for negative health outcomes such as unplanned and unwanted pregnancies and STIs among adolescent girls in rural communities. Addressing the unmet needs for SRHR education and services among rural adolescents will help to prevent poor SRH outcomes and their impacts on educational and social outcomes.

**Vimbiso Okafor**  
**Nelson Mandela University**



### **Implementation of a National Policy Framework for Addressing Gender-based Violence in Universities: A Case Study of a South African University**

Over the years, university policies targeting gender-based violence (GBV), were mostly focused on sexual harassment, which was considered a misconduct. However, available research suggests that the increase in cases of GBV and rape culture in these institutions over the last few years indicates a policy gap and that available policies and programmes have not been effectively implemented or are not working. A new national Department of Higher Education and Training GBV policy framework was introduced in 2019 for all HEIs in South Africa. Therefore, using a case study of one university, this PhD study addresses the question: *How is the DHET GBV policy framework understood, interpreted and translated into institutional policies and programmes in a South African university?* Specifically, the study asks:

*How do key policy implementers in a South African university understand the DHET GBV Policy Framework and its implications for the safety of staff and students on campus? How do institutional GBV policies respond to the DHET GBV Policy framework? What are the experiences of staff and students regarding the influence of the newly developed institutional policies on their safety on campus?*

# 9<sup>th</sup> McGill International Cellphim Festival

The 9<sup>th</sup> McGill International Cellphim Festival centred on the theme of **Transformation**:

- ▶ What does it mean to you and in your circumstances?
- ▶ How does it manifest in your school, community, environment or everyday life?

In total, the festival received 53 submissions from 75 international participants hailing from four continents and eight countries. A huge thank you to CODE, the sponsor of the festival and Collette Anton for coordinating the event. The festival this year featured a keynote address from Dr. Sarah Switzer entitled “Transforming How We Gather: Reflections on Community-Engagement in COVID-19.”

Congratulations to the winners of the 5 categories! Watch the winning cellphims [here](#).

## Creative Content Award

THE LABYRINTH OF DEPRESSION

*Laya Najwa Zoukari*

## Best Production Award

BREAKING THE MOULD

*Yasha ShodjaeeZrudlo, Mona Ghadirian, and their youth team*

## Best Group Award

AFTER TOMORROW

*Déborah Maia de Lima and Juliana Ponguta*

## People's Choice Award

KITTIES TRANSFORM ALMA'S LIFE

*Alma Sadati*

## Young Film Makers Award

EXPLAINING OUR PARANOIA  
WALKING ALONE AS INDIGENOUS  
GIRLS IN TREATY 6

*Melody McKay, Harmony McKay, Kelly Kalum, and Kalan Kakum-McKay*

9TH EDITION MCGILL INTERNATIONAL CELLPHILM FESTIVAL



# YOUNG FILMMAKER AWARD

MELODY MCKAY, HARMONY MCKAY,  
KELLY KAKUM, KALAN KAKUM-MCKAY

EXPLAINING OUR PARANOIA WALKING ALONE  
AS INDIGENOUS GIRLS IN TREATY 6

*This award honors the best submission from filmmaker(s) aged 14 and under. It displays a high level of technical production skills and demonstrates effective visual and audial choices.*



Congratulations to the girls from Young Indigenous Women's Utopia on this amazing achievement!  
—N4C

## “Why Participatory Video/Cellphilm and Why Now” Symposium

This year was the first year we held a cellphilm symposium titled, “Why Participatory Video/Cellphilm and Why Now?” The symposium, organized by Aaron Rosenberg, brought together many ideas and people, facilitating a meeting point for sharing experiences and insights between some of the pioneering researchers in this field and other academics and educators who share an interest in supporting communities through participatory video or cellphilm. Read the full report from the symposium [here](#).

### OPENING PANEL: “THE BIRTH OF CELLPHILM IS IN AFRICA”

Chair: Dr. Claudia Mitchell

Speakers: Keyan Tomaselli, Naydene de Lange, Relebohile Moletsane, and Alcina Siteo

### PARTICIPATORY VIDEO & CELLPHILMING ROUNDTABLE: WHY NOW?

Chair: Steven Schnoor

Speakers: Juan Carlos Sandoval Rivera, Katie MacEntee, Casey Burkholder, Josh Schwab Cartas, and Ramson Karmushu

### NOT JUST A TOOLKIT

Chair: Nesa Bandarchia Rashti

Speakers: Jen Thompson, Lisa Starr, Nicole D'Souza, Michaela Field, Darshan Daryanani, Chloe Garcia, Maria Ezcurra, and Mindy Carter

### CELLPHILM FOR SOCIAL/ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Chair: Aron Rosenberg

Speakers: Vanessa Gold, Salima Punjani, Mitchell McLarnon, Francisco Reyes Pegeuro, and Jayne Malenfant

## Orange Shirt Day / National Day for Truth and Reconciliation



On 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, Canada observed its first official national holiday in honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Since 2013 this day has been known as *Orange Shirt Day*, bringing awareness to the history and legacies of the residential school system. Orange Shirt Day originates from the story of Phyllis Webstad from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation and her experiences at St. Joseph's Residential School in Williams Lake, British Columbia.

To honour this day, a coalition of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples at McGill University collaborated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual We Will Walk Together/Skàtne Entewathahita event, focusing on the theme of Hope and Healing. A thoughtful agenda filled with story sharing and musical performances was

facilitated thoughtfully by John Sylliboy (Mi'kmaw educator, co-founder Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance—W2SA). You can access the event recording [here!](#) Musical highlights included Nina Segalowitz's drumming and [performance of the Dene Healing Song](#), and children of St. Edmund Elementary School's [performance of Tiny Hands](#), led by music teacher Jennifer Hayden.

Following the event an in-person student-led solidarity march took place, starting on-campus at McGill and journeying through the city. It was beautiful to see the engagement and the commitment that day. We hope the days that follow are filled with just as much commitment to the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action](#).

Below, Left to Right: Some of the We Will Walk Together event organisers. John Sylliboy, Nesa Bandarchian Rashti, Ramy Gorgis, Tatianna Sitounis, Claudia Mitchell, Mindy Carter, Cruickshank, Andee Shuster, Leann Brown, Saruul Khishigjargal, and Darshan Daryanani. Photo credit: John Sylliboy.

Inner Circle: The beginnings of the student-led solidarity march on rue McTavish, McGill University campus. Photo credit: John Sylliboy.

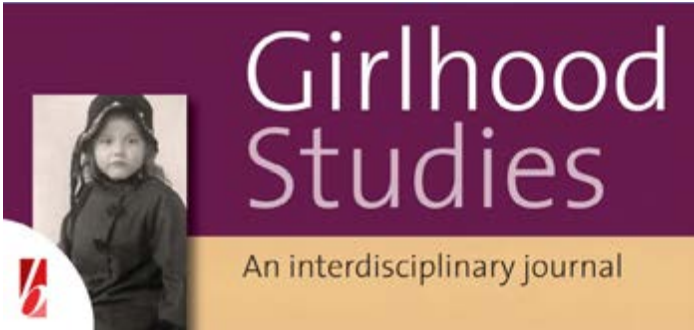


# New Publications



Authors: The Young Indigenous Women's Utopia Group, Cindy Moccasin, Jessica McNab, Catherine Vanner, Sarah Flicker, Jennifer Altenberg, and Kari-Dawn Wuttunee

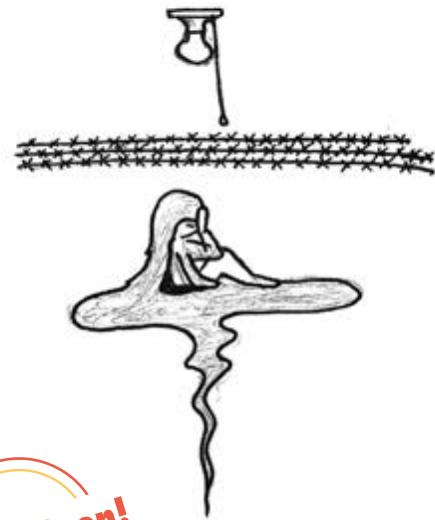
We adopt an autoethnographic approach to share critical reflections from the Young Indigenous Women's Utopia girls' group about our experiences attending the 2019 International Girlhood Studies Association conference at the University of Notre Dame (IGSA@ND). Moments of inspiration included sharing our work and connecting with local Indigenous youth. Challenging moments included feeling isolated and excluded since the only girls present at the conference were Indigenous people in colonial spaces. We conclude with reflection questions and recommendations to help future conference organizers and participants think through the politics and possibilities of meaningful expanded stakeholder inclusion at academic meetings. This article has now been made [open access](#).



**Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal**  
Volume 14, Issue 2

**Where Are All the Girls and Indigenous People at IGSA@ND?**

## Out Of Darkness



**Coming Soon!**

HANNAH BATTISTE

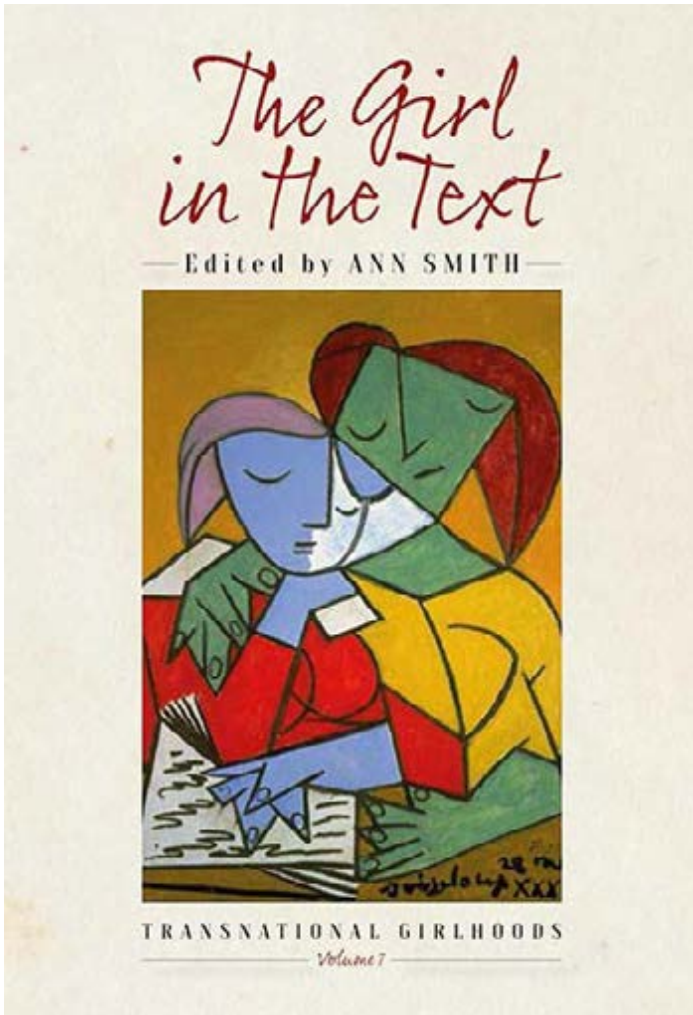


## Berghahn Series: Transnational Girlhoods

### Series Editors:

Claudia Mitchell, McGill University  
Bodil Formark, Umea University  
Ann Smith, McGill University  
Heather Switzer, Arizona State University

### Volume 1

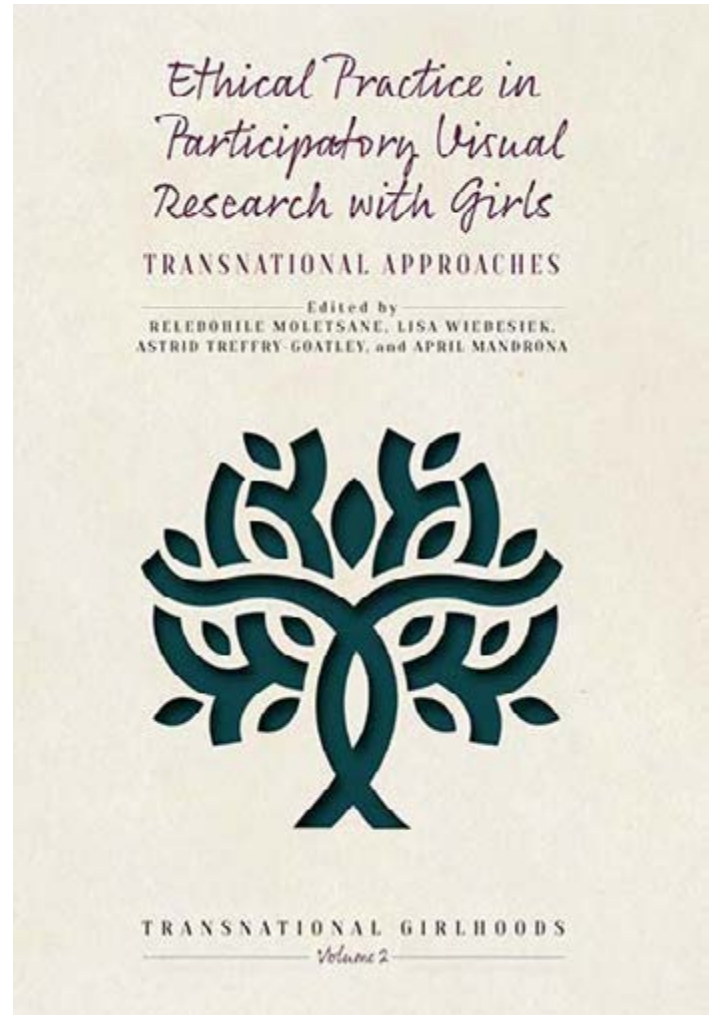


Edited by Ann Smith

How are girls represented in written and graphic texts, and how do these representations inform our understanding of girlhood? In this volume, contributors examine the girl in the text in order to explore a range of perspectives on girlhood across borders and in relation to their positionality. In literary and transactional texts, girls are presented as heroes who empower themselves and others with lasting effect, as figures of liberating pedagogical practice and educational activism, and as catalysts for discussions of the relationship between desire and ethics. In [these varied chapters](#), a new notion of transnationalism emerges, one rooted not only in the process through which borders between nation-states become more porous, but through which cultural and ethnic imperatives become permeable.

As the first book series to focus specifically on the exciting field of Girlhood Studies as an area of interdisciplinary research and activism, *Transnational Girlhoods* will help to advance the research and activism agenda by publishing full-length monographs and edited collections that reflect a robust interdisciplinary and global perspective. International in scope, the series will draw on a vibrant network of girlhood scholars already active across North America, Europe, Russia, Oceania, and Africa, while forging connections with new activist and scholarly communities.

### Volume 2

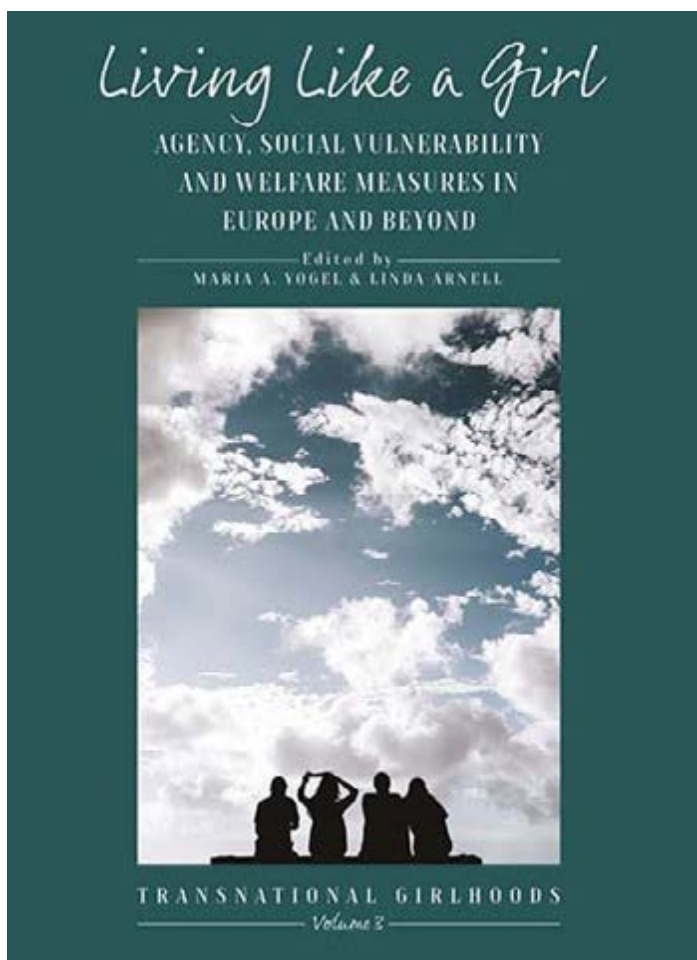


Edited by:

**Relebohile Moletsane, Lisa Wiebesiek,  
Astrid Treffry-Goatley, and April Mandrona**

Girls and young women, particularly those from rural and Indigenous communities around the world, face some of the most adverse social issues in the world despite the existence of protective laws and international treaties. *Ethical Practice in Participatory Visual Research with Girls* explores the potential of participatory visual method (PVM) for girls and young women in these communities, presenting and critiquing the everyday ethical dilemmas visual researchers face and the strategies they implement to address them, reflecting on principles of autonomy, social justice, and beneficence in transnational, Indigenous and rural contexts.

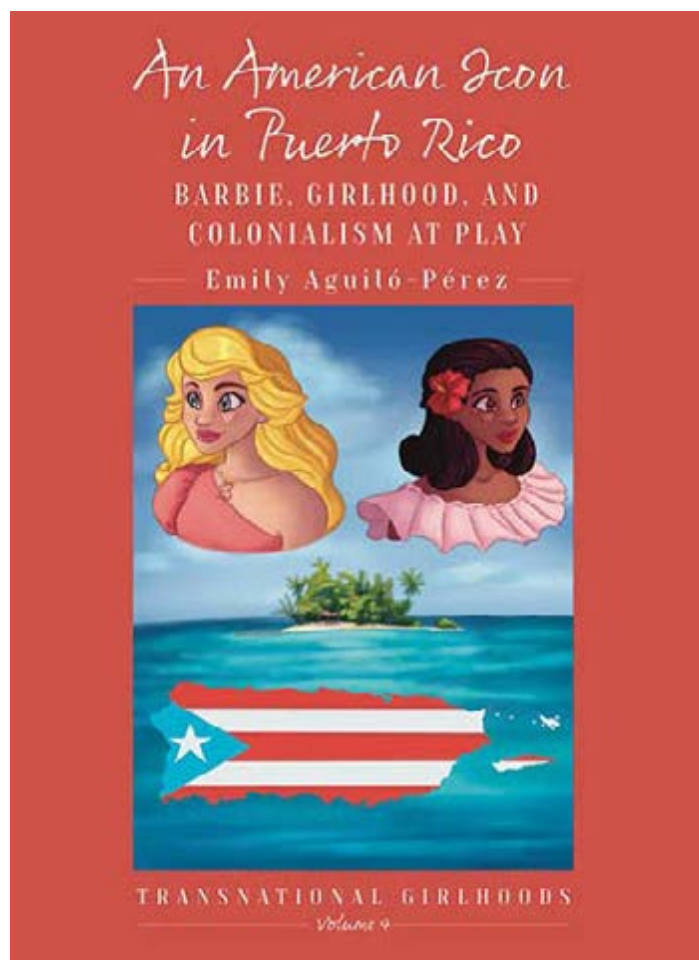
### Volume 3



Edited by Maria A. Vogel and Linda Arnell

In recent decades, large-scale social changes have taken place in Europe. Ranging from neoliberal social policies to globalization and the growth of EU, these changes have significantly affected the conditions in which girls shape their lives. *Living Like a Girl* explores the relationship between changing social conditions and girls' agency, with a particular focus on social services such as school programs and compulsory institutional care. The contributions in this collected volume seek to expand our understanding of contemporary European girlhood by demonstrating how social problems are managed in different cultural contexts, political and social systems.

### Volume 4



Edited by Emily R. Aguiló-Pérez

Since her creation in 1959, Barbie has become an icon of femininity to girls all over the world. In [this study](#), author Emily R. Aguiló-Pérez focuses on a group of multigenerational Puerto Rican women and girls, exploring how playing with Barbie dolls as children has impacted their lives. By documenting the often-complicated relationships girls have with Barbie dolls, Aguiló-Pérez highlights the ways through which women and girls construct their own identities in relation to femininity, body image, race, and nationalism through Barbie play.



ELSEVIER

### "They Abduct Us and Rape Us": Adolescents' Participatory Visual Reflections of their Vulnerability to Sexual Violence in South African Townships

Authors: Ndumiso Daluxolo Ngidi,  
Relebohile Moletsane, Zaynab Essack

The abduction and sexual violation of adolescents, especially in township contexts, has increasingly made headlines in South Africa. These incidents are evocative of jackrolling, a phenomenon that plagued townships during the apartheid upheavals in the late 1980s. The abduction of adolescents on their school journeys has been reported in several South African

townships. In this paper, we report on a study in which we used participatory visual methods (i.e., cellphilms: short videos made with cellphones) to explore how 19 adolescent girls and boys living in the Inanda, Ntuzuma, and KwaMashu township precinct, outside Durban reflected on their vulnerability to sexual violence. Although the question was broad, our analysis of the visual data suggests that adolescents believed that their vulnerability to abduction and rape was almost inevitable. As such, in their cellphilms, they chose to portray their risk and vulnerability to abduction, rape, and even murder on their daily journeys to and from school. We found that through this methodology, adolescents were able to illustrate and/or articulate their fear of sexual violence. For them, violence was an inescapable reality that created fear and helplessness. This underscores the need for interventions, including the provision of safe scholar transport and visible policing in the community. This article is [open access](#) for a limited time.

# The Circle Expands: Extending the *NC4* Movement

*Networks4Change* has inspired a movement of youth-led work to address gender inequality and gender-based violence. As the IPaSS partnership sunsets, the *Networks4Change* movement continues and expands in scope through a host of projects and initiatives in Canada and South Africa and beyond, that build on participatory arts-based approaches. Here is a small sample of the exciting work that continues in the effort to achieve safety and freedom for youth everywhere.



## **Pathways2Equity: Youth-led, Indigenous-Focussed, Gender-Transformative, Arts-based Approaches to Challenging Gender Norms in Addressing Gender-based Violence**

PI: Claudia Mitchell | Co-Investigators: Lisa Starr, Dennis Wendt, Jordan Koch, Lee Schaeffer, Neil Andersson, Linda Liebenberg, Marnina Gonick, Jen Altenberg, and Sarah Flicker

Pathways2Equity uses gender-transformative approaches to dismantle harmful gender norms, create safer relationships and advance towards ending gender-based violence (GBV) which has been exacerbated by COVID-19. Driven by Indigenous youth (groups of girls and young women working alongside groups of boys and young men, in all their diversity) we build upon ongoing arts-based work with Indigenous girls in Eskasoni, Rankin Inlet, Treaty 6/Traditional Homeland of the Métis/Saskatoon addressing GBV. Critically, these girl groups have identified the need to engage boys in work needed to disrupt broader social norms and structures that contribute to harmful gender stereotypes, inequality and ultimately fuel GBV.



## **Comprehensive Sexuality Education Curriculum in Rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa: A Community-based Participatory Approach to Contextually Relevant Programming**

PI: Relebohile Moletsane & Xolile Msimanga | Co-Investigators: Naydene de Lange, Astrid Treffry-Goatley, Lisa Wiebesiek, Nkonzo Mkhize

This project builds on the dynamic partnership built by the *Networks4Change* project between the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Xoli Msimanga, the co-founder and director of Thembaletu Care Organisation, a non-profit organisation based in the rural community of Loskop in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In this partnership project, we will apply the same participatory visual methodology to engage with adolescent learners (boys and girls), parents and caregivers, and Life Orientation teachers to understand the needs of adolescents in relation to their sexual and reproductive health and rights and to explore how comprehensive sexuality education might be implemented in a way that is meaningful to adolescents and relevant to this context.



## **WE-SAY: Youth, Gender and Education: Changing Landscapes of Work in Rural Sub-Saharan Africa**

PI: Barbara Crossouard | Co-Investigators: Naydene de Lange, Astrid Treffry-Goatley, Lisa Wiebesiek, Nkonzo Mkhize

Combining life history and visual participatory methodologies, this [project](#) explores the livelihoods of rural female youth with different educational trajectories and the imaginaries they hold of work. By involving youth researchers in Nigeria and South Africa, both fractured by deep social inequalities, the project aims to develop situated understandings of the values and norms within these imaginaries and through participatory methods to support youth in developing new conceptual frameworks that challenge historic gender and other structural inequalities in the ways different work is valued. The group of young women will use these visual materials to develop a booklet about work and education of young women in rural communities and how they would like to see this change. The visual images and productions will be exhibited for different audiences and used to initiate dialogue about the links between education and young women's work in rural communities.



## 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

PI: Claudia Mitchell | Co-Investigators: Neil Andersson, Mindy Carter, Jaswant Guzder, Shaheen Shariff, Lisa Starr, Linda Liebenberg, Sarah Flicker, Marnina Gonick, and Jen Altenberg

*More Than Words* (MTW) uses art and intergenerational mentoring to empower Indigenous young women, girls and LGBTQ2+ youth to address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and support survivors, families, and communities. MTW builds on the project *Networks for Change and Well-being: Girl-led 'From the Ground Up' Policy Making to Address Sexual Violence*. This project laid the foundation for collaboration and successful partnering over the last six years by building skills and capacity for Indigenous young people to respond to SGBV in their own communities through arts-based approaches.

The project is driven by Indigenous youth in three sites: Treaty 6/The Traditional Homeland of the Métis/Saskatoon (Sask), Rankin Inlet (Nvt) and Eskasoni on Cape Breton Island (N.S). Youth groups chose their own approaches, corresponding with their personal, cultural, and community values. Each site is youth-led, Indigenous-focussed, survivor-centred and supported by local Indigenous community scholars. Youth are trained in arts-based methods to develop leadership and facilitation skills so they may share their knowledge of SGBV and survivor support with their peers and community. Youth-led community events focus on participatory artmaking and sharing, and create spaces where survivors, families and community members can gather, share, and heal.

## Girls' Clubs: Building the Capacity of Girls to Address Gender Inequality and Gender-Based Violence In and Around their Schools and Communities

PI: Relebohile Moletsane | Co-Investigators: Naydene de Lange, Astrid Treffry-Goatley, Lisa Wiebesiek, Nkondo Mkhize

This project, which directly responds to the findings of the *Networks4Change* project, aims to build the capacity of and support 12 to 15 young women teachers to establish and facilitate girls' clubs as safe spaces for girls and young women in their schools. These champion teachers will invite girls they teach to join an extracurricular girls' club and will serve as accessible mentors to girls who join the clubs. The clubs will use participatory visual methodology to enable discussion, learning, and the co-production of knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender inequality, and gender-based violence (GBV); cultivate a sense of confidence and leadership through mentorship, interactive training in life skills, career development, and goal setting; build the girls' skills in digital media and the creative arts as modes of expression and communication about issues that impact their lives; and build girls' capacity to use their visual artefacts to stimulate school-community dialogue about gender inequality, SRHR, GBV, and strategies for addressing them.

## Participatory Research on Agency in Education in Mali (PREAM)

PI: Claudia Mitchell | Co-Investigators: Kattie Lussier, Blane Leslie Harvey, Lisa Starr, Myriam Gervais, and Myriam Denov

PREAM seeks to investigate the relationship between agency and educational participation in conflict-affected regions of Mali, particularly in relation to adolescent girls. The purpose of the study is to enhance the responsiveness of policies and programs to the educational rights and aspirations of adolescents, especially girls (ages 13-18), in crisis-affected areas of Mali. More specifically, the objectives of the research are to:

1. Improve the availability of credible, crisis context-relevant and participatory research on the relationship between adolescent girls' agency and education, and
2. Strengthen the use of evidence on agency and education by advocates of quality education for adolescents, especially girls, in crisis-affected areas.

The study builds on the use of participatory methodologies such as drawing and cellphilmimg. It is being conducted in Segou and Mopti regions of Mali by McGill University and the Université des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Bamako in close collaboration with Plan Canada and Plan Mali who are implementing an education in emergencies program in these regions and will assist the researchers in terms of access.

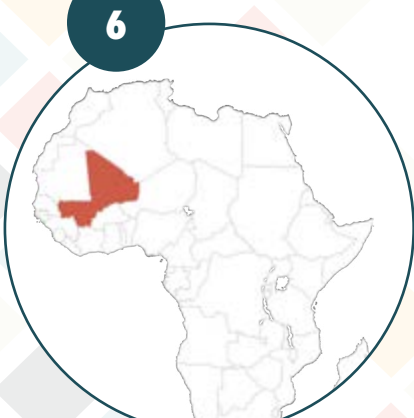
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# Thank You Summer Interns at McGill!

Much of the creative work attached to the *Imbizo* presented in this Newsletter is thanks to the 2021 McGill Interns.

Over the summer of 2021, 8 Interns from McGill's Faculty of Arts and Global Health Scholars programs worked to support projects and initiatives of Claudia Mitchell and the Participatory Culture Lab.

Catherine Dillman and Sumaya Soufi supported [Networks4Change](#) and [Imbizo activities](#) including the creation of the site bios, the [Circle Back book](#), and the [Podcast](#). Saruul Khishigjargal and Johnathon Cruickshank set out supporting *More Than Words*, but also helped with many aspects of *Networks4Change Imbizo* including [video creation](#), knowledge mobilization, production of the [Circle Back Podcast](#), and logistical elements of the *Imbizo* event. Theodore Chiara and Tatianna Sitounis supported *Young People, Well-being, and Connectedness in the Time of Distancing* research study, the [International Cellphilm Festival](#) and 'Making Connections' activities of the [Participatory Cultures Lab](#). Tatianna

also helped produce creative and accessible graphic notes from what was shown and shared at the *Imbizo*. Ishika Obeegadoo and Elina Qureshi supported the [Institute of Human Development & Well-being \(IHDW\)](#) and [Participatory Research on Education and Agency in Mali \(PREAM\)](#), a 3-year international collaboration between McGill University and the Université des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Bamako (ULSHB) in partnership with Plan International Canada and Plan International Mali.

Special thanks to Avril Torres Rios, Leann Brown, Nesa Bandarchian Rashti, and Ramy Gorgis for coordinating the 2001 Summer Internship program.

Collaboration with the team of interns took place remotely over the summer, with members placed all over Canada, USA and Mauritius. The team finally had the opportunity to meet one another in-person on-campus on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021, when we came together in reflection and celebration of the internship and all the wonderful work. It was a very local Intern *Imbizo*!



Nesa Bandarchian Rashti shares her reflections with the team. Nesa collaborated closely with Theo and Tatianna during the internship.



Sumaya shares her best memory of the summer internship: The *N4C Imbizo*!



L to R: Darshan Daryanani, Claudia Mitchell, Elina Qureshi, Sumaya Soufi, Catherine Dillman, Hani Sadati, Johnathon Cruickshank, Leann Brown, Nesa Bandarchian Rashti, Tatianna Sitounis, Saruul Khishigjargal, Ishika Obeegadoo, Ramy Gorgis. Theodore Chiara was missed that day.

Thank you, Emily!



Special thanks goes to **Emily Booker** for all of her support for *Networks4Change*.

## Partners



(Native Youth Sexual Health Network)



## Stakeholders



National Council Against Gender-Based Violence, South Africa



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