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VOICE VIEWS ON INTERDISCIPLINARY CHILDHOOD ETHICS

MISSION

VOICE is an interdisciplinary team committed to addressing ethical problems in all realms of children’s lives (‘children’ is defined as all minors). VOICE is advancing knowledge and improving practices in Global Child Health Ethics by using a participatory integrated knowledge and action framework with active input from an extensive network of community partners. These community partners include a number of youth groups and community organizations. A major focus of the VOICE team is to promote the recognition of the voice of children in matters that affect them. VOICE is a unique and innovative initiative. VOICE is committed to ACTION!

ACTIVITIES

VOICE is conducting numerous **Global Child Health Ethics** projects at any given time. These projects include empirical research studies, syntheses of existing research to highlight existing knowledge and identify priorities for new research, legal analyses, as well as knowledge translation projects in various settings. The latter includes vigilant advocacy work WITH children and youth to promote improvements in the ethical treatment of young people. VOICE is conducting this work in international resource-limited settings, as well as Western settings where ‘high-risk’ childhood groups have been identified (e.g., indigenous children as well as children living in the context of migration, poverty, mental illness, disability, among others). Within Canada, VOICE has a strong indigenous child health focus with trainees from the McGill Ingram School of Nursing working on projects with indigenous children in various Quebec communities.

Current Global Child Health Ethics VOICE projects include (among others):

- Promoting the ethical treatment of children in pediatric services in Brazil (e.g., HIV/AIDS prevention, palliative care, childhood disability)
- Advancing peer-to-peer HIV/AIDS prevention education among youth in rural Tanzania
- Attending to the voice of children with cancer in India
- Developing pediatric ethical standards in the Republic of Georgia
- Recognizing indigenous children as active moral agents in the development of culturally-adapted health and social services

1 Children vote for youth peer health educators at the Tanzanian VOICE site.

2 Team members Franco Carnevale and Mary Ellen Macdonald with student Suzanne George at the Rapid Lake indigenous site.

3 Playroom (India site)



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COMMUNITY PARTNERS

VOICE works in continuous collaboration with an extensive network of community partners to identify research priorities and effective practice-improvement strategies for addressing Global Child Health Ethical problems. Canadian examples of community partners include:

Youth Groups

- Inter-tribal Youth Centre (ITYC) (Native Friendship Centre of Montreal)
- Students Commission of Canada
- Youth Advisory Council - Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Parent Groups

- Canadian Family Advisory Network
- Parent Representatives from Numerous Parent Groups

Youth Services Organizations

- Canadian Association of Paediatric Health Centres (CAPHC)
- The Lighthouse, Children and Families (pediatric hospice and respite care)
- LOVE Quebec (Leave Out Violence)
- Welcome Hall Mission - Children's Services

Youth Advocates

- UNICEF Canada - Director of Policy and Education
- New Brunswick Office of the Child & Youth Advocate (Senior Legal Counsel)
- Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Ontario

Children's Services Providers

- Educators/teachers, nurses, physicians, social workers

Policy-Makers

- Bioethics Committee of the Canadian Paediatrics Society (Past-president)

Note: similar partnerships are being continuously developed in international settings where VOICE is working.

4 Youth peer educators huddling at the Tanzania site.

CANADIAN TEAM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Franco Carnevale

(bioethics, nursing, psychology)

PROGRAM MANAGER

Crystal Noronha

CO-INVESTIGATORS

Delphine Collin-Vézina

(child welfare, psychology)

Mary Ellen Macdonald (anthropology)

Jean-Frédéric Menard (law)

Shaheen Shariff (childhood education)

Victoria Talwar

(childhood education, psychology)

Shauna Van Praagh (law)

COLLABORATORS

Myra Bluebond-Langner (UK; anthropology)

Patricia McKeever (disability studies, nursing, sociology)

Nico Trocmé (child welfare, social work)

Daniel Weinstock (ethics, law, philosophy)

Plus numerous international collaborators & trainees

WHERE WE WORK

Canada, Brazil, India, Mauritius, Tanzania, Republic of Georgia, among others



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