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Dear Friends of the IHDW,

Welcome everyone to this latest issue of the IHDW newsletter. It would be lovely to welcome you to our ‘post Covid-19’ issue but clearly we are not there yet.

We include in this issue an update on some of the ongoing projects and book and journal publications of IHDW co-directors and graduate students, with much of this work related to Covid-19. In the Summer of 2021 we had the good fortune to have eight interns from the Faculty of Arts and Global Health working either directly with the IHDW and its projects such as the new Participatory Research in Education and Agency in Mali project (PREAM) and the 9th Annual McGill International Cellphilm Festival which focused on the theme of Transformation. Other interns worked on related projects funded through SSHRC and Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) and attached to the Participatory Cultures Lab. A special feature of much of the work of the interns, all undergraduates at McGill, was their ‘take’ as young people on the impact of the pandemic on young people. This included their analyses of media and the preparation of a youth briefing paper, and the production by faculty arts student, Tatiana Sitounis of a graphic novel style publication. Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Canadian Youth Well-Being: a Graphic Story to be launched officially later this fall.

We thank the interns for their energy and enthusiasm and especially their contribution to a youth perspective on well-being. Finally, we welcome our new Visiting Professor, Dr. Prachi Srivastava.

Claudia Mitchell,
Perspectives of Youth and Covid-19
A special report and reflection from IHDW 2021 Interns

The Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadian Youth
by Tatianna Sitounis & Theo Chiara

A year and a half into a global pandemic, the entire world has felt its impacts. These impacts, however, have not been felt equally. At the Participatory Cultures Lab, we have been paying particular attention to the impacts the COVID-19 pandemic has had on Canadian youth in terms of well-being and mental health. This work involves analyzing and comparing different age groups (12-24) as well as youth of differing backgrounds in order to report what this nation’s young teenagers and adults have been going through, how these developmental impacts will affect their lives, and what can be done to address the situation.

Two critical age groups which have been impacted severely are those who have just graduated high school and are preparing to enter university, and those who have just graduated from university and are entering the workforce.

“These groups of students have missed out on critical opportunities for academic and social development”

Due to the pandemic’s impacts on education, many high school students, especially those who are about to graduate, have discussed how underprepared they feel for university, as many students have not taken an in-person exam in over a year (CBC Radio).

Coupled with these educational losses, late high school students have also missed out on many important markers of their high school experience, like dances, after school activities, and simply being able to hang out with friends - all of which are vital to students’ social development and mental health.

Those who have just graduated university face similar uncertain futures. As they prepare to enter a volatile work economy, with many young adults struggling to find entry-level positions, this group has also missed out on important life events, with many having had to graduate from their university through a Zoom meeting or abruptly having to say goodbye to friends.

As well, some experts worry that the pandemic’s impacts on this group could potentially have life-long influence, with some saying there could be lifetime decreased earnings (CBC Radio).

Within these age groups it is important to acknowledge the different realities that certain groups of youth across the nation face, such as LGBTQ+, Indigenous, refugee, foster care, and youths with disabilities. These groups have felt disproportionate impacts of the pandemic, with many not only facing mental health issues, but also often having decreased accessibility to resources which could alleviate some of the pressures this pandemic has exacerbated. Our research delves into the varying reasons why and how COVID-19 impacted these groups differently.

For most youth, this pandemic has come at a time that would ‘normally’ have been marked by important life events, and while the pandemic has not erased these experiences, it certainly has
altered the way youth get to experience their lives.

Thus, it is critical that we identify and uplift the voices of Canada’s youth to share their experiences and document their development during a time in which their health and wellbeing must be prioritized.

Theodore Chiara is entering his fourth year of his double major degree in Political Science and Philosophy. He is currently interning at the Participatory Cultures Lab (PCL). At the PCL, Theo wants to use his knowledge and interests to learn more about researching, analyzing, and improving the social world.

Tatianna Sitounis is currently a U3 student at McGill University, pursuing a major in Environment and Development and minoring in Health Geography. She looks forward to combining her passions for social justice, research, and community engagement with her love for art and digital media as a summer intern with the Participatory Cultures Lab.

Covid-19 Research @ the IHDW

COVID-19 research-to-practice: Enhancing on-line mental health resource provision for adolescents. SSHRC Partnership Engage Grant

Dr. Nancy Heath, Dr. Elana Bloom, Dr. Gerry Weintraub

Funder: SSHRC Partnership Engage Grant

In September of 2020, the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, announced the investment of over $4 million in funding through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council’s (SSHRC) Partnership Engage Grants to provide short-term and timely support for partnered research activities that will inform decision-making in the public, private or not-for-profit sector.

In response to the early phases of the pandemic crisis, the latest Partnership Engage Grants competition included a special call to address COVID-19-related research to support Canadian researchers who can help provide the data, insight and evidence to guide action in the months and years to come, and to navigate post-pandemic economic and social recovery. Among the 139 projects funded through this special call were seven McGill-led projects, one of which is the current project under the direction of principal investigator Dr. Nancy Heath and co-investigators Dr. Elana Bloom and Dr. Gerry Weintraub.

The Online Mental Health for Adolescents (OMHA) research project is a partnership with the Centre for Excellence in Mental Health of Quebec. Since online resources are being more frequently used in efforts to address the mental health needs of students, the wide variety of newly developed online resources in response to COVID-19 can make it difficult for school mental health professionals to decide what to recommend. Thus, OMHA aims to develop,
evaluate, and disseminate an evidenced-based, best-practice bilingual infographic guide to support school mental health professionals, and pre-service school mental health professionals, in their selection of online mental health resources for adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Young People, Well-being, and Connectedness in the Time of Distancing**

*Dr. Claudia Mitchell, Dr. Neil Andersson, Dr. Lisa Starr, Dr. Bronwen Low, Dr. Hani Sadati*

**Funder: Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux – Québec**

The project addresses the question youth are asking, “How will we develop under physical distancing and social isolation?” The dramatic Covid-19 pandemic is shifting everyone’s lives and there is wide promotion of social distancing as the mainstay of managing local spread. This has profound consequences for community engagement and personal well-being. For young people, even in an era of social media, the idea of physical distancing has been particularly challenging.

We urgently need to learn more about how young people see the issues and how they can be engaged in co-production of knowledge about the pandemic. This project looks at the pandemic ‘through the eyes of youth’: What is their youth of urgency, of agency and of coping under prolonged social isolation? What unmet mental health need is created or exacerbated by the crisis? What new creative and educational methods are they developing, including through social media?

We also want to learn how this experience will affect the lives of youth after the pandemic, particularly in relation to their connectedness?

Including youth as co-producers of knowledge during and after this crisis, particularly in relation to social distancing, will inform policies and practices in several areas including mental health, education, and community engagement in crisis management. Reduced access to formal support systems that are typically in place for youth (e.g. schools, youth centres, mental health services, physically mixing with friends) produces a multi-pronged challenge. Service providers and researchers have few avenues for tapping into the perspectives of youth, particularly marginalized populations such as Indigenous, new Canadians, and LGBTQI groups.

A deeper understanding of social connections and youth engagement can have far reaching possibilities for informing a post-Covid-19 world, something that we are seeing in longitudinal youth-focused AIDS pandemic research.

**Peer versus Professional Video Outreach to Enhance Mental Health Resilience in University Students**

*Principal Investigators: Dr. Nancy Heath, Dr. Lina Di Genova, Dr. Srividya N. Iyer, Dr. Stephen P. Lewis, Dr. Rob Whitley.*

**Funder: Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)**

The Stress and Coping: Online Outreach Program (SCOOP) was developed, piloted, and evaluated with funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The SCOOP is an online resilience-building program
for university students which consists of audio recordings, podcasts, infographics and two video series to provide skills-training and guided practice aimed at enhancing mental health resilience. Since the launch of the program coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, a section was added to the program to assess COVID-specific stressors and coping through online surveys and qualitative interviews. Additionally, more strategies were provided on the SCOOP website to help students cope with COVID-related stressors.

**IHDW on Covid-19 in the Media**

**Morale at an ‘all-time low’: Post-secondary students grapple with COVID-19 fatigue**
*Global News - January 9, 2021*

Dr. Nancy Heath was interviewed as part of Global News investigation into how the second wave of Covid-19 is leading to more student fatigue. According to Nancy Heath, a university professor of educational and counselling psychology at McGill University in Montreal, at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, students had the habituation of an “I can do this” attitude, but today this isn’t the case.

“What we’re seeing in this semester that we were not seeing (before) is a level of fatigue that has led to an incredible decrease in coping resources.” Nancy Heath


**COVID-19 Q&A - Jeff Derevensky on screen time for kids during the lockdown**
*McGill Reporter - January 14, 2021*

Children’s screen time has long been a contentious issue for the modern parent. The situation has become more challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this Q&A, Jeff Derevensky discusses video game addiction, its impact on developing minds and strategies parents can employ to place reasonable limits on their children’s screen time.

“The pandemic has created a perfect storm for increased screen usage with children out of school for longer periods of time, their inability to visit with friends and the need for parents to work uninterrupted from home.” Jeff Derevensky

The full interview can be found here:


**CEGEP and university students, how are you?**
*CBC Radio Interview - Feb. 4, 2021*  
*Radio Noon Quebec with Shawn Apel*

Dr. Nancy Heath, of the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, was recently interviewed on CBC Radio Noon Quebec with Shawn Apel, about students’ needs of social connections and their mental health. Lack of these connections is a key part of mental health, and though not all students feel that classrooms are a safe way to keep these connections, Dr. Heath wonders if there are outside options that would give young people a safer way to connect while maintaining distancing to rebuild their
normal connections.

“We’ve seen in the research, that the lack of social connection or isolation is really a main driver in the problematic student mental health that we are seeing right now” Nancy Heath

The full CBC Radio interview can be found here.
https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-102-radio-noon-montreal

Webinars on Covid-19

Gender Dynamics in a Pandemic
May 6, 2020 | McGill University

During this unprecedented global health and economic crisis, we are all being challenged to live, work and connect in new ways. But the pandemic is not affecting everyone equally. Behind the scenes, women and girls the world over still face a baseline set of challenges, such as human rights violations, unequal work, and unsafe living conditions. Is the COVID-19 pandemic increasing this burden? What impact does gender have on our experience of the crisis?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nGLu8MPyhE

The Girl in the Pandemic Webinar
October 20, 2020 | McGill University

The Girl in the Pandemic Webinar, cosponsored by the Institute for Health and Social Policy at McGill University and the Institute for Human Development and Well-being brought together speakers across projects in three countries, South Africa, Ethiopia and Canada (Quebec) addressing critical issues related to gender inequalities and young people.

Speakers included: Relebohile Moletsane from Networks4Change, Eleni Negash and Hannah Pugh from the Agricultural Transformation Through Stronger Vocational Education, and Jennifer Thompson and Katherine Frohlitch from Myriagone at the University of Montreal.

The speakers highlighted the precariousness of girls and young women in a time of distancing, but also some of the ways that girls and young women are taking up the issues, something that was highlighted in the presentation by Marianne Dupré-Deslandes, one of the young people who participated in a ‘cellphilm-making project at the University of Montreal. To hear the full recording of this lively session, visit:

https://mcgill.ca/x/oPT
In December, 2020 Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal edited by Claudia Mitchell and Ann Smith published a Special Issue “The Lives of Girls and Young Women in the Time of COVID-19”. The pandemic has exacerbated gender inequalities and negative affected health. Girls and young women around the world are facing increasing levels of precariousness as a result of health measures taken to curb the transmission of the virus. The lack of privacy in the households makes it more difficult to carry on face-to-face or technology driven programming carried out by NGOs. In some cases, working to combat sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) could potentially do more harm than good. These were some of the issues raised when the editors put out a call for articles in May, 2020. It was some months after the pandemic started and the editors were wondering who would be able to do empirical research or write Publications articles while doing home schooling. In spite of all expectations, many proposals were received! This issue of Girlhood Studies brings together a collection of articles representing the situation of girls and young women in different countries, including Russia, China, US, Canada, Jordan, Kenya, and Bangladesh. The authors address a wide range of concerns and use innovative methods and tools such as using online platforms to do participatory visual work or conduct interviews, or testing out new genres of representation such as a visual novella or comic books.

Authors: Shaheen Shariff, Chris Dietzel, Safia Amiry
Publisher: Peter Lang, New York, USA

Confronting Systemic Omissions and Impacts in Educational Policy Navigating Legal and Policy Lines during COVID-19
Authors: Shaheen Shariff, Chris Dietzel, Kimia Towfigh
Publisher: Peter Lang, New York, USA

Dr. Shareen Shariff and the iMPACTS team have several book project underway. As the team highlighted in the original call: The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated numerous existing societal problems, and created many unprecedented social, legal, psychological and public policy dilemmas. Rates of sexual and domestic violence have risen as some families are in lockdown with abusive partners and/or family members. Child abuse has also increased. Government mismanagement and lack of permanent staff, caregivers and resources, has greatly compromised the elderly, many of whom live in nursing homes. Neglect and poor
hygiene have fueled thousands of deaths within long term care facilities. People of color are at a higher risk of catching COVID-19 and dying from the disease than white people. International students are also caught between omissions as they confront suspended work permits, visas, and limited access to health care or insurance, while students with disabilities may struggle in adapting to social challenges and interacting online. Now, more than ever, it is important to examine and confront long-overlooked intersecting and interlocking barriers and systems of oppression that many marginalized communities experience. The primary goal of these publications is to unearth and unpack these emerging and uncertain challenges and develop realistic guidelines and suggestions for addressing these complex issues. The IMPACTS Project has begun to engage in important work to address domestic and sexual violence; cyberbullying, scapegoating and victim-blaming during the COVID-19 pandemic. These two collections aim to explore potential solutions for how society can support people in need in a range of important areas outlined below. These publications will take an intersectional approach to understanding the effects of the pandemic on diverse communities.

The Girl in the Pandemic
Editors: Claudia Mitchell, Ann Smith
Publisher: Berghahn Press, New York, USA

A new book by Claudia Mitchell and Ann Smith, The Girl in the Pandemic is coming soon. As with Zika, Ebola, HIV and AIDS and other pandemics in recent history, girls and young women are particularly vulnerable socially if not medically. Some have referred to the current Covid-19 crisis as a “tale of two pandemics” in reference to both to the obvious health issues and also to the pervasive gender inequalities that have become exacerbated. For example, we see the negative impact that physical distancing and social isolation is having on already vulnerable girls and women experiencing sex- and gender-based violence (SGBV). Girls and women all over the world are facing increasing levels of precariousness as a direct result of the health measures being taken to curb the global transmission of COVID-19. At the same time, we are seeing inequalities across a wide range of issues related to the lives of girls and young women, such as homelessness, child labour, mental health, access to schooling, sexualities, disabilities, and teen pregnancy. This edited collection brings together submissions from Uganda, Poland, Ethiopia, Argentina, Thailand, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Nigeria and India. The book is divided into 4 main sections: 1) setting the stage, 2) global girlhoods 3) vulnerabilities and 4) continuing education. Methodologically the book is diverse in the range of tools and approaches that reflect both the disciplinary areas as well as the special circumstances of Covid-19.

IHDW Visiting Professor

The IHDW is delighted to announce our new Visiting Professor for 2021-2022, Dr. Prachi Srivastava. As part of her Visiting Professorship, Dr. Srivastava will be contributing to the Sustainability and Well-being Working Group, including an examination of issues dealing with Covid-19.

Welcome Dr. Prachi Srivastava
Dr. Prachi Srivastava is tenured Associate Professor, Western University, specialising in education and global development. She is also Member, World Bank Expert Advisory Council on Citizen Engagement, and Senior Research Fellow, NORRAG. Previously, she served with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and the International Rescue Committee. She holds a master’s and bachelor’s from McGill University, and a doctorate from the University of Oxford. Currently, Dr. Srivastava is working on the global education emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. She has led high-level policy briefs on education policy and planning and equity implications of the pandemic for the Think 20 (T20), the official global engagement group of the G20, for the 2020 and 2021 G20 Summits. She has been commissioned by UNESCO to draft a paper on the futures of education for pandemic recovery.

Domestically, Dr. Srivastava has been consulted by the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table on education issues, and was a lead author for the Science Table brief on education and co-author of the school reopening guidance. She also led the creation of the COVID-19 School Dashboard, an open-access data visualization portal mapping all school-level cases in Ontario with school-level demographic data to provide a clearer indication on the impact on local school communities. The dashboard has been widely covered in local and international media. Dr. Srivastava has been invited to provide expertise and commentary on COVID-19 education disruptions by the UNICEF Office of Global Insight and Policy, UNESCO, the BE2 education donor working group, and a range of global and Canadian civil society and non-governmental organisations. She has frequently appeared in The Globe and Mail, CBC and CBC Radio-Canada, CTV, and Global News TV, radio, and online media outlets, Maclean’s, The National, amongst a range of scholarly podcasts and other media, for her work on COVID-19 education analysis cross-nationally, provincially, and globally.

Dr. Srivastava’s long-term research interests are: non-state private sector engagement in education; global philanthropy and impact investment; private schooling and education privatisation; and global education policy and the right to education in the Global South. She is recognised for coining the term, ‘low-fee private schooling’, and was one of the first researchers of the field. She was commissioned by the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report Team to draft the conceptual think piece for the flagship, 2021-22 Global Education Monitoring Report which will be on Non-State Actors in Education.

Based on her work on non-state private engagement and global education policy, Dr. Srivastava has provided research evidence to the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Global Education for All (British Parliament), DFID UK, European Commission, Global Affairs Canada, JICA, the United Nations Inter-Parliamentary Union, UNESCO, and the World Bank, among others, and has been commissioned by DFID, the European Commission, and UNESCO. She is a signatory to the Abidjan Principles on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education.

Dr. Srivastava has been interviewed in and contributed to a number of national and international media outlets on global education and political issues, including The Economist, The Financial Times, The Guardian, Devex, Vrij Nederland, L’actualité, CBC Radio-Canada. She recently directed a major collaborative research program on non-state private actors and the right to education funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Her other academic affiliations are: Adjunct Professor, School of International Development, University of Ottawa, Adjunct Professor, Centre for Global Studies, Huron College, and Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Centre for International Education, University of Sussex. Dr. Srivastava has also held visiting appointments at Columbia University, National University of Singapore, and the University of Oxford.
New Research @ the IHDW

**Capturing the elusive? A reflection on the study of agency**

*Dr. Kattie Lussier*

*PREAM is a three-year international collaboration between McGill University, L'Université des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Bamako (ULSHB), Plan International Canada, and Plan International Mali. It uses participatory visual methods to investigate the relationship between girls’ agency and their participation in education in conflict-affected regions of Mopti and Ségou, Mali.*

The concept of agency is now commonly used in both social and cognitive sciences. It could even be argued that women’s agency, in particular, has reached the status of buzz word in some disciplines. But are we always talking about the same thing? A new literature review conducted for the project ‘Participatory research on education and agency in Mali’ (PREAM) suggests that we are often not. In spite of its frequent use, agency is rarely addressed with the depth it deserves and is being framed and interpreted in various ways depending on the backgrounds of the authors. For instance, agency is associated to bargaining power in economics, consciousness, voice and action in gender studies, and autonomy and personhood in psychology. This means that unless researchers and policy makers take the time to clearly specify what they mean by agency, they run the risk of discussing different things.

Gender scholars and activists alike have long said that it is time to move beyond discourses of empowerment and implement policies and interventions that really enhances agency, but how can we do so unless we share a common meaning? How can we design programs if the significance of their object keeps on escaping us? How do you study the meaning of the elusive without defining it for the people whose understanding you seek to capture?

The challenge is even more acute when attempting to translate the concept into other languages.

For example, in the francophone literature, there is no agreement around the terminology of power yet, and no officially accepted translation of agency.

Rather than joining the debate, some authors simply use the term in English, talk about agents or describe what they mean in a few words.

The terms ‘agencéité’ and ‘agentivité’, while they have not yet entered official dictionaries, are now commonly used by academics but while some fields appear to have marked preferences for one term over another (for instance ‘agencéité’ in economics) the choice of wording still appears to be a matter of authors’ personal preferences.
Researchers from ULHSB in Bamako receive equipment for cellphilmimg as part of PREAM research.

During the review process, we came across more than 30 different definitions of agency in the English literature alone.

That said, Naila Kabeer (1999)’s definition – the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them – appears to be the most influential across fields and has been expanded upon by different authors. Overall, there seem to be a general agreement that agency is about purpose, potential, and action.

It can manifest itself differently in different domains of life and is affected by norms and structural constraints. One of the key lessons from the literature is that efforts to enhance agency have to go hand in hand with addressing inequitable social norms and sociocultural barriers.

The literature reviewed suggest that when studying agency with children and youth, researchers should keep in mind their asymmetrical position with adults, but still regard them as being able to make decisions and influence their environment in their own unique peer cultures. However, little is known of how children and youth themselves perceive agency and the components of agency that matter most to them. We therefore call for more participatory studies involving youth from around the world – young women in particular – because agency does not have to be an elusive concept, it can be a transformative one, if we only take the time and give it the space it deserves.

Dr. Kattie Lussier is a researcher and professor at the Institute of International Development Studies, McGill University. She is currently leading the Participatory Research on Education and Agency in Mali (PREAM) research initiative at McGill, in partnership with PLAN International and L’Université des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Bamako. PREAM investigates the relationship between girls’ agency and their participation in education in conflict-affected regions of Mopti and Ségou, Mali.

https://www.mcgill.ca/ihdw/pream

Learning to care: Exploring empathy and compassion using digital narratives
Dr. Manuela Ferrari & Sehar Fazeli

Globally, stories of suffering and human struggle are shared daily (if not hourly), using digital formats, such as internet videos, news stories, social marketing, and fundraising campaigns. These digital stories are often created and shared with an attempt to generate awareness about a problem, impart knowledge on contemporary issues, and to promote compassion. The practice of sharing moments of life and the insights provided by these experiences are valuable to both the tellers and the listeners in terms of catharsis, healing, reconciliation. Social marketing or fundraising campaigns, in the form of video testimonials, aim to reduce mental illness stigma while simultaneously raising money for research and services. An example is the Bell Canada’s ‘Let’s Talk’ anti-stigma fundraising campaign feature celebrities, such as Clara Hughes Canadian Olympic medalist who struggled with depression and is now sharing her story to help others. Do all digital testimonials and narratives have the same impact?

The Learning to care: Exploring empathy and
compassion using digital narratives, a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council sponsored grant, attempts to answer important questions, such as: (1) How is mental and emotional suffering depicted in social marketing/fundraising campaigns (video testimonials) versus digital stories (digital videos made by citizen with no filmmaking experience)?, and (3) What is the impact of these video depictions (video testimonials versus digital stories) on viewers with respect to their empathy and compassion?

Personal stories powerfully convey knowledge and experiences and connect people. Storytelling is an age-old tradition, bringing people together, sharing stories, and building relationships. Digital stories are modern versions of this tradition, combining personal narratives and images to create short digital movies. Digital testimonials, often used in advertising or in social marketing/fundraising campaigns, consists of a video interview describing the person’s experiences, views, and/or messages. The Learning to care project, will gather and analyse Canadian social marketing and fundraising campaigns, as well as offer digital storytelling workshops to people with lived experience of mental illness and recovery who have no filmmaking experience. A small pilot randomized controlled trial (RCT) will be undertaken to evaluate the impact of video testimonials versus digital stories on viewers with respect to empathy, compassion, and stigma about mental illness.

Manuela Ferrari is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at McGill and the principal investigator of this project. Sahar Fazeli, Ann-Catherine Lemonde, Geoff Meugens, Claudia Mitchell, Srividya Iyer, Rob Kershaw, Jai Shah are distinguished members of the Learning to Care project.

Events@ the IHDW
Festivals and Symposia

The 9th McGill International Cellphilm Festival: Transformation
June 10, 2021 / McGill University

On June 10th, 2021, the 9th McGill International Cellphilm was held. This year’s theme of “transformation” received 59 submissions from international participants hailing from eight different countries including New Zealand, Iran, and Panama, as well as from across Canada. Given the difficult year and a half we have all experienced, this year’s cellphilms were created within the unique context of lockdowns, social distancing, and a world that has just begun to reopen. Participant videos spoke to a diversity of topics concerning issues such as mental health, systemic racism, and the lived experience
of Indigenous girls, reflecting not only the diversity of participants but also the creativity in interpreting this year’s theme.

The festival began with an introduction from Dr. Claudia Mitchell, speaking about this year’s theme of “transformation” and how it has shown its relevance, not only in the context of the pandemic, but also in its ability to relate to each person’s own unique experiences. This was followed by a few words from Scott Walter, executive director of CODE, a partner with the Participatory Cultures Lab and the Institute for Human Development and Well-Being, who spoke about the organization’s work and mission.

This year’s panel of judges featured Heloisa Modesto and Brett Pardy. Dr. Sarah Switzer was this year’s keynote speaker with her presentation titled, “Transforming How we Gather: Reflections on Community-Engagement in COVID-19.” This presentation concerned what it means to facilitate and participate in community-engaged projects online in the context of the pandemic and in the spirit of the festival’s theme, transformation.

https://mcgill.ca/x/o9Y

Why Participatory Video/Cellphilm and Why Now?” Symposium
June 10, 2021 | McGill University

Th 9th McGill International Cellphilm Festival also held its first Symposium, hosting four different panels with topics including the creation and history of cellphilm, why cellphilm is important, exploring some cellphilm toolkits, and how to implement cellphilm strategies for social and environmental change. The Symposium’s panelists represented distinguished scholars, educators, and researchers hailing from all around the world, who shared and discussed their work, their experiences, and their methodologies in using cellphilm for transformation. The team from the McGill International Cellphilm Festival would like to extend our sincerest congratulations to all the winners and participants for sharing with us their creativity, honesty, and stories through their cellphilm. We look forward to the future of cellphilm and what further transformative work will be created!
student enrolled at McGill University in the M.A. Educational Leadership (thesis) program.

The session aimed to demonstrate how to create an online escape game using the website “genial.ly”, using the four core elements “story building”, “activities”, “clues” and “codes”, as well as how to use them in an educational context. About 20 participants attended and created escape games individually or in groups during the workshop and developed creative products with the assistance of the workshop presenter. Escape Games can be tailored for a variety of audiences. Moreover, they can be used to deliver content in a unique way, which makes it memorable for the reader. GHDW is an interdisciplinary working group, part of the IHDW at McGill University. Recently, GHDW has been developing its social media reach through the creation of an Instagram account that aims to share online resources on Serious Games, Gamed-Based Learning and Gamification. This platform enables GHDW to appeal to an audience outside of the academic network, such as undergraduate students and educators interested in games in teaching. Moreover, GHDW’s members can use this platform to share their work and current research with this newfound audience. If you would like to learn more about GHDW and its activities, you can use the links below!

**Website:**
https://www.mcgill.ca/ihdw/ghdw

**Facebook:**
https://www.facebook.com/GHDW.McGill

The IHDW would like to acknowledge and thank our 2021 Faculty of Arts intern Elina Qureshi for putting together this report.

Elina Qureshi is a U3 student pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in International Development and Economics. Her academic interests include public policy and good governance, international environmental policy, and transnational migration. Her previous work experience has focused on corruption, transparency, and governance practices in Lebanon, immigration and refugee policy in Canada, and financial empowerment through development programming for women in Uganda. She has participated in various on-campus student organizations and is on the editorial board for journals such as Catalyst and Maktoub. Elina is passionate about furthering equity and sustainability through her work and is looking forward to contributing towards community development initiatives at the IHDW and learning more about participatory visual research.
Connect with the IHDW

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Ramy Gorgis coordinates the IHDW activities, under the direction of Claudia Mitchell, as well as the PREAM project. To contact him, please email ramy.gorgis@mcgill.ca

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