



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

At a time when so much has been cancelled or postponed, and when the word 'unprecedented' has become everyday vocabulary to refer to lockdowns, social isolation, physical isolation, school closures, and economic hardships, it has been difficult to reflect forward in a productive way on 'what next' in our project that works with Indigenous girls and young women to address sexual violence. This is especially so since so many of those most affected by lockdowns during Covid-19 are also the same girls and women who are experiencing higher rates of violence.

In South Africa the pandemic has both highlighted and exacerbated existing inequalities that drive gender-based violence (GBV) such as poverty and access to services and resources. Specifically, while the impact of COVID-19 on GBV is not yet clear, research by scholars at the Medical Research Council (MRC) suggests that data from various NGOs working with survivors/victims of GBV have reported increased rates of intimate partner violence, including sexual violence and femicide since the beginning of national lockdown in March. Media reports have been awash with cases of femicide and GBV, particularly against girls and women. These include reports of more than 120 000 (double the normal call volume) to the national helpline for abused women and children in the first three weeks of lockdown. For Indigenous communities in Canada we are similarly seeing the ways in which existing inequalities have been exacerbated, and especially in relation to such issues as overcrowding, access to places to isolate, and weak infrastructures to support online communication.

While this issue of the newsletter offers no 'silver linings' of COVID-19, much of the coverage from the different sites demonstrates, we think, the ways that site leaders, girls and young women, and researchers have been creative in adapting to make things happen. A face-to-face conference on mentoring and Indigenous girls becomes a webinar in a move to keep the discussions going. The years of experimenting with cellphilm across several sites provides the opportunity to return to the roots of cellphilm, contributing to an international cellphilm festival on 'well-being in the time of distancing' which springs up. Girls at one site use their devices to share through social media their guidelines for keeping their community safe in the time of COVID-19.

And on the eve of South African national lockdown in early March, the Inkosi of the Amangwe Nation in Loskop signed an historic response protocol for addressing early and forced marriages. As an example of a girl-led, 'from the ground-up policy making' initiative, the research team at the University of KwaZulu-Natal developed the protocol with the Social Ills Fighters of Loskop, with support and endorsement from the Commission on Gender Equality, the National Prosecuting Authority, and the Office of the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal.

All of this took place just in the last six months. We hope this issue of the newsletter informs but also inspires.

Warm regards,

Claudia and Lebo

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SPOTLIGHT ON CHANGE

The Loskop Protocol

A Girl-led 'From the Ground Up' Policy making Success Addressing Early and Forced Marriage in Loskop, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

By Lisa Wiebesiek

On 11th March 2020, a few weeks before the National COVID-19 lockdown was declared in South Africa, Inkosi Mazibuko of the Amangwe Nation in Loskop, KwaZulu-Natal, signed the "Reporting and Response Protocol on early and forced marriage in eMangweni". This followed months of negotiation and collaboration between the *Networks4Change* team at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), in collaboration with the Social Ills Fighters (SIFs), the group of co-researcher participants we have been working with in Loskop (with the help of our longstanding community partners, Xoli Msimanga of Thembaletu Care Organisation and the local Ward Councillor, Mr. Mpembe), with whom we worked, and the Amangwe community to develop the protocol.

How did we get to this point?

In our very first *Networks4Change* workshop in Loskop in February 2017, SIFs identified early and forced marriage (EFM) as a key issue affecting the safety and well-being of girls and young women in their community. Since then, they have continued to focus on EFM as we have sought to better understand GBV in their community, and in their awareness-raising and advocacy work. With the support of the adult research

team and Xoli Msimanga, the SIFs have engaged critically with and challenged unequal gender norms and traditional practices like:

- ▶ EFM,
- ▶ the payment of lobolo (dowry), and
- ▶ the payment of so-called damages (this entails payment in cash and/or in kind from a boy or man's family to a girl or woman's family as a form of reparation and/or justice for some form of violation which could include a number of things from impregnating an unmarried girl to rape).

Between 2017 and December 2018, four of the SIFs were directly involved in or affected by EFM. In December 2018, one of the SIFs was abducted and an attempt was made to force her into marriage. With the support of the SIFs and Xoli Msimanga, the girl's mother was able to seek help from the South African Police Service. The girl returned home safely, but not without facing backlash and censure from her community for refusing to be forced into marriage.

In response, we brought forward plans to engage with the community and traditional leadership to address EFM, and in February 2019 we had the first

in what would be a series of community meetings and dialogues to raise awareness about EFM and advocate for the end of these practices.

In this first meeting with the Traditional Council, the Inkosi (Chief) requested help with developing a protocol to address EFM in the community. Over the next few months, the research team together with the SIFs and Xoli Msimanga worked with community members, the Commission for Gender Equality, the National Prosecuting Authority, and local and provincial government structures, to develop the protocol and ensure its alignment to the South African policy framework on marriage and sexual offences.

The draft protocol has been presented to the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, and the Quality of Life Standing Committee of the KwaZulu-Natal legislature. **The protocol was finalised in early 2020, and signed by the Inkosi on behalf of the Amangwe community on 11th March 2020.**

One of the community dialogues
taking place in eMangweni



More Than Words Mentoring Webinar



By Sonia Bucan

On June 25, 2020, the *More Than Words* and *Networks4Change* team convened a webinar titled *A Conversation on Mentoring with Indigenous Girls and Young Women*. This webinar was hosted over Zoom, and brought together over 40 participants from all over Canada and South Africa. The webinar aimed to discuss different approaches to mentoring and provide a space for fruitful discussions about critical issues to pursue in follow-up work.

We had initially planned these conversations to take place face-to-face over 5 days in Durban, South Africa at the Imbizo Intergenerational, June 29-July 3, 2020. As a follow-up to the *Circles Within Circles* gathering held at Montebello in July, 2018, Imbizo Intergenerational was meant to support the collective voices of Indigenous girls and young women. Over 60 individuals from across Canada including 40 Indigenous youth participants were preparing to travel to South Africa and connect up with 40 more researchers, community scholars, activists and youth members in Durban. This was a remarkable opportunity for Indigenous girls and young women from across Canada and South Africa to come together to continue their work of addressing the impact of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) through community-based workshops and youth-to-youth mentoring.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible for us to go ahead with Imbizo Intergenerational and the event will be postponed to 2021. In the meantime we explored other activities and ways to connect up remotely. In this effort, we held the Conversation on Mentoring online using Zoom. However, like most online meeting platforms, Zoom privileges some voices over others due to the necessity for up-to-date technology and reliable Internet connection. With acknowledgement of this inequity, we moved forward and a panel was held featuring partners from Treaty 6, Rankin Inlet, Eskasoni, and our South African partners from *Networks4Change*.

Welcome & Opening

The webinar began with Marjorie Beaucage inviting ancestors in to guide the conversation and thank them for their knowledge. Marjorie evoked the image of a circle to draw attention to the power of creating equal spaces for listening and learning, speaking to how there is no one way to properly engage in mentorship and thinking about how the circle can expand and contract.

The Panel

The moderator for the panel was Liz Cooper from the University of Regina.

Treaty 6

The panel began with a presentation from Treaty 6 by Jenn Altenberg, Kalan Kakum McKay, and Tegan McKay. They discussed the importance of Aunties to the Young Indigenous Women's Utopia group. They use the term Nikawak, which translates into "little moms". They emphasized the important role Aunties play in supporting and guiding young girls through life. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for the girls to be there for each other in-person, but they have been able to stay in touch through their group chat which remains extremely active.

Eskasoni

Linda Liebenberg provided an update on mentoring in Eskasoni. Linda noted that in Eskasoni, they primarily use a community and cultural mentorship model. Drawing from the idea of the blanket toss game from the North, Linda spoke to the importance of supporting the youth, making them feel safe as they explore for themselves, and welcoming their ideas in the community. Like in the blanket toss game, the youth in Eskasoni are lifted to see what is out there, and then brought back to bring new ideas and perspectives into the community. The group has also found that coming together in the form of a workshop or retreat has worked well. From all of the different projects that have taken place in Eskasoni, the young people have

developed many different skills, and this growth of skills has allowed for peer-to-peer mentoring. When new youth come into the project, the ones who have participated in previous projects are able to take on a mentorship role.

South Africa

Relebohile Moletsane and Lisa Wiebesiek followed with a discussion of how they are taking up mentoring at the South African sites attached to *Networks4Change*. They spoke about how although the project focuses on sexual and gender-based violence, the different groups of girls and their communities narrowed in on different specific focuses. For example, a group of girls and young women in Khethani chose to focus on the intersection of SGBV and intimate partner violence. Young women at Durban University of Technology engaged in campus-based activism by working with a local radio station, and a group of young men at the same university have been working to encourage other men to play a part in ending gender-based violence.

The Girls Leading Change group from Eastern Cape has now produced three books. All of the girls have graduated and are now teaching in mostly rural communities. Lisa noted that group mentorship and workshops/retreats have been the most popular mentoring styles across the sites, and that peer-to-peer mentoring has developed organically as the girls have become valuable support systems for each other and the girls in their communities. Many of the girls have stressed that the violence women experience is often perpetrated under the guise of tradition and culture, so a critical component of mentorship is enabling young women to critically engage with practices that have been oppressive and harmful, and to help these young women see themselves as agents of change. Inspired by conversations from Treaty 6, Lisa believes that Auntyship has great potential in South Africa as there is a cultural history of grandmothers and older girls mentoring younger girls through puberty and sexual relationships. Finally, Lisa noted that "mosaic mentorships" is promising as all forms of mentorship are valuable and meaningful, and that a multi-pronged approach would be best.

Rankin Inlet

The final panelists were Jennica Alhda, Haily May Ussak, and Julia Ussak from Rankin Inlet. They discussed how *More*

Than Words incorporated more cultural aspects into the arts-based program, “Girls Talk Back”, by inviting community members to come and lead workshops for girls relating to cultural practices such as throat singing and tattooing. Older girls in the group have taken on a mentorship role for the younger girls. Julia mentioned how rewarding it is to teach the younger girls and help them improve upon their skills. Haily May noted that she is very excited to be taking on this mentor role, and that her favorite part of the program was making videos with the little kids and watching them have fun while participating. She hopes to do a sewing program with the girls sometime soon to help them learn more about their culture.

Breakout Rooms

Room 1

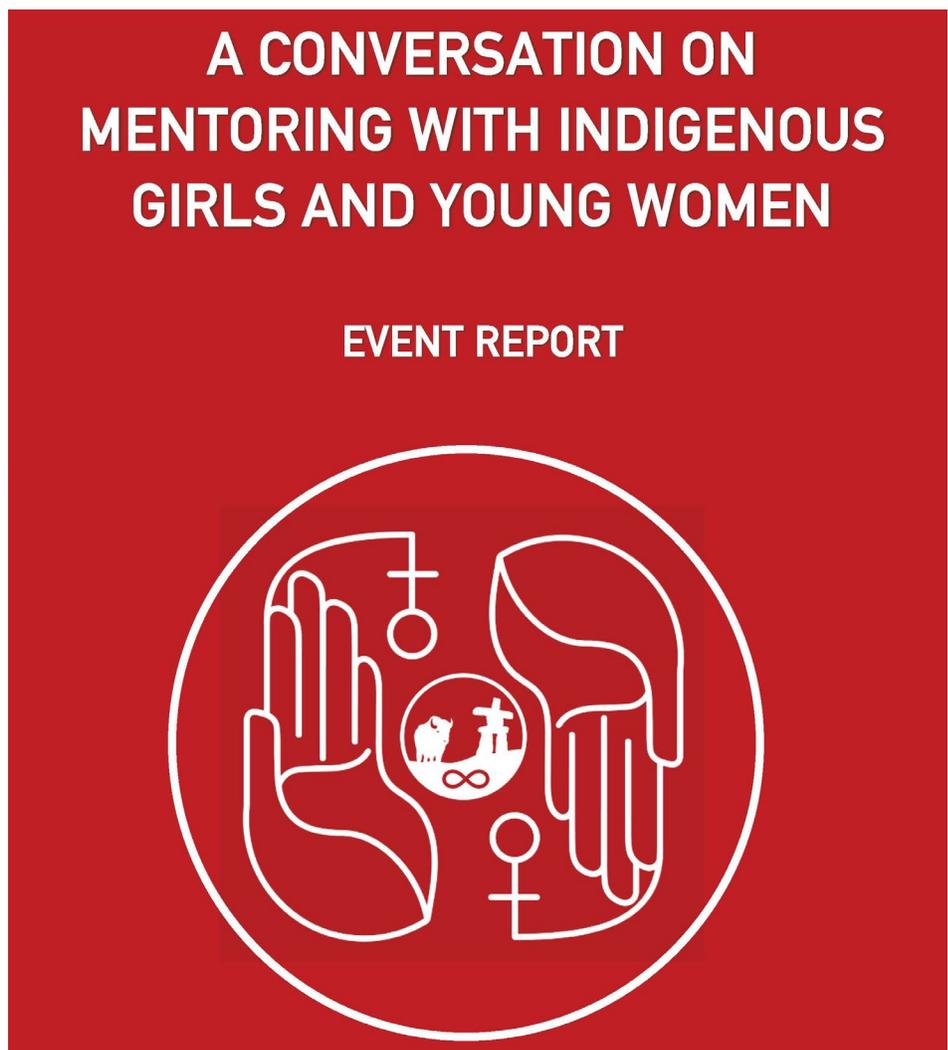
Sarah Flicker, York University

This room discussed some of the challenges of researching the difference that mentorship makes among Indigenous youth. One of the challenges that was highlighted during the discussion was that of meeting the expectations of funders and creating the proper documentation during the process without interrupting it. It was stressed that researchers and academics must be able to find a way to advocate and research mentorship models, but in a way that is not extractive or exploitative as certain stories should not be shared simply to validate funding.

Room 2

Lisa Starr, McGill University

This room talked about what some of the most important elements are to include and emphasize when it comes to mentorship. The group stressed that there is not one specific way to do mentorship. Going in with one specific goal is not productive, and you have to be completely open and flexible for what’s to come in a mentor-mentee relationship. It takes time to cultivate a trusting and meaningful relationship, so it is important to not rush the process and to always check in with the mentee to make sure that they are feeling safe and comfortable. Many participants noted that when working with young people, you need to learn when and how to get out of the way. It’s important for mentors to be cheerleaders, but to follow and not lead. It is also important to create a balance between making space and taking space, and to embrace the fact that those who teach also learn.



For further information on the discussions held, access the [event report](#).

Room 3

Katie MacEntee, University of Toronto

This room discussed the challenges faced during mentorship and how to overcome them. The group noted that some of the challenges include creating a safe space for young people to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and emotions, especially in small communities where everyone knows each other. Another challenge is that of community resistance, and understanding the cultural appropriateness of certain topics. The group stressed the importance of mentors taking the time to truly connect with and understand their mentee and their community, as well as working with their schedules so that the relationship can be consistent.

Conference Closing

Marjorie closed the event with gratitude for the ancestors guiding us, and for the valuable knowledge that was shared and received.

Next Steps

COVID-19 has clearly had an impact on the mentoring activities planned for work across the various sites. However, we hope that conversations such as this one help to keep the ideas circulating. An extensive literature review of mentorship practices is underway and, as was obvious from the panel, learning across sites remains key. Onward to planning for Imibizo Intergenerational 2021!

Intern Profile: Sonia Bucan

Sonia did an internship at the PCL as part of the Arts Internship program. She is starting her fourth year at McGill University, double-majoring in International Development Studies and Political Science. She has experience as a writer and researcher, with a passion for human rights, social justice, and sustainable development.

Networks4Change Fieldsites

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

Eastern Cape (South Africa)

Young Girls Leading Change (YGLC)

Naydene de Lange & Ntosh Yamile

The YGLC have used cellphones to make several cellphlms in their work over the years. One important cellphilm which they use in their gender work, was titled *Rape is Real*, focusing on what should happen after someone has been raped. The making of this cellphilm was prompted by a question from a young male learner about what girls are supposed to do after being raped.

The YGLC girls did not stop making cellphlms. When a call for submission of cellphlms to the McGill International Cellphilm Festival came, they jumped at the opportunity. The theme they had to speak to was: *Well-being in the time of distancing*. They worked together to make their cellphilm. They submitted their cellphilm, and held their breath!

It was a joyous occasion when they heard that they had won 3rd prize! Siyamthanda, representing the YGLC, was interviewed by an intern from McGill University about the cellphilm. It was a super-exciting event for all!

The Covid-19 pandemic has deepened gender-based violence in SA where girls remain vulnerable, but the YGLC seem to show so much resilience!

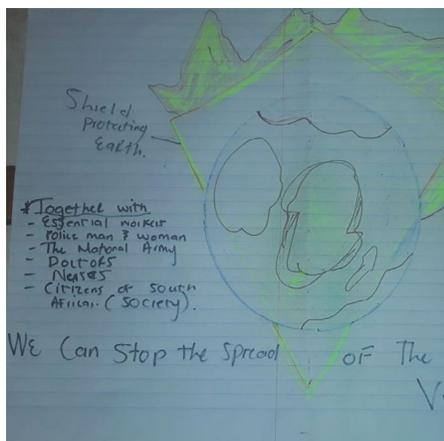


Above: A still from YGLC's cellphilm, *Our experience during lockdown* and YGLC's 3rd place announcement for McGill's Cellphilm Festival

Below: On April 30, 2020 YGLC made these drawings as their response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Congratulations!

Ntomboxolo Yamile, our PhD candidate, has added a little boy to our N4C family, and so we welcome Inile to the world.



Eastern Cape (South Africa)

Girls Leading Change

Naydene de Lange & Ntosh Yamile

The young women from GLC are all in teaching positions and are using their skills, knowledge, and practice to address gender-based violence. They have received a toolkit consisting of the books they have published, the policy posters and action briefs they have

made, and the Montebello Girlfesto in English, Afrikaans, and isiXhosa. We are excited to hear the stories about how they are putting these to use in the schools and communities.

With Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in South Africa the news reports of gender- and sexual-based violence have accelerated, and we often feel overwhelmed! Melissa Lufele (right) wrote a poem, *It's Your Fault*, articulating her response to the pandemic, which we share here.



IT'S YOUR FAULT

Melissa Lufele

*I am an angry woman
A woman scorned, bruised, battered, destroyed and left
to die.
But please grant me one request before I take my last
breath.
Let me say what lingers silently yet so heavily in my soul.*

*I cried and begged for you to stop!
To stop violating me in a manner so dehumanizing,
it has left me with both visible and invisible scars.*

*I asked you to love and respect me
but all I received from you were daily affirmations of
how inadequate, useless and how unworthy I was of you
and your love.*

*I thought loving your hurt away would help,
that maybe if I spoke softer you wouldn't shout louder
than you normally do.
I thought if I didn't make you angry maybe you would be
happy and perhaps smile a bit more but clearly, I failed.*

*They say "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" but I
am not just scorned, I am broken,
unrecognizable I'm a shadow of my former self
but best believe you have taught me a lesson.*

*I now know what I did not know before meeting you.
I know that it is not my fault but it's yours and your
society's fault.*

*THEY taught you that men don't cry.
THEY said she doesn't really mean No, she is just
playing hide and seek.
Uncle asked you to discipline me because I am too loud,
proud, plain rude, such a prude with attitude and you
listened.
You listened even when I told you "Baby you're hurting
me, YOU listened!*

*When I asked them for help they asked why I didn't
cry louder,
why I stayed and endured,
Yet I cried. Tell them I cried.
I cried so loud I couldn't anymore.
I reached out and they called me an attention seeker,
a populist,
bored housewife,
an obnoxious prick that just won't stop and you, you
remained silent.*

*When you nearly murdered me they told me it was a
mistake, a mistake!
If I had energy I'd laugh at that ignorant comment.
Well it's a mistake you have made too many times, I
have lost count.
Now I refuse to be blamed.*

*It's not my fault! Do you hear me?
It is not my fault!
It's your fault and it's your society's fault.*

*I know it's too late to do anything about anything now
but please just stop!
Stop blaming me because both you and I know it was
never my fault.
It's your fault and the fault of the voices surrounding you.*



@NewsinMind

Treaty 6, Saskatoon (Canada)

Young Indigenous Women's Utopia

July Gathering

A July prairie sunrise was the most exquisite backdrop to walk into as the girls from YIWU unloaded supplies and gathered in front of the Worme family Tipi. It fascinated each of the girls to be in a new space, never mind together after many months of isolation and social distancing due to COVID-19.

Land, Ceremony, laughter!
Wahkotawin, pimatsowin, nitewak!

We were greeted by Auntie Helen Semaganis-Worme, who had given us permission to be in this sacred special place, this tipi carries many stories, ancestors, and healing and had been within their family for generations. Risen at Sundance's and used with purpose now, Helen hung a shawl up in the tipi with love in her heart and had Gabby tie the tobacco bundles by her shawl, knowing that it would wrap the girls in love and comfort as we took time to check in after many months of being apart and invite Randy Morin and Lindsey Knight to give us teachings for the morning.

The themes of the day were planned carefully and with input from the YIWU, as always, we started with smudge and a circle, with check-ins and snacks. The girls naturally know how things roll, everyone pitching in. Gabby has started preparing and leading our smudges as an oskaypos-iskewis, this is an important role in our group as it takes calmness, gentleness, and good thoughts to help transmit our prayers and intentions between us and Creator.

It was nice just to be ... be together ... while we waited for Lindsey and Randy to arrive. What took place in the tipi was special, it was sacred, and it was just for us.

These were some of the topics Lindsey and Randy spoke about and both were extremely humbled and honoured to be able to sit and speak with such amazing young women. The girls felt the same way:



- ▶ Boundaries, prayer, time to reflect
- ▶ Sobriety, life partners, healing journeys
- ▶ Raising children, taking our power back, the power of choice
- ▶ Old ways, our ways, the future

The next few hours were spent eating, laughing, and taking a dip in the pool. Feeling refreshed we headed to the hotel to prepared for the next day, where we would invite the younger girls into our circle again for their second sessions with us. Curtis Vinish, another male role model in our community also came to hang out with us, share with us some of his experiences, and hang with us as we sewed, beaded, and prepped for Utopia 2.0.

Chokecherry Studios was *hot, hot, hot*, but the girls powered through and delivered a beautiful day of auntying and creating.

Gabby and Jessica quickly organized their agenda for the day for the girls to see and everyone pitched in to set up the space. Kiyari McNab, another role model and exceptional young woman took photos throughout the day to capture our special moments together.



[Tanis Worme](#), an emerging visual artist, spent the day with us teaching us a new technique of linocut and silk-screen print making to speak back to colonial violence. This medium allowed the girls to speak directly without the convolutions of English. Tanis is Plains Cree and a member of the Poundmaker Cree Nation with roots to Mistawasis and Kawacatoose First Nations. The method of printmaking allowed the girls to send messages on paper, clothing, and banners. It is a thoughtful process that requires careful consideration of how the composition will be “read” or “perceived.” The girls’ work was astounding considering the over heated environment and it was their first attempt. They had the opportunity to etch an individual print, discover how to use the tools, and we are looking forward to creating more collaborative projects together.



As always, our time together goes hard and fast, and no one wants it to end. We created interactive journals for the girls to do their self-reflections and YIWU will support and reach out to their younger iskwewak to help them with their writing reflections and do check ins as we navigate, back to school, online learning, and continuing to survive and resist together during COVID-19 times.

Reflections: Ocean Sanderson, original member

Hey Jen! I’m thankful and very honoured to do this. Girls group is always a great time, we laugh, we cry, we share, and we create long lasting memories. Our recent girls group session was so beautiful, I wish it could be like that all the time. All of us and our lovely guests hanging out together and sharing our stories in a tipi on the land, smelling the fresh air and sage, and eating. It’s the best, like come on, nothing gets better than that. A big thank you to Helen who let us use her space to reconnect. That was very kind of her and her family. That session was very much needed, especially hearing Randy and Lindsey’s stories, they were very powerful. I’m glad they shared a part of them with us. It was a teachable moment for all of us and I learned a lot; they inspire me very much to keep going everyday and work hard, they also made me believe I can and will accomplish lots. I love

how girls group reminds me all the time on how far I’ve come and how far I still have to go to get to where I want to be! Everyone in girls group and who we meet along the way is definitely a confidence booster.

Reflections: Cindy Moccasin, original member

It was very nice to finally get together with the girls after not being able to for so long, being together gives me a sense of wholeness and I love being able to create new memories. I really enjoy working with the younger girls and being able to set an example for them. They remind me of myself and the other girls when we first started, and I hope one day they can gain the same friendship and sisterhood with each other that us older girls have. We spent a day with the younger girls working, laughing, and eating in the studio together. We started with smudge and introducing ourselves, then we shared a little bit about who we are. We created our self love wall with the girls and shared what self love means to each other. We then learned how to do print making and how to carve using the different pencils, for most of us it was our first time, so we took a while but everyone created their own unique designs. Once we were finished, we created our own posters

and added them altogether onto one poster, some of us even added them onto our clothing. Giving plays a big part in our indigenous cultures so we also had little gifts to give our girls, so they know and feel that they’re respected and supported.

Closing

We then finished off the day with a sharing circle about how our day went and something we learned.

Moving Forward

YIWU is currently working on a collaborative journal piece for a Special Issue of *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (IGSA@ND) which two of the girls are co-authoring, alongside Guest Editor, Catherine Vanner. Also, we celebrated another publication this past November titled, “Red Ribbon Skirts and Cultural Resurgence” Kimihko simpân iskwêwisâkaya êkwa sihcikêwin waniskâpicikêwin in *Girlhood Studies* (2019, Volume 12, Issue 3). We hope you take the time to continue to listen, read, learn, disrupt, and resist.

Hiy hiy! Ekoshii! Until next time!

Peace out from T6/THM!

Rankin Inlet (Canada)

On April 21st 2020, as the threat of the Covid-19 pandemic was creeping north to Nunavut, the girls from Rankin Inlet's GET ART group (Girls Expressing Themselves through Art) shared a beautiful PSA to keep their community safe.

Nunavut officially declared a state of emergency on March 18th and the GET ART girls each created informative and encouraging posters from their homes during this period of confinement.

The group leader, Jennica Alhda Barcial, shared a collage of photographs of the girls with their posters on social media, reminding the community of what is important during these challenging times *"Rankin! Let's keep Nunavummiut safe by staying home, washing our hands often and spending time with our families. Thank you!"*

The community responded with appreciation and the post garnered many positive remarks and notes of thanks. Nunavut has had no confirmed cases of Covid-19 throughout the pandemic, through community conscious and unifying efforts like that of the girls, Rankin Inlet is safe from the virus. The girls will continue their work to achieve the same kind of safety and security within other aspects of their community life.

Stay Home & Stay Safe!



Eskasoni (Canada)

Linda Liebenberg

Gwe' everyone!

And happy summer/winter greetings wherever you may find yourself. While the past few months have been limiting because of COVID, and disappointing because our wonderful trip to South Africa has been cancelled or postponed, we have been able to use our summer wisely, to focus on our memorial garden for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



We have made amazing headway on this project! As soon as the lockdown restrictions began to loosen, we got going on the garden. We began in mid-June by laying out the design on the land and building the smudge bowl and seven concrete rocks. We subsequently painted the rocks to represent each of the seven sacred teachings.



The weekend was amazing. It was our first try at the rocks and they turned out beautifully as did the smudge bowl for our memorial at the centre of the labyrinth. And, when we marked out the four quadrants of the medicine wheel beds, our original plan matched up perfectly with the four directions ... as if the garden was simply meant to be.

We also spent a lot of time with the earth moving contractor, Darrel, from D.J. Denny Trucking here in Eskasoni. He was extremely generous with his time, offering lots of advice on the plan and how to implement it. That following Monday, Darrel and his crew began work on the earth moving; they did an amazing job and certainly helped move things along much faster than if we had done that work by hand! Once they were done, we were able to get the plants in and build the labyrinth. Shaw bricks in Sydney, NS, generously donated everything that we needed for that part of the project. In addition to plants that we bought, and those that were generously donated by various communities, we have also moved plants from the old crisis centre healing garden to our memorial garden. It's wonderful to give these plants a new home where they will continue to be

appreciated. In many ways its also a continuation of one of our initial research projects, [Spaces & Places](#). The resilience mural we painted reflecting the finding from that project, created a backdrop to the previous healing garden. By moving plants from the old garden to this new one, it seems in some ways, we are still connected to that original project.

Possibly the best part of working on the garden so far though, has been the guidance provided by our Elder Clark Paul in planting sweet grass in the garden. In the day we spent together, he taught us how to transplant the grass according to our traditional teachings, and what this sacred medicine means to us as Mi'kmaq. It was a very special day! Now that the garden and labyrinth are in, we are going to be working on the space for ceremony next, installing the sweat lodge, tee-pee, and sacred fire pit. In addition to that we still have many other smaller tasks to take care of around the garden, but we will let you know more about this later in the year! In the interim, if you want to watch our garden grow, visit our website:

[changethesilence.org/
watch-our-garden-grow/](http://changethesilence.org/watch-our-garden-grow/)



Sisters Rising (British Columbia, Canada)

University of Victoria,
Unceded Lkwungen Territories

Greetings from the west coast of Turtle Island!

Sisters Rising is an Indigenous-led project with youth, families, practitioners, Elders, and knowledge keepers in diverse rural and urban Indigenous communities in BC. We employ land- and arts-based workshops, intergenerational mentoring, and community leadership to recenter Indigenous knowledges of gender and sexual well-being and sovereignty.

Over the past four years, our work has included workshops and activities with hundreds of participants, dozens of knowledge mobilization workshops and presentations, and numerous publications (a full list is on our [website](#)). Our team has also presented at several regional, national and international forums and conferences, including in BC, across Canada, Australia, South Africa, Mexico, the US, and Austria. While many of our land-based and community activities were cancelled during COVID-19, we were still able to complete an amazing final year. Highlights from the past year include restorative land-based gatherings with knowledge keepers, the permanent exposition at the University of Victoria of our huge collective mural on gender resurgence, along with a digital link to a new website showcasing upcoming Indigenous art projects with young First Nations artists, and new pop up and digital projects and publications to keep us connected virtually.

In addition, several of our fearless youth members graduated high school, and nine amazing students are completing their graduate research with Sisters Rising, most in their own First Nations communities. Our students have done projects with youth and participants of all genders on topics such as land and water-based healing, decolonizing gender relations, Indigenous masculinity, decolonial love, contesting silence and shame, healing



Left: “Unlock Love” rock art,
Sisters Rising workshop

Below: Michaela Louie (Sisters Rising student)
presenting her undergraduate research poster
at the University of Victoria research fair



lateral violence, 2Spirit resurgence, restoring local languages for gender well-being, and Indigenous laws and ethics. This past year, our network was also active in Indigenous resurgence, anti-pipeline and Black Lives Matter advocacy, forging new BIPOC alliances for the decolonization of gendered and sexualized violence.

It has been an honour to participate in this project and we wish all *Network4Change* partners the very best with future initiatives.

Kathryn McLeod

Kathryn is a Sisters Rising participant from the Nisga'a village of Gitlaxt'aamiks who has played a leadership role in our activities for the past three years. Kathryn represented Sisters Rising at the More than Words mentoring symposium.

“Fight or flight” is the body’s natural response to a perceived harmful event, attack, or threat to survival. In what is now called Canada, I believe

Indigenous people live in a constant state of fight or flight; especially Indigenous women, who are statistically more likely to experience gender-based and sexualized violence and exploitation, intimate partner violence, gendered poverty, police-involved gendered violence, and other forms of colonial violence.

Living under the constraints of the Indian Act, navigating a colonial and capitalistic society that derives worth out of resource extraction, ultimately leads to harm done onto our targeted Indigenous bodies. The only way to embody body sovereignty, a world free of gender-based violence, is through decolonization—restoring Indigenous justice systems, giving back land sovereignty, dismantling toxic masculinity and patriarchy through community and inter-generational healing. I am incredibly comforted knowing that projects such as Sisters Rising are working towards positive change for us, led by us.

Haagwil huwilin



Sisters Rising mural now permanently exhibited at the University of Victoria!

Sisters Rising collaborated to create “Fearless Sisters”, an amazing mural celebrating the power and presence of Indigenous girls and women. The mural was created in partnership between Sisters Rising, the Innovative Young Indigenous Leaders Forum (IYILS) and the Fearless Collective. It was collectively envisioned and painted over several months and conceptualized by First Nations lead artists [Brianna Bear](#) and [Nicole Neidhardt](#).

The mural was completed and unveiled at Sisters Rising’s international forum on Indigenous gender well-being that brought together over 150 Indigenous youth, researchers, students, and policy and practice stakeholders. The design speaks to the healing spirit of kinship and our relations with our land and water relatives. The red wings contain hand-written messages of transformation by

forum participants from across British Columbia, Canada, and South Africa.

The mural is now permanently exhibited at the University of Victoria, which occupies Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ homelands. It will be stewarded by library staff and visited by thousands of visitors each year. To promote knowledge mobilization, the mural includes an explanatory plaque with a scannable digital code that links to our new art project, entitled *Kinship Rising*, launching this fall. Unfortunately, our official mural unveiling—which was going to include a ceremony, youth speakers, and an interactive art activity reclaiming space for Indigenous body resurgence—was cancelled due to COVID-19. We hope to have a virtual launch and an in-person ceremony as soon as feasible. Funding for the creation and exposition of the mural was provided by CIHR, the Canet Foundation, and the Faculty of Human and Social Development (University of Victoria).

Discover some of the amazing graduate students at University of Victoria collaborating with Sisters Rising!

[Keenan Andrew](#) is part of a growing movement of men fighting violence against women and has volunteered in different initiatives contributing to this cause.

[Shezell-Rae Sam](#) is committed to helping Indigenous young people recover from trauma and speak to their strengths through arts-based research workshops using Indigenous knowledge systems involving spirit and land.

[Michaela Louie](#), Nuu hah nulth (Ahousesat), recently started her thesis research with Indigenous sex workers using storytelling, arts and action research approaches.

Find out more of Sisters Rising fieldwork including an episode of a Child and Youth Care (CYC) podcast [here](#).

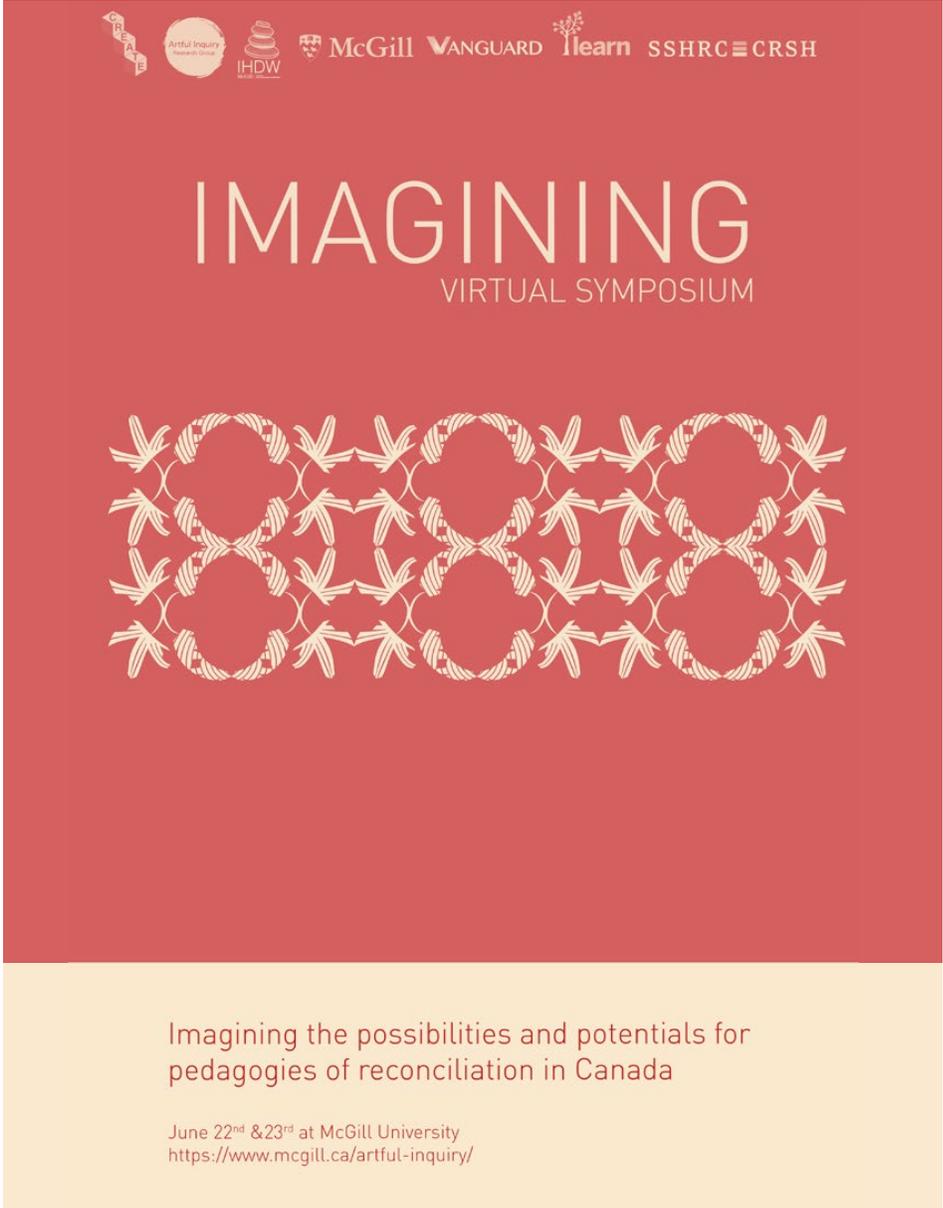
Sisters Rising participates at IMAGINING

Sisters Rising took part in the 2020 national [IMAGINING symposium](#). Three of our youth members, Ruth and Abigail Underwood and Aniah Raphael, provided the opening song and youth welcome. We also unveiled a new digital story created by dozens of our members across British Columbia, speaking to Indigenous and Black body well-being and resurgence. Sisters Rising researcher Sandrina de Finney offered the following keynote:

Land and Water Retellings: Indigenous Responses to Colonial Gender Genocide

For First Peoples, the pathways to gendered violence are carved into a colonial landscape of dispossession from land, detribalization, and the outlawing and dispiriting of our Indigenous gender teachings. Indigenous bodies imprinted with colonial trauma are too often the focus of deficit-based and externally-conducted investigations that further a cycle of shaming, pathologizing, and interlocking body and land exploitation. Thus our relationships with the ancestral homelands and waterways that hold our gender worldviews need to be recentered in our discussions about violence.

Sisters Rising, an Indigenous-led, community-based research study, located in Western Canada on the unceded territories of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ nations, is focused on upholding Indigenous teachings for gender well-being and sovereignty. Our workshops use land, water and art materials to explore topics such as the colonial roots of violence, land- and water-based well-being and dignity, and Indigenous gender resurgence. Land-based materials help shift the focus away from externally-imposed colonial lenses. We seek to restore body dignity and relational kinship by upholding practices of kinship making, rehomeing, place interconnectedness, and self-determination. These practices offer a much-needed ethical framework for Indigenous anti-settler violence movements. We are guided in this work by a decolonial ethic. As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson

The poster for the IMAGINING Virtual Symposium features a red background with a white geometric pattern of interconnected circles and lines. At the top, logos for Artful Inquiry Research Group, IHDW, McGill University, VANGUARD, iLearn, SSHRC, and CRSH are displayed. The title 'IMAGINING' is in large white letters, with 'VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM' below it. The main text at the bottom reads: 'Imagining the possibilities and potentials for pedagogies of reconciliation in Canada', followed by the dates 'June 22nd & 23rd at McGill University' and the URL 'https://www.mcgill.ca/artful-inquiry/'.

Artful Inquiry Research Group IHDW McGill VANGUARD iLearn SSHRC CRSH

IMAGINING

VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM

Imagining the possibilities and potentials for pedagogies of reconciliation in Canada

June 22nd & 23rd at McGill University
<https://www.mcgill.ca/artful-inquiry/>

The IMAGINING symposium seeks to document and learn from the innovative and emergent work on pedagogies of reconciliation happening in Canada, and to create new pedagogical spaces that recognize the processes of remembrance, forgiveness, and forgetting needed to take up The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action for education. IMAGINING brings together a diverse group of scholars who are working in between the spaces of environmental justice/sustainability, law, education, social work, Indigeneity, art and narrative methods of representation in a two day virtual symposium on June 22 & 23/2020, hosted through McGill University (Montreal, QC) and supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

outlines, decoloniality “has a long, diverse genealogy and can be understood as an ongoing process of co-resistance and alliance.” Decolonial ethics exposes “how coloniality is not past” and upholds “possibilities for (and the necessity of) decolonial being/ knowing/loving/resisting/creating.”

Sisters Rising extends our heartfelt gratitude to all of the *Networks4Change* partners and participants, and to the Elders, knowledge keepers and community members who have so generously guided our work for the past four years.

—Sandrina de Finney

Networks Events

In June, the Participatory Cultures Lab hosted a special edition of the International Cellphilm Festival. This, the 9th International Cellphilm Festival was particularly special as it came during unprecedented times. This special online edition was a way to allow more people to express how they are dealing with the current Covid-19 pandemic. The theme *Well-being in the Time of Distancing* was particularly relevant as it highlighted the emotions, feelings, and thoughts from people who are experiencing physical and social distancing.

The festival was held on June 12th 2020 and screenings of the prize-winning cellphlms, and featured guest speakers. The festival was generously supported by the Canadian-based International NGO CODE. The judges included Marjorie Beaucage who is a Metis filmmaker and activist, Katie McEntee, a cellphilm specialist who has been a part of the cellphilm festival since its conception, Layla Zia from Storybolt, Casey Burkholder from UNB, Emily Ridlington Prashad from Code, and Gabby Daniels from Young Women's Utopia. This year's youngest judge, Gabby Daniels, shared some of the challenges that she and her community has been experiencing during this time.

Several winners of the festival were on hand to talk about their work, sparking conversations related to race and xenophobia in the first place winning video titled *IMPERI(a)L* by Alexa Ahooja, Kevin Ah-Sen; ad commentary on the slow monotony and the repetitiveness of quarantine from the 2nd place winner *Circa Diem (About a Day)* by Emily Liang, Sunny Liang. Themes of trying to study and just carry on (shared all around the world) was feature in the 3rd place winner, *Our experiences during the lockdown, SA 2020* by the Young Girls Leading Change, who are participants in *Networks4Change*. Another commentary was highlighted in the 14 Years and Under Prize: *Changing Perspectives* by Kendra Ley also touched on themes of family, time, and what that means during these times.

9th McGill International Cellphilm Festival: Well-being in the Time of Distancing

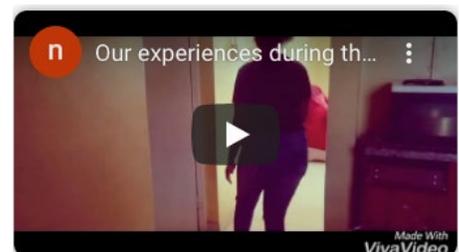
Joy Hannam | McGill University



The cellphilm festival was a great way to also bring people together and help them feel connected especially in this time where everyone is distant. A big thank you goes out to those who were in the planning stages of the cellphilm festival; to all who submitted cellphlms, and to all the people who logged in to the festival from all over Canada and internationally. This was the first time the festival was held online, and the engagement was strong as it joined many people to connect even across different cities and countries.

The Participatory Cultures Lab, and the Institute for Human Well-being and Development welcomes everyone to be part of the next cellphilm festival. Stay tuned for more information!

- 1st Prize: "IMPERI(a)L"
Alexa Ahooja & Kevin Ah-Sen
- 2nd Prize: "Circa Diem (About a Day)"
Emily Liang & Sunny Liang
- 3rd Prize: "Our experiences during lockdown, SA, 2020"
Young Girls Leading Change



Interview About the Cellphilm Festival

The Young Indigenous Women's Utopia and Cellphilms— From Student to Teacher

Colette Anton | McGill University

Contributing to the 8th International Cellphilm Festival as this year's youngest judge is far from Gabby Daniels' first experience collaborating with others in participatory visual methodology. Gabby, 17, is from the Mistawasis First Nations in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and has already been an active member of the Young Indigenous Women's Utopia (YIWU) for three years, working enthusiastically to uphold the group's mission of "representing the stories and visions for a world where women and girls can be liberated in living their best lives." Within the organization, she's played two distinct roles: that of a motivated student and an inspired teacher.

I was lucky enough to speak with Gabby about her work with YIWU, cellphilm, and the group's plans for the future. The focus of the YIWU through the years has been diverse.

“We hold workshops for ourselves, workshops for younger girls (called Utopia 2.0), create artwork including cellphilms, and do public speaking. In the group, everyone shows up and has fun.

Gabby noted how essential the group has been in deepening her understanding of social issues, as well as in empowering her to use tools like cellphilms to educate other young women on the same topics.

“We first made cellphilms about gender-based violence. I didn't know what it was before...more people need to know about it. Young children especially are a good audience—there is lots of gender-based violence in schools.

Gabby has been working with cellphilms for years, notably earning second place in the 6th International Cellphilm Festival. She went on to praise the medium for its applicability and power to enact change.

“Cellphilms are really great. For someone like me who can get easily distracted, I found that presentations can become boring, but videos help me focus. They're a great way to get the message out; they usually make people pay more attention. They're easy to make, short, and very effective.

Gabby shared how eager she was to incorporate more cellphilm workshops within the YIWU, especially with young women like herself.

“We definitely want to introduce making cellphilms to the younger girls because that's how old we were when we started making them ... I know a lot of the girls would like it. In the first workshop, we made TikToks with them and they all knew right away how to use the technology. I know if [the cellphilms] had an important message, they would like it even more.

Like just about everything in our novel reality, the YIWU's plans for the future have been forced to readjust to accommodate the new social distancing measures imposed by COVID-19.

“There have been ... some challenges. We usually meet once a month in person, but because of COVID, we couldn't meet for a few months. We can't have any workshops on reservations or for other younger girls.

Nevertheless, Gabby noted how the organization has stayed resilient in these unprecedented times, and adapted their work to continue providing support for young Indigenous women in Canada.

“Recently, we were able to meet in groups of less than thirty, so in the past week we had one day where we hung out with the older girls, went to a tipi, smudged, and talked. Then, we had a workshop with the younger girls and held it at an arts space where we could be [safely] scattered. Lots changed when COVID-19 started. It was hard because [the group] also enjoyed hanging out together; it took a toll on us.

With things beginning to approach some semblance of normalcy, Gabby has been able to think towards the future, as well as reflect on the role that the YIWU has played in her growth.

“My plans ... are to keep mentoring the young girls, travel more, and expand the group. I really enjoy being a part of [the YIWU] because I made a lot of new friends—they're my sisters and my family. The group brought awareness to a lot I didn't know about. I've very happy to be a part of it.

For the full report on this year's International Cellphilm Festival, visit our [website](#).

Intern Profile: Colette Anton

Colette is the lead intern for the PCL's International Cellphilm Festival this summer. She is entering her fourth year at McGill University, majoring in Sociology, and minoring in Political Science and Hispanic Studies.

Intern Profile: Joy Hannam

Joy interned with the PCL this summer as part of the Arts Internship Program. She is at her fourth year at McGill completing a Bachelor of Arts in International Development, with a minor in Health Geography and Psychology.

Growing up with a creative background, she picked up many passions in art, photography and design. That, combined with her interest in working with others and helping with community initiatives led her to seek projects that engage others.

New from the Cellphilm Festival

A Comprehensive Guide to Facilitating Virtual Cellphilm Festivals

Colette Anton | McGill University

The McGill International Cellphilm Festival almost from its beginning in 2013 has attracted submissions from girls and young women attached to *Networks4Change* cellphilm festivals, and even members of the Advisory Board, along with many other groups and individuals around the world.

A cellphilm festival provides a platform for the organizational expression of unique voices in the form of a publicly accessible showcase. Given the social distancing regulations imposed due to the spread of COVID-19, the transition to virtual cellphilm festivals seems to be an inevitability. Virtual festivals are designed to take place remotely via an interactive video platform such as YouTube or Vimeo, and allow speakers and audience members to 'attend' the festival using a personal mobile device or laptop from the safety of their home.

We have developed *A Comprehensive Guide to Facilitating Virtual Cellphilm Festivals*, outlining all the necessary steps for conceptualizing, designing, and facilitating a cellphilm festival, with special focus on virtual festival management in the time of COVID-19.

A Comprehensive Guide to Facilitating Virtual Cellphilm Festivals will be available online at [PCL](#) and [IHDW](#) websites.



Social Media Launch

Girlfesto Online Exhibition

October 11, 2020 | Sabrina Gill



The Participatory Cultures Lab (PCL), in collaboration with the McGill Global Health Scholars Program, is proud to present the virtual exhibition of the Girlfesto! The official social media launch will take place on October 11, the International Day of the Girl. We are excited to share the Girlfesto and honor the communities that came together to create it.

The Girlfesto is a protest text, demanding safety and liberation from Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). It represents solidarity, safety, and healing amongst women and their communities.

At its core, it outlines the local severity of this SGBV, lists out actionable steps to mitigate this issue, and brings together the thoughts and experiences of various women and girls. In our virtual exhibition website, you will find key information about the purpose and reach of the Girlfesto. The Girlfesto has been translated into 9 different languages: isiZulu, Inuktitut, Kanien'kéha, Xhosa, Afrikaans, English, French, Russian, and Swedish. Each version of the Girlfesto is on display within our exhibition, and we are thankful to all our contributors who helped to make these translations possible. You will also find extensive details regarding the process of making the Girlfesto, the *Circles Within Circles* conference, and a means of contacting the PCL if you wish to connect.

The Girlfesto is an output of the 2018 *Circles within Circles: Transnational Perspectives on Youth-led Approaches to Addressing Gender-Based Violence* conference. This event was held in Montebello, Canada supported by the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation. *Circles Within Circles* brought together 75 women and girls and created a safe space to discuss the pervasiveness of SGBV. To begin the [process](#) of creating a collective Girlfesto, individuals first shared their thoughts through participatory arts-based methods. Drawings and paintings helped to visually represent various experiences, and from there, participants were able to empathize and create connections with each other. Later, participants were broken into smaller groups to brainstorm ideas for their own Girlfesto. At the end of the conference, all ideas and mini-

manifestos were brought together to create the collaborative Girlfesto.

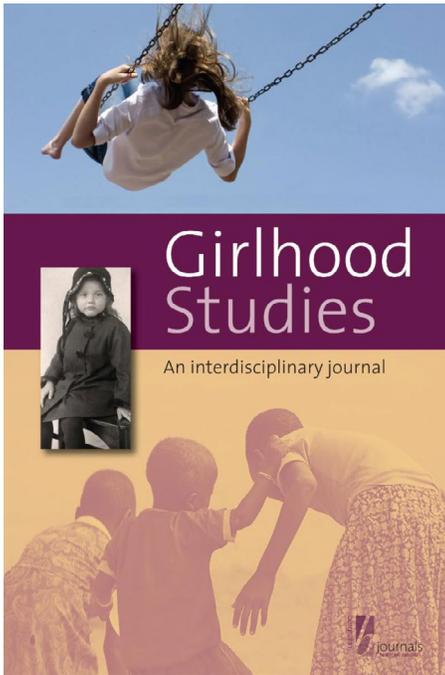
The Girlfesto is not only a declaration of freedoms, but also serves as a call to action for others to create their own Girlfesto. On our virtual exhibition website you will also find work from the Young Indigenous Women's Utopia (YIWU) group, and the Rankin Inlet Girlfesto, to serve as inspirations for your own creation. Our work extends across many nations around the globe—participants from Canada, South Africa, Ethiopia, Sweden, Russia, and more, came together to speak back against SGBV. This factor was crucial to the creation of this virtual exhibition. In the time of COVID-19 and social distancing, an online display is the most accessible way to showcase the hard work that was put into the creation of the Girlfesto. We hope this will encourage audiences to draft their own Girlfesto and outline demands and needs that are specific to their community. For more information, visit the following website:

<https://mcgill.ca/x/4Xr>

Intern Profile: Sabrina Gill

Sabrina joined the PCL this summer as part of the Global Health Scholars program. She is a third year student pursuing a major in International Development and a double minor in Communications and Field Studies. Her passion lies in exploring the ways in which media can intersect with and enhance development initiatives.

Publications



In the midst of the global pandemic, the inspiring and complex narratives of activism by, for, and with girls and young women provide refreshing insight into the possible, and an important reminder of the need to continue investing in girls and young women now more than ever. “[Personal, Powerful, Political: Activist Networks by, for, and with Girls and Young Women](#)” is the title of the Special Issue of *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, published in July 2020. It was guest edited by Catherine Vanner, Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations at the University of Windsor, and Anuradha Dugal, Director of Community Initiatives at the Canadian Women’s Foundation.

The Special Issue showcases girl-led activism in practice, while examining issues of the historical and contemporary representation of girls’ activism, the complexities of adult support, and the life-long influence that participating in activism can have on girls and women. It includes several stunning pieces

[Special Issue] *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*

Personal, Powerful, Political: Activist Networks by, for, and with Girls and Young Women

Guest Editors: Catherine Vanner, University of Windsor & Anuradha Dugal, Canadian Women’s Foundation

from *Networks4Change*, including “Negotiating Girl-led Advocacy: Addressing Early and Forced Marriage in South Africa.” In this article, the authors critically reflect on their roles as researchers and supporters of girls challenging practices of early and forced marriage in South Africa, even while girls are being threatened by the practice during the course of their work together. Their article highlights the urgency of mobilizing behind girls, while simultaneously addressing the delicate balance of protecting and promoting girl activists that adult researchers and activists must contend with.

The Special Issue also includes a book review of Young Indigenous Women’s Utopia’s book of the same name, which contains stories of mentorship, self-love, and activism by the girls group in Treaty 6 Traditional Homeland of the Métis People. The book review is entitled “Passing the Talking Stick: Resilience-Making through Storytelling” and recognizes the power of the work not only in the stories themselves but in the process by which the girls become storytellers, creating new knowledge while carrying it with them. These *Networks4Change* narratives are nestled within other powerful articles and a visual essay that collectively call for more attention to the voices of girls and to the process of listening to them.

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[Forthcoming] *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*

Girls' and Young Women's Lives in the Time of Covid-19

As with Zika, Ebola, and HIV/AIDS and other pandemics in recent history, girls and young women are particularly vulnerable socially if not medically. Some observers have referred to the current COVID-19 crisis as a "tale of two pandemics" in reference to both to the obvious health issues and the pervasive gender inequalities that have become exacerbated. We see the negative impact that physical distancing and social isolation is having on already vulnerable girls and young women experiencing sex- and gender-based violence (SGBV). All over the world they are facing increasing levels of precariousness as a direct result of the health measures being taken to curb the global transmission of COVID-19. The

increasing lack of privacy in the home furthers the practice of cultural forms of patriarchy significant to SGBV.

Local and international NGOs, government ministries, and researchers are developing emergency SGBV responses during this time of physical distancing, but we must tread carefully and thoughtfully in our response to what has become the new normal. Working to combat SGBV could, at least potentially, do more harm than good as we work to uncover the experiences of girls and young women in social isolation and lockdown situations. The high rates of intimate partner violence and child abuse behind closed doors means that face-to-face as well as remote technology-driven and text-based investigative programming carried out by NGOs are proving to be problematic.

Another critical component in a time of physical distancing, lockdowns, and social isolation is that vulnerable girls and young women are unable to access

support services (like girls' clubs, gender clubs, hotlines, and supportive programming) that might otherwise be in place. But there is also the situation of post-Covid-19:

- ▶ What will the world look like and what are the implications for girls and young women?
- ▶ What have we learned from previous pandemics that might be useful as we consider a post-Covid-19 world?
- ▶ Are there new ethical issues that should be taken into consideration?

There is concern on the part of many International NGOs working on girls' education and on broader issues of gender equity that many of the gains over the last few years will be lost. Clearly, the dramatic economic downturn globally will affect financial support for many of the programs in place. There is also the worry that less progressive agendas will have a deleterious impact on programs supporting girls and young women.

Coming Soon: Berghahn Books

Ethical Practice in Participatory Visual Research with Girls *Transnational Approaches*



Edited by
Relebohile Moletsane, Lisa Wiebesiek,
Astrid Treffry-Goatley, & April Mandrona

Ethical Practice in Participatory Visual Research with Girls: Transnational Approaches is a volume in Berghahn's series *Transnational Girlhoods*. Girlhood Studies has emerged over the last decade as a strong area of interdisciplinary research and activism, encompassing studies of feminism, women and gender, and childhood and youth and extending into such areas as sociology, anthropology, development studies, children's literature, and cultural studies.

As the first book series to focus specifically on this exciting field, *Transnational Girlhoods* advances 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 draws 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.

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Relebohile Moletsane, Astrid Treffry-Goatley, April Mandrona, & Lisa Wiebesiek

Introducing “A Toolkit on Creative Approaches to Studying Change: Looking Back and Determining the Path Ahead”

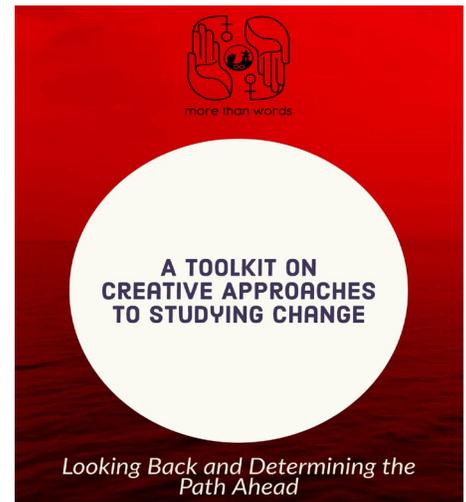
Allison McCook | McGill University

This summer, I was one of seven interns interning at the Institute for Human Development and Well-being/ Participatory Cultures Lab. My task was working on the *More Than Words* project, specifically in the area of evaluation. During this time, I have been working on creating a toolkit on evaluation, expanding on the methods outlined in *More Than Words* evaluation framework document “[Looking Back and Determining the Path Ahead](#).” Detailing the numerous tools that can be used in project evaluation, this toolkit provides insight into real world application. It frames studying change in the context of trauma-informed pedagogies. It serves to present an overview of various tools which can be used to evaluate ‘what happened’ and the difference an arts-based, youth-led and Indigenous focused project is making among its participants, assessing how it is functioning, how well it is/has met its original goal(s), and offers the potential to illuminate areas which can be improved on.

The aim of this document is to offer a step-by-step guide to the implementation and use of each tool, when it is most useful, along with

advantages and disadvantages. This toolkit explores 14 methods organized according to ‘engaging through the arts’, storying, and more conventional forms of evaluation. One of the strengths of the toolkit is that it builds on methods that have already been used in the *Networks4Change* and *More Than Words* projects, such as Picturing Change and Community Mapping. For example, the toolkit defines Community Mapping, offers a step-by-step on how to use the tool, provides a consideration of when the tool might be most useful, details advantages and disadvantages, provides a short section on arts applicability, and concludes with an example from Rankin Inlet where the girls photographed places they felt safe and unsafe as well as captured what they like and dislike about their community.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me with this project and have been so kind and understanding throughout this internship, with a special acknowledgement to the work of Pamela Teitelbaum of the Tamarack Institute who provided the initial outline of methods. This has been an experience I will never forget. I am very excited



for ‘next steps’ in relation to further input from the various communities involved in *More Than Words* and *Networks4Change*—and then final product which we hope can be used as a resource for the benefit and education of others. Stay tuned to *More Than Words* media for the launch of this and other great resources: [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#).

Intern Profile: Allison McCook

Allison is a third year student at McGill University, majoring in Political Science and minoring in Canadian Studies.

Congratulations!



Emily Booker finished her Master of Arts in Education and Society at McGill University on July 28, 2020.

How is the Settler Colonial Project Advanced or Challenged in BC Schools Through Teachers’ Resources?

Emily Booker

Now more than ever, the role education plays in reconciliation in Canada is being discussed, some people see education as a path to reconciliation. In contrast, others see education as a tool of the settler-colonial project.

My research is inspired by the need to make education socially just and equitable. I critically analyzed *Shared Learnings: Integrating BC Aboriginal Content K-10*, a resource created by the Aboriginal Enhancement branch of the British Columbian Ministry of Education, to include Indigenous content in kindergarten to grade 10 classrooms.

The objectives of this study are broadly to inquire into settler colonialism in education and specifically to determine if a resource created to benefit Indigenous students and include Indigenous content in the classroom is achieving

its objectives or continuing to advance the settler colonial project. With Tribal Critical Race Theory as a theoretical framework and using Critical Discourse Analysis as a method of analysis, my research uncovers the ideologies being imparted to teachers interacting with the resource, how those ideologies are connected to the settler colonial project.

Ultimately the research found that some aspects of *Shared Learnings* challenged the settler colonial project while others supported it and uncovered the challenges of including Indigenous voices, cultures and histories into a system that has historically excluded or disvalued them.

Thank you to Claudia and my coworkers in the PCL, *More Than Words* and *Networks4Change* for all the support throughout the process!

Forthcoming!

Agenda

Empowering women for gender equity

What's Policy got to do with it? Girl-led 'From the Ground Up' Approaches to Policy Dialogue and Policy Change

Guest Editors: Claudia Mitchell, Relebohile Moletsane, & Shakira Choonara

In this issue of *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, we are focusing on articles and other forms of writing and art work that respond to questions about girl-led/young women-led 'from the ground up' approaches to policy-dialogue and policy-making, particularly in the context of gender-based violence and related areas of femicide, sexual assaults and rapes, early and unwanted pregnancy, access to child grants, forced and early marriages and so on. For more than a decade, researchers working in community-based research, especially using participatory visual and arts-based approaches such as digital storytelling, photo voice and participatory video and cellphilm, have been asking 'so what' questions, but particularly questions related to change through various forms of policy. Recognizing that the idea of policy change at a macro level typically calls for long term initiatives over time, and that policy change does not necessarily guarantee any type of real change 'on the ground' as can be seen in all too familiar 'policy rich' and 'implementation poor' contexts, we invited contributors to consider the vast range of possibilities for what policy making, policy dialogue and policy processes might mean, particularly in the context of those who are normally excluded from policy dialogue. In so doing we encouraged contributors to weave in ideas of the critical in policy analysis

and especially the processes of policy making through the lens of addressing inequalities, or possibilities for 'changing methods' in relation to policy.

The articles are meant to be located within critique of what counts as change. For some the critique is about whether it is even possible for the work of young people to lead to policy change and hence questions are about 'false promises and tokenism'. For others the issues might be more about 'what counts as dialogue' or what counts as change and how do we understand the 'messiness' of policy dialogue and policy change? How could, for example, #MenAreTrash be included as aspects of dialogue about how men as a collective have been complicit in the anger and fear that has become an integral part of women's and girl's lived experience in South Africa? There are others, following the work of Sara Ahmed and others on affect, looking at the actual art work produced (a mural, exhibition, memorial/monument) or even a march or demonstration or other form of public display as in and of itself the point in relation to potential for provoking policy dialogue. For example, how might the Annual Silent Protest at Rhodes University, Durban University of Technology and elsewhere, which provokes dialogue about unmuting sexual violence be included in a consideration of policy dialogue? For still others the questions are more about activism itself, something not all researchers associate with policy dialogue and policy change but which, as Jessica Taft and others have highlighted may be a central ingredient of policy dialogue. We see this in relation to the increasing attention being paid to girls, young women and trans youth and activism at the global level in the work of Nobel Prize winners such as Nadia Nurad and Malala Yousafzai, and in the recent work of climate change activist Greta Thunberg. In her studies of girls' activism in North and South America, Taft writes about girls seeing themselves

as "becoming" rather than as activists, a perspective which she believes "enables valuable political flexibility and openness." But we also can recognize this activist spirit in local young people such as Zee Ngcobo, a transgender girl who is doing pioneering work on the rights of girls and non-binary youth in a rural KwaZulu-Natal community. Finally, we think of the many 'so what?' questions that see policy dialogue as only something that happens 'out there' and at an abstract level, often failing to see policy dialogue that is directly in front of us (in a classroom, in a rural community, in a local clinic and so on), or how policy itself can be framed within participatory processes and transformation as can be seen, at least in principle, in Canada's Feminist International Agency Policy.

These issues are key to deepening an understanding of girl-led and young women-led 'from the ground up' policy dialogue because they suggest that perhaps we need to look more closely and critically at where instances of policy-making and policy-dialogue are already taking place or where they could take place outside the conventional arenas of dialogue. The inspiration for this issue of *Agenda* comes largely out of the work of the guest editors in co-leading the 6-year SSHRC and IDRC-funded project *Networks for Change and Well-being: Girl-led 'from the ground up' Policy making to Address Sexual Violence in Canada and South Africa*. As Claudia Mitchell and Relebohile Moletsane highlight in their edited book based on that project *Disrupting Shameful Legacies*, arts-based methods and tools are central to the idea of 'speaking back'. In her article 'Stop the War on Women's Bodies': Facilitating a Girl-Led March Against Sexual Violence in a Rural Community in South Africa', Moletsane takes this further to offer an 'up close' look at the impact of 'girl-led' policy dialogue in a rural community.

Special Thanks to Our Summer 2020 Interns

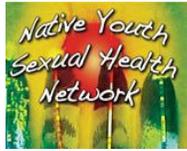
We would like to thank the seven McGill undergraduate [interns](#) from the Faculty of Arts and from the

Global Health Scholars program who in the months of June, July, and August contributed so much to the various projects related to *Networks4Change*, *More Than Words*, the McGill International Cellphilm Festival as well as the production of this newsletter. We are so grateful to each intern for adding so much and at a time when things were

so uncertain. In these unprecedented times of distancing, all our meetings—and even a wind-up picnic—took place online.

Thank you Colette Anton, Sonia Bucan, Darshan Daryanani, Sabrina Gill, Joy Hannam, Mary Lynne Loftus, and Allison McCook.

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