

Networks for Change and Well-being

Girl-led 'from the ground up'
policy making to address
sexual violence in
Canada and South Africa

Issue 1: June 2015



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Dear Partners of 'Networks for Change and Well-being':

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you, as partners and stakeholders, with an update on the first months of the project's planning and implementation by the research team. The official start-up date for the project was August, 2014.

We have to acknowledge that getting this transnational project 'up and running' has taken much longer than we expected -- from the logistics of ensuring that the funding is available in both countries, to embarking upon the complicated issues of ethics applications across so many institutions, and from recruiting and hiring to establishing appropriate governance structures that take account of the participation of the key communities. We thank all of you for your patience.

As part of our communication strategy, a newsletter will be sent to you several times a year highlighting the project's activities and events. This first issue of the newsletter highlights research activities and publications 'in the works,' but we are looking forward to future communications that are led by Indigenous young women in both Canada and South Africa.

Best regards,
Claudia and Lebo



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Project Overview

Networks for Change and Well-being: Girl-led ‘from the ground up’ policy making to address sexual violence in Canada and South Africa is a six year, \$2.4 million (CAD) research initiative funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and the International Development Research Centre of Canada (IDRC) as part of their International Partnerships for Sustainable Societies (IPaSS) initiative. The project officially started on August 1, 2014.

This project involves collaborators and partners from universities and community organizations across Canada and South Africa. The Co-Principal Investigators of the

partnership are Dr. Claudia Mitchell from the Faculty of Education at McGill University and Dr. Relebohile Moletsane from the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The project will focus on learning from the contexts in which communities of girls and young women are subject to exceptionally high rates of sexual violence. In the Canadian context this refers to self-identified young Indigenous girls/women, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, status or non-status, beneficiary or non-beneficiary, and includes Indigenous girls and young women who identify as Trans, Two Spirit, or gender non-

conforming. In the South African context we will be working with girls and young women of a range of sexualities who belong to two of the official government designated groups, Black and Coloured (mixed race), and who live in rural areas.

The partnership draws on methods and approaches to learning ‘from the ground up’ (digital story-telling, participatory video, cellphilms, drawing and mapping, along with social media) and builds on various iterations of youth-led media making, community-based research, participatory action research, research as intervention, and research as social change.

Photos on this page: Girls Leading Change, South Africa



Inception Workshop and Project Launch at McGill University, Canada

The Inception Workshop and Canadian launch for *Networks for Change and Well-being: Girl-led 'from the ground up' policy making to address sexual violence in Canada and South Africa* brought together partners from Canada and South Africa on November 27-28, 2014 at McGill University. The workshop consisted of two full days of presentations, discussions, activities, and a project launch celebration. Discussions centered specifically on project governance and planning for the next steps of the partnership.



To open the workshop, three key presentations brought to light the overarching objectives of the partnership and the ways that

partners can situate themselves in the context of those objectives.

Partners later discussed how the project will be organized over the next six years according to models of Indigenous governance and trans-national governance. One important aspect of project governance will include a Girls' Advisory Panel made up of members from Canada and South Africa who form a part of the organizational structure.

In small groups, the partners participated in a collaborative Theory of Change exercise to reflect on the development of informed action for social change. Each group produced a short narrative of important issues and a summary account of questions discussed; this activity helped those involved to lay out the framework for project goals, such as putting girls' narratives at the centre of the partnership.

Several critical discussions on the research process and research ethics took place as a result of small group meetings and larger group presentations.

At the end of the first day, a reception was held to celebrate the launch of the project.

Members of the university and the broader community, partners, and stakeholders attended the gathering at the Coach House.



Following the Inception Workshop, The Participatory Cultures Lab hosted the Second International Cellphilm Festival to announce the festival winners and awarded prizes to local and international participants. Several cellphilms created around the world were screened in front of a keen audience. The cellphilms, each 60 to 90 seconds in length, addressed the festival theme "Our Spaces / Our Selves."

Current activities of the partnership include selecting members of the Girls' Advisory Board, establishing a communication strategy using a website and social media presence, and submitting ethics applications.



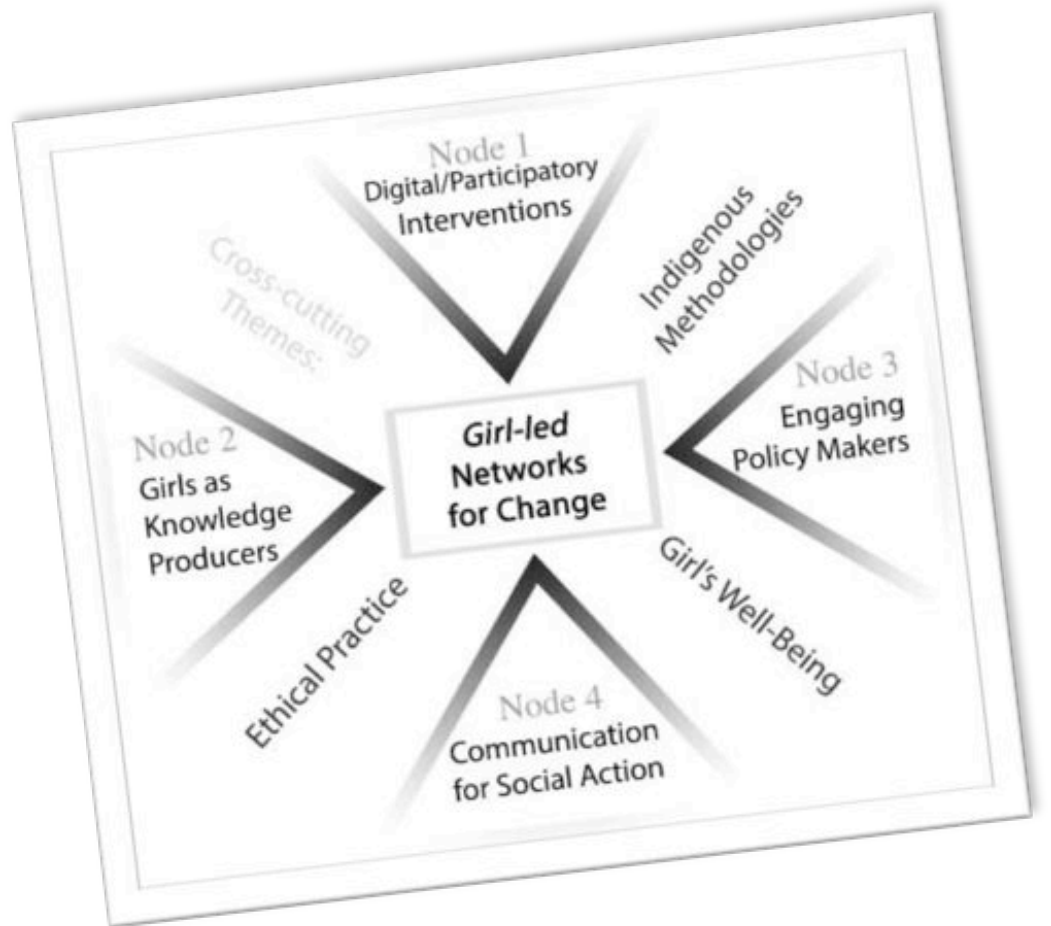
Partnership Design

The four research nodes are guided by three cross-cutting themes.

The goal of the node structure is to draw together key learning across the nodes through node meetings. Node leaders will report their nodes' work at annual meetings of the whole team and annual international symposia.

Node 1 "Digital and other participatory interventions" has a strong practice-based field-work orientation. Team members draw on their own extensive work with audio, visual, and other participatory methods in order to embark upon a set of sub-studies that compare and contrast: 1) data produced through different participatory media tools, 2) the relationship between the cultural products and the thematic of safety and security, 3) efficacy in dissemination, and 4) the nature of young people's engagement over time.

Node 2 "Girls as knowledge producers and mobilizers" tests out the ways of studying knowledge production as informed by the texts produced by the girls (digital stories, videos). This work will include close readings of primary texts independently



produced by girls, and uploaded to YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, as well as texts produced in the various interventions. It will also include work with girls themselves (through interviews, focus groups, online discussions, etc.)

Node 3 "Methods and approaches in engaging policy makers" focuses explicitly on the policy-making community and how policy makers might engage with digital media and productions created by girls and through direct dialogue with girls. It is impossible to consider how the digital productions created by youth can have an impact if we do not study the role of audience

in social change.

Node 4 "Communication Networks and/or Social Action" explores the potential for virtual networks to foster knowledge sharing and data development within two arenas. The first arena focuses on developing methods and spaces for digital dialogue and knowledge exchange amongst institutions, community practitioners, and policy-makers all working in the area of girls and sexual violence. The second arena examines the ways in which emergent social media tools and applications are (or can be) part of a girl-led social movement towards addressing sexual violence.



Project Launch in South Africa at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)

UKZN in collaboration with Agenda Feminist Media present
 “What does/would a girl-led response(s) to sexual violence look like?”

Adapted from the article by Melissa Mungroo on UKZN’s website <http://ow.ly/OkZcS>.

The Feminist Dialogue - *What does/would a girl-led response(s) to sexual violence look like?* – was presented at the New Conference Centre on UKZN’s Edgewood Campus on March 19, 2015.

Leading the presentation were UKZN’s Professor Relebohile Moletsane, Janine Hicks of Agenda Feminist Media, and Professor Claudia Mitchell of McGill University, who is also an honorary professor at UKZN.

The Dialogue launched the six-year (2014-2020) collaborative project: *Networks for Change and Well-Being: Girl-led ‘from the ground up’ policy making to address sexual violence in Canada and South Africa*. All South Africa project partners were represented at the presentation.

In launching the project, the dialogue invited girls and young women, feminists, activists, academics, policy makers and others to come together to reflect on what such responses might be.

Opening the dialogue, the Dean

and Head of the School of Education, Professor Gregory Kamwendo, observed that the dialogue was important and central to humanity and targeted an issue prevalent in society. Lamenting the absence of men at the event, he expressed the hope that such open discussions would attract a greater male presence in the future.

In her opening remarks, the Chair of Agenda Feminist Media Board of Directors, Ms. Janine Hicks expressed confidence that the research would allow the experiences of rural girls to be heard so as to enable change in messages to communities and government, and ultimately, change in policy.

Dr. Rekha Mahadev, who graduated from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in 2014, shared her research on using participatory video research to address Gender Based Violence in an Indian high school. Her study focused on how Indian youth understand, experience, and relate to gender-based violence (GBV).

Mahadev sees her participatory video research as a powerful tool

for addressing GBV in communities. “It can be seen as an intervention by addressing the abuse and violence with the learners, adding to their knowledge base on how to take action, giving them a sense of accountability and responsibility. The learners see this research as socially constructive and transformative to them as they effect self-directed changes and shift existing norms on gender roles.”

Mr. Ndumiso Ngidi of the Durban University of Technology looked at Transformative Pedagogies for addressing GBV in a Township school in Ntuzuma. His presentation centered on his *Inyathelo Lethu* (Our Initiative) Project. Ngidi told of how the initiative enhanced the learners’ confidence in identifying gender violence in their own lives and the lives of others.

Ms. Melissa Lufele and Ms. Zethu Jiyana, BEd students at NMMU accompanied by Professor Naydene de Lange, presented on the work of the *Girls Leading Change* initiative. The project involves 14 young women students from NMMU’s

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education faculty who came together in their first year in 2013 to address the issue of sexual violence on campus.

In this session, the two women presented on the work of *Girls Leading Change*, in which they developed cellphilms (videos made using cellphones), policy posters, and action briefs to stimulate dialogue in their university community around sexual violence and safety. Lufele and Jiyana spoke about women students' experiences of violence and feeling unsafe on campus, issues which their project aimed to highlight. Said Lufele: "The issues raised in the cellphilms were used to generate a set of policy posters and action briefs that we shared with university policy makers to work towards addressing the issues. "

The three collaborators, Naydene de Lange, Relebohile Moletsane, and Claudia Mitchell, initiated *Girls Leading Change* as a pilot initiative that will feed into the bigger project launched at the feminist dialogue.

In particular, the work examines how girl-led media production might influence community practitioners and policy-makers. In so doing, the project aims to shift the boundaries of knowledge production and inform policy change.



Photo of the February 14 Strawberry Ceremony held in Toronto, Canada in 2014. Posted on the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls – People's Gathering live stream, February 26, 2015. Photo by Windspeaker.

Sexual Violence in the Context of Colonial Legacies in Canada and South Africa

Relebohile Moletsane, Claudia Mitchell, and Haidee Smith Lefebvre presented their paper, *Sexual Violence in the context of Colonial Legacies in Canada and South Africa* at the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conference in Washington, D.C on March 12.

The two countries have a similar history in relation to racialized colonization and segregation, something that is evident in the treatment of Aboriginal populations in Canada, and in the effects of apartheid in South Africa. While the governments of both countries have attempted to confront past injustices through the establishment of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, both countries continue to come under scrutiny by international organizations such as Human Rights Watch and the United Nations for their failure to create

safe and secure environments for girls and young women.

Using the lens of history and the contemporary reality, for example of the missing and murdered Indigenous girls and women in Canada, this paper focuses on the constitutional and legal frameworks that shape the 'on the ground' realities for Indigenous girls and young women. The paper argues that in order to effectively address sexual violence, we need analytic frameworks that take seriously colonial legacies.

Some Colonial Legacies in Canada:

1840-1980: Indian residential schools

1850: Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and Property of Indians in Lower Canada

1867: British North America Act, Section 91(24)

1869: Gradual Enfranchisement Act

1969: 'The White Paper'

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1982: Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms, Section 35

1985: Bill C-31

Some Colonial Legacies in South Africa:

1913: Natives Land Act

1985: Immorality and Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Amendment Act

1950: Group Areas Act (urban apartheid)

1953: Bantu Education Policy

1953: Reservation of Separate Amenities Act

2012: Traditional Courts Bill

Clearly there are a number of commonalities across the two countries: Limited access to land (violence on the land); Segregation (apartheid [townships, homelands] reservations); Education (residential schools, Bantu education); and Regulation of cohabitation and sexuality.

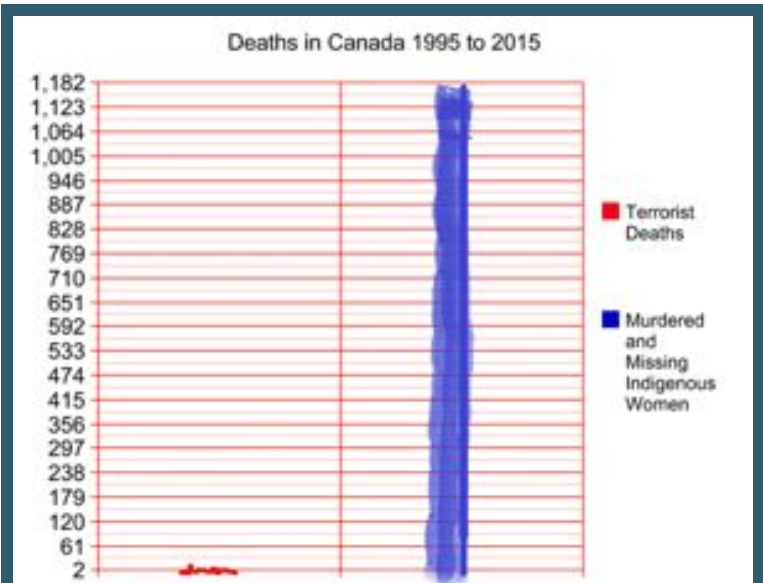
The paper concludes with a number of points for ‘reflecting forward’:

What can we learn across

various country contexts with settler colonizing factors and using tools that build on indigeneity (e.g. the indigenous intersectional-based policy analysis)? How does this work contribute to deepening an understanding of gender inequality in relation to sexual violence? What can this work contribute to understanding the ‘root causes’ of violence? How can this work inform girl-led interventions?



Taken outside the magistrate’s court in Bredasdorp, South Africa, where appeared two men accused of raping and murdering 17-year old Anene Booysen appeared. Photo from The Guardian website on February 15, 2013, Reuters Stringer/Reuters.



Posted on the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls – People’s Gathering live stream, February 26, 2015.

Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) Support to Participatory Cultures Lab

Adapted from the McGill Faculty of Education News <http://ow.ly/OI0Sd>

What changes would young women make to policies on preventing violence against women if they had the chance to do so? How can social media be used to fight gender-based violence on campuses and in other communities? How do we

empower bystanders to help prevent such violence?

With funding from the CFI (Canada Foundation for Innovation) complementing funds from SSHRC, Claudia Mitchell will begin testing apps developed by her students to see how they can use the apps to create dialogue surrounding issues of violence against girls and women. She hopes that ultimately this work can be adapted for use in various communities, including work with girls in rural communities in

South Africa.

The Participatory Cultures Lab, established in 2010, is organized around the study and use of visual and other participatory approaches to research and social action, and involves the work of collaborators and research students engaged in the study of participatory research.



Forthcoming Publication in 2015 – Special issue of *Agenda* Journal

“Interventions to Address Sexual Violence: Transforming violent cultures for and with girls and young women”

Adapted from Agenda’s Call for Abstracts <http://ow.ly/OI1xp>

Guest editors Claudia Mitchell and Naydene de Lange are currently editing an issue of *Agenda* on interventions to address sexual violence.

This issue of *Agenda* looks specifically at the Gender-based Violence ‘Trilogy’: Domestic Violence, Trafficking, and Rape, and considers the ways in which we might re-imagine ways of addressing extreme levels of violence that young women in the Global South encounter on the streets, in families, in institutions such as schools, universities, in

the workplace, and in communities.

South Africa has one of the highest rates of sexual violence cases in the world, many of which go unreported. Because rates of prosecution are low, conservative gender regimes such as customary practices often prevail, causing girls and young women living in both rural and urban contexts to experience intense violence.

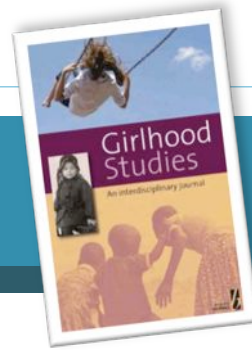
While the media continues to cover the issue of sexual violence, the responses are still ineffective, due to what some agree is a lack of political commitment.

This special issue of *Agenda* presents articles and commentaries that reflect and focus on ways to re-imagine a world free of sexual violence for girls and young women.

The special issue features authors from South Africa and Canada and includes a range of school-based interventions as

well as interventions in Higher Education Institutions: Rekha Mahadev: “Participatory video as research as intervention: Addressing sexual violence with Indian secondary school youth in the age of AIDS”; Katie MacEntee: “Using cellphones to discuss cellphones, sex, risk, and female heterosexuality in and around schools in rural South Africa; Ndumiso D. Ngidi, Laurie Bruns, Relebohile Moletsane and Lisa Wiebesiek: “Using Transformative Pedagogies for the Prevention of Gender-based Violence in Secondary Schools: A Case Study”; Nokukhanya Ngcobo: “Addressing gender and sexuality through song lyrics: experiences from a South African secondary school”; Ansurie Pillay: “Interrogating gender inequality to address gender violence: Using literary texts as catalysts in an English Education lecture-room”.





Publications Under Development for 2016
Two new issues of *Girlhood Studies*:
An Interdisciplinary Journal and Working Papers Series

Girlhood Studies – “Indigenous Girls”

*Adapted from the Girlhood Studies
Call for Papers <http://ow.ly/OI1XI>.*

The National Indigenous Young Women’s Council members Kirsten Lindquist and Kari-Dawn Wuttunee, with the support of Sarah Flicker, are currently guest editing the special issue of *Girlhood Studies*, “Indigenous Girls.”

“Indigenous Girls” will feature academic articles, short stories, personal essays, digital and other art media, and book reviews. Taking a strength-based approach, this issue will consider how Indigenous girls are resisting stereotypes, thriving, taking a stand in their communities, and participating in social, communal or political action.

The themes of this issue will focus on health and wellbeing, social justice, resistance, self-determination, decolonization, environmental justice, parenting, relationships, sexuality, culture, agency, and pride, also exploring indigeneity and gender. Self-identified Indigenous young women and girls including trans, Two Spirit, and gender non-conforming grlz were encouraged to submit short stories, narratives, visual, and personal essays for this issue.

Girlhood Studies – “Ethical Practice and the Study of Girlhood”

*Adapted from the Girlhood Studies
Call for Papers <http://ow.ly/OI2xf>.*

April Mandrona, SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow, is editing this themed issue on “Ethical Practice and the Study of Girlhood.” This issue will feature submissions from transnational and transdisciplinary perspectives that investigate how the constructs of girlhood and ethics might inform each other. Authors will focus on work that explores, disrupts, or otherwise complicates the notion of girlhood studies as an ethical space.

As of yet, the relationship between girlhood studies and the field of ethics remains under-articulated and under-researched. While there is a range of research that takes up questions of feminist ethics, childhood ethics, and to a lesser extent feminist girl-centered interventions, ethics in girlhood studies is a new nexus of inquiry. Persistent forms of marginalization and ongoing concerns about the physical and mental wellbeing of girls around the world necessitate the development of girl-responsive ethical frameworks. Ethical considerations may also allow probing into the taken-for-granted

aspects of what it means to be a girl.

The aim of this themed issue is to produce new imaginings and understandings of ethical being, rights, otherness, power, agency, and responsibility in relation to the study of girlhoods.

Working Papers Series

This Working Paper Series is meant to be a collection of commissioned literature reviews and policy reviews of particular relevance to the Partnership as a whole, and of use to researchers, policy-makers, partners and stakeholders. To be produced (or co-produced) primarily by new scholars, especially postdoctoral fellow and doctoral students attached to the Partnership. The Working Papers constitute “work in progress” and are meant to stimulate discussion and contribute to the advancement of our knowledge in areas related to girl-led responses to working with girls and young women in relation to sexual violence.

Working Paper #1 “Colonial Legacies: Sexual Violence in Canada and South Africa”

Working Paper #2 “Doing ethics: youth/girls and the challenge of sexual violence”

Partners

- Agenda Feminist Media, South Africa
- Dalhousie University, Canada
- Girls Action Foundation, Canada
- International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON), South Africa
- Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada
- Native Youth Sexual Health Network, Canada
- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa
- McGill University, Canada
- North-West University, South Africa
- Resilience Research Centre, Canada
- Status of Women Canada, Canada
- University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
- Centre for Rural Health, South Africa
- University of Victoria, Canada
- York University, Canada

Current Stakeholders

- National Association of Friendship Centres, Canada
- National Council Against Gender Based Violence, South Africa
- Youth and Political Engagement in Contemporary Africa, Finland
- United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI)
- Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Rights Commission, South Africa
- Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention (GAAP), Canada
- PACT: Persons Against the Crime of Trafficking Humans, Canada
- Global Girls Media, USA
- Centre for Education & Research on Violence Against Women and Children, Canada
- CAPRISA: The Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine, South Africa
- Girl Museum, USA
- British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, Canada
- CIET South Africa, South Africa
- Canadian Women's Foundation, Canada
- The Commission for Gender Equality, South Africa
- The Department of Basic Education, South Africa
- Institute of Security Studies, South Africa
- JamiX R-Labs, South Africa
- Masakhane Youth Leadership, South Africa

