



NETWORKS FOR CHANGE AND WELL-BEING

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

Issue 3: September 2016

Content

Dear Partners

Moving into the third year of *Networks for Change and Well-being*, we have lots to report. From the setting up of field sites in both countries to training and support for new scholars, and from the Indigenous internship program that you will read about in this newsletter, to producing key publications, we are seeing “girl-led ‘from the ground up’ policy making” in action. Of particular note is the publication *14 Times a Woman* featuring the autobiographical writings from the members of Girls Leading Change at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in South Africa, and the Special Issue of *Girlhood Studies* on Indigenous Girlhood, guest edited by two members of the National Indigenous Young Women’s Council along with Sarah Flicker at York University. We also invite readers to visit the newly launched Networks4Change website: www.networks4change.ca/ or www.networks4change.co.za/. One of the high points of this quarter for the Partnership was the project symposium and Indigenous Pre-Conference (leading up to the 21st International AIDS conference) held in Durban in July. The two events not only brought co-applicants together from the two countries, but an impressive gathering of girls and young women from the field sites in South Africa as well as members of the National Indigenous Young Women’s Council in Canada. An important component of that meeting was the opportunity for the girls and young women to engage in dialogue to establish the Girls Leading Change Youth Council in South Africa and to consider ‘next steps’ for establishing an international forum made up of Indigenous girls and young women. In the next few months we expect to add several new field sites, and have expanded the network to include new collaborators and community partners. We sincerely thank all the partners for their wonderful contributions and continued support to Networks4Change.

Best regards,
Claudia and Lebo

Two Perspectives: Canada	2
Two Perspectives: South Africa	3
Social Media & N4C	4
Fieldsite Reports	5
Girls Leading Change	10
Women & Girls: HIV Response	13
Keynote Address	14
Researchers’ Abstracts	17
Internship Report	22
14 Times a Woman	24
Community Report/Toolkit	25
Girlhood Studies Issue	26
Upcoming Events	27
Partners & Stakeholders	28



Two Perspectives on the Networks4Change Project Meeting & Symposium

July 14, 15, & 17, 2016

A View from Canada

Brittany Jones

Aanii, my name is Brittany Jones, I am Anishnabe from Neyaashiinigmiing First Nation in Ontario and am a member of the National Indigenous Young Women's Council (NIYWC). Along with Kari Wuttunee, I recently represented the council in the Networks for Change project meeting and at the Indigenous Pre-conference on HIV and AIDS in Durban, South Africa.

While in Durban, we had the chance to meet and interact with Young Indigenous women from across South Africa that are part of *Girls Leading Change*. They are a group of powerful, driven and beautiful women who are committed to making change in their communities, schools, and in their country. We had a discussion around the formation of a Girls Leading Change Youth Council. Kari and I shared our experience as members of NIYWC as it is an initiative for and by Indigenous women.

Girls Leading Change shared ideas on what they could be, what they can do and what their council will look like. Their ideas were great and fueled by passion. Forming a council is a huge undertaking and the work has only just begun but their hearts are with the project. We will continue to support the *Girls Leading Change* group while they form their council.



Project meeting and symposium, Umhlanga

During the project meeting, we were able to hear about the various field sites in South Africa and Canada and the work that has begun. We as a council will have the opportunity to choose and guide 2 field sites in Canada. Listening to and learning from the group while they shared their experiences has given us many ideas coming back. NIYWC is a very diverse group and we are located across Canada so have many possibilities moving forward.

While Indigenous populations in Canada and South Africa share a history of colonization, racism and struggle, more apparent on my trip to Durban was the shared history of passion for our people, resilience and strength. This trip was my introduction to South African culture, song and people and it was nothing short of life changing. The work we are doing is important and I look forward to strengthening the relationships I have made while continuing work on the project.

A View from South Africa

Takatso Mohlomi

I am Takatso Mohlomi, a fourth year education student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). I am a member of the young women activists for social change and well-being group, *Girls Leading Change*. We attended the project's team meeting on the 14th-15th July 2016 held in Umhlanga (Durban, South Africa).

It was a brief but very informative meeting and we had to squeeze everything in two days time. The meeting was focused on bringing together the members of the *Networks for Change and Well-being* project and also aimed to see how far we have gone in bringing about the change in our different places.

Our first meeting was comprised of different presentations which reflected on the work that has been done already. A few of the presentations we had included a values clarification which I found very helpful, the website launch, a book reading, exhibition, and both South African and Canadian presenters who are supported by the bigger project (*Networks for Change*).

It was suggested in December 2015 that we open a website for the *Networks for Change and Well-being* project. The website was developed through the collaborative work between the Canadian and South African women. An official website launch was presented by Lelethu Mlobeli and myself. All the members of the project who were available applauded the great work. The website is now available and running at www.networks4change.ca and www.networks4change.co.za in addition to our Facebook page and Twitter handle.

The *Girls Leading Change* from NMMU presented a beautiful and very touching reading of their published book titled

14 Times a Woman, Indigenous Stories from the Heart. These young ladies work closely with Professor Naydene De Lange from NMMU. The present members of the project were touched and praised the young ladies for the strength of every young woman they portrayed in their awesome stories.

We then heard about the wonderful work done across the world, where we had presenters from South Africa and Canada. From South Africa, we had Nokukhanya Ngcobo (University of KwaZulu-Natal), Naydene de Lange (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University), and Yolande Coetzer (North West University). On the Canadian side we had Marnina Gonick (Mount Saint Vincent University), Sandrina de Finney (University of Victoria), Jessica Danforth & Kari-Dawn Wuttunee (Native Youth Sexual Health Network/National Indigenous Young Women's Council) and lastly Pamela Lamb (McGill University). All these presenters gave fruitful discussions about what they covered, and listed some events they were still looking forward to.

On the second day, we focused more on what was yet to be done, and how we could still initiate events that would lead to the fair and justice social change we were working for. We were separated into six working groups where we started discussions under different provided topics.

We then separated into two groups, where the young women from South Africa and Canada were in the same group. We discussed opening a young women's council in South Africa which will be named *Girls Leading Change Youth Council (GLCYC)*. The older people sat together and discussed the communications strategy in knowledge mobilisation and amongst their discussion they emphasised the frequent use of our recently launched website.

This was indeed an eye opening and informative meeting where we got to see our hopes become reality. It all started as a dream but today there are so many powerful initiatives born from the *Networks for Change and Well-being* project.



Networks4Change working group discussion



It always seems impossible until it is done.



Nelson Mandela

Social Media & Networks4Change



WEBSITE LAUNCH

4 NETWORKS CHANGE

Networks for change and well-being: Girl-led 'from the ground up' policy making to address sexual violence in Canada and South Africa

www.networks4change.ca or www.networks4change.co.za

The Networks for Change and Well-being website highlights project updates, blog posts, photos, and resources compiled by girls and young women working in the partnership in both Canada and South Africa. We hope that you will have a look and interact with the website, Twitter, and Facebook page.

IDRC CRDI Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada / Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada **Canada**



Networks4Change website launch

On July 18 *Networks for Change and Well-being* launched our website <http://www.networks4change.ca/> and www.networks4change.co.za. We also have a Facebook page ([Networks for Change and Well-being](https://www.facebook.com/NetworksforChangeandWell-being)), and Twitter account ([@Girls 4Change](https://twitter.com/Girls4Change)), launched earlier this year. Led by project members located in both Canada and South Africa, the website brings internal project communication to a central online platform and allows for sharing and interaction with wider networks. The website is directed by the Website Advisory Committee, made up of nine members who provide content and give advice on the structure, layout, and aesthetics of the website. The website designer, Jessica Deer, (based in Kahnawake, Canada) puts together all elements of the design using ideas and feedback from the advisory committee. The group holds Skype calls to discuss website updates and sends emails and messages using WhatsApp and Facebook. In addition to news items and project information, the website features a resources section including a list of toolkits and links to other websites about gender based violence and violence prevention—to name a few.

After meeting in Durban, South Africa in July, the Girls Leading Change Youth Council (GLCYC) created a second Facebook page linked to the project which is 'for girls and by girls to share information, support one another and ultimately change policy' (<https://www.facebook.com/SAGLCYC/>). The GLCYC will continue to share pictures and post links as they establish the International girls and young women's youth council.

Fieldsites

In this issue, we present 4 updates on fieldsites set up in Canada and South Africa. As Networks4Change evolves, there are more fieldsites being set up.

Kjipuktuk (Canada)

Our group is based on traditional Mi'kmaq territory and meets weekly in Kjipuktuk (Halifax, NS). Our group is comprised of Mi'kmaq women and women from other Indigenous Nations living here in Mi'kmaq territory. While the nature and focus of our topic is sexualized violence and empowering women's voices on this subject matter through arts-based forms of expression, we also encourage and support each other in matters related to everyday life. Our group members are juggling post-secondary education, work, motherhood and family life, all while contributing to the project.



We have been meeting for just over two months now and are still in the process of designing the final presentation of our group's conversations and work. The nature of our discussions touches on a wide range of topics, from our every day lived realities to shared history and the impacts of colonization on traditional and contemporary Indigenous realities. Once a week we join together as a group of strong Indigenous women. Together we are building a strong foundation for whichever way our project ends up manifesting itself in presentation.

Durban University of Technology: Girls Against Sexual Violence and Abuse (South Africa)



The *Networks for Change and Well-being* and *Girls Against Sexual Violence and Abuse* (GASVA) is hosted by one of the civil society partners *International Center for Non-violence* (ICON) at the DUT. GASVA at DUT have embarked on a number of activities and campaigns educating others and raising awareness around sexual violence on campus and in residences. The GASVA, under the mentorship of Nokuthula Magudulela, a Masters student, works very closely with student governance structures.

A number of dialogues have been held with the academia, fellow students, and managers about student harassment in and around campus. Women feel like their bodies are being policed, as men and fellow male students comment about their bodies and what they are wearing especially if it's shorts or miniskirts. Late in 2015 a group of young men called Amajita was formed to promote peace and non-violence on campus. GASVA group, has collaborated with Amajita on a number of campaigns and dialogues. The aim is to get the entire campus community, including management, on board in working towards a non-violent and safer campus for women and girls.

Eskasoni (Canada)

Hi! We are 8 young co-researchers from Eskasoni. Our community is located on Cape Breton Island, within the Unama'gi district of Mi'kmaq territory (Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada). The community has approximately 4,355 people and is the largest Aboriginal community in Atlantic Canada. We are partnering with Eskasoni Mental Health Services (EMHS) to conduct Networks for Change and Wellbeing in our research site. EMHS uses a community development approach, where the community as a whole is the client. Using the medicine wheel and a two-eyed seeing approach, the intent is to attend to the basic needs of the community (financial planning, new parent support, etc.) together with relationship building activities (Halloween events, Easter egg hunts, and so forth) to ensure that service provision is extended. These aspects of service provision provide additional supports to formal mental health service provision.

We started the research in early July. To start us off, we worked collectively to develop safe space guidelines. When we gather as a team, we revisit the guidelines at the start of every session. We also hold daily debriefs, starting and ending each day with them. In this way we ensure that we remain respectful of one another and that we can support each other emotionally through our journey of discovery.

During our first intensive week of fieldwork, we used various activities to unpack what sexual violence means, and what it looks like in Eskasoni. Some of these approaches included envisioning the world we want our daughters to live in while making dreamcatchers; making collages to unravel how women, and Aboriginal women in particular, are portrayed and perceived by Aboriginal men and the broader community; and used mapping exercises to think about the sites of sexual violence in the community.

We are working on our first set of dissemination products which include a public service information video, three posters that will be shared with the community, service providers and policy makers, two brief reports and two academic conference posters. We hope to meet again during winter to look more carefully at self-care and resilience.



Khetani (South Africa)

The *Networks for Change and Well-being* Research Team at UKZN held our first workshop with seven young people at the Isibani Welfare Centre in Khetani over three days, from June 29th to July 1st. The programme developed for the workshop included activities like body maps, photovoice, and drawing. Each visual method used had a purpose, but the young people and the research team got even more out of the process than we expected.

We started out the first day of our workshops, on July 29th, with warm tea and muffins, as us Durban folk were not used to the frigid cold weather on that Wednesday morning in Khetani. It was a slow start but eventually all the young people arrived and were ready to get down to business. We all went around and did introductions and a check-in to see how everyone was doing that morning and what they were most looking forward to in the three days we had together. It is important that we do a check-in and checkout at the beginning and end of each day to start and finish our work in a good way. It allows for the group to discuss, if they feel comfortable, anything that may be bothering them, or anything they need to get off their chest.

The team went over the consent and assent forms again just to ensure all of the young people had their consent forms signed and had signed the assent forms, as well as making sure they knew this was voluntary and that they can stop participating in the project or any of the activities at any time. Once we were all comfortable with the informed consent process, the group then established some ground rules for the day and the

workshop that we all agreed upon, such as: phones off/silent until lunch time, keep an open mind about others' views and or opinions as well as no judgmental comments, confidentiality (what we say in the group stays in the group) and lastly participate and have fun!

We then moved on to an ice-breaker called *Agree—Disagree—Unsure* where the facilitator reads a series of statements to the group. They then decide whether they agree or disagree with the statement, or if they are unsure about whether they agree or disagree. They then go to stand at a particular spot to indicate to the rest of the group whether they agree, disagree, or are unsure. Once each participant has chosen where they stand, (literally and figuratively!), the facilitator asks participants who are comfortable to do so to explain why they chose the position that they did. This allows for open, non-judgmental group dialogue and for everyone to hear other points of view on a particular issue. The purpose of the ice-breaker was also for the group to start thinking about important issues

around gender, sexuality and safety, to get out of comfort zones, and observe some of the differences and similarities within the group, and to learn from each other.

After a lovely hot lunch that we ate sitting in the sunshine that had finally broken through the clouds, we worked on body maps using the prompt "*What does it mean to be a girl in my community?*". We used body maps to explore with the young people how they think about their bodies, and who they are in relation to their community. Also, how they think about the importance of their safety in the community, and the importance of their thoughts and feelings in their community.

It was amazing for us, as a research team, to see how creative and powerful these young learners were, and the inspiring and important messages they have to share with the world. Their body maps were full of color, pictures, paint, writing and powerful messages of what it means for them to be a girl in their community, and within this they all found new talents within themselves.



Creating the outlines of our bodies for body maps

A few of our participants expressed that they didn't know they could draw or be creative in such a way, and we could see as a team how much pleasure they took in the activity.

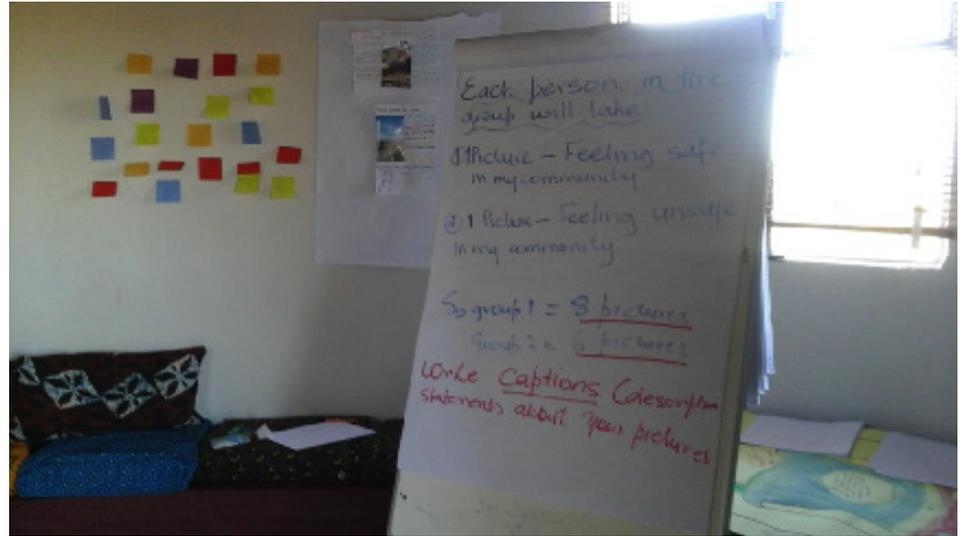
Day Two of the workshop started with a discussion of leadership. As a team, we felt that it is crucial that young people know that there are many different types of leaders and leaderships styles, and that one is not more important than the other, as each style of leader has a role to play in reaching a common goal. We came up with different examples of leaders:

- Nelson Mandela, a great leader at the forefront of the movement for what he believed in, with leaders and supporters who helped him,
- Sofi, founder and head of Isibani
- Each of the young people who are all Peer Educators at their school

We wanted them to know they are all leaders in their community and that one person can make a difference no matter where you come from. From the list of leaders that we came up with, we started to identify some leadership qualities/traits that these people have. From this list, we asked what leadership qualities we think we already have (confidence, empathy, listening, understanding and passion), and which leadership qualities we don't think we have but would like to work on. This session gave us the opportunity to reflect on the fact that we can all be leaders and makers of change. We also reflected on the fact that we don't always need money or a lot of funding to make change, sometimes we can make a meaningful difference if we have passion and dedication.

We spent the rest of the day doing photovoice which is a powerful visual

method involving people taking photographs based on a prompt to identify and represent something about their lives, circumstances and/or communities. We started out with a 'practice run' using the prompt 'feeling brave and strong'. Once the young people were a little more familiar with the equipment and process involved they were each asked to take two photographs; one based on the prompt "What makes you feel safe in your community?", and the other on "What makes you feel unsafe in your community?". Using a portable digital photograph printer called a Selphy, each person's photographs were printed.



Prompts for photovoice

Each young person then stuck each of their photographs onto a piece of paper and wrote a caption beneath the photographs. We then posted their powerful photos on the wall and one by one each of the learners read their descriptions of both photos of feeling unsafe and safe. Some of the themes the youth spoke about involved environmental concerns, safety for girls and young women going out at night, and concerns about alcohol and drug abuse in the community.



Creating captions

The young people came together again as a group after their mini exhibition to come up with a name for their group, and to develop the following curatorial statement for their work:

Changing our Communities: Making Better and Safe Places for Young Women

By Leaders for Young Women's Success,
Khethani, Winterton

This exhibition comes from a photo-voice project conducted as part of the project, Networks for change and well-being: Girl-led 'from the ground up' policy making to address sexual violence in Canada and South Africa. The photos for this exhibition were produced by a group of girls and a boy from a local high school in Khethani, Winterton, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa after a series of workshops from June 29 to July 1, 2016.

The prompt for the photo-voice activity was, "Take pictures of 'feeling safe' in my community and feeling unsafe in my community as young women". The facilitator explained the prompt and gave examples of pictures the group members could take, including spaces, people, etc. She also talked to us about the ethics of photo-voice and of taking pictures, for example, that we may not take pictures of children or of people without their permission.

The photos in the exhibition tell a story of safe and unsafe places in our community. Our school is a safe place because there are teachers there who are like our second parents. Unsafe places, like the 'middle of nowhere' are not good for young women because there are criminals there who are after women and want to hurt them and overpower them.

The last day of the workshop focused on drawing. We asked the *Leaders for Young Women's Success* to draw four pictures, each one answering or responding to one of the following four questions:

1. What are the challenges you face to being safe in your community?
2. What would you change about this?
3. What already exists in your community that can help with this dream of change?
4. How can we put this into action?



Creating a curatorial statement with Professor Lebo

In their drawings the young people drew attention to similar themes to those they addressed in the photovoice activity, including environmental challenges to safety, and alcohol and drug abuse in the community. As researchers we often forget that we cannot conduct proper research on issues we have no idea about, that is why participatory visual methodologies is so important to making real change in real time. It is one thing for us to assume what these girls, learners and young women go through in their own communities, it is another to allow them to express it themselves and for them to be involved in the process of changing their surroundings and policy around girls safety.



Getting creative with drawings

The three-day workshop was busy, and by the end of it all of us were tired—probably the grown-ups more than the young people! We all had a wonderful time and were all sad that it was over. We are all looking forward to working together more in the future and making change!

Report submitted by Rakiya Larkin

'Girls Leading Change' Back from St. Cloud State University

Bongiwe Maome and Takatso Mohlomi on behalf of

Originally printed in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Faculty of Education newsletter, April/May 2016

Thirteen of the young teacher education students participating in *Girls Leading Change*, in their efforts to enrich and empower themselves as well as other young women in their immediate communities and beyond, were afforded an opportunity to travel to St. Cloud State University, Minnesota, USA. We were welcomed in the warmest of ways into the state by the university stakeholders as well as the mayor of St. Cloud!



GLC after their presentation in the 'Women on Wednesdays' series

This trip was a one-of-a-kind experience for us because, not only was it a joyous and fun-filled trip but, it was also a very informative and inspiring one.

“We experienced the manifestation of the Dalai Lama’s words when he says: “When you talk you are only repeating what you already know, but if you listen you may learn something new”. We listened, and learn we did. We learned a lot from the many meetings, workshops and events that we were invited to. It was almost impossible to believe that we, as the ‘normal’ girls from the rural areas of South Africa, were in the USA, being exposed to such a wealth of culture and knowledge as well as sharing ideas with influential and highly recognized people in the States.”

Takatso Mohlomi

Sandisiwe Gaiza
Zethu Jiyana
Melissa Lufele
Lelethu Mlobeli
Asisipho Mntonga
Wandiswa Momoza
Happy Mithethwa
Elethu Ntsethe
Zikhona Tshiwula
Zamahlubi Mabhengu
Thina Kamnqa

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There were so many things that we stood to gain from the student exchange program, such as a new cultural experience, building new relationships as well as gaining a broader perspective on and about issues of gender, women, sexuality, equality, and safety. In addition to that, having been exposed to a different side of the world, we are better equipped and encouraged to reflect on ourselves as young African women in the context of our own country as well as the global community. We got an opportunity to share our own perspectives on issues of sexual violence, education and being young African women through the presentation of our work as the Girls Leading Change, to an international audience who are/were likely to be experiencing, to varying extents, the same issues that we interrogate and discuss in our work.

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Bongiwe Maome

Of the many valuable things that we were introduced to and experienced, the one element of St. Cloud State University that stood for all of us was how the university implements practical and effective ways to accommodate its diverse student population in the structures, policy-making, academic and cultural programs, as well as the day-to-day running of university activities.

The emergency blue poles are all over the campus and readily available to students should they find themselves in a vulnerable and/or compromised situation. The poles are directly connected to the campus public safety office where 24hr staff is available to assist students. In addition to the direct, emergency call option, some of the poles have cameras which are monitored 24hrs a day, ensuring quick response and security. So refreshing!

The campus health facility is a clinic complete with sufficient staff (qualified doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and administrative staff). We were impressed, particularly by how well resourced this facility is; from the electronic check-in system, process of assessing, and treatment, to the pharmaceutical products that students can receive for various conditions and ailments.



A photograph taken after attending Dr. Mwangi's Women's Studies class

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The impressive thing about this class was how it was structured—it was dialogue or discussion-based. This allowed students space and comfort to disclose on a personal level, to present the political using media such as documentaries, and so on. The lecturer is there as a facilitator, not a sole “bearer of all information”. This spoke to the decolonized curriculum of the SCSU.

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Based on the audience turn out alone, it was interesting to see how involved the students and staff of the SCSU were in discussions about critical or core issues. It was a powerful and informative session and even though we were presenting on *Dialogue to address sexual violence at a South African university*, we also learned a lot.

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GLC listening to Dr. Chuck Derry speak about working with other men to reduce sexual violence. The accommodation of activism on gender issues within the university was refreshing and especially impressive to us.



The Women's Center and the Women Studies program piqued our interest because we saw from these that SCSU was making an effort to produce not only academically strong young professionals, but also socially conscious members for the global community by affording its students a space to engage with and gain a deeper understanding of issues that affect them within society—issues such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, culture, and so on. The impact that these have is far-reaching as they use different approaches to drive the content/message across; such as the 'Women on Wednesdays' series that we participated and presented in, resource centers, regular seminars, talks, movie screenings, and meetings, all of which is for, by, and available to the students.

Another, equally important experience, was the school-based learning referred to as 'clinical experience' in the US context. The arrangements to place us in schools were done prior to our leaving for the USA. This was done through the SCSU Office of Clinical Experiences (OCE). We had a meeting with two SCSU colleagues, Fran Umerski from the Office of Clinical Experiences (OCE) and Sheila Lelwica-Lungstrom, St. Cloud Area District Liaison to OCE, SCSU, prior to

the 'clinical experience' in the schools to clarify any uncertainties we still had. We were also given time to explore the route from the residence to the schools (by bus or on foot!) to ensure that we got to the schools on time. We were placed in three schools and were allocated a class according to the phase we were enrolled for at NMMU. The three schools were Talahi Elementary School (which took 4 students), South Secondary School (which took 2 students) and Tech High School (which took 7 students).

We experienced how it feels to be a teacher in the US, and also how it feels to be a learner in the US. The teaching and learning process in the US is quite progressive and inclusive. The public schools in Minnesota have all their learners—regardless of any barriers to learning they might experience—attending the same school. There are no special schools for learners with special needs. Instead, everything is built and practiced in a way to accommodate them all. To give a few examples, all restroom doors had braille writing to accommodate visually impaired people, they had an automatic sensing system to flush most toilets to accommodate physically challenged people. Apart from the infrastructure the schools were inclusive, even in the

teaching and learning process. Every class had about two to three teachers, depending on the number of learners attending. Of these three teachers one would be the main teacher for that particular class and the other two would assist learners with special needs to make sure that they are on track.

We were also astounded by how advanced and informative the US schools were. Learners had access to teaching and learning materials; they all had iPads with their textbooks installed on it, they could do their assignments and homework online, there were resourced libraries, advanced computer labs, and access to school Wi-Fi. The teachers were supportive, organized, motivated, determined, and very welcoming.

This was quite an informative journey and we report back with the hope that other future teachers can learn from our experience and that the university policymakers and stakeholders could learn and implement some of the things we learnt in the US. We thank the international office and the faculty of education at NMMU, as well as the international office and women's center at SCSU, and the project team leaders, for making this opportunity possible!

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This experience helped us to refresh our minds and be ready for the next classes in the long day.

Sam, South Junior High

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Our last day of the Clinical Experience...we had a great day. I learnt a lot and I am overwhelmed by the whole school, their education system, and how the teachers are dedicated in their work. I'm grateful to the Almighty God for the opportunity! It was such a great experience that I will never forget.

Wandiswa Momoza, Facebook post

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A Recap of the International Indigenous Pre-Conference on HIV & AIDS

Women and Girls: Leaders, Activists and Champions in the HIV Response

Kari-Dawn Wuttunee

Tansi, I am thankful to have the platform to write on a part of my experience while attending the International Indigenous Pre-Conference (July 16 & 17, 2016) on HIV/AIDS 2016 (IIPC) in Durban, South Africa. The IIPC is an AIDS affiliated pre-conference that creates a forum for Indigenous Peoples from all over the world to share wise and promising practices, learn from each other, and build relationships across continents, cultures, traditions and languages. This year the IIPC highlighted Indigenous Peoples from Southern Africa to explore Indigeneity in Africa and HIV in their regions and communities. South Africa plays an important role as the host country because it has the biggest and most high profile HIV epidemic in the world, with an estimated 6.19 million people living with HIV.

This year sessions at IIPC were diverse and incredible to witness, for one of the breakout sessions the young women from the *Girls Leading Change* project from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University presented on the topic *Women and Girls: Leaders, Activists and Champions in the HIV Response*. Each of the young women from the project took the opportunity to speak about lived experience moving from rural communities to making the move to the city for school. They sat in a semi-circle with traditional regalia and proudly displaying their *Girls Leading Change* t-shirts - one by one they spoke

about the challenge each one faced, each with a story weaved with struggle and accomplishments. I felt proud to know them, and being able to call them friends, realizing that they have taught me more about resiliency, culture and kindness than I have ever witnessed before. I know that going forward these young women are re-shaping the Indigenous womanhood narrative and breaking through gender norms by challenging stigmas and racism that oppress them everyday. I am grateful for their friendship and excited to be working with this amazing group of young Indigenous South African women.



Keynote Address at the International Indigenous Pre-Conference on HIV & AIDS

Towards Privileging the Voices of Rural Girls and Young Women in AIDS Activism

Relebohile Moletsane, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Today I am reminded of Thabo Mbeki's speech to parliament at the launch of the South African Constitution on May 08, 1996: **I AM AN AFRICAN**.

Those were hopeful days! Today I remember this speech with some level of anxiety (after all, this is an AIDS conference, and the author is Thabo Mbeki). More importantly, though, I remember the speech with a lot of disappointment and sadness. My sadness today is compounded by the noise I hear from scientists who tell us that young African women remain a key population, or if you like, a most-at-risk group as they continue to account for the bulk of new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa generally, and South Africa in particular. Why is this so? How did we get here and why do we continue to get stuck in this situation?

For me, the problem seems obvious: the incessant gender violence and in particular sexual violence that continues to be perpetrated against women in our country and globally. The problem lies squarely in unequal gender norms in families, communities and beyond. It is the recolonisation and marginalisation of indigenous peoples generally and of poor young African women whose bodies are often discussed without their presence (and often without their knowledge and permission) in much of AIDS work and activism today. To illustrate, I will use just three examples to illustrate.

The **first example** is rather personal. I was out grocery shopping with my niece on a beautiful Saturday afternoon recently. My



Presented at the 6th International Indigenous Pre-Conference on HIV and AIDS, Durban

niece was wearing what I thought was a casual dress, a bright African print I had bought her on a visit to Lagos, Nigeria many years ago. Even before he spoke, I could feel the man's eyes on us, and more specifically on my niece as women often do in public spaces in South Africa. Finally, as my niece and I passed him in one of the aisles, with his eyes moving up and down the length of her body, he sneered: "*You look beautiful!*" As we both started to smile politely, he quickly added with some level of emphasis: "*Respectable!*" I inwardly flinched as my niece mumbled something before we both walked away. I spent the next few days trying to understand, explain, and justify in my mind, first, why I did not retaliate and say something, and secondly, the meaning in the man's words. I kept coming back to the painful realization that, he probably meant that, as opposed to 'those' girls and women who are not 'respectable' and therefore, are

'asking for it' (sexual violence) through the clothes they wear, my niece was more "respectable", and could therefore be spared such violence.

I also wondered: Would these views about my niece's dress be universal and held by all men? Could a different man or group of men see the dress as inappropriate or not respectable and as warranting attack? What criteria do men (and some women) use to make these judgements and on what authority do they make them? What in their minds, gives them permission to violently police a young woman's body and tell her what she can or cannot wear? Violent attacks on women based on what they are wearing abound in South Africa. For example, in 2007, a woman was stripped naked and marched down a street of a Durban township and beaten as punishment for wearing pants in defiance of the local 'culture'. According to the

self-appointed guardians of this ‘culture’ (a gang of men, often supported by some women) in public spaces, it is un-African for women (and girls) to wear particular kinds of clothing including pants and what they regard as short dresses. Women have been attacked for wearing dresses that are deemed too short (for example, at a taxi rank in Johannesburg in 2008 and at the university of Zululand in 2014). I can’t help but ask: *When did western clothing become our culture?* Not so long ago, our people, in line with nature and the climate in this part of world, seldom covered their bodies, let alone their children’s bodies. I suppose the anthropologists who studied our lives forgot to document the rampant sexual violence the men must have perpetrated against women and young girls in those days? I don’t think so!

What is even more troubling is that some women seem to have bought into this thinking and have become, as always, the foot soldiers for enforcing compliance, mostly by women and girls, to their ‘cultural’ subordination. In a recent campus dialogue on sexual violence at the Durban University of Technology, during discussion time, it was not the men who expressed the sentiment that women ‘ask for it’ by wearing short dresses or pants, but a woman. What makes women accept and internalize their own oppression? Why have we come to accept the myth that men are incapable of controlling their sexual urges in the face of our bodies and sexualities and that it is our responsibility to protect them by wearing ‘appropriate’ clothing? What kinds of conversations, debates and further dialogue are we not having in communities and institutions to transform this mindset? When will my niece be able to leave her house without first thinking whether she might be told by a random man that she is appropriately or inappropriately dressed, or might be assaulted as a result of what she is wearing?

The **second example** relates to formal or institutional responses to girls and young women’s sexuality. In July 2014, [a storm broke out](#) in South Africa around a group of young students, mostly from poor backgrounds, who had been awarded scholarships by the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government to study pharmacy in India. While many commended the government for providing these opportunities, fierce debate erupted over media reports that the provincial government had announced that the girls and young women in the group would be compelled to take a contraceptive (Implanon) before departing to India. Nothing was said about the boys and men in the group. This medical intervention, according to the government, was to avoid a repeat of what happened to four girls who had been studying in Cuba and were forced to return to South Africa after “falling pregnant”.

More importantly, the governments’ approach to dealing with the young women’s sexuality reflects a larger problem in South Africa. Unplanned pregnancies are largely addressed within a framework that places girls and women at fault. Youth sexuality, particularly young women’s sexuality, often induces moral panic among the public. Consequently, those who “fall pregnant” are stigmatized, whereas the boys or men responsible for pregnancies are let off the hook. The concept, “falling pregnant”, ignores the fact that two people (often) are involved in making a baby. The concept also seems to ignore the participants’ agency in the sexual act that leads to conception.

Significantly, this very gendered perspective informs many of the interventions aimed at addressing unwanted pregnancies among girls and young women. At the heart of the matter though is that without the requisite SRH knowledge, including knowledge of their rights and the resources available to them, girls’ agency is

compromised and they are not adequately prepared for life transitions that often place them in environments, like schools, universities, and our communities that are characterized by unequal gender norms, and gender-based violence, including sexual violence. This leaves young women and girls in particular, vulnerable to negative health outcomes, including not only unwanted pregnancies, but sexually transmitted infections such as HIV and others.

The **third and final example** comes from an incident I initially thought was a media joke: the awarding of what became known as the **maidens’ bursary**. When I first read the various media reports on the issue, I thought to myself, who on earth would give girls bursaries on condition of their virginity? But as the days progressed, social media and newspapers were literally having a social (or cultural) fit! Indeed, the mayor of Uthukela, a small municipality north of Durban, had just launched a university bursary scheme for young women on condition that they get ‘tested’ and prove their virginity before they get the award as well as every time they go home for the university vacations.

To be sure, we all applaud initiatives, including bursary schemes that seek to facilitate girls and young women’s access to education. After all, [research](#) has shown that “educating girls is the best investment in a country’s development... A [report](#) found that investing in [girls’ education and enabling them to complete higher levels of education] contributes to improved lifetime earnings equivalent to up to 68% of annual GDP”. Not only does education empower girls, it also equips them with essential life skills, the ability to participate effectively in society, and helps to build self-confidence which has critical development benefits, including preventing sexual exploitation and reducing HIV and AIDS”. Research also shows that “for every additional year

of education women of reproductive age receive, their children are almost 10% less likely to die”. So I agree with the Mayor, investing in these girls’ education will contribute positively to their own educational and health outcomes.

However, to claim that the girls and young women voluntarily accept these bursaries and the conditions attached to them, ignores their marginalised positions in communities and a society characterized by poverty, gender inequality and gender violence. Obviously, it would be foolish for the girls and young women to refuse any offer of money that promises to pay for further education, and to ultimately take them and their families out of poverty, whatever the conditions attached to it are. To attach the bursary to a condition that links girls’ bodies to financial rewards, however well intentioned, can never be acceptable. Such a condition seems tantamount to enslavement. It infringes on the girls and young women’s constitutional rights, including the right to make decisions about their own bodies. In our gender unequal and violent society, as a practice, virginity testing is one of the mechanisms aimed at policing girls’ and women’s bodies and sexualities. This approach and others in recent years, including the infamous Implanon incident I have discussed in this presentation, reflect a larger problem in South Africa. Interventions targeting sexual and reproductive health challenges facing young people, among them unplanned pregnancies and HIV infections, often place girls and women at fault. In the eyes of the public, girls who ‘fall pregnant’ are seen as immoral and loose and in need of a moral ‘fixing’, whereas the boys or men responsible for the pregnancies are seldom held to account.

Such perspectives ignore contextual realities such as gender inequality and violence against women that characterise the environments in which young people



live. Awarding young women bursaries, while commendable, does not necessarily make them immune to gender inequality and the violence that accompanies it once they access higher education. The recent protest action on a number of university campuses, particularly under the #RURReferenceList illustrate this rates of sexual violence in and around educational institutions, including schools and universities are at epidemic proportions in this country and globally.

While I am weary of reciting the currently trending statistics, I can’t help but go back to what Stephen Lewis wrote in 2004:

In Africa (and to my compatriots, I should add, this does include South Africa), 75% of all those infected, between 15 and 24 years of age, are young women and girls ...the true nightmare intersection of youth and gender...[This is] linked to the **power imbalance** between men and women, [where] matters economic, social, cultural and above all, sexual, doom young

women and girls; the much talked about intergenerational sex; transactional sex; sexual violence; early marriage; and in the context of AIDS, removing girls from school to tend to sick and dying parents; the entire burden of care; the absence of knowledge about transmission.”

So, in the context of the three examples I have outlined in this talk, why is it, in 2016, more than a decade since Stephen Lewis highlighted the plight of African girls and young women, are we still bemoaning the same things? Why, as Indigenous peoples and AIDS activists, have we not done our very best to ensure meaningful participation of young women in our forums? Why have we not worked harder to bring together women, across generations, to dialogue about not only the vulnerability of young women in the context of HIV and AIDS, but also their agency in addressing it? When will their voices be at the forefront of efforts to understand the issues and to identify strategies for addressing their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS?

Training

A key component of *Networks for Change* is training and support of masters and doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, and community scholars. In each issue of the newsletter we offer short bios and descriptions of research of some of the current students (see also Issue 2).

Laurel Hart
Post Doctoral Fellow, McGill University



Laurel Hart is a SSHRC supported Post Doctoral Fellow at McGill University working primarily in two of the IPaSS partnership's Working Groups: Engaging

Policy-Makers, and Communication for Social Action. Laurel brings a specialization in developing collaborative social/mobile communities that exist both online and in-person. Her doctoral dissertation involved developing a women's creative, informal, collaborative learning community, using Apps to collectively engage in photographic and social research of the everyday, and sharing women's voices and creative works within personal, local and academic networks.

Within Networks for Change, Laurel is further developing blended research methods, such as arts-based research, participatory action research, and emergent analysis with ICTs/networking technologies, while investigating their capacities for supporting network and cultural growth, skill development, and empowerment. She is interested in

digital multi-modal communication, the intersection of high and low technologies, and how tech is hacked, appropriated, and re-framed for social justice, creative practice, and for self-efficacy, voice, and wellbeing.

As part of this multi-disciplinary international team, Laurel will contribute to the partnership's digital network development. She is happily available for partnership members: to consult with, to casually discuss project ideas and technologies, for workshops, and other forms of assistance with creative incorporation of technologies or collaborative arts inquiry methods. Laurel is guest-editing a themed issue of *Girlhood Studies* entitled *Technologies of Non-Violence: Re-Imagining Mobile and Social Media Practices in the Lives of Girls and Young Women*.

Robin Notshulwana
PhD Student, NMMU



Girls Here and Boys There:
Arts-Informed Research as Social Change to Facilitate Gender Sensitive Practices with Foundation Phase Pre-Service Teachers

South Africa has made huge strides in policy making to promote gender equitable practices in schools and society. However, despite the policies, most South African schools still engage in gendered practices that perpetuate inequality and gender-based violence. A recent Gender Links study (2014) stated that the "main cause of sexual harassment and violence in schools is that traditional gender stereotypes and unequal power relationships within the broader society become reproduced within schools rather than challenged" (p. 98). Many FP pre-service teachers believe that they treat girls and boys equally and sometimes explain away children's behaviour based on the child's sex—a narrow and normalised understanding.

Schools can and should be a place that disrupt the socially constructed ideologies of gender, femininity and masculinity.

The study seeks to explore how an arts-informed research might facilitate awareness and agency in FP pre-service teachers to develop a gender sensitive practice. This study aims to contribute to the theory in the field of FP teacher education and particularly with regards to gender. Further, there is potential to contribute to improving practice by emphasizing pedagogies that value student voice and engage students critically with the aim to transform their practice, which can indirectly contribute to gender equality and also the addressing of gender based violence.

Pamela Lamb
PhD Student, McGill University



**Storytelling as Capacity Building:
Narrating Data on Gender-Based
Violence and HIV**

The 2016 UNAIDS Gap Report shows that the disproportionate HIV burden among young women in Sub-Saharan Africa has not improved since 2014. In Canada there are communities where the prevalence of HIV among Indigenous women is as high as in sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, gender-based violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada is close to triple that of non-Indigenous women (Statistics Canada 2016). Moreover, statistical evidence is limited by under-reporting as well as by interpretation and definitional challenges. South Africa – a country with widespread gender-based violence and the largest HIV epidemic in the world – is leading the movement of HIV prevention efforts beyond science and health services to investing in community and societal level transformation. What can we in Canada learn from South Africa in relation to prevalence and prevention? There is reduced funding for AIDS research globally, while the

cost of medicines, technologies and care remains exorbitantly high. Studies show that the societal level transformation from investing in community education not only reduces the incidence of HIV but also reduces gender-based violence.

This doctoral research takes a two-pronged approach to investigating the disparate rates of gender-based violence and HIV incidence among Indigenous women in Canada through:

1. A comparative analysis of HIV and gender-based violence prevention strategies between South Africa and Canada, and
2. A community-based action research project with the Native Women's Shelter in Montreal, using arts-based methodologies to supplement the statistical evidence with narrative inquiry into the lived experiences of Indigenous young women.

Ashley DeMartini
PhD Candidate, McGill University



**'We are Storied Creatures': A
Participatory Visual and Digital Inquiry
into Pre-Service Teachers' Relationship
with Land on Turtle Island (Canada)**

In the undergraduate classroom, Ashley has asked her students to explore their relationship with land through participatory media-making. Her experiences and observations in the post-secondary classroom have helped to formulate her doctoral research, which considers the constellation of meanings, modes and how they come together to tell a story of one's relationship with land through participatory media-making. As a non-Indigenous educator/researcher developing decolonizing teaching practices informed by Indigenous Knowledge, Ashley's research with preservice teachers looks closely at the symbiosis between storytelling, critical land literacy, and reflexivity as a means to encourage participants to challenge any colonial-capitalist narratives that may arise in their stories. In so doing, she hopes this project is one way to shift the taken-for-granted understandings of place

and space that prevails in mainstream Canadian society. Much of Ashley's own personal learning and reflection owes itself to her ongoing conversations with several of her doctoral colleagues and their work, such as Rosalind Hampton, Sandra Deer, and Jennifer Thompson. Ashley's doctoral work is a project of developing a critical consciousness with land amongst preservice teachers who will make a career within one of Canada's most classic settler-colonial institutions—the education system. Arguably, contemporary mainstream discussions around "reconciliation" lack any serious consideration of land, and yet, this way of discussing the reconciliation process has been taken up quite liberally in many post-secondary institutions across Canada. Aware of the socio-political context that her work takes place within, Ashley takes a critical stance towards the process of reconciliation, positioning land as a driving force within her analysis.

Ndumiso Daluxolo Ngidi
PhD Candidate, UKZN



**Picturing Orphans' Vulnerability:
Using Participatory Visual Methods as
Transformative Pedagogies to Address
Sexual Violence among Orphans Attending a
Township Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal**

'Picturing Orphans' Vulnerability' seeks to use participatory visual methods—such as photo-voice, participatory video, roleplay and film—to explore the extent and ways in which the use of visual participatory methodologies can engage learners who are identified as orphans in a township secondary school in exploring their experiences of sexual violence and their agency in addressing sexual violence.

The study's objectives are:

1. To explore how a group of orphaned learners attending a township secondary school identify, understand and speak about their own vulnerability to sexual violence.
2. To investigate the tools and strategies these learners use to exercise their agency and resilience against sexual violence in and around the school; and
3. To examine the use of visual participatory methods in addressing sexual violence among learners identified as orphans in a township secondary school.

The study site will be located in the INK (Inanda, Ntuzuma, Kwamashu) area. These are three townships built by the apartheid government, located north of Durban and share socioeconomic activities such as shopping centers, health facilities, educational facilities and recreational areas. The research will take place in a township government secondary school in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province of South Africa. The school is an all-African quintile 1 township school located in an environment mostly made up of informal housing and low-cost housing built by the then apartheid government, as well as post-apartheid Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing comprising small two- and three- roomed houses. As a quintile 1 institution, the school is a 'no-fee school' and relies largely on government subsidies and donations. As a result the school is characterised by poor infrastructure, which bears testimony to the socio-economic demography of the learners it attracts.

Lukas Labacher
PhD Candidate, McGill University



**What Role can Digital Technologies Play as
Persuasive Messages in Preventing Sexual
Violence Against Girls and Women in Public
Spaces (Trains, Buses, Metros)?**

The rate of sexual assaults experienced by public transit riders here in Montreal has almost doubled in the last couple of years (Greig, Sept, 2015), and the threat of violence against girls and women continues to be a problem in other public transportation systems around the world (Gekoski et al., 2015). Researchers have recently explored the role that mobile phone apps and crowd-sourcing websites can have on calling the public's attention to places where sexual violence has occurred (Hart & Mitchell, 2015), but what about using these technologies of nonviolence (Bock, 2012) to influence strangers standing in public spaces, where there is an immediate opportunity to intervene, to interrupt violence before it occurs?

This research explores theories explaining the Bystander Effect (Latané & Darley, 1970) and Diffusion of Responsibility (Darley & Latané, 1968) to better understand how to influence strangers to help others, Mass Interpersonal Persuasion models (Fogg, 2008) for designing persuasive messages, and participant-led visual arts-based research methodologies for policy change (De Lange, Mitchell, & Moletsane, 2015) to create and evaluate social marketing campaigns that could be used in buses, trains, and metros here in Montreal.

Haidee Smith Lefebvre
PhD Student, McGill University



**Visual Representations of
an Indigenous Girlhood**

Many Indigenous women artists create paintings that represent directly or indirectly girlhood. In contrast, popular images draw upon limited conceptual tools such as the Indian princess as the exotic other. This stereotype, among others, contributes to Canadian's historical and on-going ignorance about the experiences of Indigenous girls and young women living on lands and waters claimed by Canada. In 1892, Tekahionwake (Pauline Johnson) described Indigenous girls as distinct, unique and natural, recognizable by their tribal characteristics and distinctions. Over a century later, Nancy Marie Mithlo asserted that the markers family, land, and memory connote a sovereign, bounded and discrete

identity for some Indigenous women artists. My doctoral inquiry addresses the question: How are the artists' representations of girlhood in conversation with these descriptions and marker? Further, drawing upon aspects of autoethnography, I ask: How can this methodology inform a conversation regarding Canada's renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous people? By compiling a visual vocabulary that represents possible ways Indigenous women artists infuse girlhood with sovereign identities, I engage with the process of identifying as a Treaty person—a process that has the potential to rectify some of Canada's ignorance about Indigenous girlhood.

Nokuthula Magudulela
Masters Student
Durban University of Technology



**Tackling Gender Violence on a
South African University Campus:
An Action Research Project**

The research focus is on sexual violence at a South African university. The aims of the study are two-fold: to review perceptions of female students on the nature, and the extent, of sexual violence at Durban University of Technology.

The study will explore how female students are directly affected by sexual violence within the confines of the campus and its residences. The research will examine the constructs of fear of sexual assault by female students in an environment that is largely regarded as 'safe', where debates around this topic are sporadic, and in a context where literature suggests high prevalence of sexual violence. The second aim of the study is to break the pervasive

silence around the phenomenon of sexual violence and create a space for campus community to dialogue in attempt to find preventative interventions to sexual violence. A group of twelve female students are part of the advisory group as *Girls Leading Change* (GLC) that will be capacitated with leadership skills to tackle gender based violence.

This is an action research study that involves narratives, dialogues, participatory methodologies, and use of innovative multimedia technologies to educate, raise awareness and bring about transformation in the manner in which gender violence is handled on campus.

Marianne Adam
Masters Student, NMMU



Secondary School Girls Addressing Gender-Based Violence through Dialogue in their Rural School

Against the background of continued and increasing violence and in the context of gender inequality that young girls and women face in society, the focus of this research is on gender-based violence in school. The participation of and engagement with young girls is therefore important and is being explored, providing a space for young girls to say how gender-based violence personally affects them and what should be done to address it. This in itself intends to serve as an intervention, enabling dialogue in the school and the community.

The study is taking place in Paterson (a rural town outside Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, South Africa). As the focus of this research is to explore how young girls—a disregarded group—can inform dialogue and programmes related to their own safety and security at school, I am using visual participatory methodology which I believe is an appropriate methodology for this work.

The methods of generating data includes the making of cellphilms, policy posters, and action briefs. These will be complemented by focus group discussions. Having worked with 6 girls in grade 9 for a while, usually after school, I decided to invite them to the university during the school holidays. We spent 5 days talking about and making cellphilms. So far we have made several cellphilms, entitled:

- *Old man using young girl for sex*
- *Just one more drink—nothing 4 mahala*
- *Stop taking sides*
- *Discussion on rape*
- *Being forced to have sex with someone*
- *Eksé*
- *Don't take girls for granted*
- *Respect girls and*
- *My stuff, my privacy.*

The girls pointed out that this was a fun way of tackling a challenging issue.



Girls viewing one of their cellphilms

International Aboriginal Youth Internship Report

My Journey: Growth, Knowledge and Solidarity

Rakiya Larkin

Hello friends, colleagues and allies, my name is Rakiya Larkin and I am a 23-year-old daughter, sister and granddaughter. I have been involved in youth activism since I was 8 years old, focussing on issues affecting indigenous peoples in Canada, especially HIV&AIDS. I currently live in British Columbia, Canada with my brother, my dad and my mother, Kecia Larkin. I have followed in my mother's footsteps in terms of educating those everywhere about HIV&AIDS. Kecia Larkin was the first Aboriginal woman in Canada to publicly disclose her HIV status 27 years ago. She is a warrior, a mother, a teacher, an activist, and a fighter, and I owe who I am and where I am today to her.

I have been involved in a number of different provincial, national and international organizations and institutions, such as The University of Victoria, Red Road HIV/AIDS Network, The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, Girls Action Foundation, The Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN), the Interagency Coalition on AIDS Development (ICAD), McGill University, and University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in South Africa, to name a few.

I was recently accepted to be apart of an [Aboriginal Youth Internship Program](#) for 5 months (March to August, 2016), at UKZN in Durban, South Africa. I will be working with the *Networks for change and well-being: Girl-led 'from the ground up' policy making to address sexual violence in Canada and South Africa* project. The internship project is a partnership that involves NYSHYN, McGill University, ICAD, and UKZN.



While the role that I was assigned on the project was called documentation and research assistant, I have been involved in all aspects of the *Networks for Change* project. I have been involved in developing programmes for, participating in, and facilitating various workshops, seminars and meetings, such as the Community Engagement Workshop in May, and our 3-day Workshop in the field with our young participants that took place between June 29 and July 1. I have taken a lead role in multi-media development for the project, creating blog posts for the website of the Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change (CVMSC) at UKZN, developing a Facebook page for *Networks for Change*, and developing a twitter handle for the project.

I have also developed a notice board on Campus on which I post news items and information on gender-based violence (GBV) and HIV&AIDS. I assisted with the planning and co-ordination of the

Networks for Change project meeting that was held on the 14th and 15th of July. During this meeting I facilitated the development of a youth council with the *Girls Leading Change* from NMMU, representatives from the National Indigenous Young Women's Council (NIYWC), and young women from two of our research sites. The Council is called *Girls Leading Change Youth Council* (GLCYC).

In our work with young people in rural KwaZulu-Natal, we have used various visual participatory methods within the project such as; drawing, body mapping, and photo voice during our workshops. During these workshops and throughout these past 4 months I have met remarkable young leaders, with great courage and resiliency, and who have such a strong voice with the generosity of sharing their amazing stories.

In addition to the work that I have done as part of the *Networks for Change* project, I have also been involved in another project which aims to recruit and train recent graduates to design and deliver a sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programme to learners in under-resourced high schools in townships and rural areas. I contributed to the development of the training curriculum for the recent graduates, and facilitated sessions during the week-long training. I have continued to provide support to the recent graduates as they have developed the SRHR curriculum to be delivered to learners, particularly in terms of facilitation skills, and working with youth.

In the time that I have been here I have also made the following presentations:

- *Who am I and Where do I belong?* Race and Identity Seminar at the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity, UKZN
- Agenda Feminist Media, Feminist Dialogue: *Foregrounding the Voices of Girls and Young Women in AIDS Activism*
- *Grassroots Experiences in HIV Advocacy and Healing* at the 6th International Indigenous Pre-Conference on HIV&AIDS
- I sat on the Youth Panel on youth leadership in the HIV and AIDS movement at the 6th International Indigenous Pre-Conference on HIV and AIDS

I also served as a volunteer supervisor at the International AIDS Conference which took place in Durban between July 18-22.

Since this journey began on March 17th, 2016, I have developed so many different emotions and feelings, from

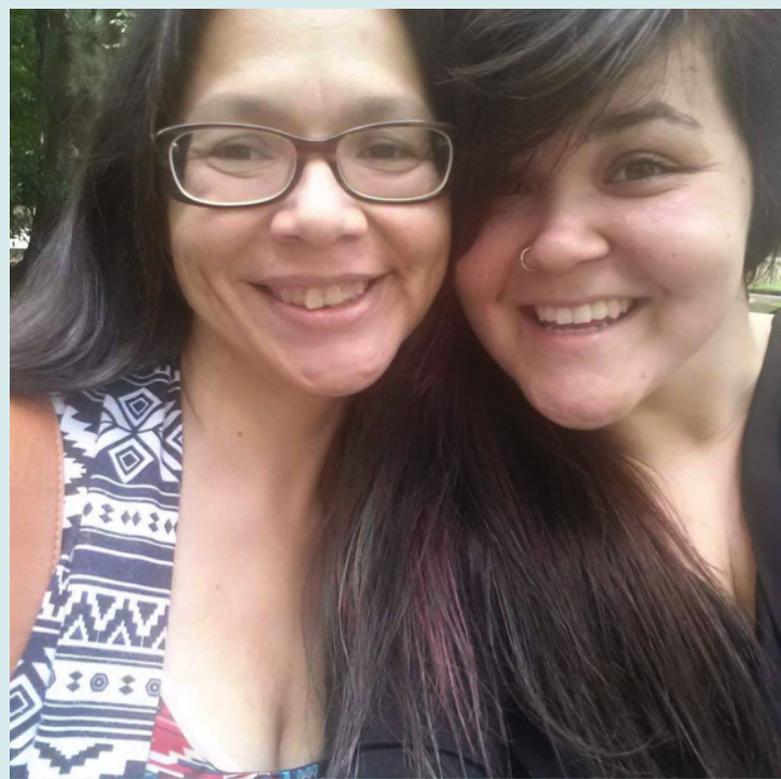
sadness, to excitement, to a new sense of independence and extreme joy. This experience has had its challenges being so far away from my family and my home, but I know that I was chosen for a reason and I am meant to be here. I know that my path in life has lead me to this moment, with my ancestors behind me and the support of my friends and loved ones I cannot fail, I only fail if I do not try.

I have grown so much in my own personal development; I have learned so much about whom I am and my capabilities. I gained experience and have made connections I will cherish for the rest of my life. South Africa has given me a greater sense of purpose and passion. Seeing the struggles and sheer resilience of this country and its people have really opened my eyes, and heart to what we can do with a little bit of “never-back-down” attitude and passion. We as North Americans, can learn so much from this beautiful and strong country. We always have this idea that we need to save

Africa! Well, I am telling you, we need to change this way of thinking if we ever want to move forward in a good way and build true solidarity as Indigenous people and allies all over the world.

I look forward to coming back to my second home, and to all the friends and connections I have made here. I will miss it dearly. I want to take this opportunity to thank Lisa Wiebesiek and Professor Relebohile Moletsane for being there for me, believing in me and supporting me throughout this whole process. Without you two and the wonderful team we have created this experience would not be the same and I couldn't have done it without you both. Thank you to the *Networks for Change* project and the team behind it for creating this opportunity for girls and young women to be able to address sexual violence within their communities and to bring this issue to the forefront.

Gilakasla



Rakiya (R) and her mom, Kecia

14 Times a Woman: Indigenous Stories from the Heart

Lelethu Mlobeli



The book is made up of 14 autobiographical pieces of young South African aboriginal women from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU).

All women have stories to tell. Our collective story begins when three professors from three universities started working on a project entitled, *Digital media for change and well-being: Girl-led from the ground up policy-making in addressing sexual violence at a South African university* with a group of young black South African first-year women university students from rural areas who are all studying towards being teachers. The initiative (pilot project) was part of a larger project, *Networks for change and well-being: Girl-led 'from the ground up' policy-making in addressing sexual violence in Canada and South Africa*.

An email was sent to all the first year education women students at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University who were from rural areas and were interested in such a project. The thirteen of us sent back the email saying we were interested. We met with a senior student, Zethu Jiyana, who helped us in meeting up with professor Naydene de Lange and meeting together as the 14 girls.

As part of the pilot project, we came together regularly from first year to explore issues related to sexual violence especially on the campus (NMMU) itself. We made

cellphims and produced pictures about different situations faced by young women around the campus and on residences. We took action by making posters and action briefs in which we presented to policy makers on campus. We also had an opportunity to participate in a feminist dialogue somewhere in the country.

The stories we told, cellphims we made, and pictures we produced were about what we see as sexual violence from where we come from (rural areas) and here in the university. What stood out for me in all these stories and pictures we produced in the meetings we had with policy makers and student leaders around campus was the fact that we tend to 'normalise' sexual violence. I related to this a lot. This also opened a space for me to learn what exactly constitutes sexual violence.

During the meetings/workshop (pilot project) we also covered a range of topics such as sexual violence, teenage pregnancy, bullying at school, poverty and many other social justice issues. I have learned more about the broad definition of what constitutes sexual violence during different workshops, meetings, and panel presentations that we had with different people from around South Africa and also in the United States during a recent trip to St. Cloud State University.

For the writing of the book, we met in a conference room which is close to the one we regularly had me in, to engage in various projects. It was emphasized that everyone has a story. We were taught on what a life story is.

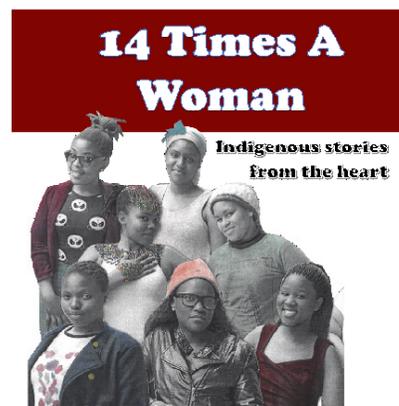
We then looked at other people stories, which helped us in seeing how other people have written their autobiographical stories. We went through a lot of autobiographical stories.

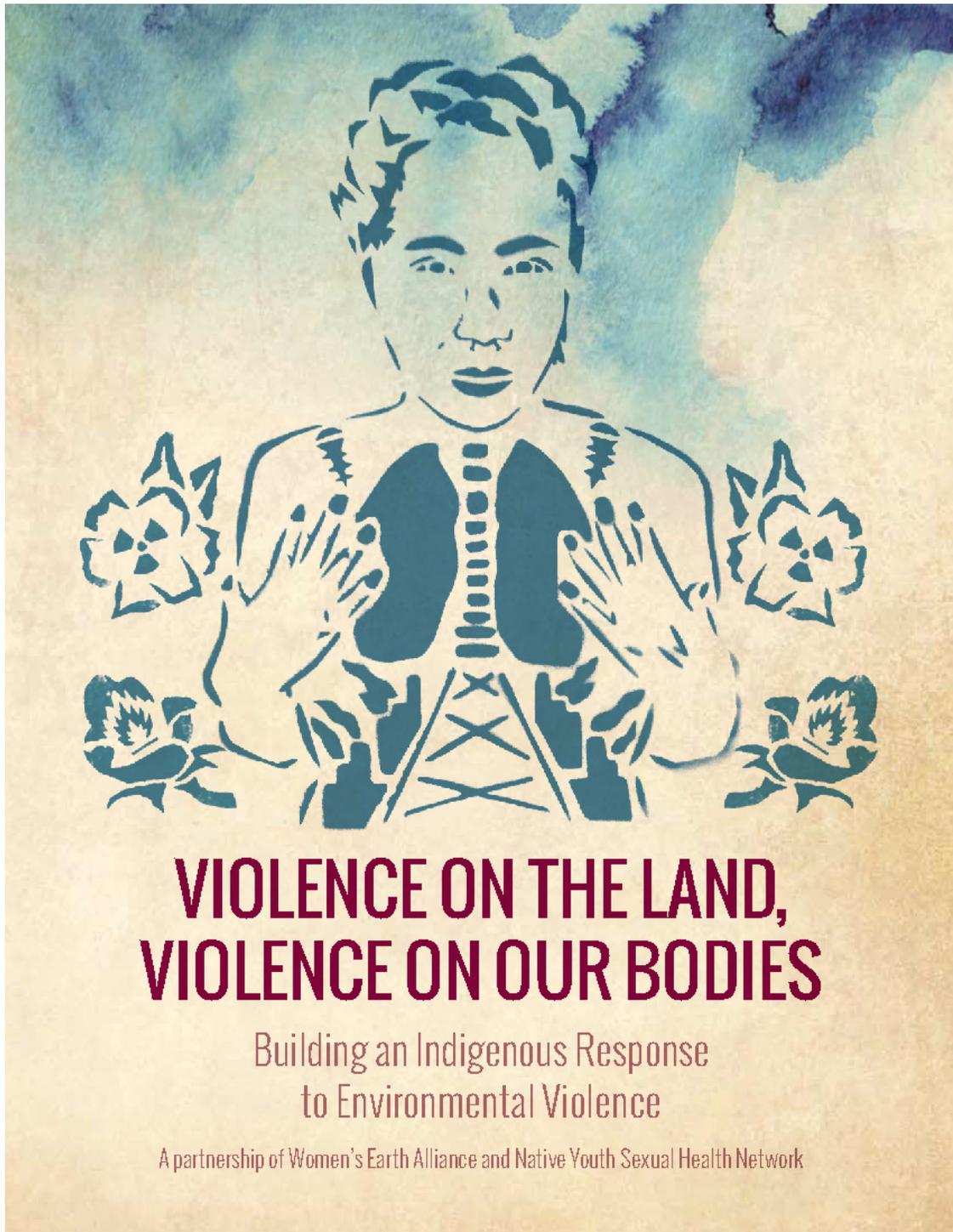
We were then each given a document with a timeline and told to write about the important events and experiences that have contributed to our lives in becoming who we are today.

We were each asked to write a brief piece capturing our biographical information. Our biography was to be no more than 500 words. We read our pieces to the whole group and comments were made. This helped us reflect on our stories and revise them. We were then asked to write about further moments and read them to the group. We then wrote one story each with these two pieces and created a title.

Wanting to combine our stories and make them one book for publication, we came up with different titles of the book on which we chose one that we thought best fits and describes the book; *14 Times a Woman: Indigenous Stories from the Heart*.

The book is basically about autobiographical pieces that enabled 14 young women to reflect on the experiences which made us into who we are today.





[Violence on the Land, Violence on our Bodies](#) is an initiative of the Native Youth Sexual Health Network. NYSHN recently released a community-based report and toolkit for action that exposes the devastating impacts that extractive industries have on the sexual and reproductive health of Indigenous women, Two Spirit people, and youth. Some of these impacts include: increased rates of sexual violence in areas of resource development, increased reproductive cancers, miscarriages, etc. This initiative seeks to name, push back on and reduce the harms of environmental violence as a form of colonial gender based violence. It names colonialism, environmental destruction and capitalism as harms impacting the bodies of Indigenous peoples and rallies voices of Indigenous women, Two Spirit people, and youth who are actively resisting these harms. In addition to the testimonies of resistance, there are also strategies and tools for healing, transforming and building consent culture for both our bodies and lands.

The community report/toolkit is available at: www.landbodydefense.org

Announcing: Special Issue on Indigenous Girlhood

Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal (9:2)

Recognizing the need for decolonizing perspectives and approaches, the guest editors of this Special Issue, Kirstsen Lindquist, Kari-Dawn Wuttunee and Sarah Flicker, offer a boundary breaking collection. Alongside the fact that it is one of the first ever collections on Indigenous girlhoods, the Special Section is unique in several other ways. First of all, it is guest edited by an editorial team that includes two Indigenous young women, Kirsten and Kari-Dawn, both members of the National Indigenous Young Women's Council (NIYWC), and as such, draws on the strength of an organization of Indigenous young women. It also highlights the significance of community alliances as represented by the contributions of Sarah who has been working with Indigenous young people in Canada for more than a decade. The collection includes submissions on Indigenous girlhoods in Canada, South Africa and Mexico, acknowledging solidarity amongst Indigenous peoples globally, as recognized for example in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Finally, it is boundary breaking in that it brings together different genres of writing and other creative productions—personal essays and reviews, poetry and visual art—and in so doing, supports the idea in both theory and practice of decolonizing knowledge.

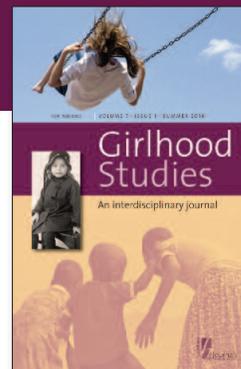
Girlhood Studies AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Claudia Mitchell, McGill University
MANAGING EDITOR: Ann Smith, McGill University

Girlhood Studies is a peer-reviewed journal providing a forum for the critical discussion of girlhood from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, and for the dissemination of current research and reflections on girls' lives to a broad audience of scholars, researchers, practitioners in the fields of education, social service and health care and policy makers.

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SPEAKING OUR TRUTHS, BUILDING OUR STRENGTHS: SHAPING INDIGENOUS GIRLHOOD STUDIES

EDITED BY: KIRSTEN LINDQUIST, KARI-DAWN WUTTUNEE, AND SARAH FLICKER
(Vol. 9, Issue 2, 2016)

EDITORIAL

Breaking Boundaries in Girlhood Studies
CLAUDIA MITCHELL

INTRODUCTION

Speaking Our Truths, Building Our Strengths: Shaping Indigenous Girlhood Studies
KIRSTEN LINDQUIST, KARI-DAWN WUTTUNEE, AND SARAH FLICKER

ARTICLES

Overlapping Time and Place: Early Modern England's Girlhood Discourse and Indigenous Girlhood in the Dominion of Canada (1684-1860)
HAIDEE SMITH LEFEBVRE

Understanding the Role of Cultural Continuity in Reclaiming the Identity of Young Indigenous Women
BRIGETTE KRIEG

Red Intersectionality and Violence-informed Witnessing Praxis with Indigenous Girls
NATALIE CLARK

Indigenous Girls in Rural Mexico: A Success Story?
MERCEDES GONZÁLEZ DE LA ROCHA AND AGUSTIN ESCOBAR LATAPI

PERSONAL PIECES

'Hey, Can I Call You Quick?' Navigating the Academic Swells as Young Indigenous Women
RENÉE MONCHALIN AND LISA MONCHALIN

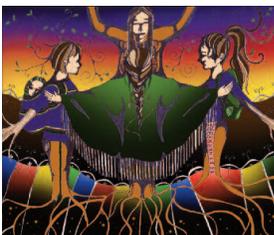
Sexy Health Carnival: One Small Part of Indigenous Herstory
ALEXA LESPERANCE

Mipit
AMANDA BUFFALO

REVIEWS

Sexual Politics and Cultural Oppression
JASMYN GALLEY

Their Journey to Triumphant Activism: 14 Young Women Speak Out
NOKUKHANYA NGCOBO



The National Indigenous Young Women's Council (NIYWC) is a self-governed council of Indigenous young women under 30 years of age. It includes those who identify as Trans, Two-Spirit, and/or gender non-conforming. The Council works to provide leadership opportunities, community actions, mobilization, skills training and capacity building. With the support of the Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN) the Council also develops spaces for celebration, reclamation and cultural resurgence with a vision for future generations.

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2016 National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference: Decoloniality



Border Crossings in Girlhood Studies: A Case for Transnational Feminist Dialogues [Roundtable]

Claudia Mitchell (McGill University), Ann Smith (McGill University)
Relebohile Moletsane (University of KwaZulu-Natal), Marnina Gonick (Mount St. Vincent University)

Drawing on experiences in editing *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, the only journal that focuses exclusively on girlhoods, and *Agenda*, a South African-based journal which seeks to situate African feminisms (including feminisms related to girls' lives), this roundtable interrogates borders that cut across age and intergenerationality, race and sexualities, and geographies (both Global North and Global South).

Canadian Media: Politics, Representations, Contestations, and Policy

Postcolonial Perspectives on YouTube Communities & Girls' Video Production: Changing Landscapes with Mobile Phones

Negin Dahya
(University of Washington)

Unsettling the Colonial Lens: Fostering Solidarity between Indigenous Peoples and Ethno-cultural Minority Settlers

April Bella Lilas Carrière
(University of Ottawa)

Visual Images of Indigenous Girlhood: Family, Land and Memory

Haidee Lefebvre Smith
(McGill University)

Resurgent Imaginaries: Girls Studies Under the Settler Transcarceral Continuum

School Inscriptions of White Settler Colonialism On Young Women's Bodies

Patricia Krueger-Henney
(University of Massachusetts, Boston)

Intimate Resurgence: Witnessing with Indigenous Girls from the Personal to the Indigisphere and Beyond

Natalie Clark (University of British Columbia)
Sandrina de Finney (University of Victoria)

Debunking Metaphors of Decolonization: Living Solidarity in Meaningful and Respectful Ways

Manjeet Birk
(University of British Columbia)

Decoloniality and Artistic Practice: Indigenous Women and Resistant Imaginaries

Girl-Hed 'From the Ground Up' Policy Making: Arts-based Methods in Decolonizing Knowledge about Sexual Violence

Claudia Mitchell (McGill University)
Relebohile Moletsane (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Voices in Longitude and Latitude: Decolonizing the Screen and Research Methodologies

Marnina Gonick
(Mount St. Vincent University)

Decoloniality, Arts-based Methodologies, Indigenous Women and Violence

Catherine Lynn Richardson
(Université de Montreal)

Insurgent Visualities: Indigenous Film and the Unmaking of Colonial Celebratory Culture

Janice Hladki
(McMaster University)

