Tikkun Beyond Borders

Connecting Youth Voices, Leading Change

THE

tikkun

YOUTH PROJECT

Tikkun Beyond Borders

Connecting Youth Voices, Leading Change

YVETTE DANIEL (ED.)

The University of Windsor sits on the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, comprised of the Ojibwa, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi.

Dedication to Aphiwe Tomose

It is very difficult remembering Aphiwe without a wave of sadness. It has been six months, but many still feel disbelief that he is not a phone call away or just around the corner. Aphiwe Tomose was killed in the early hours of 2 December 2018. Due to a lack of faith in the police service a case was not opened, while this means that a perpetrator will not be brought to justice, broader issues of history, structural violence and poverty are as much a cause of his death as the person who pulled the trigger ending his life. In the community in which he lived, and

his family still lives, the nature of his death is all too familiar. Too many young men are impacted upon by crime and violence some as victims, some as perpetrators, it is difficult to navigate a path without this touching your life in some way.

The violence of Aphiwe's death, however, does not overshadow his vibrance, creativity, intelligence and warmth, the largeness of his 20 years of life. Aphiwe was a committed activist, friend and student of life. His creativity was expressed through film making – as a [student](#) his flim [Bom'Bam Ndifundise](#) (isiXhosa for My life educate me!), captured the complexities of a young man growing up and trying to access an education in Khayelitsha – through music as a DJ as well as through fine art, he was recently accepted into a WITS Fine Arts degree.

Aphiwe's activist identity and vision of society grew out of study, one of his favourite books was I write what I like by Steve Biko, as well as participation in struggle. He believed in the power of young people to bring about change in our unjust society and once wrote that through learning from peers he came to realise that there is so much you can do in your community. To him community didn't only mean the geographic areas we live in, but also collective spaces and individuals coming together across their differences. This belief grew further through his work at Equal Education and later his involvement in the TIKKUN project and was also expressed in his involvement in [Kino Kadre](#) and the [Popular Education Project](#). He once wrote: If I could change one thing in the world it would be oppressive consciousness. Working with his fellow youth and a desire to bring about social change were close to his heart.

In sharing her thoughts about Aphiwe's life his sister, Zintle, reflected that he had so many ideas and unfinished work. He felt passionate about the dire state of public transport in Cape Town (in particular the disarray of the state-owned rail service Metrorail), how the continued geographic segregation of Cape Town impacts on people's lives, how unsafe it is to walk in Khayelitsha at night, violence against women and the lack of hope experienced by so many youth.

Aphiwe demonstrated leadership, passion for social change, courage to strive for social justice and a contagious zest for life. His life will continue to inspire, connect and remind us that we all have a part to play in bringing about a just and loving world.

Hamba Kahle Aphiwe!

Contents

Acknowledgements

YVETTE DANIEL

Every product is a collaborative effort from many individuals. My trepidation in writing up this acknowledgements section was that I might fail to mention all the dedicated individuals involved in the project and this book. Our Tikkun project focused on healing and reconciliation in communities and was a work of labour, love and commitment on the part of all participants at each of the five sites. Without their dedication we would not have been able to bring this project to fruition. We went through many stages; some where the execution of tasks per the prescribed timelines progressed well, and also stages where the project's trajectory deviated from the planned steps outlined in the grant proposal. These issues led to angst and frustration, but also served as learning opportunities. These experiences allowed everyone to identify and understand that the process was different as each site based on their unique challenges and lived experiences. Nonetheless, the project was completed successfully at each site resulting in the final and culminating symposium where youth researchers and participants, university researchers and community organizers gathered in Windsor for a week of fun, sharing, reflecting, disseminating information and findings, learning with and from each other; and more importantly forging bonds that went beyond the project and symposium. In a congratulatory email message that Dr. Katherine Quinsey (Acting Dean, Faculty of Education) sent to the university she noted, "... they [the youth] have been together in the work of creating world healing and reconciliation through various forms of research and expression both within their communities and as a community."

As the Principal Investigator/Project Director, I still vividly recall the sense of joy and accomplishment I felt on the morning of April 3, 2017 when we welcomed everyone and met some of our partners in person for the very first time. In the various chapters in this book you will read more about the project and the youth symposium, and also the diversity of perspectives on display.

With specific attention to this edited book, I would like to thank all our contributors for their commitment in bringing their chapters to their final drafts. As expected with any publishing project, this edited book has been a long and laborious two-year journey; but it has been worth the effort

A brief audio-visual overview of the highlights of the project and the youth symposium

The video link below provides a brief audio-visual overview of the highlights of the project and the youth symposium:

https://ctl2.uwindsor.ca/uview/show/8789AA4EA939AE5/

We take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to Chris, Jhoan, and Michael who stepped in and worked diligently with a sincere commitment to creating this video. This work was created to showcase the true essence of this project and the hard work of youth civic engagement at all our partnering sites.

University of Windsor's Public Affairs and Communications Media Production Team:

- Christos Kolonelos, Acting Assistant Producer
- Michael Wilkins, Operations Technician
- Jhoan Baluyot, Manager of Production and Communications

Tikkun Beyond Borders: An Introduction

YVETTE DANIEL

> "We are an adaptable species and this adaptability has enabled us to survive. However, adaptability can also constitute a threat; we may become habituated to certain dangers and fail to recognize them until it's too late" (Hitchens, 2001, p. 51).

One of our youth researchers observed that while he had been actively engaging in civic life through volunteering in local organizations, he encountered many obstacles. He stated that the various organizations (with all good intent) where he volunteered were basically carrying out the status quo. Mostly, they wanted him to comply. This observation exemplified several comments in the same vein that permeated our formal and informal discussions with young people engaged in civic life in their local communities. However, the young people in our project at the various sites refused to become "habituated/complacent" with current conditions. They questioned the "familiar" in their communities with the hope for healing and reconciliation in their community engagement and action for social justice. As such, they attempted to dislodge representations that failed to capture youth power and potential to show spaces where youth could play important roles as organizers and leaders.

When Pope Francis visited Myanmar on November 28, 2017, he stated that reconciliation began with a respect for human rights. In a video message sent to Myanmar prior to his visit, the Pope said he aimed to spread the message of "reconciliation, forgiveness, and peace" (Vatican News, 2017). Repair, healing, and reconciliation as the path to social justice are the key concepts that forged our Tikkun Youth Project and the culminating Tikkun Youth Symposium that I introduce in this opening introductory chapter. It serves as a gateway to the variety of interesting and engaging chapters that are eclectic in style and substance to illuminate the different activities of this project.

The Meaning of Tikkun in an Inclusive Broad Sense of Social Justice[1]

We apply the concept of Tikkun to the non-sectarian aim of working for social justice through human action for healing, repair, and reconciliation. The concept of *Tikkun* has wider social non-denominational appeal and indicates actions directed at repairing the harm/injustices in this world. Sacks (2005) was instrumental in promoting the concept of *Tikkun Olam* as a liberal movement for social justice causes. In the original text, the precise term is *Tikkun HaOlam* which means "repairing the world" using the definite article "ha" (Rosenthal, 2005). The source of this concept is in important Jewish religious texts such as the Talmud, Midrash, and Mishnah, and in prayers where this term/phrase appears numerous times (Rosenthal, 2005). In its earlier usage, the term denoted legal application for repairing harm. With the advent of Jewish mysticism, however, the meaning and use of this term shifted from legal/judicial processes (outlined by sages and judges) to cosmic importance and to the role of human deeds in repairing "the flaws in the universe" (Rosenthal, 2005, p. 225).

For the purpose of our partnership development project, we underscored the philosophical principles of repair and healing that were relevant to the contexts of the different partnering sites. Through initial sharing of ideas and issues among partners, we found ways to coalesce around these principles that served as the inspiration for all researchers, youth activists, and community organizations. Despite the geo-political, cultural, historical, economic, and social differences among participants at these far-flung sites in our partnership, we were able to collaborate through the Tikkun framework that resonated with youth researchers, university researchers, and community organizations. In coming together and sharing their experiences, they found some common issues and the most significant one being that youth wanted to be taken seriously so their voices were heard in their work for healing, repair, and social justice. Our research and partnership supported the development of the next generation of socially responsible leaders who attempted to understand the practices of active citizenship by exploring similarities and differences of access to justice and fairness across different jurisdictions. They engaged in dialogue and

participatory action research and initiated and/or sustained innovative programs and practices.

The Tikkun Youth Project: Background Information

Pedagogies of Repair and Reconciliation (Tikkun): The Embodied Praxis of Youth Civic Engagement is the official title of this project and partnership; henceforth, in the book it is referred to as the Tikkun Youth Project. The Tikkun Youth Project evolved from its inception as a three-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and University of Windsor funded partnership research grant awarded in 2014. The five sites of this partnership project came together organically out of previous attempts to seek funding for our work with youth. Since the process of working to put together a proposal for this prestigious grant took some time, patience, and persistence, in the interim we were able to consolidate ideas and build bridges among youth researchers, community organizations, and university researchers at the different sites. An ethic of responsibility and praxis (informed committed action) to others served as the foundation for this youth-focused partnership between the University of Windsor and our Canadian and international sites. Each one of us, in our humanity, is bound to others through an ethic of responsibility to take action(s) in order to repair the fractures (injustices and indignities) and transform the world through healing and reconciliation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) report was a testament and also a stark reminder of the work of healing and repair still needed in Canada in order to address the legacy of trauma inflicted upon generations of Aboriginal peoples (First Nation, Metis, and Inuit—FNMI) through the residential school system and other gross injustices inflicted upon them since first contact. In post-apartheid South Africa, a TRC was set up to address injustices of the apartheid era. In general, there is little faith in the efficacy of these reports, but the establishment of these commissions underscored the need for healing and reconciliation as societies move forward in hope for a better environment for people who had suffered (and still suffer) injustices. In post-war Kosovo (part of the war in the Balkans after the collapse of Yugoslavia), no such TRC was established

to address the injustices perpetrated during the years of conflict. It should be noted, however, that official government documents, under the influence of the European Union, place great emphasis on the role of youth in nation-building. Youth advocates, in general, have the potential to take on this moral and ethical responsibility for a better world. Therefore, the guiding principles of the project are: Tikkun (healing, repair, and reconciliation), youth leadership for advocacy and change, and embodied praxis (i.e., youth engaging in mindful and thoughtful social action through a lived sense of self and a focus on the lived experiences). For the project, active youth civic engagement was manifested at three levels: active citizenship that is personally responsible; participatory; and socially just and transformative (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

This Tikkun Youth Project created a partnership to reach out to marginalized youth from five communities that collaborated for youth advocacy and engagement. These particular communities in need of healing, change, and reconciliation were located in South Africa, Kosovo, and Canada. Despite the end of apartheid in South Africa, inequities are rampant and impact youth the most (Swartz, Hamilton Harding, & De Lannoy, 2012). Since the end of the Kosovo War, there has been an urgent need to repair relationships and establish trust among Serbian, Albanian, Kosovar, and Bosnian youth. In Canada, Indigenous (FNMI) and immigrant youth are disproportionately dropping out, or being pushed out, of secondary schools and are at higher risk for police apprehension or incarceration (Korteweg, 2010; Reading & Wien, 2009). These dynamics of social exclusion are equally glaring in urban and rural communities across Ontario (Canada), South Africa, and Kosovo. At the same time, youth (ages 10-25) have become the world's largest demographic group (United Nations, 2013). By virtue of their numbers alone, young people have the potential to effect positive social change if provided opportunities for meaningful participation and leadership in civic life.

When we examine the manner in which youth are defining citizenship and civic engagement, there has been a noted shift away from interacting with the "traditional" forms of engagement, such as with the state. Instead, youth are gravitating towards actions and utilizing skills, such as network building, that are motivated by pertinent local issues of glaring injustices. With these techniques and goals, youth are able to utilize experiences from everyday life as a catalyst for participating and creating change in their locales (Harris & Roose, 2014). When we look at understanding what citizenship means,

we draw upon O'Loughlin (2006) who described citizenship as community-based, drawing on the aspects of coming together as a community and the feelings we share with each other. Citizenship highlights the idea of a "shared embodiment" (O'Loughlin, 2006, p. 86) that creates solidarity amongst individuals. Smith, Lister, Middleton, and Cox (2005) identify citizenship as being the relationship that individuals have with their wider society. Furthermore, citizenship revolves around the feelings that individuals have about their role and position within that society.

Marginalized youth disproportionately experience social and economic exclusion due to systemic, legal, and social barriers. Our project sought to address these inequities by fostering collaboration across borders and by explicitly increasing the capacity of marginalized youth in diverse contexts to challenge inequities through local projects that advocate for healing and change. In line with Quintelier (2008), we argued that it was imperative to gain an understanding of the processes that lead youth to become engaged in civic life, especially those who had been marginalized through intergenerational impacts of social injustices. Research of programs that focused on encouraging and developing connected citizens had shown that young people were prepared and eager to contribute their talent and to improve their communities (Nicholson, Collins, & Holmer, 2004).

Studies of such programs suggest that "[r]ather than 'leading,' adults need to be in the background, monitoring, mentoring, facilitating, but not being in charge" (Watts & Flanagan, 2007, p. 782). Camino and Zeldin (2002) observed that youth seek adult support in the form of coaching, dialogue, and facilitating connections to sources of institutional, community, and political power. In this partnership, adult support at each site was demonstrated in training youth in conducting research for social action. Youth initiatives for advocacy at the local level were guided by the grassroots stages of initiation where youth collaborated to interrogate current action projects and/or create new ones; legitimation where they had local community support for their initiatives; implementation where they carry out their proposed plan of action; and lastly, the evaluative reflective stage (Willie, 2009 as referenced in Angara, 2011).

Through our project, we developed this cross-border partnership for youth-led embodied praxis in social justice across borders. The specific objectives of our partnership were as follows: 1) identify the places and resources to engage marginalized youth in youth-led advocacy for positive civic change; 2) explore the ways that these new understandings are

translated into the youth's embodied experiences of civic engagement; 3) generate data to inform the development and mobilization of educational models to repair injustices through youth civic engagement; and 4) consolidate and expand our partnership to formal and informal educational institutions. In order to achieve these objectives, we first researched the manner in which citizenship and civic engagement were practiced in the lived reality of youth at these different sites and to consider the lessons they could learn from each other. We wanted to understand the perspectives of youth and the roles they played in civic engagement in repairing and healing based on an ethic of collective responsibility. Lastly, through our project and partnership, we highlighted the extent to which participatory action research serves to accelerate youth civic engagement. Without a strong partnership that combines considerable academic research experience (through the involvement of five universities), community-related advocacy experience, and the building of partnerships among these various entities, it would not be possible to work towards the goals of this project.

Project Partners: An Overview

Each site was affiliated with one local university headed by one or more university researchers, along with one non-profit organization engaged with youth engagement. I was the Principal Investigator for this SSHRC/ University of Windsor funded project and our university served as the project hub. In Ontario, we partnered with two sites – York University and the Canadian Civil Liberties Education Trust (CCLET) in Toronto; and Lakehead University and the Nishnawbe Aski-Nation (NAN) in Thunder Bay. Internationally, we had two partners: the University of Prishtina and International Progressive Education (IPE) that facilitated youth advocacy in Prishtina; and Kosovo (note that the chapter by Selimos et al. provides further details about Kosovo) and the University of Cape Town and Equal Education (EE) where youth (called Equalizers) advocate for equality in education in the post-apartheid era, and especially in Khayelitsha, a township located on the outskirts of Cape Town.

International Progressive Education (IPE) and Kosovar youth advocates. Since the end of the War in 1999, Kosovo, one of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia (Krasniqi, 2010), continues to exist in a post-war

rebuilding phase. The main concerns among government officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and others heavily involved in rebuilding Kosovo were the ideologies that are shaping this new nation state. Since Kosovo has a very young population along with a high unemployment rate, the need to involve youth is particularly pressing. A new citizenship education program was established in schools and many informal citizenship-learning opportunities/training programs were created by non-governmental organizations. In general, the vision of the new "Kosovar citizen" was a project of the EU, the UN, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and hence, it had a strong European influence in all aspects, and especially in education. This image of the new citizen represented the dominant idea of citizenship in Kosovo. But the ideas often promoted in these settings contradicted other ways that different people envisioned this new nation and roles for citizenship.

International Progressive Education (IPE)[2], our partnering organization, founded in 2010, was an educational non-profit organization in Prishtina, Kosovo. IPE was dedicated to expanding educational opportunities for Kosovar youth through educational research on important issues facing young Kosovars, as well as through innovative formal and non-formal educational projects (International Progressive Education, n.d.). IPE was also committed to promoting inter-ethnic reconciliation in the Balkan region. IPE became a country partner to the Global Youth Service Day (GYSD), the world's largest celebration of young volunteers. IPE worked to recruit and coordinate with local groups and organizations to participate in GYSD. Therefore, one of the first steps in this partnership with IPE and local youth was to understand how young people articulated and embodied the ideas for citizenship and advocacy in their daily lives. Through the Tikkun Youth Project in which participatory action research (PAR) served as the main investigative tool, we examined how citizenship was practiced and embodied by young people in Kosovo. Further, we gained insights into the role youth activism related initiatives play in healing the wounds of conflict and to further community relationship-building. Finally, based on the Tikkun concept of repair and reconciliation, our partnership highlighted youth potential in "bridging" the divide among the multiplicity of ethnicities in post-war Kosovo nation-building efforts.

Equal Education (EE) and Equalizers. Equal Education (EE) is a non-profit community organization located in the township of Khayelitsha, South

Africa. Since its inception in 2008, EE has focused on developing the political and social consciousness and the leadership abilities of youth through formal and informal training programs ("Our Movement," n.d.). EE organizes and facilitates regular youth group sessions where issues related to education in South Africa and other local and international issues concerning youth development are explored. EE utilizes evidence-based activism to improve the school system, especially schools in crisis in South Africa ("Our Movement," n.d.). EE youth leaders called "Equalizers" are involved in many projects, such as assisting a high school in Khayelitsha to fix its leaking roof as well as an amazing campaign to fix 500 broken windows at Luhlaza Secondary School (Angara, 2011). Further, EE also employs legal means when they seek to address glaring injustices. For instance, EE sought a court order to force the Education Minister to meet promises made to set a national standard requirement for school facilities ("Equal Education," 2012).

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) and Youth Amplifiers. Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) is a political territorial organization that represents 49 First Nations in the province of Ontario, with a population of 45,000. NAN encompasses James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Ontario's portion of Treaty No. 5. At this site, an indigenized approach for Indigenous – Youth Participatory Action Research (I-YPAR) incorporated the four "Rs" of Indigenous education that emphasizes 1) *repair* of the trauma and traumatic effects of schooling from the legacies of the Indian Residential School system and ongoing colonization; 2) *respect* for Indigenous youth to self-determine and define their needs for improvement of life and social/societal conditions; 3) *regeneration/revitalization* of hope, strength, and resilience for youth in order to bring forth 4) *reclamation/resurgence* by youth of their culture, communities, languages, and Land practices for greater civic/democratic engagement (Grande, 2004; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

Canadian Civil Liberties Education Trust (CCLET) and Urban Youth Advocates in Toronto. CCLET is a branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) in Toronto. CCLET's educational programs offer in-class workshops, interactive seminars, and lectures on Canadian rights and freedoms for youth (Canadian Civil Liberties Association, n.d.). Participants learn that democracy requires them to make choices, and these choices are not only between good and bad, but more likely to be between the lesser of two or more evils. Students are engaged in thinking critically about the conflicts of rights that all people living in democracies face.

CCLET contributed its expertise in the design, development, and

implementation of youth-targeted activities for the partnership. CCLET participated in project-related activities at the Toronto site, provided a support network at the local level, assisted in recruiting youth through their connections with various local organizations, and assisted in knowledge mobilization through their association with various organizations at the local, provincial, and national levels to develop democratic habits, such as critical thinking and active citizenship engagement.

Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County (MCC). Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County (MCC**)** is a non-profit organization that provides community-based services to urban and rural communities in the region (Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, n.d.). In particular, they are dedicated to providing resources for newcomers (immigrants and refugees) to Canada with a focus on settlement and integration. MCC is, in fact, an umbrella organization of community-based organizations with expertise in promoting cultural sensitivity, anti-racism education, newcomer integration, and intercultural relations within the community and beyond (Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, n.d.). Through their various youth organizations, MCC plays an active role in facilitating access to youth participants and also in facilitating, planning, and implementing knowledge mobilization activities. MCC benefits from the partnership by being able to facilitate small and large-scale adaptation of intervention/pilot programs and modules. Some of our youth researchers were already involved in initiatives supported by the MCC. For example, they initiated a local community garden cooperative in which residents collaborated to grow and share fresh produce. They also worked with new immigrants to help them in the various phases of their settlement, especially supporting young girls and women in accessing services. Further, they participated in anti-poverty initiatives and programs geared to promoting minority rights and gender equality.

Challenges in Building a Partnership

All community organizations involved in our project were non-profit, and working on tight budgets and with personnel who were already stretched to the limit with their workload.

The geographic distance and time zone differences among and between

the different sites made collaboration and communication difficult to coordinate. The hub site in Windsor played a key role in ensuring that these challenges were met through the use of information communication technologies to record, relay, and coordinate activities. Furthermore, our youth researchers led hectic lives with other commitments such as school, work, and family obligations that made scheduling meetings and training sessions rather a daunting task. An additional challenge was that many of our youth participants had little experience with participatory action research (PAR) where they were active participants conducting interviews and other such research related responsibilities; hence, training was required before they went out to interview their recruited participants. Also, we had to account for different cultural and social expectations for each site, such as pace of work, meeting deadlines, making assumptions based on our values of time and efficiency, and such other issues. John Antoniw's chapter featured in this book is based on an autoethnographic approach; he expands on the challenges and the ways we had to overcome them.

Methodological Processes

We employed participatory action research (PAR) in which youth participants were also researchers. At each site, our youth researchers were trained to become active researchers. PAR is also effective in developing youth leadership skills (Rodrigues & Brown, 2009). PAR interrogates the role of power and existing forms of knowledge construction in order to enable youth to construct knowledge for action guided by the principles of fairness, equity, and social justice.

We adopted a three-stage methodological process for this project. In the first stage, we solidified the partnership by setting up the project at the five different sites with Windsor being the hub site. The teams at the sites included university researchers, members of the partnering community organizations, and youth researchers/participants. We held regular meetings via Skype, and through emails and other forms of information and communications technology (ICT), we prioritized our objectives and established rapport and trust. Since we worked with sites and youth that did not have consistent access to ICTs, each organization provided the equipment, software, and training.

In the second stage, we recruited and trained youth researchers by the university (each partnering organization is linked to at least one university researcher) as participant-researchers to conduct interviews with peers (3-4 interviews each). These interviews focused on understanding what youth knew about civic engagement and access to justice/social justice and the manner in which these understandings were shaped by their school/curriculum, especially with regards to civic education and media literacy, family, culture, and social context. Further, these interviews were designed to understand the extent to which youth engaged in critical thinking question the structures that shaped their lived realities. The resulting data were collated, analyzed, and shared among participants.

The highlight of the third and final stage of the project was the Tikkun Youth Symposium for which members from all our sites travelled to Windsor for four days in early April 2017. The symposium titled "Tikkun Beyond Borders: Connecting Youth Voices and Leading Change" was organized to celebrate the voices of youth engaged in healing and reconciliation (Tikkun) through social justice activities, and to network among participants from the five sites collaborating on the Tikkun Youth Project and other youth activists in Windsor and beyond. Youth researchers, academics, and community leaders were engaged in dialogue and discussion about issues facing young people around the world and discussed ways of leading change for equity and social justice.

The planning, organization, and execution of this symposium was made possible through the support and collaboration of all teams, and in particular the Windsor team that hosted the symposium. Despite virtual meetings over the past two years, the symposium provided a real opportunity to meet, connect, share resources, have fun, and discover the similarities and differences among the social issues and challenges youth leaders faced at each site. Symposium participants shared resources through formal and informal meetings to explore their effectiveness in building knowledge about the facilitation of active community and leadership among youth. Further, these activities raised consciousness about the challenges as well as the opportunities for addressing injustices at the individual and community levels. The Artnote was one of the important events held during the Tikkun Youth Symposium. During the numerous planning meetings, we discussed various ways in which we could highlight our research findings in ways that would be accessible to all and in particular to youth involved in civic life. We played around with different ideas and went through a list of different

activities and potential keynote speakers for the final day. We recruited an award-winning local artist, Chris Rabideau, who created the Artnote and served as the artistic director. Further, we were also influenced by Prosser and Loxley's (2008) review paper on visual methods to represent data. Prosser and Loxley focused on photographs and videos as data sources. They claimed that until a few decades ago visual data methods were invisible and that visual methods promise "enhanced analytical insights of everyday social worlds" (p. 4). Although the aforementioned authors focused on images and videos as a method of data collection, we extended this concept to use the medium of drama, music, and dance to share our partnership findings among sites and with the local invitees; many were youth leaders, academics, and from other youth organizations. Bell's (2010) Storytelling Project Model also influenced our decision to create an inclusive Artnote not only as a way for our youth to disseminate their findings, but also as a tool for reflection and learning. We included our local youth in different ways as well. We invited Syrian youth drummers (recent arrivals to Canada) to open the formal part of the day with a drumming circle. After the Artnote, a group of recently arrived Syrian refugee youth put on an amazing and heart-wrenching play about their experiences growing up under constant siege and then their journey to get to Canada. By the end of their short play, there wasn't a dry eye in the audience.

On the last day of the symposium, we held our final meeting for reflection, debriefing, and future directions for our youth. Having spent over three packed days together in intensive activities, our participants developed strong bonds and the common theme of "youth for social justice and change" continued to guide their discussions and reflections. They shared their hopes and ideas for civic-engagement activities/initiatives in their local contexts. Further, they stated that participating in the symposium was memorable and moving. One of our participants explained that in coming together for the symposium and through the different activities over the four days, they were able to understand the issues that were unique, but also that so many issues are common to youth regardless of where they lived. They suggested the idea of creating an e-book to document their experiences in this Tikkun Youth Project. Therefore, two years or so later here we are with a collection of engaging chapters written by our project participants and also local organizers who participated in the four day symposium. Below, I provide a glimpse of the chapters in this collection. We have a range

of authors that include academic researchers, youth researchers, youth participants, symposium participants, and others.

Introduction to the Chapters

Erwin Dimitri Selimos, Ereblir Kadriu, and Janet Balyeat's contributions to the project at the Kosovo site are clearly delineated in their chapter with a balance between personal experiences and conceptual understanding of research and partnership-building. They provide a brief history of the conflict and the challenges faced by Kosovar youth in the post-war nation-building period. Youth researchers explained their involvement in creating a new and better future for themselves and others. This chapter discusses the unique issues faced by young people in Kosovo and the ways in which the Tikkun Youth Project has assisted them in taking on leadership roles. The authors also provide a succinct overview of the entire Tikkun Youth Project and the ways in which PAR methodology was deployed at this site.

In Chris Rabideau and Karen Roland's chapter "Artnote: Data as Performance," they take us on a journey through the process of creating the Artnote from its inception to its grand finale. They argue that this Artnote should not be seen only as a one-time performance but as a Storytelling Project Model and as a way of presenting data and findings in a unique way. They walk us through the challenges and successes of this approach and provide a comprehensive description of the Artnote created by our participants within three days of coming together in Windsor for the Tikkun Youth Symposium.

Danielle McLaughlin was an active partner in the project. During the Tikkun Youth Symposium, she had in-depth conversations with our youth from the different sites. This chapter evolved from her reflections on these conversations in which she first discusses the different ways in which youth face discrimination (e.g., "mosquito sounds" outside of certain businesses, curfews, reduced minimum wage for those under the age of majority, youth not being involved in making decisions that affect them, etc.). Next, she identifies specific issues that youth at each site encountered, such as the ethnic separation in Kosovo, the fight for a living wage in Windsor, the

challenges of education for Indigenous youth in Thunder Bay, and the fight for a decent education in impoverished areas in Cape Town, South Africa.

Our team from South Africa (Siphenathi Fulani, Salma Ismail, Sisanda Khuzani, Lona Mtembu, Lyndal Pottier, Amanda Maxongo, Aphiwe Tomose, and Phelokazi Tsoko) collaborated to write an in-depth chapter guided by Salma Ismail and Lyndal Pottier. They focus on the youth researchers' understanding of the concept of Tikkun and connecting it to Ubuntu in their context of post-apartheid South Africa. They describe the challenges faced by young people in Khayelitsha and the work done by Equalizers through an organization called Equal Education to fight for rights to a quality education in impoverished areas. In their involvement with the Tikkun Youth Project, they faced challenges when employing the PAR method, such as time zone issues, weak Internet connection, minimal access to the ICT, and the cost of transportation. Through their research, they found that youth's motivation for activism ranged from growing up in poverty to growing up in a middle-class political family, from experiences in prison and at tertiary institutions to teachers acting as role models and the influence of peers in organisations such as Equal Education. Their activism was demonstrated in a variety of ways from welfare type (e.g., tutoring learners, providing workshops in career guidance, and social entrepreneurship) to more activist type (e.g., raising consciousness about identities, gender, and Black consciousness, and involvement in student movements).

Erin Rose's chapter is a description of her journey to becoming an activist. Erin was one of the youth researchers from our Windsor site. Even though she had always been driven to fight for injustice, she felt of a sense of isolation in these struggles. When she became active in the project and participated in a provincial rally in the Fight for $15 and Fairness for the first time, she felt validated as a youth activist and found a community of like-minded people and also found her voice. In this chapter, she delineates the trajectory of her emotions and experiences when meeting youth activists from the other sites at the week-long youth symposium held in Windsor in April 2017. She realises that healing and repair work for social justice was the thread that bound youth from different parts of the world together.

Ainslee Winter, who is a certified art therapist, discusses the importance of using art as a research methodology and as a different way for collecting data. She emphasizes the healing aspects of art therapy for youth, especially for those who have experienced oppression, trauma, or upheaval in their lives. At the Tikkun Youth Symposium, she facilitated a prayer flag art

therapy session for our participants. At this session, Ainslee underscored the importance of art as healing and reconciliation both at an individual and at a communal level. Our youth participants shared their hopes and dreams to address the social issues they faced at their sites.

Dr. Lisa Korteweg, Jacky Chan, and Kylee Johnstone share the successes and challenges of the Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project – the project's site in northern Ontario/Canada. Here, the project was shaped by a collaborative Indigenous youth leadership, community engagement, and well-being project. The purpose was to support Indigenous students who had to leave their northern home communities to pursue secondary schooling in Thunder Bay. These students often faced insurmountable challenges when moving to a city far away from their homes. Through collaborative research with high schools, youth role-models, and educators, the team at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay was able to provide the conditions whereby Indigenous youth gained opportunities to meet and create bonds with their Indigenous peers. They participated in culturally-focused activities, shared stories in holistic circles, and developed their leadership skills while engaging in well-being practices and self-determining needs and actions. This chapter explains the philosophy and purpose of the culminating Land-based well-being retreat, as well as the Land-based outdoor leadership camp processes, the Leaders-in-Training strengths-based activities, and the responses of the youth participants, all decided, led, and engaged in by Indigenous youth, for Indigenous youth, and with Indigenous youth.

In the chapter contribution from our Toronto site, Nombuso Dlamini, Cynthia Kwakyewah, and Shawnee Hardware report on findings from data collected with and by youth researchers in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). In this chapter, the authors expand on the ongoing scholarly debate in finding a definition for the complex concept of civic engagement. What does it mean for youth to be civically engaged and what are the different levels of engagement? How do youth find their voices? Oftentimes, when they feel that they do not connect in traditional formats for civic engagement, they seek out alternative spaces – especially digital spaces to feel empowered and to make their voices heard.

Nesreen Elkord and Lina Chaker highlight the pressing issues of the integration of newcomers to Canada and that of young people in particular through the lens of a girl named Randa (pseudonym), a recently arrived refugee from Syria. Her story is shared within the framework of social, cultural, and historical contexts and in particular Canada's humanitarian

role in refugee re-settlement. They describe the methodology of narrative inquiry and present a three-dimensional narrative design based on temporality, sociality, and place while problematizing issues of trustworthiness from a reader's perspective. Randa shares her experiences of going to high school in Canada, participating in the Tikkun play, logistical challenges of the play, healing and reconciliation achieved through drama and role-play, civic agency and engagement, and her performance at the symposium. The authors present their analysis on refugee youth's civic engagement and refugee youth's journey to healing and reconciliation on a personal, social, and academic level.

Riham Al-Saadi was affiliated with the MCC in Windsor and Essex County (one of our partnering organizations). In recent years, Windsor and Essex County has been active in the re-settlement of Syrian refugees; according to the statistics, over 1,600 refugees have called this area home (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2017). Riham examines the phenomenon of resettlement through the lens of acculturation, facilitative factors, and impediments that manifest themselves as these refugees seek to adapt to life in Windsor/Canada while trying to maintain their cultural heritage. In this chapter, Riham focuses on the narratives of three Syrian refugee youth as she believes that engaging with youth serves as healing by drawing upon their experiences and ensuring their voices are heard.

Evelina Baczewska and Francis Cachon's chapter provides us with a detailed account of their focus on the struggle for economic justice through the Fight for $15 and Fairness in Windsor, as part of the provincial struggle for this issue. They discuss the ways in which youth respond to the economic, social, and political conditions that shape their lives, and they explore the ways in which Tikkun (healing and repair) is exemplified in their actions. They contend that the Tikkun Youth Project supported youth as important and valued stakeholders and provided them with opportunities to take an active role. Further, they dispel the myth that youth are disinterested/apathetic toward civic engagement and political struggles; the reality is that they often are excluded from them – a theme echoed in several other chapters as well.

John Antoniw's chapter wraps up this collection and also serves as a reflective and honest epilogue for the project. He uses the metaphor of a patchwork quilt to represent the five sites of this project. Since he was involved with the project from its inception, he could retell and reflect on the challenges and the successes that have occurred over the course of

three years in addition to reflecting upon his own participation. He assesses and reflects on the cultural, structural, technological, and interpersonal challenges we had to overcome in bringing this partnership project to fruition. Antoniw provides useful recommendations that should be considered carefully in undertaking a similar international collaborative partnership project.

Conclusion

The process of creating these chapters and putting them together as an anthology has been a collaborative effort from the start. After the project had been completed and participants had moved on, they still honored the commitment they made at the Tikkun Youth Symposium to bring you this collection of engaging and diverse chapters that celebrate the voices of youth, their optimism and advocacy for healing, repair and reconciliation to build a better future. Despite the numerous challenges they faced, youth participant-researchers, university researchers, and partnering organizations exhibited resilience and dedication to activism for change throughout the duration of this project and beyond.

While the following twelve chapters could be read as stand-alone chapters, we anticipate that these narratives weave together to present you with a rich tapestry of stories of youth courage and leadership that offers insights into youth-led praxis (informed committed action) for social justice. We hope these engaging and accessible chapters inspire youth to move forward one step at a time and build skills for civic engagement and advocacy through further dialogue and debate about common and distinct issues young people around the world face and to facilitate discussion and sharing about ways of leading change for equity and social justice.

References

Angara, H. (2011). The 500 windows campaign: A case study of a youth movement for educational resources in South Africa. *Interactions*: *UCLA*

Journal of Education and Information Studies, 7(2), 1-26. Retrieved from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7r8387bx#author

Bell, L. A. (2010). *Storytelling for social justice: Connecting narrative and the arts in antiracist teaching.* New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Camino, L., & Zeldin, S. (2002). From periphery to center: Pathways for youth civic engagement in the day-to-day life of communities. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6(4), 213-220. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0604_8

Canadian Civil Liberties Association. (n.d.). Education. Retrieved from https://ccla.org/education/

Daniel, Y., & Antoniw, J. (2016). Introduction to youth-led civic engagement for Tikkun: A developing partnership across borders (Canada, South Africa and Kosovo). *Citizenship Education Research Journal*, 5(1), 3-13. Retrieved from https://ojs-o.library.ubc.ca/index.php/CERJ/article/view/13

Equal Education takes Angie Motshekga to court. (2012, March 7). *Mail & Guardian.* Retrieved from https://mg.co.za/article/2012-03-07-equal-education-takes-infrastructure-fight-to-court

Grande, S. (2004). *Red pedagogy: Native American social and political thought.* Rowman & Littlefield.

Harris, A. & Roose, J. (2014). DIY citizenship amongst young Muslims: Experience of the 'ordinary'. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(6), 794-813. doi:10.1080/13676261.2013.844782

Hitchens, C. (2001). *Letters to a young contrarian.* Cambridge, MA, Basic Books.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2017, November 1). Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2018.html

International Progressive Education. (n.d.) About [Facebook page]. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/ipeducation/about/?ref=page_internal

Kirkness, V. J., & Barnhardt, R. (1991). First Nations and higher education: The four R's – Respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 30(3), 1-15. Retrieved from http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ledproxy2.uwindsor.ca/ehost/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=23f6bcd4-f5b2-4cf2-a3bc-d39bb6e1f12f%40pdc-v-sessmgr01&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=119119262&db=a9h

Korteweg, L. (2010). The Lakehead Public School Board's urban Aboriginal

education project. Retrieved from http://ontariodirectors.ca/UA_Pilot_Project/files/Lakehead%20RE/UAEP_FINAL_REPORT_Review%20and%20Research%20Study_LK_July16.pdf

Krasniqi, G. (2010). *Citizenship as a tool of state-building in Kosovo: Status, rights, and identity in the new state.* (CITSEE Working Paper Series; Vol. 2010, No. 10). CITSEE.

Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://themcc.com/

Nicholson, H. J., Collins, C., & Holmer, H. (2004). Youth as people: The protective aspects of youth development in after-school settings. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591(1), 55-71. doi:10.1177/0002716203260081

O'Loughlin, M. (2006). *Embodiment and education: Exploring creatural existence.* Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Our Movement. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://equaleducation.org.za/our-movement/

Prosser, J., & Loxley, A. (2008). *Introducing visual methods.* Discussion Paper. National Centre for Research Methods. (Unpublished). Retrieved from http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/420/

Quintelier, E. (2008). Who is politically active: The athlete, the scout member, or the environmental activist? Young people, voluntary engagement and political participation. *Acta Sociological*, 51(4), 355-370. doi:10.1177/0001699308097378

Reading, C. L., & Wien, F. (2009). *Health inequalities and social determinants of Aboriginal peoples' health.* Prince George, BC: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health. Retrieved September 15, 2013 from https://www.ccnsa-nccah.ca/docs/determinants/RPT-HealthInequalities-Reading-Wien-EN.pdf

Rodrigues, L., & Brown, T. (2009). From voice to agency: Guiding principles for participatory action research with youth. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 123, 19-34. doi:10.1002/yd.312

Rosenthal, G. (2005). Tikkun ha-Olam: The metamorphosis of a concept. *The Journal of Religion*, 85(2), 214-240. doi:10.1086/427314

Sacks, J. (2005). *To heal a fractured world: The ethics of responsibility.* New York: Schocken Books.

Smith, N., Lister, R., Middleton, S., & Cox, L. (2005). Young people as real

citizens: Towards an inclusionary understanding of citizenship. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8(4), 425-443. doi:[10.1080/13676260500431743](10.1080/13676260500431743)

Swartz, S., Hamilton Harding, J., & De Lannoy, A. (2012). Ikasi style and the quiet violence of dreams: A critique of youth belonging in post-apartheid South Africa. *Comparative Education*, 48(1), 27-40. doi:[10.1080/03050068.2011.637761](10.1080/03050068.2011.637761)

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and reconciliation commission of Canada: Calls to action.* Retrieved from https://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

United Nations (UN). (2013). *International Conference on Population and Development: Beyond 2014.* Thematic paper: Leadership and meaningful participation. Retrieved September 28, 2013 from http://icpdbeyond2014.org/uploads/browser/files/leadership_and_meaningful_participation.docx

Vatican News. (2017, November 22). Pope Francis sends video message to Myanmar ahead of visit. *Vatican News.* Retrieved from https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2017-11/pope-francis-sends-video-message-to-myanmar-ahead-of-visit.html

Watts, R. J. & Flanagan, C. (2007). Pushing the envelope on youth civic engagement: A developmental and liberation psychology perspective. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 35(6), 779–792. doi:10.1002/jcop.20178

Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(2), 237-269. doi:[10.3102/00028312041002237](10.3102/00028312041002237)

[1] The description of the project, its methodology, and its partners are partly paraphrased from an article written during the first year of the project (Daniel & Antoniw, 2016) and from the SSHRC partnership development grant proposal (SSHRC Grant # 890-2013-0019)

[2] International Progressive Education (IPE) is no longer an active organization. Its founders and youth participants have dispersed across the globe to continue their education, careers, and activism.

1. Kosovar Youth Doing Tikkun: Insights from a Research-Based Action Project for Social Justice and Reconciliation

ERWIN DIMITRI SELIMOS, EREBLIR KADRIU, AND JANET BALYEAT

Abstract

Drawing on peer-to-peer interviews conducted by/with highly-engaged Kosovar youth, this chapter considers how they make sense of their social activism within the context of a post-war Kosovar society. In particular, we identify how they learn about issues of social concern and take an active role in addressing these concerns. Analysis demonstrates that traditional institutions of socialization, personal experiences, and a strong sense of attachment to local place are important factors motivating their social change efforts. Furthermore, their social change efforts most often take place in non-governmental and youth-focused organizations, which enable but also shape the topics and nature of their social change agenda. Although highly-engaged Kosovar youth view their social engagement as important to building a better society, they also understood it as a means of gaining skills and experiences advantageous in a society which is attempting to integrate into the European Union. Finally, social change activities have important and positive benefits on young people's sense of self and often result in important practical changes to their local communities.

Keywords: Kosovo; Kosovar youth; youth activism; peer-to-peer research

It has now been nearly 20 years since the end of the Serbian-Kosovo War. An entire generation of children born in or after 1999 has no living memory of life before the conflict. These young people have grown up in a society

marked by intense social transformations including the introduction of capitalist consumer economies, access to global media, persistent interethnic animosities, and often overwhelming economic challenges including economic underdevelopment, joblessness, and poverty. Since the end of the Serbia-Kosovo war, state-builders and policymakers have viewed cultivating active citizenship among young people as essential to building a democratic state (Feltes, 2013). These policy initiatives aim to build young people's capacity to be active citizens and key actors in addressing the social divides characterizing the Kosovar society.

Within the context of these societal challenges and youth-targeted policy initiatives, this chapter considers how young people are attempting to make a difference. We draw on peer-to-peer interviews conducted by/with highly-engaged Kosovar youth to identify how they learn about issues of social concern and take an active role in addressing these concerns. We situate their experiences within the larger Kosovar context to consider how they make sense of and practice their social change efforts. We believe that a focus on young people's perspectives, situated within the complex social-cultural context of post-war Kosovo, provides a valuable angle to assess the implementation of post-war reconstruction policies that place priority on encouraging and cultivating active youth citizenship in Kosovo.

The chapter begins by providing an overview of the Kosovar youth situation within the context of post-war challenges and concerns. It then moves to a description of the study, the research process, and its main findings. The final section of the chapter identifies the significance of our project and points to important avenues for further exploration.

Background and Context

Kosovo is a partially-recognized independent state located in Southeastern Europe, northeast of Albania. Kosovo was an autonomous province of Serbia throughout the history of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. During the dissolution of Yugoslavia, a major conflict arose in the late-1990s between the Albanians of Kosovo and the Serbian military and militia. The basis of the war was Serbia's increasingly nationalistic and aggressive stance towards Albanians under the leadership of Slobodan Milosevic, who sought to claim

the territory of Kosovo and Serbian-ize its population, territory, and institutions (Malcolm, 1998). After nearly a decade of non-violent resistance by Kosovar Albanians, open fighting broke out in the late 1990s between Serbian military and paramilitary forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army. The war saw overwhelming destruction, including the mass killing of Albanian civilians by the Serbian militia forces. The conflict ended in 1999 because of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervention, after which Kosovo was placed under the administrative rule of the United Nations (Clark, 2000).

From 1999 to 2008, the United Nation Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) acted as the main institution to deal with post-war challenges, directing various state-building efforts, which included establishing the main institutions of state governance (Feltes, 2013). In 2008, when Kosovo declared independence from Serbia, the United Nations steadily transitioned out of the country, handing over some supervisory authority to the European Union (EU). With a mandate to 2020, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) monitors Kosovo's legal system, acting as a corruption watchdog and providing assistance to specific institutions of Kosovo's legal system (EULEX, n.d.). A central goal of the post-war reconstruction efforts has been the eventual integration of Kosovo into the European Union. Its succession into the European Union requires that it harmonizes policies, legislation, and procedural operations of its government institutions with EU standards and best practices.

Figure 1. Map of Kosovo

Source: https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia16/kosovo_sm_2016.gif

Currently, Kosovo's legitimacy is contested both internationally and locally. The country has yet to be recognized by all UN or EU member states, and in different parts of the country, primarily the northern area of Mitrovica, many Serbian residents do not recognize Kosovo as an independent country (Clark, 2000). Its succession into the European Union is opposed by European Union member states, including Greece and Spain, and furiously opposed by Serbia. As such, Kosovo remains a contested territory and an unsettled state (Krasniqi, 2013).

In addition to its territorial disputes, the country also faces significant social and economic challenges, including high levels of nepotism, economic underdevelopment, enduring structural unemployment and poverty, limited social protection systems (i.e., unemployment insurance, pension programs, healthcare, work condition regulations), as well as poor and uneven

educational infrastructure (Feltes, 2013; Gjinovci, 2016; Gjocaj, 2016; Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2017; UNDP Kosovo, 2017). A central challenge also remains building an inclusive society, as interethnic animosities and segregation, and concern over minority rights and the status of women in society persists (Clark, 2000).

The Youth Situation in Kosovo

Kosovo is among the youngest countries in Europe, with an average age of 30.2 years (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2017). In 2011, ninety-one percent of Kosovo's residents were ethnically Albanian, 3.4% Serbian, and 5.6% members of the Bosnian, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (RAE), or Turkish communities (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2017). Most Kosovar youth, particularly young Albanians, identify as Muslim. Kosovo is also characterized by a substantial percentage of its population living in poverty. Drawing on official statistics collected by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Gjocaj (2016) reports that most Kosovar families are financially insecure, with about 30% of Kosovars living in relative poverty and 8.2% living in extreme poverty.

In 2012, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and IDRA Research & Consulting (Pasha, Xhangolli, Dundo, Gjokuta, Tahiri, & Lena, 2012) released a report examining young Kosovars' attitudes and life orientations. Utilizing surveys and focus groups, the study points to important features of young Kosovars' current social and cultural situation. The study's focus on Albanian and Serbian Kosovar youth limits our capacity to generalize about the life situations of RAE, Bosnian, and Turkish youth, whose histories, conditions, and positions in society as ethnic minorities are unique.

In terms of general cultural orientations, Pasha et al. (2012) reveal that Kosovar youth remain conservative and traditional. This can be observed in their stance toward family and marriage. A strong familialism pervades: most young Kosovars place very strong trust in their families (compared to their mistrust of other social institutions, such as the government) and reside for a comparatively long time in their parents' household, usually until they themselves marry. Parents are actively involved in shaping children's life decisions, including the selection of marriage partners and educational and career pathways. Furthermore, the study illustrates that fathers play a

central role when deciding children's career and educational decisions, while mothers remain "consultants of day-to-day, 'softer' issues" (Pasha et al., 2012, p. 13), suggesting enduring patriarchal elements of contemporary Kosovar family life.

The report also demonstrates entrenched attitudes of suspicion and animosity between different ethnic and religious groups. Albanian and Serbian Kosovar youth, who continue to live in segregated neighborhoods and cities, express significant mistrust of each other, and young Albanian and Serbian Kosovars' attitudes toward RAE, Turks, and Bosnians are characterized by mistrust and prejudice. Across these ethnic and religious divisions, however, the report documents that Kosovar youth are remarkably united over their high educational aspirations and their desire to access European and North American educational institutions. Kosovar youth, in general, express very strong support for Kosovo's integration into the European Union, which translates to them free movement and access to educational, cultural, and economic resources (Pasha et al., 2012).

Despite these educational and cultural aspirations, for many young Kosovars the promise of education and the desires for a European consumer-citizen life are frustrated by restricted travel. Unlike many of their European youth counterparts who enjoy unrestricted travel throughout Europe as members of the European Union, Kosovars are subject to strict visa regulations. Furthermore, the prospect of joblessness remains a persistent source of anxiety and despair, contributing to a strong desire among young people to live abroad (Cani, 2015; Tahiri, 2014). For example, in the first months of 2015, tens of thousands of Kosovars, mainly young people, crossed illegally into European Union countries via Serbia and Hungary to seek asylum in Germany. Most applicants were determined to be economic migrants–not refugees–and were denied asylum. The "exodus" of Kosovars was a symptom of the frustration and despair caused by joblessness and limited opportunities (Cani, 2015).

Ibrahim Berisha, a leading Kosovar sociologist, summarizes the current situation of many young people in Kosovo:

> After a difficult period, Kosova's society is in a period of reconstruction, attempting to integrate itself into international financial, political, and cultural institutions. However, this integration, although it seems to offer hope, has not produced the results that citizens would like.... The failure of current policies to

create more social equality has made young people cynical. Most young people want to leave Kosova, looking to the global job market as an opportunity to build a future. But success in the global market requires investment and change of the education system. (Berisha & Kunushevci, 2017, para. 18-19)

In sum, our short sketch of the youth situation in Kosovo demonstrates that young Kosovars are confronted with the contradictions of being exposed to a globalizing youth culture, the promise of EU integration (with the types of opportunities this may provide), and the very real structural realities that shape their daily lives and restrict their possibilities. Although conservative yet increasingly global (and perhaps "European") in their orientations, desires, and consumption practices, their lives remain largely local: shaped by restricted travel, limited social resources and opportunities, poorly functioning state institutions, social inequality, interethnic animosities, and deeply entrenched nepotism.

Kosovar Youth and the Promotion of Active Citizenship

Since the end of the Serbia-Kosovo war, young people have figured centrally in the construction of a new Kosovar state. State-builders and policymakers have viewed cultivating active citizenship among young people as central to building a viable democratic state. The promotion of active citizenship among Kosovar youth has been encouraged and supported by the international community (especially the European Union), an array of government-sponsored policy initiatives, and the efforts of many youth-focused civil society organizations, all of which have come to characterize the social landscape of post-war Kosovo (Feltes, 2013). Two policy initiatives illustrate the centrality of cultivating active citizenship among youth as a tool in post-war reconstruction: the adoption of the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth (Republic of Kosovo, 2009) and the development of a four-year youth strategy titled Kosovo Strategy for Youth, 2013-2017 (Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, 2013).

On October 19, 2009, the Kosovar government adopted the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth (hereafter the Law), which makes youth participation mandatory for policy decisions in the fields of education,

employment, public health, environment, spatial planning, and rural development (Republic of Kosovo, 2009). Among others, the Law considers the construction and operation of municipal youth centers as important nodes to achieving youth participation. Local youth centers are intended to provide a space for youth to socialize and access various activities and services, such as professional support for health and psychosocial issues, and any relevant trainings (Republic of Kosovo, 2009).

The Kosovo Youth Strategic Action Plan 2013-2017 (hereafter the Action Plan) aims to improve the general situation of Kosovo youth and align the country's youth sector policy priorities with European and international standards (Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, 2013). Its vision is to encourage

> young men and women of Kosovo to become active, healthy, educated citizens, who enjoy a good and qualitative life and prepare to face all challenges of life as responsible members of local, regional, European and world community. (Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, 2013, p. 18)

A specific objective targets youth participation in decision-making processes by encouraging greater involvement of young people in sectorial policy-making which directly affects the youth. Among other priorities, the strategy also seeks to promote active citizenship in the form of volunteerism as a key route to interethnic interaction, reconciliation, and social integration (Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, 2013).

Thus, European integration remains a key driver of state-building efforts in Kosovo, and policy documents frame young Kosovars as essential to the construction of the new European state. Young people are presented as the central sites of intervention toward which social resources should be directed to build their capacity to be active citizens and key actors in addressing the social divides characterizing Kosovar society. However, while the existence of these laws and initiatives are important, their implementation has been uneven. Feltes (2013), who offers the most thorough study on the issue, demonstrates that post-war policy frameworks dedicated to enhancing youth participation have achieved a certain degree of success: 83% of the young people he surveyed felt that they had better opportunities for social and political engagement than before the war. However, he concludes that youth organizations remain largely influenced

by political parties and the international community. As a result, an independent youth sector that pays clear attention to the concrete concerns of young people themselves is yet to exist.

Our Study

Despite often overwhelming societal challenges, many young Kosovars are actively involved in addressing social concerns. These young people engage in civic and social life and want to contribute to healing their society after the violent events they and their families have experienced. This study seeks to understand how highly-engaged Kosovar youth learn about issues of social concern and take an active role in addressing these concerns. A focus on young people's perspectives provides an important vantage point to assess further the implementation of post-war reconstruction policies that have placed priority on youth active citizenship in Kosovo.

Our exploration of the motivations and activities of highly-engaged Kosovar youth was part of the larger research project entitled "Pedagogies of Repair and Reconciliation: The Embodied Praxis of Youth Civic Engagement." This project, which we referred to as the Tikkun Youth Project, was a three-year study that explored how highly-engaged youth across three countries (Canada, Kosovo, and South Africa) became aware of social injustices and sought opportunities for social change. The project wanted to highlight how the youth's knowledge of social injustices translated into embodied, lived experiencesof their activism. The project sought to use these insights to inform youth-led action projects that would help to identify and address ongoing social concerns.

The Tikkun Youth Project, as described in the introductory chapter, was organized around the concept of *Tikkun Olam*, an ancient Hebrew theological phrase meaning "healing the world." As Daniel and Antoniw (2016) explain, in its current practical and philosophical meaning, Tikkun Olam underscores the centrality of the actions of humans in the repair, healing, and reconciliation of social injustices. The phrase was used as a way of suggesting that humanity has a shared ethical responsibility to heal and transform the world. Despite the variances among participants and research sites, the notion of Tikkun Olam served as the inspiration for the

researchers, youth activists, and community organizations to explore how young people were working for social justice, human dignity, and reconciliation in their specific communities.

As an analytical framework for making sense of young activists in Kosovo, we applied the "everyday network of youth politics" approach developed by Baczewska, Cachon, Daniel, and Selimos (2018) as part of the Tikkun Youth Project. This analytical framework is based on several propositions. First, it suggests that in understanding the engagement strategies of contemporary social change-oriented youth, "the distinction between formal and informal political engagement is becoming increasingly more difficult to sustain" (Baczewska et al., 2018, p. 291). While traditional arenas of socialization, such as the school and political parties, remain important to shaping young people's activities, young people are also engaging in what Giddens (1991) calls life politics—non-formalized ways of doing politics that involve lifestyle choices coalescing around broad-based social justice initiatives. Moreover, the analytical framework emphasizes the paradox that young people, due to the restriction placed on their lives, are also bound to a specific territorial location yet increasingly de-territorialized due to their access to information technologies and social media. Thus, their political activism is both local—shaped by the opportunities and restriction afforded in their local environments—as well as networked globally. Finally, the analytical framework suggests examining the strategic nature of young people's political and social engagements—their willingness to work through both formal and informal avenues to achieve their social change agendas.[1]

Methodologically, the larger project adopted a participatory approach to youth research in which young people actively participated as youth researchers under the guidance of university-based research experts. In participatory approaches, researchers collaboratively design projects that involve young people as co-researchers in various aspects of the research process, including project design, instrument design, data collection, and data analysis (Heath & Walker, 2012). A participatory approach to youth research was adopted for several reasons. First, participatory research is reflexive about power relations between adults and youth, pays attention to how research contributes to the construction of dominant representations of young people, and explores how these representations inform the types of youth-oriented policies possible (Lesko, 1996). Second, although some raise concerns that incorporating youth co-researchers into the research process compromises the trustworthiness and validity of data (Sharpe, 2012), others

have demonstrated that with adequate training and preparation, youth co-researchers can access experiences and perspectives unavailable to adults, thereby improving the overall quality of data collected (Schubotz, 2012; Sharpe, 2012). Finally, incorporating youth as co-researchers provides a space where young people can build confidence and develop important skills (Schubotz, 2012).

Within this larger conceptual and methodological framework, each research site was encouraged to adapt their approach to fit the specific context of their work. This flexibility allowed each research team to negotiate practically about the contextual features of their research site, but remain committed to the conceptual, methodological, and ethical components of the larger study. The notion of "flexibility within structure" aligns with Sharpe's (2012) insistence on the need to adopt flexible approaches to participatory research which holds that the level of youth participation may vary from step-to-step. It may not be necessary, possible, or desirable for young people to be involved in choosing the research topic and/or designing its overall objectives and the researcher may also wish to retain more control over data analysis procedures. This flexible approach is common in participatory research practices (McIntyre, 2008).

In Kosovo, we adopted a peer-to-peer interviewing approach in which five youth researchers were identified and trained to conduct semi-structured qualitative interviews with their highly-engaged peers. Youth researchers were active in various projects, clubs, and youth centers in their cities and were chosen for this project because of their previous experience with social activism activities. The youth researchers were themselves highly-engaged youth activists, although they varied in many aspects of their lives and engagement activities. Three females and two males between the ages of 18 and 21 years old participated in the project as youth researchers. One male was from the capital city Pristina, and the other male is from Prizren, the second largest city in Kosovo. Two females were from the divided northern city of Mitrovica, and the third female was from Rahovec, a mid-sized city located in southwest Kosovo. Youth researchers were involved in a variety of activities, such as advocating for gender equality, RAE rights, the social inclusion of children with Down Syndrome and other disabilities, interethnic reconciliation, and youth participation. In many ways, the youth researchers represented the social, cultural, and regional diversity of young people in Kosovo more generally.

To prepare for interviews, youth researchers participated in approximately

twelve hours of training meant to orient them to the larger project. Training sessions involved explaining the goals of the project, acquainting youth researchers with effective interview techniques, and familiarizing them with the standards of ethical social research. An important component of the training sessions was dedicated to collaboratively reviewing and revising the initial interview guide. An initial draft interview guide was presented to the youth researchers who were asked to suggest revisions. The resulting interview guide was divided into two main parts. The first part included questions that aimed to map the personal background of the interviewee, including questions about their family, school experiences, friendships, leisure activities, and community life. The goal of these initial questions was to get a sense of how interview participants understood themselves, their social world, and ordinary ways in which they engage in day-to-day life. In the second part of the interview, specific questions were asked about their perspectives and practices of social activism. After completing the training and developing the interview guide, each youth researcher was then responsible for conducting two initial tape-recorded interviews with peers involved in various social activism activities. Interview participants were recruited by youth researchers through their networks. Each participant was informed of the scope of the research and their rights as voluntary research participants. Participants were then asked to sign a consent form.

After youth researchers completed these two initial interviews, the research team gathered to reflect on their experiences. Our conversation was divided into three main components. First, youth researchers were asked to reflect generally on their experiences of the initial interviews. Second, our conversation focused on specific analytical questions. Youth researchers were asked to discuss the following topics: the demographic characteristics of their interview participants (i.e., age, ethnicity, city/region where they lived); the range of activities interview participants were involved in; the participants' motivations to be engaged and impacts of their engagement; the ongoing community needs as identified by the participants; and the potential inconsistencies or limitations in the received information. The research team took detailed discussion notes on the conversation and developed preliminary themes addressing the main research questions of the project. Third, we used the insights generated during the discussion session to revise or refine the interview guide. Following this initial meeting and the second revision to the interview guides, youth researchers were then responsible for completing three more interviews.

All interviews were then transcribed verbatim in the language (Albanian, Serbian, or English) in which the interview was originally conducted and then translated into English if needed. In total, twenty-four in-depth interviews were conducted by the youth researchers. Interview participants ranged in age from 17 to 24 years old. Thirteen males and eleven females were interviewed, and they came from various regions throughout the country, with 71% residing in urban areas. All participants were chosen by the youth researchers based on the participants' social activism activities and their desire to make a difference in their communities. Participants were Albanian (n=16), Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (n=4), Serbian (n=3), and Bosniak (n=1). Interviews lasted around one hour.

The adult researchers and facilitators for the Kosovo site (Ereblir Kadriu, Erwin Dimitri Selimos, and Janet Balyeat) analyzed the English versions of the interview transcripts and developed themes to describe interview participants' social engagement activities and experiences. Through our analysis, we developed a list of preliminary findings which were written as detailed analytical memoranda. We then met with the youth researchers and presented to them the analytical memoranda and initial findings. Adapting Frisina's (2010) "back-talk focus group" format, we asked the youth researchers to agree, disagree, and/or qualify our conclusions and insights. In their responses, we probed specifically for how their own experiences as highly-engaged activists related to the insights documented in the analytical memoranda. The inclusion of the youth researchers' own engagement experiences through their "back-talk" added a level of youth participation in the analysis process and additional empirical detail and richness to complement interview insights.

Findings

How do highly-engaged Kosovar youth learn about issues of social concern and take an active role in addressing these concerns? What motivates their involvement and what impact does it have on them as individuals as well as the larger society? In what follows, we organize our findings into the following sections: Motivations to Get Involved; Ways of Learning About

Initiatives; Places of Engagement; and Benefits, Risks, and Impact of Engagement.

Motivations to Get Involved

Highly-engaged youth demonstrated an interest in a range of issues and activities, including the promotion of gender equality, human and minority rights promotion, sexual health promotion, the inclusion of people with disabilities, interethnic reconciliation and peace-building, social integration of the RAE communities, anti-discrimination programs, and educational improvement.

Participants cited deep personal tragedies and experiences as primary motivations that compelled them to join existing organizations, campaigns, or initiatives that addressed issues of social justice. For example, Donika, a young activist, connected her participation in interethnic reconciliation and peace-building to a confluence of personal experiences, including witnessing the destruction of war, losing friends because of the politicization of ethnicity during the war, and her experiences as a refugee in Europe, where she felt firsthand the effects of social and racial stigmatization. When she returned to Kosovo, Donika dedicated herself to reconciliation efforts between Serbs and Albanians because, as she tells us, "I did not want other kids from Kosovo to experience what I experienced."

Participants also remarked that their deep personal attachments to local communities motivated them to look for opportunities to improve the conditions of local life. For instance, when asked what motivated him to become a social activist, Jon, an 18-year-old from the ethnically-divided northern city Mitrovica, responded that he wanted "to see the city better, to see the city [that has] suffered in the war, has suffered in the past ... [In] history Mitrovica was a 'big place' ... but it became a dark place. So, I really want to see this place a bit brighter ... Maybe I might have something this city needs."

Participants also expressed several pragmatic considerations when asked what motivated their social engagement activities. These interests were not related to concerns about social injustices, but rather emerged from a desire for self-development. For example, some participants chose to volunteer because they wanted to gain work experience, enhance their resumes, and

develop new competencies and skills that would improve their prospects in a highly competitive society that lacks opportunities for young people. For others, being involved in social engagement activities was a way to have fun: they could spend time with friends, make new friends, and learn new things. A very important factor in motivating participation cited by many young people was that available trainings and programs often offered young people the ability to travel throughout Europe–an important motivating factor given that Kosovars continue to experience significant travel and visa restrictions.

Ways of Learning About Initiatives

These young people learned about potential opportunities from friends, during informal and formal school presentations made by Civil Society Organizations, official public campaigns, or through acquaintances they knew from previous events or initiatives in which they participated. For example, Pajtim became involved in the Young Men's Initiative after being introduced to the project during a presentation at school.[2] He "liked their ideas" and joined several workshops as a participant. Inspired by the things that he learned, he now works three hours a week with the organization as a project coordinator where he assists with various outreach initiatives and workshops, including anti-homophobia campaigns, educating young people about family-based violence, and the ways in which young men could express "their feelings in an easier way." During his interview, he reflected on how he sees his work on gender equality as part of a larger process of social change in Kosovo:

> Our society has learned to do what our elders did. They basically told us what to do and we followed their orders ... We are trying to figure out our way. We are following some rules ... we don't even know who invented them, or that are written somewhere. When we stop and think, we are offending someone or they bring no good.

Many participants echoed Pajtim by stating that involvement in one initiative encouraged or snowballed into more initiatives. Through exposure to one issue, some became aware of and interested in additional social issues. Their

involvement connected them to people, either peers or older persons, and organizations through which they received information about additional opportunities. The ongoing participation in different national and international social activities and projects led to the development of an identity as a civically engaged and socially responsible young person in Kosovo.

Family practices and parental support, especially around attitudes toward gender, were very important in shaping young people's motivations and social activism. Most participants spoke about how their parents were supportive of their social activities and argued that this was not the case for many other young people in Kosovo. One of our youth researchers, herself highly active in interethnic reconciliation and a director of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that has been working to promote youth civic engagement and volunteerism, suggested that her outreach experiences revealed that many parents in rural areas, who often adhere to more traditional attitudes toward male and female roles, are reluctant to allow their daughters to "create friendships or go in some activities." This contrasts with another interview participant, a member of the Bosnian community living in Northern Mitrovica, whose parents were very supportive of her involvement in interethnic reconciliation efforts and escorted her weekly from Northern Mitrovica to attend conferences and workshops outside the city.

High schools were identified as a major pathway to learning about highly engaging projects, activities, or initiatives. Participants cited presentations and trainings done in their schools conducted by organizations such as the Red Cross (which included First Aid training, and information trainings about STDs and AIDS), Be a Man Clubs (an initiative originally funded by the CARE International Network), and Peer Education Network, which also trains youth about sexual reproductive health as well as safe and healthy sexual behaviors. In this way, schools enabled social and civic youth activism by being the distributer of the information, as well as the place for young people to meet and attend different workshops and trainings organized by non-governmental and youth organizations.

Places of Engagement

Conversations with highly-engaged youth revealed that a clear majority of young people's social change efforts took place in non-governmental organizations and/or youth organizations. Some participants were in fact leading representatives of these civil society organizations. A nexus of international and local organizations provided spaces and activities that young people could become engaged in. The issues or concern of focus were, therefore, not necessarily what the youth felt were most important issues in their communities. Instead, funding, often from international organizations and governments, drove these types of actions. However, in some cases young people used these organizations to design and create their own initiatives, actions, and activities.

What seemed to emerge in our conversations with highly-engaged youth was the perception that they were part of a loose network of active young people, evidenced by concerns expressed by some that "in every training [the] same people participate, not different people. New people don't join us." Conversations also revealed that many highly-engaged youth developed an identity as "active youth" in contradistinction to the passive or apathetic youth of Kosovo, which were characterized by our participants as constituting most young people in Kosovo. Most of our participants differentiated themselves from their fellow peers. They tended to see themselves as active, while depicting most young people as disengaged or even apathetic. They provided different reasons for the assumed passivity of other young people: some blamed young people who they thought did not care, had no hope, or were more concerned with having fun or being popular, and others suggested that adults and the government ignored young people's ideas or did not do enough to reach out and learn from them.

Benefits, Risks, and Impacts of Engagement

Participants identified many positive benefits of their social activism. Their involvement was important in their own self-development and enhanced their perspectives. Involvement gave them an opportunity to learn new things and travel to places outside of Kosovo to attend study visits and

conferences. Other participants reported on the positive benefit of building their resumes and advancing their credentials. On a more affective level, social activism made many young people feel better about themselves. Their involvement improved their self-esteem and self-respect. Working jointly on projects made some of them feel more connected to their friends and colleagues. This sense of accomplishment and human connectedness is summarized by one of our youth researchers who told us that just seeing the "smiles from children of different people from different ethnic backgrounds" during workshops on interethnic reconciliation justified her efforts. Such an image provided a sense of hope within a societal context characterized by many difficult social and political challenges.

Young activists pointed to positive community changes engendered by their activities. In Mitrovica, for example, a group of young people did a study of what their community needed, and one identified a need for public toilets in the city. They petitioned the municipality and as a result, there are now two public toilets in the city which are maintained by municipal finances. In Prishtina, several young men from the Be a Man Club organized a public cooking activity in the city center in which boys cooked food publicly in the city square and gave it away for free to any passerby. The initiative was designed to encourage discussion about changing gender roles in society and, specifically, to create dialogue about conceptions of masculinity. According to one youth activist involved in the cook-in, many men approached them and questioned why they were performing women's work. This opened an opportunity for a discussion about gender equality. One participant who is highly active in promoting the rights of RAE communities spoke of establishing a radio station specifically for the RAE communities living in the municipality of Gjakova. This initiative was meant to address the fact that many RAE members cannot read and/or are hesitant to approach government officials due to a long history of discrimination and abuse. As such, the radio station was designed specifically to educate the RAE community of their legal rights and to act as an essential source of information about various programs, activities, and services.[3]

Although attempting to address social issues had important positive impacts on both young people personally and on their communities, being active, especially around controversial topics and issues, was risky and led to criticism from other people. Some young people spoke about being teased or criticized for their activities in ways that were meant to disparage their efforts, beliefs, and goals. For example, one young female Albanian activist,

who at the time of our conversation had been active in interethnic reconciliation in Mitrovica, spoke about being criticized by her Albanian peers for speaking Serbian (she is fluent in Serbian) with Serbian peers. One time, she was accused of being Serbian, which was intended as a threatening and disparaging comment:

I speak Serbian fluently and in trainings when I talk to Serbs, my friends usually say to me, "Why do you speak Serbian? Where did you learned it?" [Interviewer: Do they say it in a mean way?] Sometimes, yes. I know also of some of my friends being asked, "Why do you cooperate with Roma people or other ethnicities?"

A common point of discussion in our conversations was the sense among many young activists of the overwhelming number of social needs that have to be addressed in Kosovo. Several spoke of the need to get other people involved in various initiatives and to increase the number of young people instead of only including those who have already been participating. Others spoke of the need for educational campaigns to increase people's knowledge of human rights, to educate people about domestic violence, and to inform people about the struggles of people living with disabilities in Kosovo.

In sum, traditional institutions of socialization, such as families and schools, remain important in enabling young people's social engagement. A strong sense of attachment and identification with local places, like their neighborhood, city, or town, emerged as an important factor underpinning their desire to address social issues. Participants also expressed a mix of social-ethical and instrumental reasons for their engagement. Social engagement was viewed as important to "building a better society," but also as a means of gaining skills and experiences advantageous in a society attempting to reconstruct and integrate itself into international financial, political, and cultural institutions, namely the European Union. Their social change efforts most often took place in non-governmental organizations and youth organizations, frequently funded by international organizations. These organizations enabled their engagement by introducing youth to new issues and providing them with initiatives to get involved in addressing them. Through doing so, these organizations also shaped the topics and nature of the youth social engagement agenda. Finally, their social change activities had important benefits on their sense of self and often resulted in practical changes to their local communities.

Concluding Remarks

Our exploratory research points to interesting questions that we believe deserve further exploration and analysis. First, non-governmental and youth organizations are critical in shaping young people's engagement activities, including the very types of issues they attempt to address because funding arrangements and organizational missions often drive programing. While highly-engaged youth are often committed to addressing the issues and concerns identified by these organizations and advocate through and within these organizations, there is still a need to explore the extent to which young people themselves participate in setting the agenda and how this participation might vary based on organizational setting. Furthermore, few interview participants spoke about participating in policy-decisions through government-sponsored youth centers. This could be an issue of sampling, but the relative absence of this experience may also point to the ineffective implementation of youth participation rights as articulated in official Kosovar laws (see Feltes, 2013).

Second, highly-engaged youth suggest that families have a significant impact on accessing programs and initiatives. This is not surprising given the enduring influence of familialism in Kosovo. However, there are many questions that warrant more research, and these include exploration of factors which explain families' reluctance to allow their children to participate in these initiatives. As noted earlier, an important social distinction in Kosovo is between the rural and urban folk. These distinctions are often framed through explicit value distinctions—rural lifestyles tend to be more conservative, traditional, and religious, while urban lifestyles were more progressive "European" and cosmopolitan. Many of these programs and initiatives articulate liberal social change agendas and are targeted to specific cultural issues, like gender equality or interethnic prejudice reduction. To what extent are the identified issues of participation the result of a collision of differing value orientations?

Third, and related to the point above, our conversations reveal what appears to be networks of inclusion and exclusion with respect to young people's participation in social initiatives. Participants spoke about their impressions that "in every training [the] same people participate, not different people. New people don't join us." Such comments suggest that participation is being confined to a loosely-structured network of young

people. Given the EU integration thrust and value-sets of these programs, this raises the question of the extent to which this uneven participation reproduces social distinctions among youth. Even more, does this uneven participation reproduce inequalities through an unequal distribution of social and cultural capital? Are certain youth being "left behind" as Kosovar society attempts to reconstruct and integrate itself into international financial, political, and cultural institutions, namely the European Union?

Future research should examine young people's participatory experiences in non-governmental youth-focused organizations, consider the degree of participatory influence they have in shaping the agenda and activities of these organizations, and document the processes of implementing youth participation in policy decisions as outlined by Kosovar laws. This research should also consider the unequal impact that participation may have on youth and consider practical strategies to enhance youth participation in the third sector. Such research would provide valuable information that could be used to enhance the effectiveness of the youth sector in Kosovo.

References

Baczewska, E., Cachon, M. F., Daniel, Y., & Selimos, E. D. (2018). Mapping the terrain of strategic politics among social change-oriented youth. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 21(3), 288-303. doi:10.1080/13676261.2017.1366649

Berisha, I., & Kunushevci, L. (2017). The legacy of colonialism in Kosova: An interview with Ibrahim Berisha. *Global Dialogue: Magazine of the International Sociological Association*, 7(3). Retrieved from http://globaldialogue.isa-sociology.org/the-legacy-of-colonialism-in-Kosovo-an-interview-with-ibrahim-berisha/

Cani, B. (2015, February 13). Lack of opportunity lead to mass exodus from Kosovo. *Deutsche Welle*. Retrieved from http://www.dw.com/en/lack-of-opportunity-leads-to-mass-exodus-from-kosovo/a-18256218

Clark, H. (2000). *Civil resistance in Kosovo*. London, U.K.: Pluto Press.

Daniel, Y., & Antoniw, J. (2016). Introduction to youth-led civic engagement for Tikkun: A developing partnership across borders (Canada, South Africa and Kosovo). *Citizenship Education Research Journal*, 5(1), 3-13. Retrieved from http://ejournals.ok.ubc.ca/index.php/CERJ/article/view/13

EULEX. (n.d.). What is EULEX? Retrieved from https://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/?page=2,16

Feltes, T. (2013). Youth and democracy: The promotion of youth participation by the international community in Kosovo. *Security & Human Rights*, 24, 195-209. doi:10.1163/18750230-02402010

Frisina, A. (2010). Young Muslims' everyday tactics and strategies: Resisting Islamophobia, negotiating Italianness, becoming citizens. *Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31(5), 557-572. doi:10.1080/07256868.2010.513087

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity.

Gjinovci, R. (2016). Kosovo's education system amongst the worst in the world. *Prishtina Insight*. Retrieved from https://prishtinainsight.com/kosovos-education-system-amongst-worst-world/

Gjocaj, S. (2016). Kosovo's poor future. *Prishtina Insight*. Retrieved from https://prishtinainsight.com/kosovos-poor-future/

Gola, A., & Selaci, G. (2017). Socio-political and religious dynamics in Kosovo from the post-secularist perspective. *Croatian Political Science Review*, 54(4), 85-108. Retrieved from https://hrcak.srce.hr/190339

Heath, S., & Walker, C. (2012). *Innovations in youth research*. Houndsmills, UK: Palgrave MacMillian.

Kosovo Agency of Statistics. (2017). Statistical yearbook of the Republic of Kosovo. *Prishtina, Kosovo: Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Republic of Kosovo*. Retrieved from http://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/statistical-yearbook-of-the-republic-of-kosovo-for-2017

Krasniqi, G. (2013). State borders, symbolic boundaries and contested geographical space. *Transitions*, 52(2), 29-51. Retrieved from https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/files/15270778/State_borders_symbolic_boundaries_and_contested_geographical_space.pdf

Lesko, N. (1996). Past, present, and future conceptions of adolescence. *Educational Theory*, 45(4), 453-472. doi:10.1111/j.1741-5446.1996.00453.x

Malcolm, N. (1998). *Kosovo: A short history*. New York City, NY: New York University Press.

McIntyre, A. (2008). *Participatory action research*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publication, Inc.

Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. (2013). Kosovo Strategy for Youth, 2013-2027. Retrieved from https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/KOSOVO_STRATEGY_FOR_YOUTH.pdf

Pasha, A., Xhangolli, K., Dundo, J., Gjokuta, B., Tahiri, Z., & Lena, O. (2012). Kosovo youth study: Forward looking, grounded in tradition. *Friedirch Ebert Stiftung and IDRA Research & Consulting.* Retrieved from http://www.idracompany.com/en/news-publications/publications/kosovo-youth-study-2012

Republic of Kosovo. (2009). Law on the empowerment and participation of youth. Retrieved from http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kosovo_2009_Youth_Law.pdf

Schubotz, D. (2012). Involving young people as peer researchers on community relations in Northern Ireland. In S. Heath & C. Walker (Eds.), *Innovations in youth research* (pp. 101-120). Houndsmills, UK: Palgrave MacMillian.

Sharpe, D. (2012). Young people and policy research: Methodological challenges of CYP-led research. In S. Heath & C. Walker (Eds.), *Innovations in youth research* (pp. 161-177). Houndsmills, UK: Palgrave MacMillian.

Tahiri, P. (2014). Concepts of citizenship among school students in Kosovo. *Kosovo Education Center.* Retrieved from https://phzh.ch/globalassets/ipe.phzh.ch/forschung-und-lehre/concept-of-citizenship-among-school-students-in-kosovo.pdf

UNDP Kosovo. (2017). Public pulse XIII. Retrieved from http://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/publications.html

---

[1] Please see Baczewska et al. (2018) for a more detailed discussion of this analytical framework.

[2] Led by CARE International, the Young Men's Initiative has been implemented throughout the Balkan region with the aim of building more gender-equitable and non-violent lifestyles among youth. The initiative uses media campaigns and school-based curriculum to encourage young men to reflect on how gender norms lead to the inequitable treatment of women and girls. For more information, please see http://www.icrw.org/where-we-work/young-men-initiative-balkans

[3] See, for instance http://birn.eu.com/uncategorized/rae-community-establishes-a-radio-station-in-gjakova/ and Radio Prosperiteti at http://www.radioprosperiteti.com/

2. Artnote: Data as Performance

CHRIS RABIDEAU AND KAREN ROLAND

Abstract

This description of the Artnote is included as a means with which to share with the reader our perspectives concerning the development of an innovative approach to presenting data, specifically, the research findings of the Tikkun youth researchers through an arts-based ethnographic (personally immersive and reflexive) practice – a method of presenting research data as performance. The Artnote, rather than a keynote address, was presented at the Tikkun Youth Symposium to facilitate the inclusive participation of youth researchers from all five of the Tikkun research sites. In this chapter the following aspects of the Artnote will be discussed: **the vision for creating the Artnote** to celebrate the voices of youth; **data as performance** as the means used to engage youth, researchers, and the audience in meaningful discussion, and further, to develop an experiential understanding of the data presented; and the use of the Artnote as a novel approach for mobilizing knowledge and thereby **fostering the voice of youth leadership in social justice research and activism**.

   Key Words/Phrases: vision for the Artnote; data as performance; fostering the voice of youth leadership in social justice research and activism, mobilizing knowledge

---

This description of the Artnote is included as a means with which to share with the reader our perspectives concerning the development of an innovative approach to presenting data, specifically, the research findings of the Tikkun youth researchers through an arts-based ethnographic (personally immersive and reflexive) practice – a method of presenting research data as performance. By "performance," we mean that rather than a keynote address to present the research findings from each of the Tikkun research sites, the Artnote was presented at the Tikkun Youth Symposium

to facilitate the inclusive participation of youth researchers from all five of the Tikkun research sites, along with the audience. The Artnote was created as an interactive and experiential performance which attempted to create "a transformative 'liminal space' for the audience" (Bagley, 2008, p. 67). In other words, the objective of the Artnote was not only to disseminate research data, but also to immerse the youth researchers *and* the audience in an experiential learning event. The goal was to share stories and insights through this creative process, and to engage with and increase our knowledge and view of the world from a global perspective.

In this chapter, the authors will present their perspectives of the following: the project team vision for creating the Artnote as a means of celebrating the voices of youth; presenting data as performance to engage youth, researchers, and the audience in meaningful discussion, and further, to develop an experiential understanding of the data presented; and the use of the Artnote as a novel means with which to mobilize knowledge and thereby foster the voice of youth leadership in social justice research and activism. As members of the Tikkun Youth Project, we developed this chapter about the Artnote through a collaborative writing process which included a discussion of storytelling and a focus on the arts as media for expression and knowledge mobilization. Knowledge mobilization is an essential aspect of research. In our work, knowledge mobilization was viewed not only for the purpose of disseminating research findings to add to the body of knowledge about social justice and activism, but also, through the Artnote presentation, a means with which to provide the added element of access to the research findings through an experiential lens – data as performance. To ensure that we were able to convey a nuanced understanding of the Artnote and its development, implementation, and ability to engage and empower youth, some sections of this chapter offer a narrative that was collaboratively developed.

The Artnote Vision

Have you ever attended a lecture or research symposium and felt that while intellectually you may have understood what was being shared, you did not feel a personal connection to the research findings presented or the experiences of the researchers? Did you walk away without having

experienced a personal understanding of the research and the findings? Did the research data and the findings shared by the researchers affect your world view? These were central concerns and a focus of the members of the Tikkun Youth Project – the youth researchers not only wanted to disseminate their research, but also wanted to act as agents of change and to present their research data in a manner that further encompassed their identity as global social justice activists and advocates to promote social change. Therefore, it was essential that the Artnote be developed as a collaborative and educational arts-based initiative based on the research data from each of the Tikkun project research sites; this multi-epistemic data included ideas, stories, poems, songs, and the personal experiences and narratives of youth researchers. Built upon the foundation of the *Tikkun* philosophy of healing and reconciliation, the Artnote was collectively created to reflect the social, educational, and environmental factors that were concerning from a youth perspective about the world, and how we as citizens of the world can work together to begin to heal and to answer the call of social justice. As an ethnographic data performance strategy, the Tikkun youth researchers ensured that the Artnote embraced the power of the story to illustrate truth, lived experience, empathy, and understanding. As Bell (2010) asserted, "Stories are one of the most powerful and personal ways that we learn about the world…. stories operate on both individual and collective levels, they can bridge the sociological, abstract with the psychological, personal contours of daily experience" (p. 16). In the remainder of this chapter, the term "data" will be used to describe the research findings shared and experienced by the Tikkun researchers as described above.

Following Dewey's (1938) assertion, "the principle that development of experience comes through interaction means that education is essentially a social process" (p. 38); the process used to develop the Artnote was a shared collaborative and social experience during which the youth researchers from each of the Tikkun project sites were able to share their stories, insights, and reflections. In doing this, the youth researchers shared the data from their research in a creative manner. The Artnote participants, as co-creators in this process, were given the opportunity to identify the data that were used and then to choose the focus of their narratives and artistic expression to be included in the Artnote performance. This was done through the following epistemologically reflexive processes: reflections of the self in the world, reflections of social duty and responsibility, and reflections on

the world (worldview). Through these reflective processes, and by using creative expression, the participants were able to identify specifically what art form they wanted to use to present their research data. The options included drama, dance, visual arts, poetry, music, video, or any other art form they wished. The element of choice was critical for this creative process to respect the dignity of the youth researchers, ensuring their comfort, and most importantly, the authentic representation of the research data they were sharing – data as performance.

Creating the Artnote

The process of creating the Artnote began in the spring of 2016 when Chris Rabideau, an award-winning social justice, community-engaged artist, was invited to join the Tikkun Youth Project as Artistic Director for the April 2017 Tikkun Beyond Borders: Connecting Youth Voices, Leading Change Symposium. As an artist and educator, Chris was an ideal candidate given his extensive background working with youth locally to create theatre-based performances and projects that address social justice issues; he has worked with community not-for-profit organizations, school boards and community groups. His thoughtful and intentional respect for youth and their "voices" was demonstrated by his ability to be flexible and fluid within the artistic process.[1]

We believe that the youth researchers' vision of the Artnote was that of a "call to action." As the authors of this chapter, we have collaborated to develop the story behind the Artnote – its inception, creative process of development, and outcomes. Our discussion in this chapter of the Artnote includes a narrative we developed collaboratively. We have done this to ensure that the meaning and nuances of the creative process are described accurately. In this way we have worked together to share these perspectives, as noted below:

> When meeting with the Tikkun project team to discuss the concept of a keynote presentation for the 2017 Symposium, we were intrigued by the prospect of youth from different communities around the world gathering together to share their research and thoughts about "repairing our world" through youth activism and advocacy. As we began to share ideas, it was evident that at the

core, the Tikkun Symposium objective was to celebrate the culture, identity, and individuality of the youth researchers from each of the five project sites. The Artnote would essentially be an opportunity to use the arts to explain, and most importantly, experience educational research.

The Arts are a powerful medium for expression. They provide an authentic communication process that can create an educational and empowering experience with the potential to affect positive social change in our communities and institutions. Arts education, as a pedagogical approach, provides individuals and groups with an educational experience by which they may empathically step inside the shoes of the "other." For the youth researchers we saw this process as the means by which to develop their self-confidence, leadership, and communication skills. The Arts have the power to illuminate social issues such as discrimination, stereotyping, and violence, while developing awareness and empathy in our communities and our classrooms. As social justice artists and advocates, we knew that this was the way to provide the youth researchers with the opportunity to share their stories, and to bring not only a piece of home with them, but also to showcase their talents through the Arts. An example of this was illustrated through the performance and video created by the Thunder Bay youth researchers to share their research data about the experiences of First Nations youth in navigating curricular challenges, having to travel in some cases up to a thousand miles or more to attend school, and therefore having to be absent from home for many months at time – all in the pursuit of education in Ontario. Their research findings were articulated through the performance of their research data during the Artnote (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Thunder Bay researchers' Artnote performance.

Celebrating the Voices of Youth

An essential aspect of our collaboration to create the Artnote began by contacting the Tikkun researchers at each of the project sites (South Africa, Kosovo, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and Windsor) prior to their arrival at the University of Windsor; the initial steps of this process are noted:

> As we started to plan, we realized what a challenging undertaking the Artnote was going to be. This was exciting and yet concerning too: Could we effectively translate this excitement into action? Several other questions also came to mind: How much time would we have to put this collaborative presentation of research data together as performance? How would we begin? Where would be the best venue to hold the Artnote, and what would be the needs in this creative space to ensure an interactive audience experience? Would the youth researchers involved even like the idea of an Artnote?

The goal was to provide youth researchers with a unique and creative process through which to mobilize knowledge about social justice issues and thereby ensure that their "voices" about how they, as youth, have been answering the call of social justice in their communities. The process unfolded organically by allowing the voices of the youth to guide us. In gathering background information, we learned that many of the youth researchers had been working in their home communities on a diverse range of social justice projects and that in some cases, they had brought with them fully formed arts-based performance concepts such as songs, poems, and/or dance. However, the central focus of all of their work was to make change and to promote the voice of youth as change agents. At each of the Tikkun project sites, this focus was clearly articulated, as was the need to address social justice as a call to action led by youth. In addition to the Windsor site's call to action for economic justice through their Fight for $15 & Fairness project, during our initial meeting at the University of Windsor campus, the youth researchers from the other Tikkun project sites also identified the following calls to action: "Thunder Bay site – Clean water for all; South African site – One school, one library, one librarian; Toronto site – Tuition way too high, you need to cut it; and Kosovo site – No walls, more bridges!" All of the Tikkun projects collectively were a global call to action – youth leading social change!

The development of the Artnote was similar in many respects to Bell's (2010) Storytelling Project Model in that there was a concerted effort to create a "community of diverse members in which stories" (p. 20) could be shared. Bell's model consists of four connected story types: stock stories, concealed stories, counter-stories, and stories of resistance. The "stock stories" are those perpetuated and told by mainstream society. They contrast with the "concealed stories" which Bell identified as those told and kept secret by marginalized groups. These concealed stories effectively "portray the strengths and capacities within marginalized communities" (p. 23). The national pride and cultural heritage expressed by the Kosovo youth researchers may be considered an example of concealed stories. Counter-stories also consciously seek to disrupt "stock stories" through the storytelling process. Bell's storytelling model also incorporates stories of "resistance" that articulate how marginalized groups defy and challenge the discrimination perpetuated by societal "stock" stories. The South African youth researchers presented research data that illustrated these stories of resistance – they chose to use their voices in song, poetry, action, and

improvisation to recreate life at home and to represent the data collected as articulated in the song performed as part of the Artnote script: "My Mother was a kitchen girl, My Father was a garden boy; that's why I'm an activist, that's why I'm an activist!"

Finally, in her work, Bell (2010) suggests that the Storytelling Project Model fosters the creation of "emerging/transforming stories" – new stories that not only challenge the stock stories, but also build upon the messages of truth and activism to "interrupt the status quo and energize change" (p. 25). Storytelling may require some messiness and move people outside of their comfort zones; however, this messiness and tension are necessary aspects of the process, and this was definitely experienced during the creation of the Artnote performance. Some of the impressions concerning guiding the youth researchers to develop their stories through an arts-based process including the following:

> The creation of the Artnote presentation was not an easy task. Initially, each of the project sites were contacted, but there were many unanticipated communication difficulties such as access to the Internet and working with different time zones that proved to be quite challenging at times. Once each site was contacted, we began by discussing with the youth researchers the idea of presenting their research data at the Symposium using an Artnote presentation. Initially, we thought that they would love the idea. However, as we discussed the concept further, they began to realize the scope of what was being asked of them. As the objective of using data as performance started to set in, most groups began to respond with concern and fears: So, what is it exactly that you want us to do? What do you mean by "artistic"? Am I going to be on stage and required to act? I don't understand what you mean. This stage in the Artnote development began to feel like a very disorganized and chaotic classroom where the lesson is not going well! However, everyone was clearly engaged!

At this stage we took a step back with the realization that many of the youth researchers may never have had an experience within the Arts in terms of an arts-based experiential performance. The unstructured and creative aspect of using the arts as a medium to present research data felt foreign and difficult. The participants struggled with conceptualizing the end product

– this was especially difficult given that the Artistic Director did not know what it would "look like" either. The uncertainty was unnerving to some. We discussed that this was part of the creative process and that experimentation is an essential aspect of the arts and the creative process. However, we were cognizant that living in the unknown can be difficult for people particularly as we live in a society of yes and no, black and white, where boundaries and rules guide our thinking. We have found that the arts can provide endless possibilities; Jenna, a youth from the Toronto site, eloquently captures this spirit of possibilities in her poem included in the Artnote script:

> What is a rainbow but an optical illusion? A series of 42 degree angle refractions of light,
> Creating the appearance of colours, One falling naturally on top of the other
> It is said that no one experiences the exact same rainbow Rather, it is dependent on each specific angle and perspective, Each unique reflection
> It is an intersection of light and water and oneself Which results in a both beautiful and orderly
> deception Placing one above the other, but this vision a regression
> The community is trapped within a fallacy of hierarchies, Where levels of exclusion dismiss one's
> identity when it is too far from comprehensive ability
> Where gay is okay, but only when it matches the correct shade, And where you can use the
> washroom beside me, but only if you stay at least two feet away
> Trapped in a thought wave that one's oppression dismisses the opportunity to be the oppressor
> And that love is love is love, and the rights to love are fought and gotten But when this love
> does not speak the same language, it is quickly forgotten
> What is a rainbow but an optical illusion? A system of hierarchy which reflects a method of
> exclusion This is a challenge to claim that all love is truly love, and all rights are everyone's
> rights, to question which colour and voice in this hierarchy is prioritized.
> No matter who is the apple of your eye, or what is between one's

thighs,
A challenge to make sure each colour is visible, no matter how one's
queerness is identified.

Therefore, to engage in possibilities to create the Artnote, it was necessary to find that empathetic place within ourselves so that we could understand each other. In responding to the youth researchers' concerns and fears of the creative process, the goal was to break down walls, not start putting them up. We had to acknowledge that the youth researchers were looking for structure, but the fact was that *they* were the architects of this structure – the Artnote was their creation. We explained to the Tikkun youth researchers that we wanted *them* to guide *us* as they were the authors of the field experience and research data. Similar to Bell's (2010) Storytelling Model, this creative process led to further but nonetheless necessary confusion, which ultimately, through consistent guidance and support, resulted in the creation of an Artnote presentation.

Essential to the success of this collaborative creative process was the consistent support and mentorship provided by the Windsor youth researchers as the host project site. Their efforts proved key to our collective achievement of an Artnote presentation! Prior to all the Tikkun sites joining us at the Symposium in Windsor, the Artistic Director had the opportunity to work closely with the Windsor project participants so that they could embrace the role of host site. We wanted to ensure that the artistic pieces created by the Windsor group, based on their Fight for $15 & Fairness project for economic justice, would ultimately unite the project as a whole, as well as provide a loose structure for the preliminary design of the Artnote. We did not have much access to what the other Tikkun project groups were doing prior to their arrival at the University of Windsor, Faculty of Education, and we wanted to make sure the Windsor group gave us a *broth* in which to create our artistic soup.

Therefore, from the perspective of the Tikkun youth researchers and the Artistic Director, the Artnote proved to be an ethnographic educational strategy which reflected many of the stories as identified by Bell (2010) in her Storytelling Model, and which carefully embedded reflective practices by using the arts as the medium of research dissemination – data as performance. This was clearly demonstrated as creation of the Artnote was driven by the research data in the form of personal stories and reflections by the youth and research participants. This was a truthful and authentic

approach to developing the performance. As Prus (1996) shared, the arts have always been a powerful and impactful medium for conveying the authentic narratives of humanity.

Data as Performance

The Artnote was comprised of two essential elements: *art* and *note*. The first focus was on the *art*, referring to the artistic process and practice, which showcased the development and form in which participants delivered ideas and contributions through an artistic prism. The experience of developing and performing the Artnote was supported by the literature indicating that the arts can offer a limitless world of opportunity to share insights and research findings. Through their participation, the Tikkun youth researchers were able to share their stories and develop an artistic approach to showcase their research data. The other key component of the Artnote was the opportunity that the audience was provided with to engage in the lived experiences and narratives of the youth researchers – data as performance. This other aspect, the *note*, was an ethnographic educational strategy that allowed all participants of the Artnote, including the audience, to have a collective experience with which to promote an empathic understanding of the data presented. The *note* was what was left with the audience – an impression, a feeling. This became the signature, the human imprint of research data as performance: the audience reflected on the process as the performance was unfolding. Just like reading a text and having an opinion, the audience was left with having lived an experience that attempted to provide them with an empathic understanding of the research data.

The Artnote sought to disrupt, challenge, and engage the audience with the research data – not as passive receivers of information, but rather as engaged constructivists of a new reality. They were engaging in what Bell (2010) opined as a "different kind of listening" (p. 47), given that the Artnote audience was provided with the opportunity to "experience" the research data, to empathically listen to the lived-experiences shared through the data. The result of this experiential process was to challenge the audience's ways of knowing the world, and thereby underscore a developing understanding of the experience of others. Through this engagement, the participants both within the process and those who witnessed the Artnote performance were

given the opportunity to step inside the shoes of another and be part of a transformative experience. This was a rare research opportunity: data were not only disseminated, but also shared as a collective experience. This collective experience was congruent with Dewey's (1934) assertion that, "the arts remove the veils that keep the eyes from seeing" (p. 325). Talisha, a Toronto youth researcher, communicated this "removing the veil" when she spoke about feminism in this excerpt from the Artnote performance:

> I wonder,
> Is your feminism my feminism?
> Does your feminism fight my fight
> Walk my walk
> Talk my talk
> Who is your feminism for?
> Is it for the Muslim women who are constantly being targets for hate crimes
> Is it for the black women who march on the front lines?
> Is it for the indo-Caribbean women who never seem to belong
> Is it for the missing and murdered indigenous women?
> Do you march with BLM, no justice no peace
> Do you march to the strawberry ceremony?
> Have you marched for people who look like me?
> So I ask who is your feminism for?

Building the Show

In discussing the stages of development for the Artnote, including the initial creation of the Artnote idea, the Tikkun project team considered: How could an Artnote be a means of presenting research data? What other aspects of the Artnote could be developed and explored? What changes were made to the initial Artnote idea as each Tikkun project site worked on their data as performance? What was the impact of the convergence of arts-based and non-arts-based learners in the process? What were the challenges? During the first contact with individual research sites, what were the challenges that no one saw coming? How were these challenges navigated? What approach was used, and did this approach work? During the symposium, how did the

research project sites coalesce data to weave together a collective Artnote presentation – data as performance? These were questions central to the collective and collaborative process used in creating the Artnote, data as performance:

> What we wanted was for each Tikkun project site to use an arts medium such as dance, drama, poetry, video, song, etc., to showcase the injustices that they witnessed or experienced in their communities via presentation of their research data. The role of the Artistic Director was to weave their stories together. Underlying this process was the understanding that the arts provides an environment in which both experiential tasks and idea-making create more experiences to form a presentation structure.

Personal narratives and storytelling can be an explorative way to guide a project. To guide the participants through a web of stories, we challenged the youth researchers to consider: How do your stories connect? What common themes are developed? What do we want to say, and how can we say it? The youth researchers were not only contributors, but also the authors of the Artnote. Initially, the youth researchers had been seeking a structured beginning, middle, and end to the Artnote, and the uncertainty of weaving their research narratives into the collective Artnote was unnerving.

  As noted previously, the creation of the Artnote began through initial contacts made by the Artistic Director to the various Tikkun project site participants. However, we suggest that the creative process really began in earnest once all the youth researchers convened to form a collective body of researchers at the University of Windsor, Faculty of Education. In retrospect, many aspects of the theory of stages of small group development that were identified by Tuckman and Jensen (1977) were displayed during the development of this collective as a community: forming, storming, norming, performing, and transforming. Getting to know each other, sharing research, and sharing personal stories were all aspects essential to forming a collective identity. Sharing intellectual and physical space was part of the storming and norming aspects of collective development. Furthermore, the process of creating the Artnote gave youth the opportunity to develop as a community of researchers through the stages of performing and transforming:

> When the youth arrived, we in Windsor felt a great sense of responsibility. Before we could move ahead with the project, it was

imperative that we took the time to get to know one another. Any dramatic endeavour needs to begin with all parties understanding each other, and where the "other" is at. This meant that our first goal was to get to know the youth researchers and to reach out to them on a personal level. We did our best to carefully observe and attend to everything that was said – and to what was not said. We had to get to know each other, and in doing so, we had to learn to trust each other. In this trust-building process it is often best to start by sharing oneself – putting yourself in a personally vulnerable position to foster both trust and community-building. To facilitate this, the entire group was given the opportunity to take part in a number of trust exercises and activities as part of their orientation. These activities proved to be very helpful. Everyone needed to trust each other. That's where we had to start – earning trust.

This need to earn trust to foster the creative process was also evident during initial work with the Windsor project site – the Artnote process really began with building trust with the members of the host site. With the Windsor project site, we started to build trust by "playing" together. When we are children, we play not for sport but for fun. When someone wins, "play" becomes a game or sport. However, by playing we learn how to share, grow, and develop as individuals. Adults, it seems, have forgotten how to play. Through play and efforts to consciously build a sense of community, we began to trust each other.

With this sense of community and trust, when meeting with all the project sites, although we were aware that we had very limited time to create our collective performance, each group was encouraged to experiment and to draw upon their experiences and their research data. Following this, the youth researchers were invited to share with each other in a "show-and-tell" exercise to reveal their preliminary plans for presenting their data. This was very helpful. When these sharing presentations were completed, each group was asked questions to guide them in weaving their stories together into a collective Artnote performance. In all, the Artnote was conceived, written, and presented within a 2-day period! The narratives, which were based on the research findings (data) and stories shared, were used to build a final blueprint for the Artnote, which included staging the performance.

To effectively create the experiential aspect of our performance, the stage was designed to consist of 12 to 16 riser platforms with the cast seated with

the audience on three sides. This was done to allow the cast to sit when they were not on stage. The performance was intended to be completely in the round, meaning that the audience would be seated in a circle arrangement around the perimeter of the stage area; seating was an essential consideration as we wanted to ensure our ability to immerse the audience experientially so that they were able to empathically understand the diverse worldview and experiences portrayed by the youth in their performances. Ultimately, given the space available and the requirements of the performance, the staging of the show was more of a "thrust stage," with the audience seated along 3 sides of the stage, allowing a back wall to be used as a screen for projected images and providing a dedicated space for musical instruments.

Figure 2. Creating the Artnote.

This novel approach to data as performance underscored how we as research participants may reflect through an arts-based activity, and how our reflexivity may be presented in the form of data dissemination as performance. Freire (1985) stated that the process of "realizing a theme" requires that one must reflect and acknowledge our personal and epistemological "truth" of reality, and that this notion of "truth" has a significance on the origins of the "theme" we then develop (p. 112). In other

words, our actions – and our reflections on these actions – transform the world by which we are transformed. Through the Artnote, as collective participants, we were able to engage in reflective expressions as "reflection to self" and "reflection to our world." Some of the youth researchers were experiencing, for the first time, being involved in an arts-based performance to experientially present research data. This, in turn, may have created difficulty for some to conceptualize the meaning and feeling of the performance until the Artnote performance was fully realized and experienced. The arts are a continuum, always moving and evolving. People often look at the end product as the learned experience; as educators, we have found that for many students the final mark they receive in a course is how they determine what is learned. However, the arts continue to push us and teach us during the process, through the experience, as well as after the experience has concluded; this experiential learning process provides an opportunity for the learner to rethink their worldview, their epistemological (way of knowing) positions as well as, most importantly, allowing for greater empathy and understanding to see another's point of view. The arts, through the creative process, can stimulate deeper thought and introspection and ultimately lead us to action. The process is just as important as the final result. In many ways, the process is rather more important than the end product. The "play," the questioning, and the learning-though process are what nurture the participant's growth and development.

An example of this learning-through process during the Artnote was the graffiti wall – an oversized piece of paper that appeared upstage of the performance space and became a living document. We thought that the use of the graffiti wall would allow for the cast and the audience to write freely about how they felt in real time. The youth researchers placed key words, thoughts, statements, and themes on the wall as the production was lived and experienced. This added an element of improvisation and helped make the performance relevant and engaging. It also reinforced the *note* aspect of the Artnote that the youth and audience were collectively creating. The graffiti wall became a document of record – a living document that the audience members could add to after the show. It also served as a record of how the cast felt in the performance as it was unfolding.

Figure 3. Artnote – The graffiti wall.

We found that the Artnote had a physical, spiritual, and emotional impact on all involved. This impact was the transformative power of understanding which moved us all as Artnote participants to reflect and engage through an embodied/experiential understanding of the research data presented. Dhouha's moving story about leaving her home in the Artnote script illustrated this transformative impact:

> I remember we packed up a little suitcase for what was supposed to be a summer vacation in the US with my father. We left our perfect home in Tunisia that summer of 1998. We left everything in place. Our clothes, shoes, furniture, TV's, my books, my artwork on the fridge, and my mother's sewing machine.
>
> I remember the last moment. It is still in my memory. I turned around as we were leaving, and I told myself that this would be the last time that I would see the world that I knew. The world I grew up in. I looked around, I saw the perfectly landscaped and green garden. The one I played in my entire childhood. Where I made my first

friends and had my first experience of friendship, love, and a sense of community.

As the literature suggest, and we would agree, the arts may offer a *lived* or experiential approach to the dissemination of research data. Eisner (2001) contended that, "the form of representation one uses has something to do with the form of understanding one secures.... different forms could convey different meanings" (p. 139). We as people naturally learn through doing. However, it could be stated that the human condition is most affected by learning through our experiences (Dewey, 1934, 1938). In speaking about racism and social justice, Bell (2010) postulated that stories, "help us connect individual experiences with systemic analysis, allowing us to unpack in ways that are perhaps more accessible than abstract analysis alone..." and that "stories offer an accessible vehicle for uncovering normative patterns and historical relations that perpetuate racial privilege" (p. 16). The Kosovo youth researchers powerfully expressed these stories based on their research on stage during the Artnote performance by incorporating artifacts and songs of historical, national, and cultural significance in their presentation of research data.

Figure 4. Kosovo youth researchers' Artnote presentation.

Fostering the Voice of Youth Leadership in Social Justice Research and Activism

Drama comes from the Greek word "to do;" through the Artnote – data as performance, we created a means through which the researchers and audience were living and embodying the research. It is at the core of who we are as humans to be affected by what happens to us personally, and yet, drama may also provide us with an intimate portrait of humanity (Prus, 1996). The Artnote provided a means for youth researchers to express their lived experience, supported by an arts-based experiential approach to connect participants (youth researchers and audience) emotionally with the lived experience of others through the research data presented, including a deeper understanding of perceptions, ideas, and meanings. The authors, working as social justice educators, have witnessed this personal growth during the development of a diverse range of artistic projects and contributions. As such, we have often reflected and examined a range of

approaches in attempting to determine how we learn. As Nierenberg (2017) suggested, understanding our learning may help us understand the world.

In connecting the various project site performances, the production was organized into pieces, or moving parts. The pieces were connected by looking for the connections that could effectively bridge one performance with the next seamlessly. Working with the Windsor location first really assisted this process. With the Windsor project site, we were able to experiment and try new things to see if they worked – a workshop phase. This workshop phase allowed us to create a framework for the Artnote developed through play and experimentation. Sometimes this workshop phase resulted in a lack of success, but through perseverance it ultimately led to the creation of a performance that conveyed the messages that the youth researchers wished to share. Given their experience in this process, the youth researchers from the Windsor site embraced their role as mentors – mentors who could guide the youth researchers from the other Tikkun project sites through this creative process:

> An example of the Windsor host site mentorship happened when developing the opening scene of the Artnote performance. The Tikkun youth researchers from each of the project sites may have been fighting for a different cause in their own communities, but as a collective, they were united in that they were all fighting for what they believed in. Through their mentorship, the Windsor site guided the entire group of youth researchers to collectively decide on a message protesting injustice and activism through a call to action. To illustrate their collective message, the opening scene of the Artnote involved all the youth researchers walking on the stage as protesters. This symbolized their united need for change. It was a moment that brought the audience into their activism – from that moment forward the audience was part of the experience and we broke the fourth wall and allowed the audience to share in the voices of youth. The introduction as a protest rally showcased the voices of the youth!

Picower (2012) stated that, "emerging social justice educators need to develop an orientation toward activism in which they see it as a calling – something they can't imagine not doing" (p. 113). A common thread or theme reflected in the stories and impressions shared by the youth researchers

involved in the Tikkun Youth Project was that they felt that their voices were silenced, that they were not heard by society. However, this did not lead to apathy for social justice; instead, it began the process of coming together – the experience of disseminating their research by sharing their stories resulted in an urgent need to continue to interact with one another for change! During the final Tikkun Youth Symposium wrap-up meeting, youth researchers shared that "we have it within us" to be social innovators and social activists. In particular, the youth researchers indicated that they felt "resource rich" in this regard in terms of personal capital. However, they also felt that they were "resource poor" and that social justice entrepreneurship may be a possible means to fund projects at both the local and global levels. They stressed the importance of continuing to learn from each other, networking, and sharing techniques and strategies – building and sharing the skills of protest and advocacy… moving forward, one step at a time!

Conclusion

In conclusion, a key element in the creation and performance of the Artnote involved a discussion of "long-form artistic works" versus "short-term utopias" within the artistic landscape. Based on the Broken City Lab's (2013) workshop, Homework II: Long Forms/Short Utopias, which explored this aspect or element of the artistic process, the importance of focusing on the longevity of the art form to thrive as a medium for social change was critical. The concept of focusing on a future-oriented longevity of protest and advocacy clearly resounded in the sentiments expressed by the youth researchers. In other words, the youth researchers recognized that social change for justice is a lengthy endeavour of continual activism, requiring a personal as well as a collective commitment to advocate for those marginalized in society. They recognized that although their work in each community had a specific context, there was nonetheless a thread of connectivity in their activism and advocacy, and that building capacity as a Youth Network may in fact foster healing and reconciliation. What worked for one site might address an issue in another community. Just as the wind creates ripples upon the water in a pond, it is our hope that the experiences that the youth researchers shared during the Tikkun Youth Project – and

the Artnote performance itself – will support their continued courage and drive to be the waves of change as social justice innovators and leaders, both locally as well as globally.

Figure 5. Tikkun youth researchers – Symposium Artnote performance.

References

Bagley, C. (2008). Educational ethnography as performance art: Towards a sensuous feeling and knowing. *Qualitative Research*, 8(1), 53-7. Retrieved from doi:10.1177/1468794107085296

Bell, L. A. (2010). *Storytelling for social justice: Connecting narrative and the arts in antiracist teaching*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Broken City Lab. (2013). Homework II: Long Forms/Short Utopias. *Steve Lambert*. Retrieved from https://visitsteve.com/news/talks/keynote-at-homework-ii-long-forms-short-utopias-conference-november-8-10-2013/

Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: Minton, Balch & Company.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience & education*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Eisner, E. (2001). Concerns and aspirations for qualitative research in the new millennium. *Qualitative Research*, 1(2), 135-45. Retrieved from doi:10.1177/146879410100100202

Freire, P. (1985). *The politics of education: Culture power and liberation*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Nierenberg, C. (2017, June 2). Knowing yourself: How to improve your understanding of others. *Live Science*. Retrieved from https://www.livescience.com/59349-knowing-yourself-helps-your-understand-others.html

Picower, B. (2012). *Practice what you teach: Social justice education in the classroom and the streets*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Prus, R. (1996). *Symbolic interaction and ethnographic research: Intersubjectivity and the study of human lived experience*. New York: New York Press.

Tuckman, B. W., & Jensen, M. A. (1977). Stages of small-group development revisited. *Group & Organization Studies*, 2(4), 419-427. Retrieved from doi:10.1177/105960117700200404

---

1 See Arts Collective Theatre for more information about Chris and his social justice work: http://actwindsor.com/.

3. How Young People are Healing the World: An Activist Reflects on the Tikkun Youth Project

DANIELLE MCLAUGHLIN

No great oaths need to be sworn
No special colours need be worn
Your hair can be curly or straight or shorn
You only have to be born
   Just like everyone else on earth
Human rights are yours from birth
   ROBERT PRIEST, EXCERPT FROM "YOU ONLY HAVE TO BE BORN" IN *THE WOLF IS BACK*, WOLSAK AND WYNN, HAMILTON, 2017

Abstract

Young people everywhere face prejudice and discrimination. They are targeted for the same reasons older people are – because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, or social status. They may live in societies where they face violence and deep personal strife. In addition to all of this, youth face the additional burden of discrimination on the grounds of their age. Most societies do not see young people as full citizens worthy of having a voice. Despite these barriers, the young people who participated in the Tikkun Youth Project, from five very disparate sites and demographics, demonstrated remarkable resilience, creativity, and willingness to engage with their communities. As an activist, I examined the civic engagement and rights-awareness of the young activist-researchers who appear in the international media, as well as those participating in the Tikkun Youth Project. I conclude, with some optimism, that young people are not waiting to become leaders: they are taking the reins and are making a positive difference – today.

A young man named Aphiwe, who was from the community called Khayelitsha, an informal township in the South African city of Cape Town, told me a story. He was out for an evening with his friends. They were drinking beer (perhaps underage) in a hot and crowded venue when he decided to step outside for a breath of air, bringing his drink with him. As he was standing in front of the building, he was approached by several police officers. They told him it was illegal for him to be outside with his drink. He asked them why. They responded by beating him and breaking both his arms. "Did you complain to the authorities?" I asked him. He looked at me as if I had not understood what he had told me. If asking the simple question "Why?" of a police officer could result in a severe beating, did I not understand what complaining about police would do? Aphiwe was cared for by his friends who were also activists. They helped him get medical attention and kept him in the group while he recovered. This young man knew his town and understood the likelihood that a police complaint would result in further injury, or even worse consequences. Unlike some of us from more privileged communities, Aphiwe understood what it means to live with violence.

As I was writing this chapter, I received the dreadful and tragic news that Aphiwe had been murdered. While I do not know the details, I was given to understand that his death was the result of a robbery gone terribly wrong. Aphiwe had only just learned that he had been accepted into a special program for talented young artists, likely the first person in his family to attend a post-secondary institution. His loss is immeasurable for his community, his family, and for his fellow activists. In all of the Tikkun study sites, we will continue to think about Aphiwe and mourn the loss we all feel for the brilliance he brought into our lives.

I am an activist. I have spent much of my life enraged about injustice whenever and wherever I have seen it. Fortunately for me, I have been able to take action. I spent much of my life working for a non-government organization, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and Education Trust, that gave me the opportunity to create programmes for teachers, student-teachers, and for students from kindergarten through university. These programs encourage people to participate in their democratic communities. I believe that by asking pertinent questions, thinking critically, engaging in dialogue, and facing conflict, we can all learn to make a positive difference in our societies. I joined the Tikkun Youth Project as an activist and educator

who wanted to find out more about the young people who have already learned to make a difference. What do they know about their rights? How do they experience their communities? What do prejudice and discrimination mean to them, and how do they approach injustice in their communities? I wanted to learn how the researchers and participants in the five sites of study would interact with one another, and how they could learn from their own research as well as from the experiences of others.

I am a researcher in the sense that I learn from my observations and my readings, and while I am a teacher in that I engage with students, I am not an academic. I do not have a university appointment even though I have taught thousands of university students and teacher-candidates. My focus over the last three decades has been on citizenship education. I believe that as soon as a child is able to express an understanding of fairness (or of injustice), he or she is ready to take part as a citizen. I believe strongly in rights-based education and seek to identify strategies and information that can assist learners at all stages in seeing themselves as rights-holders. What follows below are my own observations and reflections on some of the stories reported and performed, and on research completed by the Tikkun Youth Project researchers and participants.

We learned many poignant stories from the young people who participated in the Tikkun Youth Project's Artnote. Below I share just a few as examples because there are so many such amazing stories.

A young woman in Windsor told us that she became pregnant while still in school. She was faced with some deep and difficult choices: Would she be able to continue with her education? Could she manage motherhood and schooling at the same time? What would her family think? What kinds of stigma would she and her child face? What resources, if any, would be available to her in her community? Did she have the right to make demands on "the system?" She described how each of the choices open to her could lead down very different paths. Her acknowledgment of this conflict could be seen as the turning point where she moved from being acted upon by external forces, to being an actor – an activist who began to engage in her community at many levels.

During the Artnote, we met a family that had fled for their lives from war-torn Syria. They shared their experiences about landing in Canada, knowing little or no English or French. These families had very little expectation of what, if any support their new community could provide. The children did not know if they would be able to go to school and whether they would be

welcomed or rejected by other children. What would happen to the family if the adults were not able to find work? How would they live in this new land? While their English language skills are still limited, these young people have the courage to tell their stories to both newcomers and people whose families have lived in Canada for generations. As they shared their poignant stories of fear and uncertainties that have plagued their lives for many years, we learned about the effects of war and loss on youth and their families – and we could observe their determination to engage in positive ways with their new friends and community.

So many times children and young activists are told by more senior members of their communities that they will be the leaders of the future. This chapter will demonstrate that young adult activists are at the forefront right now; they are not waiting to become more experienced or more educated – they are leading their communities now in ways that their seniors cannot even understand.

What do these young leaders have in common and what are their differences? We will explore examples and stories about their involvement with what they identify as needs in their own lives and the lives of others. How have they done this? How do they facilitate change? Let's see what their community participation and leadership look like on the ground.

Identifying "Them" and "Us"

One of the critical triggers that motivates youth to activism is the polarization of communities divided by strong social factors such as race, ethnicity, social class, and the lack of opportunity for employment and/or education. The manner in which a young person chooses to identify him/ herself is a significant contributor to the choices they make when faced with injustice. The civic engagement/pedagogy literature demonstrates that when young people learn to consider dissent and disagreement in a positive light, when they can listen to the views of people who think differently, they are better prepared to engage as citizens (Osborne, 2005; Sears, 2018).

In each of the five Tikkun study sites, and in the wider context of their personal experiences, the young researchers have identified and come up against societal barriers to change. They have found that they themselves or

others they know have faced unfairness and discrimination on a variety of grounds (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

Among the barriers faced by the young researchers in our studies are sexism, racism, bias against their religions, social class, the community with which they identify, and the neighbourhoods where they live. Most of the young people faced intersectional barriers because they are discriminated against on more than one ground. While the barriers are unique to each situation, the young people in our study share an optimism and an understanding that they are powerful. Their response to inequity has not been to sit back in fear; it has been to take charge. They believe Malala Yousafzai when she said, "When the world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful" (Yousafzai, 2013).

Firstly, it must be said that young people throughout the world face discrimination and prejudice (Giroux, 2003; Pinker, 2012; Young-Breuhl, 2013; Youthism, n.d.). The very fact of their young age means that many adults believe a diminished number of years of experience makes young people less than competent to act in a responsible and capable fashion. Even when presented with evidence that young people have taken and continue to take leadership roles, participate in their communities, and even act as care-givers for people both older and younger, they rarely receive the credit that is their due. But, it is even worse for many young people. They are frequently vilified and blamed for wrongdoing even before any wrong doing has taken place. And recent events around the world have demonstrated that children and youth are seen as less than the rights-holder they are.

With the United States using children under the age of majority as pawns in a dangerous political game, separating them from their families and their adults, placing them in cages (Shear, Stolberg, & Kaplan, 2018), it is easy to understand how readily youth go from being humans of worth to bargaining chips. Their voices, even the voices of crying babies, are unheard.

In 2018, the attention of the world was drawn to a terrible event in the U.S. when a shooter entered a Florida high school and murdered 17 people. School shootings are not unique to the U.S., but they are certainly more prevalent in that country than in any other. The young survivors, however, responded in a way that has not been seen following previous school shootings – they organized (Yee & Blinder, 2018). They asked the obvious question: "What is causing so many school shootings?" And came up with an obvious answer – guns. Now, a lot of political power in the United States is in the hands of the National Rifle Association (NRA). This lobbying organization

is very popular and positions itself as a protector of the constitutional right to bear arms – The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution reads, "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed" ("The Constitution of the United States," n.d.). But the students who are speaking up and organizing are not trying to further divide the country between the gun lobby and those who question all gun ownership. They are carefully asking the hard questions of politicians: how much money do you take from the NRA? And what are you going to do to protect children from school shootings? These young people want answers to their questions and they are not willing to wait until they are old enough to vote. They see themselves as powerful and they are using their media savvy to exercise that power in many creative ways. They point out that it is easier for a young person to buy an assault rifle than to buy a beer in their state (Beckett, 2018). They want this changed. Their points are narrow and direct – they do not want to further divide the country, they want to unify everyone around the issue of child protection.

While we honour their courage and ability to articulate strong positions, we must also focus on the backlash that their protest attracted. Let us have a look at a few of the comments that were posted on social media in response to the students' activities:

> "It's time for adults to start listening to young people." Said every young person ever... and then they grew up. Young people are lucky to vote at 18 given their brains aren't fully developed until 25. They'll just have to make due [sic] with vigor, health, unextinguished zest for life, etc. (Clarke, 2018)
>
> "Sure, even though last week congress was asking Tide to change the Pod designs because young people were eating them. Sure, let them determine government policy" (Daly, 2018).

In addition, several of the most articulate young spokespeople were accused of being actors planted by a left-wing anti-gun conspiracy (Uyehara, 2018). They were not given credit or respect for the thoughtful language they used nor the action they demanded. Instead, in many cases, they were assumed to be "tools" of an older generation. Even when young people are directly affected by the tragedies and unfair actions of the societies in which they

live, there are those who refuse to see them as equal participants in society. The attitude that our youth are generally nuisances can be seen everywhere.

However, these nuisances can be quite effective. In fact, in March 2018, a Republican candidate for the Maine House of Representative who was running unopposed made some ugly comments about two of the Parkland student survivors (Hansler, 2018). The reaction was swift. The students used social media to encourage qualified candidates to run in opposition to him. And in the end, the candidate stepped down, and another Republican and a Democrat decided to run for the office (Hansler, 2018). This is what democracy in the hands of such young activists looks like.

There are many instances of generalized or systemic discrimination and prejudice against the young. Take, for example, the use of high-pitched sounds in locations where young people gather. These sounds, known as "Mosquito tones," have been found to be audible only to people under the age of about 25 (Education.com, 2013). Because of the common assumption that when a number of young people gather, they will be up to no good, stores and certain public institutions have hired security companies to install machines that make these noxious sounds (Akiyama, 2010). The aim is that the groups will disperse or gather elsewhere. Because some of the locations include transit stops and public buildings, some have said that this is a discriminatory act that unreasonably limits young people's access to institutions and services that should be equally available to all (Akiyama, 2010).

Another example of such prejudice can be found in youth curfews. Many communities require people under the age of majority (or under 16) to be inside their homes, usually from about 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following morning. The penalty for disobeying such laws is often in the form of fines laid on the young person and/or on his or her responsible adult (e.g., Ottawa Police Service, n.d.). Again, these curfews are based upon the assumption that if young people are out and about at night, they are about to commit an offense.

Vandalism is nearly always assumed to be perpetrated by the young, even when no actual perpetrators have been caught. Interestingly, when vandals and graffiti artists have been caught, it is often found that they committed their acts in the late afternoon (Schwartz & Wang, 2005). In other words, curfews might look like a good idea, but they are discriminatory and they don't work. The curfews keep young people who have no intention to commit offences under a kind of house arrest, while failing to catch the actual

vandals. As well, a number of municipalities have seen their curfews successfully challenged under human rights acts (Yosowich, 2015).

While curfews may seem like a trivial limit to freedom for adults, they are, in fact, a breach of Canadian constitutional rights, and rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), such as liberty, equality, freedom of association, and the right to peaceful assembly. We need to remember that all of our rights are for everyone. There are no age limits in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or the UDHR. While specific laws and by-laws limit rights according to age, such as the right to vote and the requirement to attend school, limits must be shown to be reasonable. If we treat our young people as if they are not rights holders, how can we expect them to stand up for the rights of others who experience injustice?

A third example of systemic discrimination against young people is the reduced minimum wage that many countries permit employers to pay to those workers who have not reached the age of majority. Even where two people are working side-by-side, doing the same task, the younger of the two may be paid a lower wage. There are a number of justifications for this. In the opinion of some policy-makers, the unemployment statistics are kept lower when employers can hire cheaper workers. Others see the lower wage as a way for younger workers to get into the workforce and gain experience. While there may be benefits that accrue to a young person who is able to get work when that job could either go to an older and higher paid worker or be automated, the decision to pay young people at a lower rate cannot be said to be anything other than a form of systemic discrimination. Merely because of a personal characteristic, in this case age, a group of people do not have access to the same benefit, in this case a living wage, that other citizens have.

Perhaps the most insidious form of discrimination faced by young people is the inability to be included in discussions where decisions are made about their lives. At nearly every level of policy-making, young people are excluded from discussions about their health, welfare, education, and social status. Even where young people hold seats on governing boards, their presence is frequently a mere token; they may not be able to vote or participate in decision-making in a meaningful way (Urist, 2014).

Most if not all democratic countries have age limits for voting rights. It is understood that young children cannot make the kind of sophisticated decisions that informed citizens need to make. However, the age of majority varies from country to country, and has also frequently been changed within countries. There is nothing magical about turning 18, 19, or 21. People mature

at different ages. Yet, a test for knowledge, maturity, or responsibility could create even greater disparity. When asked, many young people would like to see the voting age lowered. They argue that this will lead to an increase in voter turnout and political engagement ("Top ten reasons," n.d.). They also point out that young people are already involved with their communities and are knowledgeable about those communities' needs ("Top ten reasons," n.d.). Their voices need to be heard in meaningful ways because the laws have critical effects on their lives. As some have said, legislation without representation is unfair and discriminatory (NCC Staff, 2018). In my view, there would be little disadvantage to lowering the voting age. Since such a small number of voters bother to show up at the polls, this could give committed young people an opportunity to see the effects of organizing and having an opinion. And just like everyone else, if they don't care, they are unlikely to vote. Age limits are not written in stone. They can be changed again and again, depending upon political will.

I feel that young people should be heard from in democratic societies, particularly because students and others under the age of majority are, in fact, subject to more laws than those who have achieved the age of majority. Because of their age, in nearly every country, children and young people are required by law to attend school. While these are clearly laws that benefit the youth and society in general, other than people who have been convicted of criminal offences, no law-abiding sector of society is otherwise compelled to be in attendance in a public institution. In addition, most countries compel expression from young people. They are frequently required to wear school uniforms, sing national anthems, recite prayers or pledges of allegiance to their country, or otherwise demonstrate affiliations to institutions they may or may not support. To my mind, it is amazing that we still find young people who can think clearly and analytically after they have experienced so many restrictions on their liberty and freedoms.

And yet, if we look critically at the media, we find ourselves in every community, in the presence of young people who are deeply engaged citizens. These are the kind of people who participated in the Tikkun Youth Project and who have, of their own volition, become leaders in their communities. Despite the specific barriers to participation enumerated below, the other chapters in this book detail the positive activities led by young people at each of the Tikkun research sites.

Each of the chapters of this book celebrates the strength and leadership shown by the young researchers and participants of the Tikkun Youth

Project. Each group discusses its unique challenges and what the participants learned about overcoming those challenges. The Artnote performance summarized the findings and responses to injustice that each group experienced. As a member of the audience, I had the privilege to watch the performers and other audience members as they responded to what they saw, heard, and learned. It is important to note that each group had its own way of expressing the experiences that brought them to activism, yet the shared experience of injustice united the groups and the individual performers.

Divisions and Barriers to Participation Identified by Tikkun Youth Researchers

Kosovo. The young people who came to Canada from Kosovo were remarkable in their honesty and articulate expression about the divided society in which they live. The Albanian/Kosovar/Serbian racism, anti-Islamic, anti-Roma segregation, post-war division and violence are part of their daily lives. They spoke about the symbolic but very physical barrier that the bridge over the Ibar River in Mitrovica has created in their community. This bridge is the border crossing between Serbia and Kosovo (Morina, 2017). It effectively keeps ethnic Albanians from mixing with and gaining the benefits that their Serbian neighbours enjoy. While the group of young people from this city who came to Windsor for the Tikkun Youth Symposium represented the diversity of ethnic origins in Kosovo, they each reported in private conversation the understanding that they would have been unlikely to get to know one another without making a concerted effort to do so – outside of their separated communities. They also mentioned in personal conversation that their families were not particularly happy with their associating with people from the other ethnicities.

Nonetheless, these young people used the bridge, the symbol of their division, as a place to gather people of different ethnicities together to meet and speak together. They are working to heal the world. Their slogan "More bridges, fewer walls" was a succinct expression of their hopes and the barriers they fight to tear down.

Toronto. The young researchers in Toronto were also a mixed and intersectional group of people; in this case, all young women. Because they

are all young women, they face the same discrimination all women everywhere face. Because most women of colour belong to minority religions or identify along the LGBTQ spectrum, they also face intersectional discrimination (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.). They came from both immigrant and so-called "old-stock" Canadian communities, although none identified as having Indigenous heritage. When asked to identify barriers to participation in their communities, the researchers listed discrimination they, their friends, and colleagues had faced in the following categories: Immigrants are treated with greater suspicion than "old-stock" (first or second wave immigrant) Canadians; postal code discrimination – meaning that certain neighbourhoods were assumed to be "bad" and that people who lived in these neighbourhoods faced more difficulty in getting employment, being treated fairly in school, and finding housing; parental education (class) discrimination; youth unemployment, particularly for youth from minority groups; anti-Islamic attitudes and prejudice; and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

A spoken-word piece by Toronto participant Shaza Ali, at the time a first-year university student, expressed her feelings about the barriers she perceives in her community:

I think people want anger from me. I get the feeling that there's an expectation of outrage, a fiery passion turned into a sound bite for you to gawk at. But I'm not angry. I'm just uncomfortable. Maybe it's because I have the privilege not to be angry. Because although there have always been those who say that I'm not wanted here, those are voices I can tune out. Because I've heard them all my life, but from a distance at which it's just background noise to me. Because I have the ability to roam the streets without fearing that my name will be in an article about the rising rate of hate crimes against people of my religious heritage. But that noise is slowly turning up lately, to a point where even I can feel a certain unease growing. An unspoken hostility under the surface. And maybe it's because I'm not a poster child for my community, that I can get away with a mild sense of discomfort rather than a bullet. I'm expected to express how afraid I am when a mosque is shot up or burnt down, but ultimately, I'm not the one whose fear makes a difference. I don't slowly back away when I wake up for breakfast and see my family. I forget to see them as a threat to national security. I don't call a tip line when I'm hanging out with my friends. I

forget I'm supposed to believe that they're sleeper agents of global jihad.
And I forget that some still look at me that way too because I thought
I'd done everything I can to be assimilate. I've tried taking every step
to be integrated. I've tried being everything they said I should be to be
wanted here. But even though it's not my name listed in the headlines
of the articles, there's an ever-growing pile of newspapers. And I can't
shake the feeling that one of these days it'll include a name of someone I
know. And I then suddenly can't tune out the fact that there will always
be those who will still never want us here, but at that point I don't know
what else is left for me to try. I suppose that's why I can't muster the
energy to perform anger and passion. Because truthfully? I'm just tired.

Despite being frustrated by the attitudes of those around her, Shaza Ali is a volunteer working with other young people to make a difference. While she articulates her despair at the situation Muslim people are facing in her community, she finds ways to reach out and to speak out about the unfairness she lives with. Shaza is engaged in using the arts, such as the spoken-word piece above, as a way to reach out to and interact with people of her own faith, as well those in the university community where she studies.

Another Toronto researcher, Talisha Ramsaroop, expresses the problem of "postal-code prejudice" in a TEDx video (TEDx Talks, 2015). She tells us about the violence of low expectations. In 2018, Talisha was presented with the first Pam McConnell Leadership Award for her community activism (Beattie, 2018). In receiving this award, Talisha talked about her plans to run for political office in the future.

Windsor. The work done by the young researchers in Windsor demonstrated efforts to overcome **s**ocial class discrimination, discrimination against immigrants and refugees, as well as discrimination against young parents. The young activists identified poverty as a problem that can be addressed by raising the minimum wage to a level whereby working families can sustain themselves. Coming from a city that has experienced very high unemployment after the closing of many automotive plants and related industries, the Windsor youth were particularly aware of the unfairness faced by the under and unemployed in their community. Even though many of them were students, they had a unique understanding of the way an entire family's life changes when breadwinners lose their jobs.

The Windsor youth joined with unions and other workers to call for a $15/

hour minimum wage (Chen, 2017). They did not let their youth stand in the way of acting for their community and their families. While young, these advocates were able to participate in a groundswell of activism that came from many sectors in their community, and in 2018, they and their fellow protesters were successful in seeing the Ontario minimum wage increased. While it is impossible to know, when there are many contributions to a cause, which actors had the greatest effect, it is fair to say that the effect of this success on the young activists is likely to be one where they see themselves as strong and effectual. Will they continue to influence public policy in their communities? It is my view that when they feel strongly about an issue, these young people will remember how effective they have been; they will remember the techniques they used, and they will again become activists. It is now a skill they have learned to use.

At this point, I would also like to address two of the other concerns brought forward by the Windsor participants: teenage motherhood, and fear of immigrants and refugees.

A young woman in the Windsor cohort reported on her experience of becoming pregnant and having a child while still in school. She described the fear she had of the stigma and the barriers she expected to find, both from within her family and from her social sphere. She also talked about the struggle to overcome these issues and the surprising support she found among some of those whom she had expected to reject her. There are innumerable scholarly and popular articles about the stigma and prejudice faced by young mothers in Western society (Ellis-Sloan, 2014), but there is also evidence that with the support of their families, and social and academic communities, there is no reason to believe that their lives will be any less successful or happy than those of mothers in other age groups.

I am the grandmother of two children who were born while my daughter, their mother, was very young. Both my daughter and her daughters have gone on to develop as forceful and successful women who are advocates for their own communities and who see themselves as strong and powerful. Having seen bus drivers leave young parents standing in the rain, doors not held for teen mothers pushing strollers, and open public hostility offered to young mothers and their infants, I am amazed by the resilience and willingness of these people to move ahead to assist not only people like themselves, but also other less fortunate members of our community. And they are not unique.

The young mothers overcame the stigma and rejection they faced by

making demands on those around them: they would not accept negative attitudes. Young mothers are fully capable of civic engagement and participation. While the difficulties many of the researchers in the Tikkun cohort faced had the capacity of making themselves and other people bitter and disengaged, our participants in every locale appear to have turned their negative experiences into causes for action.

Along with the Windsor activists who have grown up in the community, the Tikkun Youth Symposium Artnote heard from a group of newly-arrived young Syrian refugees. With great courage, these English language learners told stories about their losses, their fears, and their hard work at settling into a culture and education system that is very new and foreign to them. With their families in the audience, the Syrian refugee young men and women told of their harrowing escape from war – and of their culture shock when making new friends in school. These school-aged children were able to articulate their gratitude for the help they received in Canada, but also helped the Canadians to understand what it means to be a refugee. In their words, "sharing these stories will ease the burden and make us open our arms to life."

Is Windsor, Ontario a unique community? I like to think that it is representative of the kind of small city that takes its role in society very seriously. With its history of autoworker union activism, its Multi-Cultural Council ("Cultural Diversity Training," n.d.), and the important anti-racist work of the late MP Howard McCurdy (MacKay, 2018), Windsor community members know that there is an expectation of diversity and acceptance. Does this mean that everyone lives harmoniously together in Windsor? Certainly not, but there appears to me to be an expectation that racism and prejudice will not be ignored. Perhaps this is one reason that the Tikkun Youth Project was started and centered in Windsor, Ontario.

Thunder Bay. The young researchers and their mentors in Thunder Bay are faced with ingrained negative attitudes toward Indigenous youth (Talaga, 2017). This community has experienced great loss. Young students from remote communities come to Thunder Bay seeking a high school education and find themselves unwelcome and endangered. *Toronto Star* reporter Tanya Talaga (2017) tells the story of seven students who attended Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School in Thunder Bay, only to die under mysterious circumstances. The young people who survive experience a lack of opportunities in education and employment; like Black youth in larger cities, Indigenous young people in the north are frequently targeted by police for

interrogation even where no wrong doing is suspected. The story of A.J. Miles is an example of what happens to such Indigenous youth:

> On November 7, 2007, a member of the Thunder Bay Police Service singled out, questioned, detained and photographed DFC student Abraham J. (A.J.) Miles during a school field trip to the Thunder Bay police station. A.J. Miles, who is from Fort Severn First Nation, was made to remove his Warchief Native Apparel shirt before being permitted to reunite with his school tour, causing him to feel humiliated, embarrassed and discriminated against. Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) took the view that this was an example of unwarranted racial profiling and part of a larger problem in the Thunder Bay Police Service with unjustly accusing First Nations youth of gang membership. No charges were ever filed against A.J. Miles. A.J. Miles filed a public complaint with the Thunder Bay Police Service who found in January 2008 that while one of the officers involved had committed misconduct that it was not serious. The Miles family retained pro bono lawyers from Aboriginal Legal Services Toronto (ALST) who appealed the January decision to the Office of the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Service. The Commission agreed with the arguments put forward by ALST and have decided to hold a hearing into the misconduct of the Thunder Bay Police Service officer. A.J. Miles is pursuing two other complaints against the Thunder Bay Police Service. (Nishnawbe Aski Nation, 2008)

After this experience, A.J. returned to his home community and did not complete his schooling.

While the Canadian government has issued apologies and some restitution to families and individuals who survived Canada's infamous residential schools as well as the "60s scoop" when large numbers of First Nations children were removed from their families and placed with white families, the aftermath continues to play a very large part in the over-representation of Aboriginal people who are homeless, incarcerated, and among the missing and murdered.

> And yet, the young people who participated in the Tikkun Youth Project give all of us cause for hope:
> Red Rock Indian Band's Ashley Nurmela also received the Advocacy and Activism Award during the May 5 awards ceremony for the Stand

Up anti-racism campaign she ran at Confederation College over offensive and racist posts on social media.

"I'm very humbled by it," says the second-year Confederation College Native Child and Family Services student. "I didn't realize that it had made such a big impact on so many people so far and wide, not just in our community of Thunder Bay but in the region."

Nurmela plans to continue running the Stand Up campaign after she graduates from the Native Child and Family Services program this year. (Garrick, 2016)

Facing racism and many other barriers to community participation, some young people demonstrate remarkable resilience. They refuse to let others define the roles they play in the communities in which they live. While the young researchers and mentors from Thunder Bay were fully aware of the stigma and prejudice they face on a daily basis as young Aboriginal people living in a majority settler community, they choose to focus on the things they can change in their own communities. They do not deny that there are many difficulties, but instead use those difficulties to bring attention to the special needs of young people like themselves. A fine example of this is the video "The River Flows" created and recorded by youth in Pikangekum First Nation as a response to the suicide crisis in their community (Jinan, 2018).

Cape Town. As people who are living in the aftermath of Apartheid, the young researchers from South Africa are a new generation of activists. They learn about the history of their country, about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Magistad, 2017; "Truth and Reconciliation," n.d.), and about the many communities and forces that make up their complex society.

While there have been many changes in the political systems in South Africa, the fact remains that the Indigenous peoples and people of colour experience great inequality in access to education, as well as poor quality of schools and teaching for people living in "townships" (informal communities). Among the other challenges faced by the communities where young people who participated in the Tikkun Youth Project live are fear of violence; massive unemployment; lack of material resources; substandard housing; lack of clean and reliable sources of water (Evans, 2018); little access to computers and Internet; and lack of reading material in learners' first languages. In other words, these young people face racial discrimination and poverty from their earliest years. Again, however, the youth from Cape Town demonstrated remarkable resilience and willingness to participate in

campaigns to make positive changes in their township as well as in their country.

As detailed in the chapter by our South African colleagues Dr. Salma Ismail and Lyndal Pottier, Equal Education , a non-profit, non-government organization works with young people who want to see an education system that is fair for everyone in South Africa (Equal Education, n.d.). By learning how to organize, to peacefully protest, to demand specific standards and implementation of legislation to address the unfairness they experience on a daily basis, these young people become literate in democratic practices and learned in civic engagement (Equal Education, n.d.). They see themselves as powerful change agents who are alerting their country, as well as the rest of the world, to the ways they are treated unfairly. But much more importantly, the Equalisers are learning how to use their voices in effective and democratic ways.

An example of this is the way in which the organization combines lawful political pressure with litigation (Equal Education, 2018). First, the organization lobbied the government to establish education norms so that all learners would have an equal opportunity to attend fully functional schools with qualified teachers – and walls, a roof, electricity, and plumbing (Equal Education, 2018). Once they succeeded in getting that legislation passed, they went on to use the courts to make the government implement the standards promised. Equal Education (2018) says, "We have seen what the law can achieve in securing real changes in the provisioning of basic services and the provisioning of education – that is why we are continuing to fight for better legal frameworks".

Equal Education can demonstrate the success of their organizing efforts and actions:

> Since EE won its first victory and the Norms were initially published, we have seen an improvement in school infrastructure. Since 2013, more than 1000 schools that did not have water, now have water. More than 2000 schools that did not have electricity, now have electricity. However, this is not enough. We fought for more. (Equal Education, 2018, para. 7)

Shortly after this announcement, a five-year-old child tragically drowned in a pit latrine in his school (Eyewitness News, 2014). This heartbreaking event was used as a trigger by activists. When media talks about the large numbers

of people who live in dreadful conditions, it is easy for the audience to turn away, but when the terrible story of one child is told, people stop and pay attention. Equal Education had a platform and they used it. The President of South Africa then demanded a plan from the Minister of Education to implement the norms and standards as promised (ENCA, 2018). The wheels of democracy grind slowly, but, with young people continuing to put pressure on their governments, there is hope for change.

Conclusion

As a group of researchers and practitioners, we have learned a great deal from the young researcher-activists who participated in the Tikkun Youth Project. I think I can summarize my findings and observations as follows:

- Nearly all young people experience discrimination on the grounds of age.
- Many youth are subject to intersectional discrimination because of their gender, disability, sexuality, race, religion, social status, immigration status, marital status, or other grounds in combination with one another, as well as with their age (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.).
- Young people are not blind to the inequality they and others face.
- The Tikkun youth represent a positive vision for the future because they believe they can make a difference.
- Young people who live in communities that are divided because of war, politics, race, religion, unemployment, poverty, and violence can use these divisions to draw attention to their needs. They are often willing to reach across the divide to fight for the rights of people unlike themselves.
- Young activists are not afraid to stand up and speak out when they find unfairness.
- Even when they do not have full democratic rights because they are minors, young people are willing to take leadership roles in their communities.
- Young activists are willing to use the resources they find in their

communities. They believe that their communities, no matter whether they live in poverty or wealth, contain human and social resources that can be utilized to make a positive difference.

- Young activists see themselves as rights-holders and expect their communities to treat them with respect – even when they have repeatedly and consistently experienced oppression.
- Young activists see no need to wait in order to take action.
- While the Tikkun youth are leading complex lives with, in some cases, serious responsibilities, they remain civically engaged at a deep level.
- While the Tikkun youth are special in many ways, they are not untypical of young people world-wide.
- The Tikkun Youth Symposium held in April 2017 provided a unique opportunity for the five groups of young activists to learn the issues, advocacy styles, techniques, and ideas that originated in each of the other groups.
- Each group returned to their home communities refreshed and more confident in the capacity of young people to lead positive change.
- In the year following the Tikkun Youth Symposium, a number of the youth groups and individual activists have gone on to work for social and political change.

I believe the most important lesson we have learned from this three-year study is that there is enormous hope for the future of civic engagement. The interaction of the young researchers at the five Tikkun Youth Project sites may be the beginning of a very personal and also very political way for young activists to learn from one another. The world is small. People now have many ways to communicate with one another – and young people are at the forefront of using information and communication technologies. Friendships and alliances can exist across borders and time zones. The ability to consult one another about ways to make a difference, to share, and to borrow creative techniques for bringing attention to important issues has never been easier. Media are now in the hands of us all. Let us hope that our Tikkun youth continue to use their skills and knowledge wisely.

Recent world-wide demonstrations have shown that older activists can continue to work for the goals they have identified as crucial because they are being assisted, and in some cases even led, by confident, intelligent, and thoughtful young people. As we learn the techniques of peaceful activism together, we can trust that the world is in good hands.

References

Akiyama, M. (2010). Silent alarm: The mosquito youth deterrent and the politics of frequency. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 35(3), 455-471. Retrieved from https://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/2261/2969

Beattie, S. (2018, March 7). First Pam McConnell award to be presented on International Women's Day. *The Star.* Retrieved from https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2018/03/07/first-pam-mcconnell-award-to-be-presented-on-international-womens-day.html

Beckett, L. (2018, February 16). Most Americans can buy an AR-15 rifle before they can buy beer. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/feb/16/americans-age-to-buy-ar15-assault-rifle-mass-shootings

Chen, D. (2017, July 10). Hearing on Ontario minimum-wage increase coming to Windsor. *The Windsor Star.* Retrieved from https://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/hearing-on-ontario-minimum-wage-increase-to-be-held-in-windsor

Clarke, D. (2018, February 23). Re: It's time for adults to start listening to young people [Blog comment]. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/danielle-s-mclaughlin/adults-listening-young-people_a_23368897/

Cultural Diversity Training. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/in-the-fight-against-racism-mp-howard-mccurdy-never-backed-down/article38263803/

Daly, A. (2018, February 24). Re: It's time for adults to start listening to young people [Blog comment]. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/danielle-s-mclaughlin/adults-listening-young-people_a_23368897/

Education.com. (2013, May 23). Sonic science: The high-frequency hearing test. *Scientific American.* Retrieved from https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/bring-science-home-high-frequency-hearing/

Ellis-Sloan, K. (2014). Teenage mothers, stigma and their 'presentations of self.' *Sociological Research Online*, 19(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.3269

ENCA. (2018, March 16). Ramaphosa gives Motshekga deadline on pit toilets.

Retrieved from https://www.enca.com/south-africa/ramaphosa-gives-motshekga-deadline-on-pit-latrines

Equal Education. (n.d.). Our movement. Retrieved from https://equaleducation.org.za/our-movement/

Equal Education. (2018, March 15). Statement: Today is day two of Equal Education's court case to fix the national school infrastructure law. Retrieved from https://equaleducation.org.za/2018/03/15/statement-today-is-day-two-of-equal-educations-court-case-to-fix-the-national-school-infrastructure-law/

Evans, M. (2018, March 13). Divided to the last drop: Cape Town is running out of water. Its four million residents are urged to cut their consumption or else the taps will stop running. But far from uniting citizens in a common struggle, the crisis has revealed the depth of class divisions in a city where so many don't have taps of their own. *CBC News.* Retrieved from https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/day-zero-cape-town?cnis=b7caaf07-445a-4fbb-b67b-c1f0f3e76a57*C*2387*0*0*A

Eyewitness News. (2014, January 26). Pupil's death prompts government action. *Eyewitness News.* Retrieved from https://ewn.co.za/2014/01/26/Pupils-death-prompts-government-action

Garrick, R. (2016, May 19). Youth honoured at annual awards. *Anishinabek News.* Retrieved from http://anishinabeknews.ca/2016/05/19/youth-honoured-at-annual-awards/

Giroux, H. A. (2003). Zero tolerance, domestic militarization, and the war against youth. *Social Justice, 3*(2), 59-65. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/29768187

Hansler, J. (2018, March 17). Maine House GOP candidate who insulted Parkland students drops out. CNN. Retrieved from https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/17/politics/maine-house-gop-candidate-drops-out/index.html

Jinan, N. [Nwe Jinan]. (2018, March 9). N'we Jinan artists – "The river flows" // Pikangikum First Nation [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5D-1TyJmSE

MacKay, S. F. (2018, March 9). In the fight against racism, MP Howard McCurdy never backed down. The Globe and Mail. Retrieved from https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/in-the-fight-against-racism-mp-howard-mccurdy-never-backed-down/article38263803/

Magistad, M. (2017, April 6). South Africa's imperfect progress, 20 years after the Truth & Reconciliation Commission. Pri. Retrieved from

https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-04-06/south-africas-imperfect-progress-20-years-after-truth-reconciliation-commission

Morina, D. (2017, March 2). Mitrovica's flashpoint bridge symbolises Kosovo's divisions. Balkan Transitional Justice. Retrieved from http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/mitrovica-s-flashpoint-bridge-symbolises-kosovo-s-divisions-03-01-2017

NCC Staff. (2018, October 7). On this day: "No taxation without representation!" *Constitution Daily.* Retrieved from https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/250-years-ago-today-no-taxation-without-representation

Nishnawbe Aski Nation. (2008). Abraham J. (A.J.) Miles. In *Nishnawbe Aski Nation Annual Report 2007/2008.* (pp. 37). Retrieved from http://www.nan.on.ca/upload/documents/finance-2008-annual-report.pdf

Ontario Human Rights Commission. (n.d.). An introduction to the intersectional approach. Retrieved from http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/intersectional-approach-discrimination-addressing-multiple-grounds-human-rights-claims/introduction-intersectional-approach

Osborne, K. (2005). Political education and citizenship: Teaching for civic engagement. *Education Canada*, 45(1), 13-16. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ736046

Ottawa Police Service. (n.d.). Youth curfews. Retrieved from https://www.ottawapolice.ca/en/safety-and-crime-prevention/Youth-Curfews.aspx

Pinker, S. (2012, March 2). Childism, by Elisabeth Young-Bruehl. *The Globe and Mail.* Retrieved from https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/books-and-media/childism-by-elisabeth-young-bruehl/article550457/

Schwartz, A., & Wang, L. (2005, April 1). Proliferating curfew laws keep kids at home, but fail to curb juvenile crime. *National Center for Youth Law.* Retrieved from https://youthlaw.org/publication/proliferating-curfew-laws-keep-kids-at-home-but-fail-to-curb-juvenile-crime/

Sears, A. (2018, November 28). Dark clouds and silver linings: The perils and possibilities of digital media for citizenship. *EdCan Network.* Retrieved from https://www.edcan.ca/articles/dark-clouds-and-silver-linings/

Shear, M. D., Stolberg, S. G., & Kaplan, T. (2018, June 19). G.O.P. moves to end Trump's family separation policy, but can't agree how. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/19/us/politics/trump-immigration-children-separated-

families.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=a-lede-package-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news

Talaga, T. (2017). *Seven fallen feathers: Racism, death and hard truths in a northern city.* Toronto: House of Anansi Press.

[TEDx Talks]. (2015, April 22). *The violence of low expectations | Talisha Ramsaroop | TEDxYorkU.* [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMF7lnhPnv8

The Constitution of the United States. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://constitutionus.com/

Top ten reasons to lower the voting age. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.youthrights.org/issues/voting-age/top-ten-reasons-to-lower-the-voting-age/

Truth and Reconciliation. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/

Urist, J. (2014, April 23). Should students sit on school boards? *The Atlantic.* Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/04/do-school-boards-need-student-members/361127/

Uyehara, M. (2018, March 30). The sliming of David Hogg and Emma Gonzalez. GQ. Retrieved from https://www.gq.com/story/the-sliming-of-david-hogg-and-emma-gonzalez

Yee, V., & Blinder, A. (2018, March 14). National school walkout: Thousands protest against gun violence across the U.S. *New York Times.* Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/14/us/school-walkout.html?emc=edit_nn_20180315&nl=morning-briefing&nlid=912058020180315&te=1

Yosowich, M. (2015, November 30). Can youth curfews be legally enforced? FindLaw Canada. Retrieved from https://legalblogs.findlaw.ca/legal-life/can-youth-curfews-be-legally-enforced-638/s

Young-Breuhl, E. (2013). *Childism: Confronting prejudice against children.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Youthism. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://challengingyouthstereotypes.wordpress.com/youthism/

Additional Reading: Educating for Civic Engagement

About us. (n.d.). Youth for Human Rights. Retrieved from https://www.youthforhumanrights.org/about-us.html

Acar, Y. G., & Ulug, O. M. (2016). Examining prejudice reduction through solidarity and togetherness experiences among Gezi Park activists in Turkey. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, 4(1), 166-179. doi:10.5964/jspp.v4i1.547

Alex, C. (2016, June 1). 'Flying colours': Thunder Bay students organize high school's first powwow. *CBC News*. Retrieved from https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/thunder-bay-high-school-powwow-1.3609637

Avery, P. G., Levy, S. A., & Simmons, A. M. (2013). Deliberating controversial public issues as a part of civic education. *The Social Studies*, 104(3), 105-114. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/00377996.2012.691571

Banks, J. A. (2008). Diversity, group identity, and citizenship education in a global age. *Education Researcher*, 37(3), 129-139. doi:10.3102/0013189X08317501

Dickson, G. (2018, March 18). Children's crusade. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/event/Childrens-Crusade

Goraya, J. (2015, March 9). The overrepresentation of minority youth in Canada's criminal justice system. *The Public Policy and Governance Review*. Retrieved from https://ppgreview.ca/2015/03/09/the-overrepresentation-of-minority-youth-in-canadas-criminal-justice-system/

Hung, V. (2013, January 30). Youthists & age discrimination. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/hung-vo/what-does-bring-a-youthis_b_2200679.html

McCann, J. A. (1995). Nomination politics and ideological polarization: Assessing the attitudinal effects of campaign involvement. *The Journal of Politics*, 57(1), 101-120. Retrieved from doi:10.2307/2960273

Mira, M. L. (2013). Pushing the boundaries: What youth organizers at Boston's Hyde Square Task Force have to teach us about civic engagement. *Democracy & Education*, 21(1), 1-13. Retrieved from https://democracyeducationjournal.org/home/vol21/iss1/2/

Osler, A., & Starkey, H. (2004). *Study on the advances in civic education in education systems: Good practices in industrialized countries*. London:

Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights Education/Institute of Education.

Soden, G. J. (2013). Preparing citizen-agents: A review of teaching for dissent: Citizenship education and political activism. *Journal of International Social Studies*, 3(2), 92-97. Retrieved from http://www.iajiss.org/index.php/iajiss/article/view/99

Xing, K., Chico, E., Lambouths, D. L., Brittian, A. S., & Schwartz, S. J. (2015). Identity development in adolescence: Implications for youth policy and practice. In E.P. Bowers et al. (Eds.), *Promoting positive youth development, advancing responsible adolescent development* (pp. 187-208). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-17166-1_10

Yousafzai, M., & Lamb, C. (2013). *I am Malala: The story of the girl who stood up for education and was shot by the Taliban.* New York: Little, Brown and Company.

4. Becoming Social Activist Leaders - Stories of Passion, Motivation and Bold Ideas from the Township of Khayelitsha in Cape Town, South Africa

SIPHENATHI FULANI, SALMA ISMAIL, SISANDA KHUZANI, LONA MTEMBU, LYNDAL POTTIER, AMANDA MAXONGO, APHIWE TOMOSE, AND PHELOKAZI TSOKO

Abstract

The chapter from the South African site reports on how the youth researchers initially understood the concepts *Tikkun Olam* and civic engagement, and how they developed their understandings during the research and at the symposium. We then reflect on the Participatory Action Research (PAR) process and challenges with the methodology as we experienced it in South Africa. A major focus of our chapter will be on presenting, discussing, and analysing the findings from the research. We will conclude with highlights and lessons learnt, and reflect on the influence the Symposium had on all of us.

Keywords: Multiple youth activisms; civic engagement, social justice; consciousness, leadership

---

> *Youth activists are singing;*
>   *are acting out;*
>   *listen;*
>   *my mother was a kitchen girl*
>   *'my father was a garden boy*

that's why I am an activist
an activist, an activist'
(sung in IsiXhosa again)
'Umama wam wayesebenzi khitshini
Utata wam wayasebenzi gadini
Yilento ndiliqabane
Ndili qabane, ndili qabane'

This chorus was sung in both English and IsiXhosa at the Tikkun Youth Symposium in Canada during the Artnote presentation by the South African research team. The Artnote presentation was a means of celebrating the voices of youth from the five sites of research and chosen by the team instead of a keynote address; it is defined as, "presenting data as performance to engage youth, researchers, and the audience in meaningful discussion, and further, to develop an experiential understanding of the data presented" (Rabideau & Roland, 2019, p. 53). Through the chorus, the youth researchers sketched a story of the oppressive material conditions which led them to join Equal Education and become youth activists in the township of Khayelitsha in Cape Town. Whilst they are singing, the atmosphere is sombre but uplifting as Phelokazi's soprano voice moves us deeply and there is a recognition by the audience that personal histories are formative in who we become. The youth researchers were documenting their journey and the intense passion of activists in the township whom they had interviewed, all of them wishing to improve their lives through access to an equal and liberating education.

Figure 1. South African research team in the Artnote.

Introduction

The South African research team consisted of six youth activists all of whom were members of an educational social movement called Equal Education (EE) – a community and membership-based organisation that advocates for quality and equality in the South African education system (Equal Education, n.d.). EE is a forerunner in youth leadership development and the organisation's campaigns are based on detailed research and policy analysis, aimed at achieving quality education for all (Equal Education, n.d.). One activist was a staff member of EE and an academic from the School of Education at the University of Cape Town.

Amanda Maxongo, Aphiwe Tomose, Lona Mtembu, Phelokazi Tsoko, Siphenathi Fulani, and Sisanda Khuzani were all attending high school in Khayelitsha for the duration of the Tikkun Youth Project while at the same time undertaking activist work as *Equalisers* – active youth members of

EE. One of the ways their activism took shape at EE was through their involvement in the project [Amazwi Wethu](#) (isiXhosa for "Our Voices"), a youth media advocacy and arts programme run by the organisation ("Our Mission," n.d.). This film project mentored these young people to further build on their story-telling skills, to create socially conscious documentary films that elevated youth issues, and to use these skills in their activism through interactive film screenings. Since Equal Education's core focus is around addressing the inequality in the South African education system, all the films deal in some way with, or raise questions about, access to quality education and how it is related to the well-being of youth. As all the students had previously been involved as Equalisers before joining Amazwi Wethu (AW), they had already been engaging with questions related to politics, justice, and the legacy of apartheid in addition to participating in various campaigns related to the current conditions in their schools and schools across the country. They came to the Tikkun Youth Project with first-hand experiences of inequality and the challenges related to struggling for social justice in the current South African context.

The project coordinator of the Amazwi Wethu and the Tikkun Youth Project was Ms. Lyndal Pottier from EE. Dr. Salma Ismail from the University of Cape Town initially came in as an advisor, but became part of the project and together with Lyndal taught the research methods and supervised the research. The funds were held at the University of Cape Town and therefore Salma managed the funds.

Khayelitsha

The township of Khayelitsha is about 25 km south-east of the Cape Town city centre. The history of the area is hinted at in its name which is isiXhosa for "[new home](#)" (South African History Online, 2013). Approximately 391,749 people live there, the majority of whom are Black African, isiXhosa speakers (Strategic Development Information and GIS Department, 2013). This concentration of similar people has its roots in South Africa's apartheid history of segregation and economic exploitation of Black people. According to the Census which was conducted in 2011, just over half of those of working age – 15 to 64 years old – are employed and 74% of households have a monthly income of R3 200 or less (approximately equivalent to $404 at the

2011 exchange rate[1]). Just over half the households (54.6%), live in informal dwellings or "shacks," which are structures made predominantly out of metal sheeting. In terms of educational attainment, only 30.7% of the population had a Grade 12 and only 4.9% a higher education degree in 2011 (Strategic Development Information and GIS Department, 2013); access to equal and quality education continues to be a struggle for the youth of Khayelitsha.

Aside from the racial profile, the other legacy of the apartheid era is the high levels of violence and crime associated with the forced removals and resettlement of people into Khayelitsha and the pervasive brutality of that time. In a recent investigation into the current links between crime and policing in Khayelitsha, one witness commented on this legacy:

At a less visible level it left behind untold, and as yet unexplored, psychic wounds and unarticulated resentments. These lie deep in the hearts and memories of thousands of black African citizens in the city, many of whom, together with their families, voluntarily or involuntarily resettled in Khayelitsha where they, once again were faced with rebuilding a sense of home and place in the city. (Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry, 2014, p. 34)
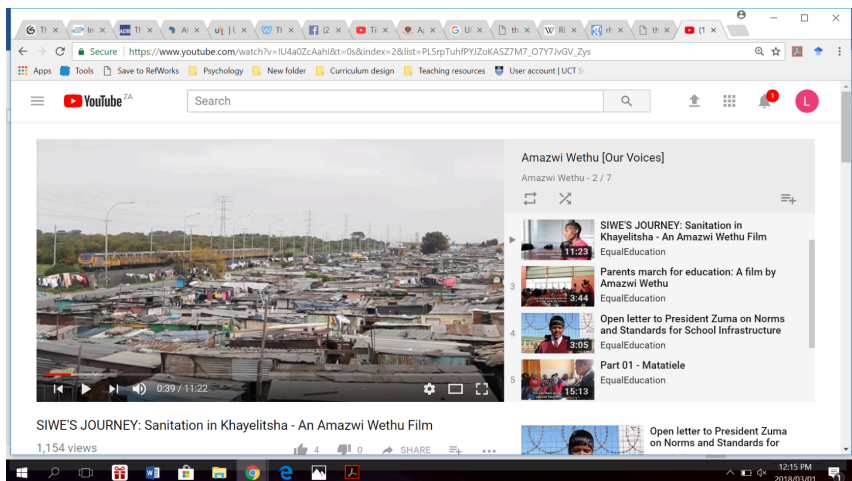

Figure 2. Screenshot of the AW film Siwe's Journey: Sanitation in Khayelitsha showing photo of Khayelitsha.

How We Came to the Tikkun Youth Project

In 2012, Dr Yvette Daniel approached Equal Education with the idea of the organisation supporting a youth research project, originally titled the Active Youth Citizens Leadership programme. Over the years, the project morphed from focussing on female youth who were interested in becoming teachers to the theme of youth leadership and the emergence of the concept of Tikkun Olam as an umbrella theme for the project. There was also a shift in terms of how and who would implement and coordinate the project at each of the sites. Once the project had settled into its final form as the Tikkun Youth Project, it was agreed that the Amazwi Wethu students would benefit from participating in this project given the nature of the work they were involved in – research-driven film work. At that point the AW participants were involved in an exploratory fiction film rooted in issues of gender-based violence and domestic abuse which they identified as pervasive in their communities, and which were negatively impacting youth's well-being and participation in school. The Tikkun Youth Project (hereafter referred to as "the project") opened an opportunity for them to cast their net beyond the organisation and their form of activism (as Equalisers and film makers in training) and hear about the issues other youth were engaged in and how.

> On introducing the project to the youth, their initial reactions ranged from excitement to an openness to learn, share, and co-create new knowledge. Here are some ways in which the youth expressed themselves in written reflections:
>
> Excitement was written on my facial expression when I learnt about the opportunities of this project and when I was down, I thought about this project which made me happy. (Siphenathi, August 2017)
>
> The introduction of the Tikkun project and engagement of what it was all about was exciting and I was keen to gain more skills by learning to do research. (Sisanda, August 2017)
>
> When I started this project, I was a 17 year old who enjoyed deep house music and knew little about politics and activism, but I stretched my imagination and saw this as a great opportunity to learn and to enlarge my knowledge. (Aphiwe, August 2017)

When I started the project, I was 16 years old and learnt that Tikkun is a project working on healing the world because of the history of a particular country, for example in South Africa it was the apartheid era and I learnt how – through civic engagement – we can move forward to think about changing the world for a better place. (Lona, August 2017)

I'm all about bringing positive change. When Tikkun came into my life I was so keen and excited because it was an opportunity to stretch my arms and contribute to a better world. It was so exciting because I had my peers to do that with. (Amanda, August 2017)

Figure 3. AW youth at the introductory workshop held in January 2015.

Figure 4. AW youth at a second workshop held at the old Equal Education office in 2015. Here, we began to tackle research concepts.

Research Process

The research project was in a sense given to us; we did not participate in its conception but agreed to participate as we were very interested in working internationally on the topic of civic engagement and interested in the philosophy of Tikkun Olam. This concept resonated with the current African humanist philosophy of creating with others – Ubuntu. We were keen to explore different ways to engage in social activism that reflected the new democratic political context in South Africa with youth, academics, and creative artists from all over the world.

PAR methods were new to our group of youth researchers, and Salma and Lyndal ran workshops on the design and skills of qualitative research using interviews by going through the project's training guide which was a resource that was very well set out, clear, and methodical. We went through

the worksheets provided by the project and worked through these in a step-by-step way. Sisanda says of these workshops,

> The introduction of the Tikkun project by Salma and the engagement of what it was all about created excitement and we all concentrated together. I was excited to know that I will be doing research and learning how to interview people, and gain more skills; I was impatient to start. (August 2017)

Figure 5. Early days, Lona and Phelo practice interviewing each other.

The main challenges with the PAR approach for us was that although the lead researcher in Canada tried to keep us informed and together as a group, the communication with all the sites was erratic. The reasons for this were: the time difference between the various countries; weak Internet connection because South Africa has a low band width; the youth have minimal access to the Internet and computers, and no money for transport to get to Internet

cafes meaning this site could not meet all the requests to participate in the Skype meetings and discussions for the Symposium. The result was that most of the communication was between Salma, Lyndal, and Yvette. However, when possible the youth researchers read a lot on Facebook about the other sites.

Reflecting on the research process Lyndal (2018) said,

> Many experiences come to mind. I will share two of these and the learnings that they generated or understandings which deepened for me. Identifying youth activists: In the initial stages of the project we encouraged the youth researchers to identify youth activists in their communities who they felt were addressing social justice issues and who they felt could be described as active citizens as per the project focus. The initial group of activists that they identified were involved in sports, arts, and/or cultural activities. Along the way, however, the youth struggled to pin down interviews with these individuals. Given that we had to move along with the research, they unfortunately could not wait for their schedules to coincide and so were unable to include them in the study. I thought this was an opportunity lost as it seemed that these were the instinctive choices of the young people and would provide interesting insights as to the challenges facing young people and the creative ways that youth activists are addressing these. In terms of participatory action research with youth (with significant material constraints) this was really a lesson for me that those supporting them need to have sufficient time available to do so, where support could mean driving them to an organisation during a taxi strike when transport is not easily available to make an appointment with an interviewee, meeting with them individually to discuss the project and clarify any questions they may have about the process (especially in the conceptual and field-work phases), and keeping them "in the loop" when they missed sessions in the midst of their teenage activist lives. This experience also supported the view that participatory action research needs to employ a flexible research process.

The second reflection centred on the learning and relationship building that happened through PAR process:

> I couldn't easily separate my role as AW and Tikkun coordinator

neatly in terms of how these created conditions for my relationship and learning with the AW Equalisers/youth researchers. One distinction that does stand out though was a greater sense of being a co-participant with them in my Tikkun research coordinator role. An example of this was how in the first few interviews I asked them, 'Can I help you to prepare?', 'Do you want me to sit in on this with you?' and the answer was 'No'. They were keen to 'own' that space, even though later they mentioned that sometimes they felt intimidated by those they interviewed. The first time this happened I was a little nervous: would we get 'the right/enough information' from the interview? My controlling coordinator hat on, I was concerned with deadlines and the pressures of setting up follow-up interviews should the need arise given our already pressed schedule. This moment was fleeting though as I remembered that this was their process and my role was one of support. By them putting up boundaries of when they needed my involvement and when they didn't, I felt this gave them a different sense of power in our relationship and enriched it. (2018)

Figure 6. In Addis Ababa waiting to board the plane.

Further barriers for all were institutional and time, as this project was above our usual work load. The youth were in their final school year, and involved in the film project and EE activities so they had to manage their time very well. It was often difficult to meet regularly, and after long periods of absence we had to refocus and rebuild interest and motivation for the project. However, the benefits of strengthening our research skills, meeting with and learning from other local activists, journeying out of the country for the first time to the Tikkun Youth Symposium, meeting members from all the other sites, and engaging with multiple ideas and creative activities, outweighed the challenges we experienced. Amanda comments on the research process:

> Doing the actual work was so exciting and challenging but it was also very educational. As I've learnt new words that could help me as an activist like 'civil engagement, injustice' and throughout the research process I met a lot of activists and that empowered me and I grew as an activist. (August 2017)

Reflecting on the experience Siphenathi commented,

> The most important things for me over this period was the excitement and happiness that I never forgot and the opportunity (i.e. Amazwi Wethu and Tikkun). All to say that these two projects have played a big role in my life – I experienced doing formal interviews and it was my first trip on a plane. (August 2017)

Figure 7. Siphenathi, Lona, and Phelo waiting to take off.

Gathering Data

The research set out to explore the journey of youth activists engaged in social justice issues and individual interviews were used to gather data from six current youth activists in Khayelitsha and Langa.

Some of the questions which were asked by the youth researchers to youth activists in the study included: What motivated them (their histories, socio-political contexts, family, teachers, etc.); what were the issues that they focused on, the reasons for choosing these issues, and the nature of their activism; and how they saw themselves bringing about social justice in their communities.

Each youth had the responsibility to conduct at least one interview; however, because the youth were first time interviewers, they were paired

up and did the interviews in groups of two or three. The youth researchers made their own choices of who to interview and so we asked them to name an activist and to give a reason for the choice. The basis on which they made this choice conformed to the following criteria: that the activist be a youth involved in civic forms of activism, and the activist was from the community or their activism was inside the community of Khayelitsha.

We provided the youth with the necessary skills and information as said above and along with equipment such as audio–recorders, batteries, and stationery. The recorders were tested and youth practiced doing interviews using the recorders. They set up times for the interviews which were done in the home language of the interviewee which was often isiXhosa. We had one transcription lesson with the youth so they were aware of the process, but it would've taken far too long for them to transcribe the interviews because of the expertise involved and their limited access to computers. Therefore, we employed an isiXhosa language teacher who transcribed and translated all the interviews into English. For the first two interviews, the youth researchers compared the translated transcriptions from isiXhosa to English, but we could not sustain this comparison for the other four interviews.

Figure 8. Translation workshop at UCT labs.

The usual ethical procedures were followed. The research proposal was sent to University of Cape Town's (UCT) ethics committee where it was approved. The youth sought informed consent for the interviews and permission to record. On the issue of confidentiality, the activists that were interviewed gave permission for their names to be used in the texts and the youth felt more comfortable to use the real names of those interviewed. Reflections followed the interviews and the challenges of the interview were discussed as well as the excitement it had evoked. Permission to use photographs in the text was given by all who participated in the research and in the Symposium.

Reflection on Challenges of the Interviews

One of the key challenges was that some of the youth researchers felt intimidated by the knowledge and commitment of some of the interviewees. Aphiwe and Amanda said that they initially felt inadequate to do the interviews with such important activists. The activists appeared very confident, passionate, and committed in their work, and had great ideas for social justice work.

Sometimes there was embarrassment when the tape recorder was off while the interview was in progress and this was because as Lona said embarrassingly, "We forgot to switch the on button on or the batteries were flat."

Another challenge was finding suitable venues which could be reached easily by public transport by both participants and youth researchers, and which was quiet enough to conduct the interview. This was not always achievable as Sisanda noted, "Because of the background noise outside, it was sometimes difficult to hear one another" (August 2017). At one point during the research period, there were several crime related incidents which also made it unsafe to meet at the EE offices.

Transportation was another challenge as there were various minibus taxi strikes during the research period making it dangerous to travel sometimes, and at other times it was difficult to find a taxi operating on the necessary route to reach interviewees.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The analysis of the data was done by first reading through the data several times, highlighting and identifying key words and phrases, and then coding these into categories. We wrote up the categories on newsprint then checked for similar and different themes. The themes chosen were Background; Interests and Important Issues; Activities (what, when, where, and how); Challenges; and Use of Social Media. We wrote these themes up onto newsprint to present at the Symposium. The findings are presented in this format in this chapter.

Phelokazi describes her experience of coding the data: "On the long flight to Canada, I sat with many interviews in front of me and highlighted important issues and from the interviews I learnt how civic engagement is happening in our country" (August 2017).

Figure 9. Phelokazi reading over interviews.

Lona reflects, "The interviews showed how activisms can be different and activists do something positive for the community and tomorrow's generation. Activists we interviewed were usually leaders" (August 2017).

Research findings

Who Are the Youth Activists and What Are Their Different Forms of Activisms?

Mase Ramaru. Kealeboga Ramaru, also known as "Mase," was born in the Northern Cape and came to Cape Town to study at the University of Cape Town. She qualified with an honours degree in Gender Studies. She is 23 years old and at the time of the study was the Deputy Head of Equal Education in the Western Cape. She comes from a politically active family who have an African National Congress (ANC) background. The ANC is the governing party in South Africa. Mase is not affiliated with the ANC, but is active in student movements such as the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements. These two student-led movements reject the continuing institutional racism present in South African universities. They mobilised to decolonise the physical spaces and the curricula, and to secure free tertiary education for South African students. In 2018, a significant gain was made as the government confirmed that it would be introducing fully subsidised, "free higher education and training for poor and working-class families" (The Department of Higher Education and Training, 2018, p. 1); this will be phased in over the next five years.

Mase became a confident speaker and honed her debating skills in high school as an active participant in debate societies, drama, music, travel, and plays. In all of these public activities, she interacted with people and her confidence grew. She is interested in the #RhodesMustFall and #FessMustFall student movements; she also did a lot of organising work including organising protests and doing the groundwork for meetings. Mase's particular interest is to work towards Black youth's access to university which involves protesting against fees, and for a decolonised university and curriculum. She says she loves this brilliant quote from the

#FeesMustFall movement: "If it's expensive and inaccessible, then it's not revolutionary" (Mase Interview, April 2016).

In EE, she is active in taking up gender issues and says, "In gender activism you have to be an intersectional person and you have to treat each struggle with equality and not one better than the other." Mase is inspired by Audre Lorde; she states,

There's a brilliant feminist author. Her name is Audre Lorde. She says something beautiful ... she says that your silence won't protect you (Lorde, 2017). For as long as we are quiet and silenced and we are inactive in our own spaces and we see the injustice taking place that doesn't protect us from the harm that injustice brings.

Following on this precept, Mase developed her motto: "Even if your voice shakes, say it. Tell the truth. Speak it. Call out injustice. Work for justice around you" (April 2016). For her, civic engagement means the importance of consultation and having open conversations at a grassroots level because, "conversation allows us to engage and think of solutions to problems and this will create a kind of social activism that creates spaces for youth to establish themselves."

For Mase, social justice work is about observing and respecting the humanity of others, and supporting their autonomy. She states, "The *Equalisers* do amazing work on a daily basis ... I think what we do is facilitate a space for that to happen and the rest is up to them."

Mandilakhe Lungile. Mandilakhe was born in the Eastern Cape and moved to Cape Town when he was 10 years old to continue his primary school education in a "coloured" township called Mitchells Plein, where he was one of four Black African children in his class. Later he enrolled in a high school in Khayelitsha, which made a significant impact on the kinds of activism he chose. During his primary school, a teacher singled him out as someone with leadership potential and suggested that he be the class captain. From there he went on to initiate and lead various projects. Thus, from this experience he regards teachers as important role models as they have the potential to influence learners' lives. This experience informed his choice of civic activism and social justice projects.

One of Mandilakhe's main concerns is that there are not enough role models for young people in the community who can motivate them to complete their schooling; another concern is the low pass rate in the final school year also known as matriculation. These two concerns led him to form the New Hope Community Programme which began its work in his old high

school, Kwamfundo Secondary School in Khayelitsha. Speaking of the work of New Hope, he stated, "If you ever need help, we are available and willing to uplift your spirit, motivate you and give you skills that you need" (December 2016).

The programme initially involved tutoring high school students and out of school youth trying to improve their matric results and motivational speaking. It then grew to include donating clothes as Mandilakhe stated,

In life there are people less privileged than us. I took that and I thought 'If every one of us in these [tutoring groups] has old clothes, instead of throwing these away or burning them we should gather them and donate to a charity or to those less fortunate.'

His reference to burning clothes may suggest a youth sub-culture in the township which is characterised by buying expensive brand name clothes and then burning these as a performance of their identity (Howell & Vincent, 2014).

Mandilakhe expressed his deep appreciation for the group of people who have been drawn to the project and have formed a team together with him. He noted that the biggest challenges he faces with the programme is the negative peer pressure exerted on youth, such as gangsterism, drugs, peer pressure to play truant which result in lateness, non-attendance, and negative attitudes among youth.

His views on civic engagement and social activism are linked to improving youth's education, mentoring young people, and being a role model for them. He is appreciative of students who volunteer their time to help others and says, "You can start with small things – for example, just be encouraging."

Siyabulela Sophi (better known as "Mocca J."). Mocca J. grew up in the Eastern Cape and in describing his upbringing he states, "I come from a very disadvantaged background, where my mother was a cleaner and my father works as a gardener," echoing the chorus sung by the youth researchers in the Artnote: "They supported all my dreams and would ask what I want to do" (October 2015). Mocca J. considers himself a social entrepreneur: "one of the people who are called social innovators around Khayelitsha."

On completing his studies, Mocca J. connected with five other youth who were in a similar position as he was: returning from tertiary study to the community in which they grew up, asking themselves how they could give back to the township. Out of this reflection, Makhaza Lifestyle was formed. Makhaza is the name of the suburb in Khayelitsha that he lives in. Mocca J. explained, "Makhaza Lifestyle is an immediate solution to the current

economic challenges such as youth unemployment and crime." He feels strongly that youth should follow their dreams and strive to find their own solutions and not wait on the government.

The vision of the Makhaza Lifestyle team is to develop access to information for youth in the township; they undertake various projects to meet and reach this vision. Mocca J. uses his own life as an example when explaining this vision in which access to information and career guidance may have kept him from making the wrong study choice. He was angry that he couldn't attend a career guidance session at the university since he had no money to get there and without thinking about his interests, enrolled for a diploma in Office Management and Technology.

To solve this problem for youth in the township and so they do not experience this frustration, one of the activities undertaken by the group is organising a Career Exhibition in the township. The group also provides financial assistance to students by paying their registration and tuition fees. Money for their work is raised through selling caps and clothes labelled with his brand name Makhaza Lifestyle. His brand has also become popular because of his music – Mocca J. is a DJ.

Mocca J. strongly and confidently believes that people should be positive and follow their dreams. He makes an example of his own path: "I wanted to be a leader so I joined the Social Justice Coalition to learn about leadership which is principled." He also had dreams of becoming a social innovator, so he joined workshops at the University of Cape Town at the social innovator hub. From all of this, he has learnt that if the community and youth were to take him seriously and respect him, he needed to be mindful of how he behaves in public.

His ideas of social justice and civic engagement illustrate that he is strongly motivated to engage with youth to achieve their dreams and to become self-sufficient through education and social projects which can also be entrepreneurial so as to bring economic development into the community. He excitedly says,

> So, the biggest challenge for me was to get a team, a team that would support the idea and the dream of bringing a positive economic change to Khayelitsha … people who were friendly and positive about bringing about a new change because my ultimate goal was … community development.

He is passionate about his projects and emphasises that these are not for his individual benefit, but for the community.

Lucas Siphelo Ntabeni. Lucas was born in Cape Town and grew up in Khayelitsha. From an early age at primary school and high school he was involved in youth issues and several organisations; one of these was Global Development Peace and Leadership. In high school, he was also an Equaliser and was active in Equal Education. At the time of the interview, he was working in Equal Education as a Community Leader and head facilitator for his community; his work here was to ensure that youth were mobilised to be aware of the problems in schools, and to help them take these issues up and focus on quality in education. He also spoke about xenophobia as many foreigners from other parts of Africa who live in the township are often victims of violence. He was angry about "this hateful attitude and behaviour to foreigners" (September 2015) and urged young people not to discriminate against other African nationals.

Lucas, like Mocca J, was also passionate about youth following their dreams and to inculcate a spirit of positivity within them. He therefore mentored students to develop their leadership qualities. It was important for him that teachers reflect on the knowledge they share, and he emphasised the importance of parents as role models and the different parenting styles. He used a metaphor of the three-legged pot in African cooking to say that, "All three legs support the cooking of one meal, so too in life the three important people who mould the youth are parents, teachers and their peers."

For Lucas, social justice and civic engagement is about bringing change through education. He ends the interview with these words: "People must talk and engage with one another and make sure they learn and move forward." Very sadly, Lucas became ill and passed away in December 2017.

Zuko Ngoma. Zuko grew up in Langa, one of the oldest townships in Cape Town and is now studying at the University of the Western Cape. When he was 18 years old, he served a prison sentence for robbery; this experience motivated him to become a social activist. He joined a social movement called Langa Youth Conscious Movement and for him, this project is critical as the *conscious talks* make youth aware of the history of slavery, of the writings of Steve Biko, and of the links to the Black Consciousness Movement. Conscious talks refers to an education methodology used in this movement; for example, youth come together to a screening of a documentary on slavery, and afterwards discuss and debate issues raised by

the film, such as the history of slavery. These talks are undertaken with the aim of changing the consciousness of youth. Their work is inspired by Steve Biko, the founder of the Black Consciousness Movement. Zuko wished that he had been exposed to such talks and social analyses earlier in his life. For him, the conscious talks are also a way to engage with youth and to inform them of his traumatic prison experiences with the intent to deter them from committing crimes.

Zuko is also involved in a group that educates youth about life in prison as a way to deter them from making bad decisions, such as joining gangs or stealing. One of the actions that they take is the "museum prison." This is an actual prison cell with a bed and an adjacent container with an exhibition about a fictional boy called Thando; one side of the container tells a story where he makes good decisions and the other in which he makes bad decisions. The focus of the exhibition is to engage young people to ask questions about crime and life in prison, and to bring to them a perspective that gangsterism is not a solution to poverty.

Apart from the talks and drama, Zuko realises the scope and the value of social media. He is using this medium to educate himself on the different youth struggles, such as #FeesMustFall. He is also part of a communal garden project, where they plant vegetables for people and in the process, hope to make others conscious of their environment and their immediate surroundings.

His vision of the Langa Youth Conscious Social Movement is to, "build a communal system that serves the community and to this end we have people talking about issues such as culture and health to bring out different perspectives and consciousness so that people can achieve their vision in the long term." Heis confident that such a vision can be realised.

Monde Kula. Monde describes himself as follows: "I'm an organic-change agent, someone who advocates for change in any means necessary" (June 2016). He is the deputy director of Inkululeko in Mind, meaning Freedom in Mind. He grew up in poor living conditions in Khayelitsha and these social conditions motivated him to work towards change. For him, people change when there is a shift in their consciousness, from thinking about themselves as victims to agents of change. He wishes to develop youth who are aware of their surroundings. Therefore, he encourages debates, discussions, poetry, and use of social media so that young people can envision a more positive society, even though he is aware that the Internet is not accessible to everyone.

Monde has been involved with many different organisations such as Equal Education, The Treatment Action campaign (which fought for free anti-retrovirals for people living with HIV/AIDs), and Political Life for Peace. For him, civic engagement is to advocate for change and social justice which should go beyond single-issue based movements which he experienced while being an activist in the movements mentioned above. He says these movements have a narrow view of change, meaning he is in favour of systemic structural change. While speaking of Inkululeko in Mind, Monde states, "It's an idea that originates in Khayelitsha and its created by young people of Khayelitsha to speak to the ills of the society that affects young people and the behaviour of young people within society so it's an organisation that deals with consciousness."

He holds the view that the purpose of changing people's consciousness or creating freedom in the mind is important for behavioural change. Civic engagement in the forms pointed to above were key to unlock the consciousness and according to Monde, is critical for social justice work.

Discussion and Analysis

The key findings from the research show youth's motivation for activism ranged from growing up in poverty to growing up in a middle-class political family, from experiences in prison and at tertiary institutions to teachers acting as role models and the influence of peers in organisations such as Equal Education. About half of the youth interviewed came to Khayelitsha from poorer parts of the country to either attend school or to access tertiary education in Cape Town.

The findings illustrated that there were diverse forms of youth activisms which ranged from welfare work to more militant forms. The welfare approaches included donating old clothes to poor people, tutoring learners in school subjects, and workshops on career guidance and social entrepreneurship. The more militant forms included raising consciousness about identities, gender, Black consciousness, forgoing issue-based politics, and involvement in student movements which were protesting for free tertiary education. Modalities used to advocate for these changes were discussions, debates, conversations, music, drama, poetry, and social media because these offered creative pedagogies to mobilise youth who live in

tenuous social conditions. Important too are role models – parents, teachers, and peers – when providing support, necessary information, and guidance.

Most of the youth activists were concerned with empowering youth to be positive and to follow and realise their dreams as a goal in itself, but also to improve the economic, social, psychological, and environmental conditions in their community. This view arises from their own experiences and from the social conditions in the townships as described earlier which are characterised by high levels of crime, unemployment, and the high school drop-out rate.

For the activists interviewed, civic engagement meant having engaging conversations, introducing challenging ideas, motivating youth to take responsibility for themselves, getting physically involved in social justice work, and undertaking different forms of creative expression. The thread that seemed to run through these activisms was that of giving back by contributing to the lives of others, changing attitudes, ways of thinking and ways of being amongst youth, to encourage further study, being a role model to other youth, supporting youth to have agency in their lives, and plugging their activism into youth culture.

These activists felt that the youth were the entry point to building powerful communities and to improve the quality of life in the townships. Personal experiences were important influences on their choice of activism and social justice projects; they all had a strong and passionate response to the interview questions and showed an eagerness to illustrate their commitment to this work through civic engagement.

Reflections on Symposium and Artnote

During the Tikkun Youth Symposium in Canada, we encountered and learned about different forms of social injustices experienced in First World and Developing countries in addition to the activisms associated with these. The first-hand accounts of youth struggle that were shared, the weaving of these stories into a collective performance – the Artnote – as well as the various opportunities for informal socialising created a camaraderie in this community and helped form tentative bonds of friendship which we hope will continue to be built beyond this project.

Figure 10. Backstage at the Artnote.

Initially, the concepts of Tikkun Olam and civic engagement were not in the South African youth's vocabulary. Before the symposium, we did some theoretical input into the meaning of these concepts and related this to the history of the struggle for democracy in South Africa and the current struggle for basic services. Gradually, these concepts were accepted and included in their research and conversations on social justice and youth activism.

Lona said that she learnt to relate to the values in Tikkun from the cultural aspect of Ubuntu which in the African language means "humanity" but more literally translated into "*I am what I am because of who we are.*" Ubuntu is a concept that was widely used during the struggle for freedom by Nelson Mandela. After the first democratic elections in 1994, Bishop Tutu reinvigorated it to signify reconciliation. Ubuntu fits well with the concept of Tikkun Olam which is also about forgiveness.

Below are further expressions of expanding imaginations and conceptual

understandings of the South African youth after the symposium. Phelo reflecting on the Artnote stated,

I learnt from the experiences of the different activists and their issues and what was happening in other countries. I was excited about telling our stories and showing our talents. It was exciting and I was very happy about it. However, the day of the Artnote, we heard some very sad stories from the youth of Syria. It really touched us all and many were crying; this made me feel very committed with others and I felt loved and we experienced healing from the Tikkun project.

Lona went on to say, "In doing the Artnote we opened up and shared stories and ideas and worked together and through this we supported one another. I felt welcomed, free, listened to strangers who became friends, and became the Tikkun project."

Reflecting on the experience more broadly, Sisanda stated, "I learnt in the youth symposium that youth in other countries are fighting for the same things as we in SA, learnt about working with people from other places with different personalities, goals and learnt about a diversity of perspectives."

Figure 11. Sisanda and Lona with the Windsor team.

Figure 12. Aphiwe with Fatlum and Aid from Kosovo.

Figure 13. In Toronto, already missing the Thunder Bay team!

Reflecting on what he learnt from the other youth researchers, Aphiwe noted, "For me, I learnt that civic engagement includes communities working together in both political and non-political actions, the goal of such engagement is to address public concerns and promote the quality of life in the community."

The remarks made from the youth about the Artnote and Symposium rang true for both Lyndal and Salma. Reflecting on the youth, Salma noted, "The youth learnt a lot and visibly grew in confidence from the time they left the Cape Town airport."

Besides their participation in the Artnote, the youth researchers also screened their documentaries which gave the audience a glimpse into the life of Black youth in the township and the challenges they face at school. Commenting on the richness of the experience Lyndal said,

Over the three years that we were involved in the project, our relationships were tested and nurtured by, among other things, events in our personal lives, the social justice work that we were involved in, and the material

conditions of our different class positions. Notwithstanding, being an adult in the relationship (with years of formal education, work experience, and informal learning as a mother under my belt), as we faced different experiences together, I often felt that I learnt more from the youth than they learnt from me. During the research work, my understanding of the nuances of each of their activism grew which enriched my understanding of the nature of youth activism in post-apartheid South Africa.

Conclusion

Since the youth researchers are in an organisation which does research and advocacy on social justice issues and they see their identities as activists or "Equalisers," these two concepts were familiar to them, and during their research and participation in the Symposium these concepts were expanded on and given more impetus. The interviews with different activists exposed us to diverse forms of activism for social justice, inspired us, stretched our imaginations, and gave us bold new ideas for social justice work and civic engagement.

Figure 14. Research team arrives in Toronto.

References

Daniel, Y. (2014). *Research proposal titled: Pedagogies of repair and reconciliation (Tikkun): The embodied praxis of youth civic engagement.* Unpublished manuscript, Education Department, University of Windsor, Windsor, ON.

The Department of Higher Education and Training. (2018, January 4). *Media briefing input on subsidised free higher education for poor and working-class students* [Press release]. Retrieved from http://www.dhet.gov.za/SiteAssets/Media/Statements/2018/Media%20Briefing%20Input%20on%20Subsidised%20Free%20Higher%20Education%20for%20Poor%20%20and%20Working%20Class%20Students%20FINAL.pdf

Equal Education. (n.d.). Our Movement. Retrieved from https://equaleducation.org.za/our-movement/

Howell, S., & Vincent, L. (2014). 'Licking the snake' – The i'khothane and contemporary township youth identities in South Africa. *South African Review of Sociology*, 45(2), 60-77. doi:10.1080/21528586.2014.917883

Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry. (2014). Towards a safer Khayelitsha: Report of the commission of inquiry into allegations of police inefficiency and a breakdown in relations between SAPS and the community of Khayelitsha. Retrieved from http://www.khayelitshacommission.org.za/images/towards_khaye_docs/Khayelitsha_Commission_Report_WEB_FULL_TEXT_C.pdf

Lorde, A. (2017). *Your silence will not protect you: Essays and poems*. London, UK: Silver Press.

Our Mission. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://amazwiwethu.wixsite.com/ourvoices

Pound Sterling Live. (n.d.). U.S. dollar to South African rand spot exchange rates for 2011 from the Bank of England. Retrieved from https://www.poundsterlinglive.com/bank-of-england-spot/historical-spot-exchange-rates/usd/USD-to-ZAR-2011

Rabideau, C. & Roland, K. (2019). "Artnote: Data as Performance" in Y. Daniels (ed.), *Tikkun Beyond Borders*. Windsor, Ontario: University of Windsor.

South African History Online. (2013, November 8). Khayelitsha township. Retrieved from http://www.sahistory.org.za/place/khayelitsha-township

Strategic Development Information and GIS Department. (2013). *City of Cape Town – 2011 Census Suburb Khayelitsha*. City of Cape Town: Cape Town.

University of Windsor. (n.d.). Tikkun Project guide: Workshop modules. (Unpublished).

Acknowledgments

1 Census 2011 was conducted from 9 to 31 October 2011 (STATS SA, 2012).

Exchange rate at that time was approximately $1 to R 7,9208 (Pound Sterling Live, n.d.).

5. Reflections of a First-Timer at a Provincial Rally: The Healing Power of Physical Presence and Bonding

ERIN ROSE

Abstract

This chapter encompasses my journey of being an impoverished student in Ontario, Canada. In this chapter, I articulate my own struggles that have shaped my identity of becoming a "youth advocate." To expand, I will also discuss the validation that is received through community building and shared experiences while at an activism event, such as the $15 and Fairness protest. My journey went from feeling isolated in my own fight, to wanting to make a difference and having a desire to see a positive change for future generations. I will also touch on my experiences as a youth advocate in both a provincial rally setting, as well as an international youth advocacy project setting. It was not until the Tikkun Youth Symposium that I personally identified as a youth advocate. Once I saw that there were people from all different areas of the world who were in the same generation as myself, fighting for social economic justice in our separate communities, did I truly find comfortability in identifying as such while meeting some of the most special people. As youths in modern day society, it is our responsibility to heal and repair the world in the ways we best know how and to positively fight against the struggles of our communities. It is essential that experiences be shared and articulated, as well as building identification processes to feel comfortable in one's own skin as a youth advocate. Experiencing the emotion and validation that is attached to being physically present at an activism event for the first time is important as well.

Experiences of modern youth advocates portray online presence in the activism world as important, but it is not the only way to participate in youth advocacy or activism. There is a sense of community and bonding that happens at events that evolve from community organizing. The $15 and Fairness movement is based on an anti-oppressive lens, meaning it was not led or fully supported by one group of people: various groups were fighting for the advancement of economic justice. The $15 and Fairness movement takes place both online and in physical assembly, which is an attribute not so often seen anymore. The atmosphere of bodies and spaces is something that cannot be achieved on a strictly online activist community. The sense of friendship, community building, networking, success, and shared experiences can be found online, but the physical atmosphere of being in the middle of all the action at a grassroots event is an experience of a lifetime and belonging.

Online activism is not the only way that this generation of youth advocates can take part in having their voices expressed. We have seen the enormous potential of activism that grows out of online communities. For example, the international Occupy Movement was facilitated by online engagement, but took shape by local camps. The Occupy Movement first took place on Wall Street in October of 2011 (Democracy Now, 2011). It was a call for the nations to change the ways in which they think about and use money (Democracy Now, 2011). During this time, Wall Street was crashing, and tax payers' dollars were being used to bail out billion-dollar companies while everyday citizens were struggling to find work, and afford food, housing, education, etc. (Democracy Now, 2011). This protest not only took place in New York City, but reached an international level through online forums as a movement against social and economic inequality and a lack of democracy around the world. This is important to note because the Occupy Movement illustrates that online communities are important, but that the intimacy and connection that developed in camps is what sustained activists' commitment to the movement, so much so that they were willing to occupy spaces with their physical bodies. This point is not an argument of choosing to use one and not the other; it is about the importance of experiencing both. There is a responsibility of knowing what lights your activism on fire, and being involved in the repair of that in order to see change. My personal experiences speak to the intimacy derived through bodies and space which creates a sense of community, connection, and belonging.

Introduction

This chapter is an autoethnographic journal of my journey that evolved from me feeling like a hopeless impoverished student who lacked a voice and a stance about injustices, into identifying as a motivated youth advocate. An autoethnographer uses photographs, life history, and biographies to give voice and explore self-revelation (Reed-Danahay, 2011). It is a chance to create a space for first-hand narratives. However, I am only speaking from my own experiences in the world thus far and realize others may have completely different experiences. With that being said, I will incorporate instances of activist history that support my experiences and self-reflection. Taking the route of autoethnography in sharing the importance of healing the world is important because I am able to create a space for shared experiences within a scholarly piece. Sharing experiences is one of the most powerful avenues in terms of sharing how one sees the world and most importantly how we can take responsibility in those experiences.

I want to share my experiences and life history to help others in similar circumstances from feeling isolated. I did not always identify as a youth activist because this label/term seemed loaded and carried a great deal of cultural baggage: trouble maker, radical, loudmouth, etc. I personally did not perceive myself in this light so I chose to not identify as such. This chapter aims to explore how I became comfortable identifying as a proud youth advocate. In this journal, I also describe the healing power of bonding with other like-minded youth and the feeling of being involved in both online and in-person activism. I will discuss my experiences as a student, both in high school and my decision to become a university student. Then, a discussion of my experiences as a campaigner for the $15 and Fairness movement at my university and as a first-time protester at a provincial rally will follow. The chapter will then focus on my beliefs in terms of grassroots organizing within activism and speak about my transformative experience within the Tikkun Youth Project.

Erin: The Student

I started my post-secondary adventure at the University of Windsor where

I graduated with my Bachelor of Arts in Women Studies, then continued at the same university in the Faculty of Education. Women Studies was my stepping stone for applying to the Faculty of Education because you need an undergraduate degree or equivalent to apply. Women Studies forever changed the way I viewed the world, encouraged me to do a lot of unlearning in terms of societal norms, and facilitated a home away from home for me. I was so passionately angry at the structure of post-secondary schooling that I contemplated how anyone did it. Nevertheless, I wanted to become a teacher because for however alienating and elitist universities are, I still believed in the importance of education and the impact I could have on the generations to come. Oftentimes, throughout my undergraduate education, I questioned the reasons why a university degree and obtaining a career I desire and love was so incredibly expensive.

As long as I can remember, my peers and I were told, "If you go to university, you will be guaranteed a good job." Since there was no university in my hometown, I had to think about where I was going to live and how I would afford the related expenses, such as rent, textbooks, transportation, food, etc. They didn't tell us that our savings from our high school part-time jobs would hardly suffice for the tuition of one semester, let alone books and living expenses for the next couple of years. All I have ever wanted was to be a Kindergarten teacher, so I applied to the University of Windsor and started on my post-secondary schooling journey. I was told to use as many resources as I could to get to the end-goal: graduation. I recognize my privilege in having this as an option to begin with and in no means could achieve this on my own. Thankfully, post-secondary students in Ontario can apply to a financial aid program called Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). This program is funded by the federal and provincial governments and ran by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (OSAP definitions, n.d.). Students can apply by submitting their income and their parents' income in order for the website to generate the eligible amount of financial assistance she/he could potentially receive. This money will be given as a loan with interest and students will begin to pay this back once they have graduated. I was also "lucky" enough to receive a student loan from my bank as well to help with the cost of post-secondary schooling and living expenses. I am also privileged enough to have parents who have tried to support me as much as they could to help me reach my end goal.

My thought process was that I wanted to become a teacher right after I graduated which would mean that both of my loans would be paid off in no

time. However, in order to become a teacher in Ontario, you must have an undergraduate degree to apply to the Faculty of Education which means at least four years for my undergraduate degree and another two years in the Faculty of Education. According to *The New York Times*, 41% of students do not finish an undergraduate degree in four years, even though it seems that straightforward (Kolodner, 2017); I am included in that 41% and had to return for an extra semester. Personally, this put me at a total of seven years of schooling, with one more to complete. I have estimated my total debt to be approximately $70,000 at the end of my seven-year journey. Further into my post-secondary schooling, it became apparent that there would not be a job waiting for me at the end of the proverbial tunnel. On top of post-secondary school stress, I now had the stress of $70,000 on my shoulders and no job. There is also the pressure from society to get on with my life. I will be 26 years old by the time I graduate. To put it in perspective, my parents were 21 years old when they got married, 24 years old when they bought their first home, and 27 years old when they started having children. This was average for their generation. There is no way that I will be able to buy a car, own a house, get married, or have children with the amount of school debt I have on my shoulders. In fact,

> When the first Millennials reached 30 years old back in 2010, their unemployment rate was 12.7%, higher than the unemployment rate experienced by Baby Boomers and Gen. Xers when they reached the same age. In general, higher levels of educational attainment are associated with lower unemployment, job stability and higher incomes – key variables in assessing credit worthiness and demand for financial services. (Nava, Karp, & Nash-Stacey, 2014)

I also feel the pressure to be looking for and attaining a job within my field before hitting the age of 30 in order to not feel entirely crippled due to the above facts.

I am fully aware and very lucky that my parents and sister have been supportive in helping me follow my dreams of becoming a teacher. They have taught me that my happiness and enjoyment of life should always be my first priority and I try to remind myself of this every day. I also have a strong support system within my close-knit friend group that has helped me get through the tough times. I mention this because it has kept me grounded when getting overwhelmed with thoughts of defeat, debt, and my unknown

future. To be honest, I try to put my debt and my lack of "adulthood" out of my mind, and instead focus on the now.

Following graduation, and with no guarantees of a job in my profession, I will have to find a job that pays minimum wage in order to keep up with my loan payments for both OSAP and the bank. With minimum wage at $11.60 an hour, I feel like I have been set up to fail by both the government and the structure of post-secondary schooling. As much as parental co-residence – sharing a residence with parents and an adult child (Dettling & Hsu, 2017) – can be an alternative to paying back debts easier, it is also a setback in order to begin my own life. Living on my own is not possible while working a precarious job with a minimum wage salary and with the debt I now have. The post-secondary school structure, in combination with the low minimum wage rates, leave students below the poverty line instead of being guided into beginning our adult lives.

How are millennials supposed to thrive and contribute to a positive world when society is not on our side? We are forced into debt in order to attain a "well-respected" job through post-secondary prices and a low minimum wage. I felt isolated, exhausted, impoverished, and incredibly stressed just thinking about it. I truly grappled with my personal morals of feeling absolutely trapped in trying to reach my set goals in modern society. It became so overwhelming at times that I contemplated quitting school all together and committing to a career I did not see myself happy in. It is unjust to expect people in the millennial generation to succeed when they are stuck with thousands of dollars of debt, with more and more businesses involving precarious work and paying a low minimum wage. This was when my passionate anger needed to be put to good use; I was then introduced to the $15 and Fairness movement through my involvement with the Tikkun Youth Project research group at The University of Windsor.

Erin: The Campaigner

One of my professors, Dr. Frances Cachon, saw my intense passion for seeking a positive social change for myself and others in my generation; she asked if I would be interested in joining the Tikkun Youth Project and provided me with the necessary information – I was hooked. From there I joined the rest of the University of Windsor students from the Social

Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded partnership known as the Tikkun Youth Project. *Tikkun Olam*, the main principle of the project, is an ancient Jewish concept meaning it is our responsibility to repair and heal the world. The project consisted of five groups of youth advocates; from Windsor, South Africa, Kosovo, Thunder Bay, and Toronto. The project brought together youth from all over the world to share their experiences and issues faced within their communities. After attending my first meeting with the Windsor youth, we all felt a sense of concern about economic justice and what society had in store for our futures. With the youth participants becoming known as Tikkuners, we decided to make the $15 and Fairness movement our focal action project. I remember feeling so heard and "at home" after I left my first meeting with the Windsor Tikkun team.

We developed our own $15 and Fairness collective at the University of Windsor. The $15 and Fairness movement is a provincial movement that focuses on six main demands: a $15 minimum wage, paid sick days, rules that protect everyone in the workplace, decent hours for decent work, the right to organize and unionize, and respect at work (Demands, n.d.). This movement became my movement. I learned so much about how the minimum wage and rights in the workplace can and do affect students, families, and citizens. In Ontario, our minimum wage puts more than half of our population under or directly on the poverty line (Demands, n.d.). Is it socially just if modern day society supports the fact that families can hardly afford to live in the world we have created for ourselves?

As a collective, we advertised online about our events being held on campus where we tabled for $15 and Fairness. Tabling is a term used in the activist community that is a public education outreach initiative aimed at bringing awareness and networking to those who want to get involved. We set up our table in the student center, ready with our signs, petitions, and buttons. These tabling events happened a few times over the span of a couple of months. We also took the time to speak in large lecture halls and classrooms on the university campus about the $15 and Fairness movement, and informed students about the different ways in which they could become involved. During these quick 5-minute periods before a class would begin, I would open up about my extreme debt, my struggles as a student, and the bleak prospects about finding a suitable job that would enable me to pay off my loans. I would then bring up the demands of the movement and put them into the perspective of how they could assist students in paying back

their debts. This act of sharing personal experiences was difficult for me at first, but I believed in being honest about my own experiences. I learned that it was a great way to build rapport with other students and in turn help them feel less isolated or exhausted. I knew that my impact at this point was not large; I may have sparked an interest or a light bulb in one out of two-hundred of those students in each lecture hall. I may not have caught the attention of every student and my struggles may not have aligned with all of them, but to me, that one person was enough. Every small act counts in the process of Tikkun. As I became a part of this Tikkun partnership, I learned that we may not always achieve everything we set out to achieve through activism, but the small steps towards healing and repairing the world do/will make a difference.

   I would describe our tabling events as a success. We had many people who were opposed to the movement come by to have conversations with us about our thoughts on inflation or on how we expected this movement to become successful in the current economy. During these conversations, it was hard to feel like we were successful, but when standing up for social movements, educational discussions are the best way to get the information and importance across. In a study done at the University of Colorado about student protests, negotiation, and constructive confrontation, the researchers concluded that constructive confrontation can be the best approach when both parties are committed to research, analysis, debate, and dialogue (Burgess & Burgess, 2001). My experiences with tabling at the University of Windsor also showed this as being the most comfortable way to go about listening to different viewpoints on this issue. Giving each person the time to speak and educate the other is the best way to learn about an issue, no matter what side you stand on. Burgess and Burgess (2001) also concluded that, "miscommunication and misunderstandings portray inaccurate (usually negative) images of the positions and actions of others" (p. 1); therefore, approaching such a situation can encourage growth for both sides instead of a negative experience and resisting any further dialogue. Having learned this through my own experiences with tabling events, I learned to know the facts, be well-versed in the topic, and to keep an open mind as to where the other side may be coming from. After our first event, I was presented the opportunity to attend a $15 and Fairness rally in Toronto. I thought: "What better way to become completely equipped with the language and tools I would need to feel more confident in constructive

confrontation than to collect this information first hand from the passionate organizers and supporters themselves?"

Erin: The Protester

The $15 and Fairness movement organized a protest in Toronto, Ontario in October 2016. Dr. Frances Cachon, who introduced me to the Tikkun Youth Project and $15 and Fairness, was the same person who encouraged me to attend the rally. I had never been to a rally before, so I had no idea what to expect or how to prepare. I did very little research before I went, but made sure I packed a bag with what I thought would be the essentials: band-aids, a selfie stick, a rain poncho, an extra pair of socks, my cellphone, a portable charger, a water bottle, a granola bar, cash, and my ID. Since I would be in another city with a group of strangers, I had no idea what to expect. Luckily, a friend from school decided he wanted to join me. I felt somewhat better knowing that I would be walking into this new situation with a friendly and reliable face. So, that was how I prepared and embarked on a four-hour bus ride to my very first rally. And it was not a small local rally, but a provincial one! I was amazed at the huge crowd gathered outside of Queen's Park, the provincial legislature. As I walked into the crowd, there were speakers on stage encouraging the crowd to repeat chants back to them: "We want 15 and we want it NOW!" I had chills come over my entire body, not just because of the rain or the dampness of the day, but because of the rumbling of the ground from the constant cheering; I could feel it in my heart.

Navigating around the main areas was difficult: there were hundreds and hundreds of people gathered together all for one cause, movement, and a shared struggle. There were booths and tents set up where volunteers were handing out petitions and information. There were individuals carrying large art pieces, groups with banners, and even families with children! I found it so empowering that parents would bring their children to such an event; I imagined my future self, bringing my own children out to rallies one day. There were also all kinds of people representing many different disciplines and professions: union workers, teachers, students, flight attendants, janitors, hospital staff, lawyers, and rappers.

The rain did not put a damper on or discourage a single person who was there. Even though I am short 4'10", I pushed my way through the crowd

to get to the front of the stage. At the time, Fred Hahn, President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) was giving a speech. I happened to turn around to see the crowd behind me; all I saw was a sea of posters and signs, with people cheering and blowing whistles (see Appendix). I can still remember that exact moment – the happiness I experienced for not being the only one who felt like I was existing to fail and forever be in debt. This rally represented the voices of people who were struggling due to economic injustices that went beyond just students and the financial burdens they carried. I felt a strong sense of community with hundreds and hundreds of strangers, and realized that economic injustices have wide-felt ramifications.

While listening to the stories of people around me, I understood that I was not alone. This rally turned into a healing process for me. I was able to reconcile with myself and come to my own self-revelation that I no longer needed to feel alone in this fight. We marched into the street and closed down an entire intersection in the busy metropolis of Toronto. Of course, I had seen such rallies in the newspaper or on television prior to my participation in this rally, but there really were no words as to what it actually feels like to be completely immersed in a sea of people, chanting the same demand, making a ton of noise, and seeing a city intersection come to a complete halt. I could not stop smiling. "Watch me make a difference," was all I could think.

There was no one in charge at this rally, not one person who would take the blame or be held accountable, but a completely grassroots event. Grassroots activism can be described as a group of people that are not attached to any political party who are willing to put in the effort to effect a change of a shared specific injustice (Crystal, 2018). That is not to say that political persons are not involved in the movement, but that its community does not rely on political persons to organize and be in charge (Crystal, 2018). Most grassroots events are also known as peaceful protests. Brian Martin (1982) states that, "A foundation stone of activities by grassroots organisations is nonviolent action" (p. 78). This means that there are no extreme lengths or any actions of danger that are to happen at these events. This $15 and Fairness rally was exactly that.

Erin: The Grassroots Advocate at Heart

As we know, in the era of President Donald Trump, protests and rallies have become apparent within the news, but until recently, millennials were taking part in an action referred to as online activism. This is where tactics such as, "[v]irtual petitions, online money-bombs, forums to debate issues, and the use of social media and email" (Rohlinger, 2012, para. 1) have come into play. These tactics were used to recruit people for meetings and protests, and to spread awareness about specific issues. Rohlinger (2012) suggests that today's political activists try to engage citizens and influence the political process through online activism. As much as I believe that this is a great way to grab the attention of large masses of people and is extremely convenient, the atmosphere of bodies in spaces is something that cannot be achieved through a strictly online activist community. Of course, the sense of friendship, community building, networking, success, and experience sharing can be found online, but the physical atmosphere of being there in the middle of all the action at a grassroots event is an experience of a lifetime that provides a sense of belonging.

Online activism is one way, but not the only way, that this generation of youth advocates can take part in having their voices expressed. When looking at the Occupy Wall Street movement, for example, the online presence was a network of protesters and activists who gathered on social media to share the intense experience of unfair political and economic order (Caren & Gaby, 2011). Their online activism spoke highly of their volume and were able to connect with people nationally without meeting them in person, but also participating locally at the same time (Caren & Gaby, 2011). This strengthens the idea that both online and physical participation can be useful in tackling social injustice. Getting out there is important in order to feel the sense of community, rather than watching numbers increase online and thinking that is enough. Choosing one or the other is not the argument here, but rather the importance of experiencing both. To physically attend a rally is a different atmosphere and overall feeling compared to the gratification of involvement through likes or shares on social media. There is truly something magical about attending a rally. It brought a sense of accomplishment because I had actually been there, took up space, and showed my support by wearing my struggle on my sleeve. Being a part of a community that I had never thought I would become a part

of was a great stepping stone into realizing who I wanted to be, and already was, as an advocate.

Erin: The Tikkuner

I felt an even greater sense of community and belonging when I met my fellow international Tikkuners at the Tikkun Youth Project conference and symposium in April of 2017. I had never been surrounded by other youth who also wore their struggles on their sleeves, who weren't afraid to speak up about their issues in their communities, and who were just as passionate as myself when it came to activism – maybe even greater! I met people who saw the world as *our* world and who wanted to make a change by repairing what had been broken in our individual societies.

On the first day of rehearsals for the Artnote[1] when we presented our singular pieces that we all prepared, I was in tears. I could feel the passion beaming out of every single member of the groups at each partnering site. We were there to stand up for the things we found most important and to show them off to the other passionate beings that we were surrounded by. I was so proud of these strangers right from our first day together. Meeting my new found Tikkun family was one of the most impressionable moments of my entire life. I am forever thankful for the love, support, and courage of my fellow Tikkuners. On our last day together when we performed our Artnote and when our performance finally came together, it was more beautiful than I had ever imagined. The tears streamed down my face again because I felt completely overwhelmed, proud, and loved; I also felt a pure sadness because I realized it may be a long time before I see these beautiful people again. I was finally introduced to the youth advocates who weren't the stereotypes of being radical, loud mouths, or troublemakers. I saw a group of youth who were strong-willed, passionate, caring, full of life, loving, angry, but not violent, and most of all a community. Through each of the five sites, learning about the specific injustices in their communities, we still shared an overarching theme of taking on the responsibility to repair and heal the world in which we live in as youth. Not only was it about healing the world, but we also helped each other heal. We were there for each other and still are to this day. I am thankful for the friendships, for the messages of "I miss you," "I love you, but…" and for the unplanned video calls to and from my

fellow Tikkuners. This symposium and wonderful youth gave me the courage and the community I needed in order to feel comfortable in my own skin as a youth advocate.

Erin: The Youth Advocate

Although I am still exhausted, impoverished, and incredibly stressed, I no longer feel isolated or alone. I have a community that supports me, is there for me, and understands my struggles. I have support from all sides of the world and experienced what it feels like to be in a crowd of strangers, but feel more at home than ever. I have an understanding of my responsibility as a youth advocate, as a Tikkuner, as an ally, and as a fellow youth advocate. I know my place is within grassroots organizing, and in attendance to events, protests, and rallies. I know my advocacy has meaning and a voice. I am powerful because of my community. I am a proud youth advocate.

Appendix

References

Burgess, G., & Burgess, H. (2001). Student protests, negotiation, and constructive confrontation. *Conflict Management in Higher Education*, *2*(1). Retrieved from http://www.campus-adr.org/cmher/reportarticles/Edition2_1/Burgess2_1a.html

Caren, N., & Gaby, S. (2011). Occupy online: Facebook and the spread of occupy wall street. Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1943168

Crystal, G. (2018, August 5). Grassroots activism. *Civil Rights Movement.* Retrieved from http://www.civilrightsmovement.co.uk/grass-roots-activism.html

Demands. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.15andfairness.org/demands

Democracy Now. (2011, October 10). Occupy Wall Street emerges as "first populist movement" on the left since the 1930s. *Democracy Now!* Retrieved from https://www.democracynow.org/2011/10/10/occupy_wall_street_emerges_as_first

Dettling, L. J., & Hsu, J. W. (2017). Returning to the nest: Debt and parental co-residence among young adults. *Labour Economics*, 54, 225-236. doi:10.1016/j.labeco.2017.12.006

Kolodner, M. (2017, April 6). 6 reasons you may not graduate on time (and what to do about it). *The New York Times.* Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/education/edlife/6-reasons-you-may-not-graduate-on-time.html

Martin, B. (1982). Grassroots action for peace. *Social Alternatives*, 3(1), 77-82. Retrieved from https://www.uow.edu.au/~bmartin/pubs/82sa.html

Nava, M., Karp, N., & Nash-Stacey, B. (2014, December 16). The Millennials paradox. *BBVA Research.* Retrieved from https://www.bbvaresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/141216_US_BW_BankMillennials.pdf

OSAP definitions. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.ontario.ca/page/osap-definitions#section-28

Reed-Danahay, D. (2011). Autobiography, intimacy and ethnography. In Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., Delamont, S., Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 407-425). doi:10.4135/9781848608337

Rohlinger, D. (2012, January 1). How political movements are using the Internet to change politics. *Scholars Strategy Network.* Retrieved from

http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/brief/how-social-movements-are-using-internet-change-politics

---

1 The Artnote was a 45 minute long artistic presentation of all of the youth's research and experiences put together. This was chosen as the alternative to a keynote speaker to showcase the research done within the Tikkun Youth Project. It involved dancing, singing, drama, drawing, video, instruments, and story-telling, to show the real-life experiences of international youth struggles. Each group came prepared with a piece(s) to contribute. During the conference we were given time to rehearse, combine all of the pieces, collect props, work with light and sound, and memorize lines.

6. Expanding Community Healing and Reconciliation through Therapeutic Art

AINSLEE WINTER

Abstract

The intent of this chapter is to determine the extent to which therapeutic art provides sufficient evidence to support healing and reconciliation. This will be explored by contemplating art as a mechanism for healing, both for the individual and for the larger community. The chapter will refer throughout to the prayer flag art experience that took place during the Tikkun Youth Project, as it aligns with the concepts of healing and reconciliation. The chapter will investigate the use of art as a means of collecting data and the use art as a form of research. Personal experiences, scholarly articles, and professional case studies will be utilized to support the hypothesis regarding the use of art as a means of healing and reconciliation.

Key words: Art therapy, Healing, Youth

I will begin my chapter with a short anecdote. I have always had great interest in human connection, empathy, and healing, right from when I was a young child. Growing up, I was surrounded by paintings and creativity but was unaware of its expansive capacity. My mother graduated from the Fine Arts program at the University of Windsor but did not pursue a career in the field. She has experienced significant loss throughout her life, and it is during these times that she delves into an intense art-making process. I have witnessed her go through life-transforming experiences and have seen her use her paintings as a form of coping, reflection, and self-discovery. She describes this process as a learning experience that allows emotions and reactions to come forward in a healthy way. She describes painting as a way

to nurture her soul, take accountability for herself, and provide herself with the space to grieve, let go, and move forward. She finds joy and peace in this process.

After witnessing this process for my mother, I have come to realize she has been a model for me and for what I am able to share with others. I graduated with a BA (Hons) in Psychology and the Visual Arts, completed graduate studies for Art Therapy, and currently act as a professional art therapist. During my education, my understanding of how art can be used as a tool to enhance the healing processes began to expand. As I traveled around the world, I noticed other people using art as a form of healing, and I recognized that art was used historically as a means of healing and creating social change. I developed a clear understanding that art could be a form of healing and reconciliation, as it is deeply rooted within many different cultures. Some historical and cultural forms of healing through the arts will be described later in the chapter.

I have been involved with individuals from different cultures and backgrounds in a variety of projects that focus on building connections and finding meaning through art. The Tikkun Youth Project involved individuals from a variety of countries with different languages, cultures, and traditions.

Because art cuts across language barriers, it can reach vast populations. People can interact with what they see which elicits a physiological response. Art is a form of expression that expands the healing potential despite unique cultural and language differences. I have used therapeutic art with Syrian refugees who had moved to Windsor, Ontario shortly before my involvement with them. The goal of the art therapy program, which was made possible by Dr. Annette Dufresne of New Beginnings and the Multicultural Council, was to create a community and help refugees settle in and adapt to Canada. A second program, the Global Art Project for Peace, employed art-making to help individuals heal from the effects of trauma. The refugees' artwork emphasized a greater sense of connectedness, a form of expression (hope, dreams, interests), their spiritual traditions, and showed their vision of a more peaceful community.

The rest of this chapter will explore the variety of personal and professional events that link me to this profound question: Does therapeutic art provide sufficient research to support healing and reconciliation for individuals and the wider community? This chapter will explain how art is a healing modality for individuals and for whole communities. It will explore the ways in which art-making can be a form of data collection and will

expand upon research methods that support this healing modality. Connections to the Tikkun Youth Project will be threaded throughout the chapter, as it provides an example of healing and reconciliation through therapeutic art.

Art can be seen as an opening, a form of expansion, and a safe place to discover the inner-workings of who we are and how we interact with our surroundings. The acknowledgment that art encompasses such depth and offers such an insight into one's psyche is a source of inspiration and motivation that support the transformation and healing of individuals and communities. I hope that this chapter will offer insight, expanded knowledge, and personal narratives that will continue to inspire and influence the reader.

Art as Healing for the Individual

The act of art-making is a transformative process that facilitates healing and leaves an impression on both the individual and the community. The process of creating art can "provide an opportunity to reformulate overwhelming emotional reactivity into a semblance of ordered thought" (Kaplan, 2007, p. 182). Individuals who have experienced trauma gain a sense of control as they externalize their overwhelming emotions through writing or art-making (Kaplan, 2007). The art-making process can provide relief for the individual who may have been dissociating from the trauma as a form of protection and self-preservation (Kaplan, 2007). However, it is imperative that these vulnerable people feel safe when they are working with overwhelming emotions. When they do feel safe, their continued work of "self-expression and interpersonal connection within the creative and therapeutic process can offer a means of strengthening the Self" (Kaplan, 2007, p. 188).

Devon's Story

As an art therapist, I have worked with a variety of different populations, including high-risk youth. I worked with one adolescent male who was

passionate about and driven to create birdhouses. I will refer to this client by the pseudonym Devon. Devon described his plans to care for birds by giving them shelter, water, and food. He was upset by having previously witnessed a bird that was injured and abandoned.

In his reflections, Devon connected his own story to the story of the injured bird. Devon had experienced a physically traumatic event; he could relate to the pain the bird was experiencing and had compassion for it. He did not want it to feel abandoned like he had felt in the past. Devon had come from an unstable environment where his basic needs were at times neglected.

The process of creating birdhouses was Devon's way of bringing stability and healing to these aspects of his own life. The act of making birdhouses served to open Devon up to major themes in his life that needed healing and support, such as insecurity, lack of stability, vulnerability, and fear. Art-making enabled Devon to have a sense of control as he cared for the parts of his life that needed the most attention and healing. It also provided useful information that was critical for getting Devon more support. In his case, through art-making Devon was better able to identify his future needs and become an active participant in his own healing process.

Healing Youth Through Therapeutic Art

Therapeutic art can be particularly beneficial for the adolescent population. Art as a means of expression can be extremely useful for many youth who resist traditional forms of therapy and support. As these young people evolve from childhood and the state of play associated with it and become more reluctant to seek traditional help, art acts as a less invasive way for them to start the healing process (Briks, 2007). Youth facing challenges find that it is safe for them to use art as a healthy way to express their emotional world and discover their inner resources (Block, Harris, & Laing, 2005).

Many youth coming for art therapy have a difficult time expressing their emotions verbally. In some cases, this difficulty may lead to them "acting out" if they have never been taught how to express their emotions in a healthy way. Scottish philosopher John Macmurray described humans as "embodied beings;" he explained that engaging in action is weighted with a similar importance as engaging in thought (McIntosh, 2015). This sense

of embodiment emphasizes the human experience as a contained whole (parts working together simultaneously), and not as separate parts to a whole. Macmurray was arguing for the unity of mind (thought) and body (emotions), and he believed that action is motivated by our emotional desires and not solely by thought processes (McIntosh, 2015). Individuals are most efficient when mind and body work simultaneously. In art therapy, the act of art-making helps people connect with their emotions, which are often buried beneath the clutter and noise within the mind. Art acts as a bridge to connect thoughts and emotions, as well as an access point to further explore emotions that reside in the body that have been repressed. While creating (action), the mind is able to sense, perceive, and make judgment during this embodied practice. The Prayer Flag Art Experiential during the Tikkun Youth Symposium helped participants bridge emotional/felt senses within the body during the opening meditation, and forge connections with the mind through thought processes and reflection upon executing the art-making. This embodied practice is important as it addresses a more in-depth inquiry and reflection. Scholars have gathered evidence to prove that bridging both emotional expression and cognitive exploration support therapeutic change within a variety of modalities (Chilton, Gerber, Bechtel, Councill, Dreyer, & Yingling, 2015).

Sheeba's Story

I worked with a client I will call Sheeba (pseudonym) who was experiencing intense emotions. She had a history of trauma and was getting in trouble for behaving violently towards other youth. To help this young person navigate her emotions, I used an art directive I call the Let Go and Transform activity. This activity has three steps. First, I directed Sheeba to create a scribble drawing using watercolour pencils that reflected her current emotional state. She used harsh red lines to represent her anger, soft blue lines to represent her sadness, and black for her confusion. This first step is typically created quickly (between 10 seconds and 2 minutes) and is used to externalize current emotions and validate the person's feelings. As all emotions have purpose, Sheeba and I took a moment to honour the emotions she had been holding.

The second step incorporates mindfulness and encourages the process of

letting go. I had Sheeba dip a paint brush into water and begin to wash away the watercolour pencil marks while she connected with her breath. This step focuses on exploring the impermanence of emotions and increasing the awareness that emotions come and go. Typically, the line work from the first step will begin to fade and become gentler, but light imprints from the scribble drawing may remain (representing the scars that might exist from past experiences, but which have become a little less powerful).

The third step is optional and is only taken if the client has the emotional capacity, readiness, and willingness to do so. This step is called the transformation stage and provides an opportunity for the client to explore and find meaning within the artwork. This step focuses on connecting thought processes to emotions through body-based action techniques. I encouraged Sheeba to look at the new designs and altered line work with a fresh perspective. I then encouraged her to create a new image by adding more watercolour pencil and building on what was currently on the paper.

Some people can transform past experiences into opportunities to learn and grow. In the Let Go and Transform activity, the third step typically brings forth symbols that may provide the client with insight. Sheeba created an image that resembled a spider in a spider web. Together, she and I discussed the spider's powerful qualities, but also how the spider in its web reflects her feelings of being stuck. The symbol that Sheeba had created became a metaphor she connected with and could expand upon in a more comfortable way. Celebrated psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Jung supported the importance and transformative potential of using an art image as a way of bringing denied aspects of the Self into conscious awareness to support the healing process (Hocoy, 2005). *Video 1* demonstrates an example of all three steps of the Let Go and Transform art therapy directive.

Still from video 1. Let Go and Transform time lapse.

Art as Healing in Larger Communities

The fact that traumatic reactions can extend well beyond the realm of the individual and into the larger community is an unfortunate truth. Many young people involved in the Tikkun Youth Symposium discussed much larger issues that affect larger communities including racism and segregation, violence and killing, and lack of compassion/understanding. Art has the capacity to facilitate large scale healing by addressing suffering, by building a community, and by developing a response with which people are able to interact continually. Art is an extension of many cultural and spiritual practices and has been shown to assist in healing populations that have experienced oppression (Archibald, Dewar, Reid, & Stevens, 2010).

Sand Mandalas as a Healing Art Practice

One healing art practice that has its origins in the 7th century is Tibetan sand mandalas. Creating mandalas is a Buddhist practice used to reach individual enlightenment, liberate a sense of freedom, develop unconditional compassion, and access wisdom (Thorp, 2017). Buddhist monks use different coloured sand to create intricate designs. The designs may contain rituals, scripture, and meditative processes, and can represent up to 722 deities (Thorp, 2017). The practice of creating a mandala emphasizes the impermanence of life. Once the mandala is completed, it is ritualistically dismantled and released back into nature (Thorp, 2017).

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in the United States, the Dalai Lama (spiritual leader of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism), instructed his monks to create a sand mandala at the former site of the New York Trade Center (Thorp, 2017). The goal was to protect the area from future attacks and to heal both the Earth and the people who were deeply hurt and distraught by the attack (Thorp, 2017). The act of creating this mandala is an example of the profound healing qualities encompassed in art that have been used for millennia as a part of culture and religion.

Our Relationship with Art

At times, art may be created to develop frameworks of viewing, experiencing, and connecting with the world at large (Potash & Ho, 2011). The art becomes a third party that fosters relationships within diverse environments. Reconciliation is based on the need to bring together at least two parties that have strong differences. Art can help reunite both parties by facilitating a safe space for building relationships (Potash & Ho, 2011). Being able to connect and engage with art as a third party allows space for individuals to make their own personal connections to the art. The interplay between the artwork and viewer, and the relationship they build, is what May (1975) describes as a *creative encounter* (Potash & Ho, 2011). This connection can strengthen empathy and cultivate a sense of compassion. Through this powerful connection, the relationship between the original conflicting

parties may become less hostile, more understanding, and on the path of reconciliation.

Art holds an energy that elicits a human response. The relationship between viewer and art is personal and the message the viewer receives from a piece of artwork may be significantly different than if the message were portrayed solely through words. Art provides an opening for individuals who may have been closed to beliefs and views that conflict with their own. Furthermore, art provides space in which the viewer can reflect and be curious rather than respond defensively and from an entrenched position.

Art can address social issues and create change on the individual and community levels. When individuals combine the process of making art with social action, they can develop a connection with something larger, which, in turn, can lead to many different experiences that will leave a positive impact on their lives. For youth to have a place where they feel included, empowered, and liberated, the community must be involved. Since adolescence is a time Erik Erikson (as cited in Marcia & Josselson, 2013) identifies as a time to explore and define one's identity, it is beneficial for youth to be surrounded by positive role models and communities.

The PhotoVoice Group Example

The combination of art as healing and its capacity to create social change was captivated in a PhotoVoice group called *Capture Compassion* (Figure 1). PhotoVoice is a modality commonly used in community-based participatory research that showcases perspectives and increased awareness of people's social realities through photography (Suffla, Seedat, & Bawa, 2015). It is often used with underrepresented (Warne, Snyder, & Gadin, 2012) and diverse populations as a response to social justice issues (Suffla et al., 2015). The Tikkun Youth Symposium encompassed similar goals as Capture Compassion in relation to healing and creating social change. PhotoVoice is a modality that can be used in the future for youth interested in facilitating social change. The goal of *Capture Compassion* was to explore to what extent youth participation in an arts-based PhotoVoice group would contribute to their taking a "compassionate action approach" to developing a positive vision for themselves and/or their community. Youth were taught to use different tools and shown how to broaden their perspectives when approaching social

injustices; they were shown how to create change through a compassionate action approach. This approach teaches individuals to transform any anger into motivated, purposeful, and non-destructive action; in this case, to alleviate social injustice (Ueda, 2013). *Capture Compassion* strengthened the PhotoVoice group's personal awareness through mindfulness and meditation, and through visual arts and photography. Belonging to the group strengthened its participants' sense of belonging, enhanced their willpower and self-worth, and provided a forum for self-development.
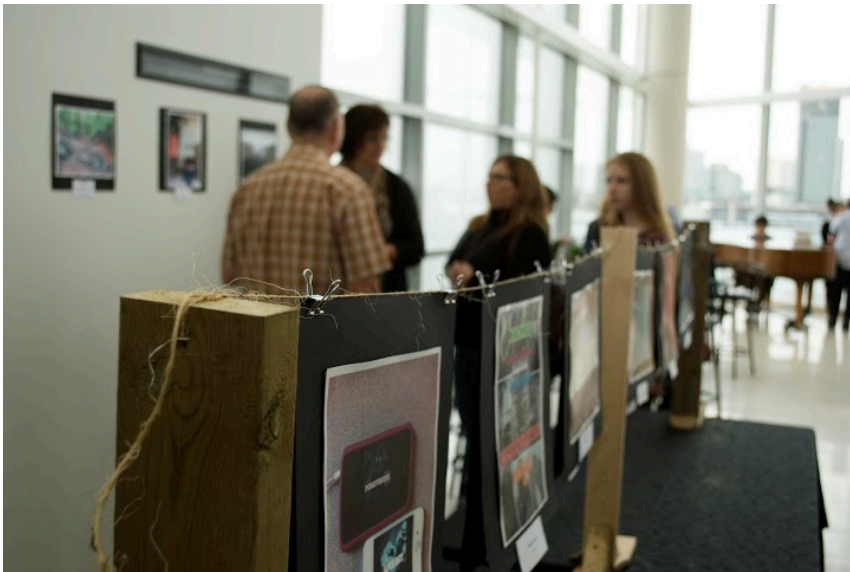

Figure 1. Capture Compassion youth PhotoVoice exhibition.

The art-making process enables communities to communicate their current needs (Potash & Ho, 2011). People can use art to help them deal with environmental or cultural calamities. Linton (2017) discusses the benefits of implementing an art therapy group following the 2015 earthquake in Nepal. The group made their art from natural materials, which helped them reconnect with the earth – and supported their resilience and recovery – following the natural disaster (Linton, 2017).

The Role of Art in Addressing Social Issues

Art can also address social issues. For example, a school system may use art therapy to help students respond to racial discrimination or bullying. Art may address indigenous rights, gender discrimination, or poverty and living standards. Art may also be used outside of traditional settings (Kaplan, 2007).

In times of repression and civil unrest, art can depict the underrepresented and can reveal the unheard perspective (Bisschoff & Van de Peer, 2013). In post-colonial times, art can express injustices that have happened in the past and bring an awareness of a traumatic history. Art tackles painful subjects and controversies, as is the case, for example, in the artwork related to genocide in Africa (Bisschoff & Van de Peer, 2013). Art can bring forth healing, reconciliation, forgiveness, and a sense of justice to painful histories. Art can address truths that may have gone unnoticed or unrecorded. Art can be the first step in a move towards reconciliation. Once hidden voices or perspectives are revealed, it brings forth the opportunity to move forward with reconciliation.

Tikkun Youth Project: Prayer Flag Art Directive and Data Collection

Because of the strong link between art and reconciliation, a therapeutic art project was included in the Tikkun Youth Project. In this case, it was a series of prayer flags that were intended to remain at the University of Windsor so that students could interact with them and see their messages on a daily basis. As will be discussed in much greater detail below, the prayer flags share the vision and voice of youth with an extended audience, which further expands the mission of healing and reconciliation. The prayer flag project addresses social issues by incorporating the hopes and dreams of youth for the future. The project was hung outside a traditional setting to reach a wider audience and to help them develop their own response and process of reflection. The intention for the artwork is that it remain at the university to motivate continued interaction with each person who views it.

On April 5, 2017, the Tikkun Youth Project held an international youth symposium – a day of events to honour the culmination of the three years of

facilitating youth-led social change initiatives. Individuals came to the prayer flag activity feeling somewhat drained as the day had been emotionally taxing. Youth shared personal stories of the injustices and hardships they had experienced that had inspired the social change work they are currently doing within their communities. Many also shared their healing journey and expressed gratitude for the group's support.

The day had begun with a high-energy and emotionally-moving Artnote. The Artnote shed light on individual narratives and brought a sense of connection to everyone. It provided an opportunity for those performing, and those witnessing, to have their hearts touched. The afternoon consisted of breakout sessions, where youth presented the research and work they have been advancing for an extended period of time. As a way to conclude the day of deep sharing and discovery, youth participants and people from the community were invited to respond through the prayer flag art directive. The art therapist gave the group a brief history of Tibetan prayer flags to give the art directive a cultural context and understanding. By providing context to the art directive, we encouraged a deepened purpose and meaning for those participating.

Prayer flags are an important part of Tibetan culture because they impart teachings from the Buddha (Barker, 2003). The origins of prayer flags date from thousands of years ago in Tibet, India, China, and Persia (Clark, 2002). Despite these flags being a Buddhist tradition, people from all backgrounds and beliefs are invited to participate. Flags are typically hung in holy places or across mountain plateaus with the belief that the wind will carry the prayers on the fluttering flags to bring blessings and healing to all beings that come in contact with the wind carrying the blessings (Barker, 2003). The prayer flag uses the power of the wind to carry and fill spaces with its healing potential (Clark, 2002). The prayer flags are a symbol of the movement towards a place of peace (Barker, 2003), which connects with the overarching themes of the Tikkun Youth Project.

The colours universally chosen for the prayer flags were utilized in the activity. The colours represent the five elements: space, air, water, fire, and earth. Historically, these colours (blue, white, green, red, yellow, respectively) were chosen to appease the elemental gods that were capable of causing great suffering through natural disasters (Clark, 2002). Before the activity began, the therapist shared the eight auspicious symbols that normally appear on traditional prayer flags with the participants, along with their meanings. The eight auspicious symbols include: umbrella or parasol

(protection), golden fish (happiness), treasure vase (wishes fulfilled), lotus (purity and spiritual development), conch shell (enlightened teaching), endless knot (meditative mind or knowledge), victory banner (overcoming obstacles and choosing wisdom over ignorance), and the dharma wheel (spiritual or universal law) (Clark, 2002). Other, more traditional symbols are commonly represented on Tibetan prayer flags, but we limited the symbols in this activity to these eight. We did, however, encourage participants to create or use symbols with which they had a personal connection.

The art therapist led participants through a mindfulness visualization to help them become connected with themselves and participate in an embodied practice. This practice of embodiment assists individuals to become aware of sensations within their body, which can play a role in thought development. The mindfulness activity was designed to strengthen personal awareness and provide a period of time for self-reflection. We asked youth and community members to envision themselves as agents of change and to focus on one major theme, word, image, mantra, prayer, blessing, etc., that held deep importance to them.

After the mindfulness activity was completed, participants used different coloured markers to draw and write their vision on the flags. The therapist guided them to respond to the day's events by creating artwork that represented their own journey of healing and reconciliation, something that touched their heart that day, messages they would like to share, or their vision for the future. Participants spent about twenty minutes creating their flags. Some discussed their concepts with the people around them, but many entered a state of flow and became deeply focused in their own creative response.

Once the flags were completed, participants gathered at the front of the room to hang their flags together in harmony. Each was given a token to remember the impact and healing capabilities of prayer flags and their own vision as they continue on their journey. Everyone received a strip of paper that stated, "May all beings everywhere receive benefit and find happiness." This statement is derived from the Buddhist metta "loving-kindness" meditation. The prayer flags were hung during the final reception and remain hanging at the University of Windsor.

The prayer flag directive was an important component of the Tikkun Youth Project. Youth participants spent countless hours working towards the final day of presentations. Although many will continue to be agents of change within their communities following the Tikkun Youth Symposium,

because the prayer flags remain at the university, they offer an experience of continued energy, intention, and impact. The culmination of collected vision, thoughts, prayers, and places of deep meaning, which the prayer flags represent, were left as an opportunity for continued impact.

Figure 2. Tikkun Youth Project reception.

Figure 3. Hanging the prayer flags.

Art as a Form of Data

Through the therapeutic art-making process, research can be conducted using art as a form of data. Historically, there has been resistance to using art therapy to conduct research due to data collection challenges. These include whether or not to identify data as qualitative or quantitative, the question of ethics, etc. (Rubin, 2005). When setting out to use art to collect data, it is important to identify clear goals (Rubin, 2005). There are many ways to address and answer questions that inspire research, and it is up to the researcher to find an approach that best suits the needs of the question being asked (Rubin, 2005). It is essential that the researcher remain objective and, if possible, for the researcher to use an objective observation guide that is available to streamline this process (Rubin, 2005). In fact, we used this method to help support data collection in the prayer flag activity. Often art therapists will use self-report questionnaires, pre- and post-tests, or interviews (Snir & Regev, 2014). The final art product is only part of

the therapeutic experience. In the therapeutic setting, there is typically an emphasis on the process that may not be clear in the final artwork. Self-report questionnaires are able to focus on different themes that may have been present in the process of creating art but may not be evident in the final product. An example may be an individual feeling tight and tense within their body while initially creating, yet over time it turned into a fluid and relaxed image. The process acknowledges the journey of moving from discomfort and into fluidity (whereas, if only the artwork was being researched, one may only pick up on fluidity). Self-report questionnaires can be used to further analyze and create comparisons if appropriate for the research objective (Snir & Regev, 2014). Snir and Regev (2014) describe the self-report questionnaires as useful for gaining more insight on clients' "perceptions, thoughts, preferences, desires, wishes, beliefs, habits, and behaviours" (p. 134).

Other research methods, used by Jennifer Laffier (2016) in a recent study, use art therapy as an intervention for psychological empowerment for bullying victims. To collect data, Laffier uses a qualitative content analysis – an approach that uses a data clustering method to identify core characteristics and meaning from artwork or written text. In Laffier's study, the artwork's components and factors were recorded chronologically and entered into an electronic data analysis system. In this way, artistic expression became a source of data collection. The entered data were further reviewed to uncover themes, and a cross-case comparison was developed to look at participant similarities and differences.

Often art therapists will use arts-based research methods because the artwork created is a source of inquiry to further examine major themes and concepts at play in the art-maker's life (Chilton et al., 2015). Although we did not collect and quantify the in-depth analysis processes or data from the Tikkun Youth Project, the prayer flag activity revealed ideas and major themes. The purpose of collecting these themes and ideas is to better understand the vision the youth created. The ideas collected from the youth artwork speak to the overall goal of repair and reconciliation which demonstrates how important it is to use art as a source of research and further inquiry.

Table 1

Major Ideas Described within the Prayer Flag Activity

Idea	Occurrence
Unity	37
Peace	32
Love	32
Healing	28
Action	20

Figure 4. Prayer flag art directive word cloud.

Table 1 records the ideas expressed most commonly in the prayer flag activity: love, peace, unity, healing, and action. We compiled these themes after examining the words and images on 62 of the project's prayer flags.

Figure 4 shows word clouds that capture all of the ideas expressed on the prayer flags.

Figure 5. Example of youth vision of healing, reconciliation, and social change on prayer flags.

Figure 5 encapsulates many of the major themes collected during the prayer flag directive. Written across the top of this flag is "unity," and below are the words "ubuntu" and "humanity." Ubuntu is a South African concept that Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes this way: "A person is a person through other persons" (Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, Tutu, & Abrams, 2016, p. 214). The concept speaks to the interconnectedness of human experience. Humanity is an intricate network and joyful experiences are possible thanks to the interactions within this network. In *Figure* 5, black and white hands come together – a symbol of reconciliation, togetherness, and forgiveness. This symbol is deeply meaningful for South Africa, which has a history of grave racial division. The flag's background – an image of the world surrounded by a rainbow – alludes to a future of peace, harmony, and healing.
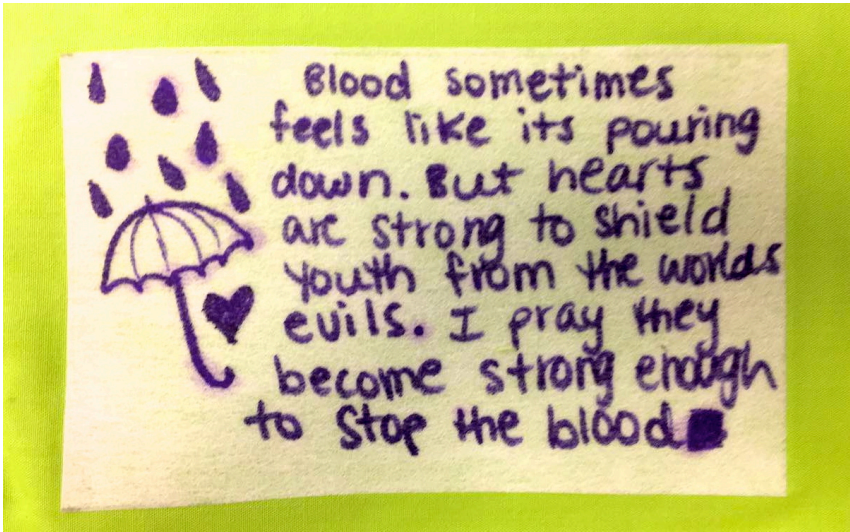
Figure 6. Example of youth vision of healing, reconciliation, and social change on prayer flags.

Figure 6 is a plea from a youth seeking protection from the darkness of the world and connecting with their spirituality through prayer. These powerful words acknowledge the violence, injustices, misfortunes, and suffering that people around the world experience. However, this flag also offers a sense of hope for the future. With the support of prayer, this artist hopes that youth will gain the strength to create changes and stop the injustices. This text is on the right and is beside an umbrella image on the left; the umbrella protects the artist's heart from the pain she feels around her. This image connects with the themes of action and healing: the artist is expressing the emotional state she is experiencing and is surrounding her heart with a boundary of protection.

Figure 7. Example of youth vision of healing, reconciliation, and social change on prayer flags.

Figure 7 illustrates a longing for home and a connection to one's roots and may be associated with healing. Throughout the symposium, individuals shared stories of living many hours away from home to complete their schooling. This flag expresses feelings of peace, connection, and returning to a place of love.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research

Therapeutic art-making can support healing, serve as a call to action, and be used as a form of data collection. Continued research into the role of therapeutic art and its capacity to bring forth healing and reconciliation would be beneficial. As the field of art therapy becomes more popular, it is likely that more concrete research will be conducted, and evidence

discovered, that supports the use of art as a tool for reconciliation and healing.

This chapter has included examples of the ways that art can be used in healing, social action, and data collection. The prayer flag activity at the Tikkun Youth Symposium provides just one example of the great ability of the arts to incorporate healing, repair and reconciliation, and social action, while also providing a form of data. Other examples in this chapter support our findings, including the *Capture Compassion* PhotoVoice youth group, individual youth art therapy sessions, sand mandalas, Global Art Project for Peace (Syrian refugees), psychological empowerment for bullying victims, and art as social action for oppressed populations. It is inspiring to acknowledge the capacity and potential for future art projects and the benefits that are possible for individuals and communities from art-making. I am hopeful that I will continue to see passionate youth using art to drive their journeys of healing and social change.

References

Archibald, L., Dewar, J., Reid, C., & Stevens, V. (2010). Rights of restoration. *Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal*, 23(2), 2-17. doi:10.1080/08322473.2010.11432334

Barker, D. (2003). *Tibetan prayer flags: Send your blessings on the breeze.* Boston, MA: Connections Book Publishing Limited.

Bisschoff, L., & Van de Peer, S. (2013). *Art and trauma in Africa: Representations of reconciliation in music, visual arts, literature and film.* New York, NY: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.

Block, D., Harris, T., & Laing, S. (2005). Open studio process as a model of social action: A program for at-risk youth. *Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, 22(1), 32-38. doi:10.1080/07421656.2005.10129459

Briks, A. (2007). Art therapy with adolescents. *Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal*, 20(1), 2-15. doi:10.1080/08322473.2007.11432288

Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, D. L. X., Tutu, D., & Abrams, D. C. (2016). *The book of joy: Lasting happiness in a changing world.* New York: Avery.

Chilton, G., Gerber, N., Bechtel, A., Councill, T., Dreyer, M., & Yingling, E. (2015). The art of positive emotions: Expressing positive emotions within

the intersubjective art making process. *Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal*, 28(1), 12-25. doi:10.1080/08322473.2015.1100580

Clark, T. (2002). The prayer flag tradition. *Radiant Heart Studio*. Retrieved from http://www.prayerflags.com/download/article.pdf

Hocoy, D. (2005). Art therapy and social action: A transpersonal framework. *Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, 22(1), 7-16. doi:10.1080/07421656.2005.10129466

Kaplan, F. F. (2007). *Art therapy and social action.* Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Laffier, J. (2016). Empowering bullying victims through artistic expression. *Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal*, 29(1), 12-20. doi:10.1080/08322473.2016.1171987

Lind, C., Cantell, M., Baggott, S., Houde, M., & Coupal, S. (2015). Participatory action research with therapeutic arts practitioners: Research capacity building in a pediatric hospital. *Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal*, 28, 1-11. doi:10.1080/08322473.2015.1083642

Linton, J. (2017). A natural response to a natural disaster: The art of crisis in Nepal. *Canadian Art Therapy Association Journal*, 30, 31-40. doi:10.1080/08322473.2017.1317201

Marcia, J., & Josselson, R. (2013). Eriksonian personality research and its implications for psychotherapy. *Journal of Personality*, 81(6), 617-629. doi:10.1111/jopy.12014

May, R. (1975). *The courage to create.* New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

McIntosh, E. (2015). Why we need the arts: John Macmurray on education and the emotions. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 47(1), 47-60. doi:10.1080/00131857.2013.866533

Potash, J., & Ho, R. (2011). Drawing involves caring: Fostering relationship building through art therapy for social change. *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, 28(2), 74-81. doi:10.1080/07421656.2011.578040

Rubin, J. A. (2005). *Child art therapy: 25th anniversary edition.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Snir, S., & Regev, D. (2014). Expanding art therapy process research through self-report questionnaires. *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, 31(3), 131-136. doi:10.1080/07421656.2014.935588

Suffla, S., Seedat, M., & Bawa, U. (2015). Reflexivity as enactment of critical community psychologies: Dilemmas of voice and positionality in a multi-

country photovoice study. *Journal of Community Psychology, 43*(1), 9-2. doi:10.1002/jcop.21691

Thorp, C. L. (2017, April 24). Tibetan sand mandalas. *Ancient History Encyclopedia.* Retrieved from https://www.ancient.eu/article/1052/tibetan-sand-mandalas/

Ueda, N. (2013). *The Dalai Lama on what matters most: Conversations on anger, compassion, and action.* Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads.

Warne, M., Snyder, K., & Gadin, K. G. (2012). PhotoVoice: An opportunity and challenge for students' genuine participation. *Health Promotion International*, 28(3), 299-310. doi:10.1093/heapro/das011

7. The Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project: A Land-based Well-being Retreat by Youth, with Youth, for Youth

LISA KORTEWEG, JACKY CHAN, AND KYLEE JOHNSTONE

Abstract

Lakehead University's Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project in northern Ontario/ Canada was a collaborative Indigenous youth leadership, community engagement, and well-being project that was designed to support Indigenous students who have to leave their northern home communities to pursue secondary schooling in Thunder Bay – a challenging, difficult, and risky journey for many. Through our collaborative research with high schools, youth role-models, and educators, we were able to provide the conditions whereby Indigenous youth gained opportunities to meet and gain strength with their Indigenous peers in culturally-focused activities, share stories in a holistic circle, and develop leadership skills while engaging in well-being practices and self-determining needs and actions. We ran the Indigenous Tikkun Youth Project to carve out action sites where young people from systemically oppressed and marginalized communities could self-determine their needs and actively contribute to collective healing, repair, and change through civic engagement in their school communities. We designed weekly Indigenous youth drop-in sessions, a leaders-in-training (LiT) program for self-selected Indigenous students, and our culminating Land-based well-being outdoor camp retreat. This chapter details the philosophy and purpose of the culminating Land-based well-being retreat, the Land-based outdoor leadership camp processes, the Leaders-in-Training strengths-based activities, and the responses of the youth participants, all decided, led, and engaged in by Indigenous youth, for Indigenous youth, and with Indigenous youth.

This chapter focuses on a Land [1]-based well-being retreat organized by, for, and with Nishnawbe[2] youth in Thunder Bay, Ontario, as the culminating event of the Indigenous[3] Tikkun Youth Project. Lakehead University's Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project was designed to provide a culturally safe (Cooke, 2018; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011), holistically healing (Castellano, 2006; First Nations Health Authority, 2015; First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014), and open/welcoming space (Korteweg & Bissell, 2016) where Indigenous youth would be able to decide by/for/with themselves what civic or community engagement means to them as Indigenous youth in Canada. Civic education was reconceptualized as a space for Indigenous youth to decide what actions they wanted to claim in order to start decolonizing education at this critical time of Canada's post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) era.

We felt compelled to try and improve Indigenous civic engagement education as we were already involved with many Indigenous education projects and knew how difficult and colonial education systems were for Indigenous youth across Canada. As stated in their own words, the Indigenous youth writers of the Feathers of Hope report (Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth, 2014) had many testimonials of how devastating and damaging colonialism has been on Indigenous communities and Indigenous youth's futures:

> With these deeply internalized negative beliefs we carry within ourselves, how can we be expected to feel confident enough to be able to achieve the dreams we had as small children, before the shabby reality of our life situations set in? (Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth, 2014, p. 70)

We felt compelled as education researchers to address the role of education, specifically civic engagement education, in this era of the post Truth & Reconciliation Commission's (2015) Calls to Action for educators (#62 and #63). However, we also knew that seeking civic engagement education with/by/for Indigenous youth as non-Indigenous settler-researchers does not come without many complexities and difficult implications. As described by Korteweg and Bissell (2016),

> [I]t is highly problematic to design and implement a research project

whose primary goal is to support civic engagement when Indigenous youth have been told and taught, [explicitly or implicitly,] that their communities, systems of government, Elders as wisdom leaders, languages, laws and protocols are all at a deficit to Western models of citizenship. (p. 19)

The Lakehead University Tikkun site is located in Thunder Bay and focused on northern[4] Nishnawbe youth who have no choice but to leave their communities and families in the Far North of Ontario in order to "get an education" in this city's high schools. "Getting an education" has become, for many northern students, a short-hand expression for a rite of passage of life in the city. This passage either results in the successful completion of secondary school before the age of 20, dropping out, or being "forced out" (Tuck, 2011) by racism and extreme alienation, thus causing the youth to return home to their northern community without many options for an education, a job, or a promising future. Thunder Bay has long been a critical case study of the continuing colonialism and inequities against Indigenous youth in Canadian education systems that reproduce oppression and systemic racism (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011); dysfunctional bureaucracies that govern daily life and needs of housing, food insecurity, chronic poverty, and lack of access to basic services such as dental and healthcare (Macdonald, 2017; Talaga, 2017); and desperate mental health conditions of illnesses, homesickness, loneliness, and social alienation that are real and compounding for many northern Indigenous youth (Gardam & Giles, 2016).

We primarily focused on serving northern, Nishnawbe youth who have no choice but to leave their communities and families in order to "get an education" in urban (provincial) high schools, a phenomenon that impacts most First Nations communities across Canada. This risky predicament continues because most northern or rural First Nations, such as those in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) territories, do not have the federal funding or capacity to run their own on-reserve community-based high schools (Parriag, Chaulk, Wright, & MacDonald, 2011), which means that most Nishnawbe Indigenous youth have to leave their homes to pursue secondary education in towns and cities (Richards, 2014). Indigenous youth's dislocation from their communities then subjects them to multiple risks, harms, and dangers: institutionalized racism in schools, Eurocentric cognitive imperialism in the curriculum (Battiste, 2013), teacher deficit perceptions of academic abilities, psychological isolation in alienating classrooms, and

racist abuse or physical aggression on the bus, streets, or school hallways (Richards, 2014; Talaga, 2017). These unsafe conditions can all lead to serious educational disengagement or being forced out from achieving a high school diploma, resulting in a significant loss of talent, ability, and hope (Neeganagwedgin, 2013; Tuck, 2011).

From 2000 to 2011, seven NAN youth, now referred to as the "Seven Fallen Feathers" (Talaga, 2017), flew hundreds of kilometers away from their communities and families and died while attending school in Thunder Bay. The youths' untimely deaths led to the longest Ontario coroner's inquest where "three of the five river deaths could not be explained" (Macdonald, 2017, para. 37) and from which a list of 200 recommendations were made to all municipal institutions and services that failed in their duty to protect the city's most vulnerable, Indigenous students. These unresolved deaths continue to increase the racial tensions and gulf of misunderstandings between non-Indigenous settler-residents and Indigenous peoples. The deaths also instill fear and mistrust of schools for the physical, mental, and cultural safety of Indigenous youth (Macdonald, 2017; Talaga, 2017). We believe Thunder Bay is the bellwether for the educational challenges, risks, and dangers that many Indigenous students face in urban centres and towns across Canada (see Talaga's Massey Lectures, 2018). Thunder Bay is also a prime site for teachers and educators' civic responsibilities in reconciliation-as-education (Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018). We follow Senator Murray Sinclair's wise counsel (Sinclair, 2015) that reconciliation by Canadian settler society has to start and be driven by teachers and education systems; educators, curriculum and pedagogies have to proactively acknowledge and repair the damages and injustices instilled by the Indian Residential School (IRS) system that continue to harm Indigenous youth and communities and perpetuate neo-colonialism in mainstream schools.

In this chapter, we present our Tikkun Youth Project contribution of a model that includes a Land-based well-being retreat that was designed and implemented by Nishnawbe youth, with Nishnawbe youth, and for a collective gathering of youth strengths and healing while "getting an education" in the city of Thunder Bay. We outline the key components of this retreat's design, including a youth-to-youth mentorship process and youth-led activities that create a culturally safe space for positive engagement with peers and create the conditions for youth to decide by/for themselves as a community what they want for collective strength and civic engagement. We conclude the chapter by providing recommendations for educators,

community organizers, and school equity activists on how to co-design and facilitate a Land-based well-being retreat by and with youth to support the self- and collective-determination of marginalized students who continue to face serious risks and barriers in their rights to "get an education."

Year Three of the Lakehead University Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project

In the third and final year of the Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project, we focused on one urban high school (provincial jurisdiction) and their Four-Directions Program for northern Indigenous youth – a program focused on keeping students in school and experiencing incremental success, along with ongoing counselling and holistic supports from a graduation coach and an Indigenous achievement tutor. The goal of the third and final year (2015-16) was to synthesize and put into action the observations and research findings from the four high school sites and Indigenous youth groups that were the focus of years 1 and 2 (2013-2015). For the last culminating project, we chose the most opportune high school (out of the original four) for a more intensive project than the weekly drop-in lunch hour sessions of informal well-being games, activities, and sharing circles. It was only in the last phase of the Tikkun Youth Project that we believed that we had acquired adequate information on how to assist the Indigenous youth to drive the collaborative research project with peers and to ensure cultural safety, authentic and good relationships, and willing administrative and teacher partners at the school and school board. We decided upon the urban high school that had started its own Indigenous-focused Four-Directions Program as the best site to focus on well-being approaches that would support Indigenous youth engagement, self-determined advocacy, and building of cultural and leadership strengths to do this work by youth, for youth (Korteweg & Bissell, 2016).

To focus our project efforts on this one group of Indigenous youth, we visited the high school every week to build stronger relationships with the regular drop-in group of Indigenous youth as well as develop collaborative partnerships with the high school's Indigenous Graduation Coach of the Four Directions Program in addition to the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) Achievement Tutor. These two educators were critical for maintaining

support for the Indigenous youth leaders-in-training (LiTs) as well as keeping the continuity of the project.

Our Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project sessions were held in the *~nish~* (short for Nishnawbe or Ojibwe) room – a safe space for Indigenous youth to use during school hours under the supervision of the FNMI Achievement Tutor. Any Indigenous student was welcome to the weekly lunch-hour sessions, and all Indigenous youth were strongly encouraged to join our project sessions by these two educators and other school staff. The Tikkun research team did not miss a single week unless there was a field trip scheduled or a snow day. It is critically important to be present, reliable, and committed to these youth when there can be much chaos or strained relationships in their school lives while living far away from home, often residing in boarding homes and facing challenging racism in the city.

During the Fall term, as the lead researcher or principal investigator (PI) of the Lakehead University Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project, Lisa identified and recruited four outdoor-experiential specialist teacher-candidates (TCs) from her unique Indigenous education course (ED4000), Indigenizing Perspectives and Practices in Education (IPPE), an intensive honours course in which Jacky was the Graduate teaching Assistant (GA), as well as the research assistant (RA) of the Lakehead Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project and second author of this paper. The four TCs had been explicitly prepared and taught in ED4000-IPPE on how to build authentic and strengths-based intercultural relationships with First Nations students from their multiple cultural immersion assignments and experiential learning requirements of the specialized Indigenous education course (see Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018). We were fortunate to have these non-Indigenous preservice teacher role-models (~23-24 years old) act as youth mentors and join the weekly lunch-hour sessions to encourage, support, and amplify a collective well-being through positive play-based games, team initiatives, and sharing circle discussions with the Indigenous youth.

After four months of these weekly drop-in sessions at the designated high school, the Tikkun team (Lisa-PI, Jacky-RA, and the four TCs) began collaborating with four northern Nishnawbe students as youth leaders who had been selected by our school collaborators – the Indigenous Graduation Coach and the FNMI Achievement Tutor. Once we had our Indigenous youth leaders (in training), we were then able to move towards a youth-driven and youth-designed well-being retreat. An invitation to attend an early spring retreat at the school board's outdoor education centre was sent out to

all the northern Nishnawbe students at the high school. As the planning progressed and the retreat dates neared, we had close to 20 Indigenous northern youth registered, along with six educators from the school and school board. All school staff attendees were familiar with the Indigenous youth but our two project collaborators, the FNMI Achievement Tutor, and the Indigenous Graduation Coach had the strongest and most important relationships of trust with the Indigenous youth and were the main reason why the youth wanted to participate.

   The retreat was Land-based, experiential, and focused on well-being in order to achieve the goals of the Tikkun Youth Project: to repair the deficits and damages of systemic oppression in schools against marginalized youth, and to shift education towards reconciliation by youth determining and leading the changes that they want to see in their communities and schools. With the Lakehead University's Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project, our goals were to 1) to build opportunities for advocacy and self-determined strengths through positive relational experiences amongst the Nishnawbe youth; 2) to provide culturally safe spaces in a historically colonial institution (education) in which Indigenous youth could voice their stories and concerns while being heard and affirmed by other youth; and, 3) to empower all the participating Indigenous youth to become agents of resurgence by building confidence, pride, collective strength, and community amongst themselves during this retreat.

Design of the Tikkun Land-Based Well-being Retreat

The design of the Tikkun Indigenous Youth well-being retreat began with Jacky's accumulated experience with a volunteer-driven Canadian not-for-profit organization, Zen's Outdoor Leadership Camps for Youth (ZOLCY), that worked globally with marginalized youth in underserved communities of Jamaica and Nepal. ZOLCY's mission was to cultivate positive well-being through a variety of means: youth leadership development in the marginalized communities, service learning for cultural immersion and global perspectives by White Canadian university students, intercultural group bonding through Laughter Yoga, team-building initiatives, and well-being games. The Tikkun retreat design was based upon Jacky's refined

approach from delivering a dozen 4-day camps with seriously poor and marginalized youth in Riverton, Jamaica.

Riverton is one of Kingston, Jamaica's designated land-fill sites while at the same time a residential community for hundreds of chronically impoverished families. The Jamaican youth in the ZOLCY camps came from situations of severe socio-economic, physical, emotional, and spiritual distress similar to that of many Nishnawbe youth from northern communities in Ontario who live without access to basic human rights to clean water, adequate housing, continuous electricity, or quality health and education services. Jacky's experience of designing the ZOLCY camps provided the basic framework of activities for the Tikkun retreat of Laughter Yoga, team-work challenges, and play-based socializing and interactions with peers. Laughter Yoga was employed as an embodied somatic method for the release of emotional blocks, negative self-talk hindrances, or social impasses, while the teamwork gave the youth a focus and purpose to make peer connections and creatively problem-solve challenges together. The third key component was play-based activities for fun, positive, and holistic engagement with peers that we knew students were not experiencing in their school or urban lives. We reasoned that the tested and reiterative approach of the ZOLCY's youth camps would be a very relevant and foundational design for the culminating retreat of the Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project.

The Tikkun Indigenous Youth Land-based Retreat

The focus of the Tikkun Indigenous Youth Land-based retreat was to build positive healing relationships with youth and by youth. All the retreat activities were designed to provide a culturally safe and decolonized space for Indigenous youth to develop a voice for self-advocacy; to empower youth participants to become leaders and agents of change; and, to foster a collective spirit for relationship building or bonding, thus gathering strength as a community of northern Nishnawbe and instilling pride and confidence in their identities while away from their First Nation communities and in the city seeking an education. Healing from colonial harms was promoted through a Land-based location in the bush at an outdoor centre, and through cooperative games, team challenges requiring problem-solving and a collective effort, Laughter Yoga (LY) to release stressful emotions, and

sharing circles to process experiences and share stories of life in the city and at school.

In this section, we describe key components of the retreat that were successful for the Indigenous youth's gathering of positive strength and cultural bonding. These components included the following: 1) a mentorship process of youth working with youth where youth leader-mentors work in partnership with youth Leaders-in-Training (LiTs); 2) the fun "back-pocket" games or positive icebreakers to break down social isolation, awkwardness, or alienation; 3) team initiatives or challenges that would focus the purpose of coming together; 4) sharing circles to share stories, emotional experiences, and process collectively; 5) Laughter Yoga to release dis/stress from "getting an education in the city" along with emotional blocks of anxiety and depression; and 6) drama-based role-plays of risks and challenges that many Indigenous youth face while attending school in Thunder Bay.

The mentorship process. Cooke (2018) states that emotionally strong and healthy people are those who have a high level of well-being linked to self-determination or the autonomy to make decisions that affect one's livelihood. When many northern Nishnawbe youth have little choice but to move to Thunder Bay to "get an education," hundreds of kilometres away from their home communities, then these youth are already in a position of subjugation with a reduced agency over their rights, their autonomy, and their self-determination for future opportunities. Our Tikkun approach to wellness and well-being were closely aligned to Cooke's (2018) philosophy of self-determination for mental health when the Nishnawbe youth were given the freedom and opportunity to take the lead and choose what they wanted to do in terms of activities on the Land during the retreat. It was a brief respite of decolonized and Indigenous majority space for these northern Nishnawbe students while also an actualization of the Tikkun research findings implemented into good practice by/with these youth.

We developed the ZOLCY mentorship program to focus on the four Nishnawbe LiT youth who then demonstrated leadership and self-determination with their Indigenous peers. During an evening sharing circle, one of the youth leaders (LiTs) expressed to their peers that they were motivated to attend the retreat due to the opportunity to engage in leadership: "I thought that I got what it is to be a good role model … I've got to be a leader for some reason …" (Cabin 1, 38:3).

To encourage Indigenous youth civic engagement through self-determined leadership, Jacky first modified the LiT mentorship program by

focusing on three objectives that the Nishnawbe youth would be able to respond to: 1) tailoring the goals and objectives of the Tikkun Youth Project to be aligned to Indigenous perspectives; 2) reworking team initiatives for a northern Ontario Land-based context; and 3) learning how to facilitate groups of school peers from different First Nations communities but all together in the city. We focused on these skills and capacities with the four Indigenous youth LiTs and their four teacher-candidate partners or paired mentors. Each pair of Indigenous youth LiT and non-Indigenous TC worked well together to learn how to facilitate games, direct initiatives, and guide sharing-circles. The purpose of the pairing of youth-mentor with youth LiT was to help build a cohesive relationship and support system for running all the activities and encouraging peer-to-peer participation.

During the six weeks of intensive training, the pairs learned how to co-teach and facilitate games and team initiatives, figuring out the logistics of the retreat along with their roles and responsibilities. The primary focus of this training was to support and strengthen the youth LiTs' confidence and leadership capacity through play-based training in order to then encourage their peers (while empowering themselves) towards embodied healing through self-determination. The role of the teacher-candidate mentors was to focus their support on their LiT mentee in order to build the youth's capacity to lead the whole group through games or initiatives and to facilitate sharing circles in their cabin each night of the retreat.

Back-pocket games/icebreakers. These activities are purposefully simple games that do not require complicated rules or equipment. The term "back-pocket" refers to the idea that these games can be "pulled out" whenever the need arises for a group to come together and where no complicated planning or complex materials are needed. The only requirement is participants who are willing to play. The main objectives of these games are to facilitate playful interactions amongst participants in order to create a fun, cohesive, and safe environment while "breaking the ice" or any social awkwardness or impasses. An example of a back-pocket game is Rock, Paper, Scissors where rules are flexible, and the only requirement is two participants.

We first introduced these games during the informal drop-in lunch sessions at the school by encouraging the youth to participate by watching Jacky and the TC mentors enthusiastically play. Sometimes, the youth would not pay attention or would try their best to remain disengaged to appear "cool" in the school context. But, with our regular lunch-hour visits, more often than not, the youth would be compelled to look up from their cell

phones and find the spectacle of the game hilarious or infectious. As the youth became comfortable with our presence in their culture room and more accustomed to these silly and fun games, more youth would stand up and initiate their own participation. These games were easy to remember and to lead, always ended in laughter, and became the retreat's favourite pastime as the Nishnawbe youth leaders (LiTs) took the initiative to start games on their own with their peers while waiting for meals or during blocks of free time. These games started a natural process of self-initiation and self-determination that extended to asking for and maintaining an outdoor fire in the designated fire pit during the evenings and mornings to sing traditional songs and engage in ceremony together. When given the decolonized space in an Indigenous-focused Land-based setting, these youth knew what they needed to come together, share, and heal.

Team initiatives. These activities were co-operative activities that challenged participants to work and problem-solve together through peer-to-peer interactions and group efforts. Similar to back-pocket games, team initiatives were also not resource intensive; however, the youth were more invested as they challenged groups of participants to think, communicate, problem-solve, and trust each other to work together towards a common goal. An example of a team initiative that we used during the retreat was the Flip the Tarp challenge. A group of youth is directed to stand on a tarp and then instructed that the objective is to flip the tarp over (as a group) without anyone stepping off the tarp. The goal of any team initiative is to have participants work together to overcome the challenge and to gain a feeling of collective accomplishment and belonging rather than individual failure and isolation – an experience that too many northern Indigenous youth feel and endure multiple times during regular high school classes.

Each team initiative always ended with a debriefing of what went well or what was challenging with the team's work on the initiative. To consolidate the collective effort and spirit of the activity, we prompted the youth with questions such as "How did the group decide on what to do?", "What did you learn from this initiative?", "What is the relevance of this initiative and how can you apply what you learned here to a real life setting, such as school?", "Was there anyone who felt that they were not being heard?", and "What was frustrating and why?" These prompts gave the youth a relevant and authentic situation where they could share their responses and feelings while others were invested, present, and ready to listen.

During the retreat, it was the four Indigenous youth leaders (LiTs) who

facilitated each initiative in order to give them incremental opportunities to see themselves as leaders, facilitators, or amplifiers with their TC mentors as supportive back-up. Although unsure and uncomfortable with this new approach and leadership responsibility inside the high school context, these four Indigenous youth leaders expressed increasing confidence and excitement and an empowered motivation to facilitate more activities during the Land-based retreat. It was remarkable to witness the growth of these Indigenous youth leaders from being unsure, shy, or withdrawn during the drop-in sessions during the first two years of the Tikkun Youth Project. We observed one youth in particular who did not often engage in activities or conversations at the start of our drop-in sessions; however, during the Land-based retreat, this same youth, now in the position of a leader (LiT) to their peers, had created their own team initiative, regularly engaged in individual and group conversations, and led impromptu back-pocket games with peers. This was a regular occurrence during the Tikkun Indigenous Youth retreat and demonstrates the value of decolonized conditions in education for self-determination (Cooke, 2008) and authentic activities where youth can re-claim cultural autonomy, away from colonial settings of mainstream/whitestream school.

Sharing circles. The activity of sharing or talking circles is an important cultural method used in many First Nations communities to come together, communicate, share, and witness stories with one another. It is an Indigenous-focused communication process that has been used by First Nations health organizations as an effective means to address trauma, to promote the healing process, and to create safe spaces for participants to share stories and express their experiences and emotional responses (Castellano, 2006). During the Tikkun Indigenous Youth retreat, the youth were already organized into four cabin groups where each cabin had one Indigenous youth leader (LiT), their TC mentor-partner, and 3-5 youth peers. At the end of each retreat day, the cabin groups would process the day's activities and emotions with a sharing circle led by the Indigenous youth leader (LiT) and supported by the non-Indigenous TC mentor. Usually the cabin sharing circle would begin with ice-breaker questions, such as, "What was your rose of the day?" and "What was your thorn of the day?" Or, they could start with fun youth-focused questions such as, "If you could have any super-power, what would it be and why?" The purpose of the last question was to help ease any tension or anxiety that might arise if someone had a particularly upsetting "thorn of the day."

The cabin sharing circle acted as a safe space for the members of each cabin group to be heard and reaffirmed by peers that their voices and experiences mattered. For example, on the second night, several youths began opening up and talking about their experiences of trauma, school-related racism, and the social injustices that they often face while having to live in Thunder Bay to access their right to a high school education. Many Indigenous youth described how they felt Canadian mainstream "society … put [them] in a box … [and] gave [them] a label of how you're supposed to act" (Cabin 3, 42:85), or how there was never the opportunity in school to "talk about [issues of race] … [how they were] never … given the chance" (Cabin 3, 42:96), and how "it is hard [for Indigenous youth to] come to school because [they] feel like [they] don't belong anywhere" (Youth Leader interview).

The sharing circle was a core indigenized method in the Tikkun Indigenous Youth Land-based well-being retreat where the Nishnawbe youth leaders achieved greater ownership and leadership over the collective sharing process at the end of each day. It was a critical component to allow the northern students to share their own take-away messages and what they learned together in terms of what made them strong together, what they were still struggling with in terms of dealing with the colonial urban education system away from their communities, and their right to determine their own Indigenous identity and practices in this space of the whitestream (Grande, 2008) school board's outdoor education centre. We believe that it was the sharing circles that started a collective cultural process whereby the youth felt safe and encouraged to gather at the outdoor fire pit to sing traditional songs in Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe language) and perform ceremony in their own way without fear of racist reactions or colonial reprisals. We knew we had achieved a culturally safe space during the retreat that led to the youth gaining greater cohesion in their peer-to-peer relationships and collective healing.

Laughter Yoga. Laughter Yoga is a practice involving prolonged voluntary laughter, comprised of simulated laughter exercises that elicit the physiological and psychological benefits of spontaneous laughter. Laughter Yoga is done in groups, with eye contact, jokes, and playfulness between participants in order to promote reduced stress and increase collective well-being. Laughter Yoga was particularly important for this group of Indigenous youth at the retreat because it was an embodied or somatic method that permitted the students' psychological walls and anxieties to break down or release physically during the large group Laughter Yoga session. This

physical release helped the youth to open themselves up to emotional awareness of their own bodies and to engage themselves more fully with their peers and the participating educators. The session had a strong watershed impact on each individual as well as for the dynamics of the whole group. Many youths commented during the sharing circles on the experience of releasing stress and having new positive energy emerge that literally helped them move forward. One Indigenous youth described their experiences with Laughter Yoga "[As] amazing … [and that it gave them] a really good release" (Cabin 2, 45:1) while another shared how the positive results had motivated them to want to "do that more often you know … laughing yoga" (Cabin 2, 45:5). The school staff and TC mentors seemed genuinely surprised at how deeply the Laughter Yoga session impacted the Indigenous youth because most had never seen these Indigenous youth smile, let alone laugh. One youth described the impact the laughter yoga had on their spirit, with "the biggest take away of the day was the laughing … [and how they] went to the spirit realm … [and] found [their] inner peace" (Cabin 1, 41:54).

Themes and Analysis of the Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project's Land-based Retreat

The research of the Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project's Land-based retreat was decolonial and Indigenous-focused in its methods and analysis. We collected participant observation qualitative data of the weekly lunch-hour sessions, the plans and activities that changed each week with the Indigenous youth leader (LiT) and TC mentee feedback, and documented each activity of the retreat and audio-taped the cabin sharing circle sessions and youth participant feedback. All data were transcribed and then entered into Atlas.Ti – a qualitative software program – in order to code for cross-conversational themes. As transcribers and co-participants in the retreat, we listened carefully to each recorded sharing circle and carefully read and reviewed each transcript to get a sense of the whole retreat's impacts. Atlas as a coding program helped us find similar concepts between the participants' stories and to bring our team members' interpretations together through the refinement of the codes and then themes of interpretation.

Four major themes of meaning-making emerged from the Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project's culminating Tikkun Indigenous Youth retreat: 1) building a collective and cultural awareness as civic or community engagement; 2) raising the strengths and capacities of Indigenous youth through well-being and healing to self-determine their civic engagement; 3) culturally safe and Indigenous respectful school curriculum must be the first step to engage Indigenous youth by reducing or stopping settler-colonial harms; and 4) indigenized or Indigenist civic engagement education is first focused on Indigenous youth self-determination for democratic participation in their education by youth, for youth, with youth, and is good for everyone, including all Canadians.

Building Collective Awareness for Community/Civic Engagement

When given the opportunity to experience a positive, culturally safe space where questions can be asked and answered in a collective Indigenous-focused setting that encourages cultural and personal expression, the Indigenous youth of Lakehead University's Tikkun Youth Project were able to participate fully in community building for Indigenous youth, by Indigenous youth, and with Indigenous youth as strong civic engagement. As non-Indigenous researchers and educators, we became increasingly convinced and committed to the principle that Indigenous youth must be given the decolonial space and opportunities to self-determine in order to engage in an indigenized model of community/civic engagement education.

During the Land-based retreat research of the cabins' sharing circles, we noted that the Indigenous youth not only participated, but also gained strength in collective awareness, even when it meant that they came to realize how they were being actively subjected to colonial oppression, marginalization, and anti-Indigenous racism in their classrooms, city experiences, and social interactions. We knew that these oppressive conditions were reduced in their damaging effects by the counter approach of the Tikkun Youth Project's drop-in lunch sessions that emphasized positive, authentic, and strengths-based relationships between the youth, the assisting educators, and volunteer TC mentees. Indigenous youth were able to participate for themselves in this participatory action process despite

ongoing school and city oppressions because they were able to reclaim a certain amount of autonomy through the mentorship/leadership activities along with the conditions for trusting relationships and safe spaces with peers.

The safe space was created by having these sessions in a designated cultural classroom that reflected Indigenous ways of knowing and socializing in a positive framing. The Indigenous cultural room was a school space where the Indigenous youth felt safe and where the youth knew they could find supportive educators – the FNMI achievement tutor and the graduation coach.

This explicit emphasis of cultural safety was extended by the Land-based retreat because it took place outside the high school, outside the city (20 km northeast of city limits), in the bush, on Indigenous Land or the traditional territory of the Fort William First Nation, signatories of the 1850 Robinson-Superior Treaty. The close access and re-connection with the Land was powerful for these northern Nishnawbe youth who had grown up in the bush with daily contact on the Land but who now felt confined or imprisoned by the school and city limits of streets, concrete, and pavement.

Raising the Strengths and Capacities of Indigenous Youth Civic Engagement

Rather than remain caught in a cycle of social oppression, marginalization, and settler-colonialism (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013) through mainstream schooling, pedagogy and curriculum, the Tikkun Indigenous Youth Land-based retreat provided the supports, well-being strategies, and opportunities for Indigenous youth to reclaim autonomy and build capacity for their own cultural community/civic engagement. Youth were involved in games, team initiatives, culturally responsive activities, and Laughter Yoga sessions to engage in non-verbal communication, build a youth collectivity of greater trust and relationships, develop leadership skills through collaboration, connect to cultural practices and the Land, and experience embodied healing through role-plays and Laughter Yoga.

Assisting youth with activities and well-being strategies that they can then use in real life after the Tikkun research was "completed" was an important capacity-building goal of the project. Capacity-building through the retreat

activities was light, fun, and informal in approach while simultaneously having a serious impact on the high school's Indigenous youth culture. The retreat activities gave the Indigenous youth embodied opportunities to be actively involved in positive relationship-building with their peers which then translated into their own civic engagement. Fun, low-stakes activities such as the back-pocket games encouraged the Indigenous youth to feel comfortable enough to start their own games and conversations with one another while other activities were designed to challenge them to work and problem-solve together to achieve a common goal. Sharing circles were culturally relevant processing methods for students to cope in a positive way as well as "ease tension or anxiety" that may have come up. Laughter yoga again was a way for students to be actively involved and try a positive coping strategy. These are foundational blocks or essential skills for community (civic) engagement education. In our Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project, the youth were more than able to demonstrate their increased awareness for action, improve their own social justice discourse, gain tools and methods to help each other reflect, echo, and collaborate on a collective vision, and gather strength and resolve for greater Indigenous resurgence, sovereignty, and traditional/treaty rights in their communities.

Indigenous-determined Community/Civic Engagement is Good for Everyone

Inside the context of mainstream education, it is critical to engage all youth in a model of Indigenist or indigenized civic engagement education because it is a holistic, relational, and respectful youth-driven approach to democratic practices and community adhesion. When the Indigenous youth were given the opportunity to choose and take the lead for the games and initiatives during the retreat, the engagement and capacity to participate for all youth was exponentially increased and deeply experienced on multiple dimensions. The mentorship model with a supportive mentee empowered the four Nishnawbe youth leaders to reclaim self-determination and in turn, become role-models for their Indigenous peers' capacity for civic engagement.

Indigenized or Indigenist civic engagement education is first focused on Indigenous youth self-determination for democratic participation in their

own communities and education. When we centered the Tikkun research on what "engaged citizenship" means for Indigenous youth, who are routinely denied the rights and opportunities afforded to settler youth in civic engagement education, we discovered that the Indigenous youth knew what they needed and how it promoted skills and capacity lacking in mainstream non-Indigenous youth populations. When Indigenous youth were in a position to determine what citizenship and civic engagement means to them and their communities, they grew in capacity to reclaim autonomy in decision-making, well-being of mind and body, strength of voice, cultural identity, and the ability to envision a positive collective future.

We were convinced that providing a more Indigenist, respectful, and safe space for cultural and personal self-expression in schools would help combat or reduce the negative micro/macro aggressions of settler-colonialism that hurts all Canadians, especially Indigenous youth. When we can engage in an Indigenist model of community/civic engagement by acknowledging, encouraging, and affirming Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural protocols, and holistic models, we can all better participate democratically and contribute to community well-being – a model of civic engagement that is good for all Indigenous and Canadian citizens to share their own cultural values, beliefs, traditions, teachings, etc.

Tips for Organizing Tikkun Youth-led Retreats

The Tikkun Indigenous Youth Land-based retreat as a culminating activity of the 3-year research project allowed the research team to fulfill and extend the four objectives outlined by the global Tikkun Youth Project, as well as go beyond the original intended purposes of the well-being retreat for northern Indigenous youth seeking an education in the city. Our retreat goals included building positive healing relationships amongst all participants involved, providing a safe-space for the youth leaders to develop a voice for self-advocacy, empowering youth to become leaders and agents of change, and providing a safe-space for healing where youth were able to build their confidence, pride, community, and relationships amongst themselves.

Based on the successful experience of the Tikkun Indigenous Youth Land-based well-being retreat, we have provided the following guidelines and recommendations that should be considered when designing and

implementing a program committed to the well-being of Indigenous youth for collective strength, resurgence of cultural ways of knowing, and indigenized civic engagement by youth, with youth. First, conduct Land-based activities or a retreat at an outdoor centre that gives full unfettered access to the Land. Being outside and connecting to the Land is the most ideal setting because it often reminds youth of home in their northern communities. This Land-based setting should be a safe space for Indigenous youth to freely interact with other Indigenous youth and should be a minimum of two nights and three days for greater immersion in an Indigenous-focused environment. We found that this allowed time for the youth to become comfortable with themselves, their environment, their peers, and others who were present.

Second, implement a mentorship process to encourage as much youth-led activities as possible. Youth should have the opportunity to be part of the planning process. This gives youth a voice and can be extremely empowering for themselves and their peers. Third, include icebreaker games at the beginning of the retreat to encourage playful interactions. These low-stake games help youth become comfortable with one another and their environment. Fourth, include youth-led team initiatives. These initiatives help support and empower all youth who are involved. Fifth, invite guest speakers (i.e., First Nation community leaders and Elders) who promote culturally relevant activities and teachings specific to the group. Sixth, include sharing circles as part of the evening ritual to give youth a chance to share stories and to express their opinions, views, and experiences. This is an important time for youth to be heard and respected. Seventh, include an embodied activity that allows youth the chance to interact and laugh with each other. Laughter Yoga is a great option; however, it may not be available. Another example of an embodied activity is a youth-led comedy show. Lastly, create a communication strategy to gain the support of educators, school administrators, and organizations who work with First Nation youth to make the retreat possible. Schools, organizations, and parents/guardians need to see the value of the program.

Conclusion

We began this chapter by summarizing the research observations of Lakehead University's Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project from Years 1 and 2 of the educational inequities that continue to impact Nishnawbe youth in the northern Ontario city of Thunder Bay. The ongoing colonial impacts of Canada's education policies continue to degrade the overall well-being of Indigenous youth, as tragically demonstrated by the deaths of the seven Nishnawbe youths (the Seven Fallen Feathers), resulting in Ontario's longest coroner's inquest to understand the dangers and risks involved when northern Nishnawbe students attempt to access to their treaty and human right to a high school education. This was the context of the third year of the Indigenous Tikkun Youth Project's research into youth civic engagement. We decided that the research project needed to offer and demonstrate an alternative to settler-colonial conditions of civic education; hence, we aimed to design and engage the Indigenous youth in an alternative three-day educational experience that focused on Indigenous self-determination, resurgence, cultural strengths, and collective well-being. We focused on an incremental youth mentorship process for leadership and capacity-building for Nishnawbe youth to decide and engage in healing with, by, and for their Indigenous peers.

Indigenous youth civic engagement in Canadian education or Ontario curriculum has mostly been ignored, avoided, or fraught with ongoing obstacles and barriers of settler-colonialism, institutionalized racism, and curricula that does not recognize the vital contributions of Indigenous peoples in contemporary Canadian society. In our Tikkun Indigenous youth research, we focused on how northern Nishnawbe youth face ongoing dangers, risks, and challenges when trying to access their basic right to a high school education, not only due to historic treaties but also as the First Peoples of Canada and a citizen of one of the richest countries and most successful education systems in the world.

The focus of this retreat was to assist Indigenous youth in finding different ways and methods to reclaim their collective strength, self-determination, and critical autonomy within education as an institution, as well as in urban school spaces that continue to subject Indigenous youth to oppression, racism, erasure, and silence on a regular basis. Our first goal with the Land-based well-being weekend was to interrupt those systemic oppressive forces

in a type of retreat or time-out, away from the city, the urban high school, the students' boarding homes, and mainstream colonial expectations and routines. We created a time, place, and context for Indigenous youth to be able to commit to themselves, to focus on their own well-being, to connect to a community or peers for a bonding or collective experience where the activities, conversations, and experiences were designed and determined by Indigenous youth, for Indigenous youth, and with Indigenous youth.

From this 3-day Land-based retreat, we were able to observe and document a variety of positive findings that are promising for improving the agenda of civic engagement education research to teach culturally safe, community positive, and experiential collective strength by/with Indigenous youth as active participants who are in control of their own learning and community-building. We learned that personal-collective connections and safe-positive relationships with their Indigenous peers were vitally important for Indigenous youth to be able to talk about their cultural hopes and socially-just futures, as well as what they can accomplish with civic engagement in their communities. The culminating retreat of the Indigenous Tikkun Youth Project was a break with the constant tide of settler-colonialism in urban schools where youth continue to experience cultural erasure and are forced into a deficit perception of their Indigenous identity and community membership while school, curricula, and institutional supports are lacking, missing, or unfulfilled.

Finally, our greatest hope for the value of the Tikkun Indigenous Youth Project was realized when one Indigenous youth participant beautifully articulated their understanding of the retreat's purpose: "I felt like this thing [retreat] was pointless at first … I felt like we were just a bunch of Indians … coming here to chill … until we started doing activities and then I started seeing why we were coming here … to learn and gain experiences together. To try and build a better future for all of us by opening our eyes and seeing different possible things" (Cabin 4, 43:10).

Appendix

"I really did like the leadership activities. I've done a lot of leadership things but I've never actually put my input in cause I was shy, but I kinda know you guys better so it was easier...it was nice to get people I see everyday at school...and actually get to talk to them. If I was at school I'd

References

Battiste, M. (2004). Unfolding the lessons of colonization. In C. Sugars (Ed.), *Unhomely states: Theorizing English-Canadian postcolonialism* (pp. 209-220). Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.

Castellano, M. B. (2006). *Final report of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation: Volume 1.* Ottawa, ON: Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

Cooke, C. (2018, June 22). Metis doctor honoured for serving remote Indigenous communities. *The Current.* Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/m-tis-doctor-honoured-for-serving-remote-indigenous-communities-1.4717710

First Nations Health Authority. (2015). Hope, help, and healing. A planning toolkit for First Nations and Aboriginal communities to prevent and

respond to suicide. Retrieved from http://www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-for-first-nations/mental-wellness-and-substance-use

First Nations Information Governance Centre. (2014). *Youth resilience and protective factors associated with suicide in First Nations communities.* Ottawa, ON: First Nations Information Governance Centre.

Gardam, K., & Giles, A. R. (2016). Media representations of policies concerning education access and their roles in seven First Nation students' deaths in northern Ontario. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 7(1). doi:10.18584/iipj.2016.7.1.1

Grande, S. (2008). Red pedagogy: The un-methodology. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 233-254). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Hare, J., & Pidgeon, M. (2011). The way of the warrior: Indigenous youth navigating the challenges of schooling. *Canadian Journal of Education/ Revue Canadienne De L'éducation, 34*(2), 93-111. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/canajeducrevucan.34.2.93.pdf

Korteweg, L., & Bissell, A. (2016). The complexities of researching youth civic engagement in Canada with/by Indigenous youth: Settler-colonial challenges for Tikkun Olam pedagogies of repair and reconciliation. *Citizenship Education Research Journal/Revue de recherche sur l'éducation à la citoyenneté, 5*(1), 14-26. Retrieved from http://ejournals.ok.ubc.ca/index.php/CERJ/article/view/14

Korteweg, L., & Fiddler, T. (2018). Unlearning colonial identities while engaging in relationality: Settler teachers' education-as-reconciliation. *McGill Journal ofEducation/Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill, 53*(2). doi:10.7202/1058397ar

Macdonald, N. (2017, July 7). A river of tears. *Maclean's*. Retrieved from www.macleans.ca/river-of-tears/

Neeganagwedgin, E. (2013). A critical review of Aboriginal education in Canada: Eurocentric dominance impact and everyday denial. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, (17)*1, 15-31. doi:10.1080/13603116.2011.580461

Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth (Ontario). (2014). *Together we are … Feathers of hope report: A First Nations youth action plan.* Toronto, ON. Retrieved from http://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/Feathers_of_Hope.pdf

Richards, J. (2014). *Are we making progress? New evidence on Aboriginal education outcomes in provincial and reserve schools.* Toronto, ON: C. D. Howe Institute.

Sinclair, M. (2015). Justice Murray Sinclair's remarks on the Truth and Reconciliation Reports. *Maclean's*. Retrieved from https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/justice-murray-sinclairs-remarks-on-the-truth-and-reconciliation-report/

Styres, S. (2011). Land as first teacher: A philosophical journeying. *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, 12(6), 717–731. doi:10.1080/14623943.2011.601083

Talaga, T. (2017). *Seven fallen feathers: Racism, death, and hard truths in a northern city*. Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press Inc.

Talaga, T. (2018). *All our relations: Finding the path forward.* CBC Massey Lectures. Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press Inc.

Tuck, E. (2011). Humiliating ironies and dangerous dignities: A dialectic of school pushout. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 24(7), 817–827. doi:10.1080/09518398.2011.632785

Tuck, E., & Gaztambide-Fernández, R. A. (2013). Curriculum, replacement, and settler futurity. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 29(1), 72–89. Retrieved from http://journal.jctonline.org/index.php/jct/article/view/411/pdf

---

1 "Land" is capitalized (Styres, 2011) to indicate its complexity as a knowledge source and where the elements, ancestors, more-than-human animals, spirits, language, and stories are all interconnected with Indigenous peoples over millennia or time, immemorial as a system of relations and knowledge that continues living to this day.

2 "Nishnawbe" refers specifically to the youth who are part of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) and are Ojibwe or Oji-Cree. Throughout this chapter, Nishnawbe and First Nations are used interchangeably.

3 In this chapter, we use the terms Indigenous and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) to refer to Indigenous youth as a group of peoples.

4 The term "northern" refers to students/youth who hail from distant, rural, or remote First Nations communities north of Thunder Bay and who are most often in boarding homes with parents and other family members at a great distance.

8. Youth Perspectives on Community Activism: From the Personal to the Political

S. NOMBUSO DLAMINI, CYNTHIA KWAKYEWAH, AND SHAWNEE HARDWARE

Abstract

This chapter presents findings from the Toronto Tikkun Youth Project participants about their community and civic engagement activities. Data was gathered through interviews with sixteen participants who were between 16 and 24 years old and were of varied ethnic and racial backgrounds. The chapter contributes to literature that challenges notions of youth apathy and shows the varied ways in which youth contribute to the development of their communities and to civic society, generally. Data from the project show the different ways that youth define community and civic engagement, as well as the divergent forms and motivation for participating in these activities. Notions of belonging to their community, desire to contribute, challenge stereotypes, and create meaningful futures for themselves, were mentioned as some of the reasons youth chose to engage in community life. The youth voices echoed in this chapter can be used to combat the ongoing notions about youth apathy and the decreasing level of youth community engagement. The data also shows the need for a more systematic mapping of youth engagement and their contribution to society.

In this chapter, we present findings from data collected with youth in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), as part of the broader Tikkun Youth Project (2014-2017), with sites in Canada, Kosovo, and South Africa. The discussion presented herein is part of ongoing public and scholarly debates about youth civic engagement or lack thereof. In this chapter, we offer narratives that

describe youth community activities alongside youth discussions of empowerment, advocacy, and their growing career/academic pathways through and because of their activities in community spaces. We define community engagement as activities that "engage youth in the civic life of their communities" (Zeldin, 2004, p. 632) and as "how an active citizen participates in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future" (Adler & Goggin, 2005, p. 242). We also work with Berger's (2009) categories of engagement, while acknowledging his stance that the notion of "civic engagement" per se is muddled and lacks scholarly clarity. Berger retains the notion of "engagement," whilst distinguishing between political, social, and moral engagements and between *engagement in* (activity without attention); *engagement by* (attention without activity); and *engagement with* (attention and activity). We find these categories helpful in discussing the ways or levels of engagement that youth referred to as part of their community life. Cammaerts, Bruter, Banaji, Harrison, and Anstead (2014) reported that a significant portion of youth channel their political activities towards their social movement and civil organizing; therefore, any discussion about youth community engagement must intersect discussion on political participation. By including discussions on Tikkun youth's political engagement, we also strengthen the debates about the divergent ways in which youth participate in and lead community engagement projects.

Examining youth civic engagement is important because the past two decades have been marked by growing concerns about the lack of Canadian youth involvement in community and political activities. Some community activists, researchers, and politicians see youth's apathy as the key reason for youth disengagement in political spheres (Wattenberg, 2006; Wring, Henn, & Weinstein, 2007). This concern has been amplified because of statistics indicating that Canada has already arrived at a "tipping point," where the number of people reaching retirement age is higher than the number of young people entering working age – a dynamic that is projected to increase over the years (Public Safety Canada, 2012). Further, diminishing the diversity of those involved in civic life and suggesting a risk for Canada's civic future, the 2015 report, *Social Capital in Action*, indicates that a mere 6% of adults are responsible for 35%–42% of all civic activities (Siemiatycki, 2011).

In addition to the age-based differences in civic participation (CP), research show some correlation between areas with low voter turnout rates and areas with high populations of immigrant and/or racialized groups

(MacKinnon, Pitre, Sonia, & Watling, 2007; Siemiatycki, 2011). Overall, when compared to their white Canadian peers, the participation of traditionally marginalized youth in formal political structures is generally low. For instance, while about 84% and 83% of young white Canadians report voting in the 2015 elections at federal and provincial levels respectively, youth from visible minority groups' report only 68% and 65% (Bilodeau, Turgeon, White, & Henderson, 2015). Given that the country's largest metropolises are comprised of rapidly growing racial and ethnic minority groups (e.g., 40% of the population across the Greater Toronto Area; Siemiatycki, 2011), there is a critical need to focus on supporting and building civic capacity among racial and ethnic minority youth. Taken together, these civic participation patterns and demographic shifts point to a governance *and* economic risk: if things continue along this vein, Canada will not have a sufficient base to carry on the civic activities upon which it currently depends.

Lamentably, literature also indicates that the rise in Aboriginal and immigrant populations has had little bearing on the Canadian political landscape in terms of political representation of racialized minorities. Elected public office continues to be predominantly occupied by white, male, middle-class, educated, and Christian members (Andrew, Biles, Siemiatycki, & Tolley, 2008; Andrew, Biles, Siemiatycki, & Tolley, 2011), while Canadian visible minorities and Indigenous peoples remain underrepresented – both as candidates and as MPs (Black, 2011). In Canada, Indigenous people refers to First Nation, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) – the three distinct indigenous groups who have been lumped in to this government term. Andrew et al. (2008) indicate that some progress has been made towards equal representation, particularly for those with Italian and Jewish backgrounds, as well as South Asian, Filipino, and Chinese populations in Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Toronto. For instance, between the 2008 and 2011 federal elections, the number of racialized MPs increased from 21 to 28 (Black, 2017). Notable, however, is that this development in the ratio of minority MPs to the population remains uneven; between 1993 and 2011, the ratio of ethnic minority MPs to their respective population fluctuated between 0.39 and 0.56 (Black, 2017). On a municipal level, Bird (2004) states that the proportional representations of visible minorities in the local government of Canada's three largest cities remain uneven with 0.37 in Vancouver, 0.32 in Toronto, and 0.39 in Montreal (with 1.00 indicating a perfectly proportional representation). This uneven representation of racial minorities and Indigenous peoples means that they become voiceless, endowed with

minimum power and hence, redlined from shaping the course of the nation (see for example, Andrew, et al., 2008; Siemiatycki, 2011).

The data in this paper indicates that the uneven representation of racialized groups in civic structures is not because of their lack of activity. In fact, data in this chapter follows those scholars who challenge notions of youth apathy, claiming that youth might lack interest in or feel excluded from mainstream civic activity; however, they do participate in alternative spaces, such as the Internet (Bennett, 2008; Brooks & Hodkinson, 2008; Marsh, O'Toole, & Jones, 2007; Norris, 2011). These scholars also urge us to think more about what we mean by civic engagement, which is a concept used in our study regardless of its unclear and sometimes contested definitions (for a full discussion, see for example, Berger, 2009).

Review of Youth Civic Engagement[1]

There are vast amounts of works that are insightful in deepening our understanding of the value of youth civic engagement among advanced democracies. For instance, writing about the value of social capital, Stolle and Cruz (2005) indicate that citizens' involvement in political life positively affects the efficiency of democracy, individual well-being, and economic development. They also state that an individual's democratic attitude and behavior is inculcated at an early age through family experiences, civic education, and social relationships. Interestingly, these attitudes and behaviors are said to not change considerably within a person's lifetime; therefore, the said low pattern in youth democratic participation could have grave long-term adverse public policy outcomes (Stolle & Cruz, 2005).

Research has also given us a glimpse of popular forms of youth community engagement which include their roles on advisory boards for various non-profit organizations (Ho, Clarke, & Dougherty, 2015), participation in school clubs (Voight & Torney-Puta, 2013), and participating in informal activities (Andolina, Jenkins, Keeter, & Zukin, 2002). In reference to these informal activities, Andolina and colleagues (2002) also noted that youth had looser notions of community engagement. Hence, young people may view carrying the groceries for their neighbours or helping someone to cross the road as community engagement. In other studies, youth also listed participating and organizing a protest as a form of community participation (Gordon, 2008).

Although an increase in age is positively associated with increases in social and political activities (Tiernan, Lysack, Neufeld, Goldberg, & Lichtenberg, 2014), most of the participants in our study displayed "adult forms" of community and political participation that distinguished them from the socio-normative view of youth.

While much has been written on the United States (see, for example, Knack & Keefer, 1997; Paxton, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Rahn & Transue, 1998; Youniss et al., 2002), the scholarship on youth civic engagement in Canada is still rudimentary. Essentially, Canadian-based studies examining the trends within youth civic activities predominantly focus either on their civic literacy, their general disposition towards politics, or their level of participation in traditional electoral politics, such as voting, interest in politics, and membership in political parties (see Barnard, Campbell, & Smith, 2003; Bastedo, Dougherty, LeDuc, Rudny, & Sommers, 2012; Llewellyn & Westheimer, 2009; Young & Cross, 2004).

Scholarly works on youth civic engagement in Canada have recognized the limits to the lack of political interest argument and have sought to offer more nuanced explanations for low engagement of youth in formal politics. Blais and Loewen (2011), for instance, posit that stage of life, political interest, and involvement in politics impact the voting behavior of young people. In addition, socio-demographic factors including age, income, gender, and residence are said to have some moderate effect on youth voting patterns. But more importantly, Blais and Loewen's analysis showed that youth perceived voting as a type of politics with little capacity to spur change. This is in line with Chareka, Sears, and Chakaera's (2006) findings. As they explain, Canadian youth regard participation in the electoral process as providing minimal political options. Furthermore, in their view, the political system is unresponsive to their concerns, and the ability of politicians to effect change is limited. Perhaps not surprisingly, they discovered that Canadian youth are more likely to be involved in community-based activities (Chareka et al., 2006). Some scholars have argued that civic engagement among Canadian youth occurs in the form of volunteerism and humanitarian work as opposed to traditional ways of political participation (see Chareka et al., 2006; Gauthier, 2003). This was further reaffirmed by a 2000 National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating conducted by Statistics Canada (1997, 2000), which revealed that young people between the ages of 15-24 years old account for 15% of volunteer hours in Canada. Gauthier (2003) explains that in order to achieve sustained youth engagement, it is important to create

spaces for youth to function in a decision-making capacity. Thus, Gauthier (2003) is in favour of "broadening the concept of political participation" (p. 275), so as to embrace an interpretation that transcends electoral engagement.

Conversations of youth civic engagement has resulted in the resurgence of research projects that are geared towards understanding youth's perception of community and civic engagement. Some of these research studies also provide avenues for youth to design and execute youth-focused projects that position youth as change agents in their communities (see, for example, Dlamini, 2015). While some reports support assertions of youth being less engaged than adults (Statistics Canada, 2013), these research studies also negate assertions that most youth were apathetic. The participants in the Tikkun Youth Project's Toronto site also challenge the notion of youth apathy and instead narrated accounts of youth engagement and offered specific examples of their community-based activities.

The Toronto-Tikkun Methodology[2]

The broader Tikkun Youth Project used participatory action research (PAR). PAR is suitable for a project that seeks to produce social justices as it allows youth researchers and youth engaged in community work to actively participate in the research process (see, for example, Cammarota & Romero, 2011; Fine, 2009; Johnston-Goodstar, 2013). Youth's participation in the research process was not limited to the data collection; they were given the opportunity to effect changes to the research process and to analyze the data in general as well as for the production of this chapter[3]. Giving youth the chance to report their findings stimulated meaningful discussions of how to move forward with social healing and transformation.

The Toronto site of the Tikkun Youth Project (Toronto-Tikkun) was particularly interested in uncovering the barriers and drivers that youth faced when it came to involvement within their communities. For example, in our various meetings we discussed the general trends among why and how youth took on leadership roles. To address this concern, we interviewed youth from all over the Greater Toronto Area to uncover the stories of youth and their experiences.

The Toronto-Tikkun research activities were divided into three stages.

The first stage of the project involved finding youth researchers that could be trained and prepared to conduct qualitative interviews. The selection of youth researchers (YR) was purposive (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Ristock & Grieger, 1996), focusing on youth 16 to 22 years old who were enrolled in education institutions (high schools, colleges, or universities)[4]. A faculty researcher along with a doctoral student who was also a researcher in the project trained them in interview techniques.

The second stage focused on the actual training of each youth researcher so that they would be appropriately equipped and organized to interview other youth. Training consisted of a series of interactive workshops on PAR as well as observing and conducting trial interviews as a team. In addition to trial interviews, the Tikkun team addressed ways to deal with issues that could potentially occur during the actual interviews themselves. All in all, the youth researchers were trained on how to conduct interviews respectfully and professionally. Following the training phase, youth researchers were tasked with the responsibility of connecting with and interviewing civically-engaged youth.

We had five youth researchers who conducted three interviews on average. The interviews were conducted using the "Long Interview" (McCracken, 1988), a qualitative research strategy that allows researchers to illuminate the "life world" of participants and the content and pattern of their everyday experiences. The Long Interview provides researchers "the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves" (McCracken, 1988, p. 9). In the end, 16 youth were interviewed with their narrative's audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for themes on youth community activity. After all interviews were conducted, the research team then moved on to discuss general themes and anomalies amongst the general data that was collected.

The third stage allowed for all sites taking part in the Tikkun Youth Project to come together to share activities and discuss overall project stories of youth community life in all the three countries. An international symposium took place at the University of Windsor. At this symposium, youth researchers from Toronto, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Kosovo, and South Africa were able to share their themes of community involvement as well as brainstorm post project-funding steps that could be taken back to each site and implemented. Ideally, youth and researchers across sites were going to work together to devise ways to encourage and support other youth in their respective communities; however, the reality of such an activity to occur

without resources became unviable. In the end, the symposium served as a symbolic terminal stage of the project.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-demographic Information of Research Participants.

#	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Education & Occupation	Ethnicity	Religious Background
1.	Philip	Male	16	High school student	Indian	Muslim
2.	Adriana	Female	18	High school graduate	Egyptian	Muslim
3.	Esha	Female	18	Undergrad student	Caucasian	Christian
4.	Nicholas	Male	18	High school student	Black	Spiritual/not specified
5.	Mark	Male	18	High school student	Lebanese-Canadian	Shi'iti Muslim
6.	Denise	Female	18	Undergrad student	African	Agnostic
7.	Shawn	Male	19	High school student	Caribbean Canadian	Religious/not specified
8.	Amanda	Female	19	Undergrad student	Caucasian	Roman Catholic
9.	Tom	Male	21	Undergrad student	Black	None
10.	Stacia	Female	22	Undergrad student	Caucasian	Christian
11.	Shyan	Female	22	Undergrad student	Southern Sudanese	Catholic
12.	Natasha	Female	22	Undergrad student	African	None
13.	Trisha	Female	24	University graduate, working	Ghanaian-Filipino	None
14.	Stacy	Female	23	Undergrad student	Indo-Caribbean	Christian
15.	Jason	Male	24	Recent master's graduate	Jamaican Canadian	Christian
16.	Annette	Female	25	University graduate, working full-time	Caribbean Canadian	Christian

Table 1 indicates that with the exception of one 16-year-old, all

participants were between the ages of 18 and 25 years old and were of mixed ethno-racial and religious backgrounds. At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked the question, "Can you tell me a little about yourself?" In answering this question and other interviewer probes, we were able to get richer biographic information that is partly presented in Table 1.

In discussing the participants, it is worth mentioning that they had two commonalities with the research assistants. First, all participants were university students or were transitioning from university to the work-force. This commonality is not surprising because all research assistants were also attending university; therefore, they recruited from familiar territory. Also, as previously mentioned, Toronto-Tikkun researchers themselves had tapped into previous networks to recruit research assistants, thus ending up with university students and graduates from previous engagements. Second, all participants were recruited by research assistants because of knowledge of some engagement in community life. To avoid recursively affirming approaches to community engagement that others already recognize as such, we avoided offering any definition of what we meant by engagement. In this way, we were able to tap into youth descriptions that might capture conventional and nonconventional community engagement happening across a range of civic domains. Further, our strategy to avoid defining engagement allowed youth to describe what they meant by engagement without fear of researcher judgement. Still, we acknowledge that it would have been difficult to develop ways of identifying participants without some normative conception of community engagement already at work[5].

An overall finding from the data in our study is that youth who are engaged in their communities carry on their activities to adulthood because, as youth participate in more activities, they begin to get a sense of the things that are important to them and begin to take up more leadership responsibilities in the spaces in which they participate. To demonstrate, Trisha[6], a 24-year-old female noted, "I am a collective member on the Center for Women and Trans People, I am doing like photography and videography, I'm doing assistant work for two community activists, and I'm doing occasional workshops in the community around like HIV, harm reduction, and anti-oppression." Another participant, Esha, an 18-year-old high school student, explained that she participated in her community engagement activities through assisting with organizing community barbeques to conducting outreach with her church. Below we discuss some of the youth reasons for community participation and the meaning of community as they see it.

How Young People See Community Engagement and Political Activism

Participants were asked to talk about the places that they considered to be a part of and to talk broadly about what community means to them. Also, participants were asked to explain how they got involved in the activities that they participate in and to describe the things they do to make an impact on their community (see "Civic Engagement Questions" in Appendix 1). Data in our study indicate that the word "community" triggers different feelings and experiences for young people of all backgrounds; therefore, the concept of community engagement did not have a one-size-fits-all definition. To begin, the data in the study indicate that for youth, community engagement can be personal; it can move from a personal identity issue to advocacy and political activity similar to those experienced by the participant. The following quote illustrates this point:

> Nicholas: There's this program called EGAL, which I started going to a few months ago.
>
> Interviewer: What is that?
>
> Nicholas: It's for transgendered people to come together and talk freely and safely about   their experiences and identities. They help you find a job, which is a challenge for trans people, and if you need immediate help like a place to stay if you're in danger or got kicked out, they will help you find a place that's affordable.
>
> Interviewer: So, why is it important for you to become involved in the community of EGAL?
>
> Nicholas: Well, there was a point in my life when I was confused and questioning my gender identity, and it was hard. It still is hard even now when I know who I am, facing people and society in general, walking out on the streets and not knowing if I am passing as a man, having to use the bathroom but being afraid to. EGAL is so important, it lets people explore without judgement, live without being doubted or under suspicion or questioning about what's in their pants. EGAL

lets people who feel like they are wrong know that they are right, and I want to be a part of that.

At the same time, youth connections of identity with community engagement clearly illustrated the complexity of what this term means. At one level, community engagement is about attending to those complex nuances of sexual identity as illustrated by the quote above. Going to an organization like EGAL in order to "explore without judgement" is a form of community engagement. This quote also illustrates the "stretched" notion of "civic engagement" that Berger (2009) is critical of because it is unclear what civic/community is in Nicholas's engagement. Yet, despite the lack of clarity of the civic-ness of this activity, the quote also shows that because of hers/his political awareness/informed-ness about issues of sexuality, Nicholas is engaged. Using Berger's categories, it appears that for this activity, Nicholas is *engaged by* "the space" (attention without activity), as well as *engaged with* exploratory activity (attention and activity). Even though we do not know what "explore without judgement" refers to in the quote, it is safe to assume that it is about an activity of some sort.

To be engaged by and engaged with is also illustrated by those participants who spoke of the interconnection between their racialized identity and civic life. For racialized youth, community engagement is about learning how to overcome barriers associated with "white-dominated institutions" and counteracting the constraints posed by their environment (i.e., low-income housing, school, and home). Such notions of engagement confirm scholarship that challenges us to think broadly about what community engagement entails and opens up the possibility of unrecognized forms because of non-conventionalism, as illustrated by the following quote:

> Jason: All the time. I think that I'm often trying to navigate my role and my footprint in each community. I think that being a Black male living in Jane and Finch and who has lived in community housing and lives in subpar housing now and having to go to school in a very upper class white institution, in academia, in the ivory tower in academia, I think that I've had to navigate keeping my foot in both worlds and having challenges put at me you know. I face racism in the ivory tower of academia and also, I face questions of legitimizing my blackness in my own community because I am educated now. So, in my two communities I find myself trying to navigate and keep my place a lot of the time. In those communities I feel that it's always been a struggle trying to go between the two. And keeping your

authenticity but also moving up in the ivory tower to get positions of influence. So, it's a struggle. And it intersects, my athletic community and my geographic community intersect being an athlete from Jane and Finch, going away for school, that intersected. Sports is an asset for me – that has intersected.

Interview data also indicate that youth took part in community projects because these activities in turn affected their daily lives in one way or another. For example, one of the participants mentioned volunteering at community centres where they could translate services for their community members. This meant that parents would be able to enroll their children in after school tutoring because they would no longer be turned away due to language barriers. The result? A community that is working together towards educating and supporting their youngest members. Interview data also demonstrate some of the passion that drives youth to engage in certain community activities, to challenge stereotypes, and to motivate themselves and others as illustrated by the following two quotes.

Challenging Stereotypes

Natasha: It's important because of the idea of sensing – the sense of leadership that I was telling you about earlier. Right? So another thing that I – that you know – I'm just so sick and tired of the way media talks about oh "Jane and Finch community"[7] and like you know, trying to change the name to "University Heights" like that's really going to do   anything and you know like people will say "Oh my god, you're from Jane and Finch. Oh, I never knew that." It's like already there's this image that's attached to what somebody from Jane and Finch looks like. Right? So, now it's important for me to start actually becoming more like "Hey I'm like, you know, like hey I'm doing stuff and I'm from Jane and Finch."

      Motivational. Esha: I think it's important because there's like a role model kinda aspect to it. For example, if you're a student in school or you work the kinda job that your parents are proud of or your family is proud of, it might lead someone else who doesn't know per say what it is they want to do in life, if they look at you and they felt that – they felt motivated and they felt like they wanted to mirror what you're doing, it can create like a domino effect where like I guess

everyone, well not everyone, but the people who kinda attribute what you're doing to be good or right, they want to do the same thing too.

When, Why, and How Youth Participate in Community and Political Life

The fact is many young people are interested in systemic and institutional change; however, given the systems in place, there is no easy solution to going about bringing said change. At the end of the day, every step of the way, youths find themselves facing a plethora of barriers which ultimately prevents them from taking on leadership roles that would allow for greater change and a seat at the table. Youth are pertinent to change because they are the ones that will be future politicians, governments, law-makers, etc. Moreover, if youth are not given the opportunity to lead change, the odds will forever be slim for them to do so (Scheve, Perkins, & Mincemoyer, 2006). Additionally, when youth are constantly discouraged from engaging in change – whether that be attending community meetings or mentorship – they will continue to fall into a cycle of disengagement and continue to be regarded as complacent, not to mention *feeling* complacent as well. One reoccurring concept that was found throughout interviews is that engaged and disengaged youth need to be empowered and supported in order for them to grow and nurture a more inclusive, positive, and healthy community. Below, we chart some of the reasons that the youth participants gave for their community engagement. Firstly, youth shared that they typically participate in community engagement because they passionately connected to their various communities. Youth shared that they felt compelled to engage because they believed that their communities are enhanced by it. These were youth who lived in low-income housing; in areas that are officially known as "priority neighbourhoods"[8] and are often stigmatized as incubators of gangs, gun violence, and crime. Such areas include the Jane/ Finch area mentioned by Natasha above. One participant stated, "I find that that statement shows how much people don't look at areas like ours and our certain low-income areas or whatever they choose to call them. So, I feel like there are not enough people looking at these places that we start to have to look after ourselves." Additionally, many youths better their community members' quality of life. For example, another participant who volunteered

at a community center shared that "I like to do a lot of one-on-one stuff so, connecting people to organizations that can help them build themselves better."

Secondly, youth noted that a recurring inspiration for them (and their friends) to become active contributors to their communities is the role of positive relationships. Within the life stage of youth and young adulthood, there is great importance placed on relationships which influence both the creation and shaping of individual identities. Participants often noted that their willingness to initiate engagement within their communities was reliant on the participation of a peer. If there was no such relationship, they often refrained from engagement or waited until a peer expressed interest to become engaged as well. Another relationship-oriented finding was that mentor-like relationships play a large role in encouraging youth to remain consistent in their involvement. By building relationships with experienced and engaged community members, youth are able to learn the necessary aspects of what it means to be involved within a certain community and are able to better develop useful personal skills, such as communication and time-management. Youth and mentor relationships facilitate the sharing of knowledge and delegation of authority to youth, which in turn offer validation and purpose to their involvement. Within interviews, youth were able to identify at least one personal relationship which positively influenced their decision and commitment to engaging with their community.

Thirdly, youth highlighted the importance of representation. If there was a leader which youth could identify with on one or more aspects of their identity (i.e., ethnicity, gender expression, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, etc.), youth were more inclined to participate and take on leadership roles. In contrast, a lack of representation was noted as a hindrance to their willingness to get involved, and an aversion, whether consciously or unconsciously at the time, to assume a leadership role in their community. Also, references to representation suggest that youth are consciously aware of the political terrain that they continuously walk. This shows that youth are aware of the racist and sexist society that they live in where the allocation of resources is mediated by who people are and how they are situated within those racial and sexuality ladders. This significantly problematizes already complex identity issues young people experience. It also shapes their propensity to engage and the types of activism in which they participate. In some ways, it mobilizes them to defend the right to express their Canadian identities (such as in the case of Jason – and to

some extent, Nicholas, above). Thus, while social exclusion (racism, sexism, etc.) in general acts to inhibit social involvement, some young people feel that their own marginality can enable community and political engagement. Such mobilization may constitute a positive response to stigmatization in the short-term. However, this focus on the politics of countering racism and sexism ultimately constrains youth's social involvement within a form of identity politics that fails to reflect their complex subjectivities and denies them the opportunity to make the broader contributions to politics and society that they desire.

Future Considerations

It would be interesting to do a longitudinal study that follows our Tikkun participants in order to see if their community activity deepens and continues over time. Correspondingly, there is a need for a shift from a discourse focusing on the levels of youth disengagement and youth apathy to a discourse that explores the various ways in which youth engagement continues on to adulthood and operates alongside other adults. Also, we recognize that other virtual spaces exist where youth engage in and facilitate community activities, such as debating, mobilizing, and circulating petitions to address a community injustice. However, in the Tikkun Youth Project, that is the basis of this chapter; on-line forms of community activities were not the focus. Therefore, our discussion on youth engagement focuses on the physical community-based activities in which youth participate. A study that also takes into consideration the online part of community engagement would lead to interesting findings. Moreover, understanding how youth and adult engagement are similar can ensure the creation of more programs that actively facilitate young people's work along those of their parents.

References

Adler, R. P., & Goggin, J. (2005). What do we mean by "civic engagement"?

Journal of Transformative Education, 3(3), 236-53. doi:10.1177/1541344605276792

Andolina, M.W., Jenkins, K., Keeter, S., & Zukin, C. (2002). Searching for the meaning of youth civic engagement: Notes from the field. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6(4), 189-195. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0604_5

Andrew, C., Biles, J., Siemiatycki, M., & Tolley, E. (2011). *Electing a Diverse Canada: The Representation of Immigrants, Minorities, and Women.* Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Barnard, R., Campbell, D. A., & Smith, S. (2003). Citizen Re:Generation: Understanding active citizen engagement among Canada's information age generations. *D-Code.* doi:10.13140/RG.2.1.4839.7529

Bastedo, H., Dougherty, I., LeDuc., L., Rudny, B., & Sommers, T. (2012). Youth, democracy, and civic engagement: The 'apathy is boring' survey. Retrieved from https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2012/Leduc.pdf

Bennett, W. L. (2008). Changing citizenship in the digital age. In W. Lance Bennett (Ed.) *Civic life online: Learning how digital media can engage youth* (pp. 1-24). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Berger, B. (2009). Political theory, political science, and the end of civic engagement. *Perspectives on Politics*, 7(2), 335-350. doi:10.1017/S153759270909080X

Bilodeau, A., Turgeon, L., White, S. E., & Henderson, A. (2015). Seeing the same Canada? Visible minorities' views of the federation. Retrieved from http://irpp.org/research-studies/study-no56/

Bird, K. (2004). *Comparing the political representation of ethnic minorities in advanced democracies*. Winnipeg: Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association.

Black, J. H. (2011). Immigrant and minority political incorporation in Canada: A review with some reflections on Canadian-American comparison possibilities. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 55(9), 1160-1188. doi:10.1177/0002764211407843

Black, J. H. (2017). The 2015 federal election: more visible minority candidates and MPs. *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, 40(1). Retrieved from http://www.revparl.ca/40/1/40n1e_17_Black.pdf

Blais, A., & Loewen, P. (2011). Youth electoral engagement in Canada. Retrieved from https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rec/part/youeng&document=index&lang=e

Brooks, R., & Hodkinson, P. (2008). Young people, new technologies and

political engagement: Introduction. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 11(5), 473–79. doi:10.1080/13676260802282968

Cammaerts, B., Bruter, M., Banaji, S., Harrison, S., & Anstead, N. (2014). The myth of youth apathy: Young Europeans' critical attitudes towards democratic life. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 58(5), 645-664. doi:10.1177/0002764213515992

Cammarota, J., & Romero, A. (2011). Participatory action research for high school students: Transforming policy, practice, and the personal with social justice education. *Educational Policy*, 25(3), 488-506. doi:10.1177/0895904810361722

Chareka, O., Sears, A., & Chakaera, O. (2006). Civic duty: Young people's conceptions of voting as a means of political participation. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 29(2), 521-540. doi:10.2307/20054175

Dlamini, S. N. (2015). Youth challenging community: Between hope and stigmatization. *Educacao E Pesquisa*, 41, 1229-1252. doi:10.1590/S1517-9702201508144902

Dlamini, S. N., Daniel, Y., & Kwakyewah, C. (2015). Rethinking space, participation and gender: Unpacking barriers and opportunities for girls in the urban milieu. *Citizenship Education Research Journal (CERJ)*, 5(1), 27-41. Retrieved from https://ojs-o.library.ubc.ca/index.php/CERJ/article/view/15

Dlamini, S. N., Kwakyewah, C., & Daniel, Y. (2016). Promoting youth community engagement through active youth participation in research: Possibilities and limitations. *Journal of Teacher Education & Educational Leadership*, 1(1), 88-100. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321372644_Promoting_Youth_Community_Engagement_through_active_Youth_Participation_in_Research_Possibilities_and_Limitations

Fine, M. (2009). Postcards from metro America: Reflections on youth participatory action research for urban justice. *The Urban Review*, 41(1), 1-6. doi:10.1007/s11256-008-0099-5

Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction*. White Plains, NY, England: Longman Publishing.

Gauthier, M. (2003). The inadequacy of concepts: The rise of youth interest in civic participation in Quebec. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 6(3), 256-276. doi:10.1080/136766032000138255

Gordon, H. R. (2008). Gendered paths to teenage political participation.

Parental power, civic mobility and youth activism. *Gender & Society*, 22(1), 31-55. doi: [10.1177/0891243207311046](10.1177/0891243207311046)

Ho, E., Clarke, A., & Dougherty, A. (2015). Youth-led social change: Topics, engagement types, organizational types, strategies, and impacts. *Futures*, 67, 57-62. doi:10.1016/j.futures.2015.01.006

James, C. (2012). *Life at the Intersection: Community, Class, and Schooling*, Nova Scotia: Fernwood.

Johnston-Goodstar, K. (2013). Indigenous youth participatory action research: Re-visioning social justice for social work with Indigenous youths. *Social Work*, 58(4), 314-320. doi:[10.1093/sw/swt036](10.1093/sw/swt036)

Knack, S., & Keefer, P. (1997). Does social capital have an economic payoff? A cross-country investigation. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112(4), 1251-1288. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/2951271

Llewellyn, K., & Westheimer, J. (2009). Beyond facts and acts: The implications of 'ordinary politics' for youth political engagement. *Citizenship Teaching and Learning*, 5(2), 50-61. Retrieved from http://democraticdialogue.com/DDpdfs/BeyondFactsActs.pdf

MacKinnon, M. P., Pitre, S., & Watling, J. (2007). *Lost in translation: (Mis)understanding youth Engagement – synthesis report.* Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Marsh, D., O'Toole, T., & Jones, S. (2007). *Young people and politics in the UK: Apathy or alienation?* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview.* Sage Publications Inc.

Norris, P. (2011). *Democratic deficit: Critical citizens revisited.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Paxton, P. (1999). Is social capital declining in the United States? A multiple indicator assessment. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(1), 88-127. doi:[10.1086/210268](10.1086/210268)

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Rahn, W. M., & Transue, J. E. (1998). Social trust and value change: The decline of social capital in American youth, 1976–1995. *Political Psychology*, 19(3), 545-565. doi:[10.1111/0162-895X.00117](10.1111/0162-895X.00117)

Ristock, J., & Grieger, L. (1996). *Joining together against violence: An agenda for collaborative action.* Canadian Mental Health Association.

Scheve, J. A., Perkins, D. F., & Mincemoyer, C. C. (2006). Fostering youth engagement on community teams. *Journal of Youth Development*, 1(1), 1-9. doi:[10.5195/jyd.2006.400](10.5195/jyd.2006.400)

Siemiatycki, M. (2011). *The diversity gap: The electoral under-representation of visible minorities*. Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement, Ryerson University.

Statistics Canada. (1997). National survey on giving, volunteering and participating. Retrieved from http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=3501

Statistics Canada. (2000). National survey on giving, volunteering and participating. Retrieved from http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=4246

Statistics Canada. (2013). General social survey – Giving, volunteering and participating. Retrieved from http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=443

Stolle, D., & Cruz, C. (2005). Youth civic engagement in Canada: Implications for public policy. In *Social Capital in Action: Thematic Policy Studies*. Ottawa, ON: Policy Research Initiative.

Tiernan, C., Lysack, C., Neufeld, S., Goldberg, A., Lichtenberg, P. A. (2014). Falls efficacy and self-rated health in Older African American adults. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 58(1), 88-94. doi:10.1016/j.archger.2013.08.005

Voight, A., & Torney-Puta, J. (2013). A typology of youth civic engagement in the urban middle schools. *Applied Developmental Science*, 17(4), 198-212. doi:10.1080/10888691.2013.836041

Wattenberg, M. P. (2006). *Is voting for young people?* Harlow, UK: Longman.

Wring, D., Henn, M., & Weinstein, M. (2007). Young people and contemporary politics: Committed scepticism or engaged cynicism? *British Elections and Parties Reviews*, 9(1), 200-216. doi:10.1080/13689889908413029

Young, L., & Cross, W. (2004). Youth involvement in political parties. In Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) *Canadian Democracy: Bringing Youth Back into the Political Process* (pp. 9-11). CRIC.

Youniss, J., Bales, S., Christmas-Best, V., Diversi, M., Mclaughlin, M., & Silbereisen, R. (2002). Youth civic engagement in the twenty-first century. *Journal of Research on Adolescence,* 12(1), 121-148. doi:10.1111/1532-7795.00027

Zeldin, S. (2004). Preventing youth violence through the promotion of community engagement and membership. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 32(5), 625-641. doi:10.1002/jcop.20023

Appendix A
Interview Guide

NOTE TO INTERVIEWERS:

- Remember to tell participants that they can return to any question at any time if they think of something they want to change or add.
- Remember to treat the interview like a *conversation* – use the probes to help you get the participant to elaborate on answers.
- These questions are a guide and do not have to be asked word-for-word.

POSSIBLE PROBES:

- Tell me more...
- Let's talk about...
- Do you have an example of...?
- What do you mean by...?
- Connecting that to what you said before... Do you think...?
- Can you explain that...?
- Why/Why not?

Opening Explanation

I want to thank you again for taking the time to meet me and do this interview. Just so you know, this interview is divided into two parts. During the first part of the interview, I will ask you general questions about your family, friends, school, and community. The purpose of these questions is to get to know you better. During the second part of the interview, I am going to ask you questions about your activities in the community. This part is meant to learn more about what sort of activities you are involved in and what sort of future activities you may imagine.

Opening question

As I just said, I am interested in learning more about you. I would like to start with a very open question just so that I can get to know you better. Can you tell me a little about yourself? You can start with whatever you would like.

Family

Can you tell me a little about your family?

Probe for:

- ◦ Household composition – parents, brothers/sisters, grandparents
- ◦ Parents' occupations
- ◦ What sort of things do you do for fun as a family?
- ◦ Responsibilities in the family

School

I am also interested in your school life. Can you tell me a little bit about your school? What does school mean to you and what are your school days like?

Probe for:

- Likes/dislike and why?
- Perceptions of fellow students.
- Perceptions of fellow teachers.

Friends/Social Circle

Can you tell me about your friends?

Probe for:

- Who?
- Age range
- School friends versus outside school friends. How are they different?
- Activities
- Hang-out places
- Traits you look for
- How you became friends
    - ◦ Story of how they became friends

Leisure

When you are not in school, what do you like do? For example, work, sports, art, school clubs, etc.

Probe for:

- Interests outside of school (e.g., music, sport, art, gaming, etc.)

- What other activities are you involved in?
- Who are involved in these activities?
- Reasons for being involved in these activities

City/Town/Village

How would you describe your city/town/village? What are your feelings about this city/town/village and living in this city/town/village?

Is this community a good place for young people to grow up in? Is it a place that provides you with opportunities?

- Education?
- Work and career?
- Leisure activities?
- Family life?
- Friendship?
- Safety?
- Freedom of movement?

Civic Engagement Questions

Thank you very much. I would now like to ask you about the types of activities you are doing in your community. Can you tell me a little bit about the sort of activities you are currently involved in? In what ways are you currently engaged or active in your community?

Probe for:

- What community projects/organizations are you involved with?
- Who is involved in these projects?
- How did you become involved in these projects?
- How much time do you spend with this project/organization?
- What issues do you seek to address by your involvement with this project/organization?
- Are you typical of other young people in your community? Are other youth in your community involved in these types of projects/organizations? Why do you think they are/are not involved?

You seem quite active in several activities. Can you tell me about what motivates you to be active in these sorts of initiatives, activities, and/or projects?

Probe for:

- Can you tell me a specific story about realizing that you needed to do something about an issue facing your community?
- Do you feel that youth are supported in this type of volunteer or community work (i.e. by their peers, friends, teachers, government, etc.)?
- Are you aware of any form of support that is provided for youth in your community that want to become more involved?

I would like to ask you a little bit about what you think needs to happen in your community. What sort of initiatives or projects would you like to see developed or what could be done to help existing projects/organization address the issues that matter to you?

Probe for:

- How do you think other youth could be encouraged/motivated to become more involved in their communities?

Thank you very much for your participation. I have asked all of my questions. Is there anything else you would like to say that you think is important for me to know?

---

[1] Part of the literature discussed in this section appears in Dlamini, Daniel, and Kwakyewah's (2015) article.

[2] Some parts of the methodology may have appeared in other project-describing documents such as funder-reports and news briefs.

[3] At the initial planning for this chapter were five youth who expressed interest in its production; however, as time progressed, only two were left: Cynthia Kwakyewah and Shawnee Hardware. This was partly one of several challenges of working with youth in research, which are discussed in Dlamini, Kwakyewah, & Daniel's (2016) article.

[4] Purposively, we tapped into youth and their networks previously used by the Toronto researchers, notable in Dlamini's Engaging Girls, Changing Communities (2011-2014), which was a SSHRC-funded research project that

examined girls' concepts of and experiences with leadership and civic engagement in an urban environment.

[5] Several studies have been successful in broadening what we mean by engagement through participating in a more observatory than categorizing approach to youth community life. For a telling example, see Pilkington, 2018 H2020 Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement (PROMISE) project. http://www.promise.manchester.ac.uk/en/home-page/

[6] To protect the identity of the participants, all names are pseudonyms.

[7] The Jane/Finch community is often portrayed as an incubator of trouble and violence that offers youth a limited perspective of the opportunities they can gain in life. Media coverage has reinforced this negative image of Jane/Finch as a "troubled" community. "Even as the media attempt to present 'positive' portraits of the community, or 'look deeper' into it, they often reinforce the very ideas they claim to want to counteract [...] the message tends to be about the importance of an individual's efforts and not about how systemic inequity limits the opportunities that might have helped individuals to better their situation [while reinserting] the reputation of Jane-Finch as a tough, violent and harmful place" (James, 2012, p. 36).

[8] For details on Toronto's priority neighborhoods see United Way. (2007). 13 *Priority Neighbourhoods Map* [online]. Available online at http://www.unitedwaytoronto.com/whatWeDo/neighbourhoodsMap.php

9. In Search of Healing in Transition: A Young Syrian Refugee's Experience of Reconciliation through Civic Engagement

NESREEN ELKORD AND LINA CHAKER

Abstract

This chapter explores the healing journey of a young refugee girl from war-torn Syria, through participation in the Tikkun Youth Project within the first year of her resettlement in Canada. Through a narrative approach, her story is considered from the social, cultural, and historical contexts, based on the work of Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Stemming from this theoretical framework, in-depth individual interviews with the young girl and participatory observation affords a better understanding of her transitional journey towards healing from the trauma of war, dislocation, and relocation. Her story characterizes impacts of civic engagement on the experiences of refugee youth in their search for healing and reconciliation.

Keywords: Youth civic engagement, social integration, narrative inquiry, healing and reconciliation.

This chapter sheds light on the healing journey and transitional experience of newcomer youth in civic engagement from the perspective of a young, female Syrian refugee, Randa. While it focuses on her experience of healing through civic engagement in the context of the Tikkun Youth Project in Canada, this chapter reflects a form of civic engagement that could help with the healing of any refugee youth, anywhere around the globe. Experiences of

settlement vary based on several factors, including the types of support the young refugees receive from their new communities (Elkord, 2017).

Randa and her friends performed a drama play during the four-day Tikkun Youth Symposium in April 2017. With limited English language skills, an ongoing search for healing and a strong civic agency, they were able to bring to the forefront a view of war, survival, and reconciliation.

Before introducing Randa's narratives of lived experiences, we present a brief overview of the literature that guides this work, the method employed, and the backdrop of this narrative inquiry.

Literature Review

Three strands of literature set the context for this narrative study: refugee immigration and Canada's humanitarian role; the Syrian conflict; and youth civic engagement.

Refugee Immigration and Canada's Humanitarian Role

Large numbers of people around the world are forced to flee their homes every year in search of safety and protection. Over 65.6 million people worldwide were displaced as a result of war conflicts or persecution at the end of 2016 (United Nations, 2019). According to the Government of Canada (2017b), "[r]efugees are people who have fled their countries because of a well-founded fear of persecution. They are not able to return home" (The refugee system in Canada).

Canada maintains its well-respected international humanitarian reputation by providing thousands of refugees a safe haven through sponsoring their resettlement across the country. Over the last decade alone, Canada has welcomed thousands of refugee families from various countries affected by war or natural disasters, including Syria. In fact, the Government of Canada's (2017a) "#WelcomeRefugees: Key figures" states that Canada resettled more than 40,000 Syrian refugees between November 4, 2015 and January 29, 2017.

The Syrian Conflict

Prior to the rise of the destructive war, Syria was regarded as a heterogeneous country in terms of its religious diversity (Haddad, 2012; Khoury, 1991; Rabo, 2005). Politically, the Syrian regime was considered non-democratic because of its one-family, non-elected rule extending over four decades. Over the years, military and intelligent services maintained the status quo through curbing opposition movements (George, 2003: Khoury, 1991), as was the case in the 1980s and most recently since 2011.

A youth led opposition movement began in the southern city of Dara'a, which gradually spread across most of the country and was faced with harsh regime-led persecution (Pace & Landis, 2009). Consequently, as living circumstances became worse and lives of civilians were under constant threat, many escaped with no particular destination in mind. Many escaped to one of the neighbouring countries: Jordan, Lebanon, or Turkey. During these difficult times, most had struggled with limited access to basic education and human needs for long periods of time, and some had experienced separation from or loss of family members. They were placed in refugee camps until the UN arranged placements for them in other countries across the world. Once in the developed host countries, the responsibilities of the settlement of Syrian refugees, including their mental well-being and societal integration, emerged as key public concerns.

According to research, adolescent refugees resettling in a new country are more likely to experience academic and social challenges than their peers (e.g., Janzen & Ochocka, 2003; Lee, 2005; Manavathu & Zhou, 2012). This is partly due to untreated psychological trauma and the public's lack of understanding of refugee youth's pre-migration experiences and current needs (Ayoub & Zhou, 2016). So much can be learned from stories told by refugee youth themselves.

Youth Civic Engagement

Young Syrian refugees in Canada begin a new chapter where they are forced to participate in regular life activities. They simultaneously face challenges of integrating into the Canadian school systems while trying to cope with

the emotional distress caused by the traumatic experiences they faced in the war or in refugee camps (Ehntholt & Yule, 2006).

Documenting the stories of Syrian youth before and after Syria's civil uprising is intimately related to youth civic engagement, and the modes of storytelling are comparable to civic engagement strategies that young Canadians use (Hamilton & Flanagan, 2007). Randa and her friends gave new meaning to their shared traumatic experiences by writing and performing a drama play based on their stories. In doing so, they were motivated by the desire to reconcile the impacts of the struggles they have been through and to shift what they perceived as the public's negative perceptions of refugee youth as non-productive.

In re-telling Randa's life story in this chapter, we explore the power of storytelling that she has brought to Canadian and international audiences for healing and reconciliation.

Method

The method used in this inquiry is presented in four parts: description of the inquiry; overview of narrative inquiry; sources of evidence/tools of discussion; and trustworthiness.

Description of the Inquiry

This narrative inquiry with Randa reflects on a youth participatory endeavor supported by the Tikkun Youth Project. My colleague Lina and I were informed of the opportunity that the project was providing Syrian newcomer youth – a platform to tell their stories of war, migration, and reconciliation. We enthusiastically welcomed the idea and began planning. As a doctoral student at the time, my research interest in the lived experiences of newcomer youth, in conjunction with Lina's community volunteerism with Syrian newcomers, well-positioned us to utilize our resources to support the youth's goals. While the drama production was a brief 17-minute performance, recruiting the youth performers and drama experts, acquiring

necessary funds, and the ongoing rehearsals took over six months of hard work.

Neither Lina nor I had any prior experience with theatre or drama performances, thus we reached out to Charlotte LeFrank who is the Diversity Outreach Coordinator at the Children's Aid Society and has extensive drama production expertise. Charlotte showed great passion and enthusiasm to support the youth in making their voices heard and helping them heal. The three of us met with the youth on a weekly basis to build rapport, share stories, write scripts, and rehearse. The high school youth required plenty of support to enable their meaningful participation.

Figure 1. The youth meeting Charlotte for the first time.

Funding covering transportation and refreshment expenses came from the Multicultural Council of Windsor & Essex County (MCC), an organization that serves newcomers in its efforts "to create a welcoming community for all through education, community engagement and the promotion of diversity and equality" (Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, 2018, para. 1). Consent forms were signed, and agreements were made with the parents of the youth participants to allow their participation in the project.

Overview of Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is both the method and form of this endeavor with Randa (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Randa's narratives of lived experiences in search for healing in the transition is the phenomenon of the study, and it is the methodology used for collecting the stories and discussing them.

Dewey's (1938) notion of experiential knowledge, and that knowledge is both personally and socially developed, provided the basis for Clandinin and Connelly's (1988, 1992, 2000) narrative inquiry – a form of inquiry premised on storytelling and sharing of lived experiences as a form of social action that prompts people to reflect on their beliefs and assumptions. Unlike other methodologies, narrative inquiry avoids judgement, jumping to conclusions, or translating lived experiences into "solvable problems" (Xu & Connelly, 2010, p. 359). As such, Randa, the young participant, characterizes her act of storytelling and sharing of experiences as a form of thought-provoking civic engagement.

Sources of Evidence/Tools of Analysis

With a narrative approach, Randa's story of experience is informed by several sources of data, mainly observation and interviews (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Lina, as a community volunteer, initially met Randa upon her arrival in Windsor in 2016, and later developed a close relationship with her at a summer camp for newcomer youth. At the summer camp, Lina co-facilitated a number of the youth activities including one that involved a *living library*. In the living library, the youth told stories of their pre-migration lives in Syria in an effort to support their healing and reconciliation process. This enabled Lina to gain some understanding of Randa's family life and pre-migration experiences.

Upon the invitation to participate in the Tikkun Youth Project in November 2016, Lina introduced Randa and her friends to me. The youth were motivated to adapt their stories from the living library into the form of a play which gave rise to the Tikkun drama performance sub-project. Over the period of the play project, we (Nesreen, Lina, and Charlotte) were able to develop a collaborative relationship with the youth participants as they felt

their voices appreciated and their stories respected. At the conclusion of the Tikkun Youth Project, we stayed connected with the youth who often needed ongoing support.

On-going participant observation over a period of almost two years in various settings provided us with a collection of field texts (data) for the inquiry. I also conducted three open-ended in-depth interviews with Randa to support the development of her narrative and followed up with several conversations after the initial and modified drafts of the script were prepared. Most interviews and conversations were followed by discussions, reflections, and note-taking among Lina and I.

The field texts were then triangulated and transformed into research texts, which, in turn, gave rise to this chapter's theme of "in search of healing and reconciliation." Three tools of analysis were used to discuss the data: *Broadening* was used to situate the research texts in the social, historical trajectory of events that took place in Syria leading to the migration of Randa and her family; *burrowing* involved a deeper look at the tensions Randa experienced in the transition while coping with relocation challenges; and finally, s*torying and re-storying* captured details of her journey in the transition as she made sense of her lived experiences and reconciled the past with the present (Ciuffetelli Parker & McQuirter Scott, 2010; Craig, 2013). Storying and re-storying is not meant to provide answers; instead, it offers a means of deeper thinking and reflection.

Randa's life story is presented through a narrative design based on Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry framework:

Dimension of temporality. Lived experiences must be plotted on a timeline to reflect and understand their meanings. Hence, we explore stories of Randa's life in the past to help make meaning of her current journey of healing in the transition.

Dimension of sociality. Randa's narrated stories reflect her social interactions with people in her family, school, and the wider community. The stories also inform how such interactions impacted her in the past and continue to impact her journey of healing. Such social experiences are a result of combinations of societal and personal factors including her norms, beliefs, and behaviours. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), "[i]n essence, narrative inquiry involves the reconstruction of a person's experience in relationship both to the other and to a social milieu" (p. 125).

Dimension of place. The term *place* entails the importance of

different living situations, contexts, or environments in relation to experience and life learning. Thus, we explore Randa's lived experiences in Syria, in Jordan, in Canada, at home, at school, or outside of school.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this inquiry, as understood in narrative terms, has to do with its "lifelikeness" (Mishler, 1990). The aim of narrative inquiry is to explore the meanings and forms of understanding that participants express through stories (Coulter & Smith, 2009; Feldman, Skoldberg, Brown, & Horner, 2004). As Elbaz-Luwisch (2004) emphasizes, "[e]vents deemed worthy of being remembered and retold in story form are likely to be meaningful to the teller, and to reveal something important about how she understands her life" (p. 394).

Support for the discussions can be found in common understandings that transcend Randa's storied experiences over time. Thus, it is ultimately the readers who determine the trustworthiness of this inquiry and decide whether the lifelike representation of Randa, and her coming to see her role as socially engaged, contributes to the understanding of how young refugees experience healing in transition (Craig, 2013).

Randa's Life – In Search of Healing in Transition

Randa is an 18-year-old girl, enrolled in grade 11 at a public high school in the city of Windsor, Ontario. Randa spent most of her life in Syria where she lived with her mother and 2-years elder brother. Her father passed away when she was five, but her mother did everything she could to make Randa and her brother feel happy and fulfilled, to make up for this loss.

Randa's Life in Syria

Randa was born and raised in Dara'a, a border city in Syria, where she lived with her small family in an owned apartment until late 2013. Randa's mother was a stay-at-home mom who dedicated her life towards looking after her two children with the financial support of her wealthy father. They lived a simple lifestyle in a rural setting in a small tight-knit community among family and neighbours who knew and cared for each other. Randa and her brother attended neighbouring schools and had many school and community friends. They both enjoyed school life where they excelled academically and were frequently recognized for their hard work ethic; this boosted their self-confidence and hopes for the future.

Randa's family life was stable until the rise of the civil war when the town's youth prompted a revolt in 2011. The conflict escalated quickly, and authorities began to arrest male youth in response. For the first few months, Randa's brother was always on the run as he hid from persecution at several of his relatives' and friends' houses. During this time, the family house was raided multiple times as officers demanded his arrest, among many other youths of the city. The family became separated and the pressure was heightened with multiple bombings in the neighbourhood, forcing Randa and her mother, among other neighbours, to leave their home in search of safer havens. They moved in with a number of relatives in other towns for several weeks at a time. When bombings in Dara'a slowed down, Randa and her mother would go back to their home until things became unbearable again. Throughout this period, Randa's brother would only briefly visit the family while cautiously avoiding public attention. Randa described this anxious time as she recalled a memory:

> One day, my aunt and cousins were over for dinner. It was during the month of Ramadan, when family usually gathers to break the fast together. Suddenly, we were literally shaken by something that felt like a massive volcano eruption. We all ran up close and huddled in a tiny room for a few hours and waited to die any second.

She continued,

> That night, I thought it would be the scariest night of my life, only to realize I would face bigger fears as time moved on. After leaving

our house, I had to sneak back home a few times to get some of our belongings that we had initially left behind. I would sneak between narrow pathways with a friend or an aunt, going in the darkest of nights, hoping not to be shot by a sniper. We would only carry back the most precious items because our trembling legs could hardly carry us back.

Despite the harsh living conditions, Randa and her mother had no intention of leaving Syria – yet. They were expecting the war to end soon and their life to go back to normal. It was only when they reunited with her brother – in a hospital after a few weeks of his usual disappearance – that her mother instantly made the decision to leave. Randa's brother was shot during a protest and her mother decided that she needed to protect the one other man left for the family. She immediately carried her son across the border, with his wounds still bleeding, in hope of saving his life.

Randa's Life in Jordan

Randa's mother took her son to Jordan where some of her late husband's family had moved earlier. The normal process for Syrian refugees in Jordan was to stay in refugee camps until UN representatives looked into each family's individual case and found appropriate placements to sponsor them across the world. For Randa's family, the process was not as traditional because her mother did not initially desire to be relocated to another country. She thought it would be best for her son to stay in Jordan, and for herself and Randa to return to Syria once it became safe to do so. These goals were difficult to achieve while remaining in a refugee camp. With the in-law's support, Randa's family was able to leave the premises and sneak into the city of Amman in Jordan where they had a place to stay and monetary donations to depend on. Randa described,

> My mom and I stayed home throughout the whole period and hardly went out. We had a hard time accepting the new situation. It just felt humiliating enough having to leave home this way and sneaking into the country [Jordan] like criminals.

As time went on and Randa's brother healed, he went out looking for work to

support himself and the family. It was technically illegal for him to be hired, but business owners were illegally hiring Syrian youth for cheap labour. He worked a number of jobs, earning just enough money to survive from day to day. During this time, Randa and her mother impatiently waited to go back to their home in Syria. However, eight months later, there were no signs of war ending any time soon in Dara'a and Randa was getting frustrated from missing out on school:

> I thought I'd eventually be able to go back to my school in Dara'a once the war was over... It was a tough transition for me. I had suddenly left my home, my relatives, my school and friends without properly saying goodbyes or even preparing myself for the move. I thought it was going to be a temporary getaway!

She continued,

> The owner of the private school I joined was very kind and generous. He insisted to enroll me without charging us any fees... We appreciated the support [lets out a sad sigh], but I hated every day at that school. I felt isolated as there were no other Syrian students... I felt like schoolmates were constantly pointing fingers at me and making up stories about what brought me and my family to their country.

Randa was only able to become friends with one classmate: "[t]he least privileged in class because she was the only one who accepted me" she explained. She had to redo grade 9 before moving on to grade 10 and later to grade 11:

> I wasn't happy at school, but I certainly didn't want to stay at home any longer... At first, it was difficult to sit in class for hours after having been out of school for almost a year... I wasn't really ready to move on.

Randa went to school in Jordan for almost two years before her family received the phone call that changed their life forever.

Randa's Life in Canada

As things continued to only get worse in Dara'a and life did not get any easier in Jordan, the family received an official phone call informing them that they had been selected for placement as refugees to Canada. Although they first hesitated, the family quickly decided to leave everything and everyone they had ever known behind, and to fly to the new world:

"It was scary. Things happened very quickly. All within one month!" Randa told me,

> It was December, and I was studying for exams. We had to leave in the midst of everything… mama was afraid; she was so hesitant to accept the offer at first. Everyone she knew advised her to consider it an opportunity to start a new life since there was no going back to Syria any time soon and there were very few opportunities in Jordan, if any… I remember after the phone call, she sat on the floor in the kitchen and started crying. She recalled all the hardships [of relocating] we've been through since we moved to Jordan – she didn't want to restart all over again! On the other hand, my brother was eager to leave Jordan. He always felt unappreciated and over-worked… we quickly packed a few items and flew away.

Randa and her family arrived in Windsor in January 2016: "Everything was different. The streets looked different, people looked at us differently… and we even had to dress differently because it was very cold" Randa described. They were temporarily placed in a motel for one month with a number of other newcomer Syrian families. It was a time of uncertainty for them all, yet a chance to connect with each other. Randa and her brother were expected to go to school right away, and her mother to join an English language learning program at one of the available settlement agencies in the city.

> I didn't know what to expect at school. I was afraid and overwhelmed… I realized I had to adjust all over again, like I did when we went to Jordan. This time it would be harder, I thought, because I had to learn a new language. I would've stayed at home if I had the choice, but we were clearly told that school was mandatory… At least this time I wasn't going to be alone.

Randa goes to high school in Canada. The high school Randa joined hosted a large number of the young Syrian newcomers that arrived in the city. She described, "At school, whenever I spotted a Syrian student, I felt at ease no matter how stressed I was... It made me feel at home. A feeling I longed for during the time I spent in Jordan."

Having lived similar experiences of war and relocation, Randa and a number of the other newcomer schoolmates were able to resonate with one another and develop close friendships:

> We quickly bonded... we had all left our homes and spent several months or even years at one of the neighbouring countries before coming to Canada. We were all scared... Some had more tragic memories to live with, some lost family members, and others [youth] had to take care of terminally ill parents or siblings due to war injuries... We had little confidence, if any, that we could make it through.

They would meet up early in the morning at the bus stop to go to school together. Once at school, they would not waste an opportunity to support each other. Randa narrated,

> They all became like family... I remember the first time I felt awkward when we went for lunch and I realized that I was 15 cents short after I placed my order; one of the boys quickly came up and handed the change to the cashier. In Syria, we were told that accepting money from anyone is an absolute shame because it's a form of pity... but in no-time I learned that among our group, things were different. That day, I felt like he was family.

While Randa quickly made friends upon arriving in Canada unlike Jordan, she had to cope with different types of challenges. She explained,

> I need to work hard to adjust. It's a big transition coming from war where people were turned against each other. I still find it difficult to trust people at times... I remember one time my friends and I went to Tim Hortons for coffee, a police officer walked in and stood behind us in line. The moment we became aware of his presence, my friends and I quickly glanced at each other and a worried look masked our faces, and my legs started shaking. Very few people

would understand this. We lived through times when officers were the ones arresting our brothers…

Describing school, Randa added,

It's also difficult when I can't express myself… it's difficult to learn a new language. Most of the time I'm afraid to talk to schoolmates who don't speak Arabic… but I feel obligated to clear some misunderstandings… One time, a video recording of one of the Syrian newcomer girls dancing in gym class went viral at school… some began to point fingers and criticize her for being upset about it. They didn't understand how culturally inappropriate this is for us… That day, I thought to myself, if we don't bring an understanding of our people, we can't blame others for having misconceptions!

While Randa faced challenges during the transition, she wholeheartedly continued the search for social integration and academic excellence. The clear eagerness and enthusiasm for civic engagement that she showed when I first met her brought many questions to my mind. I wondered what might have motivated her to dedicate time and effort for the project we were proposing!

Participating in the Tikkun Play Project

I was intrigued by the courage and enthusiasm Randa and her friends showed for sharing their lived experiences. They felt that their stories, which had already been documented in the form of a book and presented in the form of a living library during the summer camp that Lina was involved in, deserved a wider audience. They were concerned with their limited English skills and decided that they could more effectively express themselves in the form of a play featuring common war experiences and stages of their migration and gratitude.

Over the period of the project, we all bonded and many of the youth repeatedly expressed how excited they would be to come to the rehearsals: "We would be looking forward to our meetings, as our fun getaway from school and everything else" Randa said.

Figure 2. At a rehearsal.

Coming to the rehearsals regularly brought me and my friends closer together. We learned so much about each other's lives... Participating in this project has allowed me to see my strengths. Only then I began to accept my shortcomings and focus more on what I could do rather than what I couldn't... Speaking in English during the rehearsals boosted my confidence. I started to realize how capable I was and began to have more courage to speak with my English-speaking schoolmates at school. I would go back to school on Mondays and tell my ESL teachers about our rehearsals... I was also becoming more open to people's questions. In the past, I was more reserved... Sharing details about my life in the project made me realize that I had nothing to be ashamed of. I even became proud of how resilient I have grown after all I've been through.

Although the youth enjoyed working on the project, not everyone was able

to stay as committed as we had initially hoped. As time passed, we lost four of the youth who were having difficulty in balancing school with this project while also attending to other commitments. This made it even more important to keep the remaining eight youth committed and enthusiastic.

Logistical challenges. The nature of the drama project demanded a lot of in-person time that could not be replaced by individual contributions from a virtual distance. All the participants needed to be together and rehearsing at the same time for it to work. This implied our full commitment as facilitators as well. With increasing schoolwork demands, it became difficult to meet after school. We started to meet on weekends, which made the youth unable to walk to university campus to meet; instead, they would need to be driven. We would arrange to pick them up from their residences and drive them back once done. We had a generous community member, Laura Soutar-Hasulo, eventually join the team and assist with transportation and logistics as rehearsals were on-going. This needed coordination and much collaboration among all the team members.

At times we had to speak to some of the parents to build rapport and assure them that their children were contributing to a worthy cause. Some parents became concerned that the time the youth were spending in this project would negatively impact their school work. However, as the project became a valuable goal for the youth who remained committed, they worked hard to prove that it would only impact their overall progress positively. Randa explained,

> On one of our rehearsals, I was nervous about a big chemistry test I had to write the next day... I remember how the words of inspiration that I heard from the team helped me calm down and motivated me to do the best I could... the next day I did very well and scored 94/ 100. I was so proud and excited; I quickly texted you and Charlotte to tell you how well I did. I felt like our play team had become my second family... I once again became motivated to do well at school like the old days because I knew there were people who would be happy and proud to see me succeed.

Healing and reconciliation. There were several challenges to be overcome in drafting the play scripts, discussing the scenes to be performed, and even conducting the rehearsals. We needed to be mindful of the emotions of the youth as they recalled and told their experiences in the war.

To overcome grief from recalling negative experiences, we incorporated scenes of the participants who had left the project and were unable to perform in the play in order to de-sensitize the story. This helped make the story being narrated less personal, as it was not a factual recollection of any one single story but a collective exercise to re-define their mutual experiences through a lens they were comfortable sharing. We also incorporated scenes that provided comic relief to emotionally counteract negative memories. For example, one of the scenes describing the educational goals of youth, poked fun at the high expectations of society

Figure 3. Ice-breaker activity at a rehearsal.

and parents: **[Click [here](#) to see the "It's my dream, not yours" scene].** Another scene created opportunity for the youth to laugh about the common language learning challenges they were experiencing during the transition. We counteracted their lack of confidence by laughing at the difficulty of pronouncing some words, especially ones with the letter "p", as they would pronounce it as a "b" instead. We also made sure to begin rehearsals with an ice-breaker activity and to conclude every time with practicing the last scene of the play. Even when the youth were exhausted, skipping to this happy ending prompted feelings of gratitude and optimism before they went home. Among the scenes that the youth repeatedly expressed joy in rehearsing was one in which they sang the Canadian national anthem

together. They felt peace and a sense of healing in hearing their own voices uniformly come together in a form of their choice, to freely and openly express their gratitude and love for the country that helped rescue them: [**Click here to see the National Anthem scene**]. As we drove the youth back and forth for the rehearsals, we would all sing together during the ride and they would look so cheerful and joyful.

Figure 4. Carpooling.

Civic agency and engagement. The collective nature of the project, of creating a single story from the memories of several youth, demanded genuine collaborative engagement from the youth. Getting a consensus for the script and visual performance of the scenes was challenging. It forced participants to make hard decisions about how their personal stories would be told, so that it would fit in with the larger story. The artistic direction also assisted the team in weaving the stories of this drama, *Quilt of Shared Stories*, as the play was later named. For example, one of the youth was assigned to be a journalist, reporting live from one of the cities and interviewing children – providing youth the opportunity to tell their experiences independently while also contributing to the broader theme of empowerment through sharing their untold stories. [**Click here to see the "Reporting Live" scene**]

One of the merits of this teamwork was the youth's increased dedication to the project. It reminded them of their common end goal: to reclaim

their narratives so that they could reconcile their tragic memories with new understandings while bridging communication gaps with members in their new society. This was the strongest way to motivate the youth to stay committed to the project and resolve any conflicts that arose. Since the youth were all eager to share their stories, they worked hard to make sure that the performance would go on and would be brought to light.

Figure 5. The day of the performance.

The Play Performance

On the morning of April 5, 2017, I bumped into Lina on the pathway leading to the building on campus where the Tikkun Youth Symposium was taking place. She was rushing out to her vehicle to give a lift to one of the youth whose carpool arrangement did not work as planned. I ran up to the event hall and began to welcome the youth as they arrived with their parents who

joined to support them. Charlotte's face had the sweetest, reassuring smile as she tried to calm the youth who were anxious. As we waited for the program to start, we ran a last-time rehearsal with the youth before they went up on stage for their performance.

"What was it like performing the play?" I asked Randa.

> It was a unique experience… no words can begin to describe my mixed feelings… I was proud of myself and my friends. We were performing in a new language, in a country we had only recently come to… My broken self was mending as random images of my past life ran in the back of my mind… I felt my heart pounding fast and loud, my legs were shaking, not with fear like it used to in the past, but with pride and happiness this time… I felt like I was speaking to the whole world, telling them that I have seen war, I have been through trauma and misery, but here I am still standing and "opening my arms to life" to start again.

Figure 6. On stage.

Reflective Analysis

Randa's narratives telling the story of her first year of settlement as a refugee, highlight two interwoven themes of a young refugee's: (1) civic

engagement; and (2) journey of healing and reconciliation. Each of these themes are unpacked and discussed here.

Refugee Youth's Civic Engagement

Dislocation from their homeland and relocating to a new country impact the quality of life refugee youth live for many years to come. While it is a harsh experience for many, some show strength through civic engagement and an active search for healing. The young Syrian refugees who participated in the play project demonstrated high ambitions for making a difference and a strong desire to bridge communication gaps within the community. Through the narrative life space of Randa, we explore the sources of motivation and civic agency of those youth within the three dimensions of time, interaction, and space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

As seen from a narrative perspective, "[n]arrative phenomena are not seen as existing in the here and now but, rather, are seen as flowing out of the past and into the future" (Xu & Connelly, 2009, p. 224). Past experiences of the youth's civic engagement in their home country continue to influence their present and future civic agency and level of engagement.

In exploring Randa's civic agency through the continuum of time, it is clear that she had been exposed to the concept of youth civic engagement during the evolving stages of the Syrian conflict, which began with a youth-led revolt in her hometown. Her past experience could be perceived as a negative one since it was widely met with persecution of the involved youth. However, witnessing injustices of war, being forced to leave home, and feelings of oppression elevated her civic agency and motivated her to make a difference and contribute to protecting public values.

She was ready to put this civic agency to use as the opportunities presented themselves to her upon relocating to Canada. She and her friends started to tell stories of war in different mediums. They first documented their stories in the form of a book and then presented them as a living library during the summer camp they participated in. They eventually saw great value in telling their stories as they received public acceptance and encouragement. This gave rise to their increased desire to share stories of war and survival with a wider audience which took the form of a play performance in the Tikkun Youth Symposium. This artistic platform of

expression amplified their message to previously inaccessible audiences by crossing language barriers.

For Randa, having been a sociable and outgoing young girl in Syria, speaking up and getting involved in the wider community had been previously met with acceptance and appreciation. This had increased her confidence that she could be a valuable member of society. She even considered herself mature for her age because friends and family members would seek her advice on general and personal issues.

While Randa had a burning desire to connect with schoolmates and make friends upon leaving Syria, she felt helpless as she perceived society in Jordan as unwelcoming and blaming her and her people for abandoning their country. Her hopes and dreams were on the verge of being buried as she spent her school days in segregation and isolation.

Fortunately, as she moved to Canada and was met with more welcoming and supportive social settings, her civic agency was re-ignited and brought to action as she found the opportunity to tell her story and the stories of her people. She valued the power of sharing stories. She frequently remembered elder members of her family creating moments of deep connection with their youth during the most negative events of war by making time to pass down the history of the previous generations. Randa's value for the role of oral history and traditions, perceived as a trust bestowed upon their generation, contributed to her sense of civic agency in Canada. This was depicted as a bonfire in the play where the youth wanted to share and pass on their life stories with the audience. They had two driving goals: to bring awareness about the circumstances of war and the struggles of their people, and to create better social opportunities for themselves among their new community.

Randa and her friends felt a strong sense of responsibility as members of their families emphasized that youth have a responsibility to become stronger and capable of reclaiming their homeland in the future. Randa wished to prove her ability to be amongst those youth who make a difference. While she felt gratitude upon resettling in Canada for living in peace and being given the opportunity to go back to school and live a normal life, she continued to feel obliged to raise awareness about the circumstances of war her people were still experiencing in Syria.

Furthermore, in an effort to build bridges between herself, her newcomer friends, and those schoolmates whom she thought knew little about their

traditions and values, she felt a need to engage in this form of action to bring understanding.

Figure 7. Play closing.

It was emotional… I saw many hands wiping off tears as my friends and I performed… we received the most moving round of applause from the audience… It wasn't just a feeling of pride I felt that moment. I felt like I belonged… I felt surrounded with real peace, love, and trust. I could literally feel the great energy in the room.

Refugee Youth's Journey of Healing and Reconciliation

While the unique individual traits of each young refugee define the personal dimension of their lived experiences, "the social fabric that forms the framework of a person's life" (Andrews, 2007, p. 493) defines the social dimension. Therefore, it is impossible to understand the individual experiences of a young refugee's transition without first understanding the context of their personal/social interactions during the transition time period (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

On a personal level. Syrian youth who were raised in the city of Dara'a

lived in tight-knit communities which made them accustomed to the interdependent communal lifestyle. There was little need for developing new social relationships outside of existing close and caring bonds and extended family relations.

Relocating to Jordan and leaving her circles of social support increased Randa's need for affiliation to a group identity in search of care and protection. In turn, the challenges she faced in making friends upon her relocation led Randa to develop feelings of loneliness and anxiousness.

Having observed Randa's social interactions for over two years, it became clear that on a personal level she was a sociable young girl who found joy and comfort in having friends and engaging with the community. This implies that the struggles she experienced in making friends in Jordan were unlikely due to personal factors alone, but more likely resulted from a combination of personal and social factors.

On a social level. When she moved to Jordan, Randa was bound by the walls of her house for eight months and segregated from the rest of society. At her first attempt to go out, she faced integration barriers due to the social context of her specific placement in the private school she attended. In her narratives describing this transition period, Randa expressed feelings of alienation, instability, and uncertainty. Like most youth in similar circumstances, Randa perceived her school placement in Jordan only as a temporary one. Such feelings of weakness and lack of independence became associated with the place of her temporary residence and school where she received little support and struggled to keep whatever remained of her strength and resilience. However, in Canada, where she received more support and was able to relate to other people, she began a journey of healing.

Randa's journey of healing began upon her arrival in Canada. The support her family received from the government and the community made her feel like Windsor was a second home to them; thus, she became generally motivated to contribute to the betterment of society. She began to make friends shortly after, since living in close proximity to the residence of several other newcomer school acquaintances facilitated developing friendships in school and beyond. They would ride the school bus together every day and meet to spend time together on weekends and summer days when school was off.

In addition, the contextual differences between the school she attended in Jordan and her school in Canada are relevant to understanding her healing

process through the transition. The diversity in her Canadian school promoted a sense of affiliation and belonging as she was able to make friends with schoolmates who shared similar experiences. She felt her experiences of trauma and war acknowledged not only by her new friends, but also by people from the wider community who showed empathy and support.

While the diverse makeup of Randa's Canadian high school helped her reconcile past challenging experiences of isolation and alienation, she continued to face challenges of integration due to the lack of cross-cultural competence among some schoolmates. Randa's narratives indicate that at times she felt judged by peers on the basis of stereotypes and misconceptions. Therefore, she felt a need for raising cross-cultural awareness to facilitate the overall social adjustment of herself and other newcomer friends.

The summer camp that Randa attended shortly after her arrival in Windsor provided her and her friends the first opportunity to realize that people in the community would be interested in learning about their experiences. She quickly discovered that there was no need for her to live with pain and feel ashamed or guilty for having left a war zone as she had previously felt. However, her love for her homeland and her loyalty for those she left behind motivated her to tell more about the negative impacts of war.

Eventually, Randa's involvement in the drama performance helped her in the journey of healing from past tragedies through sharing her stories and reconciling her understanding of civic engagement in Syria with that of Canada. The artistic platform provided Randa and her friends a medium for connecting on a deeper and more personal level. It also empowered them to amplify their voices and concerns, and to re-imagine themselves as engaged citizens initiating social change and raising awareness (Charmaraman, 2013). Through her participation in the play project, she felt a sense of fulfillment derived from feelings of productivity and her desire to contribute to developing cross-cultural understanding. This clearly impacted her overall social adjustment because she also felt the acceptance and the support of the wider community.

On an academic level. Given the unstable life circumstances most refugee children and youth experience during war, their schooling may have been interrupted for months or years before resettling. This was the case with Randa who was out of school for almost a year before she enrolled in school again in Jordan. In most cases, this impacts the learning and motivation for

resuming education upon resettling in the host country and could cause academic barriers at the time of re-joining school.

For Randa, the sense of affiliation and belonging she developed upon relocating to Canada provided for an easier transition into school. While Randa's dedicated work ethic was influenced by her upbringing – emphasizing the value for education – her work within the play project became an additional source of motivation for academic achievement. As her narratives indicate, she was encouraged by the team's pride in her academic accomplishments.

Closing Statement

While Randa's story of healing through civic engagement cannot represent the healing experiences of all young Syrian refugees, her story nonetheless provides insights on how civic engagement could be a source of healing and reconciliation for youth survivors of tragic experiences.

Randa's story reminds us that young newcomer refugees inevitably face challenges throughout the transition. However, her experience of healing through civic engagement provides guidance to members of the host society on the significance of encouraging young refugees' involvement in social endeavors. It portrays the impact of civic engagement on raising young refugees' confidence through finding their areas of strength in meaningful and purposeful ways.

Randa's story reveals a clear relationship between the young refugees' feelings of affiliation and belonging and their ability to heal from past tragic experiences of war and relocation. While individual personal qualities contribute to their social and academic adjustment upon resettlement, we learn that social contexts play a big role in facilitating or hindering their healing and reconciliation. From exploring Randa's story, we are also reminded that some heal through civic engagement as they come to accept their shortcomings and focus more on how they could contribute to the wider community.

As Randa's story describes, living in war-torn countries and areas of political conflict deeply affects people's mental wellbeing by forcing them to experience trauma and build fear. For youth survivors to overcome the post-

traumatic effects of war and stay mentally healthy, they need to realize that there is no reason to hold on to their fears and doubts. They need to feel welcomed and accepted and this is brought to the forefront in Randa's story. This can be accomplished through increasing opportunities for positive social interactions in schools and the wider community. Randa's story also underscores the importance of cross-cultural understanding in building harmony and acceptance within diverse communities.

Finally, this narrative inquiry affirms that refugee youth feel immense gratitude towards the host countries and their people who have rescued them from war and provided them with a chance to live a normal life. In return, the gratitude these youth feel creates a strong sense of civic agency which could positively serve the host communities if provided with opportunities in appropriate mediums to build on their talents. For many, survival creates resilience and determination that could make them valuable citizens to their new societies.

References

Andrews, M. (2007). Exploring cross-cultural boundaries. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry* (pp. 489-511). London, UK: Sage.

Ayoub, M., & Zhou, G. (2016). Somali refugee students in Canadian schools: Pre-migration experiences and challenges in refugee camps. *Comparative and International Education*, 45(3), Art. 5. Retrieved from https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cie-eci/vol45/iss3/5

Charmaraman, L. (2013). Congregating to create for social change: Urban youth media production and sense of community. *Learning, Media & Technology*, 38(1), 102-115. doi:10.1080/17439884.2011.621956

Ciuffetelli Parker, D., & McQuirter Scott, R. (2010). From mentorship to tenureship: A storied inquiry of two academic careers in education. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 18(4), 405-425. doi:10.1080/13611267.2010.511849

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1988). Studying teachers' knowledge of classrooms: Collaborative research, ethics, and the negotiation of narrative. *Journal of Educational Thought*, 22(2A), 269-282. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/23768371

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1992). The teacher as curriculum-maker. In P. W. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on curriculum: A project of the American Educational Research Association* (pp. 363-401). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14. doi:10.3102/0013189X019005002

Coulter, C. A. & Smith, M. L. (2009). Discourse on narrative research: The construction zone: Literary elements in narrative research. *Educational Researcher*, 38(8), 577-590. doi:10.3102/0013189X09353787

Craig, C. J. (2013). Coming to know in the "eye of the storm": A beginning teacher's introduction to different versions of teacher community. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 29, 25-38. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2012.08.003

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York, NY: Kappa Delta Pi.

Ehntholt, K. A., & Yule, W. (2006). Practitioner review: Assessment and treatment of refugee children and adolescents who have experienced war-related trauma. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 47(12), 1197-1210. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.2006.01638.x

Elbaz-Luwisch, F. (2004). Immigrant teachers: Stories of self and place. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 17(3), 387-414. doi:10.1080/0951839042000204634

Elkord, N. (2017). *Arab immigrant high school students' perceptions of their high school experiences in Canada: A narrative inquiry* (doctoral dissertation). University of Windsor, Windsor, ON. Retrieved from https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/7252

Feldman, M. S., Skoldberg, K., Brown, R. N., & Horner, D. (2004). Making sense of stories: A rhetorical approach to narrative analysis. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 14(2), 147-170. doi:10.1093/jopart/muh010

Government of Canada. (2017a). #WelcomeRefugees: Key figures. Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/welcome-syrian-refugees/key-figures.html

Government of Canada. (2017b). How Canada's refugee system works. Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/canada-role.html

George, A. (2003). *Syria: Neither bread nor freedom*. London: Zed Books.

Haddad, B. (2012). *Business networks in Syria: The political economy of authoritarian resilience*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Hamilton, C., & Flanagan, C. (2007). Reframing social responsibility within a technology-based youth activist program. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 51(3), 444-464. doi:10.1177/0002764207306070

Janzen, R., & Ochocka, J. (2003). Immigrant youth in Waterloo region. In P. Anisef & K. M. Kilbride (Eds.), *Managing two worlds: The experiences & concerns of immigrant youth in Ontario* (pp. 37-68). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Khoury, P. S. (1991). Syrian political culture: A historical perspective. In R. T. Antoun & D. Quataert (Eds), *Syria: Society, culture and polity* (pp. 13–27). Albany, NY: University of New York Press.

Lee, S. J. (2005). *Up against whiteness: Race, school, and immigrant youth*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Manavathu, M., & Zhou, G. (2012). The impact of differentiated instructional materials on English Language Learner (ELL) students' comprehension of science laboratory tasks. *Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education*, 12(4), 334-349. doi:10.1080/14926156.2012.732255

Mishler, E. (1990). Validity in inquiry-guided research: The role of exemplars in narrative studies. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60(4), 415-442. doi:10.17763/haer.60.4.n4405243p6635752

Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County. (2018). Our mission. Retrieved from http://themcc.com/

Pace, J., & Landis, J. (2009). The Syrian opposition: The struggle for unity and relevance, 2003–2008. In F. H. Lawson (Ed.), *Demystifying Syria* (pp. 120–143). London: Saqi in association with London Middle East Institute SOAS.

Rabo, A. (2005). A *shop of one's own: Independence and reputation among traders in Aleppo*. London: I.B. Tauris.

United Nations. (2019). Refugees. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/index.html

Xu, S. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2009). Narrative inquiry for teacher education and development: Focus on English as a foreign language in China. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 219-227. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2008.10.006

Xu, S. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2010). Narrative inquiry for school-based research. *Narrative Inquiry*, 20(2), 349-370. doi:10.1075/ni.20.2.06xu

10. Facilitative Factors and Impediments to Newcomer Youth's Initial Integration Milestones: The Arab Newcomer Youth Experience

RIHAM AL-SAADI

Abstract

Within the Syrian refugees' initiative, Canada has adopted a leading role in welcoming a significant number of Syrian refugees, over 1,600 of which have settled in Windsor-Essex. This signifies the importance of enhancing our role as a host society in fostering opportunities that would lead Syrians to a successful integration. This book chapter consults literature on acculturation as well as facilitative factors and impediments that influence immigrants and refugees' integration.Integration is the strategy characterized by individuals or groups who are interested in maintaining their cultural heritage while establishing interactions with the larger society (Behrens, del Pozo, Großhennig, Sieberer, & Graef-Calliess, 2015; Berry, 2001, 2005, 2014; Paterson, 2008). The chapter also highlights the importance of incorporating youth's perspectives to understand their integration experience. The stories of three youth present examples where youths' motive for achieving potential combined with formal and informal supports can facilitate initial integration milestones. Engaging youth voices can be used as a means of healing by drawing on their perspectives, thereby, youth are acknowledged and valued. Consequently, reconciliation is an anticipated outcome through social integration opportunities that the host (Canadian) society can help foster.

Key Terms: Acculturation, Integration, Syrian youth, Healing, Reconciliation, Immigrants, Refugees.

Special Appreciation to three powerful, inspiring, Syrian newcomer youth for their contributions to the knowledge and insight in this book chapter: **Naeem A., Kheder A., Evin S.**

> Youth out of war bring a lot of potential; it is our job in the welcoming country to ensure that they are not wasted.

This chapter discusses integration experiences of Syrian (Arab) youth into their new, Canadian society. The overarching goal is to consult theoretical and anecdotal evidence to inform ways in which successful integration can be facilitated among Syrian and Arab youth. Cultural studies on integration and the acculturation process for immigrants and refugees have been greatly shaping the interest of theorists in social sciences fields (Berry, 2005, 2013; Paterson, 2008; Sabatier & Berry, 2008; Vineberg, 2011). Canada, a lead nation in welcoming newcomers, is well positioned for such cultural studies to be conducted from, and the implications could significantly contribute to research and practice. Locally, Windsor and Essex County is highly diverse and is a welcoming community for immigrants and refugees from diverse ethnic backgrounds. According to recent statistics, 1 in 4 residents in Windsor-Essex is an immigrant, and Windsor-Essex has welcomed about 11,000 refugees between 2011 and 2016 (Windsor Essex Immigration, n.d.). Windsor-Essex's role in the Syrian refugees' initiative is one prime example of its welcoming nature. As part of the Local Immigration Partnership, five sectoral tables were formed in preparation to welcoming Syrian refugees; namely, health, settlement, education, housing, and welcoming communities. Since 2015, Windsor has been a recipient of 1,600 Syrian refugees (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2017). This signifies the importance of investigating Syrian refugees' settlement and integration, and our contributions as academics or professionals in enhancing these experiences.

The prime goal of bridging literature with practical examples is to define facilitative and challenging factors influencing initial integration milestones. Integration is a long-term process that requires efforts from both host and heritage communities (Behrens, del Pozo, Großhennig, Sieberer, & Graef-

Calliess, 2015; Berry, 2005, 2013; Berry & Kalin, 1995; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006b). Therefore, considering the experiences consulted are from recent settlers, the knowledge gained may inform initial milestones in integration rather than speak to the long-term outcomes.

In this book chapter, I highlight the importance of incorporating youth's perspectives when attempting to understand their acculturation or integration experience, or when working with them to facilitate their integration in their new community. From a strength-based approach, engaging youth voices can be used as a means of healing by drawing on their perspectives. By doing so, youth are acknowledged and valued, thereby leading progressively to their successful integration into the host community.

There is a consensus among settlement agencies that youth tend to underutilize available programs and services they offer. While it is undeniable that a multitude of youth programs exist, there is a lack of youth's voices in decision-making surrounding youth programs' design and implementation as well as advocacy efforts; this tends to be quite restrictive. Empowering youth through acknowledging the importance of their perspective is one facilitative step towards their healing. Similarly, the lack of integration of their voices in programs and services that are meant to be of benefit to them stands as a barrier towards their integration. In striving to enhance refugee youth's active involvement in their new community, we (that is academics, professionals, and youth allies) would be progressively contributing to their healing. Stemming from this approach and in efforts to support Syrian youth in taking a lead role in their healing and reconciliation, I consulted the stories of three Syrian newcomer youth residing in the Windsor community. Through research and youths' lived experiences, I seek to answer the following questions: how are Arab newcomer youth actively engaged in their community, and how does their involvement facilitate their integration and progressively lead to their healing and reconciliation? Healing is anticipated to result from enhancements at the individual/ psychological level and reconciliation is anticipated to be facilitated through social integration opportunities led by their host (Canadian) society. Naeem A. shared how separation from his family can be a driving force rather than an impediment, Kheder A. continued (continues) to fulfill his educational aspirations, and Evin S. shares how her active involvement in various youth programs and extracurricular activities is fulfilling her aspirations.

MCC: A Key Player in the Lives of Refugees in Windsor-Essex

The Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex (MCC) is an agency that holds a lead role in the facilitation of the settlement process among refugees in Windsor-Essex (Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex, n.d.). It serves as an avenue for newcomers to Windsor-Essex, meeting barriers with empowering steps, facilitating engagement, and creating a welcoming community for all. The MCC fulfills its mission through housing multiple supportive systems to address resettlement impediments among immigrants and refugees (Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex, n.d.). Its mission statement is, "The MCC creates a welcoming community for all through education, community engagement and the promotion of diversity and equality" (The Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex, n.d.). A wide range of immigrant populations are served through MCC, all with different immigration statuses, demographics, and cultural backgrounds, with Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) being a focal point. Among the multitude of efforts are a few youth programs and services aimed at facilitating youth's potential achievement.

MCC has been a strong partnering community agency to the Tikkun Youth Project; its role in facilitating the healing and reconciliation among Syrian refugee youth does not go unnoticed. The three case examples demonstrate successful contributions that the MCC has played as a host society member in not only welcoming newcomer youth, but also valuing and fostering their potential. The examples further aid in presenting a closer insight into the Syrian refugee youth story, whose escape from their war-torn homeland has been an element of growth.

Canada's Role in Multiculturalism

Canada's efforts and international position as the first country to foster and adopt a policy of multiculturalism has been recognized internationally (Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Ng & Metz, 2015), and has contributed to its unique stance globally as a land of attraction for immigrants from all backgrounds looking to attain prosperity economically,

educationally and socially (Berry, 2013; Berry et al., 1989; Ng & Bloemraad, 2015; Ng & Metz, 2015; Vineberg, 2011). Universally, immigration patterns have drastically increased; Canada currently ranks as the seventh destination of immigration. As per a United Nations source, from 1960 to 2015, Canada has been a recipient of about 8 million immigrants, and they now constitute about 22% of the total population (Migration Policy Institute, 2015). More recently, on November 1, 2017, Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada (2017) launched its immigration levels targets for 2018 to 2020, communicating its plan to welcome about one million immigrants and refugees to Canada. This calls for the importance of understanding the settlement and integration processes that immigrants and refugees undergo; it contributes to furthering the power of a multicultural society as ours.

Integration, an Acculturation Strategy: The Process and the Outcomes

Acculturation has been integral to the study of immigration processes and outcomes. Acculturation is defined as the process of psychological and cultural changes on both individual and group levels, often resulting from direct and constant contact between two or more distinct cultures (Berry, 1992, 2005, 2006, 2014; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006a).

Influence on both cultures. Acculturation is influenced by the interplay of exchanged information between the host culture and the immigrant, or heritage culture (Berry, 1997, 2005, 2006, 2014). The cultural change that the group and the individuals in each group undergo is based on addressing two important aspects: 1) the value placed on maintaining one's ethnic culture; and, 2) the value placed on establishing and strengthening interethnic interactions with the larger society (Behrens et al., 2015; Berry, 1997, 2008, 2014; Sam, Vedder, Liebkind, Neto, & Virta, 2008). The intersection of value placed on maintaining heritage by participating in the larger society results in a fourfold model of acculturation strategies. The four strategies defined from the ethnic group's perspective are interdependent and based on the larger society's approach to immigration and promotion of diversity. Figure 1 represents the strategies from the ethno-cultural and larger society's view, respectively. A positive or negative orientation towards each culture is symbolized with the positive and negative signs in Figure 1.
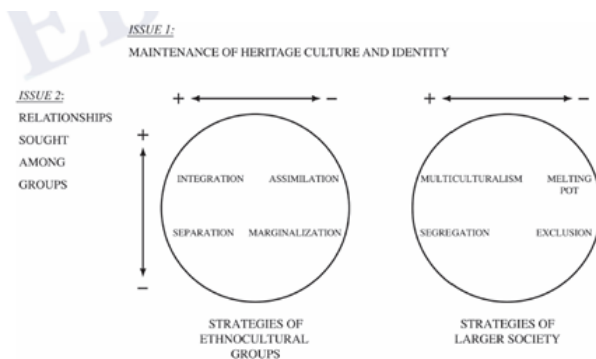
Figure 1. Four acculturation strategies from the ethnic and larger society's perspectives (Berry, 2005).

Integration. Integration is the strategy characterized by individuals or groups who are interested in maintaining their cultural heritage while establishing interactions with the larger society (Behrens et al., 2015; Berry, 2001, 2005, 2014; Paterson, 2008). Within integration, "some degree of cultural integrity is maintained, while at the same time immigrants seek, as a member of an ethno-cultural group, to participate as an integral part of the larger society" (Berry, 2005, p. 705). Integration is viewed as the most adaptive because it allows immigrant groups to maintain their heritage and culture, thereby enhancing their sense of empowerment and cultural identity, which, in turn, facilitates developing relations with the host community (Berry, 2001, 2006, 2013; Sam & Berry, 2010). Furthermore, establishing contact and enhancing participation within the larger society gives one a greater sense of belonging, higher self-esteem, and further involvement with and awareness of existent social, employment, and academic opportunities (Behrens et al, 2015; Berry, 2006, 2013; Hui, Chen, Leung, & Berry, 2015; Sabatier & Berry, 2008).

Although integration is identified as the most adaptive strategy on both psychological and sociocultural levels, it is important that the dominant society hold a positive multicultural ideology for ethnic groups to integrate successfully (Berry, 2001, 2005; Berry & Kalin, 1995; Hui et al., 2015). A descriptive for a positive multicultural attitude depicts that the host, or dominant, society values, promotes, and supports diversity as a core feature of their society, thereby supporting the integration of other heritage groups (Berry, 2001, 2013; Berry & Kalin, 1995). Canada's immigration approach is

believed to be shaped by a positive multicultural ideology, generally shaped by its enactment of the Multiculturalism Act and continual welcoming of immigrants and refugees as depicted by its recent immigration plans; this is believed to be supportive of the multiculturalism approach (Berry, 2001, 2013; Berry & Kalin, 1995; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2017). In this case, a positive multicultural ideology acts as an element of healing from the pre-immigration traumatic impacts that refugee youth may have.

Acceptance and respective sharing of cultures communicates to youth the possibility of relief from their negative experiences. It also demonstrates that the possibility of reestablishing oneself in the new society, without risking the loss of heritage, is a reality that can be achieved. One way that a host society can facilitate this process is through fostering youth engagement. As both Kheder and Evin depict, their engagement in volunteerism acts as a medium for them to not only enhance their bonding with their new Canadian society, but also to showcase what they bring from their heritage, as well as to educate about and maintain their cultural values, an integral goal that each of them held.

Role of the dominantsociety. The perception of the impact of immigration on the dominant society also has a significant influence on whether multiculturalism and integration would be supported and promoted. If the sense of competition over existent resources, like jobs, is high, then multiculturalism will not be supported (Berry, 2001, 2005, 2006; Palmer, 1996).Likewise, if the dominant group senses a threat to maintaining the powerful status of their dominant ideologies on a societal level, then embracing alternate ideologies may not be favored, thereby inhibiting integration (Berry, 1997, 2006; Berry & Kalin, 1995; Berry et al., 1989; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Palmer, 1996; Sabatier & Berry, 2008).

Ontario vs. Quebec approaches. In a comparison of the most highly populated provinces in Canada, Ontario and Quebec, Laxer (2013) explains that each province's multicultural ideology, shaped by their policy, influences the nature of integration among immigrant groups. In Ontario, the Multiculturalism policy established in 1971 is implemented where multiple distinct cultures can exist together and shape a diverse, yet cohesive community. Alternately, Quebec has exclusive power over its implementation of immigration policies through their Quebec-Canada Accord of 1991 (Laxer, 2013). This approach dictates an integration discourse of inter-culturalism, where immigrants' participation is welcomed and

encouraged, but is expected to abide to a "common public culture" (Laxer, 2013, p. 1581). For Quebec, it is important to acknowledge that the Francophone culture is not as dominant as Anglophones in Canada. Thus, any potential change to their composition may be viewed as a threat to the French culture (Berry & Kalin, 1995).

Empirical research has examined Canadian attitudes towards the enactment of multiculturalism, and it will be further discussed (Berry & Kalin, 1995). If we foster youth's growth and full participation in the new society, this will translate to the encouragement of youth to contribute equally in return. As one of the Windsor youth, Kheder, indicates, "This made me feel that I'm a good citizen for Canada. I do whatever I can to make people happy. Canada encourages socializing and that's what I would like to do and be part of people here."

Role of the cultural/immigrant group. It is important that the immigrant group is open to learning new values and the cultural practices of the host society, and attempt to adopt both (Behrens et al., 2015; Berry, 2006; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Sabatier & Berry, 2008). The intention is not to encourage replacing their heritage; rather, it is meant to expand and complement this with new knowledge (Behrens et al., 2015; Berry, 2006; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Hui et al., 2015; Sabatier & Berry, 2008). One of the contributing Syrian youth to this chapter, Evin, has shared that she sometimes continues to be bound by cultural expectations where she feels that adopting new values and cultural practices may not be a supported practice by her heritage culture. Evin shares, "I want to live normally, and I don't want to be tightly held by cultural expectations." She believes that her family's support for her goals may help her overcome the possible potential challenge of her heritage cultural expectations.

Arab Youth Acculturation Experiences

Family Relations: The Importance of Family in Arab Culture

Though it is difficult to quantify the importance of family, in the Arab

community, family holds an esteemed place, and its structure is different as extended family members tend to have an active and influential role on the family structure. As Britto and Amer (2007) argue, family is considered the main social support resource and most important societal unit within the Arab community. Sometimes, due to their prioritization as a social support resource, maintaining relations takes precedence over individual needs and may come at the expense of making friends. This is consistent with findings offered by Daniel (2013), who notes that peer relations, particularly regarding Canadian friends from outside the Arab culture, were given lower priority than extended family. In a qualitative study, Wannas-Jones (2003) likewise found that the family was prioritized above social relations, and that this was consistent among all Arabs, whether participating youth were Muslim or Christian.

Family and peer relations were significantly influential on participating newcomer youths' early integration experiences. Evin has shared that her elderly parents require her support primarily; she provides support by accompanying them to appointments and more. Her parents, however, encourage her to maintain peer relations both from her heritage culture and from the larger "Canadian society." However, Evin shared that they would generally prefer to be familiar with her acquaintances which she believes is their approach to supporting and protecting her. Reflecting on her parents' support, Evin states, "They are very supportive of me to engage in like … new sports, volunteering, and education, everything … everything to help me grow and succeed. They also helped me get my G1 and I'm now in driving school to do my G2." Similarly, Kheder supports his parents through interpretation and accompanying his family to several appointments; however, he asserts that he was able to maintain peer relations, yet devotes a shorter time to that due to his focus on academics and other youth engagement activities. Contradictory to their experiences, Naeem, being alone and separated from his family, shares that he longs for his family to join him as they are his primary support system.

Education System as a Host Society

The school system is a key component of Arab newcomer youth's resilience and progress towards effective integration. The education system is a

powerful precursor to integration as the academic environment influences socialization through peer formation and further community engagement. Such an environment is vital in shaping newcomer youth experience of the host culture, as it is here that they acquire most of their knowledge and where most of their reflection on their settlement experience occurs (Behrens et al., 2015; Berry, 2006, 2013). Hence, educational experiences are important to discuss when speaking to Syrian newcomer youth; they would inform whether their experience was facilitative to or impeding their integration.

Both Kheder and Evin have shared their dreams of engaging in further academic studies, and how these were met with some discouragement within the school system. Both come with limited English language proficiency and both have been out of school for some time-period prior to immigrating to Canada. The message conveyed to them has been to focus on improving their English language and pursue dreams that are "more achievable." Kheder has shared with his Case Manager at the Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex (MCC) that his dream is to become a Civil Engineer: "I hope to become a Civil Engineer and I'm trying to get there. To be more specific, I would like to work in infrastructure." When asked about the reactions of his school, peers, the agency (MCC), and community regarding his academic and professional goal, he said that initially, there was some hesitation from the school system, primarily from teachers, on whether his goal is realistic. However, as his English language development progressed, the school and teachers have become more supportive of Kheder's educational aspirations. Kheder has mentioned that he continues to face some discouragement from his peers, stating that they have shared that, "this is difficult, we are newcomers, and this is not for us. I may be more confident than my peers, they may be scared to do what is required." Such response clearly conveys that there continues to be a need for our society to refrain from impeding potential achievement among youth and hold a true responsibility of being a supportive system. We are the gatekeepers to newcomers' full integration, and we need to continue acting as such.

In like manner, Evin and Naeem have shared similar experiences in their respective school systems, and both have shared advanced academic and career goals. Naeem was a nurse in his home country and was hoping to either engage in the same or a related field. Evin is completing her high school diploma this year and has shared that she would like to enroll in medical school to become a physician, possibly a surgeon. Both have shared

similar instances where the response to their goals from the educational system and from the larger community is that, in reality, their goals may not be achievable.

All three youth have shared that their determination and persistence on the maintenance of their goals stems from two primary sources of social support: a public and a private source. Social support was examined in empirical research on Arab immigrants' adjustment. There are two life domains that could distinctively influence adjustment: a private and public life domain. Generally, support and well-being in the private domain, consisting of immediate family and individual experiences, results in better psychological adjustment (Paterson, 2008). In turn, support from the public life domain, consisting of the larger society, results in greater sociocultural adjustment (Paterson, 2008). All three youth have agreed that their families continue to be the greatest source of motivation. Additionally, their engagement in multiple efforts and the motivation and support they have received from settlement agencies, with special recognition to the MCC's workers, have been quite inspiring and greatly encouraging to continue advancing in their academics and career, respectively.

Naeem continues to engage in academic studies in areas of healthcare and nursing; he has also become a supportive figure himself to recent newcomers shortly after one-year of settling in Windsor. Evin, on the other hand, has made great progress in English and academia, and is working hard to achieve a higher grade point average so she can engage in pre-medical studies at the University of Windsor. Kheder is graduating high school this year and attending college next year to begin his academic journey. In 2017, Kheder created a model of a house that he showed to his Case Manager at MCC and with the school. The project was a personal effort that Kheder has created to put some of his interests in architecture and infrastructure into action. When asked about his inspiration, Kheder said, "I made it to prove to myself that I can do everything I want. That's why I did it all by myself. Because it's part of my dream to be in civil engineering, in that way, I provided to myself that I can achieve whatever I want." In recognition of the importance of MCC as a formal supportive system, the newcomer youth's effort was featured in the agency's Gazette of Winter, 2017 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Kheder Al Khalifa features his built model home: "My Design, My Execution"

Retrieved from: the Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex (www.themcc.com; link to the Winter 2017 Gazette; http://themcc.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Winter-2017.pdf)

To reconcile between the newcomer and Canadian experience, the MCC utilizes its gazettes and other social media forums as means to celebrate progress and success stories among its newcomer clientele, with special attention devoted to youth efforts and engagements in multiple programs. The next sections speak further to such engagements and their role in the enhancement of initial integration milestones among newcomer youth.

Peer relations were initially an element of great concern to newcomer youth in schools (Daniel, 2013; Wannas-Jones, 2003). Youth have reported that their separation from their Canadian peers through English as a Second Language were greatly ineffective in helping them establish positive relations with peers from their host society. First, they mentioned that they naturally resort to continuing to speak their native language, hindering their ability from advancing their English language proficiency. Being separated from their peers acts as a barrier from their ability to learn about and eventually adopt aspects of their new, host society. According to Berry (2013), the Multiculturalism Act of 1988 frames the interests and values

placed on diversity in concrete terms as it confirms the composition of a Canadian society that is culturally and racially diverse. Consequently, we are a nation and society that foster integration as the adaptive and supported acculturation strategy (Behrens et al., 2015; Berry, 2013, 2014; Paterson, 2008). Due to their academic and English language advancement, contributing Syrian newcomer youth shared that they are content to have friends from all different cultures where they have the opportunity to celebrate their heritage and gain insight into other cultures. They have framed this as an avenue for English language advancement, maintenance and growth of their social network, and an experience that enhances their sense of belonging and consequent integration into their new Canadian community.

Youth Engagement and Healing – an Integration Milestone

Recognizing the primitive role that the host society plays in the healing and reconciliation of newcomer youth within our society, youth were asked to reflect on their engagement in programs and volunteerism as extracurricular efforts, and how influential these were to date in their settlement and integration experiences. Naeem has shared that without the encouragement of the settlement agencies and involvement in multiple opportunities at the MCC, the process of integrating into his new community may have been quite difficult. In his initial year here in Windsor, Naeem has been actively engaged in multiple events and programs where he was able to share his experience prior to and post immigrating to Canada. In a little over one year of him being in Canada, Naeem has become one of the C6 (Community, Connecting, Culture, Collaborating, Coaching, and Cooperating) matching program volunteers at the MCC. He supported recent newcomers to Canada by introducing them to programs and services he became familiar with, and where he supports MCC staff in facilitating important community engagement and recreational events for newcomer youth. Naeem has shared that this has helped him enhance his self-confidence and feel content that he was able to give back to his community who has been of great support since his arrival here in Canada. Naeem, like other Syrian youth, has fled his war-torn homeland searching for peace and to re-establish his personal

and professional life. Naeem brings great potential with him; he had the opportunity to share his gratitude for the supports that he received when speaking about his personal settlement experience at a City of Windsor forum. The forum entitled, "We Came Together," occurred in December of 2017 and was a great community forum for progress reports on Syrian Refugee Resettlement. Naeem was one of the panelists who shared his pre-immigration and current integration milestones achieved through the supports received in their local Windsor-Essex community. Naeem urged agencies and service providers from different sectors to continue their active involvement with newcomer youth like him, for service providers are agents of hope for healing among youth with pre-immigration traumatic experiences. He shared that he believes that through supporting refugee youth in the new community to continue to prosper that social justice for them is attained. Achieving potential in his new Canadian society, as Naeem asserted, is the best response to undergoing violence, and is a proof that war and trauma can rather be agents of success and survival, rather than failure and despair.

Evin brings great potential for academic achievement and civic involvement, and has been actively engaged in youth engagement activities. She continues to be a key player in a variety of youth volunteerism and engagement activities at the MCC. Evin helps with the development and maintenance of the C6 youth Facebook page and she has supported staff in inviting clientele to different events. Within the Client Support Service (CSS) youth program, Evin has co-led and supported the session delivery, and had great contributions to local sub-council meetings. Evin has also successfully completed and received a Leadership Program certificate at a partnering settlement agency, Women Enterprise Skills Training (WEST). She has shared that she is thankful for these opportunities and believes that she has a significant contribution to make. These volunteer activities bring value to her experience and help her further integrate in her new community. Learn more about Evin's story in this short interview, where she shares more about her early integration experience, her happiness with her civic engagement in extracurricular activities and volunteerism, and what helps continue motivating her to progress. The link to the interview is below; in consent with Evin:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFPdN1GG53k&feature=youtu.be

Kheder has shared his perspective on how integral his youth community engagements have been in shaping his early stages of integration. He has

participated primarily with the MCC's youth programs and services. Kheder has actively engaged in Client Support Services youth activities and events and has helped with delivery of partial components. He attended a workshop on Internet safety and cyber-bullying, contributed to the local sub-council meeting as one of the sub-council members, and has attended multiple events core to his learning and advancement. He also briefly worked within the construction field, something that he considers a great achievement as it is quite relevant to his field. At another partnering agency, the New Canadian Centre for Excellence (NCCE) in Windsor, Kheder helped with providing meals and other items to homeless people. On his engagements with the MCC, Kheder asserts, "MCC helped to encourage me to speak in English even in my house; speak English even with people who speak Arabic. I'm doing this to evolve my language." He mentioned that the encouragement to speak English even on field trips was very helpful to him. Additionally, trips such as the one to the University of Windsor Open House in March was an excellent supportive approach as it gave him an idea of, "where I'm going after school and which department, see how people deal with each other, and see different cultures. No one asked what is your business here? I was welcomed there. That encouraged me to advance my studies and probably attend university." The sense of welcome to all newcomer youth at that event was shared by all participating newcomer youth as one of the best experiences they have encountered for they did not feel different. They felt that they belong here.

   All three youth have considered the ways in which their engagements have helped them to suppress their pre-immigration traumatic experiences with war and feel that their reestablishment and advancement is not only a light of hope, but also a reality. Evin shared that people in Canada do encourage her to enhance her socialization; she finds volunteering as something that makes her feel happy and confident, helps her meet new people, and expands her social network. She reflects further on this in her interview on how she finds it helpful for her early integration thus far. When asked to reflect on his involvements, Kheder states, "This made me feel that I'm a good citizen for Canada. I do whatever I can to make people happy. Canada encourages socializing and that's what I would like to do and be part of people here." Through shared experiences and perspectives of youth, we harness the potential of newcomer youth while facilitating their integration.

Social Justice in the Perspective of Newcomer Youth

In alignment with *Tikkun*, a theme of healing, reconciliation, and social justice, it is inescapable to capture the conceptual meaning that social justice carries in the perspective of newcomer youth. When asked to define and reflect on social justice in the videotaped interview, Evin sees it in gender equality; she believed that nobody should be stripped of their right to education and advancement. She also sees it in the involvement of democratic decisions here in Canada. According to her, we have social justice here in Canada and "everyone uses it;" she believes that everyone is treated with respect and that there is "no different treatment for who you are and what you're doing." As for Kheder, he believes that social justice is already applied here; he sees it in the respectful and welcoming treatment in his Windsor community. He believes that he has equal rights like his youth encounters here in Canada in areas of education, employment, and active involvements in the community.

While Naeem agrees with both Kheder and Evin, he has an elevated fear as an Arab and Muslim youth. As empirical research demonstrates, associating September 11, 2001 and other terrorist attacks with religious and cultural beliefssubjects Arabs to a challenging acculturation experience (Akram, 2002; Awad,2010; Kumar,Warnke, & Karabenick, 2014; Wannas-Jones, 2003). Arab youth have reported enhanced acculturative stress levels, challenges in developing their identity, and difficulty establishing peer relationships (Britto & Amer, 2007; Daniel,2013; Shryock & Howell, 2003; Wannas-Jones, 2003; Wrobel, Farrag, & Hymes, 2009). Arab youth shared that one factor to elevated acculturative stress was the negative media portrayals of Arabs and Islam (Awad, 2010; Zafar & Ross, 2015).In the correspondence with Naeem on social justice and full potential achievement, he shares that he fears that the media image would be an adopted response to his attempts to advance professionally and integrate more successfully herein Canada. While he feels that he is generally welcomed here, he senses that some community members may have preconceived images of him because of his background. He believes that as his network of support, we have the role as the host society to continue enhancing the larger society's knowledge about the potential that each of them bring with them, and the significant contributions that they would make to their respective communities provided that such opportunities are available for newcomer youth.

Conclusion

In light of Tikkun, this book chapter has sought to seek further insight into the integration of Arab youth (primarily Syrian youth) and how the host society acts as a facilitative factor or impediment to the initial integration milestones. The chapter has consulted both theoretical knowledge and anecdotal evidence to speak about how newcomer youth's active engagement can lead to the healing of the traumatic encounter with war, to reconcile with the new community, and achieve social justice for newcomer youth. The chapter seeks to answer the following questions: How are Arab newcomer youth actively engaged in their community, and how does their involvement facilitate their integration and progressively lead to their healing and reconciliation? The chapter concluded with insight into the youth's perspectives on the meaning of social justice, and the ways in which they believe this is achieved in their new community in Canada. Thematically and anecdotally, it is evident that as the host community, we are the lead in making the reconciliation effectively achievable. Newcomer youth escaping war bring a lot of potential with them; it is our core responsibility as a society that believes in the power of diversity and harmony to foster these potentials and ensure they are not missed. We are in the position of power to ensure that healing and reconciliation are achieved, thus leading to a strongly attained socially-just society.

References

Akram, S. M. (2002). The aftermath of September 11, 2001: The targeting of Arabs and Muslims in America. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 24 (2&3), 61-118. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/41858412

Awad, G. H. (2010). The impact of acculturation and religious identification on perceived discrimination for Arab/Middle Eastern Americans. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 16(1), 59-67. doi:10.1037/a0016675

Behrens, K., del Pozo, M. A., Großhennig, A., Sieberer, M., & Graef-Calliess, I. T. (2015). How much orientation towards the host culture is healthy? Acculturation style as risk enhancement for depressive symptoms in

immigrants.*International Journal of Social Psychiatry*,61(5), 498-505. doi:[10.1177/0020764014560356](10.1177/0020764014560356)

Berry, J. W. (2005). Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(6), 697-712. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.07.013

Berry, J. W. (1992). Acculturation and adaptation in a new society. *International Migration*, 30(s1), 69-85. doi:[10.1111/j.1468-2435.1992.tb00776.x](10.1111/j.1468-2435.1992.tb00776.x)

Berry, J. W. (2001). A psychology of immigration. *Journal of Social Issues* ,57(3), 615-631. doi:10.1111/0022-4537.00231

Berry, J. W. (2008). Globalisation and acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(4), 328-336. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2008.04.001

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology*,46(1),5-34. doi:[10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x](10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x)

Berry, J. W. (2006). Mutual attitudes among immigrants and ethno-cultural groups in Canada. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30, 719-734. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2006.06.004

Berry, J. W. (2013). Research on multiculturalism in Canada.*International Journal of Intercultural Relations*,37(6), 663-675. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.09.005

Berry, J. W. (2014). Acculturation. In Grusec, J. E., & Hastings, P. D. (Eds.) *Handbook of socialization: Theory and research* (pp. 520-549). Guilford Publications: United States.

Berry, J. W., & Kalin, R. (1995). Multicultural and ethnic attitudes in Canada: An overview of the 1991 National Survey. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement*,27(3), 301. doi:[10.1037/0008-400x.27.3.301](10.1037/0008-400x.27.3.301)

Berry, J. W., Kim, U., Power, S., Young, M., & Bujaki, M. (1989). Acculturation attitudes in plural societies. *Applied Psychology*, 38(2), 185-206. doi:[10.1111/j.1464-0597.1989.tb01208.x](10.1111/j.1464-0597.1989.tb01208.x)

Berry, J. W., Phinney, J. S., Sam, D. L., & Vedder, P. (2006a). Immigrant youth: Acculturation, identity and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 55(3), 303-332. doi:[10.1111/j.1464-0597.2006.00256.x](10.1111/j.1464-0597.2006.00256.x)

Berry, J. W., Phinney, J. S., Sam, D. L., & Vedder, P. (2006b). *Immigrant youth in cultural transition: Acculturation, identity and adaptation across national contexts*.New Jersey: Psychology Press.

Berry, J. W., & Sabatier, C. (2010). Acculturation, discrimination, and adaptation among second generation immigrant youth in Montreal and

Paris. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34, 191-207. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2009.11.007

Britto, P. R., & Amer, M. M. (2007). An exploration of cultural identity patterns and the family context among Arab Muslim young adults in America. *Applied Developmental Science*, 11(3), 137-150. doi:10.1080/10888690701454633

Daniel, S. (2013). *Immigrant and non-immigrant youth in Canada: Cultural orientation, ethnicity of friends, and life satisfaction among four ethnic groups* (Master thesis). Retrieved from Library and Archives Canada (ISBN: 978-0-494-87354-0)

Hui, B. P. H., Chen, S. X., Leung, C. M., & Berry, J. W. (2015).Facilitating adaptation and intercultural contact: The role of integration and multicultural ideology in dominant and non-dominant groups. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 45, 70-84. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.01.002

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2017, November 1). Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2018.html

Kumar, R., Warnke, J. H., & Karabenick, S. A. (2014). Arab-American male identity negotiations: Caught in the crossroads of ethnicity, religion, nationality and current contexts.*Social Identities*, 20(1), 22-41. doi:10.1080/13504630.2013.864464

Laxer, E. (2013). Integration discourses and the generational trajectories of civic engagement in multi-nation states: A comparison of the Canadian provinces of Quebec and Ontario. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(10), 1577-1599. doi:10.1080/1369183x.2013.815432

Migration Policy Institute. (2015). Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/international-migration-statistics

Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://themcc.com/

Ng, E. S., & Bloemraad, I. (2015). A SWOT analysis of multiculturalism in Canada, Europe, Mauritius, and South Korea.*American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(6), 619-636. doi:10.1177/0002764214566500

Ng, E. S., & Metz, I. (2015). Multiculturalism as a strategy for national competitiveness: The case for Canada and Australia.*Journal of Business Ethics*,128(2), 253-266. doi:10.1007/s10551-014-2089-8

Palmer, D. L. (1996). Determinants of Canadian attitudes toward immigration:

More than just racism? *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 28(3), 180-192. doi:10.1037/0008-400X.28.3.180

Paterson, A. D. (2008). *The private and public life domains of Arab youth in Canada: Acculturation, ethnic identity, social support, and adjustment* (Master thesis). Retrieved from Library and Archives Canada. (ISBN: 978-0-494-47080-0)

Sam, D. L., & Berry, J. W. (2010). Acculturation: When individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds meet. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(4), 472-481. doi:10.1177/1745691610373075

Sabatier, C., & Berry, J. W. (2008).The role of family acculturation, parental style, and perceived discrimination in the adaptation of second-generation immigrant youth in France and Canada. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 5(2), 159-185. doi:10.1080/17405620701608739

Sam, D. L., Vedder, P., Liebkind, K., Neto, F., & Virta, E. (2008). Immigration, acculturation and the paradox of adaptation in Europe. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*,5(2), 138-158. doi:10.1080/17405620701563348

Shryock, A., & Howell, S. (2003). Cracking down on diaspora: Arab Detroit and America's "war on terror". *Anthropological Quarterly*, 76(3), 443-462. doi:10.1353/anq.2003.0040

Vineberg, R. (2011). Continuity in Canadian immigration policy 1947 to present: Taking a fresh look at Mackenzie King's 1947 immigration policy statement. *Journal of International Migration and Integration/Revue de l'integration et de la migration internationale*,12(2), 199-216. doi:10.1007/s12134-011-0177-5

Wannas-Jones, J. (2003). *Globalization and the reconciliation of dissonant hybrididentities: A case study of Canadian-Arab youths* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from National Library of Canada. (ISBN: 0-612-88063-X)

Welcome to Windsor Essex. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.welcometowindsoressex.ca/en/why-windsor-essex/immigration-statistics.asp

Wrobel, N. H., Farrag, M. F., & Hymes, R. W. (2009). Acculturative stress and depression in an elderly Arabic sample.*Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*,24(3), 273-290. doi:10.1007/s10823-009-9096-8

Zafar, S., & Ross, E. C. (2015). Interreligious contact, attitudes, and stereotypes: A study of five religious groups in Canada.*Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement*, 47(1), 37. doi:10.1037/a0036720

"This book chapter is an independent writing and is in contribution to the Tikkun Youth Project (Healing, Reconciliation and Advocacy for Social Justice)"

11. The Fight for $15 & Fairness: Exploring Youth Leadership for Economic Justice

EVELINA BACZEWSKA AND FRANKIE CACHON

Abstract

This chapter is about the social change efforts of youth—how they respond to the complex economic, social, and political conditions that shape their lives. Drawing on Paulo Freire's (1996) notion of "praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 33), we explore how youth take responsibility for "repairing the world (*Tikkun Olam*), through acts that promote social justice" (Berlinger, 2003, p. 30). Findings highlight intersectional struggles for economic justice—namely the Fight for $15 and Fairness movement. Foregrounding the importance of a *distributive orientation to leadership*, "(that is, leadership among many people) and of shared values and purpose" (Schmitz, 2012, p. 76), we illustrate how the social justice praxis of the Tikkun Youth Project and $15 & Fairness effectively center youth leadership. In so doing, the chapter contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of youth leadership--not as a product, but *as a process*--rich in transformative possibilities.

Keywords: Youth Leadership, *Tikkun Olam*, Intersectional Economic Justice, $15 & Fairness

---

This chapter draws on our work with the Tikkun Youth Project, which aimed to increase the capacity of youth to "repair the world" by promoting social justice and collective responsibility for addressing injustice (Rosenthal, 2005; Sacks, 2005). Focusing on youth-led social change efforts in Windsor, Ontario, we begin with a brief discussion of the Tikkun Youth Project's use of Participatory Action Research (PAR) to center youth's social justice

leadership—an approach that views leadership not as a position or product, but, "a process in which one takes responsibility to engage" (Schmitz, 2012, p. xvi). Next, we address the action project selected by youth, specifically the Fight for $15 & Fairness campaign, emphasizing youth's appreciation of economic struggles being caused by the influence of multiple, combined forces (i.e. class, race, gender, (dis)ability, etc.) contributing to social inequality, thereby demonstrating their sophisticated understanding of intersectional struggles for economic justice. Lastly, we consider the importance of situated knowledge—that is, knowledge derived from lived experience of oppression and privilege (Haraway, 1991)—as a critical force in informing youth's social change efforts. Our discussion foregrounds the importance of a distributive orientation to leadership to the facilitation of youth-leadership capacity.

The Tikkun Youth Project: Facilitating Youth-Led Social Justice Leadership as Praxis

> "*Young people want to be engaged as change-makers in their lives, their families and their communities. They are disproportionately involved in and affected by the problems that beset their communities – and they must be part of the solution.*" (The Forum for Youth Investment cited by Edelman, Gill, Comerford, Larson, & Hare, 2004)

The Tikkun Youth Project sought the experiences and perspectives of young people between the ages of 16-25 at each of our five international partnership sites in Canada, South Africa, and Kosovo. Aiming to document youth-led efforts for social change, our university and community partners recruited and trained five youth researchers (YRs) with a demonstrated record of social justice leadership. Youth at the Windsor, ON partnership site were long-term residents of the city, were predominately female, and second-generation immigrants. Windsor YRs exhibited leadership in a range of social issues relating to gender equality and various anti-poverty initiatives (i.e. food banks, affordable housing, and accessible post-secondary education). Addressing social oppression and economic (in)equality, the YRs participated in the following: developing community gardens/markets to

provide healthy and fresh produce to the community; working with students in after-school programs in areas of high need; advocating for women's rights, workers' rights, and ethnic minority rights; and working with immigrants to help with their settlement and integration.

Supported by project mentors, the YRs, "undertook roughly twelve hours of comprehensive training in qualitative research, particularly in interview techniques, research ethics, and transcription" (Baczewska, Cachon, Daniel, & Selimos, 2018, p. 294). YRs then engaged in collaborative development of the interview guide and conducted semi-structured interviews with three to four of their social change-oriented peers (recruited through YRs' well-established advocacy networks). These interviews aimed to capture how youth become aware of injustices and take leadership roles and responsibility for addressing social injustice. The interviews also explored how their everyday lived experiences shaped their commitment to youth-led advocacy for positive social change. Findings discussed in this chapter are derived from twenty-five transcribed and coded interviews, post-interview notes written by YRs, focus groups/a "back-talk" focus group session[1] with YRs, and one-on-one conversations with YRs throughout the research process.

Importantly, the Tikkun Youth Project meaningfully centered youth leadership throughout *the entire project*. Youth perspectives were consciously foregrounded––they were equal partners in a continuously refined research process. Drawing on Paulo Freire's (1996) notion of, "praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 33), the Tikkun Youth Project positioned youth as experts in their own lives, with the capacity to work with others to take responsibility for "repairing the world (*Tikkun Olam*)" through acts that promote social justice (Berlinger, 2003). For example, YRs were integral to the development and facilitation of the Tikkun Youth Project's Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach in which youth were both research participants and researchers focusing on engagement, collaboration, and a commitment to social justice (Brydon-Miller, Kral, Maguire, Noffke, & Sabhlok, 2011).

Complementing the primary objectives of social justice praxis—reflection and action—PAR directly empowers members of the community through reflexive consciousness-raising (Kidd & Kral, 2005). Cultivating an environment that supports collective inquiry (reflection) and practice (action) for the purpose of social change, collaboration with youth was fundamental to the Tikkun Youth Project which sought to build youth-

leadership capacity. In fact, the Tikkun Youth Project exemplifies social justice youth-leadership, "as praxis in the Freireian sense, involving both reflection and action" (Furman, 2012, p. 202), given that PAR, "facilitates transformation at the individual, relational, and community levels for people experiencing oppression" (Fayter, 2016, p. 70).

The Tikkun Youth Project's distributive orientation to leadership, "refram[es] the idea of leadership, moving from an emphasis on the noun *leader* to an emphasis on the verb *to lead*" (Schmitz, 2012, p. xv). Thus, facilitating youth leadership is about creating opportunities whereby youth are supported in taking personal and social responsibility to create social change (Schmitz, 2012).

Youth Leadership and The Fight for $15 and Fairness

Utilizing PAR, the Tikkun Youth Project positioned youth leadership as central when addressing the needs of the community. In Windsor, the Tikkun YRs chose to join the Fight for $15 and Fairness because the campaign deeply resonated and best addressed the intersectional economic issues captured in interviews conducted with their social change-oriented peers. For example, Windsor youth consistently referenced struggles to find meaningful employment; exploitive and unfair labour conditions; debilitating student debt; and a lack of access to affordable transportation and housing—issues that were intensified by intersecting social identity categories (i.e. gender, sexual orientation, immigration status). Youth consistently voiced experiences of social and economic exclusion, stating that they often felt "left out in the cold." Not surprisingly, Windsor social change-oriented youth were involved in initiatives aimed at addressing the interrelated topics of poverty and oppression. It is in this context that Windsor YRs determined that the Fight for $15 and Fairness would be an applicable central action initiative for year two of the Tikkun Youth Project.

Importantly, the Tikkun Youth Project and the Fight for $15 and Fairness share a distributive orientation to leadership. That is, "leadership among many people, and of shared values and purpose" (Schmitz, 2012, p. 76). In fact, youth participation has been integral to the growth of the $15 & Fairness

movement. For example, youth have been highly engaged in cross-campus coalitions of unionized and nonunionized workers, community and student groups, public demonstrations, social media campaigns, and community outreach (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Fight for $15 and Fairness transit canvas in Toronto, ON. By David Bush, 2018,
https://www.facebook.com/
photo.php?fbid=10156592959559928&set=pcb.10156592959644928&type=3&theater

Community-organizing tactics are central to the success of the Fight for $15 and Fairness, a grassroots workers' campaign that emerged from organizing for fast food workers in the United States in 2012. Since that time, the Fight for $15 has spread to more than 300 US cities and inspired a global movement (Frache, 2016). In Ontario:

> the Fight for $15 & Fairness grew out of [a] successful Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage, a labour-community alliance that launched a $14 minimum wage campaign… the Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage opened up an important public conversation about the nature of work, especially for non-union workers who comprise over 70 percent of the workforce in Ontario. (Frache, 2016, para. 2-3)

Notably, "low-wage, non-unionized workers organized by the Workers' Action Centre [WAC] in Toronto—the vast majority of whom were women and workers of color—were at the crux of this movement" (Bush & Nesbitt, 2017, para. 19). The Fight for $15 and Fairness won $15 minimum wage[2] and

other significant concessions (i.e. paid sick days, an adequate number of paid hours, fair scheduling with advanced notice, stronger labour regulations and protections, and measures that make it easier to join or maintain a union). The success of the Ontario Fight for $15 & Fairness campaign is founded on a bottom-up organizing model. Significantly, the Fight for $15 and Fairness campaign:

> [is] not an insular or top-down campaign, but one predicated on building grassroots leadership across sectors.… The movement culture they cultivated cares about the people involved in it, aims to build people up, and gives workers the chance to shape the movement in a way that reflects their own experiences and communities. (Bush & Nesbitt, 2017, para 63-4)

The "bottom-up framework" of the Fight for $15 and Fairness campaign built workers' capacity and confidence and, "gave participants a powerful experience of collective political and economic education" (Bush & Nesbitt, 2017, para 37).

The Fight for $15 and Fairness consciously creates and holds space for workers to break their isolation, connect, and collectively build their capacity for leadership (Ladd as cited in Carniol, 2010). Deena Ladd, coordinator of Toronto's WAC, and social policy advocate, Trish Hennessy, see worker empowerment as resulting from the worker-centered approach:

> Something important happens: A group of people who have never met each other begin talking about the realities facing them on the job and what's happening in their lives; they start agreeing that what's happening isn't right and that they have a role in doing something about it … Together: Everything we do follows this basic principle: *Nothing about us without us* [emphasis added]. (Ladd & Hennessy, 2009, para. 21)

| PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING |
Developed by Sheila Wilmot & Deena Ladd
Community organizing is a model grounded in a vision for social change work that:
• Carries out work from an anti-oppression perspective.
• Sees people as the experts in determining their own lives.
• Values having people affected by an issue as being the ones figuring out how to change or transform their situation.
• Strives for on-going, active relationship building with the community of people affected by an issue.
• Works to get people involved in not only carrying out activities but in making on-going decisions on plans, strategies and tactics.
• Builds collective power to disrupt dominant power.

Figure 2. $15 and Fairness table of *Principles for Community Organizing* created from Handout – Workshop for Community Organizing. Toronto, ON.

Social justice leadership as praxis is at the core of WAC's community organizing culture (see Figure 2) -- "a culture of intellectual inquiry and organizing ... that foster[s] new layers of worker leadership" (Bush & Nesbitt, 2017, para. 37). This distributive orientation to leadership ensures that, "[n]ew voices [rise] up from the rank and file[3] [to reflect their collaborative work, as they begin to lead] trainings, workshops, and panel discussions, as well as speaking at public events and in the media" (Bush & Nesbitt, 2017, para 37-8). In sum, youth leadership emerges when youth are valued as necessary stakeholders in social change efforts.

An Intersectional Orientation to Economic Justice

Having contextualized the Fight for $15 and Fairness, we now turn to a discussion of the intersectional dynamic of struggles for economic justice. As previously discussed, the Tikkun Youth Project utilized PAR in order to illustrate how young people's standpoints based on social identity categories intersect to contribute to different and unique experiences of oppression and privilege (Collins, 1990; Smith, 1987). "Intersectionality," as an analytical framework, maps social inequalities that arise from a combination of interwoven forms of oppression, which in combination produce distinct experiences of discrimination. We now understand that all forms of discrimination are not separate and distinct, but interact in complex ways (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1991).

We draw upon DeJong and Love's (2016) definition of youth oppression as, "the systematic subordination and mistreatment of young people based on age through the restriction and denial of opportunities to exercise social, economic, and political power" (p. 342). This understanding of oppression allows us to recognize how people can experience distinct and dynamic forms of oppression (i.e. racism, ableism, sexism which in turn can interact with class and economic oppression). This echoes Edwards (2014) and Fraser (2007) who argue that social movements mobilizing for the purpose of labour and economic rights not only pursue economic interests, but also make cultural and social claims as they interact with the overarching effects of capitalism.

Consciously framing the campaign for $15 and Fairness around intersecting forms of inequalities, the movement speaks to multiple forms of simultaneously active forces of oppression as experienced in the everyday lives of its members (see Figure 3 & 4). The importance of an intersectional lens is passionately expressed by Gilary Masa, Community Organizer, Fight for $15 and Fairness:

> I can't iterate enough how grateful I am for this movement, for not only talking about minimum wage as just a workers' piece, but for really integrating the conversation around race, class, gender, and islamophobia and all the things that are attacking us all.
> (Fight for $15 & Fairness, 2017)

Figure 3. Campaign placard. Reproduced from https://www.15andfairness.org/resources

Figure 4. Campaign placard. Reproduced from
https://www.15andfairness.org/resources

Masa's words speak to the campaign's ability to capture intersecting forms of oppression. Her statement expresses the multi-dimensionality of the struggle for economic justice, whereby the experience of oppression is never identical.

In this sense, the Fight for $15 and Fairness is not only about securing a $15 minimum wage and improved labour standards, but also about articulating

and turning attention to the ways in which ageism, racism, sexism, and multi-forms of oppression are linked to economic inequality. In fact, based on 2013 statistics, of the 8.9% of minimum wage earners in Ontario, youth aged 15-19 account for 50.2% of minimum wage workforce (Maclean's, 2017).

Moreover:

[a]n Ontario student graduating from a four-year university program, for example, shouldered an average of $22,207 in provincial debt in 2012-2013. That makes for a total debt load of more than $34,000 if they also borrowed the average sum from the federal government. (National Post, 2016, para. 8)

Furthermore, "[a]n important dimension of precarious work is the over-representation of racialized workers and recent immigrants" (Block, 2015, p. 8). Thus, collective efforts to raise the minimum wage speak to a deeper appreciation of the underlying social and political realities that shape youth's lives.

Debunking the Myth of Political Apathy Among Youth

Tikkun youth expressed demands that expose systemic forms of oppression and inequality. Doing so can be particularly hard for young people given that the stereotype of youth as disengaged and apathetic still holds much resonance. In reality, many young people are, "largely excluded from formal political processes and continue to be subject to age-based systems of authority" (Oxfam Briefing Paper, 2016, p. 2). Not surprisingly, youth connect with the Fight for $15 and Fairness' critique of the unequal distribution of wealth and privilege. Struggling with precarious work, student debt, and un/underemployment, youth are well-versed in the socio-economic risks that affect their lives.

Windsor YRs repeatedly expressed that they were being ignored or that adults do not take their voices, concerns, and input seriously. Many expressed that if and when politicians pay attention to them and the issues that they care about, they are simply pandering, or their concerns receive a fleeting and condescending acknowledgement. Consistent with literature documenting the state of youth engagement (Balsano, 2005; D'Agostino &

Visser, 2010; Harris, Wyn, & Younes, 2010), Windsor youth noted a lack of opportunity and support for their political participation—and when and if it does occur, it is often disregarded or managed. For example, interviewed youth and Windsor YRs shared being told, "those are nice, idealistic ideas," or "you're young, your idealism will fade as you mature and get a better or *more realistic* grasp of reality when you are an adult." Windsor YRs expressed feeling capable and competent, yet adults consistently ignored them or were paternalistic.

Recent scholarship has shown that youth are not politically disengaged (see Figure 5), but politically active beyond formal electoral politics (Baczewska et al., 2018; Harris et al., 2010). For example, research suggests the changing nature of youth political engagement (Andersson, 2015; Benedicto, 2013; Coletto, 2016; Vromen, Xenos, & Loader, 2015), whereby Millennials are more likely to volunteer in community organizations and services, are overwhelmingly more engaged in online political activities (Schmitz, 2012; Samara's Democracy 360, 2015), and are, "more open to diversity, and prefer to work in teams" (Winograd & Hais, 2008, p. 2).
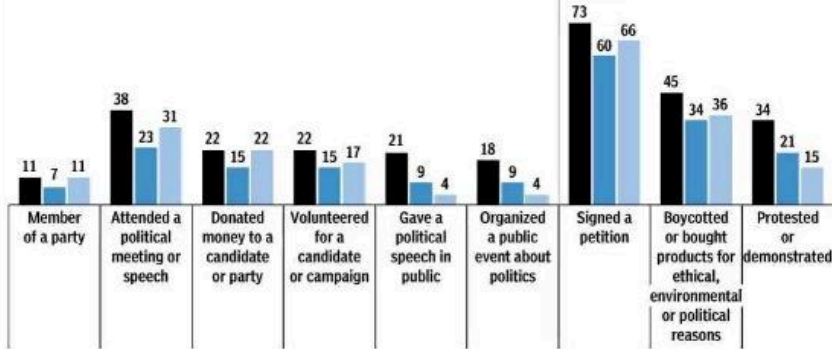
Figure 5. Political and civic engagement rates in Canada. By Jonathon Rivait, National Post. Reproduced fromhttp://wpmedia.nationalpost.com/2015/09/ na0910_politicalmillenials_c_jr.jpeg?quality=60&strip=al
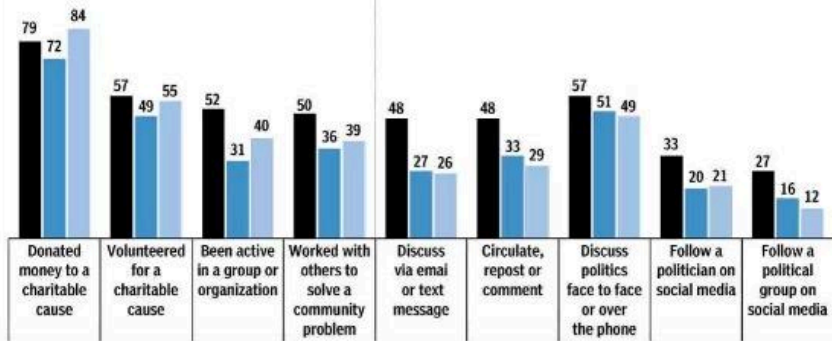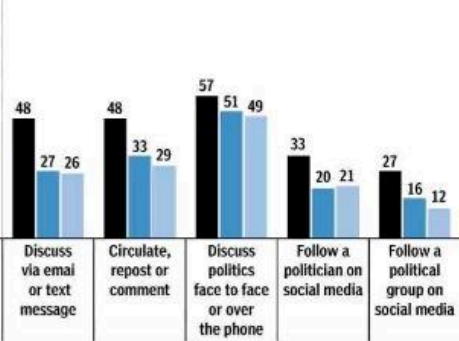
Building Solidarity by Accessing Situated Knowledge

True to both the principles of PAR and an intersectional framework--foregrounding the ways in which social inequality is shaped by diverse forms of oppression, and using lived experience as a tool for advancing social change (Collins & Bilge, 2016)--Haraway's (1991) theory of

"situated knowledges" calls for shared accounts of the world based on, "partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connection called solidarity" (p. 191). The struggle for economic justice as illuminated by the Fight for $15 and Fairness demonstrates the importance of networks and connections in solidifying a common ground based on difference. Momentum is however sustained through the recognition of multiple, yet shared forms of injustice as highlighted in the following account of the campaign:

> The $15 and Fairness movement is intersectional, reaching out to racialized workers, contract faculty members in universities and colleges, and students working part-time, among other groups. By focusing on the broad theme of fairness for *all* workers, the campaign has been able to build common ground across a wide range of people, organizations and workplaces. (Brown, 2017, para. 4)

In so doing, the campaign relied on subjugated standpoints (Haraway, 1991) from which to form a base movement. Situating economic injustice in real, concrete, lived experiences makes the effects of economic struggle visible and discernable (Taylor, 2018). Doing so, "promised more adequate, sustained, objective, and transformative accounts" (Haraway, 1991, p. 191) of oppression and injustice. The campaign positioned as a broader social movement was mobilized by listening to the situated voices of workers recounting their struggles for decent work and fairness. Echoing the common intersectional barriers that bear on their everyday lives, all members are responsible for leading and shaping the movement by recognizing that systems of oppression are sustained and thrive on our inability to reconcile difference (Taylor, 2018). Critically, an approach that values situated knowledge repositions "difference" from obstacle to source of transformative power and potential.

Moreover, literature highlighting youth's situated knowledge reveals a more complex understanding of youth political participation whereby, "many young people are disenchanted with political structures that are unresponsive to their needs and interests, but that they remain interested in social and political issues and continue to seek recognition from the political system" (Harris et al., 2010, p. 9). Accordingly, accounts of youth's situated knowledge are a powerful antidote to dominant perceptions of youth political apathy.

Drawing on lived experience, youth at each site expressed how their focal concerns (i.e. access to clean water, education, and/or healthcare) shaped their social change objectives. Tikkun youth articulated substantial critiques of the ways in which economic vulnerability pervades their lives. Little wonder that youth are at the forefront of many of the world's economic justice movements (Giroux, 2013). Windsor Tikkun youth advanced the $15 & Fairness campaign by organizing campus outreach tabling events[4], a Know Your Rights workshop for student workers, an economic justice & social determinants of health campus event, the Wall of Wages: Speak with Us About Economic Justice cross-campus provincial campaign event (see figures 6 & 7), and Youth Initiatives for Economic Justice: $15 & Fairness (as part of the International Tikkun Youth Symposium event).

In prioritizing youth's situated knowledge, the Tikkun Youth Project created space for social change-oriented youth to reflect on and further their social justice work in causes near and dear to their hearts. Interestingly, Tikkun youth across our five international partnership sites consistently expressed frustration over a lack of opportunities for social and economic advancement. Certainly, the gap between the rich and the poor has grown at an alarming rate over the past few decades (Oxfam Briefing Paper, 2016). Consequently, economic justice is central to youth's international social change efforts. Whether in South Africa, Kosovo, Toronto, Windsor or Thunder Bay, struggles for intersectional economic justice were essential to the social change efforts of *all* youth.
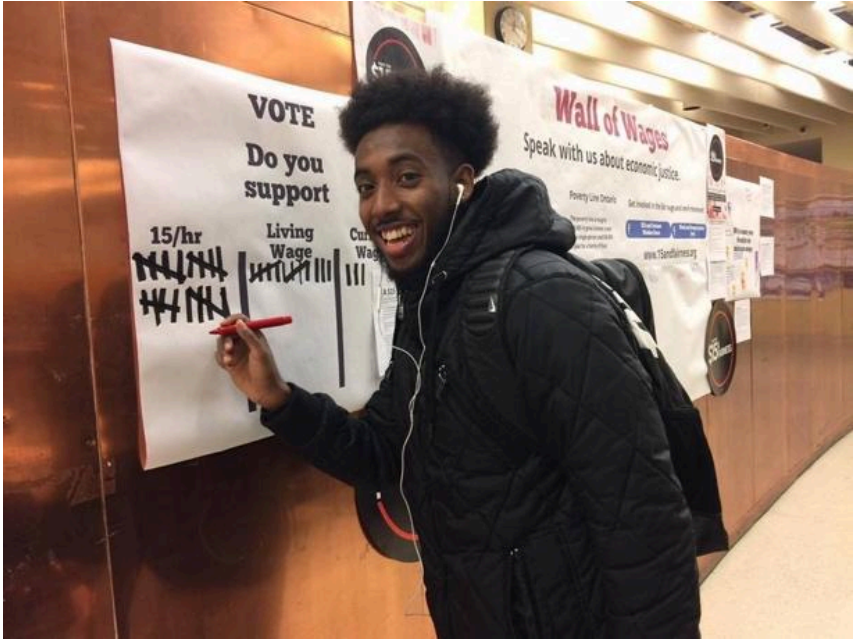
Figure 6. Economic justice, Tikkun youth campus outreach, University of Windsor.

Figure 7. Wall of Wages: Speak with us about economic justice, Tikkun youth campus outreach, University of Windsor

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have argued that youth cultivate their capacity for social change leadership when they are supported and valued as essential stakeholders. The Tikkun Youth Project represents an innovative youth-led action research project that is committed to the idea that youth can and must be integral to our social justice efforts. Given that youth comprise the world's largest demographic group (United Nations, 2013), they hold the potential to effect positive social change if provided opportunities for meaningful participation and self-determined leadership (Oxfam Briefing Paper, 2016). Challenging dominant and intersecting forms of oppression requires meaningfully engaging with youth, making it a necessary first step in cultivating youth-led social change. Unfortunately, youth are typically politically marginalized as evidenced in adult-centric policies and institutional norms and values that fail to account for young people's standpoints. Indeed, "[y]oung people ... are marginalized and excluded by

practices that give middle-aged adults the power to act on and for them, often without their agreement or consent" (DeJong & Love, 2016, p. 342).

In Windsor, Tikkun YR's social justice praxis led them to take up the Fight for $15 and Fairness. The campaign's focus on intersecting injustices and advancement of economic justice reflected young people's lived experiences of part-time, low-wage, or unpaid employment. Having identified economic marginalization as a unifying focus, youth determined the Fight for $15 and Fairness as a timely social justice action project. Embracing a distributive orientation to leadership where young people are at the centre of addressing various forms of oppression that impact their lives, youth are actively shaping the direction and scope of the movement for $15 and Fairness. In so doing, youth are demanding decent work, fairness, representation, and a say in government policies (Bush & Nesbitt, 2017).

As we reflect on the ways in which the Tikkun Youth Project utilized PAR to support youth-led initiatives for social change, we are struck by how youth leadership emerged from a praxis that allowed youth to amplify their voices, affirm their commitment to social justice, and speak truth to power. In contrast with conventional forms of practice that tokenize and patronize youth, the Tikkun Youth Project maps an experiential blueprint for youth-led social change––where youth leadership is not simply discussed, but becomes a practical reality.

References

Andersson, E. (2015). Situational political socialization: A normative approach to young people's adoption and acquisition of political preferences and skills. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18, 967–983. doi:10.1080/13676261.2015.1020926

Baczewska, E., Cachon, F., Daniel, Y., & Selimos, E. D. (2018). Mapping the terrain of strategically politics among social change-oriented youth. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 21, 288-303. doi:10.1080/13676261.2017.1366649

Balsano, A. (2005). Youth civic engagement in the United States: Understanding and addressing the impact of social impediments of positive youth and community development. *Applied Developmental Science*, 9, 188-201. doi:10.1207/s1532480xads0904_2

Benedicto, J. (2013). The political cultures of young people: An uncertain and unstable combinatorial logic. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 16, 712–729. doi:10.1080/13676261.2012.744812

Berlinger, N. (2003). Avoiding cheap grace: Medical harm, patient safety, and the culture(s) of forgiveness. *Hasting Center Report*, 33, 28-36. doi:10.2307/3527823

Block, S. (2015). A higher standard: The case for holding low-wage employers in Ontario to a higher standard. *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*. Retrieved from https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Ontario%20Office/2015/06/Higher_Standard.pdf

Brydon-Miller, M., Kral, M. J., Maguire, P., Noffke, S., & Sabhlok, A. (2011). Jazz and the Banyan tree: Roots and riffs in participatory action research. In Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed. pp. 387-400). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brown, V. (2017, September 17). The intersectional '$15 and fairness' campaign for decent work. *The University of Western Ontario Faculty Association*. Retrieved from https://www.uwofa.ca/article/intersectional-15-and-fairness-campaign-decent-work

Bush, D., & Nesbitt, D. (2017). Workers win big in Ontario. *Jacobin*. Retrieved from https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/11/ontario-fight-for-15-fairness-campaign-labor-ndp-Liberals

Carniol, B. (2010). *Case critical: Social service & social justice in Canada* (6th ed.). Toronto, Canada: Between the Lines.

Coletto, D. (2016, April 19). The next Canada: Politics, political engagement, and priorities ofCanada's next electoral powerhouse: Young Canadians. *Abacus Data*. Retrieved from http://abacusdata.ca/the-next-canada-politics-political-engagement-and-priorities-of-canadas-next-electoral-powerhouse-young-canadians/

Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Collins, P. H., & Bilge, S. (2016). *Intersectionality*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43, 1241-1300. doi:10.2307/1229039

D'Agostino, M. J., & Visser, A. (2010). Addressing and overcoming barriers to youth civic engagement. *International Public Management Review*, 11, 88-103. Retrieved from http://journals.sfu.ca/ipmr/index.php/ipmr/article/viewFile/89/89

DeJong, K., & Love, B. (2016). Youth oppression and elder oppression. In Adams, M., Bell, L. A., Goodman, D. J., and Joshi, K. Y. (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (3rd ed. pp. 299-339). New York, NY: Routledge.

Edelman, A., Gill, P., Comerford, K., Larson, M., & Hare, R. (2004). Youth development & youth leadership. A background paper. *National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth.* Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED485711

Edwards, G. (2014). *Social movements and protest.* Cambridge University Press.

Fayter, R. (2016). Social justice praxis within the walls to bridges program: Pedagogy of oppressed federally sentenced women. *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*, 25, 56-71. Retrieved from http://wallstobridges.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Rachels-Article-in-PDF-copy.pdf

Fight for $15 & Fairness. (2017, September 16). Ontario campus assembly for $15 & Fairness [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/Fightfor15andFairness/videos/1389200641187510/

Frache, P. (2016). The growing fight for $15 and fairness. *International Socialist.* Retrieved from http://www.socialist.ca/node/3110

Fraser, N. (2007). Feminist politics in the age of recognition: A two-dimensional approach to gender justice. *Studies in Social Justice*, 1, 23-35. doi:10.26522/ssj.v1i1.979

Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* London: Penguin Books.

Frisina, A. (2006). Back-talk focus groups as a follow-up tool in qualitative migration research: The missing link? *Qualitative Social Research*, 7(3). doi:10.17169/fqs-7.3.138

Furman, G. (2012). Social justice leadership as praxis: Developing capacities through preparation programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48, 191-229. doi:10.1177/0013161X11427394

Geoghan, A. (2017). 6 tabling tips to kick ass at your next event. *Green Philly.* Retrieved from https://www.greenphillyblog.com/philly/6-tabling-tips-kick-ass-next-event/

Giroux, H. (2013). *Youth in revolt: Reclaiming a democratic future.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Haraway, D. (1991). Situated knowledges. In *Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature* (pp. 183-201). New York, NY: Routledge.

Harris, A., Wyn, J., & Younes, S. (2010). Beyond apathetic or activist youth: 'Ordinary' young people and contemporary forms of participation. *Young*, 18, 9-32. doi:10.1177/110330880901800103

Kidd, S. A., & Kral, M. J. (2005). Practicing participatory action research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52, 187-195. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.187

Ladd, D., & Hennessy, T. (2009, July 11). New labour: When workers unite for fair treatment – how to rid the uneasy world of part-time work of unfairness, low pay and exploitation. *Toronto Star*. Retrieved from https://www.pressreader.com/canada/toronto-star/20090711/284614598533871

MacDonald, C. (2012). Understanding participatory action research: A qualitative research methodology option. *Canadian Journal of Action Research*, 13, 34-50. Retrieved from https://journals.nipissingu.ca/index.php/cjar/article/view/37/33

Maclean's. (2017, May 30). Minimum wage in Canada: By the numbers. *Maclean's*. Retrieved from https://www.macleans.ca/economy/money-economy/minimum-wage-in-canada-by-the-numbers/

National Post. (2016, May 30). As student debt climbs to an average past $25k, schools invest in battling the mental-health issues it causes. *National Post*. Retrieved from http://nationalpost.com/news/canada/as-student-debt-climbs-to-an-average-past-25k-schools-invest-in-battling-the-mental-health-issues-it-causes

Oxfam Briefing Paper. (2016). Youth and inequality: Time to support youth as agents of their own future. Retrieved from https://d1tn3vj7xz9fdh.cloudfront.net/s3fs-public/file_attachments/bp-youth-inequality-global-120816-en_0.pdf

Rosenthal, G. (2005). Tikkun ha-Olam: The metamorphosis of a concept. *The Journal of Religion*, 85, 214-40. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/427314

Sacks, J. (2005). *To heal a fractured world: The ethics of responsibility.* New York, NY: Schocken Books.

Samara's Democracy 360. (2015). Message not delivered: The myth of apathetic youth and the importance of contact in political participation. Retrieved from https://www.samaracanada.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/samara-messagenotdelivered-g.pdf?sfvrsn=2

Schmitz, P. (2012). *Everybody leads: Building leadership from the community up.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Smith, D. (1987). *The everyday world as problematic: A feminist sociology.* Boston: Northern University Press.

Taylor, S. R. (2018). *The body is not an apology: The power of radical self-love.* California: Barrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

United Nations (UN). (2013). International conference on population and development: Beyond 2014 thematic paper: Leadership and meaningful participation. Retrieved from http://icpdbeyond2014.org/uploads/browser/files/leadership_and_meaningful_participation.docx

Vromen, A., Xenos, M. A., & Loader, B. (2015). Young people, social media and connective action: From organisational maintenance to everyday political talk. *Journal of Youth Studies, 18,* 80–100. doi:10.1080/13676261.2014.933198

Winograd, M., & Hais, M. (2008). *Millennial makeover: Myspace, YouTube and the future of American politics.* Piscataway NJ: Rutgers University Press.

---

1 An adapted version of Frisina's (2006) 'back-talk' focus group technique. http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/138/304

2 Ontario's general minimum wage will increase to $14 on January 1, 2018, and $15 on January 1, 2019. Annual cost of living adjustments will resume thereafter. Retrieved from https://www.15andfairness.org/demands

3 [T]he ordinary workers in a company or the ordinary members of an organization, and not the leaders. Retrieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/rank-and-file

4 Community outreach aimed to inform the public by creating table displays and distributing pamphlets and other giveaway materials. Includes engaging with individuals who approach the table requesting information or asking questions. Tabling events serve as an information resource by promoting one-on-one interaction (Geoghan, 2017)

12. Unraveling the proverbial patchwork quilt*: Identifying and analyzing the challenges of an international, multi-site research partnership

JOHN ANTONIW

Abstract

Working on the Tikkun Youth Project for its entire duration, I was able to fully immerse myself in this multi-site, international, collaborative project. While it has been a very fruitful experience, working on such an expansive project comes with its challenges. Through this paper, I employ an autoethnography approach where I hone in on my experiences as the author and research assistant on this project, while exploring my own process and positionality in the project to identify the challenges that exist with this type of endeavour. I utilize three categories for this autoethnographic exploration: cultural, structural, and interpersonal/professional, as identified and outlined by Martin, Craft, and Tillema (2002). This paper aims to provide commentary about valuable lessons that were learned from this reflective process that could potentially provide perspective and recommendations to other individuals who may be working on or thinking about working on an international collaborative project in the future.

  Keywords: autoethnography; international research; international partnerships; multi-site research; multi-site partnerships; international collaboration

---

I have had the pleasure of being a team member of the Tikkun Youth Project

since its inception at the home site in Windsor, Ontario. Being a part of this journey, from the beginning of the project to its completion, has been an enlightening experience. Through my role, I have been able to work with the project director to help orchestrate the different facets of the project and work with the five different sites on a local, national, and international level. These experiences have been extremely insightful, meaningful, and have provided me with valuable learning experiences. Through this work, there have been successes and challenges inherent in a project with such a broad scope. Working with five different sites and people who exhibit different ways of life, different lived experiences, different cultures, and different positionalities, has provided an enlightening experience for those of us here at the main hub (Windsor site). These valuable lessons serve as the backbone for this chapter written with the intent of sharing with other individuals who are either working in or thinking about participating in an international collaborative project.

As the title of this work indicates, a reference has been made by van Swet, Armstrong, and Lloyd (2012) when comparing a collaborative international research project to that of a patchwork quilt:

> It requires adequate preparation and sufficient time for engagement. The process cannot be rushed and, as in quilting, it works best if the participants in the project are inspired and motivated to engage. In both quilting and research, it is important to be aware of the context and to invest in the relationships, to ensure that all participants' voices are heard, and that concerns can be expressed openly. (p. 649)

In this paper, I will use this reference as a sense of imagery and metaphor to deconstruct this important topic. With this comparison in mind, this chapter aims to deconstruct this proverbial patchwork quilt with the purpose of identifying the intricacies and lessons that ensue from an engagement of this nature.

In this chapter, I seek to explore the challenges that exist in a multi-site, international, and collaborative project, such as the Tikkun Youth Project. In this chapter, I engage in an autoethnography approach (discussed further in the next section) where I, as the author and research assistant, explore my experiences and challenges that exist when navigating such an intensive project that spans multiple continents.

I draw from the literature, such as Martin, Craft, and Tillema (2002) that

identifies three categories relating to international collaborations: cultural, structural, and interpersonal/professional. I will utilize these domains to explore the Tikkun Youth Project and to determine how each of these categories has been experienced and what recommendations could be suggested for future practice. Furthermore, I acknowledge my limitations in this writing in terms of my own privilege, proximity, and positionality in contrast to other members of the project team in different locales.

The Use of Autoethnography

When considering the best approach to explore the challenges of this specific international, multi-site partnership, it became evident that the qualitative research method of autoethnography would be appropriate. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) explain how researchers utilize this method:

> they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity. However, in addition to telling about experiences, autoethnographers often are required by social science publishing conventions to analyze these experiences. (p. 276)

This definition provides a few different elements to unpack. There is the element of an introspective reflection about one's experience, then there is an element about being involved in a culture, and then finally, there is a critical analysis element. These three elements will be interwoven throughout this written piece. Furthermore, it is important to note that involvement in a "culture" refers to the broad sense of the term "culture" (i.e., social group). Therefore, this will be the culture of a team of researchers from across the globe united through the Tikkun Youth Project.

The use of autoethnography proves to be useful in this analysis because of my own lived experience and positionality within this project. As a team member of the project since its inception at the host site, I have been able to participate in every segment of the project from inception to dissemination, including communicating and working with all of the sites from across the globe. I have been working directly for the project director and, as such, I

have been working through all of the different elements and challenges of the project. Because of my experience and position, I am in a position to meaningfully reflect on my own introspective reflections I had while I was involved with the culture of this research team. In turn, I will be able to critically analyze this information and compare it to themes about privilege and context in the literature.

Cultural Considerations for International Collaboration

In the first domain that Martin et al. (2002) have identified, one of the most prominent and salient aspects of cultural considerations is that of cultural norms. It is important to dissect and understand these norms and how they, "affect researchers' working relationships and mutual expectations" (p. 366). In particular, Martin et al. (2002) also identify the challenge of relating to the pace of work and how this varies across cultures.

Reflecting on this consideration, this is definitely something that became salient throughout our work on this project. Expanding on the idea of pace of work that was aforementioned, this was a key issue within our project. As the host site, we were responsible for facilitating and organizing five different sites from different locales within Canada and across the globe. Each of these sites is unique because of the diverse experiences of the research teams. However, as the host site, situated in a city in southwestern Ontario, we generally encompassed "traditional" North American values about work pace and timelines. We set out clear timelines and working schedules for all of our partners. However, oftentimes we found that these deadlines and schedules were frequently missed by some of our sites and partners.

This begs an important question about the cultural constructions of work, pacing, and scheduling. Again, being so intertwined in my locale and North American academic values, we adhered to strict deadlines and scheduling that is fast-paced and time sensitive. Nevertheless, we needed to stop and think about how we were working with a diverse set of partners that had different cultural considerations relating to the concept of time and different cultural values surrounding work. This is a result of their own values and cultural norms, but also can be intertwined with structural issues, which will be explored further in the next segment. Therefore, while it may have caused

a sense of frustration and confusion in the immediate moments, it became clear that we needed to check our own positionality and reflect on how it influences the ways in which we view and operate the project.

To showcase another relevant example, at the end of our project we held a five-day international symposium in Windsor, Ontario. Part of my duties as a research assistant were to help organize some of the activities and dinners. Prior to participants' arrival they were asked to inform us of any particular dietary restrictions, and we received just one request which we accommodated to the best of our abilities given the location and the circumstances. The first evening of the symposium when everyone came together, we held a group dinner at a local Vietnamese restaurant that was nearby the hotel where everyone was staying. Since Windsor is one of the most multicultural cities in Ontario outside of Toronto, we thought it would be important to showcase this aspect through a diverse cuisine. However, after the dinner engagement, it came to our attention that many individuals did not particularly appreciate our choice of restaurant. Furthermore, the issue of cuisine choice was a recurring theme throughout the five days, despite the fact that we had intentionally chosen different menus so that participants could experience food that was different from their norm, as part of the learning and cultural experience. When we received comments that were not supportive, it was important for us to step back and take a minute to consider the different factors at play.

Reflecting on this after the fact, and considering Martin et al. (2002), it becomes evident that during our initial surprise about these comments, we needed to be mindful of the different cultural norms and arrangements surrounding food that these partners bring with them from different countries and even within Canada. This cultural consideration is a perfect illustration of how important it is to be mindful and reflective. In the moment we can get upset thinking just about our own perspective. However, taking the time to appreciate the perspective of the other individuals is incredibly important, especially when considering the different cultural norms and customs of our partners. Food is such a critical part of culture and customs, so it should play a factor in the decision making.

If we had to plan such an event again, we would take different measures. Instead of merely asking about dietary restrictions, to which there were few responses, we would send participants a list of food items they expect to be served during their stay and ask for their feedback. In this way, the expectations of all participants would be taken into consideration and this

procedure ensures that the preferences of all participants would be met to a greater degree of satisfaction. It would also give ownership to participants so that they accept responsibility for the success of an important component of the symposium week.

Martin et al. (2002) identified that the ability to learn the other partners' terminology (with respect to education) is essential for the partnership and collaboration to be successful. This is something that we believe to be extremely important when working on an international partnership. When considering the different cultural constructions of terminology, we were proactive with this in mind when working on the project. For example, our Windsor site designed a training manual to be given to all five project sites. Within this training manual, a great amount of detail was provided about the project including research questions and most importantly, clearly defined important terms relating to the project. Therefore, this training guide allowed us to clarify the terminology we were using so all the sites had a clear and consistent understanding of the project. Examples of such terms included "youth researcher," and "university researcher," among others. However, if we push the critical lens further on this concept, it does appear that we provided our own specific North American terminology in a one-way "exchange" with site partners. Obviously, certain stipulations such as proposals, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) applications, and research ethics may influence what language/terminology we use. However, having an open discourse about the different terminologies we all may use may be a beneficial technique to employ in the future to have a mutual understanding and collaborative approach in selecting and defining terms used on a project.

Therefore, cultural considerations are paramount and become the baseline of what we need to constantly keep in mind and reflect upon. These serve as the backbone that relate to the next two considerations. Therefore, it is extremely important to be mindful of this within practice moving forward.

Structural Considerations for International Collaboration

Another layer that Martin et al. (2002) identified for consideration are

structural factors. Generally, the authors spoke of structural differences in terms of the macro organization of school systems and how culturally they may differ with respect to age/grade levels and curriculum. They also spoke broadly about the ways that decisions are made and the different layers of decision makers that need to be consulted to receive approval for research (Martin et al., 2002).

What can come from this conversation as a whole is the possibility of looking at the larger, more macro level of the structural issues that are in place that can help expedite the process or, alternatively, produce "roadblocks" to the desired effects/timelines set about by the North American home site in Windsor, Ontario. This is something crucial to talk about because the individuals at all five sites have different lived experiences where their structure is organized differently with unique operational issues to consider.

A truly salient issue for an international partnership with five sites across the globe is in regards to time zones and scheduling. When you have individuals in multiple time zones with busy schedules, trying to coordinate and schedule meetings can prove challenging. Phelps and Hohlfeld (2011) identified time zones as something to consider when collaborating, specifically citing how time differences can alter the timeline of a project, so this must be considered when developing a project timeline.

The Tikkun Youth Project was a massive undertaking. Coordinating a meeting with just the Windsor site was a challenge. Therefore, when trying to schedule whole site meetings, many structural issues need to be considered. Firstly, finding a time that would work for individuals in Windsor, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Kosovo, and South Africa. Arranging schedules for this many sites can prove to be difficult. Then, when this is actually confirmed, there are issues with technology. It can be hard to conduct meetings through technology (albeit it is also a blessing, as this project would be hard to conduct without this type of technology) due to glitches, and lack of in-person body language and social cues. It generally can be a harder form of communication. Then to add on to this, there are issues with having a stable Wi-Fi connection, connectivity issues, Skype issues, and other technical glitches. Upon reflecting on this, continuous reflection on this experience is important. When pre-planning an internationally collaborative project, keeping these factors in mind and trying to finesse them will be an important consideration that proves to be a continuous challenge.

One item to consider is the structural inequities that may exist among sites. One particular example that came up in practice was an issue of the digital divide. One of the sites did not have easily accessible computer/ Internet access. This resulted in having our site members stop to reflect and recognize our advantages where most of our youth had immediate access to computers and the Internet. The less advantaged site required careful, advanced planning where it was necessary to make a long journey to a location where they could access these resources. Since we required Internet access and computer access for parts of the project, it was necessary to find solutions to this problem. One activity we wanted to foster was creating a quick video on a cellphone or web camera from the researchers. What we learned was that while maybe our researchers in Windsor could quickly use their cell phone or have access to their laptop with a web camera, it was not such a quick fix to organize one of these videos for other participants in different locales. Rather, again, it took careful, advanced planning. Therefore, it made us mindful of timelines and what would be reasonable considering this digital divide.

Additionally, there are structural issues that no one can account for in the research process. Sometimes we can predict potential roadblocks, but sometimes things will happen that participants and researchers cannot predict or plan for, and will be required to respond appropriately. For instance, one of our specific sites has unfortunately been through some challenges that have caused delays in their ability to perform certain tasks. One of the most salient was an instance where the partnering community organization on the project was robbed and crucial resources were taken from them. Furthermore, one site recently experienced some severe drought issues. Therefore, it becomes obvious that these pressing issues of sustenance take precedence. When reflecting on these particular instances, it demonstrates that there are sometimes systemic injustices on a structural scale that you cannot predict that will come into play. This requires flexibility and compassion towards partners in the project, as it truly is heartbreaking to hear of these challenges.

Finally, a structural issue to consider when looking at a project that spans multiple years such as this is the issue of attrition. In particular, the attrition of our youth researchers is something that needed to be considered. Since this project spanned three years (with a fourth year focusing on dissemination), it can be difficult to ask our youth researcher participants to remain committed for all three years. Most of our youth researchers at

the home site, for example, were University of Windsor students. Many were in their third or fourth year of study. As the project progressed, some of these students moved on, moved to different cities, took on full-time jobs, etc. which had displaced them away from the project with other pressing priorities. This is definitely a structural issue to consider when planning a project, specifically one that spans multiple years. With our Windsor site, in particular, this became a frustrating challenge, as we would be left with uncertainty of not knowing who is still involved or committed to the project. This required us to be innovative and flexible, which resulted in recruiting a second generation of youth researchers that would blend within our first generation. This may have been something we did not anticipate, but it is important to step back and reflect upon this. Some of the participants would report on issues of opportunity (and lack thereof), precarious work, etc. in their research contributions to the project. As such, these are things they are dealing with in their own life. This required us to be open minded, understanding, and sensitive to their need to move along from the project to address these issues and achieve their goals. It is the whole nature of the project and research. Keeping this in mind for future projects, it is important to measure and get a sense of understanding of how long someone may be involved, what their expectations are, and what that may look like.

Interpersonal/Professional Considerations for International Collaboration

The third consideration that Martin et al. (2002) identified relates to the interpersonal and professional considerations that one must keep in mind during international partnerships and collaborations. They identified that there must be attention paid to establishing mutual trust and a careful balancing act of assigning responsibilities. They identified that the foundation of any successful relationship is trust and mutual respect, so this is the foundation a project must be guided upon (Martin et al., 2002). Furthermore, when looking at the professional considerations, things such as methodological preferences as well as past experiences and theoretical orientations may come up and may potentially conflict or clash between researchers. Additionally, there may be different work styles present, which

can occur anywhere, but especially if there may be different cultural norms of considerations interwoven within that as well (Martin et al., 2002).

One salient example of this within the Tikkun Youth Project was the added element of ethics approval and collaboration with our Thunder Bay site. Our Thunder Bay site focused on working with Indigenous youth. When working with the Indigenous population, there are further considerations to keep in mind in terms of approval, research ethics, and customs/norms. For instance, this particular site had an added stipulation that an elder must participate in the research, as per their cultural norms. As such, Indigenous Elders were incorporated through a partnership with Nishnawbe Aski Nation. This required us to make these considerations within the project budget (to ensure we had budget allotment to compensate the elder for their contributions) and to keep this in mind with the structure of Thunder Bay's research process and timeline. This may have been something we would not consider in the Windsor site, for instance. However, the interpersonal and professional consideration of working with Indigenous populations has extra layers to incorporate that we need to be mindful of when moving forward. Therefore, future projects should conduct intensive formal or informal interviews with potential partners to learn about their professional, cultural, and interpersonal needs, and what that may look like.

Referring back to what Martin et al. (2002) identified as being important considerations, the concept of work style comes up again. This was something alluded to in an earlier discussion, but nonetheless, it has an important piece to discuss when we look at it through a framework of interpersonal/professional considerations. Additionally, Phelps and Hohlfeld (2011) identified work ethics (and the variance amongst partners) as a pitfall in international partnership to avoid. They identified that work ethics and values can differ from culture to culture, but at the end of the day it is the consumer that needs to be respected in getting the product done in a timely manner. This was interesting to ponder considering the different agencies and stakeholders that we needed to report to (e.g., SSHRC). The work styles and preferences of researchers can be vastly different depending on what locale we are from. Generally in North America, we tend to be fast-paced, quickly work on things, and do things in an individualistic manner. However, other locales may have a slower pace, may be more collectivist in terms of consultation, and may need more time to work on things. General cultural differences and norms aside, there may even just be a difference in personal work cultural preferences. For instance, as the host site in Windsor, we

would be adamantly working on the project continuously throughout the three plus years. However, for other sites, this project may not be as much of a priority. Whether it be because someone is just collaborating on the project, or perhaps they have their own principal projects to work on, or simply have larger structural issues to deal with (as aforementioned) – there may be a clash in terms of priority and importance from other sites. This can cause frustration, especially when one's own values in terms of work preference or priority clashes with another site. As we continue to recommend, reflection is key. This in conjunction with communication is paramount in order to establish clear and mutually agreed upon deadlines and work schedules. This will be extrapolated on in the recommendations section.

Finally, one last element that Martin et al. (2002) identified was that of communication. This can be understood in terms of techniques, patterns, and styles. In addition to Martin et al.'s (2002) contributions on this matter, Hildebrand, Lindsell-Roberts, and Settle-Murphy (2007) emphasized the importance of communication, specifically in regards to building a sense of trust in a partnership. They believed that the "heart" of a partnership is established through this building of trust. They further identified that in order to build this trust, there is a heavy reliance on communication, both verbal and nonverbal, specifically citing the need to be able to "read" people through different cues (e.g., physical, verbal, and social). Our main method of communication in this project was digitally – through technology and electronic communication – which may be missing some of these critical cues. Mainly this would consist of e-mail, but also additionally Skype video teleconferencing/calling, as well as phone calls. We have previously discussed the difference of time zones and the challenge that can pose. However, since the project is scattered across the globe, the level of accountability can sometimes be different. What this looked like would be that sometimes e-mails would be ignored for long periods of time, or sometimes receiving no response at all. This was something very frustrating from the home team, as our only way to stay in communication for the project is through this means.

Upon reflecting through this autoethnographic piece, there are obvious explanations for some of this behaviour. For instance, we previously talked about the digital divide, and the lack of stable Wi-Fi and Internet access for one site in particular. Additionally, we talked about the competing and differentiation of interests and priorities amongst sites and researchers,

which would allow e-mails to be on the back burner. Also, there may be a cultural or personal preference for communication style to be done via phone or other means.

Future Recommendations

Part of autoethnography consists of having a critical reflection on one's participation in a cultural experience. These critical considerations have been interwoven throughout this chapter. However, this critical lens should be pushed further when considering future recommendations to make for individuals who are engaged in or are considering working on an international research project.

Martin et al. (2002) provided some important considerations that I believe are critical to keep in mind moving forward when working on international collaborations and partnerships. They identified that culturally speaking, there are two essential aspects to consider: 1) knowledge of the traditions of the other culture, and 2) a commitment to ongoing understanding and sensitivity of the other culture's cultural norms (Martin et al., 2002). With this in mind, it becomes pivotal that researchers doing international research allot time to familiarize themselves on the traditions and cultural norms of the different cultures they will be working with in the partnership. It should not solely just be up to that culture or that site to inform you of these differences. As a researcher, you should be proactive to research these things, start dialogues to ask questions if time permits, and continue to be open-minded and sensitive to the different needs and styles that you come across.

In addition to this, I believe it to be extremely important to have a transparent and open dialogue amongst potential partners before forming a partnership in which a discussion surrounding work styles, expectations, needs, abilities, work schedules, and timelines are discussed. This could perhaps be incorporated into a Memorandum of Understanding or Terms of Reference document between partners. Oftentimes the source of frustration may stem from the different expectations we all have and how these conflict with one another. This is a matter of not knowing these pertinent things before entering a partnership. However, if everyone takes the time to talk about their needs, their abilities, and their desires, and they work

collaboratively to negotiate and find a delicate balance, then it will be better for everyone involved in the project. Phelps and Hohlfeld (2011) provide a suggestion that could be utilized in these instances. Their suggestion was to discuss and then put in writing all of the agreements that partners make in order to ensure accountability for all collaborators and partners.

Martin et al. (2002) sum it up perfectly when they say that, "international research is a constant learning process for such researchers" (p. 367) and I agree completely with this. My participation in the Tikkun Youth Project was so enlightening and informing about important considerations about the world, about my own privilege, and how to be more mindful about reconciling differences. Anyone that is entering or continues to work within international research should be aware and commit themselves to the continuous learning cycle and process that occurs in this research. Coming in with an open mind and a thirst for knowledge and understanding will serve not only that individual well, but all of the partners on that project and the future research that would be produced. Almansour (2015) drew upon claims from Simonin (1997) that collaborative partnerships tend to not always achieve the original goals that they set out, and oftentimes, they actually end up failing. While this may seem rather pessimistic upon first glance, there is a sense of innovation within this statement. When we engage in the research process anyway, we oftentimes will find our research taking different twists and turns depending on the data. We remain open to where our research and our experience takes us. As such, we need to keep this mentality in mind when we are working on collaborative projects – sometimes these detours bring about rich and meaningful contributions that we should embrace.

Limitations

As one final attempt to provide the essential critical consideration that comes with autoethnography, it is important to consider the limitations of my chapter. The inherent nature of autoethnography provides some crucial potential limitations to discuss.

For instance, the concept of reliability is something Ellis et al. (2011) highlight as a potential limitation. When working with this concept, they identify it as an assessment of the writer's credibility. This begs important questions such as are the experiences of the author true? Could they have

actually happened? Did the author take liberties with their storytelling or reflection for the purpose of enticing writers? Due to the very nature of this work, it is highly personal and reflective. My life and lived experience is entwined within this work. Therefore, I definitely welcome and expect people to ask these critical questions to wonder about reliability.

Additionally, the concept of generalizability was identified by Ellis et al. (2011) as well. Specifically, they finessed the term to look at what generalizability would look like in this domain with autoethnography, and it turns its focus on to the readers of this text and how much it resonates with them: is their own lived experience reflected here? Does this information resonate with their own experience or experiences from their colleagues, friends, etc.? Therefore, when reading this piece, consider if any of these concepts or challenges have resonated with you if you have worked on international research or partnerships, or perhaps you have heard stories from your colleagues, friends, and others about their experiences. This is one way that Ellis et al. (2011) have identified as being a way to gauge the generalizability of this style of research work.

With autoethnography, it is imperative for the author to be able to identify their positionality and check their privilege as needed. Therefore, my view and construction of these experiences in the project are coming from someone who is working with the project director at the host site. More specifically, identifying myself as a white, able-bodied male who comes from a middle-class upbringing. These parts of my identity will influence how I view and experience these interactions in the project, therefore this must be noted because someone from another site writing on the same topic may have a completely different outlook and experience. However, that is also the beauty of autoethnography and is also a built-in area of limitation.

Writing this chapter has been a continuous journey to reflect on my four years working on this project and the different "challenges" we experienced. Even that language "challenge" can be contested. We perceive these as "challenges" because they differentiate from our own expectations that stem from our lived experience in our positionality. What I have continued to learn from this project experience (in conjunction to my own life experiences and schooling) is that it is important to step back and identify the intersectional experiences of others and how this can create a differentiation to what I may expect or be used to. I truly believe this to be the core of what this chapter has discussed and what we aim to have others do when working on such projects.

Through this chapter, I have been able to unravel the proverbial patchwork quilt, which van Swet et al. (2012) use as an image to represent international collaborative projects being similar to that of a patchwork quilt: "Both in quilting and research it is important to be aware of the context and to invest in the relationships, to ensure that all participants' voices are heard and that concerns can be expressed openly" (p. 649). What becomes evident from this unraveling process is that at the end of the day, all of our contributions as partners on this international project are patches of this proverbial quilt. They can be vastly different in appearance, texture, design, etc., but in the end, when they are all sewn together, it creates a masterpiece. Through the journey of constructing this quilt, we have been able to recognize just how meaningful and enriching it can be to bring together these different patches and positionalities to create something for the better good. As you continue to read through this book and learn about our project, I hope you see just how magnificent our patchwork quilt has become.

References

Almansour, S. (2015). The challenges of international collaboration: Perspectives from Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University. *Cogent Education*, 2, 1-13. doi:10.1080/2331186X.2015.1118201

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1), 1-18. doi:10.17169/fqs-12.1.1589

Hildebrand, C., Lindsell-Roberts, S., & Settle-Murphy, N. (2007). Cross-cultural collaboration. *PM Networks*, 21(3), 46-54. Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.ledproxy2.uwindsor.ca/docview/198785998?accountid=14789

Martin, D. A., Craft, A. R., & Tillema, H. (2002). International collaboration: Challenges for researchers. *The Educational Forum*, 66, 365-370. doi:10.1080/00131720208984856

Phelps, M., & Hohlfeld, U. (2011). International collaboration – Needs, essentials, and pitfalls. *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 37(3), 30-33. doi:10.1002/bult.2011.1720370312

Simonin, B. (1997). The importance of collaborative know-how: An empirical

test of the learning organization. *Academy of Management Journal, 40*(5), 1150-1174. doi:10.5465/256930

van Swet, J., Armstrong, A. C., & Lloyd, C. (2012). International collaboration as a patchwork quilt: Experiences of developing collaborative practice and research in an international masters programme. *Professional Development in Education, 38*(4), 647-661. doi:10.1080/19415257.2012.672929

Contributors

Riham Al-Saadi is a PhD student in Social Work. Her dissertation focuses on acculturation processes of immigrant populations. She is an instructor at the University of Windsor, teaching Social Work courses to undergraduate and graduate students. Riham's practical experience involves her current role as a Clinical Social Worker at Hospice of Windsor-Essex; she was a Social Worker for an agency based in Toronto, Family Oriented Rehab Services, where she provided individual and family therapy. Riham held multiple roles at the Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex, working closely with Syrian refugees and refugees from other backgrounds, assisting them in their first year of resettlement in Windsor on health/mental health, employment, education, and community connections. Riham has worked closely with immigrant populations, primarily immigrant youth, in other agencies – Women Enterprise Skills Training as well as Ready Set Go. Riham works in private practice, running Transparency Counseling Services. Riham has over ten years of research experience in volunteer, student, and employment roles; she is a current member in the Immigrant Youth Research Group, Emotional Competence Research Group, and a research team member in a longitudinal study on Syrian refugees' resettlement in Windsor-Essex.

John Antoniw holds multiple degrees from the University of Windsor, including a MSW, M.Ed., and a M.A. in Sociology. He is an Ontario certified teacher and is a registered and practicing social worker in Windsor, Ontario within the field of adult mental health and adolescent peer support. He has previously worked in a variety of domains, including: harm reduction, community development, specialized mental health, and end of life support. John was a research assistant on the Tikkun Youth Project for the duration of the project (2014-2018).

Evelina Baczewska holds a Master of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Windsor. She also holds a combined Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in Sociology and Criminology from the same university. Her research interests include intersectionality and identity politics, as well as postmodern feminist theory and embodiment. Working on the Tikkun Youth Project, Evelina applied her critical analytical skills utilizing an intersectional and sociological approach for exploring youth politics. She co-authored an article published in the Journal of Youth Studies titled "Mapping the

Strategic Politics of Social Change Oriented Youth" (2018). Her work as a sociologist analyzes human interdependence and interaction with various social structures, revealing how we collectively make up structures of oppression, as well as the power of our collective agency and potential to confront and address injustice.

Janet Balyeat is a retired secondary school educator and adjunct professor at Grand Rapids Community College. Janet has worked with youth all over the world, including six years working in Kosovo. Much of her professional career has been dedicated to encouraging youth voice.

Dr. Frances (Frankie) Cachon is a lecturer in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Windsor. Dr. Cachon served as a Co-Investigator for the Tikkun Youth Project and the youth liaison/mentor at our Windsor research site. Frankie is a feminist sociologist with a specialization in social justice. She is a long-time social justice advocate/activist who is committed to cultivating transformative social change through post-secondary education. To this end, Dr. Cachon's current work with the University of Windsor's Bystander Initiative focuses on youth-led sexual violence prevention education. Her research interests include student leadership in social change efforts, feminist pedagogies, youth-led advocacy/activism, and transnational social movements and migration.

Lina Chaker is currently pursuing her Juris Doctor degrees from the University of Windsor and University of Detroit Mercy. While completing her undergraduate degree in Communication and Biological Sciences at the University of Windsor, she participated in the Tikkun Youth Project by exploring motivations and barriers to youth advocacy. As featured in TVO's Short Doc, Lina dedicates much of her time to advocacy through organizing intercultural projects. Lina has amplified concerns of newcomer youth to governmental entities through provincial appointments to the Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities and continues to do so through a federal appointment to the Cross-Cultural Roundtable of Security.

Jacky Chan is a graduate student in Lakehead University's specialized Education for Change MEd program. His MEd research focuses on Indigenous youth wellbeing and resilience through embodied healing practices of laughter-play yoga. Jacky received national recognition through multiple awards for his outstanding academic leadership: The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education's (STLHE) 3M National Student Fellowship, a Joseph-Armand Bombardier SSHRC Graduate Scholarship (2017-18), and Lakehead University's Leadership Luminary Award (2018).

Nombuso Dlamini is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at York University and the Director of Youth in Politics. Dlamini was co-applicant and researcher for the Toronto site of the Tikkun Youth Project. She also served as the inaugural Jean Augustine Chair in the New Urban Environment, York University after serving as the Research Leadership Chair at the University of Windsor. Dlamini's research includes youth projects that focus on civic engagements, youth negotiation, and production of diaspora identities; and, gender-based projects examining immigrant women's Canadian work experiences, immigrant women's production of social capital, and ethnic minority women's health and socioeconomic livelihood. She teaches in the area of youth culture, identity, and civic engagement. Dlamini's youth-based writings include the acclaimed University of Toronto Press publication Youth and Identity Politics in South Africa, 1990-94 (Anthropological Horizons); Engaging the Canadian Diaspora: Youth Social Identities in a Canadian Border City; and Female Youth Participation in the Urban Milieu: Unpacking Barriers and Opportunities. Dlamini is also known for her global work on youth social identities, gender parity, and the effects of new urbanism in global literacy and education. She has participated in multiple interdisciplinary projects in Sub-Saharan Africa including the Social Work in Nigeria Project (SWIN-P).

Nesreen Elkord is an Arab immigrant educator and a passionate scholar of immigrant students' education. She is an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor and Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada. She is a member of the Windsor-Essex Local Immigration Partnership (WE LIP) and co-chair of its Newcomer Youth Planning Committee. WE LIP is an initiative of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to encourage communities across Ontario to develop a comprehensive plan for the delivery of newcomer services. Elkord is published in various areas including narrative inquiry and inclusive and reciprocal education.

Siphenathi Fulani. My name is Siphenathi Fulani and I am from Khayelitsha. I am a young professional and a dedicated hard working activist, a product of Equal Education. I joined Amazwi Wethu filming project in 2015. On the AW orientation camp, I was introduced to film and how it can be used in activism.

Dr. Shawnee Hardware is a Researcher with the Child Development Institute, Toronto where she is developing resources for the Stop Now and Plan program www.stopnowandplan.ca. She served as the Toronto site

coordinator for the Tikkun Youth Project thereafter, she became the Research Associate and Coordinator for the Youth in Politics project, Youth in Politics. Shawnee holds a PhD in Language, Culture and Teaching from York University, Toronto and a M.Ed. in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Studies from Memorial University, Newfoundland. Her interests include student engagement, youth civic engagement, English language teaching and learning, and sociolinguistics. Shawnee has worked as a teacher in Jamaica and Japan. As a doctoral student in Toronto, she co-founded the Jamaican Canadian Youth Council (JCYC) where she facilitated other graduate students to address systemic issues that impacted Jamaican-Canadian youth's social and educational life. While actively volunteering with the JCYC, she also served as the Youth Director at the Caribbean African Canadian (CAFCAN) Social Services where she worked in conjunction with the JCYC members to engage more youth in CAFCAN's work and initiatives.

Dr. Salma Ismail is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town. She convenes and teaches at all levels in Adult Education. She has taught literacy in communities and has been an activist in worker, youth, and political movements. She has published in the field of feminist popular education, equity, and institutional transformation. She is the author of the book *The Victoria Mxenge Housing Project – Women Building Communities through Social Action and Informal Learning*.

Kylee Johnstone is a graduate student in Lakehead University's Education for Change MEd program specializing in Social Justice Education and Women's Studies. Kylee's academic interests include feminist theories in education, inclusivity, and equity methods for marginalized learners, and well-being counselling as school curriculum with youth. Kylee volunteers with Thunder Bay's Counselling Centre as a youth mentor with school-based mental health groups.

Ereblir Kadriu is Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Prishtina and senior adviser of the American Advising Center – EdUSA Kosovo. Ereblir's professional career has been dedicated to expanding educational opportunities for all Kosovar youth. His research interests include the social psychology of peacebuilding, teaching and learning, and youth civic activism.

Sisanda Khuzani My name is Sisanda Khuzan, I'm a 21year old activist. I was born and raised in Cape Town South Africa, I'm a second born in my family. Currently I am working at Equal Education as a community Leader. I'm part of Kino kadre. "KinoKadre is a national collective of film artists

obsessed with the craft of cinema. This African Kino movement is guided by the understanding that Story drives all processes in the world of film" (KinoKadre, 2019).I'm an aspiring poet and film maker. I enjoy doing art and being around artists.

Dr. Lisa Korteweg is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University, in Thunder Bay, northern Ontario, Canada. She researches, teaches, and specializes in settler-colonial studies and Indigenous education, decolonizing teacher education, and Land-based approaches to education-as-reconciliation.

Cynthia Kwakyewah is a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Oxford (UK). She obtained a bachelor's degree in International Development Studies and a master's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from York University (Canada). Over the years, Cynthia has worked on different community-university research projects involving youth. She was the Research and Communications Associate for the Youth in Politics project, Youth in Politics, which aimed at increasing high school students' civic engagement. Prior to that, she worked as a Research Assistant for the Tikkun Youth Project, Toronto site. Furthermore, as a Youth Researcher for the Engaging Girls Changing Communities Project, Cynthia conducted peer-interviews on girl's leadership and civic activities. Together with other youth, she helped pilot social action initiatives that encouraged young women to re-define leadership and engage in community life in their own terms. In addition to her youth-centered research activities, Cynthia has co-authored journal articles on youth civic engagement and leadership in peer-reviewed journals.

Amanda Maxongo Amanda is studious! She is passionate about both science and the Arts and is very expressive: singing, acting and writing take up her non-study hours. She's a crazy, wild, #loverofjunkfood, and full of surprises.

Danielle S. McLaughlin was Director of Education for theCanadian Civil Liberties Association and Education Trust from 1988 to 2016. Recipient of the Law Foundation of Ontario Community Leadership in Justice Fellowship, she spent the first half 2011 as a visiting fellow at the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education. Danielle designed, developed, and delivered CCLET's Teaching Civil Liberties and Civil Liberties in the Schools programs that, each year, continues to engage thousands of students from kindergarten to high schools, to faculties of education, to law schools in lively discussion about the conflicts of rights and freedoms that affect everyone who lives

in a democracy. She is co-author with her son, Reuben McLaughlin, of the That's Not Fair! videos, now used widely in elementary social studies classes. Danielle is the author of *That's Not Fair! Getting to Know Your Rights and Freedoms* (2016) for kids ages 7-11, and *Freedom of Expression: Deal with It Before You are Censored* (2019) for kids ages 9-14. She also broadcasts a weekly Know Your Rights segment on Kelly and Company at AMI.ca.

Lona Mtembu. When I started in Amazwi Wethu I was 16 years old. I was doing grade 11 at Thembelihle high school and I was part of Equal Education, I was an equalizer. I then joined Amazwi Wethu where we were introduced to the Tikkun Olam Project. Now, I have finished my high school. I am currently registered for my second year in Diploma in Management, majoring in Project Management and Financial Management.

Lyndal Pottier. Lyndal is currently an assistant lecturer and PhD student based in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town. Her involvement with the Tikkun Project came about through her work at Equal Education, where she was the project coordinator of the youth media advocacy project Amazwi Wethu (isiXhosa for *Our Voices*). She co-wrote an article about this project titled: *Amazwi Wethu: Exploring the Possibilities of Cinema as a Solidarity Forging Tool* (Paramoer & Pottier, 2017). Lyndal's current research is in the area of adult and community education, development and social justice.

Chris Rabideau is an award winning, community-engaged artist and advocate based in Windsor, Ontario. Chris has worked as a director, producer, performer, playwright, project facilitator, and educator with various community not-for-profit organizations and educational institutions. His work has focused on creating theatre-based performances and projects that address social justice issues. He is currently the Artistic Director of the Arts Collective Theatre (ACT), a not-for-profit organization he founded in 2014 that is committed to enhancing the well-being of the Windsor-Essex community through arts-based practices. Chris also works as a sessional instructor at the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education.

Karen Roland: In her role as Professor and Experiential Learning Specialist (recently retired) with the University of Windsor, Faculty of Education, Dr. Karen Roland consulted and collaborated with teacher candidates, faculty, and school partners to assist in the development of strategies to address social justice and equity issues in teacher education. Her research interests include teacher education, experiential learning, social justice and equity,

restorative justice, knowledge communities, and educational policy and administration.

Erin Rose is a youth activist from the small town of Corunna, Ontario and now resides in Windsor, Ontario. Erin has her Bachelor of Arts degree in Women and Gender Studies and a Bachelor of Education degree in the Primary/Junior division. Erin has been involved with the Tikkun Youth Project since 2015 and held the University of Windsor's Women and Gender Studies 2015 Voice award. Erin has a passion for working with children and enjoys spending time with her family and friends. She hopes that her future career as a teacher will provide a space and community for students to find their passions; she also wants to help students succeed. Erin aspires to inspire the next generations to come.

Erwin Dimitri Selimos is Associate Professor of Sociology at West Shore Community College. Erwin's research interests include migrant inclusion, immigrant and refugee children and youth, youth activism, and qualitative methodology.

Aphiwe Tomose: When I started this project I was just a 17 year old activist, who enjoyed things that involve music especially deep house and loves to give life to his creativity through drawing and writing short stories, poems. I knew little about politics and activism. As a person who thinks out the box and likes to stretch his imagination, this was a great opportunity to enlarge my capacity of knowledge. l was then introduced to Tikkun Olam which simply meaning healing the world. This project taught me a lot of things such how to conduct a formal interview. Now I am activist artist not to mention a traveller, soon enough an author who has played a part of healing the word through collective processes in spaces like this Tikkun Olam international project. #Growingupinademocracy is complex.

Phelokazi Tsoko: My name is Phelokazi Tsoko. I am 25 years old. I live in South Africa, Cape Town, Khayelitsha with my 7 siblings in a 4 roomed house. I'm an extroverted person who is ambitious and energetic. I'm a talkative person who likes to socialize with people. In 2016 after I involved myself in a film project I became a special needs teacher assistant at a primary school for almost 18 months, here I noticed that a teaching career was my calling. I decided to take a step forward to further my studies. I applied to a Further Education and Training (FET) College as an educare student. I passed N4: this course takes 18 months to complete, and now I'm in N5. By the end of 2019, I will complete my N6. Then I look forward to studying at the university of

my choice. I want to be a foundation phase teacher and I will work hard to complete it and teach out of the country.

Ainslee Winters B.A. (Hons) * DTATI: Ainslee draws on 5 years of experience as an art therapist, community wellness program provider, and influencer to inspire and help heal young adults and adolescents. Her involvement with high-risk youth in a custody/detention facility, practice with newcomers, and assisting young adults with mental health concerns motivate and encourage her practice. Her ability to connect with her diverse clients helps support her holistic approach to wellness. An excellent facilitator, Ainslee uses her expertise to help her clients gain a deeper sense of self-awareness and connection to themselves and the community. To Ainslee, art is an exploratory avenue for people to gain insight, awareness, and knowledge while becoming directly connected with the subject matter. She hopes to continue to support self-discovery, connection, transformation, and inspiration through creative expression, holistic healing modalities, and outreach programming. She believes it is through our own self-growth process that we will begin to see ripples of growth throughout our community.