

SHAKING THE MOVERS 2021

Building the Skills of Advocacy to Strategize and Intervene in the World



Ryerson University (Renaming in Process)
November 20-21, 2021

Virtual conference for youth in Ontario and Manitoba
Report prepared by Annabelle De Jesus and Steven Gibson

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Letter from the Hon. Landon Pearson

No one was really prepared for the pandemic. All over the world countries had let their defenses down. Surveillance units like the one Canada set up after SARS were dismantled and so signals were missed. As a result, the responses to the threats to public health represented by Covid 19 fell into the hands of epidemiologists and politicians. The good news was the huge investment that was made almost immediately into the development of vaccines as the ultimate weapon. Almost every other decision made was problematic. At first it seemed that the most vulnerable were the elderly. And so they were for reasons that had less to do with the pandemic than with the pre-existing wretched conditions of so many long-term care facilities. Now, after more than a year and a half it seems to me that children and young people are among those who have lost the most. And there isn't even a vaccine available for those under twelve yet. What is quite clear is that over this whole pandemic, as politicians and experts have tacked this way and that, few of the decision-makers who have been shaping the conditions under which we are now living have applied a child rights lens to the various policies they have adopted on our behalf because virtually every one of the many rights of children that are articulated in the UNCRC have been severely curtailed. As a result, I am convinced that we need the input of children and young people to ensure that before a new worldwide crisis overwhelms us we have opened the necessary channels for them to be heard.

How can our young people help to make this happen? Let's look at the three packages of rights, the three "Ps" as they are called into which almost all of children's rights fall, Provision (as in health and education), Protection as in protection from violence and exploitation and Participation as in the right to be heard. And remember that these are tied together by the four guiding principles of the CRC; the right to life and development, best interests of the child, non-discrimination and, of course, meaningful participation. In order for children and youth below the voting age of 18 to become effective civil and political actors and advance these rights, they need to acquire real advocacy skills. In the area of provision rights, the right to education for example, young people should be supported to learn how to strategize with respect to making schools more responsive to their ideas. To have their protection rights respected, young people must effectively identify their concerns and demand easier access to a complaints mechanism. And their participation rights will only be secured when the appropriate machinery is constructed so that young people can step on the levers of power. Designing a scenario for action in each of these areas would be a valuable exercise for building strategic skills. Furthermore young people have knowledge that is unique to their generation. They know far better than the rest of us how to make good use of the electronic media. The next rights-challenging crisis will be upon us before we know it so it is imperative that those who will be most affected by it be well-armed, ready and able to propel movers to act in ways that will benefit us all.

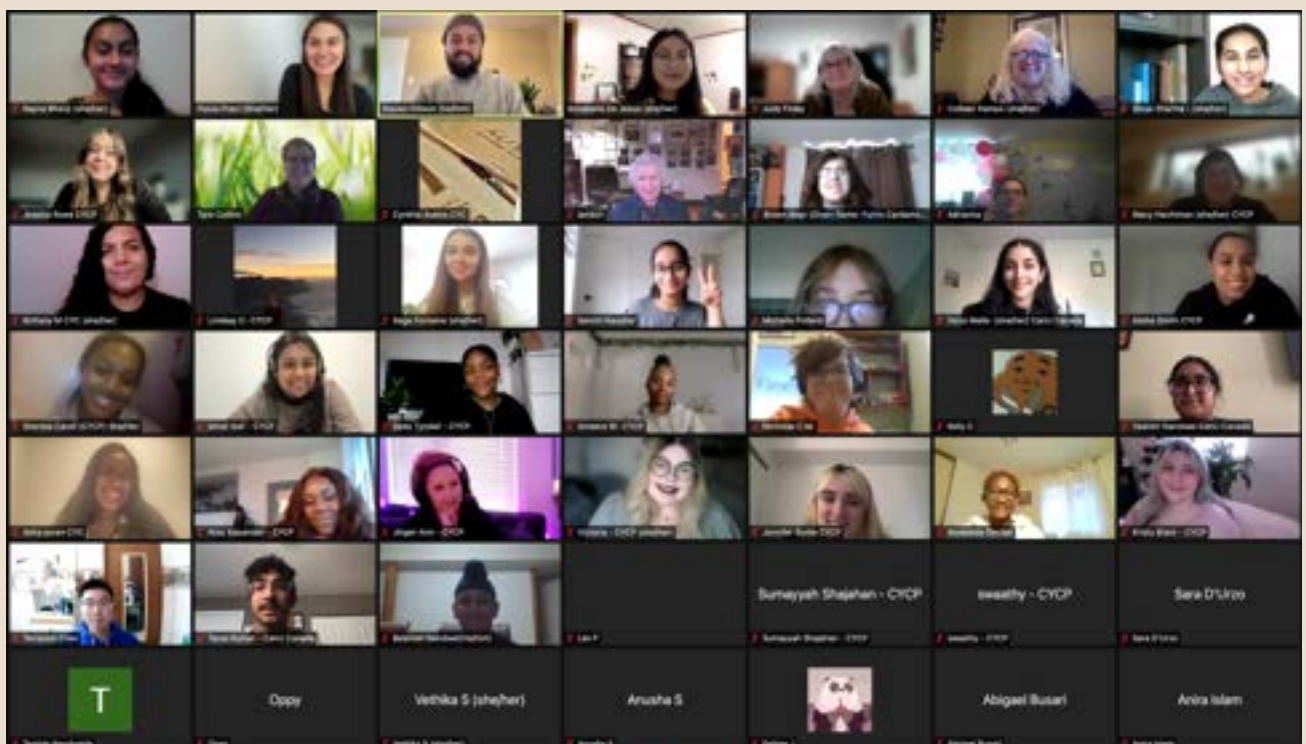
Background

About Shaking the Movers

Shaking the Movers (STM) is an annual youth-driven and youth-led workshop that takes place across the country. STM workshops offer spaces designed to enable children and youth to consider the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in the context of their lives. In turn, participants prepare comments and recommendations intended for governments, academia, and civil society concerning its implementation. Participating in STM provides children and youth with a unique opportunity to exercise their rights to take part in critical civil and political processes with the assurance that their voices will be listened to and heard.

Workshop Facilitation

For over a decade, the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights has designed workshops to create spaces for children and young people to explore their unique perspectives and experiences, while providing the opportunity to share specific recommendations and input related to a children's rights agenda. Following each workshop, the voices of the participants are consolidated into a report. Landon Pearson has made it her priority to ensure that these reports reach the hands of the 'movers'. At the end of each conference, the participants are invited to provide recommendations for the theme of next year's STM.



Background

Themes

STM 2021 was centred on the goal of building the skills of advocacy to strategize and intervene in the world. The following six thematic groups were created to help facilitate learning and exploration of these skills:

1. **Indigenous Rights – Provision**
2. **Indigenous Rights – Participation**
3. **Black Lives – Protection**
4. **Black Lives – Provision**
5. **Mental Health – Participation**
6. **Mental Health – Protections**

While these themes do not represent the totality of a vast range of concerns that young people have about society, they were positioned as a starting point for exploring advocacy skills that can be utilized across various issues and domains. As well, these themes were associated with the three Ps of the children's rights that are outlined in the UNCRC: provision, protection, and participation. This allowed for the participants to engage in education about their rights, while also positioning the young people as rights holders who must be listened to by others.

Participation, Provision, and Protection

The articles established in the UNCRC are broadly categorized within the three Ps of children's rights: participation, provision, and protection. Participation accounts for those rights that establish the influence and activity that children and young people have in matters that affect their lives. It also informs the requirement for those in power to meaningfully engage and support the participation of young people. Provision rights form the basic access to resources that children and young people are entitled to for optimal development. Protection rights necessitate that children and young people be kept free from harmful activities and environments that threaten their survival and development.

As such, states and relevant actors are required to mitigate potential risks to individuals and communities. Engaging social issues through these three broad categories helped to conceptualize the impact that children's rights have on our daily life. As well, it encouraged the participants to consider how children's rights may be a framework for understanding advocacy efforts in their future endeavours.

Overview

On November 20 & 21 2021, in partnership with the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights, Carleton University, the School of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University (renaming in process) conducted a two-day virtual conference for young people in Ontario and Manitoba. This was the second virtual edition of STM that allowed for the safe and enthusiastic participation of children and young people in light of the ongoing pandemic. The online venue not only allowed for the keeping of public health protocols, but also increased accessibility for a number of participants who would experience barriers attending an in-person event. The Zoom platform was utilized to facilitate the virtual participation of children and young people.

Highlights from the conference include wonderful opening activities led by Elder Joanne Dallaire from Ryerson University (renaming in process) and the Hon. Landon Pearson, as well as plenary sessions led by guest speakers with experience as youth activists. Prior to the conference, participants choose a thematic group that they were then divided into during both sessions. In these thematic breakout rooms, the participants had the opportunity to focus on particular issues and solutions associated with their theme. On both days of the conference, the thematic groups provided short presentations to the larger group on their experiences and learning. These presentations informed a rich dialogue between the participants and adult advocates.

As we continue to live in rapidly changing and uncertain times due to the pandemic, STM was an opportunity for the participants to contribute to social issues that have remained consistently at the forefront of social consciousness. The young people were incredibly impressive in terms of their commitment to participation, their valuable, wise, and unique perspectives, and enthusiasm for contributing to social change. After the two afternoon sessions, all participants, young and old(er), were left energized and better informed of each other's experiences. This report serves to carry forward the recommendations, contributions, and experiences of the young people who participated in this year's STM. However, the action does not stop here. As our goal was to develop skills of advocacy, the conversations that we had during STM 2021 will continue to reverberate through the collective action of our young participants as they carry forward their efforts of advocacy.

Features of STM

Virtual Location

Due to the public health restrictions in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the decision was made to conduct the STM 2021 conference online. Therefore there was no physical location for any of the facilitators or youth to meet. Instead, youth participants were given a link to join a Zoom meeting. All participants were given the agenda with an hour-by-hour breakdown for the second ever virtual STM conference.

Recruitment of Participants

Due to the nature of COVID-19 and its ongoing impact on social life, recruitment for STM occurred virtually, as well as through community contacts. Many of the young people learned about the STM conference through educators, peers, or facilitators. Through partnership building and recruitment, other youth from an organization called CanU Canada, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, attended the STM conference. Youth participants were registered online through Google Forms and were encouraged to recruit their peers to join the conference.

About the Youth Participants

As the conference was online, participation was not limited to young people in the GTA as in previous years. Therefore, we had participants from across Ontario as well as many participants from Manitoba. The young people who attended ranged from ages 13–19, all with diverse cultural backgrounds and lived experiences.

Informed Consent & STM Video

In advance of the conference, each participant was provided written consent to consider before participating. This included consent to having their narratives and pictures shared throughout this report and within the [accompanying video \(please view here\)](#). Throughout the conference, facilitators ensured that the participants were continually informed of their rights to privacy and confidentiality as participants of STM. In addition, participants were encouraged to share their perspectives in the format that best suited their comfort level including through chat box, emojis, and/or participating orally using their microphone.

Features of STM

Introduction to Youth Facilitators

The small group discussions and activities of this year's STM workshop were again organized and facilitated by undergraduate students from the School of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University. Students of the Advanced Group Work course held the Youth Facilitator roles. In preparing for this important role, each student spent several weeks in class learning about strategies of youth engagement and processes of group facilitation with young people. The students identified and developed the six workshop themes and organized themselves into separate groups. The students used their youth engagement skills and their understanding of the processes of group facilitation to engage the young people in meaningful conversations and activities in relation to strategic advocacy skills.

CYC Children's Rights Class

Involvement of students in Ryerson's School of Child and Youth Care Children's Rights course is a staple of Toronto's Shaking the Movers conferences. This year, informative and creative 5-minute videos were created and presented by Ryerson's Children's Rights class prior to the conference. At the beginning of the conference, participants were introduced to children's rights with a 5-minute video about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Then they had another video to support their discussions about their chosen advocacy theme in small online breakout groups. These videos helped provide the foundations for Shaking the Movers discussions.

Graphic Facilitation

On day 2, a graphic facilitator joined the conference to produce a visual representation of the young people's valuable ideas and contributions. Our graphic facilitator did a wonderful job of listening to the participants and supported the articulation of their ideas. It was a pleasure to view the graphic being formed in real time! The result of this work is displayed as the image on the title page of this report.

Elder Joanne Dallaire

To open this year's conference, we were honoured to have our University's Elder, Joanne Dallaire, lend her intelligence and energy. If we were in person, we would have intended to pass on tobacco as a gift of appreciation for Elder Dallaire's willingness to teach and share wisdom. See the report 'Appendix' for the full transcript of Elder Dallaire's excellent opening. Among her comments, she said:

"how good is it we feel when we're doing something we love; how good it is when we feel our spirit is moved. ...to look at how all the things in society had impacted me and COVID has brought up to the surface for a lot of us. But I think that's a silver lining in all of this mess, that great minds like this come together to find ways to continue to move forward, continue to be in inspirational and moving, and innovative, and inspiring, and all of those wonderful things. There is such power and energy on this call."

We definitely kickstarted the conference on a high note. Her powerful teaching and prayer were so important for both the organizing team and the participants, providing a necessary entry point for us to begin engaging with children's rights, the various social issues we focused on, and the critical power of advocacy.



"I really ask that we all remind ourselves, when we put our hearts and our minds together in one direction, we make a huge difference."

Agenda



Day 1: November 20, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm (EST)

Activity	Time
Shaking the Movers Waiting Room Opens on Zoom! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test out your camera and microphone • Read the welcome activity list 	12:30pm - 1:00pm
Introduction + Welcome to Shaking the Movers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening activities 	1:00pm - 1:30pm
Plenary #1 + Q&A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rights Project 	1:30pm - 1:55pm
Break-Out Thematic Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussions on the general and specific problems within your theme • Creation of presentations on your discussion 	1:55pm - 3:05pm
Stretch + Refresh (Break)	3:05pm - 3:10pm
Youth Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentations to report on your collective learning 	3:10pm - 3:40pm
Debrief + Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback for presentations + preparation for Sunday • Closing activity 	3:40pm - 4:00pm

Saturday

Sunday

Day 2: November 21, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Activity	Time
Shaking the Movers Waiting Room Opens on Zoom! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test out your camera and microphone • Read the welcome activity list 	12:30pm - 1:00pm
Welcome Back <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening activities 	1:00pm - 1:20pm
Plenary #2 + Q&A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sal Sabila + Sara D'Urzo 	1:20pm - 1:45pm
Break-Out Thematic Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans of action for advocacy • Creation of presentations on your discussion 	1:45pm - 3:00pm
Stretch + Refresh (Break)	3:00pm - 3:05pm
Youth Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentations to report on your collective learning 	3:05pm - 3:35pm
Debrief + Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback for presentations • Closing activities + closing remarks 	3:35pm - 4:00pm
Optional Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STM is welcoming you to stay for a short period of time, to share your personal opinions/thoughts/ideas on the challenges young people are facing in relation to advocacy efforts • If you would like to be interviewed/share more, please feel free to join for the optional time 	4:00pm - 4:30pm

Plenary Speakers

This year, Shaking the Movers invited youth advocates from various backgrounds and experiences to share their stories during plenary sessions on both Saturday and Sunday.

The **Saturday** plenary was led by Sumaya Nur and Kyla Platsis, Executive Director and Director of Outreach from The Rights Project, an organization founded in June 2020 that is youth led and works alongside Black, Indigenous, and radicalized communities to provide support accessing legal resources. The plenary focused on the question: 'What does it mean to be a changemaker?'



Sumaya Nur and Kyla Platsis

The **Sunday** plenary was a panel discussion joined by Sal Sabila, founder of the organization Youth Gravity, and Sara D'Urzo, a third-year student in the Child and Youth Care program at Ryerson University (Renaming in Process). The panel focused on 'personal experiences as a changemaker', particularly exploring successes, setbacks, self and community care, and more.



Sal Sabila and Sara D'Urzo

Plenary Speakers

On community and adult allies

“There wasn’t a space in our predominantly white school where students could present about their cultural or spiritual identities and get to teach about things that they weren't seeing represented in our school's Eurocentric curriculum. And we really felt it was important that we weren't just celebrating multiculturalism in a tokenistic kind of way, so we would often pair it with conversations about social issues. From these conversations I myself learned so much, and slowly our get-togethers became the safe space where students could come together anytime something's happening in our school and unfortunately there was stuff happening a lot in our school.” - Sumaya Nur

On creating spaces to foster advocacy

“Give voice back to those who are disempowered. This isn't to say that I can give power from other person to another, but acknowledge that people's voice have been stolen from them and if we can collectively come together to give that voice back to help amplify it, I will do everything in my power to do that” - Kyla Platsis

Advice to their younger self

“I would tell my younger self to just start, just do it, because, for me, I feel like I found my activism out of breaking point of frustration and I cannot sit and stand by anymore. And I know there's so many youth as well that feel the same way, because you know your voices silenced, as a young person. I would just tell myself don't be afraid, start write about it post on social media about it, if that's all you can do at that age do it it'll make you feel so much better to let it out and just be involved.” - Sara D'Urzo

Self care as the most revolutionary form of advocacy

“There's a story that on a beach there were a lot of star fish dying. There was this one man and he saw all the dying star fish and began throwing them into the water one at a time. And this person approached them and said, “why are you doing that, like this, this one star fish?” The man replied “well it doesn't matter if I can do my part and save even one star fish.” I take this story and know that there's power in choosing my star fish!”

“No one is going to be upset with you for not doing everything. Instead we're going to be grateful for the little things that you are contributing to this world, so thank you.” - Sal Sabila

Introduction to Small Groups: Youth Insights

Day One: Problems and barriers for change

On day one of the conference, the goal of the thematic groups was to discuss the relevant issues concerning their topic within the context of advocacy and changemaking. The following section highlights key pieces from the young people's conversations about barriers and challenges identified in relation to their specific theme.

Provision - Indigenous Rights

Indigenous rights was a topic that in previous years STM participants found to be of critical importance, yet was discussed the least in their everyday lives, especially conversations that were more than just surface level. In 2021, Canada and the world witnessed unsettling headline after headline detailing the historical and contemporary racism experienced by Indigenous peoples, prompting reckonings that are long overdue and are often ongoing for young folks.

- **Disparity Then** – "The original peoples of the land and just got access to water this year, some still don't, which is a super inhumane thing. There's still trauma from residential schools, then this idea of how do we compensate for a lot of the trauma that was caused and what do we do moving forward so."
- **Disparity Today** – "Provincial governments have this mandate to provide all schools with menstrual products, but that excluded specifically the schools on reserves. How does that even make sense?"

Brainstorming on Indigenous rights with a particular focus on provision, participants were knowledgeable on systemic disparities and their domino effects. Notable is the immediate enthusiasm to explore advocacy responses, a participant remarking **"we really look forward to this discussion tomorrow in terms of what we can you as youth and take actions to become allies for the Indigenous communities, thank you"**. Regarding becoming aware of generational oppression a participant shared they were touched by the idea of **"calling people in rather than calling people out and holding them accountable and I think that's such a strong and powerful piece of advice that I will carry with me going forward."**

Participation - Indigenous Rights

Through their breakout room session, this group of participants and CYC facilitators reflected on their personal experiences learning about, acknowledging, and acting on advocacy around Indigenous rights and children's rights.

- **The First Step is Awareness** – “None of the leaders in our groups knew about children's rights until maybe like a month ago, or so like when we started preparing for the conference we had time to reflect and share the thoughts about what we can do as adults and practitioners. We talked about how social media is a great platform to try to spread out the good news and the change and how as together as a community we can create change.”
- **Long Term Change Through Community Care** – “It's very important that we keep fighting for our rights and not to give up because, even though it does seem like it's not pushing through, the more we stick together as a community, and the more we continue to point out that we do notice that things are not being done, it will eventually end up causing a change.”

Through their discussions, the young people highlighted the importance of collective conversation and understanding in order to elicit long term and meaningful participation. Being on the same page about information such as the UNCRC, and documents regarding Indigenous rights (UNDRIP, Bill C-15, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, etc) can be an essential tool in effective advocacy.

Youth Insights

Day One: Problems and barriers for change

Protection - Black Lives

In this thematic group, the right to protection was explored in nuanced ways, beyond the traditional understanding of state intervention through child welfare services. The youth participants discussed what protection meant to them and discussion revolved around the context of protection within schools.

- “Something that we've talked about was: **what would you do if somebody was being racially profiled?** We went through different scenarios and one of the scenarios, we talked about was what would you do as a police officer that was called to like a scene, where Black men were playing basketball at an upper area and a non-Black male called the cop. One thing I said was that if I was a police officer I wouldn't just jump to my own conclusions, because all the time in the news we hear that so many times officers tend to think they don't think before they speak.”
- “Many of us had heard of the story ‘**The Hate You Give**’, and it's a book and movie about police brutality and the effects of a lack of protection for Black lives...but also the importance of community and advocacy after tragedies.”
- “**If I just come up to my own conclusion I'm going to be wrong, most of the time** and it's so unfair to those around me if I just like they say this person did it wrong, based on their skin colour”

After their discussion, the young people identified unique perspectives on the topic of the right to protection. Notably, young people discussed equal opportunities for all children as a form of protection.

Youth Insights

Day One: Problems and barriers for change

Provision - Black Lives

The rich discussions that young people had in this thematic group brought up many issues and challenges that they are currently facing. While the young people did discuss the Black Lives Matter movement, they also discussed many related issues like white fragility and white supremacy within a Canadian context.

- “We started off by watching a video that explains the barriers that Black youth face and Black people in general, like medically and economically and in school and a bunch of different ways and we talked about that, and how we felt about that, and a lot of us had like seen TED talks about racial bias. We came to the conclusion that **there are resources and there is an effort, but action is what needs to happen and it hasn't really been happening as much as we want it to and it just isn't enough.**”
- **Intersecting Advocacy** – “We had a prompt of what we would do if we were Prime Minister for a day and we did talk a bit about Indigenous rights and, like what we would do for Indigenous people like giving clean drinking water, but also we talked about resources for all Black students and incorporating that into the school system and, curriculum”
- “I didn't mention this in the breakout room but somebody brought up the point of resources for everybody, and I agree with that and I didn't even think about it, but some Black people and some other marginalized groups don't have resources or mental health, which also relates to the other groups of mental health, and I think I would really try to get free therapy for everybody”

The youth participants had diverse conversations about race and the Black Lives Matter movement overall. Much of their discussions focused on inequalities in education in regards to race. There was also acknowledgement of the intersectionality or interconnections between this issue and Indigenous rights and mental health in the pandemic.

Youth Insights

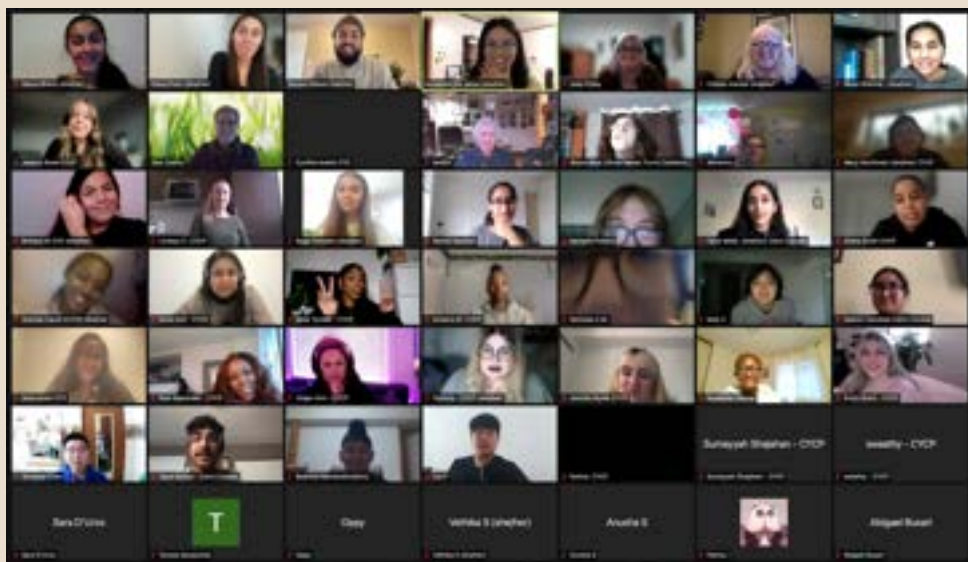
Day One: Problems and barriers for change

Participation - Mental Health in the Pandemic

Participation in regards to mental health in the pandemic was an enriching topic to learn the new challenges that have arisen for young people who are doing their best to continue their learning online or in-person during COVID-19. The reality is that many young people are feeling left behind, more than they may have already felt in this system.

- **Shared Experiences & Stories** – “Our group had a really good discussion about the right to proper mental health facilities and how COVID, stigma, and our views in general impacts this.”
- “COVID definitely made mental health a forefront topic, and then, once things kind of went back to normal it went back down to being just you know not as talked about not as much, not as advocated for and we talked about how youth felt about the news and the government kind of talking about them and their mental health issues regarding school without actually talking to the youth and **a lot of them felt that they wanted to be a part of those discussions.**”

As a group facilitator remarked, **“no one knows... what kids are going through better than kids and youth”**. This was a seemingly obvious but otherwise invisible realization until explicitly shared. It was clear that the majority of the conference agreed, with many passionately agreeing Zoom chats and reactions. This moment emphasized the lack of meaningful participation that young people have been feeling during the pandemic regarding critical issues including mental health.



Protection - Mental Health in the Pandemic

During this unique time of living through a global pandemic, the topic of physical and mental health has become a vital issue. The young people discussed the impact of the COVID-19 virus on their health overall and issues related to it.

- **“Sure there was help available for a lot of us, but because of the fact that we didn't want to do anything, there was like an inability to reach out** (a negative feedback loop) and even though we knew that okay there's these things that can help us, we just weren't able to do it. We also talked about how there were a few like programs available.”
- **Secondary Grief/Pressure as a Result of COVID-19** – “We also talked about how because, like a lot of the people they lost their jobs kids have to handle a bunch of the pressure that would have been usually taken by their parents and because the parents were home all the time. It felt that they were also responsible for what was happening, which is obviously not true. We also lost access to many places, because of COVID and some people, you know need to go to certain areas to like as distraction which supports mental health.”
- **On The Right to Play** – “Children lost their right to learn and play freely, which did not bode well for many neurodivergent people”

Through the specific examples, it's clear to see that youth are up against several different challenges and issues in terms of their mental and physical health with the added stress of the global pandemic. A common theme in the other groups was around education and the young people here outlined the difficulty they have been facing at school with the added pressure of the pandemic and how that has affected their overall health. It is also clear that many young people didn't settle and acted as a response to their experiences.

This conversation celebrated the advocacy in action and inspired many others to practice these skills in their lives.

Youth Insights

Day Two: Solutions for change

After highlighting the issues within their themes on day one, the second day of the conference was all about tangible strategies for advocacy. The young people went back into their chosen thematic groups and discussed possible changemaking actions to the issues they highlighted the previous day. The following are highlights from their discussions about advocacy.

Provision - Indigenous Rights

Continuing to weave in current events and context, folks in this discussion group highlighted advocacy strategies that often intersected in familiar spaces and places, and poked at the roots of the issue.

- **Integrating Teachings the School Systems** – "If we can have French as a language that we learned in school, what about Cree? This would support **having not just that one day of Truth and Reconciliation, but having making consistent efforts to learn about their vibrant cultures** not just about the residential schools and the trauma, but the importance and the spirit of their culture, because it is so so crucial in the way that we live today"
- **Bridge the Gap Between Indigenous Peoples and Newcomers** – "It is such a complex relationship oftentimes newcomers come here in hopes for a better life and in hopes to grow their family, but what we don't realize, is that we are on Indigenous land. Understanding that there is a dark past, and working with Indigenous communities in spirit of collaboration and reconciliation"
- **"They have the will and money to build a pipeline... put that work and effort and money into addressing issues that surround Indigenous communities and provide them with basic provision basic needs."**

It's notable that this group was not made up of all Indigenous youth, and thus isn't the lived experiences of all its members. Yet this group was clear that **"[Indigenous rights] is the top priority"**, and called out the often unsettling realization that settlers on this land have a particular relation to Indigenous communities that needs to be not only addressed but can become a critical advocacy relationship.

Participation - Indigenous Rights

Often young people note that they're already aware of a lack of respect and rights from adults and authority figures. This group in particular noted that coming together as a community/collective and holding space for passion and anger can be the tipping point to pursue advocacy in more tangible and active ways.

- **Changemaking in Action** – “In the past two days I learned a lot about advocating for things that you believe in and I think it's helped as I've had ideas for a while, things that I know I believe in...I guess I just don't know exactly how to like execute those ideas. These past few days have really helped me figure out how I want to go about it and I've actually decided on well as of today, started an instagram account! If you guys want to follow that and be a part of the group chat if you're interested in sharing your ideas about it, that would be great.”
- “We touched on a missing and murdered Indigenous women and Amber alerts, I guess, on the question why we can't have that type of thing for them as well? **Which people are considered worthy of everyone's attention and who aren't?**”

Through this group, we as a collective of youth advocates and adult allies were able to empower and celebrate the advocacy strategy of an instagram account!

Protection - Black Lives

“Black future month!” This group noted that in order to protect Black lives in the long term (and not for individual and sometimes short term actions), the definition of protection needs to expand, particularly towards cultural protection.

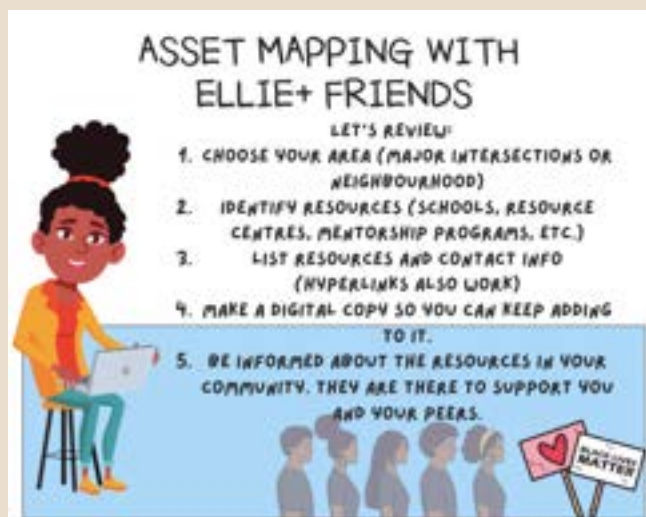
- “There was a lot of emphasis on hosting Black history month and some type of cultural awareness, to show and protect certain aspects of Black culture, which I found to be very interesting because **usually, when talking about protecting a Black lives it's usually just physically, but never really culturally.**”
- **Self Love as Advocacy** – “The topic of self love came up, in particular the connection between self love protection and advocacy. And we got really great responses from the participants. One of them just shared that they could see how advocacy could help boost the self-esteem of Black people and spread love and another share that they see the connection, because it shows that helping and caring for that community of people can help bring change, so I just wanted to share that as well.”

Self love! This was also mentioned by many of our panelists as they shared their experience of advocacy. This group reiterated that caring for ourselves and others can be what carries communities through times of grief and pain, as well as times of hope and change.

Provision - Black Lives

With the support of graphics (made alongside the discussion), this group used their shared experiences of living in the same area to point out community assets: “people and places that support young people navigate different parts of our life”

[\[See the full presentation here\]](#)



- **“An asset is a resource in your community that is there to help you and help youth, like us, as youth navigate different parts of our life.”**
- “All of us in our group went to the same high school, so we were able to brainstorm from our lived experiences the assets and resources for Black youth in the area and what they offer us.”
- “Those clubs are there now for us to go for a safe space and work on projects and talk about what we believe in and then there was like some discussion about whether we think there should be more clubs or how we feel about all these clubs and I think there's a lot of there's a lot of clubs and **I don't think more clubs necessarily need to be created, but I think putting effort into the clubs that already exist, could be really good.**”

Similar to the Black Lives group's focus on protection, this group emphasized that providing spaces to celebrate and continue Black culture are critical assets. This group also approached the question of “quantity or quality” when it comes to community assets, by stating that “[we] don't think more clubs necessarily need to be created, but [we] think putting effort into the clubs that already exist, could be really good”.

Youth Insights

Day Two: Solutions for change

Participation - Mental Health in the Pandemic

This group continued their discussion by brainstorming advocacy strategies on various levels, from events in schools to potential policies. Noting large and intersecting structures and issues at play, this group strategized that: “We can start by helping encourage our government officials to divert fundings from the military to Indigenous communities and schools and fund those funding that they receive for those certain things like the military and put it towards Indigenous communities and allowing us to really give out more resources in certain communities that need it.”



- “Rights for minorities and Indigenous people: it's directly related to mental health, and because of the fact that certain politicians don't want to address these overlaps, there will always be less action taken. We agreed that **a bill or policy be applied in that politicians regardless of party have an obligation to mental health and minorities as a priority.**”
- “To promote awareness, for mental health, it is important to not only have services available, it is important to you, like let people know that these services exist and doing that, with go beyond you know, like having a website with links to mental health services, it should go beyond having posters and stuff it should be, to the point where we have like entire day events in schools, dedicated to mental health”

This group bounced off of the comments in the Zoom chat, as all of the participants in this conference related in one way or another to their rights being neglected throughout the pandemic.

Youth Insights

Day Two: Solutions for change

Protection - Mental Health in the Pandemic

This group also broadened their advocacy strategies from classroom to system level, calling on the fact that regardless of the perceived size of change, it is definite and creates ripple effects.

- “We started to talk about mental health and the changes we'd like to see. For one, school times based on circadian rhythm. Teens are naturally meant to sleep later and then wake up later. We'd like school times that actually fit around that because I believe that if we actually did that we'd see more improvement in children's mental health, we see improvement in the how they learn, and you know they'd be like overall so much happier, because obviously we get to sleep in that would be nice.”
- “To promote awareness, for mental health, it is important to not only have services available, it is important to you, like let people know that these services exist and doing that, with go beyond you know, like having a website with links to mental health services, it should go beyond having posters and stuff it should be, to the point where we have like entire day events in schools, dedicated to mental health.”



Notably, Landon Pearson reflected in her feedback that in the past school times started later. This motivated students to know that change was possible!

Post Interviews

At the end of the second afternoon, the participants were given the opportunity to be interviewed by facilitators for closing remarks about advocacy and how young people can engage in it. The following are the questions that were posed to the young people and their responses:

Including youth in the decision making process. Our lives are not only affected but are at stake. There is power and influence in acknowledging this and pushing our leaders, communities, government officials to make change.

Q: After participating in the Shaking the Movers conference, what are some advocacy skills/strategies you have learned?

Any public space could be used as a space to talk about anything, including social justice issues. I'm more mindful of that when I enter these spaces now. If I want to lead someday, I will make sure these places are accessible by people in my community.

I have an idea for STM to create a big project that everybody works on: a joint project that shares everybody's interests. Where we all collaborate on a presentation for political officials (like the prime minister)

Q: Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for next year's Shaking the Movers?

More teacher/adult organized interaction in the summer and during breaks from school

Post Interviews

**Advocating for one social issue leads to other issues, for example, some marginalized individuals have less access to mental health supports and this leads to bigger issues.
To advocate for one thing is to advocate for everything.**

Setting up an information session or a presentation for children or adults separately. I want to have a target audience and assess the best way to communicate with each of them.

Q: In what ways has this conference inspired you to engage in activism? What are your next steps to follow-up on this inspiration?

One of the facilitators mentioned calling people in rather than out. Holding people accountable without being insulting and putting them down.

The facilitators [who are adults] listened and guided: showing their strengths through their skills was very inspiring. Which demonstrates you don't always have to be speaking, you can also be listening. Making sure you're reaching out to adult allies who demonstrate this.

Talking to other adults that will support the cause, because some adults only listen to other adults. You have to choose the right adult.

Q: How can you get adults to listen when you are trying to be heard?

Post Interviews

Q: What do you think is important for all children and young people to know about activism?

I think [youth and advocacy] is intersectional. The first step is finding out what you are, and ways you can advocate for what you stand for. I had to do a lot of learning about myself before I knew what I stand for.

You don't have to wait to grow up to have a voice. Young people can make changes now. Society needs youth to take things forward. You have to listen with your eyes, ears and heart. We are experts in our own lives and our own communities and their needs as young people, we have the knowledge we need the resources to put it into action.

No matter their gender, race, age, they can be an activist, they can start activism, you just need the willingness to do it.

Youth should not be afraid of talking about things your parents don't, not make judgment calls about things I do not fully understand. Speak up, and express your opinions, but not place judgment

I believe that since you have a voice, you should use it! We all just need to stand up together as a group and be supportive of each other's values and opinions. We need to be strong for ourselves and support one another. Just know that you got this :)

Post Interviews

When talking in my discussion group, people had different points of view. This was a learning experience.

In the conference, I really did love how much emotion was poured out into our discussions, how we didn't hold back on what we wanted to say, and how everyone felt as if they weren't alone in the conference. All of us had something to relate to and wanted to share.

Q: What was the most impactful part of the conference for you?

**The music!
The facilitators!**

I felt so happy and relieved letting out everything I wanted to mention about how I feel. It feels as if a weight has been lifted off my shoulders.

I loved Elder Joanne Dallaire, I loved her energy, her smile, her voice, and when she spoke to us in her native language. I do not know much about their language, the names of their traditional food and clothing. I have a bias when it comes to traditions of Indigenous peoples. The importance of children using their voices really resonated with me.

Acknowledgements

Shaking the Movers 2021 was an incredible experience thanks to the participation of various stakeholders. The organizing team is indebted to meaningful contributions from Elder Joanne Dallaire, the Hon. Landon Pearson, Judy Finlay, our plenary speakers (Kyla, Sumaya, Sal Sabila, and Sara), as well as students from CYC 602 and CYC 807. We are also grateful to all who assisted in recruiting efforts, including Ian and Britney from CanU. Most importantly, the enthusiastic participation of our young people made this a memorable and important event. We are inspired by the resolve and dedication to advocacy displayed by our participants, particularly in the context of a pandemic that has made life increasingly complex. Thank you for entrusting us with your valuable free time on a weekend! While we hope that our participants learned valuable lessons, we are certain that we have learned an incredible amount from the relational engagement throughout STM.

We would like to thank Ryerson University (renaming in process) for sponsoring the conference. Of course, we would like to thank the Honourable Landon Pearson and the Landon Pearson Resource Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights for making this conference possible.

Finally, our participants have been encouraged to stay in touch by joining the [Shaking the Movers Alumni Network](#) - the [form can be found here](#). We look forward to another great conference next year and are excited for all the action that will take place until then. Thank you for reading this report, we hope you have been inspired!

Best, STM Organizing Team - Dr. Tara Collins, Annabelle De Jesus, Steven Gibson, Colleen Kamps, and Flavia-Alessia Preci

Appendix

Elder Joanne Dallaire

Opening Shaking The Movers 2021

This is really exciting, this is really exciting that we've got people coming together to look at new and different and new and improved ways to deal with the life circumstances that we find ourselves in.

I really love the music that started off at the very beginning that was kind of playing in the background, and what it did was it got my body moving and I was kind of moving back and forth on my chair. What it triggered in me was how good it is we feel when we're doing something; we know how good it is when we feel our spirit is moved. Because when we express ourselves through the arts that's an expression of spirit. So when you dance or when you sing, or when you draw, you get that connection to spirit.

It's really important to have passion for life, and I've been trying to enforce that remembrance in all of us that we have passion for life, that we have love, that we have success. It's really easy to focus on what's not there and we forget to focus what it is there. One of the things is that moving to the music and the touching to my spirit and it brought joy about within me. It reminds me that I have happiness when I have my total complete expression of self and what I do. I don't have to worry about whether I'm at work, I don't have to worry about if I'm in this meeting. I'm just me wherever I go and that took me a long time to get there, it didn't come around easy. I had to look at how all the things in society had impacted me and COVID has brought that up to the surface for a lot of us. But I think that's a silver lining in all of this mess, that great minds like this come together to find ways to continue to move forward, continue to be in inspirational and moving, and innovative, and inspiring, and all of those wonderful things.

There is such power and energy on this call. I really ask that we all remind ourselves, when we put our hearts and our minds together in one direction, we make a huge difference.

I'm going to offer now one of my favourite prayers. It's accredited to the original teaching of Yellow Hawk Sioux Chief. It has been accredited to many Indigenous people. It is just a beautiful prayer. I going to start off by identifying myself and my ancestor language. My traditional name is Shadowhawk Woman from the Wolf Clan and I'm Omushkego from Swampy Cree and my ancestry hails from Attawapiskat. [Great Spirit Prayer', by Yellow Hawk, Sioux Chief. Spoken in Cree.]

Appendix

Elder Joanne Dallaire

Welcome to Shaking The Movers 2021

First, let us give thanks for this day that's been offered to us, this opportunity to open our hearts and open our minds to a new way of seeing and a newer way of being. Help us respect and listen to each other, understand and find that connect, that thread that weaves through all of us.

I thank each and every person who is here in attendance, whether you're presenting, listening, participating and then all the people who are working so hard behind the scenes to make this happen.

A big shout out and a big thank you to all of you, and I offer this prayer and wish that you have an amazing two days.

Oh great spirit the voice, we hear on the wind, whose breath gives life to the whole world. Hear us, we come before you, one of your children. We are small and weak and need your strength and wisdom.

Let us walk in beauty and make our eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.

Make our hands respect the things that you have made, our ears sharp to hear your voice. Make us wise so we mean all the things that you have taught our people, the lessons hidden in every leaf and rock.

We seek strength, not to be superior to our brothers and sisters, but to be able to fight our greatest enemy: ourselves.

Make us ever ready to come to you with clean hands and straight odds, so when life fades as a fading sunset, our spirit may come to you, without shame.

Chi miigwetch. Chi miigwetch. Chi miigwetch. Chi miigwetch. [meaning 'big thank you']

I just want to explain that concept in this prayer: clean hands and straight eyes.

Clean hands mean that when you realize you've made a mistake, you do your very best to make it right, as long as it's not hurting others to do so.

And straight eyes means, you can look at somebody right straight in the eye because you walk in your truth.

And wishing everyone a really wonderful two days. Let it be rejuvenating and inspiring and thank you so much for giving me the honour of coming in and to be the first voice that you listen to you. Miigwetch, thank you very much.

Appendix

Honorable Landon Pearson Remarks on Shaking The Movers 2021

I'm particularly delighted to welcome all of you who are coming together today to have a conversation, to build some plans, to strategize because to-day, November 20, 2021 is National Child Day: the anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed in 1989. While it has now been in existence for quite awhile, it is very much a living document so National Child Day was designated by Parliament in Canada in 1993 to remind people that the Convention exists, and that adults and children alike need to be constantly reminded that children's rights exist and why they are so important.

November 20 has also been designated as World Children's Day. So one of the things I would like to remind you, as you start to work and talk today, is that it's not just Canadian children's rights that we have to deal with. All children have rights and all the issues related to children are interconnected so we have to think about children everywhere in the world, some of whom are suffering enormously at the moment in areas of conflict in Afghanistan, in Somalia, in Colombia, and other parts of the world, and who are almost all suffering in one way or another from the impact of the pandemic and from the tensions that are being caused by the by the climate crisis including floods, fires and drought.

So your challenge today, and this is what I hope you're going to do, is to look at the mess that the we adults have created, and, to use your imagination to give us some ideas of how you hope to be able to change it as well as how we can change it if we are prepared to listen because the truth is we all want to have a home on this planet that will be liveable for, say, my brand new great granddaughter who when she is as old as I am today, it'll be 2112.

And what kind of a world that will that be is enormously dependent on you and on your activism, and your capacity, energy and commitment to changing the way some of us "movers" are thinking by shaking us up and persuading us to act differently. So we need you to figure out, over this afternoon and tomorrow, some really practical ideas about how things can be changed. How not only these issues that you will be [discussing today], that of racism and Indigenous children, but also the issues of mental health and the issues of our international responsibilities to children all over the world.

Appendix

Honorable Landon Pearson Remarks on Shaking The Movers 2021

So I think you have some important work ahead of you. I know you can have some ideas that I will be very, very interested in hearing. And then I will commit to sharing with anyone who I think is a “mover” because what we've got to do is open up for you the corridors of power. We've somehow got to find through youth activism and youth advocacy ways not only to shake people up but then motivate them to act! Sometimes people can be shaken up by protests but they are only one tool and they don't always motivate people to change if they don't know what to do.

What is needed are ideas, ideas and practical solutions, and I'm sure that a lot of you out there are capable of putting together many. I'm really interested to hear what you're able to come with over these next two days. I'm sure you will have an extremely interesting time. Be proud of yourselves for being able to participate in something that will have an impact. So thank you for being present.