

Let's Connect  
at WW 2011.

womensworlds.ca

**NWT Women Participant Perspectives  
of the 2011 Women's Worlds Conference**



# The Status of Women Council of the NWT

The mandate of the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories is to work for the political, social and economic equality of all women in the NWT, through advice to the Territorial government, research, public education, advocacy on behalf of women, and assistance to women's groups. The Council was created in April 1990 under the NWT Status of Women Council Act. The Government of the NWT provides core funding for the operations of the Council, while special projects have been funded by various sources.

## Our Vision

- Equality for women in all areas of life.
- Economic equality.
- Communities, workplaces and families free from violence against women.
- A society which respects and includes the diverse experiences and perspectives of all women.

## Our Mission

The Status of Women Council of the NWT is dedicated to achieving equality for all NWT women through:

- public education and awareness,
- research,
- advocacy,
- community development,
- interagency cooperation,
- advice to government, and
- identification and development of opportunities for women.



# Overview

According to the Women's Worlds (WW) website ([www.womensworlds.ca](http://www.womensworlds.ca)) the first Women's Worlds congress was held at Haifa University in December of 1981. It was the first world-wide interdisciplinary gathering to focus on research pertaining to women's issues and to be open to all interested researchers and activists. Since then, WW has taken place every three years in a different part of the world.

## YEAR COUNTRY HOST THEME

1981 Israel Haifa University The New Scholarship  
1984 Netherlands Gronigen University Strategies and Empowerment  
1987 Ireland Trinity College Visions and Revisions  
1990 USA Hunter College Realities and Choice  
1993 Costa Rica Univ. of San Jose Search, Participation, Change  
1996 Australia Univ. of Adelaide Think Global – Act Local  
1999 Norway Univ. of Tromso Generations  
2002 Uganda Makerere Univ. Gendered Worlds: Gains and Challenges  
2005 Korea Ewha Univ. Embracing the Earth: East-West North-South  
2008 Spain Computense Univ. Equality is not a Utopia  
2011 Canada Ottawa. Inclusions, exclusions, and seclusions:  
Living in a globalized world

In July of this year WW was in Ottawa, Canada with a theme "Inclusions, exclusions, and seclusions: Living in a globalized world". This theme was then further integrated throughout the four days with four main focuses a different one for each day. The focus was around breaking cycles, breaking ceilings, breaking barriers and breaking ground. Throughout the conference there were break out sections that helped bring people together, provided a small space for personal discoveries and helped enhance the main theme of the event.

We started our journey with the opening ceremonies. The ceremonies showcased Aboriginal culture in Canada. It was an amazing rush to see over 1,600 women in one room who were all ready to help change how the world sees women. WW provided the space for women around the world to gather and prompted us to move forward to change the global reality of women in the world. For more information or to see photos/videos of the conference please go to the WW website at [www.womensworlds.ca](http://www.womensworlds.ca).





## Opening Plenary: Breaking Cycles

The opening plenary addressed breaking cycles. There were headphones provided that allowed participants to listen in three languages (English, French and Spanish). The panelists were Monica Chuji from Ecuador, Devaki Jain from India, Tanya Tagag from Canada and Andrea Smith from the USA. Each morning plenary was based around what that days focus was.

In this plenary we learned that “the revolution will not be funded” and that if we wish to make true change in the world we need to work together to achieve what we are looking for. If we are pitted against each other over funding pots, work in silos or only do work in fields that are funded, we will not be able to change what we want for women.

Participants learned that in other countries of oppression exists to varying degrees but, it is still evident that women everywhere need to work twice as hard to receive basic human rights and achieve equality. The panelists spoke about their experiences with colonialism, patriarchy and capitalism and how women function or are perceived through these lenses.

If you would like to see some of the activities from the conference please go to their YouTube channel



[www.youtube.com/user/womensworlds2011](http://www.youtube.com/user/womensworlds2011)

## Second Plenary: Breaking Ceilings

The 'glass ceiling' is a metaphor commonly used to describe the substantial barriers women face in the corporate and political world. The notion of using glass to describe these barriers highlights the fact that whereas the barriers are very real and very strong, they are often invisible to outsiders looking in. This plenary explored another dimension of the metaphor: that when enough pressure is applied, glass ceilings (both real and metaphorical) can be broken.

This plenary on Breaking Ceilings focussed on the successful dismantling of various glass ceilings. The session was facilitated by Nicole Schwab of Switzerland, who is currently working on a Gender Equality label for Fortune 500 companies. Panellist Daniele Magloire of Haiti contributed her stories of triumph and successes in Enfofanm (a women's rights advocacy organization) and Kay Fanm, a prominent social justice group. Waneek Horn-Miller of Canada rounded out the panel, sharing harrowing accounts of her struggles with the Canadian Armed Forces during the 1990 Oka crisis. Waneek was able to find purpose and inspiration from those experiences, and described her many successes in the following years, including making it onto the Canadian Olympic Team in 2000.

## Third Plenary: Breaking Barriers

This plenary examined barriers, borders and boundaries that disabled, transgendered and marginalized women face both within their inner circles and wider circles throughout their lives. Women from across the globe shared techniques they have used to engage the general public and to help workplaces to be inclusive of women facing these challenges. Although there have been huge strides in legislation and public education to regulate and prompt inclusion, women still face many challenges with inclusion and equality in both their inner and outer circles of persons they encounter and work with. Panelists were Mary Simon - Canada, Judith Heumann - USA, Raewyn Connell - Australia, Malika Hamidi - Belgium





## Closing Plenary: Breaking Ground

Everywhere, women are changing rules, seizing opportunities, and not asking for permission. What better way to close WW 2011 than by celebrating the voices of trailblazers and engaging in powerful intergenerational exchange? In creative ways, this session looked at how new strategies, new research, new methods of organizing, and new communication tools are helping create the change women want. Panelists are not only leaders in their field, they are first-hand witnesses to the sort of groundbreaking that alters herstory for good. Panelists were Samhita Mukhopadhyay - USA and Sebenszile Matsebula - South Africa



# July 4<sup>th</sup> Workshops

**Globalization, Capitalism, and the (In)Visibility of Housewives** (attended by Lorraine Phaneuf & Samantha Dechief)  
Luciana Da Silva Santos, Glaucia Ribeiro Starling Siniz from Brazil

This workshop focused on unpaid work in the home and how women that choose to stay at home to do domestic work are still employed. They spoke to the double work day if two parents are working and how housework still needs to be done regardless if it is the man or the woman that does it. We touched on some reasons why women are mainly left with the housework but that this work should be recognized, valued and if possible, paid. There was some discussion around a housewives union. Also, through a study they conducted it was found that women were mostly happy if they got to spend time with their children, but regardless of class most felt left out or rejected by the capitalist economic model.

**War Rape in Eastern Congo: Silent Agendas and Structural Causes** (attended by Annemieke Mulders)  
Jill Trenholm, Uppsala University, Sweden; Beth Maina Ahlberg, Uppsala University/Skaraborg Research Institute, Sweden; Jocelyn Kelly, Harvard University, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, USA

This panel explored some of the root causes and tragic consequences of the extreme sexual violence being committed against women today in the Congo. Lacking legitimate centralized government, the country has devolved into a nation run by increasingly violent gangs vying for control and access to the country's valuable mining resources. Among the many reasons for the increase in sexual violence is its use as a military tactic to devastate the morale of enemy gangs (by raping their women), and to destroy women's ability to maintain a sense of order and community in their villages. Ironically, it is the acknowledgement of women's power and importance in Congolese society that makes them the target of this horrifying abuse. The destruction of the female traumatized everyone in a society.

**Silent Witness Project: Moving Toward Solutions** (attended by Irene Savoy)  
Lindsay Manuel, Women's Issues Branch and Rina Arsenault, Centre Muriel McQueen Fergusson

This workshop helped participants to understand the healing process and to honor the women who have lost their lives to family violence. Presenters encouraged participants to collaborate with their organization to help bring the project to their provinces and territories.

The Silent Witness Project displays the silhouettes of women who lost their lives to family violence with a shield on the chest of each one to introduce the woman and what she did in her life. They bring them to community events to promote awareness and honor the women who lost their lives.



## July 4<sup>th</sup> Workshops Continued...

The Project offers:

- An inspirational silent witness song "I'll Stand in the Rain"
- A bilingual website [www.silentwitness.ca](http://www.silentwitness.ca) (under construction)
- Promotion of national vision based on collaboration, information sharing, education and awareness of "better practices", plans to march on Parliament Hill with silhouettes
- Efforts to inspire the Atlantic Ballet Theatre of Canada to create a compelling multi-media ballet called the "The Ghosts of Violence"

### **Using Narrative to Create Social Change** (Attended by Lois Little)

Veena Gokhale

We are powerless without the ability to tell our stories. But it is key to know the purpose of telling stories (e.g. is it for social change, empowerment, or healing).

HTML version: [http://www.veenago.com/Using\\_stories\\_to\\_create\\_social\\_change/](http://www.veenago.com/Using_stories_to_create_social_change/)

PDF version: [http://veenago.com/Using\\_stories\\_to\\_create\\_social\\_change.pdf](http://veenago.com/Using_stories_to_create_social_change.pdf)

### **Silence, Agency, and Gender in an Increasingly Violent World** (attended by Lois Little)

Cynthia Enloe, Janet Parpart, Jeanne Roach-Baptiste, and Rita Verma

This panel of feminist academics had lots to say and provoked very insightful questions. Each challenged traditional feminist concepts for the privilege they accord to the global north and their Euro-centrism. Notions of silence and agency need to be redefined, recognizing power differentials and context. For example, feminists have historically viewed silence as acquiescence rather than resistance or a way to engage on issues through silence.

# July 4<sup>th</sup> Workshops Continued...

## **Women, Migration, and the Challenges of Global Policymaking for Care Work**

(attended by Annemieke Mulders & Irene Savoy)

Tiziana Caponio, University of Turin, Italy; Delali Margaret Badasu, University of Ghana, Ghana; Ito Peng, University of Toronto, Canada; Eileen Boris, University of California, USA; Sonya Michel, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, USA

This session focused on the global female migrant care industry, with a particular focus on the immigration policies and the status of these workers in South Korea, Japan and Italy. As in the Northwest Territories, some of these low-paid immigrant workers have limited access to information and supports if they find themselves in abusive situations. It is important that appropriate and effective protections be in place for this vulnerable population of workers.



# July 5<sup>th</sup> Workshops

## **Women and the Earth: Climate Change and Resource Extraction** (attended by Annemieke Mulders)

Sonalini Kaur Sapra, Saint Mary's College, USA

Using a gender lens, this session looked at the impact of resource extraction and its implications on both the communities directly affected by mining, and the global community at large. It was argued that gender cannot and should not be separated from the impacts of resource development. This session was particularly relevant to the Northwest Territories as we see increased mining activity affecting the women of the north in more and more ways.



## July 5<sup>th</sup> Workshops Continued...

**Community Development and Intimate Partner Violence** (attended by Lorraine Phaneuf, Irene Savoy & Samantha Dechief)  
Sandy Pitzel from Canada

The presenter spoke of several new event strategies to get more people involved in community events. One strategy to get more press for events was to involve a top person from the press as a main speaker or someone that will hand out an award. Another strategy was to bring children into the picture. If you can hand out a youth award for non-violence or have a class take a field trip to one of your events, this not only puts people in your seats but parents come and everyone receives your message. Lastly, a strategy to get people talking about the issues of intimate partner violence was to claim a violence free zone or day, have police honoured for their service in helping end violence, thus sending a message that violence is not tolerated in your community.

**Breaking Through the Old Boy's Network: Effective Lobbying for Women's Rights** (Samantha Dechief)  
Jordan Leichtniz from Canada

This workshop offered advise about the process of asking a politician to help your cause. Always be ready with a streamlined and short proposal, no more then one page. Highlight your main concern in one or two sentences and be ready for an "ask" to keep the conversation going. An "ask" is a small request, either for another meeting or for them to send a letter, that you can later check up on and possibly have another chance to speak with that politician regarding your concerns. Check a politician's background before she/he became a politician, find out what she/he sympathizes with and see if you can find a strong champion for your cause.

# July 5<sup>th</sup> Workshops Continued...

## **Gender Roles in Russian Media: Features and Trends** (attended by Annemieke Mulders)

Olga Smirnova and Tatiana Frolova from Moscow State University, Russian Federation

This presentation offered an overview of a recent study conducted to analyze current gender representation (in family life) in the Russian media. The most disturbing 'highlight' of this session was the discussion about how women's rights and status in a society (and its media) is not necessarily an evolving enlightenment, but is a phenomenon dependent upon the social and economic security of a society. During the USSR's years of global political strength and wealth, Soviet women were portrayed in the media as 'Super Women', capable of anything and everything including strategic military savvy and the ability to command at the highest levels. Since the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 90's, Russia has experienced extreme social and economic instability, and with that has come the devaluation of women. Once portraying women as equal to men, the Russian media has reverted to portraying women as simple and subservient citizens. This presentation and discussion emphasized the close relationship between the respect for human rights and stability of a nation.

## **Power and Resistance: Experiences in the Swedish Academy** (attended by Lois Little)

Sarah Ljungquist

Interesting historical and contemporary look at barriers to women and women's influence within the Swedish Academy including the challenge of getting women to know their place of equality. Sweden isn't as egalitarian as we would like to believe. There was agreement that Steig Larsson has likely done more to expose violence against women than anyone.



# July 5<sup>th</sup> Workshops Continued...

## **Northern Perspectives, Stories and Leadership** (presented by Lois Little)

Lois Little and Leslie Quammainiq

Mismatched presentations/presenters were difficult for everyone – I was speaking on global resource industries and decolonization, and Leslie was speaking about the formation of Nunavut. The venue was cramped. I appreciated Arlene Hache's active participation and Tina Keeper and another woman from northern Manitoba who immediately made the connection about the impacts of resource development on northern women, and another young woman who spoke about retrenching/replicating colonization in present day practices.



# July 6<sup>th</sup> Workshops

## **Welcome to the Swamp: Solution-Seeking Research is Always Messy**

(attended by Lorraine Phaneuf, Irene Savoy, Samantha Dechief & Lois Little)

Arlene Hache and Charlotte Hrenchuk from Canada

This workshop explored the work of a coalition of women's organizations in the Yukon, NWT and Nunavut that wanted to understand the scope and dynamics of women's homelessness in their own territory and across Canada's North. Problems as entrenched as women's homelessness in the North are difficult to research but they were able to come up with some key findings.

## **Out of Sight, Out of Mind** (attended by Lois Little)

Maureen O'Connell and Stephanie MacInnis-Langley

Excellent presentation from Nova Scotia Status of Women Council about the disappearance of women from policy language and the public agenda for so-called reasons of inclusion. "Will violence against women be the only place that women are named?" "We need to coalesce around a small number of issues and exert pressure on 'femicrats'."



## July 6<sup>th</sup> Workshops

### **Breaking the Mould – Girls and cities and ICTS** (attended by Lorraine Phaneuf)

Karen Craggs (A discussion on a report done for Plan Canada – Because I am a girl)

This workshop helped participants understand the issues facing girls in cities and in the digital realm. There are seven key factors that benefit girls internationally and nationally when given access to technology. Access to technology:

- enables them to keep in touch
- allows them to further their education and learn new skills
- helps them to participate in community decision making (twitter – facebook)
- helps girls to have employable skills
- gives them access to information that would not be available to them such as information on puberty, AIDs and STIs
- helps them gain self esteem
- keeps them safe and better connected

Essentially, girls need to have the opportunity to learn and grow with the emerging technologies in order to take advantage of the same opportunities as boys.

### **Empowering Girls and Women through Gender Reform in Education and Literacy**

(attended by Annemieke Mulders)

Melodee M. Baines, Old Dominion University, USA

Most international development agencies work on the premise that women's literacy is a precondition to women's political advancement. This premise is challenged by the dramatic success of the Soulaliyates women in the Kenitra region of Morocco. Despite a literacy rate of less than 10%, these women have successfully organized themselves and are actively lobbying for equal benefit on the sale of collective lands. The accomplishments of these women suggests that perhaps girls' literacy and education programs should be implemented concurrently with women's political/leadership programs.



## July 7<sup>th</sup> Workshops

### **An International Research Network Contributing to Policy Change** (attended by Samantha Dechief)

Dawn Hemingway and Christina McLennan from Canada

This group started out with minimal internet knowledge and a dream to get women connected in the northern and remote communities of BC. They are called the Women North Network and have websites at [www.womennorthnetwork.ca](http://www.womennorthnetwork.ca) and [www.unbc.ca/northernfire](http://www.unbc.ca/northernfire). These sites help connect women with different skills so they may partner to change the world. It is not only a database of skills but also a place you can find up to date information for research, posts regarding funding requests, and find other women in your area that are interested in making a change. They have an email list that goes out to over 350 women about twice a month.

This would be a very useful tool to start in the NWT as it would connect our women's talents and skills and strength our ability to make change. A centrally housed data source on various research that effects women would be of benefit to the north.

### **The Cooperative Child Care Alternative – Le Jardin Cooperative Daycare** (attended by Lorraine Phaneuf)

Amy Lightfoot

This session talked about alternative ways families can work together to offer high quality, cost-effective child care. The cooperative model allows for meaningful involvement in children's daily lives as a woman's career continues. Le Jardin is a parent-run co-operative daycare focused on providing a loving, family-like environment for children to learn and grow

Each family is required to volunteer for one day per week for each child enrolled in Le Jardin, and to assist in the ongoing operations of the facility including: finance, administration, cleaning, menu planning, etc.

# July 7<sup>th</sup> Workshops Continued...

Benefits include:

- cost-effective care, either full- or part-time;
- a 3:1 child-to-adult ratio ensuring individual attention for every child;
- an experienced Early Childhood Educator on staff;
- stimulating, age-appropriate programming in a TV-free environment;
- safe educational toys and books and twice-daily outdoor play;
- healthy vegetarian and organic meals; and,
- meaningful involvement in your child's day-to-day learning and development

This concept requires commitment of time and energy from the all parents who enroll their children.

## **From Stilettos to Moccasins- Criminalized Aboriginal Women's Healing from Drug Abuse**

(attended by Irene Savoy)

Colleen Anne Dell, University of Saskatchewan, Sheila Gratham, Carlton University, Jennifer Kitty, University of Ottawa, Cynthia Stirbys, University of Ottawa

This workshop examined the roles of stigma and identity in the healing journey of criminalized Aboriginal Women in treatment for drug abuse, and discussed using video and song to empower the women. They also offer the material to do a workshop in your community.

[www.addictionresearchchair.com/creating-knowledge/national/cihr-research-project](http://www.addictionresearchchair.com/creating-knowledge/national/cihr-research-project)



# July 7<sup>th</sup> Workshops Continued...

The role of the treatment provider as portrayed in the video is to:

- relay empathy
- be accepting and non- judgemental
- provide inspiration
- recognition of trauma
- open lines of communication
- show care and passion
- support the link to spirituality
- promote momentum in healing

## **Grriz Gone Wild: Activism Interrupting the Landscape of Femininity and Social Norms**

(attended by Lois Little)

Sarah Scanion

A totally hopeful and empowering session with a young, smart public educator with a bevy of tools for culture jamming and feminist activism to upend mainstream gender expectations and norms. Do we ever need someone doing this here!

## **Women and the Power of Our Philanthropy** (attended by Lois Little)

Abigail Disney, Mary Tidlund, and Bev from CWF Canada

A fascinating and inspiring presentation encouraging women to take advantage of women's interest and wealth (not just money) to set up foundations to respond to our own needs. "Don't wait until you win the lottery." Abigail provided information on her five films on women and war (available for community showings). I also learned about a school-based social justice curriculum which also has great potential for the NWT.

Coverage of Abigail Disney

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/life/Women+urged+philanthropists/5069371/story.html>





## Other Workshops Attended

If you would like to hear more about the workshops mentioned below or to receive more information on what we learned from the conference please feel free to contact us toll free at 1.888.234.4485 or in Yellowknife at 920.6177.

### **List of other workshops we attended:**

- Marital Violences: Paradoxes and Challenges for Promoting Emancipatory Practice
- Women Migration and the Challenges of Global Policymaking for Care Work
- Northern Perspectives, Stories, and Leadership
- From theory to action: Integrating gender in government, community organizations, and international development organizations
- Older Women Contributions and Acceptance
- A Mothers journey into Advocacy
- Women Breaking Resistance to Gender Equality in Post-conflict and Post-disaster Setting
- Case Studies in Feminist Theory: From Security to Post-Communist Patriarchy
- The Role of Women in Post-Conflict and Resolution Processes
- Women's Human and Cultural Rights: Feminist Theorizing and Organizing
- The Women's Court of Canada: Inventing Institutions of Resistance
- Activist Research and Gender Justice
- Indigenous Women's Resistance Through Decolonizing Practice
- Women's Equality, Religious and Cultural Practices
- Combining Our Strengths: A Partnership Between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Women



# Final Thoughts

The conference was a unique opportunity to network with over 1,600 women from across the world. The one amazing realization was that although the scale of oppression and opportunities available to women may vary, women across the globe are all dealing with similar issues.

Below are quotes from participants that went to the conference, summing up their opinion of the event.

***“It provided me with a powerful and thought provoking opportunity to discuss women’s issues on a regional, national and international level.”***  
~Lorraine Phaneuf

***“What an inspiring experience it is to be among so many brilliant feminists from all over the world, all of us sharing our challenges and successes. This is the way forward!”***  
~Annemieke Mulders

***“I thought the energy from women all over the world, working toward the same goals, was electric.”***  
~Irene Savoy

***“...I found it totally inspiring, thought provoking, and a wonderful learning opportunity... ..I greatly appreciated the opportunity to make a presentation and was heartened by the positive response and requests for other articles. Now I need to get writing!”***  
~Lois Little

***“So much energy for positive change was mesmerizing. This conference helped give a global picture of the work we do and we are on the right track.”***  
~Samantha Dechief



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