



Peel Institute of Research and Training

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FOREWARD Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread and devastating human rights violations which largely remains unreported. November 25 has been designated as the *International day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women* by the United Nations General Assembly since February 7 2000, when it adopted resolution 54/134. This is a date that had been observed by women's rights activists as a day against gender-based violence since 1981. The date was selected to honor the Mirabal sisters, three political activists from the Dominican Republic who were brutally murdered in 1960 by order of the country's ruler, Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961). The General Assembly's adoption of the Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women through resolution 48/104 on December 20, 1993, paved the way towards eradicating violence against women and girls worldwide.

Also, November 25, mark the start of the *16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence*, an annual international campaign that ends on December 10, Human Rights Day and that is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the preventions and elimination of violence against women and girls. This international campaign was started by activists at the inaugural Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991

and continues to be coordinated each year by the Center for Women's Global Leadership. The campaign is known as Orange the World and this year's theme is: *"Unite! Activism to end violence against women and girls"*.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women theme is:

UniTE! Activism to End Violence against Women & Girls

The Peel Institute of Research and Training (PIRT) has recently received peer review approval to publish an article on Perspectives of Global Femicide which document the killing of women and girls because of their gender, which is the darkest and most extreme form of violence.

PIRT is joining the international community in observing the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women by curating the stories of young women activists and their work. In the following pages, you will be able to learn about the amazing work that 9 exceptional young activists are doing to advance the elimination of violence against women and girls. Their work in the areas of the environment, health, education, art, and economics is making a difference in the opportunities available to young women. Working locally and internationally, their efforts are positively impacting the lives of other young women through the creation of opportunities and access to basic needs.

Environment



Autumn Peltier, 18, is a world-renowned Anishinaabe leader, environmental activist, and Indigenous Rights advocate from the Wiikwemkoong First Nation on Manitoulin Island in Ontario. Her activist journey began at just twelve years old, in response to the pervasive issue of contaminated water on Indigenous reserves in Canada and the U.S. Peltier learned about the importance of clean water and respecting the environment

from her mother and great-aunt Josephine Mandamin.

In 2018, when Peltier was thirteen years old, she stood in front of the UN General Assembly for World Water Day to address the issue of water protection, and for her efforts she was awarded the Sovereign Medal of Exceptional Volunteerism by the Governor-General of Canada and Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. In 2019, Peltier was named the youngest Chief Water Commissioner for the Anishnabek Nation. During this time, she earned a prestigious invite to speak at the United Nations Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in New York, and was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize three times.

Currently, Peltier is continuing her initiatives for access to clean water for Indigenous communities domestically and globally, as 61 long-term drinking water advisories remain in effect in 2020. She demonstrates an unparalleled commitment to the ongoing water crisis in Indigenous communities and believes working together to create change is pivotal to address the environmental systemic racism faced by her Peoples. In the Spring of 2022, Peltier received a Doctor of Laws from the Royal Roads University, and is committed to creating a [brighter and just future.](#)

Environment



Larissa Crawford is a 27-year-old Métis-Jamaican woman living in Canada who uses her platform to advocate for climate justice, disability, & anti-racist knowledge. Her lived experience as a Black and Indigenous woman, living through poor economic conditions and chronic pain, offers immense depth and meaning to her advocacy, policy advising, and leadership.

Crawford began as early as 13 years old when she worked with community leaders to address racism in the education system. She was an Indigenous Policy Advisor with the Ontario government's Ministry of Energy, Northern Development, and Mines and an Advisor for the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate by the Ministry of the Solicitor General. While serving in those advisory positions, she faced overt racism, ageism and ableism, leading to her quit to start Future Ancestors.

Future Ancestors is a professional social enterprise offering services in research, training, speaking, consulting and influencing clients to address systemic

issues. Crawford ensures that the enterprise consists of intergenerational, disabled, and queer team members working through the lens of anti-racism. The work uses decolonized and indigenized practices and has ancestral accountability. She has served three hundred and seven diverse clients and directly impacted hundred and fifty thousand people through her work.

She reaches thousands of people on climate, racial justice, and healthcare inadequacies through Future Ancestors and her social media platforms. As a marginalized woman with a disability, she documents the struggles of chronic pain and improper healthcare practices and policies due to racism. Crawford and her team reimagine their work and improve to continue addressing [systemic barriers](#).

Environment



Vanessa Nakate, 25, is a young leader and climate activist from Kampala, Uganda. Her journey as a climate activist began in 2018, in response to the climate crisis facing her home country. The climate crisis has been one of the greatest threats affecting Ugandans.

Affected by adverse weather patterns, long-lasting droughts in the North, landslides in the East, and all of the horrific floods, a call for action was needed and Nakate was determined. Climate change was about the people, not statistics, says Nakate. It is estimated that climate change can push up to 130 million into poverty in the next 10 years (UN 2022).

Nakate founded the Rise Up Climate Movement, in effort to amplify the voices of activists from Africa by giving them a global platform. In addition to this initiative, she spearheaded a campaign to save Congo's rainforest, which is facing massive deforestation. Currently, Nakate is working on a sustainability project aimed at installing solar and institutional stoves in schools. In her work, Nakate also highlights the importance of educating girls as one of the prime key climate solutions.

In light of her achievements, Nakate was named a UN Young Leader for the Sustainable Development Goals and listed within the BBC's 100 Women of the Year and the 100 Most Influential Young Africans. Her impactful strides as a climate activist also landed her an opportunity to speak at the COP25 gathering in Spain. Nakate also took part in calling on the World Economic Forum in Davos to stop subsidizing fossil fuels. Nakate is an exceptional young leader with [an infectious global influence](#).

Environment



Sanghamitra Dubey is an environmental researcher, activist, and strong advocate for the rural and forest dweller communities. A practicing Buddhist, she has completed a master's degree and, as of 2019, was pursuing a second post-graduate degree in Environmental Law.

Hailing from the lush, natural resource and mineral rich state of Odisha in India, Dubey was born into an economically struggling family. Growing up witnessing the struggles her community faced in terms of issues of extreme poverty, unemployment, disrespect for women, and illiteracy, she was determined to do something to make a change. Having had the chance to work and meet with female farmers and forest dwellers firsthand through a women's leadership fellow program with an international NGO, she was motivated to pursue her career as a researcher. Her work on indigenous and tribal rights, forest management, community mobilization within India, and the effects of political economy and governance on these facets

has been published in national and international journals.

With aspirations of having an impact on Indian policy and law reform in terms of breaking the cycle of poverty faced by local tribal people and forest dwellers and fostering an equitable society, Dubey is well on her way as she has facilitated many community-led initiatives. These initiatives include women-centric ones that assist in implementing the Forest Rights Act of India, as well as focusing on tribal rights and empowerment through work with the [international NGO Vasundhara](#).



Zainab Anwar Art depicts emotions words often cannot explain. Artists can depict social movements that encapsulate their depth, spread awareness and bond people in ways other mediums cannot. Zainab Anwar is a talented artist representing women and culture.

As a South Asian woman in Canada, Anwar's art represents women in her community through drawings, paintings, photography

and other art forms. Her work through Instagram reaches hundreds of people and raises awareness about problems affecting women and marginalized people, capturing the pain of oppressive social forces. Art not only raises awareness, but it also captures the emotions and gravity of the matter. It recognizes and validates the struggles women in the community face. Issues such as colorism, lack of autonomy and freedom are isolating. Anwar's art reaches fellow girls and provides solace that others can understand. Art has the power to bond and strengthen women.

Anwar has an online store where she sells her items, such as drawings, stickers and t-shirts. The designs on these items such as rickshaws and chai are important to the South Asian community. They empower and provide a sense of community and belonging to those wearing them while working through the negative impacts of the patriarchal culture. She is a recipient of the University of Toronto Mississauga's Historical Studies [Creative Activity Award](#).



An example of Anwar's art work. The caption translates to "Ever asked us?" (کبھی ہم سے؟ پوچھا) in Urdu.

Armed Conflict



Katrina Leclerc is a published author and a multi-award-winning peacebuilder with upwards of 25 academic and policy publications and book chapters under her belt. With a specialty in advocating for youth peacebuilding in conflict-affected areas, Leclerc has served as the Program Director at the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders in East Africa since 2016, where she promotes peaceful communities through the organization of gender and age sensitive grassroot and women-centric programs.

She holds an impressive and lengthy resume with work experience serving on boards at the Canadian Coalition for Youth, Peace & Security (CCYPS), the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW), the Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada (WPSN-C), WPS Dialogues FPS, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. She is also an asset to Global Affairs Canada, UN Women, and a number of advocacy-focused charities, especially for

her work in policy development and local peace-building efforts.

Having graduated in 2016 with a bachelor's in Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Studies, with a masters in Peace and Conflict, Katrina Leclerc is currently pursuing her PhD in Conflict Studies. Mainly having a focus on the education and leadership of young women and girls in conflict-affected areas, most of Leclerc's authored works revolve around gendered and youth perspectives regarding [peacebuilding efforts](#).

Education



Emelin Rivera Rural communities lack the necessities for a good quality of life. Young girls, in particular, have limited access to quality education. Emelin Rivera and fellow young girls in rural Concepción Chiquirichapa, Guatemala, were facing a threat to their education.

Rivera, then 13 years old, recognized how societal factors limit girls' participation and access to education. In many rural communities it is common for girls not to

finish secondary school. Poverty, inadequate health care, pressure to contribute to the family income and early marriage are common barriers young women and girls face to continue their education. Rivera understood that the lack of funding is a crucial barrier preventing access to education and set out to change it by going to the town's mayor.

Rivera took action by reaching out to the mayor with her concerns and asking for his support. The mayor laughed in her face and dismissed her efforts as unworthy of his time. This setback did not stop her advocacy; instead, Rivera and her fellow girls built their leadership skills with the help of Let Girls Lead, a global initiative helping girls to be leaders and changemakers. Rivera gained a bigger audience through a local newspaper, television and radio station, finally leading to the mayor's respect. The mayor signed legislation to fund Rivera's efforts, creating the Municipal Office of Childhood and Adolescence. Rivera gained international recognition. In 2015 Rivera spoke at the United Nations, showing the world that young girls are powerful and vital members of [their communities](#).

Health



Lynrose Jane Genon is an educator, a passionate member of a variety of international non-profit organizations, and advocate for youth leadership. Genon is part of the Executive Council for Young Women+ for Peace and Leadership, a safe and engaging networking space for LGBTQ leaders and young women from the Philippines.

In an interview by the 16x16 Blog Series, Genon describes living in a community very susceptible to different kinds of violent conflict. In that interview, she reports that when youth experience violence, discrimination, and minimal political inclusion, they often grow a distrust toward the government, the very system meant to protect and support them. Genon sought to change this unsettling reality.

She is the co-director for a youth leadership development program for peace called YACAP, an initiative directed toward the young community in Mindanao, Philippines, to nurture and maintain the culture of peace. In addition, Genon has previously participated in the UNDP's '16x16' Initiative that supports 16 activists from all over the world in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 16. Currently, Genon devotes her time to Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, where she teaches English.

In the Philippines, Genon oversees community peacebuilding activities for the Young Women Leaders for Peace. The network provides funding for young leaders to create and carry out cooperative community peacebuilding initiatives, including mental health services, the distribution of hygiene and safety kits,

healing packages, and more; all with the helping hand from the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders.

Genon has transformed the lives of many youths, and through her initiatives, she has contributed to the advancement and empowerment of her communities in the [Philippines](#).

Poverty



Emilie Katungu Katondolo, based mainly in North Kivu, uses her diploma in Business Administration and her position as a program officer to advocate for the rights of young women there and to empower hundreds of girls by educating them about the benefits of entrepreneurship, responsibility, and leadership.

Originally from Goma, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Katondolo aimed to tackle and change the prevalent femicide and female oppressive status quo within her community. She joined the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP)'s Young Woman for Peace and Leadership (YWPL) program. In joining, Katondolo is furthering her message of the importance of

entrepreneurship through training in promoting economic independence and community involvement.

According to Katondolo, the most effective way to empower women in North Kivu is to transform their lives through economic independence, which is essential for them to combat violence, as well as to fully enjoy their rights. Despite the significance of entrepreneurship, she also identifies one of the major setbacks for female entrepreneurs in the field as being the imposition of exploitive government taxations.

Most recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Katondolo utilized technology and social media to challenge the narrative of sexual violence purported at survivors. Her work furthered efforts in preventing and countering increased sexual violence during the [pandemic](#).

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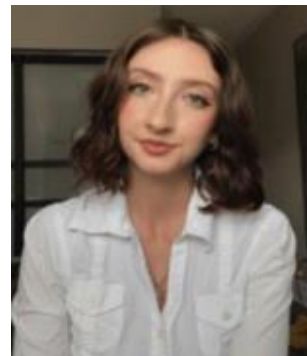
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