

TOWARDS PARITY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2020



CLAIMING SPACES

Supporting Diverse Voices
In Leadership



CITY OF
PRINCE GEORGE



Inspiring Women
Among Us



FEDERATION
OF CANADIAN
MUNICIPALITIES

FEDERATION
CANADIENNE DES
MUNICIPALITES

Dr. Annie Booth, Garth Frizzell, Penína Sara Lynn Harding,
Dr. Zoe Meletis, Dyra Pridham, Annie Pumphrey

Claiming Spaces, an online leadership resource partnership between **The City of Prince George** and **Inspiring Women Among Us**

Project address:

1100 Patricia Blvd, Prince George, BC V2L 3V9

And

3333 University Way Prince George, BC V2N 4Z9

The link for the project Claiming Spaces web resource is

<http://www.claimingspaces.com>

(This will not be live until October 1, 2020).

Team members:

Annie Booth is a Professor in Environmental and Sustainability Studies at the University of Northern British Columbia and the co-founder of Inspiring Women Among Us. She works in the areas of human-environment interstices as well as social and environmental justice. She teaches environmental ethics to the UNBC environmental and natural resources undergraduates.

As a dual American/Canadian citizen, she is very aware of how important it is to encourage women, and BIPOC folks to run for political office or to otherwise serve in a leadership capacity. And for younger people to do so. So she was delighted to work on the Claiming Spaces Project in the hopes of helping to see Canada and the world change for the better.

Garth Frizzell is a Councillor for the City of Prince George, British Columbia and is the President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). He was first elected to council in 2008, and is currently serving his fourth term. Garth is a strong advocate for empowering women in leadership. He recognizes the importance of increasing women's participation in the political environment and on September, 2019, Garth was honoured to take part in pre-conference UBCM panel: Toward Parity: Breaking Down Barriers, Building Momentum.

Garth lives in Prince George with his wife Sue and their three sons. A former president of the Prince George Chamber of Commerce, he also teaches business, economics and technology at the College of New Caledonia.

Penína Sara-Lynn Harding is a Ph.D. Student in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies at UNBC and an accepted member of the Secwepemc (Shuswap) Nation. Penína is a recipient of the 2017-18 IWAW Award; and received the UNBC Senate Student Leadership Award – Campus Community category in 2017-18 and 2018-19. In 2019-20, she was elected as the President for the Northern BC Graduate Student Society (NBCGSS) and has been a Graduate Teaching Assistant since Fall 2016. She is an intergenerational survivor of the Canadian Residential School System; three generations of her family have attended the St. Joseph's Mission. "Penína" means "a female of high ranking" in Secwepemctsin (Shuswap Language), this name was gifted to Sara-Lynn by her great-grandmother, Alice Belleau, at birth and is her preferred name. She is a mother of 4 children and the first Indigenous student to have been fast-tracked from a master's degree to a doctoral degree program at UNBC.

Penína convoked from UNBC in May 2018 with a Bachelor of Arts – Public Administration & Community Development degree.

Zoe Meletis is a human geographer of the environment and an Associate Professor in the Geography Program at UNBC. She is also the current Chair of the Feminist Intersectional Solidarity Group of the Canadian Association of Geographers. Originally from Montreal, Zoe has lived in 3 provinces and the US, speaks several languages, and her father was an immigrant. She co-founded IWAW in 2015, and sometimes considers running for office. In the meantime, she pushes for equity in the academy, and tries to support women and others facing structural barriers to success. She believes that representation matters.

Dyra Pridham is the Senior Executive Assistant to Mayor, Council and City Manager at the City of Prince George and is also a Masters student in Business Administration at UNBC. In her capacity at the City, she leads the programming and coordination of the City's student tour program, student scholarships, and other Council led initiatives geared toward increasing civic participation through celebration and community engagement. As woman of colour, she believes in the importance of helping and encouraging women step up and take their place in leadership.

Annie Pumphrey is a Masters student in Natural Resources and Environmental Studies at UNBC, with her research and previous work concentrating in communications and management of parks and protected areas. Annie has spent over six years working in provincial and federal parks in British Columbia, Alberta, and New Zealand. Holding a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Sciences from the University of Alberta (2015), Annie has had a glimpse into the historic underrepresentation of marginalized groups in Canadian politics and the need for more female and BIPOC leaders. She pursues projects that work to amplify underrepresented voices.

1. Pillars of action addressed by Claiming Spaces, and actions taken to bring these pillars to life.

X Pillar 1: Improved Access to information: Initiatives that enhance the sharing of information, tools, best practices, and training; includes the collection of disaggregated data for informed decision making and dispelling of negative stereotypes or false perceptions.

X Pillar 2: Enhanced Inclusion: Includes initiatives that facilitate the participation of all people, especially those efforts that strive to reduce systemic barriers (sexism, racism, ableism, etc.), economic inequality, intimidation and harassment.

X Pillar 3: Increased support: Mechanisms that provide support for some of the structural issues that could impede women from participating in public office. This can include, but is not limited to, access to mentorship, tools for work-life balance, support for family responsibilities, and practical supports like child care, transportation, nursing rooms etc.

Our proposal was originally designed to fund a series of in-person workshops focused on equipping youth (15-25) with connections, tools, strategies, and networks to foster and grow their leadership potential across demographic and other barriers. Due to COVID-19 and related impacts, we moved to designing an online platform of resources that leadership-interested youth and others can access, free of charge.

We offer a variety of resources, some novel and some borrowed from other inspiring leaders and organizations. Our core resource is a series of 10 intimate videos with Canadian leaders who, in one way or another, have defeated structural barriers, and succeeded in political office or student leadership roles. We particularly sought to include members of underrepresented groups (e.g. women, Indigenous

people and other People of Colour, and 2SLGBTQ+ community members) so that people could connect with their stories, struggles, and successes.

We have the opportunity to promote the Claiming Spaces resource via our Inspiring Women Among Us, City of Prince George, and UNBC social media accounts, webpages, and networks, and we will be doing so. We will also hold a Live Watch Event during our annual hosting of Inspiring Women Among Us (Nov. 18-25, 2020), on Tuesday, Nov. 24th, at 5:30pm PST. This will allow for a community screening of some of the videos, the promotion of the resource more generally, and sharing about the origins, goals, and contributions to this project. Project participants and community members will engage online via Q&A as well, and all partners will be invited to participate. The IWAU 2020 schedule will be available via our Facebook page (Inspiring Women Among Us), in October.

2. Aspects of your project are you most proud or feel had the biggest impact on your community, particularly for the women and girls.

Given the short time-frame we, the Student Research Associates, had to complete the project, we are most proud of conducting a rapid succession of recorded Zoom interviews with exceptional leaders. The leaders who were able to make the time to share their lived experiences, expressed gratitude and enthusiasm for the scope and intention of this project. It is not commonplace for leaders in northern and rural communities to be approached to share their knowledge, skills, and advice on a provincial or national level through a website, or social media platform.

The reach of our project, current, and future potential:

Directly:

Over 18 people were involved in the generation of the project and resources, including (2 female graduate students, 3 First Nations youth, 3 Municipally elected leaders, 1 male member of LGBTQ2T+ Community, 1 female First Nations doctoral degree student, 2 female members of the LGBTQ2T+ community)

Two students/team members were funded to work on the project, adding to their training and CVs in terms of being “highly qualified personnel”.

We met over 11 times during the formulation of the resource, and 3 meetings included City partners.

In November 2020, there will be an online showcasing of the project and its resources. Estimates based on prior events suggest that the online event could attract anywhere between 20-65 participants. The IWAU Facebook page regularly sees 125-250 views per post, and the event will be promoted there.

Indirectly:

The resource is web-based so its reach will have an impact on lives beyond the funding window of this project. We will continue to connect people with this resource via Inspiring Women Among Us communications throughout the year, for at least a few years. Further, the resources are free and publicly accessible so it could have quite expansive reach. It is also likely to be used in teaching or workshops given the nature of our two partners, and the audiences we hope to reach. Therefore each video on the new Claiming Spaces webpage has the potential to be viewed by hundreds of people, likely resulting in potential future reach in the thousands.

3. Recommendations for a municipality who might want to take on a similar project, as well as lessons learned.

It would be beneficial to access an established network within a municipality to find out if an organization has already begun a project like this and then meet with them to find out how you can support and uphold their work. Perhaps collaboration and sharing of resources is possible-- *How can your municipality bolster work that has been done? Are there information gaps that the municipality can focus on filling?*

When approaching anyone to be recorded for a video interview, especially during a pandemic, it is imperative to be as flexible and compassionate as possible when making the request or sending the invitations to potential knowledge holders whom you want to interview. Leadership roles are challenging on their own; leadership amidst an active pandemic requires a relentless level of attention to detail. Treat others the way you wish to be treated, with dignity, respect, and compassion. Express your gratitude before, during and after the interview.

Take the time you need to prepare yourself to record the video footage, find out which software you will need, what types of videos are you making: informational/educational or conversational? What do you want to know from the participants? Why do you want to know those things from the participants? Prepare yourself by watching YouTube videos that teach 'everyday people' to do basic recordings – Penína watched 5 hours-worth of instructional YouTube videos to train herself to conduct the interview and record it in Zoom. She then took 4 hours to practice recording in Zoom before practicing an interview with Annie P. and that video became the introduction to this project and the link was included in the invitation sent to participants. It should be noted that, while the Student Research Associates provided an option for participants to record a video on their own and submit it to IWAU, no one took that option because they felt the conversational interview would be more enjoyable and comfortable. The point is that participants had options to choose from so that participation in the project was flexible enough to accommodate their schedules, needs, and skills/experience. They were also guided by the introductory video created by the Student Research Associates. As a result, the participants had a stronger understanding of what to expect from this project, the new website, and the interview process. The leaders interviewed had an opportunity to see who would be working with them to complete the interviews and this step is critical for building confidence in the project when you cannot meet face-to-face to establish trust.

When it comes to the video editing and production process, making it short and snappy is key. We aimed to create videos that are easily digestible and appealing for a wide range of audiences. The creation of an external website that is easily navigable and visually pleasing is a choice we made to create a space that is simplistic and easy to engage with. We decided to use Squarespace as a platform as it is user-friendly and offers easily changeable templates that are time-saving and accessible for multiple members of our team.

4. How the collaboration with the women's organisation enhance the project or how has the collaboration on the project enhanced your relationship between the municipal council and the women's organisation?

The City of Prince George has a history of collaboration with IWAW through the City's participation in IWAW's annual event in 2016-2020. This project provided further opportunity to engage and look for ways for local government to help amplify important initiatives like Claiming Spaces through the City's social platforms and through connecting the project team to elected officials and leaders in the community.

Furthermore, inviting local government staff to the table ensures visibility of the initiative and continued support from Mayor and Council.

Lastly, current COVID-19 related measures have made our adapted output (a web-based resource that includes videos of inspiring leaders) particularly relevant and accessible for the near future, while restrictions are in place. This means that we have generated a new leadership-related resource that can reach out into communities, rather than counting on attendance in person—a wise choice and perhaps particularly so for members of the groups that this is intended to reach.

5. How will your municipality build on this experience and the learning that has stemmed from it in the future? Please be as specific as possible with regards to how this?

The City of Prince George will build on this experience by continuing to work with groups like IWAW to collaborate on future programming that aligns with both IWAW's intent to bring awareness to the importance of women in leadership and Council's priorities to collaborate with local organizations and partners to enhance quality of life, cultural vitality, and community engagement.

6. If you had to summarize the impact of the demonstration project in a short statement, what would it be?

Our project—Claiming Spaces—offers youth and individuals from marginalized groups easily accessible resources to engage with practical information and advice on entering leadership positions. In her interview, Tashia Kootenayoo—UBC student politician—encourages those interested in leadership to take “one little step, one decision that will lead you down a path you're meant to be down.” We hope this project may help initiate that ‘one little step’ for youth.

7. Did you manage to leverage additional funds or in-kind contributions from private sector, civil society or other projects to increase the impact of the project. If yes, please describe the type of support (financial or in-kind), the amount and the contributor.

Inspiring Women Among Us made the decision to match the FCM grant awarded to the City of Prince George. This allowed the opportunity to hire an additional Student Assistant, to take advantage of the abilities available. This also meant that two talented students were employed by the project during a summer when student employment was hard to come by, thanks to COVID-19.

8. Budget Reporting (see sample Budget Template)

Expenditure Category	Eligible Expenditures	Amount	Notes
Communications and Administrative Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document translation • Design and production of communication to promote project outcomes and benefits to the public. 		
Professional and/or Technical Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fess for professional or technical consultants and contractors, incurred in support of eligible expenses (Communications and admin support) 	\$5,000	Contractor fees for services rendered from Penina Sara-Lynn Harding and Annie Pumphrey