

Looking Out For Each Other

A Project Update – September 2018

Pro Bono Students Canada: Fahim Rahman's Experience Working With The LOFEO Project



LOFEO would like to thank UNB Law Student, Fahim Rahman. During the 2017-2018 academic year, Fahim assisted in creating a framework for a helpline navigation system that would support families and friends locate their missing loved ones.

"I was a legal researcher for Looking Out for Each Other last year, under Dr. Julia Hughes and Janelle Marchand's supervision. I enjoyed being involved on a meaningful project, by developing an inventory of legal resources for anyone affected by the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls issue. I am grateful to be involved like this early on in my legal career, as I learned how lawyers can integrate themselves into communities. I hope to take my experience working with the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples' Council to practice as a lawyer by helping improve

access to justice for marginalized populations." – Fahim Rahman

Thank you Fahim for your passion and your expertise on this project!

LOFEO Team Update

Our Academic Research Coordinator is leaving us as of August 17th. We are very grateful for the work Janelle Marchand has accomplished and we look forward to continuing our relationship with her as she continues to develop as a researcher assisting with other aspects of the project.

"I wanted to take a moment to let you know how much I have enjoyed my journey here on this project and that you have all played a part in that. I've learned so much from all of your experiences, advice, and guidance over the past year and a half, and my time spent as a coordinator on this team has been such a valuable part of my career journey. I know that I will carry the things I've learned here with me to my next adventure, and I will always look back on this experience with fondness. All team members on this project carry such important knowledges and I want you to all know that it has been an honor to learn from you all. Know that I'm always wishing the best to the project and the LOFEO team!" – Janelle Marchand

All the best, Janelle!

Welcome: Anthea Plummer

We welcome Anthea Plummer to the coordinator/researcher role. Anthea will take on some aspects of what Janelle did previously and work with Dr. Laurel Lewey on the policing research.



Anthea is also finishing her Masters at UNB in Interdisciplinary Studies focused in Sociology, Law, and Worldviews.

Welcome: Kyana Kingbird



We also welcome Kyana Kingbird as a research student on the project. Kyana will be working on transcriptions and coding of sharing circle interview recordings. She is in her last year of a BA Degree at St. Thomas University with a double major in Sociology and Criminology.

FACT OR MYTH: The “24 Hour Rule” By Kyana Kingbird

A common myth that permeates society is that a person must be missing for at least 24 hours before they can be reported as missing. It is unclear where that myth originally came from but has been credited to movies and television. It is also a myth that has transcended western culture and extends as far as Britain, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

Numerous websites and missing persons organizations cite the common belief, dispel it as a myth, and cannot seem to pinpoint where exactly the myth originated. For instance, the Thunder Bay Police Service outlines several points that a person must consider when they believe someone to be missing. Some of these circumstances include whether or not the individual has any visible or non-visible disabilities, whether they are elderly or very young, if they are in unfamiliar areas such as travelling or on nature excursions, or if they are associated with violent behavior.

All missing organizations who aim to dispel the “24 hour waiting period” myth agree that there are steps to be taken to determine if an individual should be reported as missing, and waiting 24 hours is not one of them. Before calling police, it is best to reach out to family members or friends who might know where they can be reached. It is also important to determine if the actions are out of character for an individual. If you hear from an individual every day and suddenly do not, that could be a sign. If a person shows up for work every day and does not show up or answer phone calls, it is another sign.

The majority of people reported missing are found, but it is important to report a person as missing as soon as possible to ensure that the proper steps can be taken to locate them.

LOFEO RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: University of New Brunswick (UNB)



Dr. Jula Hughes, a Professor of Law at UNB, is the Principal Investigator on the LOFEO project. Dr. Hughes has a broad range of academic expertise focused in criminal law and procedure and Aboriginal law. She has experience leading research teams, and is a nationally and internationally recognized expert on Indigenous rights and governance, feminist advocacy, and access to justice. Her area of research on this project is currently focused on four initiatives:

- 1) Participating in sharing circles: this activity has included sharing some key information with community members regarding missing persons investigations; developing a coding framework and analyzing sharing circle and individual interview results; and developing additional research projects large and small that come from questions raised by circle participants;
- 2) Developing a legal analysis of #MMIW as a constitutional rights issue, specifically under s. 35(4) of the Constitution Act, 1982. Jula Hughes has presented on stages of

this work across the country and is poised to send this work out for peer review;

- 3) Preparing resources for organizations, families and friends: we have been working on resource guides, community handouts, curriculum for law student volunteers and a family support package;
- 4) Assisting NBAPC in making submissions to the National Inquiry.



LOFEO Preliminary Research Findings

At this moment, we are at the mid-point through the projects research component. We can already report some important insights we have learned from sharing circle participants and from staff in our partner organizations. This is not a complete list, but here are some key findings.



First, there are cases of missing and murdered Indigenous people in many locations in Eastern Canada, sometimes going back decades or more, that remain unsolved and unaddressed. These missing and murdered people are not forgotten, and the tragedies of their disappearance or death remains an open wound for families, friends and communities. The situations are also very varied, ranging from unexplained disappearances, suspicious or unexplained traffic accidents to mental health crises, family breakdown, problems in institutional care for people with disabilities and seniors, recreational mishaps, stranger violence and street crime, often related to the colonial racialization and sexualization of Indigenous women.

Second, sharing circle participants see a clear connection between missing and murdered women and other experiences of violence like colonialism that has led to the racialization and sexualization of Indigenous women, residential school trauma and normalization of violence, the sixties scoop and normalization of stereotypes and racialized attitudes, and removal of children under guardianship.

Third, Aboriginal organizations and women's shelters already provide services to families and friends of missing individuals and to folks who are at high risk of violent victimization. They have significant expertise in providing these services, but they are often very underfunded and they have a hard time supporting the mental health needs of their frontline staff, who are at risk of traumatization and burnout.

Fourth, Native Councils, Friendship Centres and some other Aboriginal organizations and businesses are experts in assisting Indigenous people navigate mainstream services and in providing cultural competency training.

Fifth, a number of mainstream service providers including, importantly, the RCMP are working hard to improve their services to Indigenous people. They have made significant strides in improving their management of missing persons files. That said, there is a lot more work that needs to be done in terms of raising awareness about issues that arise for off-reserve and non-status people. Also, there is insufficient exchange of best practices among different police forces.

Sixth, having a group of trained professionals with knowledge of and established relationships to Aboriginal organizations can make a big difference to how a file is handled by police, and can really help family members and friends when faced with a missing person situation. These navigators can assist in contacting police, following up with investigation officers, media relations, volunteer coordination and connecting with psycho-social supports.

Seventh, the generosity of families, survivors, staff and leaders in all of the organizations throughout this research is inspiring. People have shared not only very personal and extremely difficult stories, but also offered their insights and expertise. The research teams have been very grateful for all that has been shared and we are working hard on creating resources that are responsive to the needs that have been identified.

LOFEO Building Resources for Youth



The Looking Out For Each Other project members Anthea Plummer, Janelle Marchand and Michelle Perley, travelled to Listuguj on June 13th to hold a focus group with youth leaders, so that youth could speak to their experiences in post-secondary education. We were very happy to learn from these successful youth on how to build strength and resiliency when transitioning from community to an urban center. The project is hoping to transform their valuable knowledge into resources for youth on what to expect during an interaction with a police officer or a lawyer.

LOFEO Travels To Prince Edward Island To Hold Sharing Circles

In July, the Leadership team travelled to Prince Edward Island (PEI) to hold Sharing Circles in collaboration with the Native Council of PEI. Over a two-day period, Circles were held in both Charlottetown and Montague.



The traditional Sharing Circles were led by a local Circle Keeper; a local Elder was also present to offer cultural and emotional support to participants. Next, we are planning Sharing Circles in collaboration with the Aboriginal Women's Association of Prince Edward Island, to be held on Lennox Island this Fall.

Please contact our project manager Michelle Perley, if you would like to hold a Sharing Circle in your respective organization, community, or to request a one-on-one interview – lofeo@nbapc.ca

New Brunswick FAMILY INFORMATION LIASION UNIT (FILU) for Families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

New Brunswick FILU- Family Information Liaison Unit for Families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) has officially started May 15, 2017 within the Community Services & Crime Prevention division of the Department of Justice and Public Safety.

The process of the National Inquiry into MMIWG is separate from the functions of each Provincial/Territorial FILU.



The NB Family Information Liaison Unit and the Family Information Liaison Officer will:

- **provide a dedicated liaison function** between families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and other provincial agencies and services, including the criminal justice system, social services, and policing in New Brunswick. The purpose will be to gather information requested by families.
- **Make referrals for families** who have identified that they have a family member who was missing or murdered, and aim to ensure that their support services are culturally sensitive whether it be through a western approach with a trauma informed therapist or through traditional/spiritual ways, ceremony and/or support.

ACCESSING INFORMATION

Eligibility for services of NB FILU are for family members, including blood relations, those who are non-blood relations such as adopted family, and those considered kin. Families do not need any official record of their loss to access the services. Eligibility for information will be determined by privacy regulations and legislation. Participation is on a voluntary basis; and you must be a resident of New Brunswick.

Stephanie Francis is NB FILU's **Family Information Liaison Officer**. Stephanie is a Mi'kmaq woman, mother, aunt, sister, daughter, niece and cousin, who is originally from Elsipogtog First Nation. She has been a member, since the age of 10 years old, and

resides in Saint Mary's First Nation (Fredericton). Her background has made her familiar, through lived experience and professionally as a front-line service provider, into the many factors that Indigenous women and girls face today.

She will be able to assist families who request information on their missing or deceased loved ones by acting as the messenger/liaison. She will also be able to connect family members with a trauma informed therapist, who is a member of the FILU team, or assist in finding a local counsellor/therapist for on-going support. One of the approaches that the FILU values is the choice for families to access culturally appropriate traditional elders for ceremony and support. She can be contacted either by phone or email, and can come directly to your home for an intake, and to begin the process.

**For more information, please contact
Stephanie Francis at (506) 444-5139,
Where you can leave a confidential
voicemail or email at
Stephanie.francis2@gnb.ca**

We Rise, for her – Our Sister by Chevelle Malcolm

We Rise,
because the freedom of our sister can no longer be compromised!

We Rise,
because her sufferings can no longer go unrecognized, her future no longer jeopardized!

Yes, We Rise
Up! for her soiled innocence, for her pain,
for the injustice she has suffered!
Up! Against those who belittled her, for her pain

Up! Against those who abused her, for her pain,
Against those who seek to destroy her, for her pain,
My sisters, We Rise Up for her.
HER
A warrior, a survivor, an extraordinary woman,
Our Sister.
With rich indigenous blood coursing through every inch of her veins,
With the strength of her native ancestors embedded in every corner and crevice of her bones,
We Rise up for her, Our Sister.
HER,
Whose hazel eyes pronounce her sufferings
Whose light-dark-brown skin recounts her fight, whose dirty blond hair shouts her victory.
We Rise up for her, Our Sister!
Whose people suffered because of colonial greed,
Were robbed of the fruits of their labor but could not be robbed of their seeds.
A good human cannot be harmed by the worst: Her people, our people – survivors.
Our sister, unforgotten, a survivor too.
Her people, our people-warriors.
Our sister, unforgotten, a warrior too.
We Rise up for her!
Because although she was taken,
She is not dead.
Although she was brutally killed,
She is- not dead!
Every atom is still compelled to carry the sounds of her laughter,
Her hazel eyes are still pronouncing
Her light-dark-brown skin is still speaking
Her dirty blonde hair is still shouting
Be stirred!
Be comforted.
Let your red scarves hang high, let them remind you of her, of who She Is!

Wear them proud! Proud for Her and of who She Is!
A warrior, a survivor, an extraordinary woman
Our Sister.
We rise up for Her!



Status of Women
Canada

Condition féminine
Canada

Canada
Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

