



# Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice:

Yukon's Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women, Girls and  
Two-spirit+ People Strategy



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	2
<b>Message from the Yukon Advisory Committee</b>	4
<b>MMIWG2S + Declaration 2020</b>	6
<b>Vision</b>	7
<b>Foundational Values</b>	7
<b>Implementation Principles</b>	8
<b>Goals</b>	9
<b>Partners &amp; Contributors</b>	10
<b>Four Paths to Change the Story</b>	11
1.0 Strengthening Connections & Supports	11
2.0 Community Safety & Justice	12
3.0 Economic Independence & Education	13
4.0 Community Action & Accountability	14
<b>Endnotes</b>	15



# Introduction

After tireless family activism and calls for justice surrounding the murders and disappearances of Indigenous women at disproportionate rates, and calls for a national inquiry, the Government of Canada began the process of initiating a formal National inquiry in 2016. After more than two years of inquiry that included family, expert and institutional hearings, led by Yukon families who were the first in Canada to courageously testify and share their loved ones' stories, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its Final Report, "Reclaiming Power and Place", on June 3, 2019, that delivered 231 Calls for Justice directed at all levels of government, institutions, social service providers, industries, and all Canadians.

**“ Reclaiming Power and Place reveals that persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind Canada’s staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA<sup>1</sup> people. The two-volume report calls for transformative legal and social changes to resolve the crisis that has devastated Indigenous communities across the country<sup>2</sup>. ”**

In response to the Final Report, the Yukon Advisory Committee (YAC) on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ people (MMIWG2S+) identified Yukon priority actions grouped under four paths to develop this whole-of-Yukon Strategy on MMIWG2S+. A whole-of-Yukon approach includes all governments, partners and contributors in joining efforts to create change together.



The YAC was created in the spring of 2015 to guide and support the first Yukon Regional Roundtable on MMIWG2S+ and to connect the work of the National Inquiry in Yukon to families of MMIWG2S+, and Indigenous survivors, experts and communities. Following the National Inquiry, the mandate of YAC was expanded to include the development and implementation of the Yukon Strategy on MMIWG2S+. The YAC continues to be committed to a decolonized approach to taking action to end violence and upholding dignity and justice for MMIWG2S+ that is grounded in culture and community.

### **The YAC is co-chaired by:**

- The Honourable Jeanie McLean, Minister Responsible for the Women's Directorate, representing Government of Yukon;
- Chief Doris Bill, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, representing Yukon First Nations; and
- Ann Maje Raider, Executive Director of the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS), representing Indigenous women's organizations.

### **Current members of YAC are:**

- Terri Szabo, President, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council (YAWC);
- Adeline Webber, President, Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle (WAWC);
- Toni Blanchard, MMIWG2S+ family representative;
- Amanda Buffalo, Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (LAWS) representative;
- Shaun Ladue, LGBTQ2S+ representative; and
- Mae Bolton, Elder representative.

Ex-officio members include officials from the Yukon government, Indigenous women's organizations, Government of Canada, and Yukon RCMP <sup>3</sup>.

### **We thank past members of the Yukon Advisory Committee on MMIWG2S+ for their time, energy, and commitment:**

- Doris Anderson, former President, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council (YAWC);
- Krista Reid, former President, Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle (WAWC);
- Agnes Mills, Elder representative; and
- Elaine Taylor, former Minister Responsible for the Women's Directorate.

# Message from the Yukon Advisory Committee

We, the members of the Yukon Advisory Committee (YAC), are honoured to present this Yukon Strategy in response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Final Report, “Reclaiming Power and Place” released on June 3, 2019. We acknowledge the contributions of the Commissioners of the National Inquiry for bearing witness to the truth of part of the historical relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada, and their critical role in hearing from families and calling for justice.

The Final Report acknowledges genocide and **identifies four pathways** that continue to enforce the historic and contemporary manifestations of colonialism that lead to additional violence. They are:

**1**  
historical,  
multigenerational,  
and intergenerational  
trauma;

**2**  
maintaining  
the status quo and  
institutional lack  
of will;

**3**  
social and economic  
marginalization;

**4**  
ignoring the  
agency and expertise  
of Indigenous women,  
girls, and 2SLGBTQIA  
people.

Yukon’s Strategy addresses all four of these pathways to violence, and maps **four corresponding paths** to dignity and justice.



**Strengthening Connections  
& Support**



**Community  
Safety & Justice**



**Economic Independence  
& Education**



**Community Action  
& Accountability**



We are grateful for the active participation of family representatives on YAC and the highly valued input generated from the 2020 gathering and other family and survivor gatherings, meetings, and engagement over the years. Families actively contribute their lived experience, rich Indigenous knowledge, and guiding wisdom. Survivors and families provide very important context, information, and recommendations to direct systemic change to improve justice and safety.

We appreciate the engagement and commitment of Yukon First Nations elected officials and leaders of Yukon municipalities. Their input informed the development of this Strategy, and their commitment to change will uphold this work in their communities.

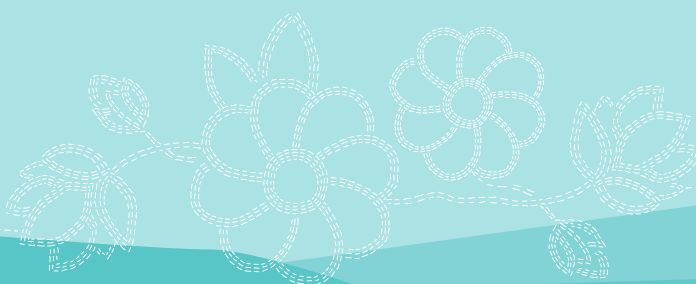
The Strategy is intended to be a living document that will grow and change as implementation proceeds and priorities for action change over time in response to evolving community needs. The Strategy will be supported by joint implementation plans that highlight commitments of partners and contributors.

We are accountable to the families and survivors to ensure their guidance and input is honoured and respected. Their experiential knowledge, wisdom, and expertise is the foundation for action. We hold ourselves, our partners, and contributors accountable for implementation of the Strategy.

We recognize that violence has been perpetuated within a social context that is shaped by systemic racism and colonialism. Systemic change requires comprehensive action across governments, other agencies, and involving all Yukon people and communities. We are committed to moving forward to create the change needed to ensure the protection of life, dignity, and equality of Indigenous people in Yukon, particularly women, girls and Two-spirit+ people. We are committed to not only changing institutions, but changing our communities, our families and ourselves.

This Strategy intentionally connects with, but does not duplicate, work being led by First Nations governments, Indigenous women's organizations, Government of Yukon, Government of Canada, Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN), and other organizations<sup>3</sup>.

Indigenous family members, survivors, community activists and leaders have been at the forefront of advocacy on missing and murdered women, girls and others, and in launching the Inquiry. As the Strategy is shaped, implemented, and revised over the years, Indigenous and family knowledge and leadership must remain central to the path forward.



# MMIWG2S+ Declaration 2020

**As Yukoners and leaders,** we acknowledge the work of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and accept the findings of “Reclaiming Power and Place”, the Final Report of the National Inquiry.

**As Yukoners and leaders,** we acknowledge the unceasing commitment of Yukon Indigenous survivors and families in pursuing justice, dignity, and safety for women, girls, and Two-spirit+ people and family members.

**Together, and as individuals,** we are committed to do our part to take action for the implementation of Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon's MMIWG2S+ Strategy, and initiatives that contribute to the vision set out in the Strategy.

**We commit to end violence,** including all forms of race- and gender-based violence and to uphold dignity and justice for Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people in Yukon.

**We commit to be accountable to families,** survivors, other partners, contributors, and Yukoners for implementation of this Strategy.





# Vision

Healthy, safe and violence-free communities where Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ Yukoners are respected, inherently valued, and treated equitably with dignity and justice.

# Foundational Values

The values that have guided the Yukon Advisory Committee during the development of this Strategy and will show the way forward include:

## **Culture, Language, Spirituality and Relationship with the Land**

The Final Report of the National Inquiry into MMIWG states that “the right to culture is also understood as including the ability to practice and pass on cultural traditions, language, and ways of relating to other people and to the land”<sup>5</sup>. Recognizing that cultural rights are part of human rights, Yukon’s Strategy on MMIWG2S+ will be grounded in Indigenous culture, language, and land-based initiatives. Each community is invited to interpret and implement this Strategy according to their own laws, language, sacred teachings, relationship with the land, cultural protocols, and governance systems.

## **Yukon First Nations and Other Indigenous Values and Principles**

Each Yukon First Nation has its own unique set of values that they live by. Kindness, love, respect, balance, and harmony are some the values that are honoured in relationships between all Indigenous people and with the land. Developing unique and shared understandings of values among all Yukon and Indigenous people is an important foundation for the design and implementation of this Strategy.

## **Truth and Reconciliation**

Partners are committed to taking joint action including all governments, organizations, Indigenous women’s organizations and MMIWG2S+ families to reinstate safety, justice, dignity, and equality for Indigenous women, girls, and Indigenous people in Yukon. Collaborative planning and implementation will advance truth and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens by responding to the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

## **Self-Determination**

Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people, like all Canadians, have the right to life, liberty, and security of the person. Yukon’s MMIWG2S+ Strategy will restore, respect and advance the fundamental principle of self-determination.

## **Indigenous Self-Government**

Eleven Yukon First Nations have Final land claim and Self-Government Agreements and three Yukon First Nations have other governance structures in place without agreements. The Yukon Strategy on MMIWG2S+ recognizes all First Nations governments and will advance opportunities for inter-governmental collaboration that respect of the governance structure of each community.

# Implementation Principles

Principles that will support implementation of this Strategy include:

## **Inclusivity and Interconnection**

By working together with all governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and Yukon people, the Yukon Strategy on MMIWG2S+ recognizes that it will take coordinated efforts to implement this Strategy. Women, girls, and Two-spirit+ individuals living with FASD or other disabilities will be fully included and considered.

## **Equity and Equality**

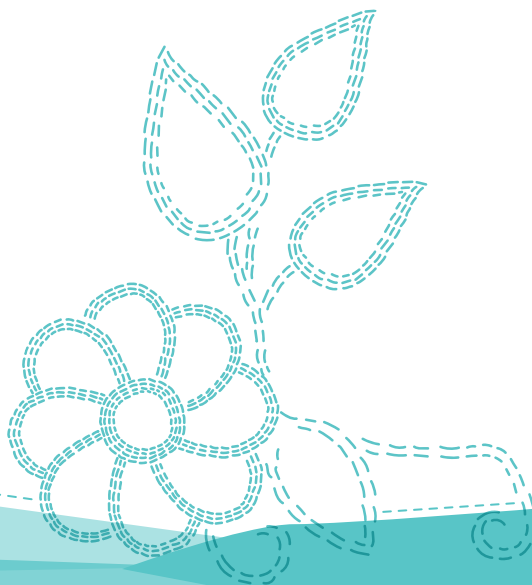
Social inequities and inequalities perpetuate violence. The implementation of this Strategy will identify and address patterns of racism, sexism, discrimination, and bias to improve justice, equality, and equity among Yukon people.

## **Sustainability**

Partners must come together and invest in changing systems, improving services, providing comprehensive, multi-year funding and in developing First Nations and Yukon service providers in all relevant fields over the long term to embed changes.

## **Accountability**

All contributors to the development and implementation of this Strategy must hold themselves and each other accountable for their commitments in leading or partnering on the implementation and action plans applicable to them.





# Goals



Implement coordinated and effective violence prevention, intervention, and crisis response across Yukon that contribute to safer and healthier communities for Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people.



End violence against all Indigenous people in Yukon, in particular women, girls and Two-spirit+ people in Yukon.



Increase the economic independence of Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people.



Increase public awareness and engagement with the community in ending violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-spirit+ people.



# Partners & Contributors

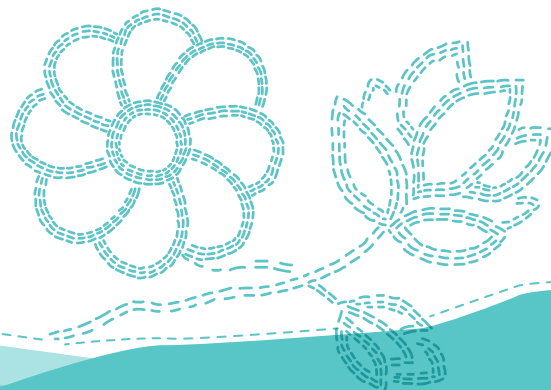
Discussions have been held with representatives from a range of government, non-government and private sector organizations.

**Partners** are those that will be invited or will be welcomed to sign the 2020 MMIWG2S+ Declaration and formally commit to advancing the implementation of the Strategy alongside other partners. Partners will invest financial and human resources in the implementation of this Strategy.

**Contributors** are those individuals and organizations that have and will continue to offer their ideas and efforts to the implementation of this Strategy in less formal ways.

Additional partners and contributors will be added as implementation proceeds. Partners and Contributors include but are not limited to:

- Families of MMIWG2S+
- Indigenous women and community activists
- Indigenous Elders, youth, and knowledge holders
- Indigenous men
- Indigenous women's organizations
- First Nations Governments
- Government of Yukon
- Yukon political parties
- Municipal governments
- Government of Canada
- Council of Yukon First Nations
- Assembly of First Nations, Yukon Regional Office
- RCMP
- Yukon Women's Coalition
- Non-governmental organizations
- Yukon Hospital Corporation
- Yukon University
- First responders
- Employers
- Private sector/industry
- Media
- Yukoners
- Other individuals or organizations





# Four Paths to Change the Story



## 1. Strengthening Connections & Supports

Historical, multigenerational, and intergenerational trauma was identified by the National Inquiry as one of four pathways to violence. Yukon MMIWG2S+ families have long echoed the Inquiry's pathways to violence and the need for sources of new and continued trauma to be identified and addressed. Strengthening connections to support access to justice, recovery, and healing is an ongoing process that is optimal when designed and developed by and for Indigenous people in collaboration with contributing partners.

### 1.1 MMIWG2S+ Family/Survivor Support and Involvement:

Keep families at the heart of “changing the story” by providing ongoing support and involvement, including the implementation of this Strategy.

### 1.2 Commemoration:

Yukon acknowledges the lives lost and lives changed because of violence against Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people and will honour and commemorate MMIWG2S+ Yukoners and those connected to Yukon families, by assisting to restore graves, fencing, and markers.

### 1.3 Strengthen First Nation Identity and Connections:

Acknowledge and increase actions that strengthen connections to the land, language, culture, spirituality and traditional livelihoods.

### 1.4 Community-based Mental Wellness Support:

Provide and improve community-based, culturally relevant mental wellness support for victims of violence, perpetrators of violence, children witnessing violence, victims of sexual abuse and other family and community members. Develop community-led accessible and appropriate options for detox, treatment, aftercare, healing and recovery.

### 1.5 Community and Land-based Infrastructure and Programming:

Invest in community and land-based infrastructure and programming including after-care and development of facilities and camps in order to ensure options are available that align with community priorities.

### 1.6 Indigenous Children and Families:

Improve and expand culturally appropriate supports to Indigenous families so that Indigenous children are raised in their own safe and loving families and communities.

### 1.7 Improvements in Health and Social Programs and Services:

Work with partners to appropriately implement “Putting People First”, the April 30, 2020 final report of the comprehensive review of Yukon's health and social programs and services.

### 1.8 International Agreements on Rights:

Explore options to consider the application of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) in the context of Yukon's Final Agreements, other modern treaties, and the evolving relationship with First Nations governments without agreements.



## 2. Community Safety & Justice

Systemic injustices supported by institutional lack of will to change was also identified by the National Inquiry as one of the four pathways to violence. Maintaining the status quo is not acceptable; especially when it comes to safety and justice. We must do better. As such, our actions need to seek systemic change to the structures that enact and enable violence.

### 2.1 Community Safety Assessments, Plans and Implementation:

Conduct community-based safety assessments designed by communities to identify factors contributing to the ongoing perpetuation of violence and unsafe conditions in each community. Develop and implement Community Safety Plans that address these factors and conditions.

### 2.2 Evaluate Sharing Common Ground:

Sharing Common Ground – Yukon's Police Force Review (2010)<sup>6</sup> is the final report of the review in Yukon focusing primarily on the RCMP. The evaluation should review the status of the implementation of the recommendations and identify emerging needs.

### 2.3 Restorative Justice:

Improve options and coordination for youth and adult restorative justice in Yukon communities with a focus on the safety and dignity of victims.

### 2.4 Whitehorse Correctional Centre and Community Justice Services:

Partner with Whitehorse Correctional Centre and Department of Justice to improve programs, services and supports for Indigenous people while incarcerated and support reintegration into the community with a focus on upholding the safety and dignity of women, girls and Two-spirit+ people.

### 2.5 Sexualized Assault and Violence Response:

Improve victim-centered and crisis-responsive supports for victims of gender-based violence and sexualized assault.

### 2.6 Violence Prevention and Response Programs:

Review violence prevention and response programs and services and associated funding programs in Yukon to improve sustainability, positive outcomes and alignment with First Nations needs.

### 2.7 Update of MMIWG2S+ Record:


Update the record of MMIWG2S+ with current information and include those who were not included in the original Yukon Sisters in Spirit research project and create a record of missing and murdered Indigenous people in addition to the MMIWG2S+ record.

### 2.8 Transportation and Communication:

Create safe and affordable transportation and communication options to and between Yukon communities.

### 2.9 Research Projects:

Identify research priorities under the leadership of Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people and conduct individual and/or joint projects to advance knowledge and information available on specific topics, including human trafficking affecting Yukon Indigenous people.





## 3. Economic Independence & Education

Social and economic marginalization is a significant pathway to violence that was identified by the National Inquiry. Enhancing the education and economic independence of Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people supports the eradication of economic forms of violence, and builds pathways to freedom and self-determination.

### 3.1 Leadership, Education and Training Programs:

Create and expand available options in leadership, education, and training programs for children, youth, and adults that are grounded in culture.

### 3.2 Post-Secondary Education and Professional Development:

Improve funding for and access to culturally relevant career counselling, post-secondary education programs, and community education outreach.

### 3.3 Employment, Livelihoods, and Entrepreneurial Development:

Increase and improve opportunities for Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people to create sustainable and self-determined livelihoods and economic independence.

### 3.4 Resource Extraction and Major Infrastructure Projects:

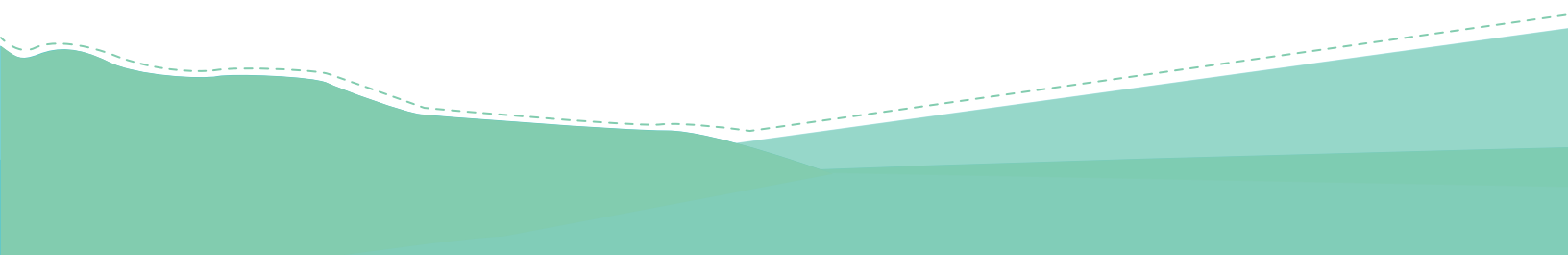
Eliminate violence related to development projects in both workplaces and communities. Increase the workforce capacity, mitigate negative impacts, and improve the positive benefits for Indigenous women and Yukon communities.

### 3.5 Workplace Physical, Psychological and Cultural Safety:

Improve the physical, psychological, cultural, and spiritual safety of all Yukon workplaces for Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people.

### 3.6 Safe Housing and Freedom from Poverty:

Appropriately and safely meet the needs of Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people which includes the provision of gender-specific options for safe and affordable housing, food, clothing, and other essentials.





## 4. Community Action & Accountability

Ignoring the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people is the fourth pathway to violence identified in the National Inquiry's Final Report. Working together, taking action, and being accountable while respecting the expertise of Indigenous people and communities is a path to Changing the Story and Upholding Dignity and Justice in Yukon. We believe that grounding our work in the inherent value and central importance of Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit+ people is key to our ability to end violence in our communities.

### 4.1 Public Information, Training, and Education:

Provide culturally relevant public education about MMIWG2S+ issues and related priority topics, including violence prevention and healthy masculinities that contribute to the elimination of racism, oppression, and violence.

### 4.2 Intercultural Competence Training and Education:

Provide education and training to all relevant public servants, judiciary and service providers in First Nations, municipal, territorial, and federal governments that is designed and delivered by Indigenous people where possible, with the goal of improving cultural safety.

### 4.3 Media Roles and Responsibilities:

Improve accurate, respectful reporting of gender- and race-based violence and eliminate the inaccurate portrayal of Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people in all forms of media. Work to ensure that the media can access relevant facts from the RCMP and other sources.

### 4.4 Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment (YESA):

Implement culturally relevant, gender-balanced analysis in the YESA Act processes.

### 4.5 Indigenous Women's Organizations:

Informed by a co-developed funding assessment process, provide adequate, long-term funding for Indigenous women's organizations that supports effectiveness and enhances collaboration.

### 4.6 MMIWG2S+ Strategy Accountability Framework:

Embed an accountability framework into the Strategy to ensure continued inclusion and involvement of MMIWG2S+ families, survivors, partners, contributors and all Yukon communities.

### 4.7 2SLGBTQIA Advocacy and Public Education:

Assess needs and resource of organizations that engage in advocacy and education on anatomical sex, sexual orientation, sexualities, gender expression and identities to address colonial violence against all genders and sexualities, promote understanding, and create safety, equality, and justice for 2SLGBTQIA Yukoners.

### 4.8 MMIWG2S+ Trust Fund:

Establish a trust fund for families and survivors of MMIWG2S+ to provide resources in priority areas defined by families.





# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The acronym 2SLGBTQQIA is used in the Final Report of the National Inquiry. It represents people who are Two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual. The acronym MMIWG2S+ is used in the Yukon Strategy to indicate Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Indigenous Girls, and Indigenous people identifying as Two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or with any other form of non-binary sexual orientation or gender identity. The acronym 2SLGBTQQIA is used intentionally in Strategy Item 2.7.

<sup>2</sup> All Yukoners are encouraged to read the Final Report <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>.

<sup>3</sup> Claudia Riveros, Executive Director of Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council (YAWC); Joy O'Brien, MMIWG Outreach Coordinator, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council (YAWC); Valerie Royle, Deputy Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate; Hillary Aitken, Director, Women's Directorate; Lisa Dewhurst, Senior Advisor on MMIWG, Women's Directorate; Scott Sheppard, Commanding Officer, 'M' Division, RCMP; Dionne Savill, Regional Director General, Yukon Region, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

Former ex-officio members include Jennifer England, former Director, Women's Directorate; Chantal Genier, former Senior Advisor on MMIWG, Women's Directorate; Siku Allooloo, former Policy Analyst, Women's Directorate; Winnie Peterson, former Executive Director, Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle. We also recognize and thank other members and ex-officio members who attended meetings on behalf of their organization, as well as those who provided administrative and executive support to the YAC.

<sup>4</sup> Related initiatives include but are not limited to the review of the Child and Family Services Act (Yukon) completed in 2019 and in implementation of changes by Yukon government with First Nations and other partners; the work of CYFN and Yukon First Nations on Jordan's Principle implementation; child welfare reform including the review of implications of the new federal "Act Respecting First Nation, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families" which was assented to in June 2019 and First Nations jurisdiction in child welfare; "Honouring Connections", a collaborative effort launched by CYFN, Government of Yukon's Family and Children's Services in December 2019 to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system; "Putting People First", the final report of Yukon's comprehensive review of health and social programs and services which was released on April 30, 2020 and implementation is in the planning stages; project and capacity building work of YAWC, LAWS and WAWC; Yukon Women's Coalition work including the Together for Safety Protocol work related to the review of the RCMP policy on sexual assault; and the work of the newly formed Yukon First Nation Education Directorate under Yukon First Nation leadership.

<sup>5</sup> "National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, "Reclaiming Power and Place": Executive Summary of the Final Report., page 23. <http://mmiwg-ffada.ca>

<sup>6</sup> For more information on Sharing Common Ground, visit <https://yukon.ca/en/your-government/find-out-what-government-doing/find-out-about-improved-relations-between-rcmp-and>.

