

## **Summary of Proposal. Connection Grants (SSHRC)**

### **Title: Sketching narratives of movement towards comprehensive and competent early childhood educational systems across Canada**

Summary: Early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Canada has a complicated, contradictory, and multifaceted history. Despite numerous research, advocacy, and policy attempts over the years, there is no federal support for a public system, and provincial/territorial initiatives have been intermittent, erratic, and sometimes contradictory. Nonetheless, many positive movements have come about in the field. The premise of this project is to capture the substantive changes that have already taken place, with regards to ECEC policy, pedagogy, practice, and theory, as the result of decades of collective advocacy and research, in order to inspire further action at local, provincial/territorial, and federal levels and to consolidate a pan-Canadian network of researchers, practitioners, decision-makers, advocates, and knowledge keepers from First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and immigrant communities

Goals: i) Mobilize narratives of change across provincial-territorial boundaries demonstrating how innovations in Canadian early childhood policy, practice, and pedagogy have achieved positive effects, and examine what drives change forward; ii) From these change narratives, and in the context of broader discussions with national and international ECEC experts in policy, advocacy, and pedagogy, plan further knowledge mobilization efforts in our roles as advocates/activists/researchers to advance national ECEC research and infrastructure, in order to leverage what has been taking place provincially to informal Federal response that ensures transformation towards a universal, competent system of accessible, affordable and equitable child care, building on local contextual developments while addressing two of SSHRC's future challenge areas: Building Better Lives Across the Gender Spectrum and Envisioning Governance Systems that Work; iii) Consolidate a cross-Canada network of researchers, advocates, policy-makers, and educators.

The primary activity of this project is to bring together a group of leading ECEC scholars/policy informants (applicants) from across Canada with national and international decision-makers, researchers, and advocates. Phase One will begin with three days of face-to-face meetings to share political, practical, pedagogical, and theoretical advances that will assist us to identify common issues and re-imagine a national ECEC future, share local change narratives that highlight priorities and challenges, and identify gaps, similarities, and resources needed to consolidate our pan-Canadian network, and to plan phases two and three. Phase Two: This phase involves planning, implementing, and

evaluating three webinars that will be simultaneously broadcast and translated across Canada, focusing on a current issue in ECEC. These webinars are intended to engage the practice community, serving as a community of inquiry mobilizing practitioner, policy-maker, and scholarly knowledge. Participation in the webinars will assist in building new reciprocal research relationships, by considering how knowledge generated and mobilized in one context can be applied, adapted, or used to inspire another. Insights collected from the webinars and local conversations will inform phase three of the project. Phase Three: We will create a project website to house videos of the webinars, and resources from various regions, serving to share knowledge and advance national ECEC research and infrastructure, as well as content shared by users (ECEC communities across Canada) documenting their ongoing narratives of change in the areas of ECEC policy, research, and practice in their local provincial-territorial contexts.

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