



VIUFA Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee (HRISC) 2018-19 Report

During this academic year, HRISC supported and partnered in projects ranging from the small to the large. For example, it lent its name to support Dr. Gillian Anderson's Period Poverty action during the month of February. In another instance HRISC was part of the 'big stage'; I helped to connect individuals who made possible VIU having The Shoe Project during Global Citizens Week. This was an initiative that linked HRISC with VIU's International Education and community partners (Nanaimo Literacy and CVI Multicultural Society).

HRISC continued to lend its support to national and community organizations in bringing speakers to campus. In October, HRISC partnered with VIU's Global Studies Program in hosting the Inter Pares 2018 Speaking Tour on Women's Rights, Human Rights. The focus was on women's reproductive health in the Philippines, with speakers, Lina Bacalando and Joy Salgado, from the Likhaan Centre for Women's Health, as well as, Layla Robbie, People and Culture Manager, Haven Society of Nanaimo. Also, in October, HRISC partnered with Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba in hosting Dr. Steve Ellner to speak on Venezuela's current situation regarding economic and human rights issues.

HRISC sought to reach out to the larger Nanaimo community by partnering with Dr. Colleen McVeigh's Worldbridger Film Series. In each semester, HRISC hosted a film in which I led the discussion. For the Fall, *Voices in the Clouds* (2010) was shown. It's a film about a man of mixed heritage who discovers his indigenous Taiwanese ancestry, Atayal, and begins a journey to deepen the connections to his roots that leads to his becoming an advocate for his people. *BlackKlansmen* (2018) was shown during Black History Month. The film bridges the past (1970s) with the present in exposing racism and the attitudes of white supremacists.

HRISC supported and partnered with VIUFA's Status of Women in several events. In November, HRISC initiated a public event that was co-hosted with SoW--guest speakers Drs. Lin and Siku, *Indigenous Women's Cultural Production and Political Activism in Taiwan: The Cases of Four Indigenous Women*. This visit was supported by VIU's Office of Aboriginal Education and International Education, and UVic's Lansdowne Lecture Series.

As well, HRISC supported SoW's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, including two activities on the Cowichan Campus: the screening of *Tough Guise 2*, followed by discussion; Reading Circle on *Secret Daughter* by Shilpi Gowda. In both instances, I led the discussion.

A Reading Circle on *Secret Daughter* was also held on the Nanaimo Campus in February.

A major FPSE-sponsored event was held on both Nanaimo and Cowichan campuses. VIU was the first to finalize arrangements for the Speakers' Tour with the invitation of Dr. Taiaiake Alfred. As one of the authors, Dr. Alfred helped to promote the publication of *Whose Land is It Anyway?* VIU HRISC was able to utilize additional FPSE funds supporting the event by hosting a meet and greet on the Nanaimo campus in February and providing/distributing 150 copies of *Whose Land is It Anyway?* between

Nanaimo and Cowichan campuses. Thanks to Lexis Linklater, Chair, Decolonization, Reconciliation, and Indigenization Standing Committee, the Cowichan event in March was a rousing success.

HRISC also initiated bringing two other speakers to campus. Originally, one was to come in February but due to the unexpected snow closures, these final speakers were re-scheduled all in March. Velma Demerson, author and activist (also 98-years old!), was accompanied by Karin Lee, independent filmmaker, who is working on a documentary about Velma. Velma is the embodiment of lived women's history. In 1939 she was deemed 'incorrigible' and jailed according to the 1927 Female Refuges Act (c347 Ontario); later she lost her Canadian citizenship for marrying a man who was of the 'wrong race' and the reason for her incarceration according to the law.

The final HRISC speaker was Kunio Yamagishi, author of *The Return of a Shadow* (2018). His presentation provided the background and impact of Japanese Canadian internment and legislation on families.

As Chair of HRISC, I represented VIUFA at the two FPSE meetings in Vancouver, October 19-20, 2018, and January 25-26, 2019. Also, I will be sitting on the committee reviewing VIU's Human Rights and Harassment Policies later this month.

Respectfully submitted,

Imogene Lim, Chair