



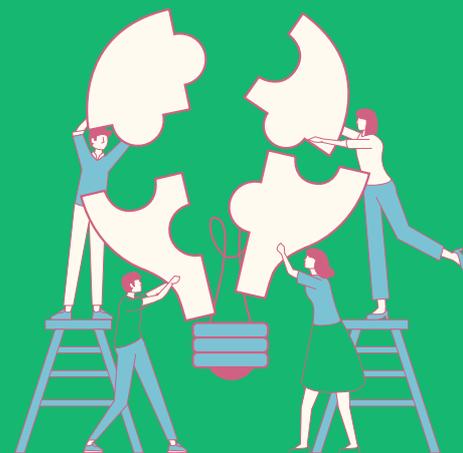
# Crossing Borders: The ICCRP Cape Town Scholarship Experience



Sachi Shukul (left) & Sheldon Caruana (right)

The International and Canadian Children's Rights Partnership (ICCRP) is an international research organization focusing on children's rights. Established following an international conference held at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU, formerly Ryerson University) in October 2015, this partnership includes young people, researchers, partner organizations, universities, human rights institutions, and governments from within Canada and around the world! Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the international and intergenerational ICCRP team's primary activities focus on researching how intergenerational relationships can transcend current barriers to implementing children's rights through intergenerational partnerships in research, policy, and practice.

In May 2023, one of the valued ICCRP partners, the University of Cape Town's Children's Institute (CI), collaborated with the ICCRP team to offer an international research opportunity, now known as the 2023 ICCRP Children's Institute/University of Cape Town Scholarship. This award was made possible through the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Partnership Grant, TMU Global, and the TMU's Office of the Provost. This scholarship was awarded to two TMU students, Sheldon Caruana (29), ICCRP Event Coordinator and Research Partner Liaison, a graduate student in the Child and Youth Care program, and Sachi Shukul (22), ICCRP Child and Youth Participant Coordinator, and recent graduate of the Early Childhood Studies undergraduate program.



## Next Stop: Cape Town, South Africa



The scholarship allowed both recipients to travel from Canada to Cape Town, South Africa, to experience four weeks of immersive cross-cultural training and learning alongside Senior Researcher Lucy Jamieson and her team at the Children's Institute. This international collaborative research placement enabled them to contribute to the ICCRP's overall partnership through networking, relationship building, and engaging in context-specific research experiences. "Through informal and formal discussions with ICCRP

steering committee members and CI staff, I was able to gain a better understanding of the international work and priorities of the ICCRP's South Africa partners and its connection to the ICCRP. As the Child and Youth Participant Coordinator, this experience, which included opportunities to connect in person with the South African ICCRP Youth Advisory members, provided me with new insights to better support the young people I work with within different international contexts." - Sachi Shukul

Hello!  
Bonjour!



Molweni



Through the different experiences while in Cape Town, each scholarship winner gained an appreciation for context-specific work and engaging with children's rights at an international level. "Important topics arose during conversations with the young people, such as discussions about ethical compensation when conducting international research. These moments provided opportunities to deepen the ICCRP's understanding of what types and forms of compensation were valued by young South African people and the importance of engaging young people in decision-making processes to reflect their cultural values and unique needs." - Sheldon Caruana



"In addition to supporting the coordination of the future travel of ICCRP partners, I had the opportunity to support the Children's Institute with different ICCRP-related work, such as hosting the Participatory Methodologies Working Group webinar series and supporting with liaising of ICCRP-related research case studies." - Sheldon Caruana

"During the conference, I engaged with individuals and groups from across the globe and met many ICCRP steering committee members in person. I felt that the ability to meet in person strengthened our relationship but also fostered a space for quality dialogues, which were both formal and informal. Moreover, during my time in Cape Town, many ICCRP working groups hosted virtual webinars that focused on international perspectives on decoloniality and the intersectionalities of law, policy and children's rights." - Sachi



Reflecting on their time in Cape Town, Sachi and Sheldon realize the significance of being constantly open to learning, adapting, and embracing differences. Their interactions with diverse cultures, perspectives, and ways of thinking have widened their horizons and enriched their approaches to research and advocacy.

"I can speak to the value and benefits that this award has provided me with. The experience aided in our growth as research assistants in the field of child rights. I was extremely thrilled to have been provided with the opportunity of visiting South Africa, learning about children's rights in a South African context, completing a placement at the Children's Institute, meeting ICCRP colleagues in person, and meeting some of the young people I work with in person. This experience in Cape Town exposed me to different ways of thinking, cultures, and approaches to working with young people, which encouraged me to reflect on my current practices but also integrate my learnings to form more equitable practices for the future." - Sachi



## Cross-Cultural Learning Journey

The ICCRP and CI did an amazing job supporting me and Sachi during our stay in Cape Town. The internship was both educational and enjoyable, and the CI staff and Lucy Jamieson went out of their way to make us feel comfortable professionally and personally. Working with the CI team provided new network opportunities and valuable professional resources to draw upon. Additionally, visiting South Africa provided unique opportunities to connect with local cultures and to learn more about the country's history of colonization and resistance. This valuable experience allowed me to deepen my understanding of systemic racism from an international perspective and better understand the aftermath and ongoing impacts of apartheid. I felt this was timely knowledge as institutions and communities, including the ICCRP, seek to address inequities and grapple with the complexities of dismantling colonial systems meaningfully." - Sheldon.

Upon their return, Sheldon and Sachi continued their work with the ICCRP. They disseminated their findings and experiences with other TMU/ICCRP research staff members in the ICCRP's growing network of children's rights contacts.



Sachi and Sheldon's experience through this partnership with the CI in Cape Town exemplifies the true essence of international and intergenerational partnerships. The knowledge gained, the relationships built, and the exposure to diverse contexts have expanded their understanding of children's rights and inspired them to continue their work with renewed passion and commitment. As they return to their roles, Sachi and Sheldon carry the invaluable lessons learned in South Africa, fostering a deeper connection with their work, colleagues, and the young people they serve. They are now better equipped to navigate the complexities of international collaborations, respecting cultural diversity, and promoting equitable practices in research and advocacy.





# Fostering Global Connections



For the ICCRP, this cooperative placement experience served as a pilot project, demonstrating the benefits of international placements for research assistants and fostering intergenerational relationships. The collaboration strengthened the partnership between the ICCRP and the University of Cape Town's Children's Institute, facilitating the transfer of knowledge between partner organizations. The experiences of Sachi and Sheldon at CI allowed for shared awareness regarding the ICCRP and its affiliation with UCT/CI, enhancing the visibility and reputation of the partnership. Moreover, the exposure to diverse cultural perspectives in the field of children's rights provided the ICCRP with a globalized outlook, contributing to the organization's ability to navigate international partnerships effectively. By providing opportunities for research assistants to engage in international travel and gain experiential knowledge, the ICCRP reinforces its commitment to promoting intercultural understanding and cross-context collaborations.

**Enkosi**

**Dankie**



**Ndiyabulela**

**Ngiyabonga**

Overall, this experience has been a mutual learning journey, benefitting Sachi, Sheldon, and the ICCRP alike. The insights gained from this placement will undoubtedly shape their future advocacy efforts, research endeavours, and collaborative initiatives. By fostering intergenerational relationships and embracing diverse perspectives, the ICCRP continues to pave the way for a more equitable and inclusive world for children and young people. At the same time, its research assistants carry these transformative experiences forward, making meaningful contributions to the field of children's rights. As the ICCRP continues to build on the success of this placement and other cooperative initiatives, it reaffirms its commitment to creating positive change and advancing the cause of children's rights globally.

**Thank you South Africa!**

