

Children's Rights and Well-being Institute (CRWI)

Faculty of Community Services Research Centre Proposal

Proposal Lead: Professor Tara Collins

1. Vision and Mission Statement

The Children's Rights and Well-being Institute (CRWI) is proposed to be housed in the Faculty of Community Services (FCS) as a pan-university-oriented research centre at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU). The CRWI will be dedicated to strengthening and advancing the human rights, dignity, and well-being of children and young people locally, nationally, and globally by addressing pressing gaps in research, policy, and practice. As an interdisciplinary hub, the CRWI will promote innovative scholarly, research, and creative activities (SRC) that critically examine children's rights issues and generate transformative solutions. Through interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and participatory approaches, the CRWI will collaborate with students, academics, practitioners, community partners, children, and young people to co-create knowledge, influence policy, and broaden public understanding of children's rights and well-being across diverse contexts.

2. Background and Purpose Statement

Children's rights and well-being are necessary frameworks for exploring and addressing the complex and diverse issues that impact children and young people throughout the world. The human rights of children and youth have been recognized in international declarations since 1924. They have since been provided for in a range of binding international and regional instruments, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). The UNCRC ensures the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of young people who are under the age of 18. According to UNCRC, Article 42 states that parties have an obligation to actively ensure UNCRC principles and provisions are widely known and implemented. Implicit in this vision is the hope of a world that advances the realization of children's rights and supports the meaningful inclusion and well-being of children and young people. However, the absence of sustained interdisciplinary collaboration continues to limit progress, as current efforts remain largely fragmented across sectors and disciplines.

In Canada, children and young people continue to have their rights inhibited and restricted by a variety of political and economic processes, as well as social and cultural attitudes that inform mainstream conceptualizations of childhood and children's rights. Despite progress with some limited scholarship, TMU does not currently have a centralized institutional home dedicated to

advancing children's rights and well-being research, training, and community engagement. Existing work is dispersed across faculties and schools/departments, often limited to separate courses or individual research programs without coordinated infrastructure, funding pathways, or platforms for interdisciplinary collaboration.

The CRWI responds to these structural dynamics and institutional challenges by providing an interdisciplinary platform for research, knowledge creation, and collaboration that brings together academics, practitioners, community organizations, and young people. It will create unique opportunities for interdisciplinary study across faculties, introducing a social justice lens to related fields. This interdisciplinary structure will allow the CRWI to address emerging, complex, and cross-cutting issues that no single faculty can address alone, such as digital rights, climate justice, urban design, migration, child protection, economic inequalities, and the impact of business and technology on children.

University-wide consultations with TMU faculty, as well as with relevant organizations and community stakeholders, further emphasized the importance of integrating intersectional and decolonial approaches to children's rights and well-being research, recognizing the roles and experiences of caregivers and children with disabilities, and supporting accessible and youth-led knowledge mobilization, including research output developed by and for children and young people. Students and faculty from programs such as (but not limited to) early childhood studies, child and youth care, nursing, journalism, law, social work, urban and regional planning, medicine, science, civil engineering, business management, interior design, and criminology will benefit from a deeper understanding of how their disciplines intersect with the human rights and well-being of children and young people. Supporting the integration of human rights principles into these fields encourages innovative research and equips students, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers with tools to identify and address systemic social inequities. This creates an intentional opportunity to move beyond adult-centric approaches and promote a respectful children's rights perspective in teaching, research, policy, and practice.

Building on the work and networks of the [International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership \(ICCRP\)](#) — which has been housed within FCS since 2016 — the CRWI continues and expands the ICCRP's work by sustaining intergenerational collaborative networks, facilitating knowledge mobilization, and supporting capacity development for academics, practitioners, children, and youth around the globe. The ICCRP model of intergenerational partnerships, participatory research, and ethical knowledge co-creation has been effective but constrained by project-based funding and temporary structures. Establishing the CRWI transforms this proven model into a permanent institutional platform with stable governance, expanded networks, and greater impact. This transition ensures long-term sustainability and positions TMU as one of the few universities in Canada with a formal interdisciplinary hub dedicated to children's rights and well-being.

In summary, the purpose of the CRWI is to contribute to the research, policy, and practice of children's rights and well-being through a multi-faceted, intergenerational approach:

1. SRC activities informed by rights respecting processes of knowledge production will contribute to the critical analysis of children's rights and well-being issues, in part by

introducing children and young people as stakeholders in non-traditional discourses (e.g., the impacts of business on children's rights).

2. Participatory and intergenerational learning and activities involving academics, researchers, practitioners, students, as well as children and young people will contribute to increased awareness, agency, and empowerment for children.

3. As a platform to share and disseminate children's rights and well-being expertise, associated academics, researchers, and practitioners will have increased opportunities to affect the realization of policies and curriculums, *inter alia*, that better respect the rights of children and young people.

Establishing the CRWI provides a unique and unified structure that enables TMU to mobilize children's rights and well-being knowledge at a scale and level of impact not previously possible.

3. SRC at the Heart of the FCS and TMU

Through its SRC activities, the CRWI will build upon the ongoing SRC activities of children's rights academics and practitioners housed within the Faculty of Community Services (FCS) and across the university, creating new opportunities for participatory and intergenerational research and knowledge mobilization with children and young people. The FCS provides a natural institutional home for the CRWI, given its leadership in equity-focused, community-engaged research and its commitment to advancing social transformation through applied, interdisciplinary scholarship. The CRWI aligns directly with the FCS's strategic priority to create reciprocal spaces for research, learning, and community partnership, as outlined in the FCS Academic Plan (2025–2030).

The institute will act as a hub for consultancies, advocacy, and training in relation to children's rights, filling a gap that is absent within the current composition of the children's rights infrastructure in Canadian universities. CRWI's participatory model ensures meaningful impact, enabling young people to influence policy, professional practice, and public discourse, directly strengthening TMU's commitment to SRC growth, community engagement, and real-world outcomes. FCS is ideally located in the heart of a diverse and globally recognized community and will greatly benefit from the creation of the CRWI through an enhanced teaching and research profile. Given the lack of children's rights infrastructure existing in colleges and universities in Ontario as well as across the country, the institute will provide FCS and TMU with a unique opportunity to attract undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate students and researchers from across disciplines and geographies, while also securing external funding and further building national and international collaborations.

Through its intersectional and intergenerational approach to children's rights and well-being, the CRWI contributes meaningfully to the key themes of the TMU Strategic Research Plan 2025–2030, particularly: Resilient, Inclusive Communities; Democracy, Justice and Governance; Health and Wellbeing; and Arts, Culture and Creativity. The CRWI further reinforces the commitments of both TMU and the FCS to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging by centering decolonial

approaches to children and young people in Canada, particularly Indigenous children and the systemic barriers they face, while advancing Truth and Reconciliation and elevating the voices of young people who have been historically marginalized from positions of influence.

The advantageous geographic location of TMU is ideal for the institute's growth as a local, national, and international collective hub for the human rights of children and youth.

4. Connections and Collaborations

The CRWI seeks to establish a multi-disciplinary approach to children's rights scholarship that would be a unique addition to the children's rights landscape. This will enhance the children's rights discourse and practice by introducing new connections as well as developing existing ones. For instance, the ICCRP's intergenerational experience since 2015 has emphasized the importance of bridging knowledge production and experience (theoretical, methodological, practical lived experiences) from all continents to share and contrast the similarities and differences. Furthermore, the CRWI will create new opportunities for disciplines not traditionally linked to children's rights to explore their impacts on the rights and well-being of children. These learnings can be used to influence and adapt existing curriculums that currently do not reflect children's rights-based approaches. The CRWI recognizes the connection and relevance of children's rights across the university's various faculties, with varying levels of existing capacity and significant potential for further development within each.

As a collaborative hub for the awareness, research, and practices of the human rights and well-being of children and youth, the CRWI anticipates establishing partnerships with individuals and organizations locally, nationally, and globally. These partnerships and collaborative efforts will draw on the pre-existing connections and collaborations of the ICCRP and will also seek to engage new relationships as well as actors who are not traditionally associated with human rights (e.g., businesses).

The CRWI will operate as a hub across provincial, national, and international contexts. Within the province of Ontario, partners include relevant universities and colleges, academics, provincial government bodies and ministries, child-care institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations.

Within the Canadian context, this will include national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), federal government departments, and universities and colleges across the country. To maximize impact, the CRWI will work in collaboration with the other children's rights academic centres in Canada, such as the Landon Pearson Resource Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights at Carleton University and the *Observatoire sur les droits de l'enfant* at Université de Sherbrooke. One specific initiative includes the Landon Pearson Centre's Shaking the Movers, an annual youth workshop involving TMU undergraduate students, and more recently an early childhood event involving undergraduate and graduate students. We will also engage with the University of Ottawa's Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory on the Rights of the Child to facilitate events and share pertinent information.

Finally, the CRWI will also engage with international partners that operate in many different contexts, including global and regional NGOs, human and children's rights organizations, government bodies, as well as universities, colleges, and academics throughout the world. For instance, as part of its mandate, the CRWI will house [the Secretariat of the International Society for Child Indicators \(ISCI\)](#), a global network dedicated to advancing the measurement and application of child well-being data. Through ISCI, the CRWI will support collaborative research, methodological innovation, standards development, enhanced data resources, and the translation of evidence into policy and practice. This will strengthen the FCS and TMU's global visibility, partnerships, and leadership in evidence-informed children's rights and well-being.

5. Impact and Activities

Anticipated Impact

Through its integrated activities, the CRWI will strengthen TMU's institutional capacity, leadership, and impact on children's rights and well-being. Specifically, the CRWI will:

- Enhance SRC capacity across departments/schools, and libraries by providing shared research resources, archival materials, and knowledge mobilization platforms related to the UNCRC and global children's rights frameworks.
- Strengthen interdisciplinary teaching, curriculum design, and experiential learning through the integration of children's rights principles into course content and pedagogy.
- Expand opportunities for community-engaged research, global partnerships, and applied policy impact through collaborations with governments, NGOs, multilateral agencies, and other partners.
- Serve as a central institutional home for practitioners, researchers, students, and young people, fostering mentorship, professional development, and leadership in rights-respecting research and practice.
- Fill critical gaps in Canadian children's rights and well-being research and practice while building institutional capacity to respond to emerging challenges affecting children and youth.
- Position TMU as a national and international leader in interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and rights-respecting research, education, and innovation.

Together, these impacts will advance TMU's commitments to social innovation, social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and community-engaged scholarship.

Metrics Used to Evaluate Impact and Progress

The following metrics will be used to evaluate the strategic impact of the CRWI in alignment with TMU priorities.

- **Research Funding Acquired:** Total amount of research funding secured annually from both external sources and member grants.

- **Publications and Research Outputs:** Number of academic papers, reports, and presentations produced by CRWI members each year.
- **Membership Growth and Engagement:** Annual growth in active membership, along with participation in CRWI events and governance activities.
- **Partnerships and Collaborations:** Number of partnerships and joint projects with government bodies, NGOs, and international academic collaborators.
- **Consultancy Activity:** Number and value of consultancy and professional service engagements.

Scope of Activities and Outputs

The CRWI's activities will fall across five core domains: (a) research, (b) training and education, (c) knowledge mobilization, (d) community and global partnerships, and (e) consultancy and professional services.

(a) Research Activities and Outputs

The CRWI will expand TMU's research profile by:

- Leading multidisciplinary research projects on local, national, and global children's rights issues.
- Supporting rights-respecting approaches to knowledge creation, emphasizing participatory research with children and young people, and including dissemination led by young people accessible to other young people.
- Providing a formal research home for TMU scholars working on children's rights, well-being, social justice, health, education, technology, climate resilience, governance, and related fields.
- Conducting UNCRC monitoring research and contributing evidence to municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal policy reviews.
- Offering a centralized knowledge hub, digital archive, and repository for current children's rights and well-being research, tools, and resources accessible to TMU and external partners.

Outputs will include peer-reviewed publications, policy briefs, evidence syntheses, research-informed practice guidelines, children's rights impact assessments, and collaborative proposals to external funding agencies.

(b) Training, Teaching, and Capacity Building

The CRWI will advance training and educational innovation by:

- Providing students with research opportunities, mentorship, networking, and professional development.
- Supporting a Children's Rights Student Association to foster a campus-wide movement for children's rights practice.
- Offering postdoctoral opportunities as funding grows.
- Creating spaces for meetings, workshops, seminars, and collaborative projects.
- Offering webinars, workshops, and short courses on children's rights for students, faculty, community organizations, and professionals.
- Supporting curriculum consultation to embed the UNCRC and rights-respecting approaches across preschool, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary programs.
- Providing placements, field education opportunities, and RA/GA positions for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students.
- Supporting graduate theses, MRPs, PhD dissertations, and capstone projects that advance rights-based scholarship.
- Developing a Canadian rights-respecting certification program for early learning centres and collaborating with school boards to support rights-respecting schools.
- Partnering with TMU's Responsive Ecologies Lab to examine the intersections between children's rights, technology, and digital futures.

(c) Knowledge Mobilization and Public Engagement

The CRWI will host a range of knowledge dissemination activities, including:

- Conferences, symposia, and public lectures on emerging children's rights issues.
- Annual youth-centered events such as Shaking the Movers, early childhood rights workshops, and youth summits.
- Community meetings, consultations, and cross-sector dialogues with governments, NGOs, educators, social service providers, and young people.
- Online resources, toolkits, webinars, and multimedia outputs accessible to practitioners, educators, and the general public.
- Public campaigns on national and provincial/territorial issues, such as eliminating post-secondary tuition for young people formerly in state care.

These activities will broaden public understanding of children's rights and position TMU as a leader in equitable, community-informed knowledge sharing.

(d) Partnerships, Collaborations, and Global Positioning

The CRWI will build on and extend the legacy of the ICCRP by sustaining its partnerships and expanding its global reach. This includes collaborations with:

- Local, national, and international NGOs, community-based organizations, and UN-affiliated networks.
- Governmental bodies seeking evidence-informed policy guidance on children's rights.

These partnerships will foster multidisciplinary, multi-sectoral research initiatives and create new pathways for international collaboration, global campaign participation, and cross-jurisdictional knowledge exchange.

(e) Consultancy and Professional Services

Serving as a hub for consultancy, applied research, and professional services in children's rights and well-being, the CRWI will:

- Coordinate short- and long-term consultancy opportunities, research projects, training initiatives, and calls for proposals in collaboration with external partners.
- Facilitate connections between partners and a network of affiliated researchers, alumni, practitioners, and students based on expertise and availability.
- Support proposal development and ensure quality, accountability, and ethical standards across engagements.
- Generate revenue through service fees, administrative coordination, and partnership agreements.

This model will strengthen external partnerships, provide applied opportunities for students and alumni, and position the CRWI as a trusted hub for interdisciplinary children's rights expertise.

6. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Access

Across its research, partnerships, and community engagement, the CRWI is committed to ensuring that EDI principles shape its processes and outcomes, fostering inclusive environments, equity, and inclusion where young people's voices meaningfully influence knowledge, policy, and practice.

The CRWI recognizes that rights violations are particularly egregious and systemic amongst Indigenous and marginalized communities and individuals. This is true in the cases of young people who intersect with child welfare agencies, youth justice, health care, and education systems. The CRWI will actively address these challenges and violations in collaboration with its members and partners. Grounded in the fundamental right of all children and youth to non-discrimination, the CRWI engages, conducts research with, and advocates alongside young

people who experience systemic marginalization. Our work intentionally engages Black and Indigenous children and youth, as well as those who face other forms of marginalization including young people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+ youth, newcomers and refugees, children and youth living in poverty, and those impacted by child welfare, immigration, or justice systems.

The CRWI will engage in participatory intergenerational research to identify existing inequities experienced by children and young people in society, and collaborate with relevant actors — such as educational institutions, businesses, governments, and non-governmental organizations — to promote the full realization of children's rights. These actions align with TMU's commitments to EDI and Indigenous values and experiences by actively addressing systemic barriers and providing tangible resources and training to elevate learning across all sectors of the university. This will extend beyond supporting policy by being at the forefront of change, which will raise the institution's profile as a socially just and engaged university.

The CRWI will seek close collaboration with the Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion (OVPECI) to advance EDI through a children's rights and youth-centred lens. This connection would serve to deepen TMU's capacity to implement human rights commitments in ways that meaningfully recognize children and youth as active rights-holders whose lived experiences and identities must shape equity frameworks. Then, the CRWI will look to contribute to strengthening TMU's position as a rights-informed institution and contribute to building a more socially just campus and community.

7. Space and Facilities Requirements

As a research centre housed in the FCS, the CRWI will leverage existing offices, meeting rooms, and research facilities located within the Daphne Cockwell Complex (DCC), the Sally Horsfall Eaton (SHE) building, and other buildings where children's rights-focused faculty currently work. These existing spaces will adequately support early research activities such as small meetings, planning sessions, student supervision, workshops, and pilot participatory engagements with children and young people.

Given the CRWI's interdisciplinary mandate, its activities will extend across multiple faculties, including arts, community services, business management, engineering and architectural science, law, and medicine. As such, the CRWI will benefit from a shared-space model in its early years, accessing seminar rooms, event spaces, research labs, and collaborative work areas provided by participating faculties. This approach will allow the institute to host cross-faculty forums, public lectures, youth engagement activities, interdisciplinary research cluster meetings, and community consultations, while fostering collaboration and strengthening existing institutional relationships.

As the CRWI grows, it will require a dedicated office and meeting space centrally located on campus. This will support coordination of research clusters, partnerships, student training, administrative functions, and youth participation activities. The dedicated space will serve as a visible and accessible hub for faculty, students, partners, and young people involved in initiatives,

while continuing to complement and work in partnership with existing centres, institutes, and faculty-based spaces across the university.

The assignment of any permanent or temporary space will be coordinated with the Dean and relevant FCS staff to ensure alignment with the FCS's overall space management and strategic planning. This approach will allow the CRWI to grow sustainably, meeting operational needs while supporting its development into a leading global hub for children's rights research, education, and partnerships.

8. Financial Goals and Strategic Planning

Projected Five-Year Financial Plan

The CRWI will adopt a diversified funding model combining faculty support, external research funding, and revenue-generating activities. An annual base funding of approximately \$10,000 from the Faculty of Community Services (FCS) is anticipated to support core operations. Additional funding will be secured through external grants from national and international agencies, including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and other Tri-Agency and foundation sources, supporting research, training, and knowledge mobilization. The CRWI will also generate revenue through its consultancy and professional services hub, including fee-for-service research, program evaluation, training, and policy advisory work with external partners. These combined streams will support the institute's growth, research capacity, and impact on children's rights and well-being.

Fiscal year 2026–27:

\$10,000 FCS funding

\$15,000–20,000 Individual research grants (estimated)

\$5,000 Fee for service contracts

\$30,000–35,000 Total revenue

Fiscal year 2027–28:

\$10,000 FCS funding

\$15,000–20,000 Individual research grants (estimated)

\$10,000 Fee for service contracts

\$35,000–40,000 Total revenue

Fiscal year 2028–29:

\$10,000 FCS funding

\$15,000–20,000 Individual research grants (estimated)

\$10,000 Fee for service contracts

\$35,000–40,000 Total revenue

Fiscal year 2029–30:

\$10,000 FCS funding
\$15,000–20,000 Individual research grants (estimated)
\$10,000 Fee for service contracts
\$35,000–40,000 Total revenue

Fiscal year 2030–31:

\$10,000 FCS funding
\$15,000–20,000 Individual research grants (estimated)
\$10,000 Fee for service contracts
\$35,000–40,000 Total revenue

Five-Year Total:

\$50,000 FCS funding
\$75,000–100,000 Individual research grants (estimated)
\$45,000 Fee-for-service contracts
\$170,000–195,000 Total revenue

Financial Goals

Secure External Research Funding

The CRWI will actively pursue external funding from national and international agencies, including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), as well as foundations and global partners. Emphasis will be placed on collaborative and interdisciplinary grants that support research, training, and knowledge mobilization in children's rights and well-being.

Develop Consultancy and Professional Services

The CRWI will establish a consultancy and professional services hub, providing fee-for-service research, program evaluation, training, and policy advisory support to governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations. These activities will generate revenue while extending the institute's impact on practice and policy.

Strengthen Partnerships and Funding Opportunities

The institute will build sustained partnerships with community organizations, governments, and international networks to support joint funding applications, collaborative projects, and long-term research initiatives.

Appendix A: Prospective Members, Centres and Partner Organizations

TMU Faculty

The following TMU faculty have already been consulted during the development of this proposal and have expressed interest in becoming members of the CRWI once it is established.

- Travonne Edwards (Child and Youth Care)
- Nicole Ineese-Nash (Early Childhood Studies, Child and Youth Care)
- Karen Milligan (Psychology)
- Raktim Mitra (Urban and Regional Planning)
- Jason Nolan (Early Childhood Studies)
- Jennifer Orange (Law)
- Leigh Paulseth (SciXchange)
- Mónica Ruiz-Casares (Child and Youth Care)
- Jane Schmidt (TMU Libraries)
- Cory Searcy (Mechanical, Industrial, and Mechatronics Engineering)
- Karen Soldatic (Disability Studies)

TMU Centres and External Partners

The leadership of the following TMU centres, institutional collaborators, community organizations, and other organizations have been consulted during the development of this proposal and have expressed interest in becoming a partner of the CRWI. Once the institute is established, opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, knowledge mobilization, research development, policy engagement, and community-based partnership in advancing children's rights and well-being will be explored.

- Black Creek Youth Initiative (Canada)
- Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children (Canada)
- Child Rights Connect (Switzerland)
- Children's Rights International Sports Observatory (CRISO; Canada)
- International Center for Research and Policy on Childhood (CIESPI; Brazil)
- Juvenile Justice Advocates International (JJAI; Mexico)
- Observatoire sur les droits de l'enfant (Université de Sherbrooke, Canada)
- The Students Commission of Canada (Canada)
- TMU Global Migration Institute
- TMU Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (OVPRI)

As the CRWI develops, membership and partnerships are expected to expand to include additional interdisciplinary researchers, centres, practitioners, community organizations, and youth-serving partners locally, nationally, and internationally.

Appendix B: Terms of Reference

The CRWI is proposed as a pan-university oriented research centre, housed within the FCS at TMU. It will be dedicated to strengthening and advancing the human rights, dignity, and well-being of children and young people by addressing pressing gaps in research, policy, and practice. Through interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and participatory collaboration, the CRWI seeks to co-create knowledge, influence policy, and advance children's rights and well-being locally, nationally, and globally.

The CRWI will include an [Advisory Board \(AB\)](#) and [General Assembly \(GA\)](#) defined in the Administrative Structure section below.

Establishment and Review

The CRWI is proposed as a Faculty Research Centre within FCS for an initial five-year term, subject to renewal in accordance with TMU Policy 144.

After year one, the CRWI will undergo probationary review against the milestones identified in this proposal. The institute is committed to meeting these milestones and using the review process to support its continued development and long-term sustainability.

Membership

Categories

Member

Open to all TMU faculty members (acting and assistant, associate, and full professors), postdoctoral fellows, researcher associates, librarians, and staff whose proven research interests and areas align with that of the institute. Faculty members apply for membership by sending a CV and a brief outline of anticipated work/contribution within the CRWI and related timelines. Renewable five-year terms are based on active involvement and contributions.

Associate Member

Open to faculty and researchers from other universities as well as staff and members of organizations and agencies that actively engage in ongoing activities and projects that are hosted or initiated by the institute. Associate members apply for membership by sending a current CV and a detailed description of anticipated work/contribution to the CRWI is required. Renewable three-year terms are based on active involvement and contributions.

Student Member

Open to all TMU undergraduate and graduate students whose academic work and interests align with that of the institute and students from other universities that actively engage in ongoing activities and projects that are hosted or initiated by the CRWI. Students must apply with proof of enrollment and a statement of interest. Renewable two-year terms are based on enrolment, active involvement and contributions.

Young Member

Open to young people (13 to 18 years at the time of recruitment) who actively engage in ongoing activities and projects that are hosted or initiated by the institute. Young members can apply with a brief statement of interest and/or affiliation. Renewable two-year terms are based on active involvement and contributions.

Rights

- Eligibility for leadership roles on the AB and working groups.
- Voting rights in the GA.

- Access to the institute's resources.
- Participation in research activities, events, funding and networking opportunities.

Responsibilities

- Adhere to the institute's stipulated values and principles.
- Active engagement in institute activities and projects related to research, policy, and practice.
- Active engagement in setting the institute's research agenda, funding, and partnership opportunities.
- Participation in the annual GA.

Institute Membership Launch Process

For the initial one-year period following the establishment of the CRWI, all membership requests and appointments for the designated terms will be reviewed and approved by the founding co-directors, based on the submission of a CV and a brief statement highlighting their expertise, contributions, and commitment to the institute's mission. For Young Members, a brief statement of interest and/or affiliation will suffice. All subsequent appointments beyond the initial term period for membership requests and appointments will be made by the AB.

Administrative Structure

Co-Directors

Powers, Duties, Responsibilities

The co-directors serve as the leads of the CRWI and are responsible for its overall governance, day-to-day functioning, and long-term strategic vision. This leadership will be grounded in principles of accountability, openness, and sustained advancement of the Institute's initiatives, deliverables, and impacts. In collaboration with the AB and GA, the co-directors will ensure that the CRWI's work and projects adhere to timelines and budgets. In addition, they will ensure that the institute remains attuned to evolving practice and fosters meaningful community-engaged research and relationship with stakeholders, including other universities, research centres, local, national and international NGOs, government entities, and young people.

Terms and Appointment

There are two co-directors: one who is appointed for a five-year term, and the second appointed for a three-year term, at the end of which they may seek renewal for an additional term should

they wish to continue. Within the first year of the establishment of the CRWI, the Steering Committee will gather interest and appoint the second co-director for the three-year term. Subsequently, the candidacies of the incumbent director and/or new applicants are collected by the AB and presented to the GA. The appointment of the co-directors is the responsibility of the AB, based on recommendations by the GA.

If a co-director takes an approved leave or resigns, the alternate co-director will serve as institute leadership and be appointed by the AB for the remainder of the term or until a permanent co-director is selected and appointed via the above procedure.

No co-director will serve more than two consecutive terms.

Founding Co-Director

Tara Collins (TMU Professor in the School of Child & Youth Care) will be a founding co-director of the institute for an initial period of five years. Professor Collins is cross-appointed to TMU's PhD in Public Policy (Social Policy major) and MA programs in Early Childhood Studies and Immigration Studies. She is also an Honorary Professor at the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town. With a PhD from the University of London, she brings 30 years of experience in provincial, national, international, collaborative, and interdisciplinary research on children's rights and well-being involving academic, public, and NGO sectors, advocacy groups, and young people's communities. Her professional experience includes work for universities in Canada, South Africa, Brazil, and Ireland as well as the Canadian federal government (Department of Foreign Affairs and CIDA) and Parliament. Professor Collins has extensive experience leading multi-site, multi-year, multi-disciplinary, national and international projects that involve executive committees comprising diverse stakeholders, including young people. She serves as principal investigator for the International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership (ICCRP), which is hosted at TMU. The ICCRP was formed in 2015. Through prior work on the interconnections of children's rights to participation and protection, the ICCRP identified a critically overlooked element in realizing children's rights: intergenerational relationships. The partnership includes young people with lived experience, some 40 researchers and 30 partner organizations from universities, NGOs, major human rights institutions, and governments in Canada and in multiple countries across the Americas, Africa, Europe, Asia, and Oceania.

Founding Steering Committee

Aurelia Di Santo, Associate Professor, School of Early Childhood Studies

Steven Gibson, Project Manager, ICCRP

Edward van Daalen, Postdoctoral Fellow, ICCRP

Rongedzayi Fambasayi, Postdoctoral Fellow, ICCRP

Chidera Onyekwe, Research Assistant, ICCRP

The Founding Steering Committee will continue to support the startup of the CRWI, the appointment of the AB, recruitment of members, and commencement of activities. Once the AB is established, it will take up the pertinent responsibilities.

Advisory Board (AB)

Powers, Duties, Responsibilities

The AB will provide oversight, strategic guidance, and governance to ensure the CRWI's mission is met. It will be responsible for approving the budget, reviewing annual reports, and guiding major initiatives. It will support and advise the co-directors in setting budgets, research priorities and agendas, and creating and maintaining partnerships. It will be responsible for the recruitment and appointment of the institute's co-directors following the procedure described above. All AB members are expected to attend (virtually or in person) the statutory AB meetings twice per year, as well as ad-hoc meetings when necessary.

Composition

The AB will consist of:

- Six Institute Members: one Member, one Associate Member, two Student Members, and two Young Members.
- Two TMU (non-institute) representatives.
- One designate of the FCS Dean.
- One designate of the International Society of Child Indicators (ISCI), whose secretariat will be housed in the institute.
- Eight external (non-TMU) representatives who hold leadership and community positions in relevant civil society, business and government organizations, locally, nationally, and internationally.

One AB member will serve as Chair and will be responsible for coordinating the AB, including organizing and presiding over the AB meetings.

Terms and Appointments

Group 1 AB members will serve a renewable two-year term. This group includes:

- One Institute Member
- Institute Associate Member

- One TMU (non-institute) Representative
- The Designate of the FCS Dean
- The Designate of the International Society of Child Indicators (ISCI)
- Four External (non-TMU) Representatives
- One Institute Student Members
- One Institute Young Member

Group 2 AB-members will serve a renewable one-year term:

- One TMU (non-institute) Representative
- Four External (non-TMU) Representatives
- One Institute Student Member
- One Institute Young Member

No member will serve more than three consecutive terms.

The Chair of the AB will come from Group 1 and serve a one-year term that can be renewed for a maximum of three terms. Candidates for the Chair will state their interests to all other AB members and will be appointed by a majority vote.

The first AB will be appointed by the Founding Director and the Founding Steering Committee, with approval of the FCS Dean. Further appointments or replacements of AB members will take place by majority vote of the GA based on recommendations of the co-directors.

General Assembly (GA)

Powers, Duties, Responsibilities

The GA serves as the principal deliberative and evaluating body of the institute and is responsible for supporting the co-directors and AB by providing collective oversight of the institute's mandate, priorities, and governance. The GA reviews and approves annual strategic plans, policies, reports and agendas and is to receive updates on financial performance and institutional outcomes. The GA will also appoint AB members by majority vote and will advise the AB in matters concerning the appointment of the co-directors.

All institute members are by default GA members and are expected to attend (virtually or in person) the statutory GA meeting once per year, as well as ad-hoc meetings when necessary.

One GA member will serve as Chair and will be responsible for coordinating the GA, including organizing and presiding over the GA meetings.

Term and Appointment

The Chair serves a two-year renewable term, with a maximum of two terms. Candidates for the Chair will state their interests to all other GA members and will be appointed by a majority vote during the statutory annual GA Meeting.

Governance Structure

The co-directors are appointed by the AB and will directly report to the FCS Dean and to the AB.

The FCS Dean will serve as a liaison between the institute and the broader university administration, supporting alignment with institutional priorities. The FCS Dean will have primary oversight of the institute, including responsibility for resource allocation and reporting to the university.

The AB is appointed and monitored by the collective of institute members in the form of the GA.

General Operation

Annual Budget and Work Plan

In consultation with the AB, the co-directors will develop a comprehensive annual budget and work plan that defines the institute's research priorities, anticipated funding requirements, and key operational objectives for the coming year. This budget and work plan will be reviewed and approved by both the AB and the GA prior to submission to the FCS Dean for final consideration.

Revenue Sources

The institute will secure and sustain its operations through a diversified range of revenue streams, including competitive research grants, strategic corporate partnerships, funding from governmental and non-governmental organizations, and institutional support from TMU.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs associated with the institute's activities, such as administrative and overhead expenses, will be allocated among participating faculties and partner institutions in proportion to their level of involvement and contribution to the institute's programs and initiatives.

Annual Reporting

The CRWI will submit an annual report to the FCS Dean by June 30 of each year in accordance with TMU Policy 144. The report will include a summary of the institute's current and anticipated activities; progress toward annual objectives and milestones; implementation of recommendations arising from the five-year cyclical review, where applicable; contributions to the faculty's SRC objectives; the previous year's financial statement; the proposed budget for the following year; and the next year's activity plan with associated milestones. An executive summary of the annual report will be published on the CRWI website by September 1 of each year.

Closure

The below closure protocol ensures a smooth transition, proper communication, and responsible management of assets and resources.

Notice of Discontinuation

- Advance notification: The institute's leadership, including the co-directors and the AB, will issue a formal notice of discontinuation at least 12 months prior to closure. This timeline ensures that members, partners, and all other stakeholders are informed well in advance.
- Reason for closure: The notice will include the rationale behind the discontinuation, whether it be financial difficulties, the completion of the institute's mission, or changes in research priorities. It will also outline the timeline for winding down activities.
- Public announcements via the institute's communication channels, such as newsletters, social media, and the website, will also be made.

Disposition of Assets Upon Closure

- Assets and intellectual property: The disposition of the institute's physical and intellectual assets will be handled in accordance with legal and institutional guidelines:
 - Physical assets will be kept by TMU if they were purchased by grant funds. If the physical assets were purchased by non-grant funds, they will be sold or donated to partner institutions or transferred to other departments within TMU or partner organizations.
 - Digital assets and intellectual property such as research data, publications, and digital tools developed under the institute's operations will either be archived for public access or transferred to relevant academic departments or partners for ongoing use and reference.

- Financial assets: Any remaining financial assets, such as unspent grant money, will be returned to the funders or redirected per the terms of the agreements.

Allowance for Closure Costs in Final Year Budget

- Final year budget planning: The budget for the institute's final year of operation will include provisions for all closure-related costs, such as administrative costs, archiving and record management, and communication.

This plan for closure guarantees a transparent and responsible process for closing the CRWI while safeguarding its legacy and ensuring minimal disruption to ongoing projects.