



# 2021 B.C. REGIONAL SOGI SUMMITS

## SUMMARY REPORT

June 2021



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## INTRODUCTION

This May, in partnership with local school districts, ARC Foundation ran the first ever Regional SOGI Summits for both Northern B.C. and Vancouver Island. These virtual conference-style events provided a space where SOGI-inclusive educators, as well as 2SLGBTQ+ students and allies, could share their challenges and experiences, participate in educational activities, and connect to the wider 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

The program was presented virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which proved to be beneficial for many of the attendees located in smaller or more remote communities. The events occurred on May 7<sup>th</sup> for Northern B.C., and May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> for Vancouver Island. These regions were selected for trial Regional Summits because of passionate educators who saw the need, and because of the opportunity to immediately service geographic areas where students and staff often report feeling isolated.

Summit attendees heard from 2SLGBTQ+ community leaders, including artists, local activists, and representatives from 2SLGBTQ+ organizations like Trans Care B.C. and Out in Schools. Sessions included topics such as gender affirming care, student/educator panel discussions, media representation, 2-Spirit identities, and navigating employment.

Summit planning committees were established in both regions to guide the details, flow, and content of the events. Students and staff came together regularly to ensure that the Summits were being planned both for and by local districts to lift up their voices, and to increase their capacity to organize similar events in the future.

## SUMMIT AGENDAS

The program content was selected based on feedback from planning committees, as well as a survey that was distributed to interested schools. Remarkably, parallel needs were identified in both regions, and the agendas for each Summit ended up being very similar to one another. Local speakers were selected as much as possible to maintain the regional aspects of the Summits, and to support a deeper connection to local 2SLGBTQ+ leaders and communities.



## Northern B.C. Agenda

TIME (PST)	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	SPEAKERS
8:30 AM	Virtual space open with DJ Rockaway. Sign on to connect and meet other attendees before the event officially begins.	
9:00 AM	<b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b>	
9:30 AM	<b>Finding a Job That is Right for You</b> Learn about your rights and hear examples of SOGI-inclusive workplaces. All ages welcome, though content will be targeted to high school students.	<b>Anden Lee</b> Trans facilitator who works in industrial settings such as mining and construction. <b>Adrienne Smith</b> Trans Human Rights lawyer.
9:30 AM	<b>SOGI-Inclusive Elementary Schools</b> Conceptualizing SOGI-Inclusive Units in Primary and Early Intermediate Grades for Educators. Educators are the target audience for this session.	<b>Bryan Gidinski</b> Presenter and consultant who currently works as the Elementary SOGI District Lead for the Burnaby School District.
9:30 AM	<b>Representation in Media with Out In Schools</b> The sibling program to The Vancouver Queer Film Festival will discuss queer representation in the media we engage with daily. All ages.	<b>Out In Schools</b> A BC program that uses film to host discussions on issues of homophobia, transphobia, and bullying.
10:30 AM	<b>MOVEMENT BREAK WITH DJ ROCKAWAY</b>	
11:00 AM	<b>Gender Affirming Care</b> Staff from the Northern Gender Clinic will share resources and supports that are available to those seeking gender affirming care in Northern BC. All ages welcome.	<b>Ingrid Cosio</b> MD, Family Medicine <b>Linda Van Pelt</b> Nurse Practitioner & Assistant Professor <b>Kerry Layton</b> Registered Psychiatric Nurse
11:00 AM	<b>Two Spirit Identities</b> Connect with an Indigenous advocate and educator to learn more about Two Spirit identities and Indigenous perspectives on SOGI. All ages.	<b>Jean Baptiste, Kihew Mahihkan Atayohkan Iskweh</b> A non-binary Two Spirit member of the Wet'suwet'en nation in the Laksilyu clan.
11:00 AM	<b>Students Share Their Stories</b> Hear from students about their challenges and triumphs of working to make their schools and other spaces more SOGI-inclusive. All ages.	<b>A panel of students from Northern BC schools</b>
12:00 PM	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>	
12:30 PM	<b>Learning from a Drag Queen</b> Hear from a BC Drag Queen about identity, drag, and growing up in a small town. All ages welcome.	<b>Shannon Lester / Sasha Zanolodchikova</b> Drag performer and visual artist, Shannon performs as Sasha. He was born in BC, grew up in Newfoundland, and now lives in Kelowna.
12:30 PM	<b>Youth Take Charge: 2SLGBTQ+ Histories</b> Learn about the history of community engagement, legal changes, and civic action in Canada relating to the 2SLGBTQ+ community. All ages.	<b>Danika Shinde</b> SOGI Lead and Teacher in Terrace.
1:30 PM	<b>BREAK</b>	
2:00 PM	<b>Grand Finale</b> Jen will wrap up the day with a message that invites you to embrace the wonderfully weird and the wonderfully queer. Jen is a queer Taiwanese-Canadian interdisciplinary & multi-hyphenate artist/activist, community facilitator, and cultural producer. All ages.	<b>Jen Sunshine</b> Co-Artistic Director + Co-founder of Love Intersections, a media arts collective producing intergenerational + intersectional QTBIPOC stories through documentary film.



## Vancouver Island Agenda

### MONDAY

TIME (PST)	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	SPEAKERS
11:30 AM	Virtual space open. Sign on to connect and meet other attendees before the event officially begins.	
12:00 PM	<b>Indigenous Welcome and Opening Remarks</b>	<b>Missy Haynes</b> Gitxsan Educator in SD62
12:30 PM	<b>Everything You've Ever Wanted to Know About a Drag Queen</b> (all ages) Well, not quite everything, but expect stories from the heart, numbers for the soul, reading some books together, and leaving feeling replenished.	<b>Peach Cobblah</b> , Drag performer and host who, out of drag, is a playwright, theatre producer, and big gay dad.
12:30 PM	<b>SOGI-Inclusive Educators</b> (for educators) Get inspired by the experiences of a variety of educators who are working to make their schools more SOGI-inclusive.	<b>A panel of educators from Sooke, Victoria, and Vancouver Island West</b>
1:30 PM	<b>MOVEMENT BREAK with Live DJ</b>	
2:00 PM	<b>Navigating Employment to Find the Right Job for You</b> Understand what resources and supports exist to find affirming work. Learn about your rights and hear examples of workplace inclusion. All ages welcome, but geared towards high school students.	<b>Gavin Donatelli</b> Youth Employment Outreach Coordinator with WorkBC. <b>Adrienne Smith</b> Trans Human Rights lawyer.
2:00 PM	<b>Two Spirit Identities</b> Connect with an Indigenous Two Spirit educator, to deepen your understanding of the intersectionality of Two-Spirit Identities and the role we all play in Reconciliation. All ages welcome.	<b>Jewell Gillies</b> An Indigenous anti-oppression facilitator who has worked in both the K-12 and post-secondary education systems.

### TUESDAY

TIME (PST)	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	SPEAKERS
8:30 AM	Virtual space open. Sign on to connect and meet other attendees before the event officially begins.	
9:00 AM	<b>Representation in Media with Out In Schools</b> This sibling program to The Vancouver Queer Film Festival will discuss queer representation in the media we engage with daily. Best for grades 4 and up.	<b>Out In Schools</b> A BC program that uses film to discuss homophobia, transphobia, and bullying.
9:00 AM	<b>Youth Take Charge: 2SLGBTQ+ Histories</b> Discuss the history of community engagement, legal changes, and civic action in Canada relating to the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Best for grades 6 and up.	<b>Connie Chan</b> SOGI Lead and Teacher in Gold River
10:00 AM	<b>BREAK</b>	
10:30 AM	<b>Gender Affirming Care</b> Speakers who are connected to SOGI-inclusive health care will share resources and supports that are available to those seeking gender affirming care. Best for grades 6 and up.	<b>Whitney Welsh</b> Health Navigator with TransCare BC <b>Dr Patricia Seymour</b> Family Doctor in the Cowichan Valley <b>Akki MacKay</b> , Social Worker <b>Sophia Palmer</b> , Youth and Family Counselor, Cowichan Valley Youth Services
10:30 AM	<b>Student Project Panel</b> Hear from students about their challenges and triumphs of working to make their schools and other spaces more SOGI-inclusive. All ages.	<b>A panel featuring elementary and high school students from Nanaimo, Qualicum, and Powell River</b>
11:30 AM	<b>BREAK</b>	
12:00 PM	<b>Grand Finale – Finding a Name that Feels Like Home</b> (all ages). Serena will wrap up the event by sharing personal anecdotes about finding the names and words for ourselves and our identities and reflect on the power we gain when we cannot only name ourselves, but also name our histories, our communities, and our lives as a beautiful and necessary part of the world.	<b>Serena Bhandar</b> A Punjabi/Welsh/Irish writer, facilitator, and advocate living as a settler on Lekwungen and WSANEC lands.



## ATTENDANCE

Attendance at each Regional Summit was greater than any event ARC Foundation has offered to date. There were over 1500 registrants between the two events: and a mix of educators and students – from GSA groups to entire classrooms. Students ranged from Grades 4 to 12.

Table #1: Registrants Breakdown

REGISTRANTS	Northern B.C.	Vancouver Island	TOTAL
Total # of registrants	<b>564</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>1533</b>
Students	385	820	<b>1205</b>
Staff	172	141	<b>313</b>
Others (i.e., trustees, presenters)	7	8	<b>15</b>
Districts Represented	12 out of 15 invited	13 out of 14 invited	<b>25</b>
Number of Schools Involved	Approx. 150	Approx. 130	<b>Approx. 280</b>

Table #2: Engagement – Participants by Session (Confirmed vs Projected)

SESSION ATTENDANCE	Confirmed	Projected*
<b>Northern B.C.</b>		
Welcome and Opening Remarks	<b>123</b>	<b>210</b>
Finding a Job That is Right for You	<b>42</b>	<b>65</b>
SOGI-Inclusive Elementary Schools	<b>58</b>	<b>63</b>
Representation in Media with Out In Schools	<b>56</b>	<b>123</b>
Gender Affirming Care	<b>43</b>	<b>73</b>
Two Spirit Identities	<b>55</b>	<b>108</b>
Students Share their Stories	<b>55</b>	<b>72</b>
Learning from a Drag Queen	<b>101</b>	<b>185</b>
Youth Take Charge: 2SLGBTQ+ Histories	<b>23</b>	<b>37</b>
Grand Finale	<b>112</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>Vancouver Island</b>		
Welcome and Opening Remarks	<b>86</b>	<b>225</b>
Learning from a Drag Queen	<b>64</b>	<b>208</b>
SOGI-Inclusive Educator Panel	<b>40</b>	<b>52</b>
Finding a Job That is Right for You	<b>21</b>	<b>35</b>
Two Spirit Identities	<b>73</b>	<b>178</b>
Representation in Media with Out In Schools	<b>82</b>	<b>165</b>
Youth Take Charge: 2SLGBTQ+ Histories	<b>35</b>	<b>94</b>
Gender Affirming Care	<b>49</b>	<b>102</b>
Students Share their Stories	<b>62</b>	<b>133</b>
Grand Finale	<b>81</b>	<b>217</b>

\*The confirmed numbers are the total number of logins to each Zoom call; however, many were groups of students calling in together. The Projected numbers are based on feedback from the group and registration information.



## ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

A post-summit survey was distributed for each event and was completed by 121 participants across the two regions. Feedback was also gathered throughout the live sessions, including comments submit through the chat feature.

### Participant Satisfaction

The overall experience was rated, on average, at 9/10 for both events. When asked to rate each individual session, the average response was over 90% either Satisfied or Very Satisfied, with 40% of the sessions receiving a 100% satisfaction rating.

Feedback was positive from educators and students alike:

*“It was the most vibrant, creative, and FUN Pro D I’ve ever been a part of”*

*“I am better equipped to support students”*

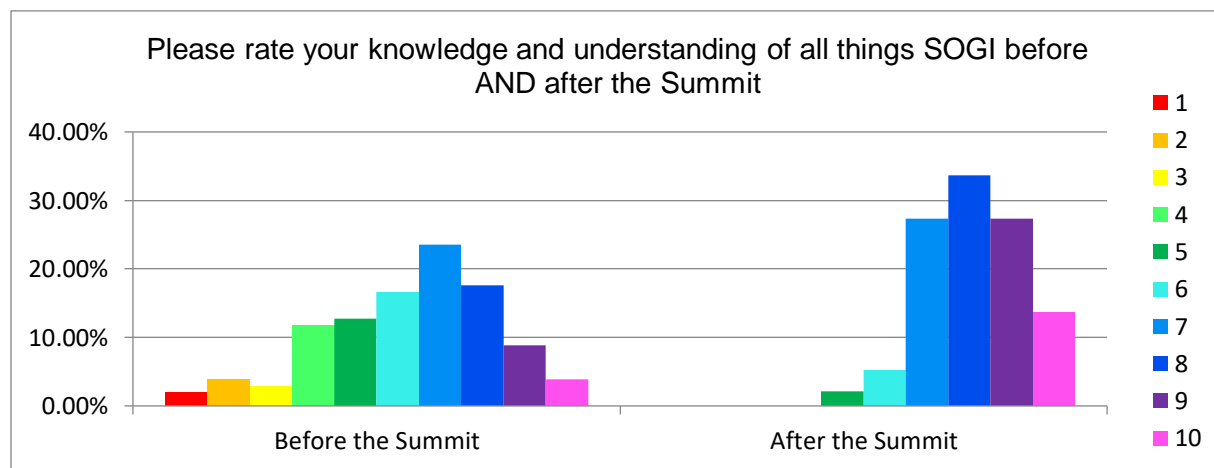
*“It felt amazing to be connecting with so many other kids like me. I can’t stop smiling. This community that the summit created was a beautiful thing!”*

*“I enjoyed hearing about others and the sense of not being alone”*

The lowest rated session at each event was “Youth Take Charge: 2SLGBTQ+ Histories”, with 19% responding as either Unsatisfied or Very Unsatisfied. Feedback on this session included the opportunity to include a panel of presenters to depict the range of lived experience on this topic, or a presenter that openly identifies within the community.

### Knowledge of SOGI

Participants were asked, on a scale of 1-10, how much they learned at the Summit, and the average response over the two events was 8 out of 10. Participants were also asked how much SOGI knowledge they had before and after the Summit. The average answer was 6.3 before the Summit, and 8.1 after; an increase of 29%. 85% of all respondents reported some increase in knowledge.



There was a significant increase in self-reported SOGI knowledge



### Suggestions for Next Year

When asked what could be improved or changed if an event like this took place in the future, many respondents said they wished for it to be in person next time, while also acknowledging the need to be virtual because of the Covid restrictions at the time. Simultaneously, many pointed out that the virtual aspect made it more accessible, allowed more students and educators to attend, and decreased the need for parental permission requirements that can cause barriers for some students to attend.

Other feedback included wanting more sessions that were targeted to a specific audience, such as topics specifically for elementary or high school, more professional development topics just for educators, or sessions for different levels of knowledge, such as SOGI basics and more advanced-intermediate discussions. Participants wished they could have attended all the sessions or that the sessions had been recorded for post-viewing, which was decided against to increase live participation and to protect student privacy.

### THANK YOU

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia in making the Regional SOGI Summits possible. This funding allows us to offer quality support, such as these events, as we continue our SOGI-inclusive education journey.

Finally, thank you to all the attendees at the Regional SOGI Summits who participated in such a meaningful way. We appreciate all the feedback provided and we look forward to exploring what kinds of regional SOGI events and connections will be possible in future years.