

**Report of the 15th International Family Nursing Conference  
(In Virtual Format): Family Nursing Throughout the Life-  
Course June 23–July 2, 2021**

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**Report of the 15<sup>th</sup> International Family Nursing Conference (In virtual format): *Family Nursing Throughout the Life-course* June 23<sup>rd</sup> - July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021**

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**The 15<sup>th</sup> International Family Nursing Conference:**  
*Family Nursing Throughout the Life-course*

**Program Overview**

This paper provides a description of the 15<sup>th</sup> International Family Nursing Conference (INFC15) sponsored by the International Family Nursing Association (IFNA). Because of the prevailing Covid-19 global pandemic and government restrictions on international travel, the IFNA Board of Directors and the IFNC15 Conference Planning Committee, in consultation with Kassalen Meetings and Events (KME), decided to pivot from delivering a face-to-face conference in Dublin, Ireland to a fully virtual format using the Airmeet platform (Airmeet, 2021)

As a result, the 15<sup>th</sup> International Family Nursing Conference took place in an online format, *June 23<sup>rd</sup> - July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021*. Together we explored the latest education, practice, research, and health policy/leadership issues related to our theme *Family Nursing Throughout the Life-course*.

The purpose of our conference was to:

- (a) disseminate innovative educational approaches from around the globe and to assess these;
- (b) intervene/promote, and measure family health outcomes throughout the life course across all levels of nursing education;
- (c) appraise family nursing practice innovations and models to inform evidence-based family health practice throughout the life course internationally;
- (d) examine influencing factors, innovative methodologies, advanced technologies, research evidence for practice;
- (e) translate family nursing research related to education, practice, and policy throughout the life course worldwide; and

(f) analyze opportunities for encouraging family nurses to take active roles in health care policy and leadership to support global family health and family care across the life course.

As Conference Planning Committee (CPC) Co-Chairs, we are indebted to the CPC, including Dr. Veronica Lambert from Dublin City University, Ireland, Chair of the Local Planning Committee (LPC), and the entire LPC for their preparation work to host the conference in Dublin, as well as their continued efforts to help us retain an “Irish feel” to the conference after we pivoted to a virtual format. In addition, we are grateful to the Country Liaisons (CL) and CL Coordinators who helped promote IFNC15 globally. We also appreciate the tireless, expert support and management from KME, particularly Debbie Zaparoni and Beth Kassalen. See Table 1 for membership of the CPC and LPC. (See Table 2 for the CLs/CL coordinators.)

[Please insert Table 1 about here]

[Please insert Table 2 about here]

In our planning, we were challenged to think about engaging families in our research, education, practice, and policy development; to grow interprofessional collaborations on behalf of family health; to consider family caregiving in healthcare across the life-course; and to extend the reach of IFNA to new places. Presenters at IFNC15 came from 29 countries, so they truly brought international perspectives. See Table 3 for a listing of presenters by countries.

[Please insert Table 3 about here]

## **The sessions**

Over 5 conference days, 350 attendees celebrated family nursing and healthcare scholarship, supported each other, and grew in commitment to advancing family nursing. There were 188 podium presentations in Concurrent Sessions and there were three Poster Sessions with 66 posters presented overall. Of the 188 podium presentations, 115 reported on research, 24 on education, 42 on practice and seven on policy.

The conference also provided a welcomed opportunity for the 10 IFNA Standing Committees, the Sub-committees, Chapters, Country Liaisons, and the Board of Directors to meet virtually in their respective groups. It was also exciting to see 75 student registrants and we welcomed 143 first time IFNC attendees.

### ***Preconference Workshops***

We delivered a varied range of Pre-Conference Workshops, Keynote Addresses and Expert Lectures. (See Table 4). A robust range of submissions were reviewed. In addition to applying quality metrics in our selection process, we considered the range of topics to reflect the conference theme and objectives.

The workshops selected provided opportunities for in-depth exploration of important topics within family nursing to address the CPC's goal of addressing the needs of a wide range of delegates. Workshops were primarily research-related ( $n = 3$ ) or practice-related ( $n = 3$ ) and were targeted at the novice level ( $n = 1$ ), intermediate level ( $n = 1$ ), advanced level ( $n = 1$ ), novice and intermediate level ( $n = 1$ ) or all three levels ( $n = 2$ ). Topics included:

- (a) global perspectives on narrowing the know-do gap in acute care family nursing;
- (b) family intervention development to advance science and inform practice and policy;
- (c) partnerships with families across the lifespan to facilitate family nursing;

- (d) quantitative and qualitative methods for analyzing dyadic data;
- (e) childbearing families and breastfeeding; and
- (f) mental health issues of vulnerable families.

The evaluations indicated that the workshops were assessed as being of high quality, that resources provided were current and highly relevant, and that discussions facilitated by the presenting teams were stimulating, informative and tailored to the identified requirements of participants. Furthermore, the wide range of international perspectives represented by workshop presenters enabled participants to gain a broad understanding of different health care contexts in relation to their selected topics. Table 4 summarizes the Pre-Conference Workshops, Keynote Addresses and Expert Lectures

[Please insert Table 4 about here]

### ***Opening Session***

At the opening ceremony, we enjoyed the international spirit of the flag ceremony to acknowledge the 29 countries represented by conference delegates/participants (see Table 1). A highlight was the awards ceremony: We honored the remarkable 2021 IFNA Award recipients (see Table 5) and the poster award winners (see Table 6).

**[Please insert Table 5 about here]**

Poster Awards were offered for the third time at IFNC15, and four presenters received awards for their outstanding posters (See Table 6).

**[Please insert Table 6 about here]**

Additionally, we acknowledged and honored our IFNA previous presidents and current IFNA president: Dr. Marcia Van Riper, Dr. Kit Chesla, Dr. Carole Robinson, Dr. Jane H. Lassetter, and Dr. Sonja Meiers (current president, 2019-21). Students who received Awards were also recognized (see Table 7).

**[Please inset Table 7 about here]**

Next, we remembered all those who have died since our last conference in 2019, including during the current global pandemic, and we recognized all the suffering that has occurred around the world due to the pandemic. In addition, we remembered families worldwide and particularly our nursing and other health care colleagues who have supported and cared for patients and families. Our opening session was a fitting tribute to our past, present, and future as an association supporting family nursing globally. Finally, we took the delegates to Ireland virtually, with a lively and entertaining video of Irish music and dancing.

### ***Keynote addresses***

The conference featured three keynote addresses. In our initial keynote address, Professor Mary McCarron from Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, founder and Principal Investigator for IDS-TILDA, a longitudinal comparative study on aging in persons with intellectual disability, explained how IDS-TILDA increases understanding about how lives and chronic conditions change over time for this population. Professor McCarron is also a champion of patient and public involvement in research (PPI) and IDS-TILDA continues to provide PPI opportunities for people with intellectual disability. Professor McCarron is Professor of Ageing and Intellectual Disability, Director of the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability and Executive Director of the

National Intellectual Disability Memory Service. Professor McCarron has held many senior leadership roles in Trinity College Dublin, including Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences and Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery. She is a recognized international leader in the fields of intellectual disability, ageing, dementia, and palliative care. Professor McCarron outlined the merit of utilizing a values-based framework, along with a commitment to advancing co-created research through meaningful involvement. She told us how IDS-TILDA is transforming health care delivery and improving policies. Established in 2007, IDS-TILDA is a longitudinal study in Ireland, to investigate aging among people with an intellectual disability, aged 40 and over. It is the first study in the world to make direct comparisons of aging experiences of persons with intellectual disabilities to those of the general population. This groundbreaking study is a testament to her dedication and the work of her team which includes clients with intellectual disabilities, scientists, health professionals and volunteers. This extensive work was highlighted very ably by Professor Veronica Lambert (Ireland) who moderated the online Q&A after Dr. McCarron's keynote lecture.

Our second keynote speaker, Professor Kim Usher, University of New England, New South Wales Australia, is committed to co-designed and collaborative research that has a meaningful community impact. Dr Usher has undertaken extensive research and published widely on issues relating to family violence and is lead researcher on a Medical Research Future Fund Bushfire grant to investigate the effects of arts-based story telling workshops on mental health recovery and a study to explore the impact of Covid-19 on preventive health behaviours in indigenous communities. As the lead investigator on an Australian Research Council funded study on Aboriginal young persons' well-being and resilience, Dr. Usher explored and discussed important considerations for nurses of the impact of Covid-19 on families in their care. She focussed on



some of these issues and their complex interrelationships that are pivotal for family nurses who are often charged with developing and delivering much needed interventions. Dr Usher and her team have involved over 400 participants in arts- based activities and she encouraged us to consider this enjoyable and productive activity for patients across the life course. To promote dialogue, a response panel was comprised of three esteemed IFNA members from diverse regions: Dr. Jill Bally (Canada), Dr. Vico Chiang (Hong Kong) and Dr. Rahel Naef (Switzerland). Each panel member in turn reflected on issues raised in the address in relation to the context in their own countries. Dr. Kathleen Knafel (USA) and Dr Junko Hondo (Japan) skillfully moderated the panel. This is the second time this response panel format has been used at IFNC, although it was our first virtual keynote address/response panel. This was a winning combination that enabled delegates to hear perspectives from several countries and contexts. We applaud Dr. Usher for an excellent keynote and the well-prepared respondents and moderators who facilitated inspiring dialogue in this evolving area of family nursing practice.

The closing keynote speaker was Professor Inger Kristensson Hallstrom, Head of the Child and Family Health research group at Lund University, Sweden. Dr Hallstrom is an experienced pediatric nurse and nurse leader. In 2008 she became the first Professor of pediatric nursing in Sweden and received the award of Excellent Teaching Practitioner at Lund University. Dr Hallstrom's keynote described a journey of developing, testing, evaluating, and implementing complex nursing interventions to improve the health of children and their families. She helpfully explored and discussed the importance of children and families being involved in intervention development and evaluation. Further, she examined the challenges for nursing and multidisciplinary researchers in deciding where to start, where to end, and what to include in interventions. Finally, she articulated her ongoing journey of consistently asking children and their

parents about their experiences, needs and preferences to ensure that she and her team develop systematic, appropriate, and effective interventions to enable optimal care provision for each child in a cost-effective manner. Dr. Hallstrom's career trajectory and personal narrative inspired participants to recognize how we can each advocate for families and family nursing in our own practice, research, education or policy and leadership work. Professor Hallstrom's closing keynote was a truly inspirational way to conclude the conference, and this was highlighted very ably by Professor Sarah Neill (United Kingdom) who moderated the online Q&A after Dr. Hallstrom's keynote. (See Table 4.)

### **Sponsors, Donors, and Fundraising**

IFNC15 was made possible financially through participants' registration fees and the generous support of sponsors who recognized the importance of family nursing. We are indebted to the Resource Advancement Committee, chaired by Drs. Linda Young and Susan Sullivan-Bolyai with additional support from Drs. Kathleen Knafl (Board liaison and Treasurer) and Janet Deatrick, and the IFN Foundation, led by Drs. Barbara Habermann (recent past Chair) and Kit Chesla (current chair) for their dedicated and successful efforts to garner significant funding to support the costs of the conference. Our Official Conference Sponsors were The Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society, the College of Allied Health, and Nursing at Minnesota State University, Mankato, Mankato, MN, USA, and the Irish Health Research Board. Our Platinum+ sponsors were: IFNA Resource Advancement Committee (Pot of Gold). Platinum Partners were Dublin City University Dublin and an Anonymous UK Family Nurse. Gold+ Partners were University of Massachusetts Worcester, Medical School and Graduate School of Nursing; SAGE Publishing; and Brigham Young University College of Nursing. Our student

scholarship program was supported by the International Family Nursing Foundation (IFNF). Sponsors of conference events, sessions, program advertising, and branding included: Duke University School of Nursing; Drs. Kathleen and George Knafel; Suzanne Feetham; IFNF; Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing; Wayne State College of Nursing; the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth; School of Nursing, University of Minnesota; Japanese Association for Research in Family Nursing; University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire College of Nursing and Health Sciences; Children's National, Department of Nursing Science, Professional Practice and Quality, Washington DC; Winona State University College of Nursing & Health Science; University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee College of Nursing; Carolina Nursing; Saint Louis University; the Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing, Saint Louis University; Children with Cancer UK; Sheffield Hallam University, UK, the UK and Ireland IFNA Chapter; University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing, University of Maryland School of Nursing; and Cincinnati Children's.

Forty donors also contributed to the Honor a Family or Family Nurse (HFFN) Program that recognized named families and family nurses at IFNC15. HFFN funds were used to support travel scholarships to 17 students to attend IFNC15 (See Table 7).

Such initiatives are the direct result of the work of the Resource Advancement Committee (RAC) that raised over \$60,000 including through the Pot of Gold initiative, and the efforts of IFN Foundation. Undoubtedly, the RAC and the IFNF contributed to the conference's success by enlisting generous sponsors and donors.

## **Conclusions and Looking Ahead**

As the conference drew to a close, we reached the time to transition the office of presidency from Dr. Sonja Meiers (IFNA President 2019-2021) to Dr. Veronica Swallow (President- Elect 2019-2021 and incoming president). In reflecting on her presidency, Dr Sonja Meiers said:

I have learned many lessons with you while president of IFNA during this past 2 years. Altogether, I have learned of your enduring, laser-focused, passion for improving family health through excellence in family nursing... The needs of the family must be considered if we are to make a difference in health outcomes across the lifespan (Meiers, 2021).

Following applause from the online participants and visual effects to show IFNA's appreciation, Dr. Swallow, the new IFNA President, took the virtual gavel to begin her presidency and said:

IFNA is a unique group of family nurses across the world, and I am privileged to be the first IFNA President from outside of North America. But I am very aware that we are building on the strong foundations laid down by our esteemed founding members from North America who shared a vision for promoting international family nursing and have worked incredibly hard to promote that vision. So, thank you very much to those inspirational pioneers without whom we would not be here today. ...Now, let's celebrate what we have in common and our diversity and let's look forward to meeting again at IFNC16

(Swallow, 2021).

We then celebrated the conference conclusion with virtual confetti, applause, and fireworks!

Following the conference, we solicited online evaluations from participants, and the CPC carefully considered all the feedback received. Notably, the evaluations indicated that 97.56% of respondents rated the overall conference experience as excellent or good ( $n=200$ ); and 97% rated the overall quality of the speakers as being excellent/good ( $n=201$ ). Based on these results, including review of the qualitative feedback, we have concluded that the participants confirmed our assessment that IFNC15 was highly successful. Given that running a virtual conference was unknown territory for IFNA, the very positive evaluation results were particularly noteworthy and rewarding.

As we reflect on our IFNC15 experience, we also turn to planning the next conference, IFNC16, for 2023. The IFNC16 CPC is being constituted with Dr. June Andrews Horowitz (USA) and Dr. Sarah Neill (UK) as co-chairs. Plans for the format and potential location of a fully face-to-face delivery or a hybrid delivery (virtual or in-person as options), or virtual only will be based on evolving COVID-19 conditions, feedback provided through IFNC15 evaluations, and careful consideration by the Board of Directors and INC16 CPC in consultation with our KME partners. We look forward to your future participation.

### **References**

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**Table 1**

*International and Local Conference Planning Committees and County Liaisons*

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**International Conference Planning Committee**

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**Co-Chairs:** June Horowitz and Veronica Swallow

**Committee Membership**

Jill Bally, University of Saskatchewan, Canada

Maria do Céu Barbieri Figueiredo, University of Huelva, Spain

Cindy Danford, University of Pittsburgh, USA

Barbara Giambra, Cincinnati Childrens, USA

Kathleen Knafl, University of North Carolina, USA

Ana Márcia Mendes-Castillo, University of Campinas, Brazil

Kim Mooney-Doyle, University of Maryland, USA

Sarah Neill, University of Plymouth, England

Wendi Smith, Holy Family University, USA

Susan Sullivan-Bolyai, University of Massachusetts, USA

Regina Szylit, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Barbara Voltelen, University College Lillebaelt, Denmark

Linda Young, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, USA

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**Local (Dublin) Planning Committee**

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**Chair**

Veronica Lambert, Dublin City University, Ireland

**Committee Representation**

Sue Carr, Northumbria University, England

Christine English, IFNA UK/Ireland Chapter, England

Kate Irving, Dublin City University, Ireland

Tanya King, Department of Health, Ireland

Charlotte O'Dwyer, Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street

Suja Somanadhan University College Dublin, Ireland

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**Table 2***Country Liaison Coordinators / Country Liaisons*

<b>Country Liaison Coordinators:</b> Sarah Neill, (United Kingdom) Ana Marcia Castillo, (Brazil)	Barbara Voltelen, (Denmark) Junko Honda, (Japan)	Kathy Knafl (USA)
<b>Country Liaisons:</b>		
Elisabeth Coyne, Australia Garth Kendall, Australia Martin Nagl-Cupal, Austria Lucila Nascimento, Brazil Janice M. Bell, Canada Francine de Montigny, Canada Debbie Sheppard-Lemoine, Canada Naixue Cui, China Jia Guo, China Ping Mao, China Pilar Aaya Rey, Columbia Birte Ostergaard, Denmark Frank Kiwanuka, Finland	Asta Perursdottir, Iceland Megah Andriany, Indonesia Veronica Lambert, Ireland Suja Somanadhan, Ireland Walter DeCaro, Italy Junko Honda, Japan Naohiro Hohashi, Japan Marie Louise Luttk, Netherlands Lisa Whitehead, New Zealand Julie Mogbo, Nigeria Maria Barbieri-Figueiredo, Portugal Celdine Chironda Chikanya, Rwanda Nada Dahlawi, Saudi Arabia	Petra Brysiewicz, South Africa Geldine Chironda Chikanya, South Africa Cristina Garcia-Vivar, Spain Inger Hallstrom, Sweden Veronique Degoumoens, Switzerland Rahel Naef, Switzerland Li-Chi Chiang, Taiwan Chayannan Jaide, Thailand Christine English, UK Amanda Garrow, UK Celdine Chironda Chikanya, Zimbabwe



**Table 3***Countries Represented by IFNC15 Delegates*

<b>Country - 29</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>AUS/NZ/ASIA</b>		<b>AMERICAS</b>	
USA	151	Australia	9	Brazil	22
Japan	29	China	8	Canada	22
Brazil	22	Hong Kong	1	Mexico	1
Canada	22	Japan	29	USA	151
United Kingdom	17	Korea, Republic of	3		<b>196</b>
Switzerland	16	New Zealand	1		
Ireland	14	Taiwan	4	<b>AFRICA</b>	
Denmark	11	Thailand	1	Botswana	1
Portugal	10		<b>56</b>	Ghana	1
Australia	9			South Africa	3
China	8	<b>EUROPE</b>			<b>5</b>
Sweden	7	Austria	2		
Spain	6	Denmark	11	<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	<b>1</b>
Taiwan	4	Estonia	1		
Korea, Republic of	3	Finland	1		
Netherlands	3	Ireland	14		
South Africa	3	Israel	2		
Austria	2	Italy	2		
Israel	2	Netherlands	3		
Italy	2	Portugal	10		
Botswana	1	Spain	6		
Estonia	1	Sweden	7		
Finland	1	Switzerland	16		
Ghana	1	United Kingdom	17		
Hong Kong	1		<b>92</b>		
Mexico	1				
New Zealand	1				
Saudi Arabia	1				
Thailand	1				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>350</b>				

**Table 4***Titles and Lead Presenters of Pre-conference Workshops, Keynote Addresses and Expert Lectures*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Lead presenter/s</b>
<b>Pre-Conference Workshops</b>	
<b>1</b> Mental Health Issues of Vulnerable Families	Dr. Naixue Cui
<b>2</b> Family Intervention Development to Advance Science and Inform Practice and Policy	Dr. Kathleen Knafl
<b>3</b> Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan in the Covid Era: How to Care for Our patients and Ourselves	Dr. Connie Kartz
<b>4</b> Partnerships with Families Across the Lifespan: Facilitating Family Nursing	Dr. Elizabeth Coyne
<b>5</b> Global Perspectives on Narrowing the Know-how Gap in Acute Care Family Nursing	Dr. Rahel Naef
<b>6</b> An Introduction to Quantitative and Qualitative Methods for Analyzing Dyadic Data	Dr. Karen Lyons
<b>Keynote addresses</b>	
<b>1</b> Helping to Drive Change Through Data: How Older People with an Intellectual Disability and their Families Work with Researchers to Improve Policy	Dr Mary McCarron
<b>2</b> The Impact of Covid-19 on the Family: Important Consideration for Family Nurses	Dr Kim Usher
<b>3</b> Using Complex Interventions to Improve the Health of Children and Their Families	Dr. Inger Kristensson Hallstrom
<b>Expert Lectures</b>	
<b>1</b> Adapting Psychosocial Interventions Using Participatory Methods	Dr. Janet Deatrick
<b>2</b> Covid-19: Urgent Call for Nurses to Understand, Practice, and Embrace Family Systems Nursing	Dr. Janice M Bell, Dr. Lorraine M Wright
<b>3</b> Family Nurses' Engagement in Policy Development, Policy Research and Policy Implementation	Dr. Lindsay Smith
<b>4</b> Defining and Conceptualizing Family to Advance the Science of Family Research	Dr. Suzanne Feetham

<b>5</b> Using a Family Perspective to Teach About Life with Genetic Conditions Across the Life Course	Dr Marcia van Riper
<b>6</b> Valuing the Voices of Patients and Families Across the Life-course in Family Research: Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE)	Dr Veronica Swallow, Dr Veronica Lambert

**Table 5**

*IFNA Awards*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Award</b>
Sandra K. Eggenberger, PhD, RN (USA)	2021 Excellence in Family Nursing Award
Maureen Leahey, RN, PhD (Canada)	2021 Excellence in Family Nursing Award
Lorraine M. Wright, RN, PhD (Canada)	2021 Excellence in Family Nursing Award
Joel Gwyn Anderson, PhD (USA)	2021 Innovative Contribution to Family Nursing Award
Weichao Yuwen, PhD, RN (USA)	2021 Rising Star in Family Nursing Award

**Table 6***Poster Awards*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Award</b>
Do Undergraduate Nursing Students Learn Family and Family Nursing?	<u>Maria do Céu Barbieri-Figueiredo</u> , Marília Rua, Carla Fernandes, Cristina Pestana, Florinda Galinha, Joana Campos, Luísa Santos, Maria do Carmo Gouveia, Rita Leal, Sara Lemos, Cláudia Oliveira (Portugal)	1 <sup>st</sup> Place
Families' Experiences of Grief and Bereavement in the Emergency Department: A Scoping Review	<u>Yoshiyasu Ito</u> , Michihiro Tsubaki, Masahiro Kobayashi (Japan)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place
Satisfaction with the Life of Families in Times of Social Confinement By COVID-19	<u>Carla Sílvia Fernandes</u> , Bruno Magalhães, Sílvia Silva, Beatriz Edra (Portugal)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place
Clown Doctors Performance to Reduce the Stress of Hospitalized Children	<u>Ling-Mei Liu</u> , Ching-Ching Sheng, Chin-Mi Chen, Shih-Hung Ke, Hsin-Hong Chen (Taiwan)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place

**Table 7**

*Student Scholarships provided by IFN Foundation, Honor a Family or Family Nurse (HFFN)*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Country</b>
<u>Nkeiru Adoga</u>	United States of America (US)
Tahani ALShammari	Saudi Arabia, studying in the USA
Cinzia Caparso	USA
Toia Francia	USA
Giulia Gasperini	Italy
Orla Hayes	Ireland
Tine Ikander	Denmark
Mariana Cristina Lobato dos Santos	Brazil
Sara Lemos	Portugal
Rhyquelle Rhibna Neris	Brazil
Ntombifuthi Jennet Ngiba	South Africa
Sarah Ogilvie	USA
Amelia Potter-Dickey	Canada
Audrey Roach	USA
Isabella Navarro Silva	Brazil
Simon Stones	United Kingdom
Qinyi Zhong	China

