**School Exclusion and Settler Colonialism: A Critical History**

I'm Dr. Mati Keynes. I'm a white settler scholar. I grew up on Whadjuk, Noongar Country over in Western Australia, and I'm trained as a historian. And currently I'm Mackenzie Postdoctoral Research Fellow here in the Faculty of Education.

So, the area of my historical research is the history of education and History Education. It's a bit confusing, but I look both at the history of education systems, institutions, ideas and actors, as well as contemporary education, how those historical kind of systems, legacies flow into and impact contemporary education around questions of curriculum, pedagogy and systemic questions around historical injustice in education.

So this is my first connection with the Australian Centre. So I was made aware of the seed funding through the university email system, and I also heard about the funding opportunity from Jess Gerrard, my colleague in the Faculty of Education, who is one of the advisory board members of the Australian Centre. We've got an amazing research team, so it's myself, Beth Marsden, who is a postdoctoral research fellow in the Australian National University in history. Archie Thomas, who is a post-doctoral researcher in UTS at UTS. And Samara Hand, who is the co-founder of the National Indigenous Youth Education Coalition, our main sort of partner in this research, and also a PhD candidate at UNSW.

Our values as a research collective, we share a sort of critical view of education and its role in settler governmentality. So part of our kind of collective endeavour in this research and beyond is to bring education into the centre of analyses of settler colonialism. And so in my work, that sort of involves looking at education in a sort of three part way. So looking one, at how education is a part of a project of settler replacement that seeks to make the white occupiers the legitimate owners.

So how education's been involved in that historically and into the present. Its role in Indigenous education. So, sort of seeking to erase and assimilate, Christianize the true owners. And the third part is paying attention to education as a site of resistance, as a site of self-determination, and as a part of expressions of enduring sovereignty.

The seed funding has contributed to producing a research report that's laying foundations for that history. And another sort of aspect of the project is to fund a workshop, which we're working on with NIYEC and bringing together a range of stakeholders in this space of school exclusion, academic stakeholders, as well as community and policy people, education sector people, but most importantly, Indigenous young people. So bringing some Indigenous young people from around the country to work with our research, to sort of design and start to make an action plan for their own research in the kind of space of contemporary education.

So hoping to do case studies on school exclusion in the contemporary sphere. So that's a big kind of outcome, I suppose, or something that's been enabled by this seed funding. And the final thing is we're also producing a digital resource with NIYEC.

So, something important to all of us in this project is to follow this kind of ethical imperative to work closely with Indigenous leaders in this space, and in particular to, as I said previously, direct our expertise to self-determination in education.

Soin this case, it's working closely with NIYEC and working with the community on their kind of own goals for this research. So that's sort of an important something important to me about this research and the rest of us as well. On the academic side, I think people are pretty familiar with the history of, say, Jim Crow segregated schooling systems in the United States and more recently with the residential school system in Canada.

And there’s also raising awareness of Sámi exclusion in places like Finland, in Sweden and Norway. So part of something important to me in this research is calling attention to the history of school exclusion here in Australia that's much less widely known and something that when we present this research to people, they're often shocked and appalled, rightly so. But I think we need to work beyond that and start to spread the stories of this systemic exclusion that has happened in the Australian Government school systems.

So something that motivates us in this research is to speak back against some of the dominant and deficit-based narratives in Indigenous education, in the contemporary space. So calling attention to that is really key and something important to me and the rest of the project team.

It sort of turns that story on its head a bit and allows us to speak back against those narratives. The other thing it does is speak back against some of the celebratory narratives there are of Western education systems, which we still see today very prominently, a lot of those narratives responsiblised Indigenous families and students for their so-called failure to attend school or to achieve certain levels of educational attainment and so on. And something our research does is to through this historical, systemic approach to show where the system has failed on the one hand repeatedly, and also to then draw the links between those historical cases of systemic exclusion into the present space of educational systems and the policies, and to place responsibility back on those systems for that so-called failure.

So the seed funding has been absolutely essential and crucial for this research. It wouldn't have happened without it. It's work that we all do off in our own sort of isolated silos. And this work has allowed us to come together as a collective and to work formally in partnership with NIYEC. And that's been absolutely invaluable to the sort of research that we're trying to do and the ways of doing research in ways that we think are most ethical and appropriate in this space.

Some of the historical stories that we've uncovered through this research are quite new, and I think will be surprising to many people.