

# East Coast Shaking the Movers

## *Defending Child Rights for Refugees and Newcomers*



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## A Message from the Advocate



It is with great pleasure that our office has partnered for the second year in a row with the Landon Pearson Center to support the *Shaking the Movers* initiative. This program provides my Office with an important opportunity to ensure respect for the rights of young people to be heard on issues that concern them. This year's focus on refugee and immigrant rights, approached here through a child rights lens, is an important and emergent conversation in our Province.

For several weeks, Advocate staff members, led by Sarah Dennene, the Director of Research Education and Outreach, have accompanied a team of young people to raise awareness around children's rights and the theme of children on the move,

in order to prepare them to act as peer facilitators for the week-end event last November. The event was rich in discussions and exchanges where everyone could express themselves. They made their voices heard. Young participants call for a better world, more respectful of the rights of the child. The diversity and composition of the group also allowed for many testimonials based on lived experience. The issue of racism and xenophobia in school is of particular concern and is a matter that I will want to address further.

I sincerely thank all the young people who took part in this initiative and I promise to amplify their voices and help them so that their recommendations can be advanced and addressed. I also want to thank the CYA staff, especially Sarah Dennene our Director of Education, Outreach and Research and her team as well as the many partners, including our local partner the Multicultural Association of Fredericton, whose support made this second edition of *East Coast Shaking the Movers* possible.

I call on all the decision-makers directly concerned by these recommendations to think about how to take into account the voices of these young people and to reflect on their recommendations as we continue to develop policies in support of New Brunswick children and their rights.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norman Bossé".

**Norman Bossé, Q.C.**

**Child and Youth Advocate**

## Foreword

### A Message from the Children's Senator

What is it like for a child to be a stranger in a strange land, where everything is different, including the weather? As you try to make your way in a new language, a new community, a new school, how does it feel? How do you figure out what to do, how to be accepted, to make friends, to belong and to succeed and what do you do with your memories? How do you learn that you actually have rights because you are a child and all children have rights? And who is there to help you, protect you, provide for you, hear what you have to say?



For children on the move these are all very important questions and Shaking the

Movers workshops are designed to open up a space where all children can articulate their concerns whether they are newcomers to Canada or children who have grown up here among increasing numbers of refugees and immigrants. At every STM we have sponsored over the years I have heard young people bemoan the fact that they know so little about what it means to have rights and how empowered they feel once they know they have them and are being listened to.

So please pay attention to what they have to say. Don't be dismissive or think you know better. You aren't the experts in their own lives, they are and solutions to the problems they raise can only be arrived at together. As far as children and adolescents are concerned our power as adults collectively and individually is enormous and our responsibility is to exercise it in their best interests as well as ours. In years to come there will be more and more children pushed about within and across borders by forces such as climate change and armed conflict. We need to have better ways to mitigate the difficulties of their lives and we need to listen to them to find out how to do it.

**The Honourable Landon Pearson O.C.**

## Introduction

Shaking the movers is a national event, held annually in several provinces across Canada. This project was developed by the Landon Pearson Resource Center in 2007 to provide a forum for youth to learn about their rights. This is the second edition on the east coast of Canada. This discussion forum is held during a weekend and is facilitated by young people. This youth engagement project is supported and supervised by the Child and Youth Advocate staff. Youth take part in a series of child rights awareness sessions and planning sessions leading up to the weekend.

The theme this year was the rights of refugees and newcomers children through a rights-based approach under the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. As project sponsor the Advocate's Office sought to embrace this approach by inviting high school students concerned by this theme to assume the role of facilitators. The facilitators and participants in this edition impressed by their commitment, but also by all they had to say and share with their peers.

The project was developed in collaboration with the Multicultural Association of Fredericton (MCAF). During the weekend, the MCAF and CYA teams acted as planning supports, chaperones and kitchen staff, while the facilitators and participants planned and ran the programs. This report is sober, reflecting only the words of young people and their recommendations. All of the stories we heard came from weekend activities, moments of discussion, video interviews and planning sessions with the facilitators and were used to develop 33 recommendations.

The hope of all UNCRC rights holders, participants and facilitators, reflected in this report is that these recommendations are heard and implemented. They express here the trajectory and the course of many newcomers and refugees or the difficulties of arriving in their host country. Some of their remarks focus specifically on racism and discrimination against young people.



## A few Words on the Project

### A. Weekend Format and Adult Support



This edition of Shaking the movers was held in the format of an overnight camp from November 10-12, 2017 at Green Hill Lake, New Brunswick. This format provided youth with a peer engagement experience different from the day camp format. The youth were grouped by age and gender in cottage dorms and enjoyed the scenic view of the camp, as well as outdoor and cultural activities. A beautiful group spirit in a safe space

respectful of differences developed. Everyone also had a lot of fun!

The presence of adults throughout the weekend ensures a safe environment and also supports facilitators who were on their first facilitation experience. These professionals also intervene at the youth's request to answer questions or give information on specific topics. For example, Christian Whalen, Deputy Advocate, speaks on Remembrance Day and answered questions from youth about war-related suffering. Sarah Dennene spoke about children's rights and on various themes related to refugees. Finally, participants were also glad to have a chance to meet Daniella Bendo coordinator from the Landon Person center who attended the weekend event and to hear her talk about the *Shaking the Movers'* editions in other provinces, and the follow-up on recommendations.



During pre-conference and conference work, the CYA team was supported by the following stakeholders from the Multicultural Association of Fredericton:

- Saa Andrew Gbongbor, Children and Youth Coordinator
- Davis Galant Programme de Liaison Francophone de MCAF
- Sarah Enright

## B. Expressing themselves in video

A space called the "Social Hub" was set up at the camp. Young people could express themselves in front of the camera and those who wanted to express themselves in other ways also had this space at their disposal. In this way the youth were also able to participate in the 2017 Child Rights Education Week. A video is available online on the CYA's website.

## C. Facilitators 'training'

This project owes its success to the commitment of eight facilitators aged 14 to 17 supported by the Child and Youth Advocate's team and MCAF stakeholders. The eight facilitators, Francophone and Anglophone and allophones met frequently to set up activities throughout the conference to help participants express themselves, give their opinions, answer their questions and be aware of their rights. Six of the eight facilitators were involved with the Multicultural Association of Fredericton.

The planning and debrief sessions with the young facilitators sought to help familiarize them with their role as facilitators and help them build conversations with participants around the theme and *the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The Facilitators met, with members of the CYA and MCAF teams, once to twice a week from the end of September until the November event to prepare the activities, adapt the activities to the theme and share their ideas. Educational tools, some of which Equitas provided, allowed facilitators to build a fun and instructional program. Facilitators also devised new ice breakers and other activities to help the group form a climate of trust.

The presence in the group of refugees and newcomers was critically helpful in planning activities that spoke to the experience of children on the move. Following the Shaking the Movers weekend, work continued with the youth facilitators to analyze the content, review their experience as facilitators and develop the recommendations.



From left to right:  
Daniella Bendo,  
Landon Pearson  
Centre coordinator  
Youth facilitators  
Ahmjad Zakaria,  
Diving Niyera,  
Shadia Irkade,  
Ahmad Shihan, Tahir  
Aldandan, Katherine

Mills, Shekinah Rutande, Purnima Sharma and Sarah Dennene, CYA.

## "What the Facilitators had to say:

*It was an amazing experience; helping young people in their pathways, making them realize that their rights exist, especially minorities who have not always had their rights respected. To be able to be part of their pathways through activities. " Young facilitator, 16 [Original in French]*

*"It was a totally new experience for me. [...]. Shaking the Movers was for teenagers which made me a little scared, but it was a lot of fun. It was an experience that I will take with me forever. It was a great opportunity for me to get out of my comfort zone and learn something different."*

Young facilitator, 17



*"It was so good, I learned a lot: like how to work as a team with other facilitators. The most fun part was the In the Newcomer Shoes game, because it really did show what it was like to be a new comer."* Young person, 17

“

STM 2017			
GIRLS		BOYS	
Number	Age	Number	Age
2	12	1	12
2	13	3	14
1	14	5	15
3	15	7	16
7	16	2	17
3	17		
<b>Total</b>		<b>Total</b>	
<b>18</b>		<b>18</b>	
<b>36</b>			

## Shaking the Movers Participants and Stakeholders

### A. Participants

Thirty-six youths aged 12 to 17 from across the province participated in the 2017 *East Coast Shaking the Movers*.

Many youth participants were invited by the Multicultural Association of Fredericton and the Centre d'accueil et de services

francophones de Moncton. Others were also members of the New Brunswick Youth Voices Committee, supporting the interdepartmental work on the Province's Harm Prevention Strategy. Others came from middle schools and high schools across the province. This mix enriched the discussion. The event was also very multilingual with the adult support team and facilitators working as interpreters and ensuring that no one was excluded from any activity or discussion because of a language barrier.

## B. Our Partners

### Multicultural Association of Fredericton (MCAF)

Formed in 1974, the Multicultural Association of Fredericton Inc. (MCAF) plays a role in establishing communication and fostering understanding between the community, settled immigrants and newcomers<sup>1</sup>. The involvement of the organization's professionals also allowed the participation of many young people from the Association throughout the weekend. Especially, we would like to thank Saa Andrew Gbongbor, Children and Youth Coordinator MCAF, who played a leading role in this project 'success. The Centre MOSAIQUE actively participated in making available its facilities to the young facilitators to prepare the event.



### CAFI

The CAFI is a non-profit Francophone reception and service centre for immigrants in Moncton. It contributes to their economic, social and cultural integration through services, programs and partnerships. The Family-School agent invited six young participants and facilitated their participation.



### EQUITAS

Equitas was founded in Montreal in 1967 by a group of prominent academics and social activists. The co-founders strongly believed that human rights education was one of the keys to improving social justice. The youth used some tools made available by a program officer at Equitas to build the conference activities. A young facilitator was trained by Equitas and made her teammates aware of the Equitas approach to human rights education.



### The Landon Pearson Resource Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights and the Lawson Foundation

This weekend would not have been possible without the financial support of "The Landon Pearson Centre. The Landon Pearson Resource Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights facilitates dialogues, initiatives and projects dedicated to the advancement and betterment of the lives of children. The *Shaking the Movers* workshops receive funding support from the Lawson Foundation and the Public Health Agency of Canada"<sup>2</sup>.



Landon Pearson Resource Centre  
for the Study of Childhood  
and Children's Rights

<sup>1</sup> <https://mcaf.nb.ca/en/>

<sup>2</sup> For more information visit <http://www.landonpearson.ca/>

# **YOUTH VOICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

*The following sections of this report contain 37 recommendations as well as supporting quotes from the youth participants and facilitators. For the sake of confidentiality, quotes are not attributed to a particular young person. In the same vein, names of schools attended were removed.*

*Excerpts are also included from the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They come from the UNICEF tool, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in plain language, the reference tool used with young people throughout the course of this project.*

## I. Ice Breakers and team-building activities

"Ice Breakers are used in various settings in order to establish a certain level of comfort among new acquaintances. They can be games, songs, or dances, among other things. At *Shaking the Movers*, we used them mostly to encourage our participants to get out of their boxes, and use a platform that spoke to all members of the group, regardless of their native language. This was an asset for us, since we welcomed participants from so many different backgrounds." Young facilitator, 16



**Bang, Bang** "Usually, this game is used as a tool to learn names at the beginning of an event. However, we played "Bang,Bang" on Saturday afternoon in between more substantial activities, as a way to take a break from the sometimes rather heavy subjects at hand.

**Get loose Get Funky / Great Big Moose:** "Gathered in a circle, everyone engaged in the song and its matching gestures. By Sunday, the bonds that our attendees had formed were so strong that comfort zones were no longer an issue. " Young facilitator, 16





“*In their own words*

*“I think it’s a great idea to make an activity like this. [...] We also play fun games here and have fun.” Young person, 16*

*“Shaking the Movers is program that teaches young people about human rights, I mean child rights and we do it through fun activities.” Young person 15*

*“Some nice people they make a group and they bring some people from all over, some refugees and other people and start talking about refugees and everything.” Young person, 17*

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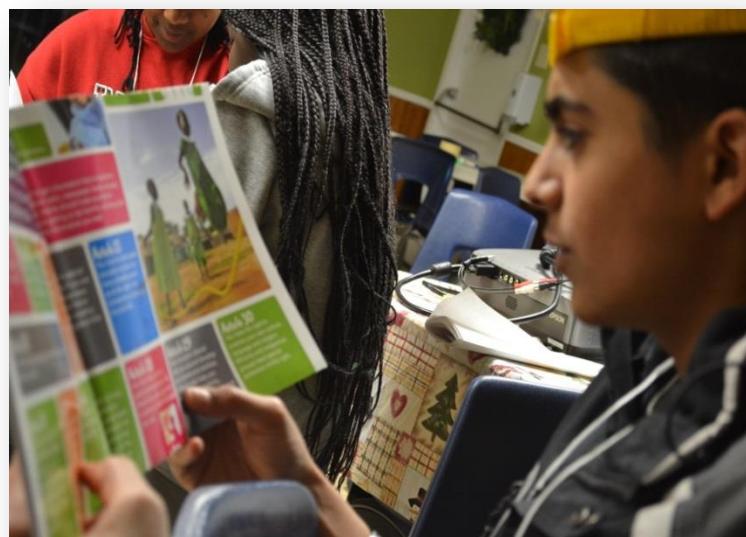
## II. Children's Rights

The foundation of the *Shaking the Movers* is the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. As such, both the preparation of the facilitators and execution of the event started with an explanation of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. It was through activities that *The Convention* was explained. In addition, education occurred organically when the opportunity came up to identify how rights linked back to specific discussions that were taking place.

### C. Glimpses of the Activities

Below is a testimonial from a facilitator on the *Toss the Dice* activity, which allowed a discussion on the rights of the child.

"Sitting in a circle, our participants were invited to throw a cardboard die, each side of which had two numbers. These numbers corresponded with questions written on a



piece of paper in the front. The thrower was then asked to answer one of the two questions associated with it. The first six questions were questions related to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and newcomers. The other six were related to personal matters, with the purpose of getting to know each other. If the dice fell on a rights issue, it was also asked to the group for discussion. Being the first activity of *Shaking the Movers* 2017, this game was intended to pave the way for the rights of the child discussion. Our hope was that by opening the discussion of youth-specific rights from the beginning, we would be able to have facilitated discussions through empowerment. Adding questions about the participants was done to ease the tension attributed to new knowledge. [...]From there, we touched on the fact that the children everywhere all have the same rights, even though they are not always equally respected. At several points the discussion also emphasized the fact that for children and youth, the right to play is essential to growth and quality of life. Then the discussion migrated to newcomers as planned, building on the notion that in Canada we are privileged to live in an environment that recognizes our rights, although there is still work to be done here. This discussion provided a good start to the weekend, as it helped orient everyone to the theme of the weekend". Young facilitator 16 [Original in French]

## "In their

### own words

**"During this activity I liked talking about rights that are important to me like the right to equality."** young facilitator, 16 [Original in French]

**"Last night I learned that we had rights and that there were people around the world who had these rights like us, but that their governments did not respect them and it's not fair to them."** young participant, 14

**"Before the Shaking the Movers weekend, I knew basic rights but I got to learn how rights are being violated everywhere especially among students in school. I heard a lot of stories about not being able to use that right even though everyone has equal "rights"."** Young person, 17

**"In order to do this I think Canada should make it mandatory for people working with youth under 19 to be educated, and have a clear understanding of child rights, how adults in the lives of children who are part of minority groups especially so have rights that are extremely commonly violated for instance: article 19, article 16, article 31, article 37, article 13, article 5 and article 30. Based on some of the things that were mentioned during Shaking the Movers NB 2017, newcomers especially often have many rights violated due to racism from people, especially older people. [...] One last thing I'd like to mention is that if youth knew and**



*learned where they should/can go when certain situations of harm or having their rights violated arise maybe if Canada was more aware as a youth population, then more people would thrive." Young person, 15*

*I learned how to solve problems like bullying, racism, I learned that we, young people have rights too." Young facilitator, 16 [Original in French]*

*"I learned a lot about my rights during this event and I think it's important that all young people know their rights. Because there are many countries in Africa for example where young people have their rights but they are not respected and it causes excesses, poor parents do not send their children to school because they do not have money. But it is their right to go to school! So young people fall into violence or drug addiction." young participant, 16*

*"Before the Shaking the Movers weekend, I knew basics rights but I got to learn how rights are being violated everywhere especially amongst students in school [in Canada]. I heard a lot of stories about not being able to use that right even though everyone has the equal rights." Young facilitator, 16 [Original in French]*

*"I learned about kids rights. I did know all purposes for them and I didn't know kids had that many rights. Now I know." Young participant, 14*

*"They [Children] all have rights, but not all the rights are respected." - Young participant, 16*

*"Culture could impact the understanding of rights." Young participant, 16 //*

## **Recommendations**

1. Rights should be part of our education in school and at home.
2. Work must be done to ensure that every child has their rights equally respected.
3. Non-discrimination policy is a well-established thing in Canada, the problems lie more with implementation on the ground; laws should be adjusted to take matters of discrimination more seriously and so that all laws be equally applied to all Canadians regardless of skin colour, culture, gender or religion.

### III. Children on the Move

Young people shared the difficulties of leaving a country, arriving and settling in a new country. Two activities opened the discussion on the reasons why people migrate. Then, a simulation activity called "In the Shoes of a Newcomer" made it possible to address all concerns relating to the pathways of refugees and migrants to arrive to Canada and to settle here.

**Article 22:** you have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (If you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

#### A. Snapshot of the activities and the discussions

Here is what one of the facilitators had to say about the **musical chairs activity on climate refugees**:



"The standard musical chair rules were used in this game. We added a script and unveiled the metaphor afterwards. In a circle of chairs facing the outside, participants walk in circles to the rhythm of the music. When the music stops, they have to sit on a chair, since one chair is missing, the unlucky has to sit out, and the next round begins.

The purpose of this metaphorical version of musical chairs is to define the reality that our Earth is now producing climate refugees. In this situation, the game chairs represent the ice patches in the North of the planet or regions of the planet. Currently, global warming makes some areas uninhabitable for an exponential number of its inhabitants. So each chair represented a patch of ice or an area of the earth, and the chairless

participant at the end of the round was a new refugee population. The activity also introduced the portion of the day that would bring feelings to the participants in the face of situations faced by refugees around the world every day". Young facilitator, 16 [Original in French]

The **Catch the Flag** activity facilitator encouraged discussion also from war and conflict refugees and had this to share:

"This version of Catch the flag was biased towards one team to reinforce the message that newcomers must work harder to

"Catch the flag. We were out there, we thought there was only one flag per team to catch on both sides and we won but in fact one team had three. That was my favorite activity! "Young person 15 [Original in French]

achieve the same results as a Canadians by birth. So one team had to find one hidden flag, and the other, three. To further support the metaphor, the "refugee" team was unaware that their team needed to find three flags. No participant knew they were playing a skewed version of the game until the "refugees" found a flag and thought they had won. Although the current game was interrupted before the end due to the cold at Green Hill Lake camp, the metaphor was unveiled as it should, and the discussion was constructive. To begin, we talked about the emotions felt by the participants when they realized that they were playing a skewed version of the game. The consensus was that the refugees felt defeated, despite trying their best. Then, in the small group discussions, the conversation moved to more concrete situations [...]. In particular, it was concluded that newcomers to Canada are not getting the economic and health care they need to have a quality of life similar to other Canadians. **Obviously, it is the financial responsibility of government, and a sociocultural responsibility of all citizens, to equalize the playing field.** "Young facilitator, 16 [Original in French]

"Thanks to this activity we have learned that sometimes you have to make more effort than others to get what you want. "

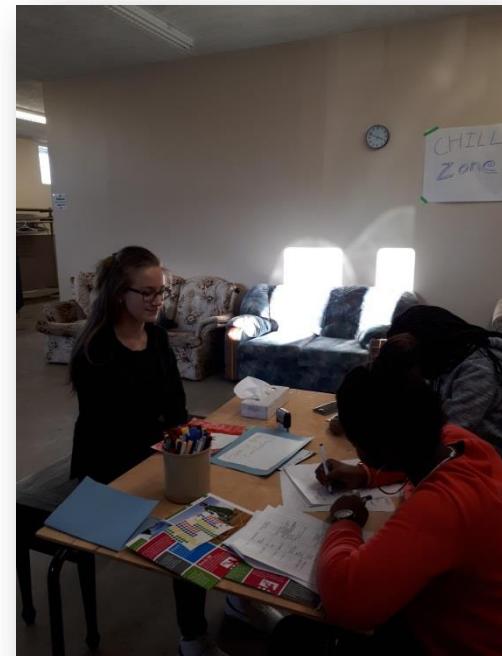
## In the Shoes of a Newcomer

In this third activity, young people wonder about how we arrive in Canada. The youths have adapted the activity to most accurately reflect their own experiences. "I experienced this situation and I know it's difficult" says a young facilitator aged 16. Here's what the facilitators had to say:

"People must leave their hometown because of the war. First, they were divided into 4 groups which would be their "family". In order to move to Canada, they needed visa, plane ticket, money and birth certificates which had their own station. Each group had to perform a hard task given by the people from each station. These tasks included push ups, burpees, singing, etc.

*The goal was to teach them the challenge refugees face even before coming to Canada. It was to show them the process it takes to come to Canada. Being a refugee myself, I remember the process it took for us to come here which was almost 1-3 years; we had to deal with a lot of paper work.* After the game, participants had a lot to say about the activity. They were truly aware of the challenges that follow to come to Canada or any other country. Some of the participants said "**it was hard physical and emotional work**" which is true. I think this activity was an eye opener for many participants especially Canadian because they hardly ever hear newcomers talking about the challenges they had to face before coming here. **We mostly just hear about the challenges they face in Canada.**"

### Station 1: getting the visa



For this station two facilitators simulated the role of an immigration officer to simulate the journey of families fleeing to settle in Canada. Behind an improvised desk, they welcomed two members of each family to ask them these questions:

1. Do you have your birth certificate? (If no, you had to go to another station to get it.)
2. Do you know this flag? (designating Canada's flag)
3. Why do you want to leave your country?

4. Why did you choose this country?
5. What are you looking for in the new country?
6. How many children do you have?

In the game, one family did not get a visa because the responses of the two family members did not match. A large group discussion ensued.



### **Station 2 : Getting the Money to travel**

"In order to get the money, we gave each group various tasks such as push ups, dancing, singing and if all the participants weren't participating, we denied their request because that's the reality for many people" says a facilitator.

### **Stations 3 and 4: getting a birth certificate and the flight ticket**

For the birth certificate and the plane ticket it was necessary to take up sports challenges    "*Getting a birth certificate in some countries to travel is difficult.*" Young facilitator, 17



## **“In Their Own**

### **Words**

*[...]I feel as though I couldn't relate since I am Canadian born, and the topic was refugees, this weekend I learned that when most of the refugees first came to Canada they struggled and didn't feel accepted. I also learned about the process to become a Canada citizen and also went through*

*it. Also I found that their rights don't get as respected as Canadian-born people [...]"* Anonymous Letter

**"You have to know the difficulties that refugees or newcomer's face in coming to a new country."**  
Young facilitator, 16 [Original in French]

**"I learned that if you are from an area and someone new like a refugee comes to the area it is harder to accept them because they are different, and a lot of people do not accept. But they have the right to be accepted."** Young person, 14

**"Wherever they go, people are not always welcoming, and I believe that this needs to be changed."** Young people, 12

**"As we heard this weekend, at Shaking the Movers, many refugees now living in the United States of America are making or thinking about making illegal immigration into Canada. Considering their present "leadership" this quite understandable as the few days following the American presidential election had us see much violence against their newcomers. Our suggestion would be, to save everybody a lot of trouble, to make an agreement with the Trump administration that would allow any refugee living in the U.S. to move into Canada after passing some kind of an evaluation. Considering the administration's appreciation of newcomers, it could possibly be very easy to achieve this agreement."** Two young people aged 15 and 12 (from a Letter to the Government)

“

## *Recommendations*

4. Canada should work to ensure that all countries become signatories of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and bring it fully into force.
5. Newcomers need to be supported when they arrive.
6. The immigration process should be simplified and shortened .
7. A specific agreement with U.S. should be reached that allows Canada to welcome individuals who are claiming asylum from the U.S. ; Assessment on a case-by-case should be put in place to make sure that refugees have an equal chance to be welcomed.

## IV. A New Life

In the Shoes of a Newcomer activity continued to address the challenges and barriers to resettlement or faced at the arrival in Canada. The youth drew their ideal world and also wrote letters to government's reporting on the challenges they face. Some are reproduced here.



### A. My ideal community/my ideal world is...



1. Health relationships
2. No residential school
3. To be what you want
4. Social media
5. LGBTQ rights
6. No racism
7. Welcome newcomers
8. No dictator and no North Korea
9. Right to identity
10. Choose your gender
11. Safety



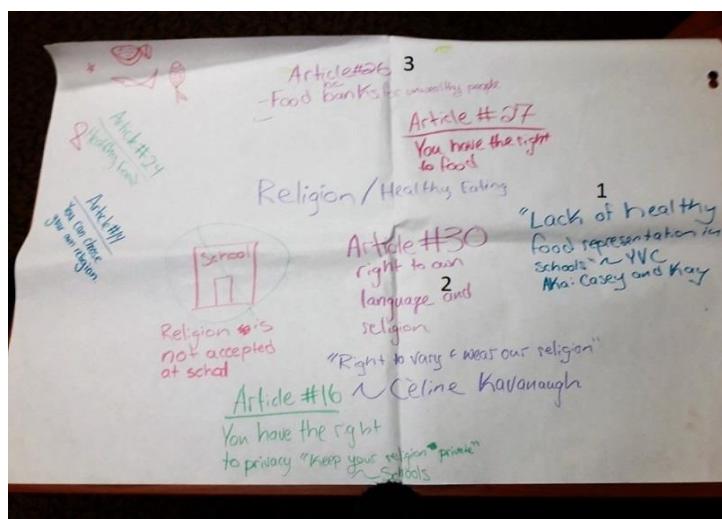
1. Right to Internet Access and resources for newcomers
2. Justice
3. No war
4. Communication and right to vote
5. Equality
6. Welcoming
7. Healthy Environment
8. Jobs and education
9. Medical care
10. Election
11. No Trump that poses a threat to the world



- 1. School 2. Fruits/nutrition 3. Play soccer  
4. Tim Horton**



- 1. Peace 2. Tim Hortons 3. Fresh water 4.  
Free sports activities**



- 1. Healthy food in schools 2. Food banks 3.  
Right to own language and religion.**

## B. Challenges and obstacles relating to the language barrier: their words and recommendations

Young people talked about learning the language and the difficulties that come with it. Here are excerpts from their letters to their governments.

### **“Youth talk about the language barrier:**

*“Learning the language is important, all newcomers want to learn the language because when you arrive in a new country, you want to do a lot of things.” young participant, 17 [Original in French]*

*“[...racism]I arrived to Canada 3 months ago, and I was disappointed, scared and sad, because as for me, first step to speak with somebody it's probably hard thing for me, and with that problem that my English is not very good, but after a few weeks I make a lot of friends and feel myself more free and pretty quietly. It was hard, but I did it, and I am proud of myself that won this fear, and I am very grateful.” Young person, 14*



*“Middle school is better than high school for acceptance and tolerance of language barriers in the classroom.” Young person, 15*

*“Exchange students are here to learn your language; you should go and talk to them.”*

*“It's not just English, it can be French.” group of young people [Original in French]*

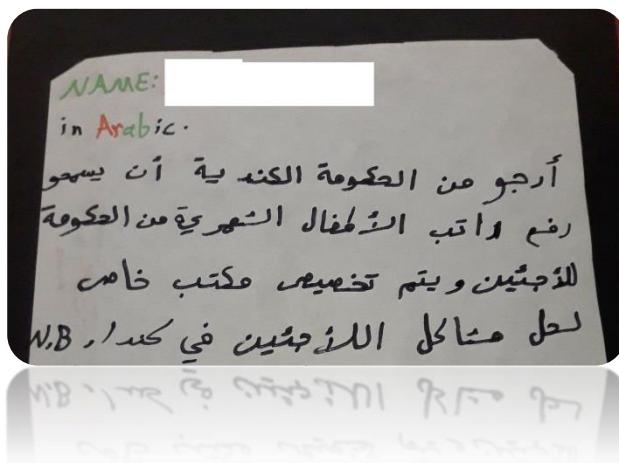
*“There is the language gap, so it is difficult to retain information [talking about school]” young person, 16*

### **“Recommendations**

8. Structures such as MCAF should collaborate with other structures such as the CYA to help young people overcome language barriers and transition into new schools in positive ways and enjoy their new life.
9. Additional support should be put in place to help newcomers learn the language and help them overcome the language barrier.
10. In Anglophone schools, English as a second Language should be more accessible; in every class of the curriculum, students should be supported and assisted by second language professors.
11. The support for the second official language learning should be offered to everyone, it is not just an issue for newcomers.

### C. Right to Health and to an Adequate Standard of Living

Another concern that young newcomers and refugees are concerned about is access to care specifically the psychological care of young people with trauma. Here are the excerpts of their testimonies.



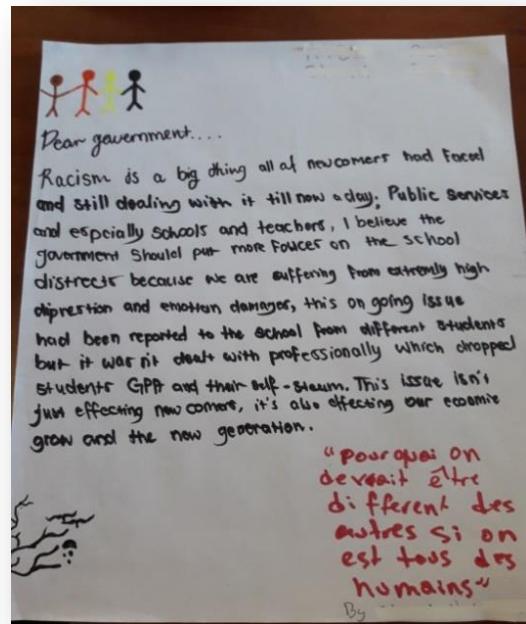
*"We ask the Canadian Government to contribute the child benefits for all the refugees and newcomers. Also, we ask the government to allocate an officer specifically to deal with our problems and help solving it in [...] Canada. Thank you, Thank you, and Thank you."* Young person, 17

Article 24: You have the right to the best healthcare possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

## **"In their own words**

*"It would help a lot if the process of getting [the permanent residence] took less time, because when you're in Canada and you do not have the residence card, you cannot get family insurance and get a job. So we have to live on our own."* young person, 15 [original in French]

*"[...]mad, depression, school avoidance when dealing with oppression in society, it creates a cycle of trouble making and bad feelings, don't want to go to school, bad grades, less respect, don't want to go [in*



*[schools] even more." group of young people*



*"Dear government,*

*[...] Public services and especially schools and teachers, I believe the government should put more [ ]on the school districts because we are suffering from extremely high depression and emotion damages, this ongoing issue has been reported to the school from different students but it wasn't dealt with professionally which dropped students GPA and their self-esteem. This issue isn't just affecting new comers, it's also affecting our economic growth and the new generation." young person,*

**16**

**"**

## **Recommendations**

- 12. Medicare coverage should be extended to newcomers who are in the immigration process .**
- 13. There should be more accessible programs for youth mental health, particularly among newcomer youth.**
- 14. Child benefits should be raised up and federal support for refugee children should be prolonged.**
- 15. Health Care system delays are sometimes too long, they must be reduced**
- 16. Inform newcomers about their health rights.**

#### D. Right to play and participation in the cultural life

[Article 31](#): You have the right to play and rest.



"lost in school" group of young people

*"In sports too, there is racism, we have been called monkey."* young person, 17 [Original in French]

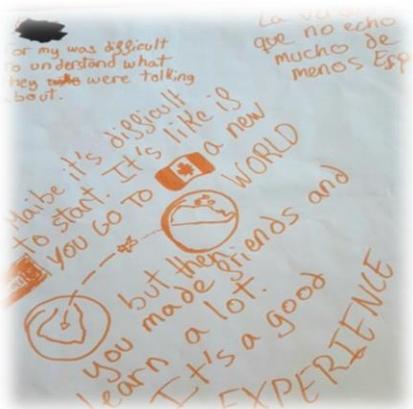
*"It's not the religions that love each other, it's the hearts."* young person, 17 [Original in French]

#### *"In their own words*

*"I try out with [...] Soccer team and when they tell me I have to pay 3.000\$ I do not go to the rest of the try out because I do not have enough money."* young person, 15

*"Pressure to feel like a Canadian is heavy, especially when you are attached to your [...] culture"*

*"Nobody tells you about the "rules"/cultural norms when they come to Canada so you are*



*Letter from an Exchange Student*

### **Recommendations**

17. Recreational activities should become more accessible, financially and otherwise, for newcomers.
18. Institutions that help protect culture and minority rights are needed.

## V. Right to non-discrimination: celebrating diversity and fighting racism and xenophobia

### A. Multicultural Dinner



experienced.

On Saturday night, the youth organized a multicultural evening. A dinner offering African, Nepali, Syrian and Acadian dishes was organized. Some parents participated in the event by bringing traditional dishes. The activity room was decorated with several flags, each young person contributed in their own way (music, cooking, dancing, singing, etc.). On Sunday, young people discussed specifically, stereotypes, racism and xenophobia that many young people have claimed to have

A young facilitator testified about this evening:

*"Having spent Saturday morning and afternoon discussing the challenges faced by newcomer youth, before and after their arrival to Canada, our multicultural night was a wonderful way to wind down and use our newfound knowledge to better understand one another. While our facilitators decorated and prepared dishes from their various backgrounds, participants bonded over spontaneous music and dance.*

*Seeing those from all cultures learning a traditional Syrian dance was a key example of how Shaking the Movers helped its participants develop a thirst for global awareness. This is an asset for all Canadian citizens, because an understanding of those unlike us helps perpetuate a positive experience for all those in our cultural mosaic. The bonds formed throughout the camp were immensely important to the quality of the debriefs. Without such strong friendships, participation would have been impacted."* Young facilitator, 17



## ***“In their own words***

[...]they have all kinds of food here like they have « halal in Turkish » meat and gluten-free food, It was a really good experience for me-everybody. I hope to come here next year again.” Young person, 16

*"Your Kebab is Turkish, your beer is German, your baguette is French, your dumpling is Nepali, your pizza is Italian and you complain about your neighbour is a refugee, pull yourself together (I didn't write it , it was a post on Facebook)." young participant*

**“**

## B. Graffiti Wall: addressing Racism and Xenophobia

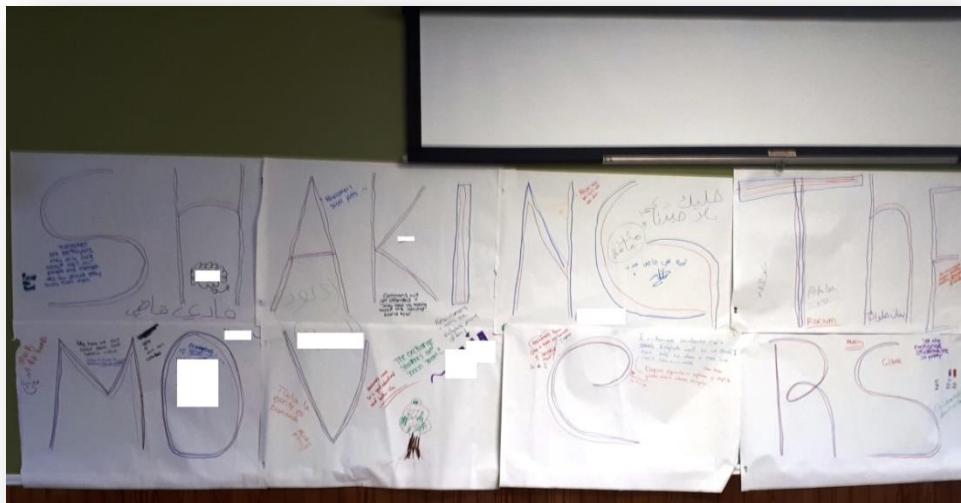
**Article 2:** all children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religions is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

The young people set up a large Graffiti wall, where everyone could write whatever they wanted throughout the weekend. This led to an open conversation of great richness on racism, discrimination, xenophobia, different forms of abuse particularly in the school system. Many young people have testified about their own experiences.



"The debrief of the Graffiti Wall was arguably the most emotionally engaged discussion of the weekend. The nostalgia of the camp coming to an end paired with the words on the wall itself facilitated an atmosphere conducive to sharing. While debunking stereotypes faced by newcomers on a day-to-day basis, the recurring topic became the education system. Refugees, and newcomers, exchange students, and Canadian-born youth alike came

forward with instances in which they experienced some form of compromised rights in their schools. Specifically, newcomers unanimously concurred that they experienced daily harms more so from authority figures than peers. We concluded that upbringing can have a significant impact on the way Canadians view newcomers. In today's Canada, where we are welcoming more refugees than ever, inclusion is being taught at a young age. However, for those having already formed values and opinions, a change of thinking can be more difficult to muster. **Our participants at Shaking the Movers were all also quick to acknowledge that everyone has a role to play in how newcomers are treated upon their arrival to our country. Each gesture is impactful.** " Young facilitator 17



## B. In School: their words and their recommendations

**Article 28:** you have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

**Article 29:** your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.



In these extracts the young people talk about their experiences with the school:

### ***"In their own words***

*"You have the right to learn. In Canada we have free education and we push people to get education."* Young participant

*"The school system is outdated, because for newcomers it's different, it is harder for them. There are different levels- some people are lower some people are higher. It needs to be more updated. In the programs we need to learn stuff, not to learn and then forget it."* Young person,14

*"Future at risk, I did not want to go to school anymore, emotional well-being is important."* young participant

*"[...]Some refugees have told me that the racism they receive makes them want to not go to school or even out in public. Our goal it's not just to let refugees in Canada but to make them feel safe."* Young person,16

*"But then we discussed there were so many stories, and it was really sad, and I didn't know that it was that bad in school."* Young person, 17

*"I personally think to help the refugees during school, that the teachers should be more understanding and patient." Young person, 14*

*"There is an abundance of stereotypes and stigma in schools and communities that need to be abolished. These harmful ideas come from previous generations. Our goal should be to educate not only young people but also adults." young person, 16 [Original in French]*

*"Teacher associates the students with the war and crisis in Syria." Young person, 15*

*"[they]feel like they can handle racism and oppression from people their age by talking to them and getting to know them but feels bad when coming from adults of confidence." group of young people*

*"Kids could be racists too." young participant*

*"School districts should protect kids mentally, not just physically." young person, 17*

*"People in the schools often tell students to "advocate for themselves" but after a certain point, teachers and administrations consider it disrespectful coming from a student. I think some solutions would be: educating Canada's population as a whole on topics that are only now being brought fully into the limelight like; LGBTQ youth, refugees, immigrants, newcomers in general, mental health + mental illnesses, etc." Young person, 15*

“

## *Recommendations*

19. Politicians, teachers, administrators, and all those working with multicultural youth should receive education on multiculturalism and child rights. This is to help build more welcoming, safe, and non-racist environments in our schools and communities.
20. Students in school should be educated from a young age, middle school or younger, about the importance of multiculturalism.
21. Schools need to make more of an effort to protect youth from all types of harm.
22. Schools should have processes to hear youth voice and to take it seriously.
23. Inform newcomer adults about their rights and how they can help their children succeed in their studies and in behavioural issues.
24. MCAF or equivalent structures should be involved in school discipline issues
25. Encourage young people who come to join associations such as MCAF even if they are dropping out of school, to stay active.
26. More information on the role of institutions that can help children and talk to them.

C. In the society: their words and their recommendations

## "In their words"

*"Canada is based on mosaic culture."* young person, 16

*"This weekend, at Shaking the Movers, I learned a lot. For many newcomers to Canada the transition is hard, while we, as Canadians, think that we are welcoming, newcomers aren't shown that love. In schools, on buses, and even in public places, newcomers and non-Canadian-born people are often discriminated against; solely for where they are from or for how they look. Wherever they go, people are not always welcoming, and I believe that this needs to be changed. Our job is to make them feel at home as this is their new home, no matter what the reason may be."* Young person, 12

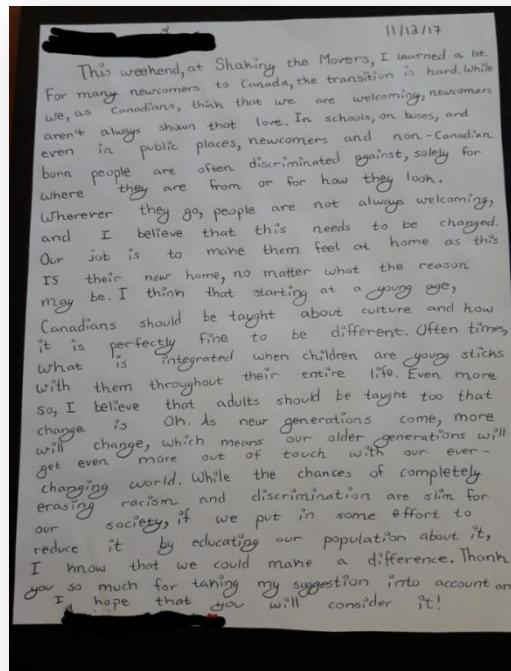
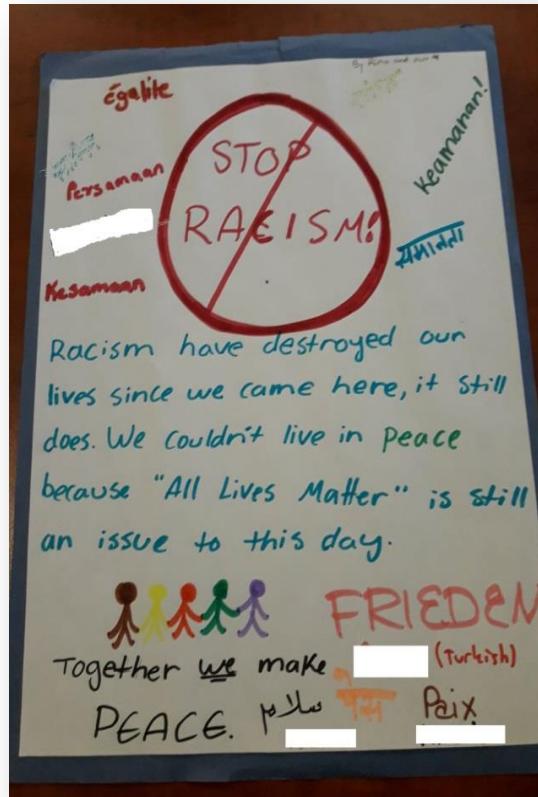
*"The person told me not to go to a dinner with a Syrian family cause I will be in danger, people don't realize they are being racist."* young participant

*"Racism is a big thing all newcomers have faced and are still dealing with till nowadays."* Young person, 17

*"Racism comes from the fact that people are ignorant and that people do not want to learn to know others."* young person , 12  
[Original in French]

*"Racism has destroyed our lives since we come here, it still does. We couldn't live in peace because all lives matter is still an issue to this day."* Young person, 16

*"There seems to be more racism in Canada than I thought. But I don't know how to change that. According to the law, everybody is equal al already, so what*



*could politicians do to change people's attitude?" Young person, 16*

*"I learned that people have a lot of stories about racism, like I never experienced racism. Well, maybe I did but I didn't really understand racism. But then when we discussed there were so many stories, and it was really sad, and I didn't know that it was that bad in school. So yeah, racism."*

*Young person, 17*

*"While the chances of completely erasing racism and discrimination are slim for our society, if we put in some effort to reduce it by educating our population about it, I know that we could make a difference." Young person, 12*

**"**

## *Recommendations*

27. More programs to help newcomers learn about Canadian norms while retaining their own culture.
28. There should be more public education for both youths and adults about the law and other cultures challenging cultural stereotypes and encouraging them to embrace multiculturalism.
29. Have multicultural groups integrate Canadian-born youth into some of their initiatives in order to bridge the gap between them and newcomers to Canada.
30. Establish big brother/big sister type programing specific to newcomers. Have them be paired with a non-newcomer to integrate them into society without cultural isolation.
31. All Canadians should live up to our reputation as a welcoming country

## VI Being "Movers"

During this discussion, and because of the many testimonies, the young people made a commitment to no longer remain passive in the face of situations of injustice that they would witness at school or in public spaces. This discussion also made it very clear that racist jokes should no longer be tolerated.

### **Young people are committed to**

**32. Respect one another.**

**33. Do not remain passive before verbal or physical violence in school or in public spaces and seek help from adults in positions of authority.**

**“My feelings about this weekend are extremely exciting. "Shaking the movers" is a very**

**good event, as for me, to make a lot of friends, to spend good time [...] It's basically help people, who moved to Canada to communicate with people, feel welcomed and don't be scared, disappointed or something else.**

**Unfortunately, in our world is a big problem, when people moved anywhere and he/she feels unwelcomed, treated bad by people around, because he/she moved there, and after that person starts to feel sadly and lonely. But here ("Shaking the movers"), you can't feel yourself lonely or a little bit sad! [...] and I am very grateful to this event [...], because now I feel myself more comfortable, respected and confident. Thanks a lot, Shaking the movers! I love you!**

**Young person, 15**

**Turkish**  
Shaking The Movers Aktivitesi  
Bence böyle bir aktivitenin olması çok iyi bir fikir çünkü burada herkes fikirlerini paylaşıyor. Eğer haksızlığa uğradılarsa yada birisi onlara ırkçılık yaptıysa bunu rahatça burada görevlilerle paylaşabiliyor ve kendilerini rahat hissedebiliyorlar. Ayrıca burada eğlenceli oyunlar oynayıp eğleniyoruz. Bu kampta çok sevdiğim bir şey daha var, o da her türlü yemekin olması. Arapça'da "halal" denilen ve Türkçe'de "helal" kelimesi kullanılan ete sahipler ve glutensiz yemek ekmekleri var. İnsallah seneye de gelirim. Çok güzel bir deneyimdi. !!

**Slogan**  
Irkçılığa Hayır!  
No racism!

## VII Conclusion

### A Message from the Young Facilitators

II

In conclusion, we are off to a great start. We want to thank the participants because they helped us and they respected us. They did more than help us, we learned from them. They trusted us. They listened to us and they were not afraid to share their personal stories with us. After the weekend, we stayed in touch. During the facilitator meetings, we bonded over our personal experiences.



We are off to a good start but our hope is to turn these recommendations into actions. We want recommendations to be taken to schools, health professionals and governments in where more diverse cultural representation is needed.

Some of the young facilitators and participants were participating in this type of experience for the first time. The implementation of their recommendations will encourage them. The voices of young people must be listened to, we want to be listened to by the decision makers. Decisions are better received by the people they target if they reflect their opinion.

***By participating in Shaking the Movers, our commitment to being "movers" is now ongoing. "***

