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

Shaking the Movers X



**Children on the Move:
*ACROSS BORDERS***

November 2017

Preface: The Rights of Children on the Move

A Letter from Hon. Landon Pearson,

All children have the same rights and this includes children on the move whose rights are understood to travel with them even though they are not always respected along the way. All rights are connected to each other and all are equally important but some are perhaps more relevant for children at different stages at their journey. For refugee children who are usually fleeing life threatening circumstances protection rights probably take precedence. For immigrant families who come to Canada looking for a second chance at a good life especially for their children the provision rights of the CRC may seem more important. These include the right to a good quality education and the right to the best healthcare possible. For children on the



move within Canada, children in the child welfare system, children in conflict with the law, children fleeing to the streets from abusive families, children of separation and divorce and children from First Nations communities forced to travel far from home for secondary education the participation rights embedded in the CRC are key. In all these situations children have the right to be heard and must be listened to. Even when children move from place to place as their parents change jobs or search for work or, indeed, are posted elsewhere as in the armed services, children should have a voice in the decisions that are being made concerning them. When they do moves become adventures rather than traumatic. The rule should always be “no decision about us without us”. This does not mean that the child’s voice is the determining one but if children are involved in processes that will have a profound effect on their future lives right from the beginning good outcomes are much more likely for all concerned.

Using the articles of the CRC to frame the way Canadian policies and programmes respond to the rights of refugee and immigrant children as well as to other children on the move as described above could be transformational. Applying the four cross-cutting principles of the Convention (non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to be alive and to develop freely and the right to speak up and be taken seriously) demands a real shift in the way adults often interact with children. The challenge is to nurture a culture of respect for children that will help them learn to respect themselves, to respect one another and to respect everyone else they come in contact with on their journey through life wherever that journey may take them.

Honourable Landon Pearson
Landon Pearson Resource Centre
for the Study Childhood and Children’s Rights

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About Shaking the Movers

Shaking the Movers (STMs) is an annual youth-driven and youth-led workshop that takes place across the country. STMs workshops offer spaces designed to enable children and youth to consider the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in the context of their lives. In turn, participants prepare comments and recommendations intended for governments and civil society concerning its implementation. Participating in STMs provides children and youth with a unique opportunity to exercise their rights to take part in critical civil and political processes with the assurance that their voices will be listened to and heard.



Workshop Organization

For over a decade, the Landon Pearson Centre has designed workshops to provide spaces for children and youth to 'have the floor,' present their unique perspectives and experiences, and provide specific recommendations and input related to a children's rights agenda. Following each workshop, the voices of the youth participants are consolidated into a report. Landon Pearson has made it her priority to ensure that these reports reach the hands of the 'movers'. At the end of each conference, youth participants are invited to provide recommendations for the following years STMs topic. The section which follows offers a list of topics and UNCRC article numbers that have been explored through STMS workshops in previous years.

Previous Shaking the Mover Conferences

2007: Speaking Truth to Power: Civil and Political Rights of Children, Articles 12, 19, 24, & 44

2008: Identity and Belonging, Articles 29.1.C & 30

2009: Child Rights in Education, Articles 28, 29 & 42

2010: Children and the Media, Articles 13, 16, 17, 34, 36

2011: Youth Justice, Articles 37 & 40

2012: Mental Health, Articles 23 & 24

2013: Right to Play and Artistic Expression, Article 31

2014: Child Exploitation, Article 34 & 36

2016: Climate Change: Articles 6, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 3, 12 & 13

**For more information about Shaking the Movers
and to view past reports, please visit:**

<http://www.landonpearson.ca/shaking-the-movers.html>

Overview

Shaking the Movers X Toronto: Children on the Move

Purpose

On November 18th and 19th, 2017, in partnership with Carleton University and the School of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University, the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights conducted a two-day workshop with children and youth from across Southern Ontario for the purposes of:

- Providing an opportunity for children and youth to exercise their right to take part in important civil and political processes, with the assurance that their voices will be heard and valued (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12).
- Working to normalize those rights afforded to youth under Articles 3 and 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Providing an opportunity for children and youth to prepare comments and recommendations for governments and civil society, concerning Articles 6, 24, 27, 28, 29, and 30 of the UNCRC and the themes that arise from these articles.



Shaking the Movers fosters an environment where young people can get together with others within their age range and create new and potential long-lasting relationships and connections. STMs workshops encourage safe and inclusive environments in which young people can freely express their thoughts and insights into problems faced by young people across the country. As per the relationship between STMs and the School of Child and Youth Care (CYC) at Ryerson University, during Toronto workshops, CYC practitioners are available to scaffold engagement and offer support and encouragement to youth participants if needed.

"I am screaming, but you can't hear me because you're drowning me in your words"
– Age, 12.

"All politicians are wealthy, they don't understand"
– Age, 18.

Topic: Children on the Move (Across Borders)

At this year's Toronto STMs workshop, children and youth from across Southern Ontario came together to look at the issue of Children's Rights and Children on the Move. 'Children on the Move' is a broad topic that encompasses the experiences of many young people, including young people experiencing homelessness, indigenous youth forced to leave their communities to attend high-schools far from home; and children in foster-care who too often move from one home and family to another. While many of these examples of 'Children on the Move' will be explored with young people at other STMs workshops across the country, the Toronto workshop specifically addressed 'Children on the Move: Across Borders' as its theme. According to this theme, at STMs X in Toronto, the weekend was spent exploring issues about children's rights and young people as refugees, immigrants, and children and youth with other cross-border experiences.



“The only way to understand what kids go through is to have been there” – Age, 18.

Workshop Themes & Articles

The Landon Pearson Resource Centre at Carleton University and the School of Child and Youth Care in the Faculty of Community Services at Ryerson University have committed to bringing the voices of young people to professionals, such as government officials, political leaders, non-governmental organizations, researchers, and other stakeholders to better understand the needs and rights of children and youth. Over the course of our two-day STMs X workshop, 25 children and youth creatively brainstormed problems and solutions faced by Children on the Move: Across Borders. As always, a driving force during this year's STMs was Landon Pearson's and Ryerson University's belief that authentic participation on issues that concern them gives young people the opportunity to 'shake up' the movers who are making decisions about them. The overall purpose of STMs is to ensure that the rights and best interests of young people are at the forefront of the planning and decision-making of those in charge of developing policies that impact them.

This remainder of this report captures the context of STMs X and highlights conversations of young people who engaged in group workshops centered around Children on the Move: Across Borders, through the following four themes; (1) **Cultural Identity and Integration**; (2) **Health & Safety**; (3) **Work & Education**, and (4) **Loss**. Within the context of the above themes, STMs X participants explored issues pertaining to children's rights as refugees and immigrants, and Articles 2, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 22, 24, 28, 36, and 38 of the UNCRC. Gathered from group discussions, the bulk of the report contains direct quotes from youth participants and highlights both the problems faced by Canadian immigrant and refugee as well as solutions and recommendations for further action. The report concludes with youth testimonies and lasting impressions.

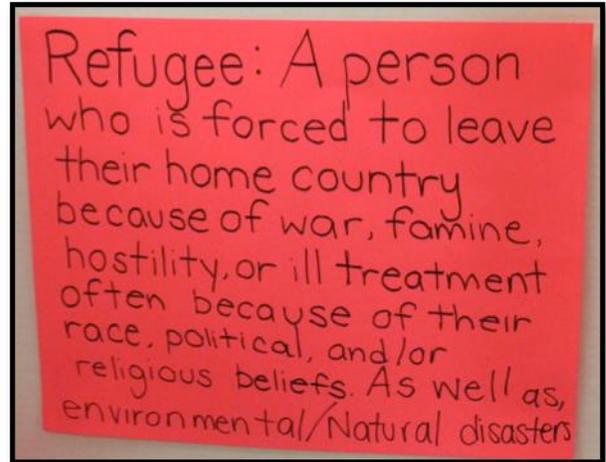
Articles Discussed from the UNCRC

Article 2 (non-discrimination)

The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities, or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Article 8 (protection and preservation of identity)

Every child has the right to an identity. Governments must respect and protect that right, and prevent the child's name, nationality, or family relationships from being unlawfully changed.



Article 9 (separation from parents) Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents unless this could cause them harm.

Article 10 (family reunification) Governments must respond quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents apply to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit and keep in contact with them both.

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings, and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right always applies, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

Article 13 (Freedom of expression): Children have the right to get and share information, so long as the information is not damaging to them or others. In exercising the right to freedom of expression, children have the responsibility to also respect the rights, freedoms, and reputations of others. The freedom of expression includes the right to share information in any way they choose, including by talking, drawing, or writing.

Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse, and neglect) Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and inadequate treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 22 (refugee children) If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide them with appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.

“People use the excuse that we need to help our own people before helping other people, but everyone is our people” – Age, 18.

Article 24 (health and health services) Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Wealthier countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 36 (other forms of exploitation) Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, for example, the exploitation of children for political activities, by the media or for medical research.

Article 38 (war and armed conflicts) Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflicts. The Convention Optional Protocol on the Involvements of Children in Armed Conflict further developed this right by raising the age of direct participation in armed conflict to 18 and establishing a ban on compulsory recruitment for children and youth under the age of 18.

Article 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration) Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect, and social life.



“Once they find a home country, it is assumed that they are lucky to be accepted into a democratic society and everything is fine. The system isn’t working for immigrant kids anymore” – Youth Participant.

Features of STMs X

Youth Participant and Facilitator Introductions

Recruitment of Participants

Many of the young people who participated in STMs X were recruited through established relationships with Agencies and Organizations who either shared our event on their social media platforms or directly encouraged youth from their programs to participate. Additionally, Ryerson University's CYC 807 class invited several youths, and several others returned from previous years.

*“I’m halfway through high school and learned more about this, this weekend, than ever before”
– age, 15.*

Demographics of Participants

The 25 youth present at this year's workshop were from across Southern Ontario, between the ages of 12-22, and met the selection criteria of young people interested in learning about children's rights and using their voices to contribute to social change to better the lives of young people across Canada. The young people present at this year's STMs X represented diverse sociocultural and economic backgrounds, all of who either directly held cross-border experiences or knew someone who had. Like previous years, many of the youth expressed that participating in STMs was their first time learning about their rights as children and youth. Once having spent the weekend learning about children rights and discussing their rights in the child in the context of Children on the Move: Across Borders, many participants spoke about their commitment to sharing what they learned with other children and youth in their communities.

Informed Consent

Prior to the STMs X workshop, each young person provided signed consent to both participate and have their narratives and pictures included in this report and accompanying video. As the weekend proceeded, Youth Facilitators ensured that young people were well-informed of their rights as an STMs participant. A unique feature this year's STMs workshop was that several participants under the age of 16 took the initiative to acquire parental consent so that their voices could likewise be heard and included in the STMs X video.

“If the government doesn't protect you then no one will. So what if you have parental protection! Without the government, you are not protected at all” – Age, 13.

STMs X would like to thank the many stakeholders who spread the word about this year's STMs conference, including:

- Sheridan College: Faculty of CYC
- Ryerson University: Faculty and Students of CYC
- Ryerson University: Faculty of Social Work
- Sick-Kids Hospital: Adolescent Unit
- East Metro Youth Services
- YouthLink
- Youthdale Treatment Centre
- Woodgreen Community Services
- Big Brother's Big Sisters of South-West Durham
- Canadian Centre for Refugee & Immigrant Supports
- Toronto Youth Network
- St. Alban's Boys and Girls Club
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Mount Dennis

Recognition of Participation

It is always important that we honour the time, voices and insights of the youth who contribute to these reports. This year at STMs, we recognized the impact of costs associated with travelling to and from the Toronto workshop could have on young people and their families. To mitigate any financial impact of participating in STMs X, this year we offered a travel honourarium to all participants. Along with a certificate of completion and a signed letter of participation for high school students using this opportunity to fulfill volunteer hour requirements, an honorarium of \$20.00 was distributed to each participant at the end of the final workshop day. We would like to thank the School of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University for their financial support in making this honourarium possible.

Introduction to Youth Facilitators

The discussion groups and activities of this year's STMs workshop was organized and facilitated by students studying Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University. Students of the Advanced Group Work class (CYC 807) held the Youth Facilitator roles and to prepare for the weekend workshop, each student spent



several months in-class learning about strategies of youth engagement and processes of group facilitation with young people. The students developed the four themes outlined prior and organized themselves into five separate groups. Four groups were responsible for setting up the four distinct stations based on the said themes. The students used their youth engagement skills and their understanding of processes of group facilitation with young people to both develop the recruitment activities for their stations and facilitate the youth-led discussions as presented in this report. The fifth group was responsible for both the photography displayed in this report and the creation of a short video of which captured the essence of the STMs X from the perspective of the youth participants.

To view Toronto's 2017 Shaking the Movers video, visit the link below:

<https://youtu.be/ow7shCgicss>

The photographs displayed throughout this report illustrate participants and facilitators during various stages of the 2017 STMs workshop. All pictures were taken by students in Advanced Group Work with the School of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University. All pictures throughout this report are being used with informed consent from each participant.

Program Introduction

Day One: Condensed Schedule

Time	Activity/Workshop	Lead Person(s)
8:30-9:00	Breakfast & Registration	CYC 807 Students
9:00-9:15	Welcome Address	Hon. Landon Pearson
9:15-10:00	Introduction to Children's Rights	CYC Children's Rights Students
10:15-11:15	Keynote Speaker	Nadjibdullah Alamyar
11:20-12:30	Stations Rotations	CYC 807 Students
12:35-1:00	Lunch	N/A
1:00-1:30	Icebreakers & Intro. to UNCRC Articles	Children's Rights Students
1:30-2:40	Small Group Discussions: General Problems	CYC 807 Students
2:40-3:00	Presentations/ Large Group Discussion	Youth Participants
3:00-4:15	Small Group Discussions: Specific Problems	CYC 807 Students
4:15-5:00	Presentations/ Large Group Discussion	Youth Participants
5:00-5:30	Dinner	N/A
5:30-7:30	Evening Activities	CYC Children's Rights Students
7:30	End of Day 1	

Day Two: Condensed Schedule

Time	Activity/Workshop	Lead Person(s)
9:00-9:30	Breakfast	N/A
9:30-10:00	Special Presentation	Olivia Morano
10:00-11:45	Small Group Discussions: Solution	CYC 807 Students
11:45-12:15	Stations Rotations	CYC 807 Students
11:45-12:15	Presentations/Large Group Discussions	Led by Youth Participants
12:15-12:45	Lunch	N/A
12:45-1:45	Closing Activities: A Meaningful Goodbye	CYC 807 Students
1:45-2:00	Evaluation Forms/Post-Cards to Government	Youth Participants
2:00	End of Day 2: Workshop Concludes	

Day One Program Features

CYC Children's Rights Class

On the morning of Day One, youth convened for an introduction into the relationship between youth rights and Children on the Move: Across Borders. Using creative forms of engagement, such as 'Children's Rights Jeopardy', the CYC Children's Rights students helped set the foundation for the next two days by defining and deconstructing the relevant UNCRC Articles.

Evening Activities

Large group activities and games were facilitated by students from Ryerson's School of Child and Youth Care Children's Right Class. These activities differed from the scope of this year's workshop topic and offered opportunities for participants to play and informally socialize with one another through play.

Presentations

Following small group sessions, each of the four groups came back to the larger group to present the ideas and insights gathered from discussions of the problems and solutions. Using many different forms of expression, the youth passionately presented their discussions of problems and solutions about their topic choices to the larger group. Some of the unique forms of expression and presentation styles this year included; freestyling, spoken word poetry, skits & vignettes, art and building projects, and panel board discussions.

World Map Activity

As this year's STMs workshop focused on Children on the Move: Across Borders, a blank map was used to visually represent the diversity of the larger group. The map was hung in the dining room, and both the youth and Facilitators were invited to write their names next to their countries of origin. In addition to illuminating the diversity at this year's workshop, the World Map activity fostered connection and sharing amongst the youth. There were several



occasions over the weekend where youth were observed gathering around the map showing others their countries of origin, and in some instances, excitingly learning that they shared the same countries of origin with one another.

Day Two Program Features

A Meaningful Goodbye

Similar to last year's workshop, as a way to conclude STMs X and meaningful say goodbye to one another, each young person brought a special non-monetary gift that holds meaning to them in which they would share with a new friend. At the end of day two, sharing took place in each of the smaller groups. Through this activity, every participant left STMs with a small token to remember their shared experiences together.



Evaluation Forms

Workshop evaluation forms offer participants a platform to voice their STMs X experience, provide feedback for improvement, and offer topic ideas for next year's conference.

Post-Cards to Government:

In the afternoon of day two, participants reflected on what they wanted to say about children's rights and Children on the Move to those in power. Each young person spent time writing their thoughts on personalized post-cards. Hon. Landon Pearson promised the youth that she would personally deliver their letters to Government officials on their behalf.



*“Canada’s system that was created for non-immigrants isn’t working anymore. Everyone assumes the problem is solved when they come here. However, new problems are just beginning”
– Youth Participant.*

Shaking the Movers X Guest Speakers

It was exciting to be able to introduce Nadjibullah Alamyar as this year's keynote speaker. Nadjib commenced our weekend by sharing his personal history as an unaccompanied child refugee who fled Afghanistan. All four of the themes for this year's STMs workshop echoed throughout the entirety of his keynote speech. Over the course of the workshop, Nadjib's story was reflected in and throughout the youth's discussions and presentations, and on many occasions, he was referenced by the youth as they articulated their insights concerning Children on the Move: Across Borders.

"You're losing your roots. The guy who left from Afghanistan, left his roots and cut the branch from his tree to start a new life" – age, 13.



Short Bio: Nadjib Alamyar is a Case Counsellor Specialist (Settlement) at WoodGreen Community Services with a genuine commitment to ensuring a better life for newcomers in Toronto. Currently, Nadjib works on an initiative that brings together a community health team to provide shared care for patients. Nadjib has an MA degree in Immigration and Settlement Studies from Ryerson University and BA Honor's from the University of Toronto. In his spare time, Nadjib volunteers as the Co-chair of Bloor Street United Church Refugee Sponsorship Committee and is a member of the Board of Directors for the Toronto East Legal Clinic. As a former refugee himself Nadjib also volunteers his time to educate young people and professionals about the complex realities of refugees, he particularly aims to educate people that refugees leave behind more than their home when conflict forces them to flee. In April 2016, Nadjib was recognized with the Dennis Mock Student Leadership Award presented by Ryerson University for his work with Syrian refugees in Toronto. Nadjib is also the recipient of the Service Excellence Award by WoodGreen Community Services CEO Anne Babcock for his excellent work on the city's H.O.M.E portal for refugees.



Olivia Morano's position as both a presenter and a participant was a unique facet of this year's STMs X weekend. Olivia shared her experience as an international volunteer in refugee camps in Jordan. Olivia began her talk by acknowledging the traditional Indigenous land on which Ryerson University is located on. Along with many pictures, Olivia shared her unique experience and concluded by explaining her moral obligation to teach others what she saw in the refugee camps. Olivia's presentation helped provide a global context into the issues faced by refugee children around the world.

Short Bio: Olivia Morano was born in Toronto; its diversity built the foundation for her dedication to equality. With a very large family and her exposure to different types of education, attending a Montessori primary school, an alternative elementary Arts school, and a private Catholic high-school, she grew interested in children and youth, socialization, and schooling. Olivia attended McGill University working towards a Bachelor of Ed. However, after travelling to Amman, Jordan in 2015, she recognized the influence "risk factors" have on performance, and transferred to Ryerson University to study Child and Youth Care. In Amman, Olivia took part in Equal Opportunities Initiative's meetings, workshops, strategic planning, and field work. Her responsibilities included organizing and conducting skill training seminars for refugee and displaced girls, as well as capacity building for staff from the United Nations Relief and Work Agency in the Palestinian Wihdat Refugee Camp and the Syrian Zaatari Refugee Camp. Upon returning, Olivia carries a sense of moral obligation to spread the word about what she saw. Her passion for understanding people's rights and others' ignorance, combined with her respect and love for all cultures has driven her enthusiasm to make change and inspire action.

Introduction to Groups

Group Selection Process

In the morning of day one, participants were divided into four groups. In a rotation, each group moved through four stations as facilitated by the CYC 807 students to learn more about each of the four previously indicated topic areas. Next, the youth ranked their top choices for the themes they wanted to explore further for the remainder of the workshop. Based on these rankings, each participant was placed in the group that discussed their preferred topic choice. This activity provided participants with the opportunity to learn and experience, in a broad sense, rights and issues regarding all four of the themes.



“I knew that refugee’s living conditions weren’t great, but it’s a lot more profound. There is a lot more [to it] than just the basic knowledge that I have. They are missing out on a lot of the basic necessities. It was good to be informed about that” – Age, 17.

Guiding Discussion Questions

Saturday: General Problems

- What are some of the challenges that Children on the Move: Across Borders face today?
- How do these challenges impact the rights of immigrant and refugee children?

Saturday: Specific Problems

- What is the most pressing concern about _____ facing children on the move today?
- How does _____ impact refugee and immigrant children?
- Why is it important to consider _____ when addressing the rights and needs of children on the move?
- With regards to _____, who is ensuring that this right for children are being protected?

Sunday: Solutions

- What are short term and long-term strategies to protect your right to _____?
- If you were prime minister for a day, what would you do to protect the _____?
- In an ideal world, what will the government do to protect your right to _____?
- What can your community/ agencies, schools, service providers, churches, community groups, family, do to support this?
- What are some ways children and youth can participate in creating change?

Cultural Identity and Integration

Engagement Activities

Building from the break-out sessions where young people wrote on post-it notes what identity means to them, the Cultural Identity and Integration group began their discussions by exploring the meanings behind each statement through the context of the discussion questions. This activity set the tone for more in-depth exploration of the problems concerning their theme. In continuing, this group participated in an activity about social locations which enhanced group relationships and fostered an environment where members could explore commonalities and differences in race, gender, income, and privilege.



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*“I’ve felt self-conscious about the food I’ve brought to school because it’s traditional food from my culture and other kids made fun of me”
– Youth Participant.*



“Allow more opportunity and broaden the perspectives of people” – Age, 19.

Health & Safety



Engagement Activities

The Health and Safety group began with an activity that playfully used candy to engage young people in answering questions to help them get to know one another. This activity helped build connection and foster a space in which members felt comfortable sharing their insights on the discussion questions. To creatively address the solution questions, the Health and Safety group created and facilitated a game called 'Spinner Trivia', which enabled each member to take on a leadership role in guiding one of the questions.

*“Physical health and mental health are both aspects of health and safety”
– Youth Participant.*



*“It is harder to maintain their safety because they are on the move. It is extra work for them than it is for people who have a home and have a nice family. We need to put extra effort into making sure they are safe and healthy”
– Age, 18.*

Work and Education

Engagement Activities

As an opening activity, Work and Education began with a game called, Needs, and Wants. Members began with approximately 25 items written on paper which they had to reduce to six essential needs within time pressures. This opened-up dialogue on the challenges immigrant and refugee children and families face in accessing basic needs and essential resources. To begin addressing specific problems, members were divided into three groups.

Each group was provided with different materials (resources) and challenged to build a house. One group was given play dough, another group was given tape and paper, and the last group was given toothpicks and marshmallows. The purpose of this activity was to demonstrate how not everyone has to have the same tools to be successful. The members were able to use this activity to make connections to the importance of work and education.



*“Education is an essential need when it comes to understanding the world we live in”
– Youth Participant.*

“I know from personal experience, as my parents immigrated here. They tell you all the time, ‘we came here for you to have a better life, you need to do well in school so you can get a good job’. It puts a lot of pressure on you. Even when I go back home, my grandparents tell me I need to be a good role model and get good grades. This puts a lot of pressure and stress on you” – Age, 15.

Loss

Engagement Activities

Participants built on an icebreaker game entitled, 'loss and left behind' which involved a fun ball toss game, the balls were labelled with specific examples of things that refugees and immigrants might lose (for example, friends). To spark dialogue and reflection, the youth then tossed (categorized) the balls into one of four categories; physical, emotional, relational, and educational. Throughout the weekend the members used



these balls to express their insights on the topic of loss within their small group discussions and large group presentations. When it came to discussion of solutions, the members of the Loss group were very enthusiastic and had a lot to share. To ensure everyone's voices and insights were captured, they first broke into smaller groups and then rejoined to share all their ideas.

*"If the government doesn't protect you then no one will.
So, what if you have parental protections,
without government, you are not protected at all"
– Age, 15.*



*"New friends, new school,
new life. Kinda hard to make
friends because they tease
you and most of your
classmates don't want to be
friends with you. After three
months they ask, why don't
you ever hang-out with me"
– Youth Participant.*

Youth Insights

The remainder of this report illuminates the profound insights of the participants. This section will commence by highlighting the perspectives of youth on Canada as a welcoming country. Next, the general problem of Children on the Move: Across Borders, indicated solely by participants will be presented. This will be followed by a compilation of youth voices as they pertain to the four themes of discussion of this year's STMs workshop. In conclusion, solutions and recommendations for further action and final participant reflections will be presented. A significant observation this



year was that in each of the four groups the conversations entailed discussions encompassing each of the four themes. It was rare that one theme was spoken about without reference to the others. For this reason, the general problems, specific problems from each theme, and solutions and recommendations for further action will be unpacked using a blend of youth voices from each of the four small groups.

“We are repeating the same mistakes that we have always made, and it’s not getting us anywhere. We are destroying our world politically, physically, and emotionally... we are not going forward. We are the ones that are growing up. This is becoming our world. So, we need to know what we are doing... we need to know how to change it”
– Age, 18.

Canada as a Welcoming Country

“Canada is better than most places because we don't have any wars or anything crazy going on”
– Youth Participant.

“People are friendly, but what are you doing in response to the refugees?”
– Age, 18.

“I feel like immigrants want to come to Canada, but if their home is safe, I’m sure they would much rather stay there”
– Age, 18.

“There are some people who take the time to help you... not many people”
– Age, 15.

“Canada’s system that was created for non-immigrants isn’t working anymore. Everyone assumes the problem is solved when they come here. However, new problems are just beginning” – Youth Participant.

General Problems by Theme

Government and Policy Related Problems

“The Government only cares about short-term”– Age, 18.



“Most people would not be able to pass the point system [referring to immigration requirements]. Growing up and living in Canada, we still wouldn’t make it” – Youth Participant.

*“The Canadian Government tries to make themselves seem so good by accepting refugees, but they cover up everything and all the challenges”
– Age, 14.*

*“I think the people who have the power to do things don’t care about these things”
– Age, 18.*

“We talk about immigration and we make it seem like Canada is this great country because we’re letting these people in... giving status and health care. I get there should be a System to let people in and not let everyone in. [However], this point system is turning people away from each other. It turns it into, okay, are you really good enough for us? If not, it turns families [and] friends against each other, because they are trying to fight for themselves. It’s just trying to survive” – Age, 18.

Broken Systems

“I feel like media and politics are half lies” – Age, 15.

*“Health Care and the Police System needs to be changed”
– Age, 18.*

Health Care System

*“I find it ridiculous
that street drugs are
cheaper than the
prescription drugs that
people need to take”
– Age, 15.*



“They have not taught us anything about first nations. All they keep talking about is World War II and not much about Indigenous people and their struggles” – Youth Participant.



Education System

*“Ours is dated, and the
teachers are gated”
– Age, 18.*

*“Why aren’t we
learning about this?
We are teaching our
kids to be racist”
– Age, 18.*

Inequality, Discrimination & Stereotypes

*“People are suffering.
Why do some people get
to drive Porsches and
live in mansions?”
– Age, 18.*

*“If you have mental
health issues, they don’t
really look at you”
– Age, 18.*



Awareness of Rights

*“How many people know their rights? We don’t learn that.
I learned all my rights from these conventions that I go to” – Age, 17.*

*“As the guest speaker was saying, his foster parent told him he needed to
work to pay off the debt. So, he worked so he could pay the money.
He did that because he did not know his rights” – Age, 15.*

Equal Access to Resources and Opportunities

*“A big challenge for new people to integrate [is that] they
don’t know all of the resources out there”
– Youth Participant.*

*“They have no control over having access to their rights”
– Age, 15.*

*“They are expected to go to school and get jobs, but we
don’t give them anything”
– Age, 18.*

*“If my parents were getting taxed more they would be angry. How can
we help them if no one is willing to pay for it?”
– Age, 15.*

Specific Problem by Theme

Cultural Identity & Integration

What are the most pressing concerns about Cultural Integration and Identity facing Children on the Move: Across Borders today?

Belonging & Acceptance

- *“My family doesn’t talk with other families, because they’re different religions” - Age, 15.*
- *“It’s really hard trying to make friends and understand what is going on” - Age, 16.*
- *“If you come here from a different country and you are trying to learn the language, it is really hard to make friends. Making friends is hard enough without a language barrier” - Age, 16.*
- *“Somedays I didn’t bring my food out of my bag and told my teachers I forgot my lunch, because I was scared” - Age, 13.*

Language & Language Barriers

- *“Language limits possibilities and resources” - Age, 15.*
- *“When they’re smuggled they have to learn a whole new language and just learn everything from nothing” - Age, 13.*
- *“It took me 4 or 5 years to speak English and I’ve been here for 11 years” - Age, 17.*



“Cultural Preservation”
– Youth Participant.

“People might have different religions, so the other person might have to change their religion to be compatible”
– Youth Participant.

Trauma & Mental Health

“My mom is a Social Worker, and she works with people with disabilities. One of the kids came into care, and [their] mom lived in war and was traumatized. She would have hallucinations and visions. Her own child had to be taken away. You can see what it does to adults, so imagine what it does to kids” - Age, 14.

“We are different cultures. We will carry our identity with ourselves. We are a shock to the world... we are here not only to escape but to educate. We will not stop fighting until we win the war we're fighting inside of us. We are always on the move until we feel safe, till we have a home, till we are safe, but most importantly, until we're happy” - Age, 12.

Health & Safety

What are the most pressing concerns about Health & Safety facing Children on the Move: Across Borders today?

Mental Health

"I don't think they really think about mental health at all. They may consider only physical health. They don't think about it. They just think about food to get through the day. Even safety, they don't really consider safety. They just want to get through a day and struggle a lot"
– Age, 17.

If you're bleeding you see and fix where you're bleeding, but if you're bleeding in the inside, you just don't know"
– Age, 15.

Access to Affordable Health Care & Medication

"If I have to wait six months to get care when I'm a Canadian citizen, what must it be like for someone who isn't?" – Age, 18.

Health & Safety Matters Because...

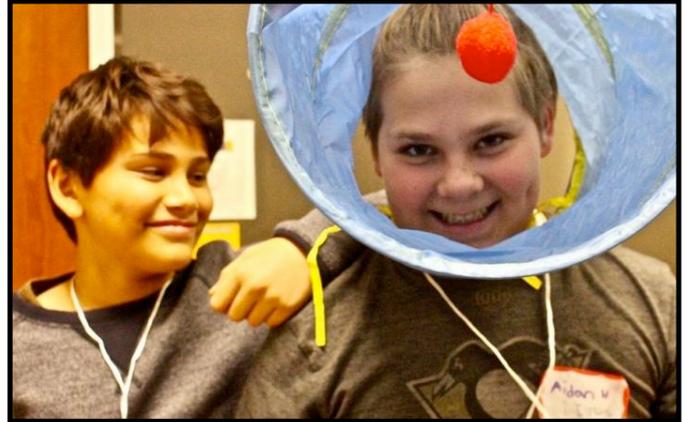
- *"If you are not healthy and safe, you cannot contribute in society, and you can't support yourself and your family"* – Age, 18.
- *"If you're not mentally stable then you can't mentally connect to others"* – Age, 18.
- *"Lack of health insurance and the inability to afford proper healthcare and medication can cause a simple cold or flu to take a considerable toll on someone's well-being"* – Age, 15.
- *"If you're not healthy you're not happy. If you're not happy, you're not able to survive"* – Age, 18.
- *"If you're not healthy and safe, you cannot contribute in a positive way to society or provide for yourself"* – Age, 17.
- *"If you don't have food or stability then it affects your health"* – Age, 18.
- *"Someone in a new place needs a proper home in order to feel healthy and safe"* – Age, 18.



Work & Education

What are the most pressing concerns about Work & Education facing Children on the Move: Across Borders today?

“The problem is that education is becoming very modernist. Like, our school is paperless, so we have to use a computer as there is no paper. Everyone has a high-end Mac Book, but I don't have a computer. So, I have to borrow a crappy one from the library. Then everyone knows your family cannot afford a laptop for you. It is embarrassing, especially in high school as it is already hard time. If people are coming here and can't afford a computer, then you are left out and don't know the language. It is a horrible situation to be in” – Age, 15.



“Everyone [thinks that] education is free, but everything [that] comes along with being in school isn't free. Like at my school, we need to pay for supplies in every one of our classes” – Age, 15.

Immigrant and Refugee Children Face More Pressure in School

“There is a lot of pressure on you to perform to the new education system. Like using a computer, if you are coming from a country that is not as developed as Canada, then it would be really hard for you... a lot of pressure to adapt” – Age, 15.

“Some people don't know how to type, so they will be made fun of. I do not like typing. I write better, but I can afford a computer. People coming here cannot always afford a computer” – Age, 13.

Schools Don't Teach these Things

“We don't talk about the history that we need to” – Age, 18.

“They teach us all this useless information. They force us to do it and teach us that if you're not good at it you won't be successful. But, they don't teach us basic information like your rights, how to cook, other cultures... other religions” – Age, 17.

Stigma and Isolation Impact Learning

“Kids make life challenging in school by the stigma. People think you are not smart or can't learn cause' you are a refugee” – Age, 14.

“I think in school, the stigma you get as a refugee will interfere with learning” – Age, 14.

Difficulties Finding Meaningful Employment

“Lack of jobs and being able to get one...they are not always allowed” – Age, 13.

“I have friends and neighbours who are immigrants from Syria. They are better than most refugees, cause the husband was already in Canada. He is the only one working and can barely afford rent” – Age, 13.

“If you can get a job, it is a minimum wage job, or you may have had high education, but here you cannot use it because Canada does not recognize your education. So again, you can only get a minimum wage job – Age, 13.

Loss

What are the most pressing concerns about Loss facing Children on the Move: Across Borders today?

Loss & Mental Health

“A lot of times, when refugees come, they have left their country, and everything is new to them. They feel all alone. Everything is new to them, and they are all alone. They have depression or loneliness”
– Youth Participant.

“Just imagine being a refugee without taking anything with you... anyone with you. It can be really stressful. For children on the move, it can upset their mental health”
– Youth Participant.

Loss, Love & Care

“If a person has no love and care and comes to a new country they will be scared... and you can feel very alone and then you can have bad mental health. You will not be good in life if you have bad mental health”
– Youth Participant.



What Gets Left Behind?

“Sometimes, they can’t bring stuff from back home into the new country. Like my dog, I wish I had my dog to support me”
– Youth Participant.

“I lived with my family for not a long time. None of my family are here”
– Age, 12.

“Your sense of Community”
– Age, 15.

“A partner, a wife or husband or something”
– Age, 12.

“The cultural food, you lose it”
– Age, 12.

“We also have money to buy housing, clothes, food, medical care... anything like that. Some people coming here flee with absolutely nothing, especially money, and since their parents sometimes don’t have jobs, then the children don’t have access to these things”,
– Youth Participant.

“They have given up so much. [We] have to appreciate that and acknowledge that”
– Youth Participant.

Solutions & Recommendations for Further Action

What can Children and Youth do to Participate in Creating Change?

“I feel like teenagers and kids, we don’t educate ourselves on this topic because it does not affect most people. If it does not affect them, they don’t care” – Age, 14.



“Don’t sit and watch people struggle or feel lonely, talk to someone. Say hi in the hallways. Make them feel included. You have to realize the amount of sacrifices they made. They left everything; they left their friends, they left their family, and they left their community” – Age, 15.

Be Kind, Caring & Helpful

*“We need to make sure we respect each other first, before we bring [others] together”
– Age, 17.*

*If the roles were reversed, wouldn’t you want someone to help you?”
– Age, 18*

*“Basically [be] the most caring you can be. Canada isn’t perfect, but it is getting there”
– Age, 19.*

*“Start a Conversation”
– Age, 12.*

*“Smile when you make eye contact with someone”
– Age, 19.*

*“Talking to people”
– Age, 12.*

Spread Awareness of Children’s Rights

“Even today, our friends asked what we were doing in Toronto today, and I said, we are at a conference for children’s rights” – Age, 15.

Mentorship Programs and Fundraisers

- *“Start a group in school” – Age, 19.*
- *“Maybe join a club or start an alliance that can help people new to Canada feel welcomed and part of a community” – Age, 15.*
- *“Start a Buddy System and get everybody included. Everyone needs a friend. Everyone deserves to have a friend. Everyone deserves to be happy” – Age, 19.*

If I were a Prime Minister ...

*“Enforce Laws that protect against discrimination”
– Youth Participant.*

*“I would spread awareness by simply talking about it in front of the public, just because I’d be in such a position of power. Also, I would tell other figures in power to spread the word. That could really go a long way”
– Age, 12.*

*“Platforms like the Grammy's. I would recommend the performers to get the point across and not just perform”
– Youth Participant.*



*“I will probably be working on strengths. Why not work on how we can improve, reinforce, strengthen, and empower others to be comfortable with who they are?”
– Age, 19.*

Short-Term & Long-Term Strategies to Help Protect the Rights of Children & Youth on the Move

Education System

Social Media

- *“Be more strict on media, like in Quebec. They are more strict about what they air” – Youth Participant.*
- *“More Public Service announcements” – Age, 12.*
- *“If Justin Bieber did a PSA on children's rights, a bunch of people would know more about their rights” – Youth Participant.*

Service Providers

- *[Have] one caseworker for newcomers following up with them and [make] it long term instead of saying, here's your support and there's the door” – Youth Participant.*

*“We believe that if we change the education system and start learning about other cultures, it would help immigrants and refugees be more accepted and it will stop as much racism and sexism as there is... and as much discrimination”
– Age, 17.*

*“In the school system, there should be classes with curriculum on culture and children's rights education”
– Youth Participant.*

*“We need to learn about other cultures, other traditions, other people, and what it's like in other countries. Last year, our theme was the environment, and we said the same thing. We need an actual course about the environment to teach us how to start over [and] about how to do things differently because we are repeating history”
– Age, 18.*



Government

“There’s a difference between educating people about rights and enforcing and actually taking action”

– Age, 19.



“Know the difference between learning about what’s going on and actually taking action. If you can talk a big talk about protecting refugee rights, then you should also be showing that with your actions”

– Age, 13.

“They sacrifice a lot to live a better life. Once they come here, we need to start giving them the tools to actually live that better life”

– Age, 17.

“They should be inclusive. There are so many cultures out there that are identified as a threat. I don't know why they do that, but stereotypically, it's not true. Give them a chance, they are not that scary”

– Age, 19.

“We need to learn about different religions and different holidays instead of acknowledging, and then simply dismissing [them]. Canadians are aware [that] there are other holidays celebrations, however, many people don’t know what they mean”

– Age, 22.

“You need to make sure they get the education and not [assume] they have it.

Raising awareness and acting on it”

– Youth Participant.

In Schools

“In a school setting, it would be really nice to see just smiles everywhere... from everyone. A smile can go a long way no matter what” – Age, 19.

Buddy Systems

“In our last group, we spoke about how starting up a school group can make such a big difference. Pairing up someone who is new to the country with a citizen who has been here and knows the norms of Canada [would] help them a lot. They would have someone... they would have a friend”
– Youth Participant.

“I could be paired up with someone and show them around the school, show them the Tim Hortons down the street, and what kind of things we order. [I could] show them what it means to live in Canada, like how I live as a teenager”
– Age, 17.

School Clubs

“Why not a school club? There’s a chess club, why not a cultural club?”
– Age, 19.



“Refugee’s rights are human rights” – Age, 12.

Youth Reflections on STMs X: Children on the Move (Across Borders)



“This year’s topic was basically, like, the refugees. Mainly, the refugees and the immigrants. [Shaking the Movers] is basically a way for youth, [for] anybody actually, to learn about a certain topic or a certain activity. We learn, basically what it is and then we go deeper into it. It’s a lot of fun and a very good learning opportunity”
– Youth Participant.

“I liked meeting new people and learning new things. I learned a lot. It basically taught me not take things [for granted]”
– Age, 17.

“When I came into this, I had no idea that we had so many rights... that we were so entitled to so many different things. That is really important for people to know. There was a speaker who came, who said, ‘I didn’t know about this, I didn’t know about that’. He was at a disadvantage because he didn’t know. So, it’s really important that people know so that they have the right to speak”
– Age, 12.



What I learned...

“What I learned was that there are people out there, who actually are in need of help, no matter what. They all need freedom, they all need an escape, they all need a path. I feel like today opened my eyes and it really showed me that I can be that person to guide them out of that trouble. Even through my course, Child and Youth Care, I can still do the same thing through it. No matter what, I learned something valuable, and that is to care about others more than caring about yourself”
– Age, 19.

“I think we should raise awareness about this program so that more kids and youth can learn about it”
– Youth Participant.

Why Should Children and Youth come to Shaking the Movers?

“I feel like other people should do Shaking the Movers, because who wouldn't want to learn more about other people so that you can help them and be aware in the future. If you ever come across an immigrant or refugee, you would know to treat them like a normal person. Because, they are a normal person. They are just like us” – Age, 17.



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



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Concluding Thoughts

Dear Readers,

An overarching characteristic of this group of young people was their enthusiastic commitment to sharing and learning about various social, political, and economic issues that impact young people across the country. The youth participants embodied a deep sense of care and empathy for both each other and the world around them. Throughout the entire conference, the overall tone stayed consistently energetic and playful. The youth remained wide-eyed with curiosity as they listened to each other in their small groups. Creativity and enthusiastically, each group presented both the problems and solutions to the larger group. On each occasion, the young people watched each other's presentations with a genuine interest to learn from one another's insights and experiences. Many of the participants talked about sharing what they learned about children's rights and Children on the Move with their friends, families, schools, and community members. When saying goodbye, we heard from several youths how excited they are to attend STMs again next year. Undeniably, this weekend further validated to us what we already know about youth voice and youth participation. When young people are given a platform to speak and be heard, they will change the world.

We would like to acknowledge the Lawson Foundation for their financial support, as well as Hon. Landon Pearson and the faculty and students from the School of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University. It is the handwork, passion, and tireless commitment of those mentioned above that ensured a successful STMs weekend in Toronto again this year. Most of all, we would like to thank each and every young person who generously gave their time and selflessly lent their voices for this report. Without each of you, Shaking the Movers could not be possible!

With this said, throughout STMs X, each young person generously shared their concerns and insightful solutions for the purpose of instrumenting change to better the lives of young people across the country. It is for this reason that we conclude this report by sincerely asking for your support in turning their words into actions.

See you next year!

