

# News from the CCR



Updates from the **Canadian Council for Refugees**

July 2017

## **When newcomer youth come together, anything is possible!**

Last November we wrote you about our Newcomer Youth Civic Engagement project which was just beginning, designed to support newcomer youth across the country in connecting and engaging with their communities.

Recently this project came to an end – looking back it is incredible just how much was accomplished by the youth in only a few months!

Through thirteen local projects, newcomer youth in six different provinces identified key issues affecting them, including:

- language barriers
- struggles in school
- lack of job opportunities
- lack of youth-only spaces
- limited opportunities to gather as newcomer youth inside and outside of school.

Many also raised the difficulty of finding initiatives and spaces that promote dialogue between newcomer youth and other youth, as well as barriers to accessing services as a result of issues ranging from misguided counselling, to racial, cultural, or religious prejudices towards newcomer youth.

The youth then took action and organized to share these with their communities, and to find ways of improving the issues through local activities. They were able to showcase their leadership in many creative ways and in just 3 months came up with solutions!

In Joliette, for example, the youth found that a lack of spaces for newcomer youth was leading to isolation, missed job opportunities and slower language learning. In response, they decided to take matters into their own hands and started a youth house project that they presented to the City of Joliette and the federal and provincial governments. They have all since given their full support to the group.

This is just one of many examples of the leadership that the youth demonstrated through the local projects.



Local youth leaders were connected nationally through the CCR Youth Network, allowing them to move from local project involvement to national support and mentorship. The youth have shared that these and youth-only spaces are key to confronting the gaps identified by them and the obstacles they face daily.

For most of the youth this is just the beginning. Many of the youth leaders involved have now joined the Youth Network Core Group and are contributing to developing the group's structure and its role as an

integral part of the CCR. Many more continue to be active in the network and in their communities to effect change.

Your support has been key in helping us ensure that newcomer youth have a national, youth-only platform to voice their concerns and to take action. We hope you enjoy finding out more about the youth in action below!

## The Youth Network in Action



### From Local Projects to National Action

Each project discussed and planned actions on local issues that were then raised on a national level through the Youth Network at CCR Working Groups, Consultations and a national Youth Action Gathering. Projects also developed resources, including videos, interviews and more as part of their actions to address the barriers they face.

[Learn more about the individual projects, their stories, priorities and resources here](#)

### Meet the NYCE Youth Leaders

Each project was made possible thanks to the leadership of youth working and inciting change in their communities across six provinces: B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick. They also received the support of local organizations that ensured the youth had access to expertise, training, mentoring, material and a space to meet, and access to a network.

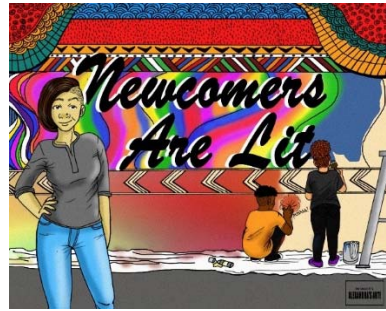
[Meet the NYCE youth leaders here!](#)



### Gathering to Create Change

Newcomer youth from across Canada met face to face at the 2017 Youth Action Gathering in Winnipeg to network, share, learn and create strategies to act on the issues.

[Watch this video to get a taste](#)



### Spreading the Word

As part of the project, youth created tools to help others better understand the issues they face and the solutions. Building on these reflections, artist Alexandra Yasmine Togba Mahan, a newcomer youth herself, created cartoons highlighting some of the issues identified by the youth.

## More good news

### We did it, Conditional Permanent Residence has been repealed!

After five years of calling for an end to this harmful provision, in April the federal government finally eliminated conditional permanent residence for sponsored spouses and partners!

Since the rule was applied in 2012, the CCR and many organizations working for the rights of newcomers and women opposed it on the grounds that it placed sponsored newcomers, especially women, at increased risk of abuse.

This is a great victory, testimony of what we can achieve together.

Thank you for helping us make sure that the immigration system protects sponsored spouses and partners living in situations of violence.



Canadian Council for Refugees  
Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés