



YOUTH ACTION GATHERING 2019

MONCTON & DIEPPE, NEW BRUNSWICK



ABOUT THE YAG 2019

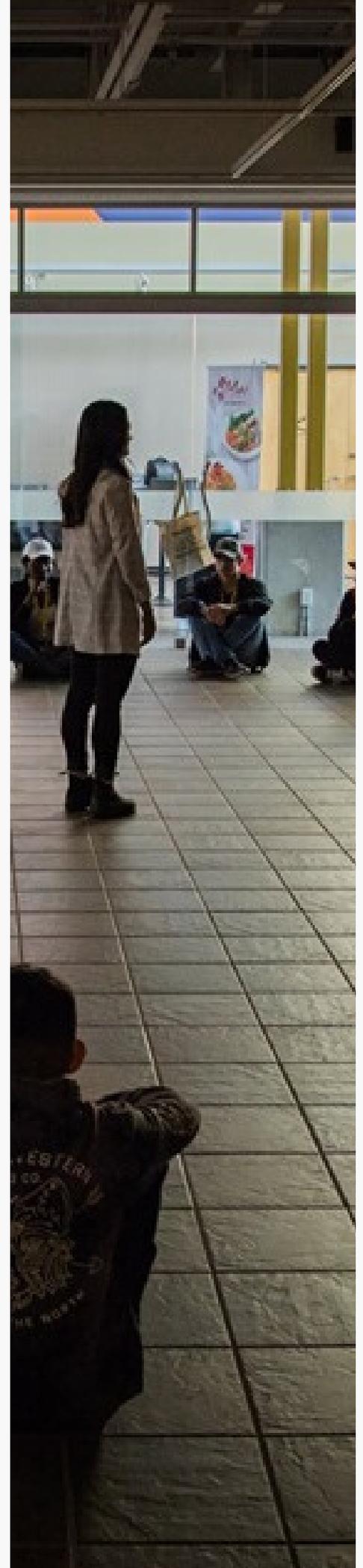
BEYOND MIGRATION JOURNEYS: TOGETHER BUILDING EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

The Canadian Council for Refugees' Youth Network held its seventh Youth Action Gathering (YAG) on October 3-5 2019, in Moncton/Dieppe, New-Brunswick. The theme for this year's YAG was Beyond Migration Journeys: Together Building Empowering Communities.

This theme allowed us to recognize that many of the youths present have different journeys and hardships when they arrive in Canada, yet the CCR Youth Network exists for them to come together to support each other and thrive in each of their communities. This can be achieved by supporting them in navigating the challenges they face or by becoming leaders in their communities, thus creating spaces where they are heard and seen.

Since November 2018, the CCR Youth Network's local branches have organized consultations to envision what the journey for newcomers and refugees should look like. Following these consultations, youth leaders from each branch were trained in human rights education and they developed further the structure of the branches. As a result, the 2019 YAG was an opportunity for YN local branch leaders to showcase what they learned throughout their inaugural year, serving as a stepping-stone for their leadership.

The YAG brought together newcomer youth and allies to learn, share, network and collaborate on actions and strategies to address common challenges. 120 youth from seven different provinces (British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Yukon) attended.





This year's YAG was quite unique because of the participation of youths from suburban areas of New Brunswick. The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) of the YAG was a partnership with the New Brunswick Multicultural Council (NBMC) and the New Brunswick African Association.

This dynamic team was in charge of the logistics, fundraising, volunteer coordination and the social event. The LOC ensured participants were welcomed, had the resources necessary for the success of the event and the opportunity to learn about initiatives taking place in New Brunswick.

The YAG coincided with Afro-fest, an annual event by the New Brunswick African Association which allowed participants to witness the diversity of the African community and culture through musical performances and food catered for the event. Likewise, Afro-fest benefitted from the participation of a diverse audience of youths from different ethnic backgrounds and from different Canadian cities.

In addition to having a strong presence of youth, we also had the participation of youth workers, mentors and funders from TakingItGlobal. We also had decision makers in attendance including: Stephanie Miller from the IRCC, Christian Whelan from the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, Alex LeBlanc from the New Brunswick Multicultural Council; and Moncef Lakouas, the Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Moncton.

THE YAG IN NUMBERS



120 youth from **20 cities** all across Canada attended



7 Provinces and territories
British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Yukon



8 Workshops
Housing, Indigenous solidarity, Community action, local services, Inclusivity and more!



97% of the participants
Said the YAG met their expectations and they would attend to the YAG again.



90% of the participants
Said they learned how to be leaders in their communities

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

“ 94% say they learned something new from the workshops ”

Life changing event...

This dynamic, life changing event acted as a catalyst to energize new Youth Network members by linking them to a network of newcomer youth eager to share their experience of integrating to Canada and becoming branch leaders.

A place for to demonstrate their leadership skills...

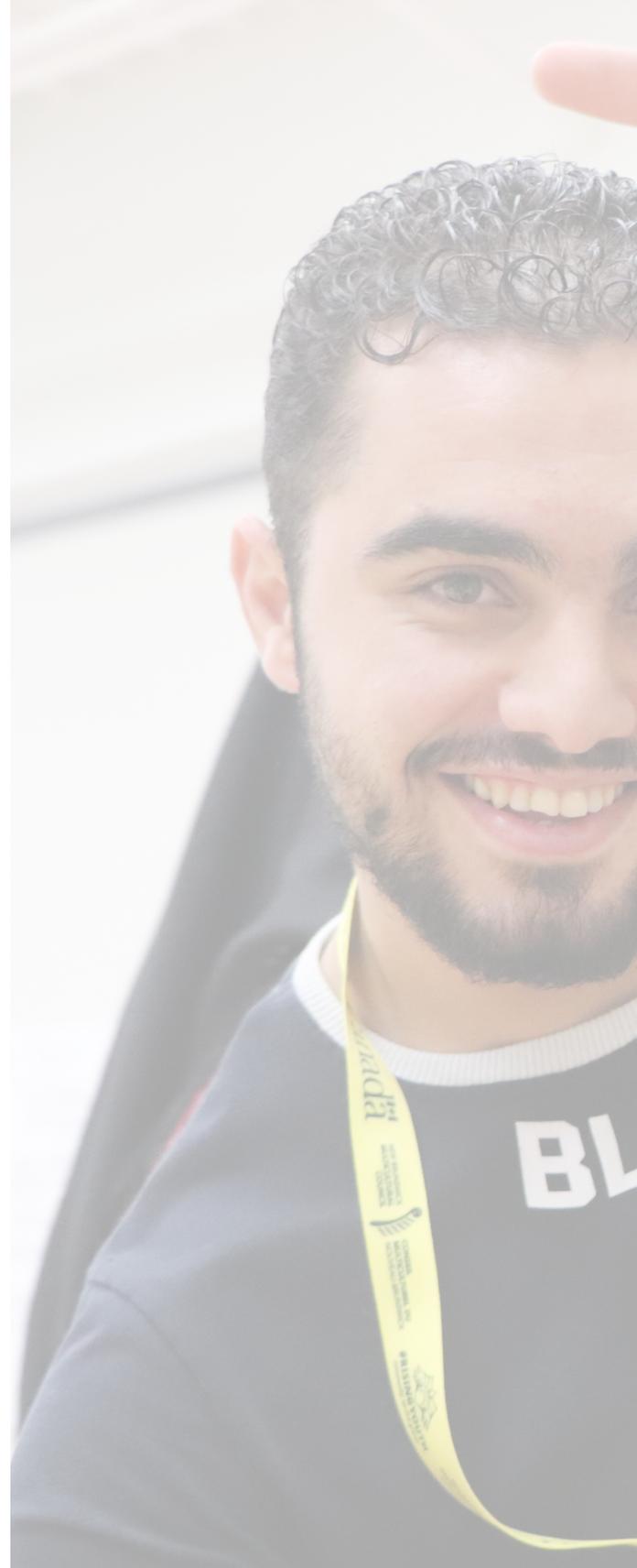
For those who have leadership positions in the YN, including Branch Leaders, Local Organizing Committee and Core Team, the YAG was a place for them to demonstrate, to a great extent, their facilitation, organization, and leadership skills.

Planned and facilitated by youth...

9 out of 11 workshops, panels and plenaries were completely planned and facilitated by youth with newcomer and refugee backgrounds. This YAG has been the result of previous trainings, mentorship and experience youth have had mobilizing their peers in their communities.

Building partnerships in New Brunswick and across Canada...

the successes of this YAG was building partnerships with other organizations in New Brunswick and across Canada like Equitas, TakingItGlobal, Canadian Roots Exchange, NBMC and NBAA. We look forward to strengthening such partnerships and sharing the programs and funding they have available.



WHAT DID PARTICIPANTS DO?

“ 90% say they learned how to be a leader in their community ”

Develop

leadership skills and gain knowledge about how to implement community action projects in their local communities via social media and the personal connections they fostered.

Connect

with other newcomer and immigrant youth who live in urban and suburban areas, and continue supporting each other's projects.

Build

the capacity of branch leaders to continue developing a structure for their local branch, do outreach to other youth, and create new programs

Strengthen

their knowledge on how to make their youth groups more inclusive for youth with different identities and backgrounds.

Strategize

on how to mobilize other youth in their community by using innovative, youth engaging workshops

Engage

with national and local decision makers and stakeholders in order to bring the issues newcomer youth face to their attention, and to share about how these stakeholders are meaningfully empowering youth through their work.



PRIORITY ACTIONS MOVING FORWARD

“ 95 % feel like they connected with other newcomer youth across Canada ”

Engage youth in their communities and creatively explore the issues they face:

Branches will do this through the support of Equitas' Community Action Projects, implementing the principles (motivate, explore, investigate, take action, evaluate and celebrate).

Build relationships with decision makers and allies:

YAG participants identified the need for this in order to advance youth engagement in organizations, youth programs, schools and at different government levels. The Youth Network will support by giving guidelines on how to effectively engage with decision makers.

Strengthen the local branches' roles and structures:

The YAG marked the culmination of the first round of projects and trainings for the Local Branches and demonstrated the areas for improvement.

Give opportunities to more youth to facilitate workshops:

youth were inspired by the branches and core team members' facilitation skills, this model will be expanded to allow more youth to learn facilitation skills, with a focus on sharing resources on how to make our workshops and activities more inclusive for people with different intersections of identity.

Improve connection to youth from suburban areas and highlight their challenges:

This YAG, we learned that smaller communities where immigration is newer lack services and programs specifically for youth. We will work to build this relationship to support them.



SCHEDULE



Youth Action Gathering

YAG 2019 SCHEDULE

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 3**

Registration
5:00pm-8:00pm
Opening Plenary
6:00pm-8:30pm

**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 4**

Registration
8:30am-9:30am
Block A and B Workshops
9:30am-12:30pm
Lunch
12:30pm-1:30pm
Block C Workshops
1:30pm-3:00pm
Afro-Fest Gala Dinner
6:00pm-2:00am

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 5**

Afro-Fest workshops
and performances
10:30am-11:00pm
Walk a mile in my shoes - experiences
of newcomer youth in New Brunswick
and Canada
10:30am-12:30am
Lunch
12:30pm-1:30pm
YAG Closing Plenary
1:30pm-3:00pm

**JEUNES
CCR
YOUTH**

WORKSHOPS

“ 92% felt like this was a safe space for me as an individual. ”

Two Lines... Histories and Resistance

The goal of this workshop was to host a deep dialogue about the reality of relationships between Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Canada. Through this workshop, participants were able to reflect about their knowledge they have about Indigenous peoples and ways in which they can start building relationships in their community. Moving forward, the Youth Network will work on providing branch leaders with resources and guiding discussions to explore how they can build relationships and learn more about Indigenous peoples in the communities where they currently live.



From Local Impact to National Solidarity: Newcomer Youth Igniting Change

This workshop showcased the work of the Local Youth Network Branches, allowed branch leaders to share their processes, challenges and successes in engaging newcomer youth in their communities to respond to emerging issues. The workshop provided a space for participants to collectively identify tools and supports needed to move forward with this work in a meaningful way. For the next round of projects, local Youth Network Branches will lead Community Action Projects using creative techniques to address issues youth are facing.

Youth Experiences Accessing Affordable Housing

The goal of this workshop was to look into the barriers that youth face in accessing local services. Participants learned new ideas about about access to affordable housing rights and responsibilities of tenants. Youth also mentioned that their priorities in terms of housing were affordability, access to transportation and how to advocate for their rights. It was recommended at this workshop to create a newcomer youth guide that can help them navigate the housing systems and to advocate for youth at the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government.

WORKSHOPS

Developing Resources for Navigating Local Services

This workshop was interactive and used community mapping to explore the barriers that youth faced in accessing social services and opportunities in the migration process. Youth identified that although there are many resources in some communities, there is a lack of information on how to access them - especially in larger cities where everything is more spread out. The centralization of information about programs/services would largely benefit newcomers. Some also mentioned isolation in schools and communities, and those that had tight-knit newcomer communities (through various local organizations) highlighted the benefits and sense of strong social cohesiveness that it brought.



Community Action project

The purpose of this workshop was to create Community Action Project by following five steps: Motivate, Explore, Investigate, Take action, Evaluate & celebrate. Projects such as a Mentorship program, Opening classes in schools to help people with the language and Comedy show to speak about affordable housing came up.

This activity not only got participants thinking creatively, but also helped them hear from other youth from across Canada. Participants then heard from representatives from Rising Youth, about non-competitive youth micro-grants available for them to undertake a CAP, which complimented well the objectives of the workshop, and further opened the possibility for meaningful action.

WORKSHOPS

“ 96% would attend the YAG again. ”

Building Inclusive Spaces for LGBTQIA2+ Youth

The goal of this workshop was to understand terminology, and explore the ways in which folks can create safer spaces for LGBTQIA2+ youth, by using inclusive language tools. The workshop helped participants unpack concepts of sex, gender, orientation and sexuality. This was only a start for workshop participants to understand the LGBTQIA2+ community and how to be inclusive. The Youth Network will provide resources for branches to make their spaces inclusive for LBTQIA2+ community.



Amplifying our voice and having a meaningful change

The purpose of the workshop was to allow youth participants to engage with decision makers (both governmental and non-governmental) in a face-to-face conversation around a variety of issues impacting newcomer youth.

The workshop aimed to foster a space where youth could creatively explore strategies to make their own voices and perspectives impactful, when it comes to decision making processes at various levels.

Issues that were presented included recognizing foreign credentials, transportation, climate, housing, cuts to healthcare in Ontario, the cost of education (especially while supporting family), culture shock, integration, and language.

WORKSHOPS

Peer Support to Lift Each Other Up

This workshop was about how we can be a better supporter to anyone who is going through anything. A tree diagram was used to illustrate this question: What qualities do we look for when need others to help us? The roots responded to: What do not make someone a good peer supporter? The trunk responded to: How can we answer and improve to be a good peer supporter? The canopy responded to: What are the fruits and solutions we can get? At the end, a good peer support to lift each other up for the youth attending to this workshop is someone who you can learn from, communicate with, stand together. A friend who doesn't judge you, make time for you, who is patient and respectful.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the YAG 2019 was a great success. We were very proud to have such a diverse group of participants, and have Youth Network members leading workshops and inspiring each other to take action in their communities.

We are excited about all the partnerships that were built and the ideas for taking action about the issues youth face in their communities. We are hopeful that this YAG planted seeds among our participants to get involved in their communities.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANKS TO

PARTNERS, SPONSORS & DONORS

We are extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to collaborate with the New Brunswick Multicultural Council and the New Brunswick African Association for this iteration of the YAG. Our partnership with them reaffirms our commitment to building community bridges to ease the transition for many newcomers in our society.

We are glad that the Youth Action Gathering happened for the first time in the Maritimes.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the generous financial and in-kind support of:



And Department of Education and Early - Childhood Development