

# East Coast Shaking the Movers

## *Defending Child Rights for Refugees and Newcomers*



**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, observed through a child rights lens, is a new subject and an important topic of 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.

The goal is to prepare them to act as peer facilitators for the weekend event held in November. The event was rich in discussions and exchanges providing a chance for everyone to express themselves. Participants made sure their voices were heard. They made claims for a better world which is more respectful of the rights of the child. The diversity and composition of the group also allowed for many testimonials based on life experience. The issue of racism and xenophobia in school is a special concern and is a matter that I want to further consider.

I sincerely thank all the young participants who took part in this initiative and I promise to follow-up with their messages and help them so that their recommendations can move forward and be 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. All their 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 consider the young participants' messages 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". The signature is stylized and fluid.

**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? How does it feel to struggle in a new language, navigate in a new community, and a new school? How do you figure out what to do, how to be accepted, make friends, how to belong, to be successful and what do you do with your memories? How do you learn that you, in fact, have rights because you are a child and all children have rights? And who is there to help you, protect you, provide for you, listen to what you have to say?



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

Movers workshops are designed to provide a forum where all children can speak about their concerns, whether they are newcomers to Canada or children who have grown up here among an increasing number 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 are not experts in their own lives, they are and the solutions to the problems they raise can only be solved 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 is 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 they encounter 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 held on the east coast of Canada. This discussion forum is held during a weekend and is facilitated by young participants. 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 focused on the rights of refugees and newcomers' children through a rights-based approach pursuant the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. As project sponsor, the Child and Youth Advocate Office sought to embrace this approach by inviting high-school students who were concerned by this issue so they could assume the role of facilitators. The facilitators and participants in this edition of the event were impressed by their level of commitment, but also by all they had to say and share with their peers.

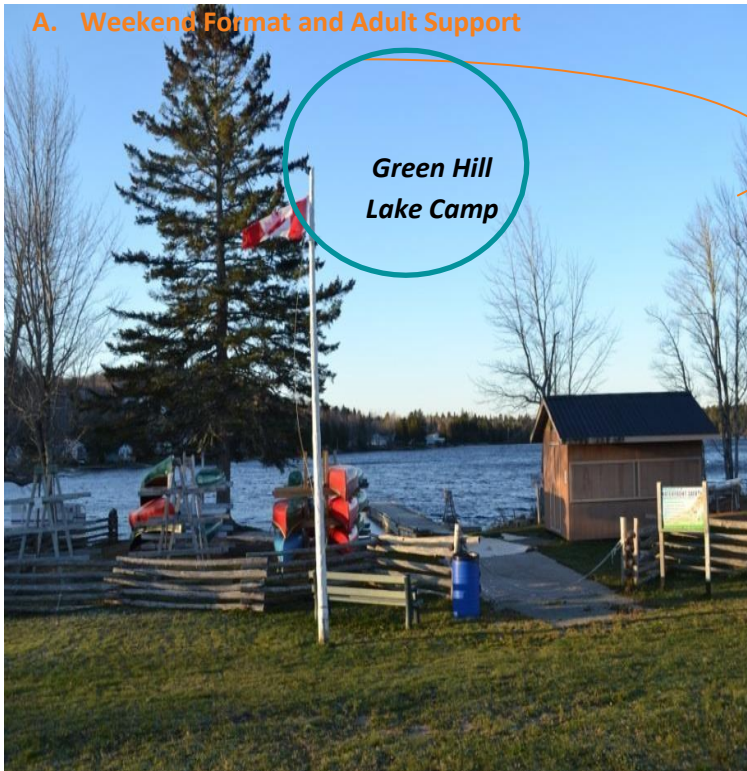
The project was developed in collaboration with the Multicultural Association of Fredericton (MCAF). During the weekend, the MCAF and CYA teams acted as supports while the facilitators and participants planned and ran the programs. This is a sober report, reflecting only the words of the young participants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

Our hope is that all those entitled to rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), participants and facilitators, who were considered in this report, have their recommendations heard and implemented. They shared the trajectory and the journey 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



**Green Hill  
Lake Camp**

This edition of Shaking the movers was held on November 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017, as an overnight camp at Green Hill Lake in New Brunswick. This format provided for youth with a peer engagement experience which was different from the day camp format. The youth were put into groups in accordance to their age and gender and placed in cottage dorms with a scenic view of the camp, which included a view of the outdoor and cultural activities.

A wonderful group spirit developed in a safe space respectful of everyone's differences. They all had a lot of fun!

The presence of adults throughout the weekend ensures a safe environment while also providing support to the facilitators who were given this role for the first time. The professional adults present also intervene at the youth participants' request to answer questions or give information on specific topics. For example, Christian Whalen, Deputy Advocate, spoke about Remembrance Day and answered questions from youth about suffering linked to war. 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 Bento, Coordinator from the Landon Person Centre, present for the weekend event and listen to her remarks about the other province's *Shaking the Movers'* exercise, and the follow-up on recommendations.



During the 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, Social Worker for Young Newcomers**

## B. Expressing themselves in video

A spot 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 were also given the opportunity to do so in this spot. In this mean, participants 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 who aged from 14 to 17-years-old, with the support of the Child and Youth Advocate's team and MCAF stakeholders. The eight facilitators, Francophones, Anglophones and allophones met frequently to set up activities during the conference. This helped the participants who wanted to express themselves, give their opinions, answer questions and be aware of their rights. Six of the eight facilitators are members of the Multicultural Association of Fredericton.

The planning and debrief sessions with the young facilitators sought to help familiarize themselves with their role as facilitators and assist them to build a dialogue with participants, while respecting 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 during the last week of September up until the November event to prepare the activities, adapt the activities to the theme and share their ideas. Educational tools, some of which were provided by Equitas, allowed facilitators to build a fun and instructional program. Facilitators also developed new ice-breaking exercises and other activities to help the group develop a climate of trust.

The presence of the participants in the group of refugees and newcomers was critically helpful in planning activities that spoke to the experience of displaced children. As a follow-up to the Shaking the Movers weekend, the work continued for the youth facilitators who had to analyze the content, review the experience gained as facilitators and develop recommendations.





## **“What the facilitators had to say:**

***“It was a surprising experience; helping young people in their pathways, making them realize that their rights exist, especially minorities who have not always had their rights respected. We could be part of their path 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 newcomer.”*** Young facilitator, 17

“

## Shaking the Movers Participants and Stakeholders

### A. Participants

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>			

Thirty-six youths, between the age of 12 to 17-years-old from across the province, participated in the 2017 *East Coast Shaking the Movers*.

Many young 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, who support the interdepartmental work on the province's Harm Prevention Strategy. Others came from middle schools from across the province.

This variety of participants 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 activities or discussions because of a language barrier.

## A. 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 participation of MCAF professionals encouraged many young people from the association to partake in the activities throughout the weekend. We would like to extend a special thanks to Saa Andrew Gbongbor, Children and Youth Coordinator MCAF, who played a leading role in the success of this project. The Centre MOSAIQUE actively participated by providing accessibility to their facilities so the young facilitators could prepare the event.



### CAFI

The CAFi is a non-profit Francophone Welcome and service centre for immigrants in Moncton. It helps their clients with their economic, social and cultural integration with the uses of 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 improve social justice. The youth used some tools made available by a program officer from Equitas to organize activities for the conference. A young facilitator was trained by Equitas and made her teammates aware of 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 Resource Centre. The Landon Pearson Resource Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights facilitates dialogues, shared initiatives and projects dedicated to the advancement and betterment of the lives of children. Shaking the movers is generously supported by 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 [www.carleton.ca/landonpearsoncentre](http://www.carleton.ca/landonpearsoncentre).

# YOUTH VOICE AND *RECOMMENDATIONS*

*The following sections of this report contain 33 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. Additionally, names of the schools participants attended were removed.*

*Excerpts from the Convention on the Rights of the Child are also included. Those excerpts were taken from the UNICEF tool and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in plain language, those provided for reference tool used by young people throughout the course of this project.*

## I. Ice Breakers and team-building activities

"Ice Breakers are often used in various settings to create a certain level of comfort among new acquaintances. Among other things, they can be games, songs, or dances. At *Shaking the Movers*, we used them mostly to encourage our participants to get out of their boxes, and use an accessible 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.

Young facilitator, 17

Get loose Get Funky / Great Big Moose: "Gathered in a circle, everyone engaged in the song and its matching moves. 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 played fun games here and had fun.”*

Young person, 16

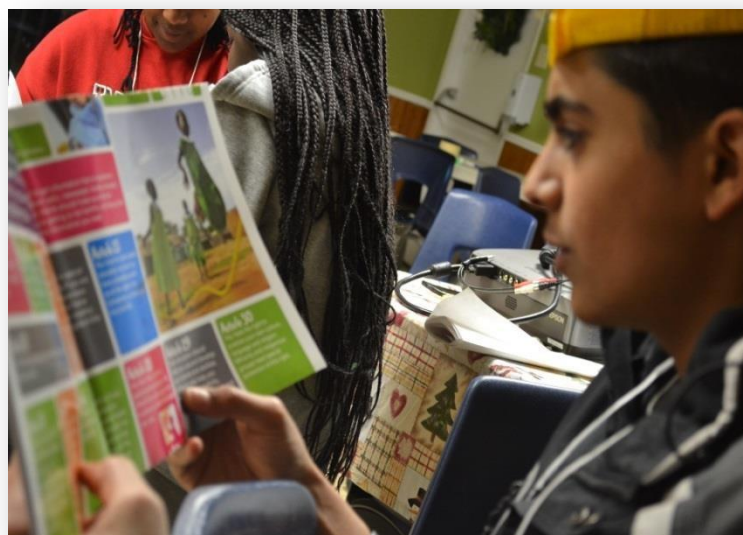
*“Shaking the Movers is a program that teaches young people about human rights, I mean children rights and we do it through fun activities.”* Young person 15

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

“

## II. Children’s Rights

The foundation of *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*. The *Convention* was explained with different activities. Additionally, education occurred organically as the opportunity to identify how rights linked back to specific discussions that were occurring.



## B. Glimpse of the Activities

The quote below is a personal narrative from a facilitator about the *Toss the Dice* activity, which allowed for a discussion on the rights of the child.

"Sitting in a circle, our participants were invited to throw a cardboard die, each side had two numbers. These numbers were matched with questions which were written on a piece of paper in the front. The person tossing the dice 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 better. If the dice fell on a rights issue, members of the group were also asked the question to discuss that issue. Being the first activity of *Shaking the Movers* 2017, this game was intended to pave the way for a discussion on the rights of the child. Our hope was that by opening the discussion of youth-specific rights at the beginning, we would be able to have facilitated discussions through empowerment. Adding questions about the participants was done to ease tensions attributed to learning new concepts. [...]From there, we touched on the fact that children everywhere all have the same rights, even though they are not always equally respected. At several points during the discussion, the fact that the right to play for children and youth is essential to growth and their quality of life was emphasized. Then the discussion migrated to newcomers, as it was planned, which built on the notion that, in Canada, we are privileged to live in an environment that recognizes our rights, even though there is still work to be done. This discussion provided a good start for the weekend, as it helped guide everyone around the theme of the weekend". Young facilitator 16 [Original in French]

## “ In their own words

***"During this activity I enjoyed talking about rights that are important to me like the right to equality."***

**Young person, 16**

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

***"Before the Shaking the Movers weekend, I knew about 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 those rights even though everyone has equal "rights"."*** Young person, 17



*"In order to ensure the respect of rights, I think Canada should make it mandatory for people working with youth under 19 to be educated, and have a clear understanding of children's rights, how adults in the lives of children who are part of minority groups have rights that are commonly violated, for instance those in article 19, 16, 30, 31, and 37. Based on some of the things that were mentioned during Shaking the Movers NB 2017, newcomers often have many rights violated due to racism from other people, most often from older people. [...] One last thing I'd like to mention is that if young people knew about and learned about a place they should/can go when certain situations causing harm arises or when they have their rights violated, and maybe, if Canada was more aware of its youth population, then more people would thrive."*

Young person, 15

**I** *learned how to solve problems like bullying, racism. I learned that we as young people have rights too."* Young person, 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. This causes excesses, poor parents do not send their children to school because they do not have money. Although, 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 their rights even though everyone has 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. The non-discrimination policy is well-established in Canada, the problems arise with the implementation in the field. Laws should be adjusted to take matters of discrimination more seriously, so that all laws are equally applied to all Canadians regardless of skin colour, culture, gender or religion.



### III. Children on the Move

Young participants shared stories about the difficulties encountered when one leaves a country, arrives and settles in a new country. Two activities opened the discussion on the reasons why people migrate. Afterward, participants were asked to partake in simulation activity called "In the Shoes of a Newcomer". This activity made it possible to address all concerns relating to the pathways of refugees, immigrants and migrants when they arrive in Canada or when they 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 protection of all the rights in this Convention.

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

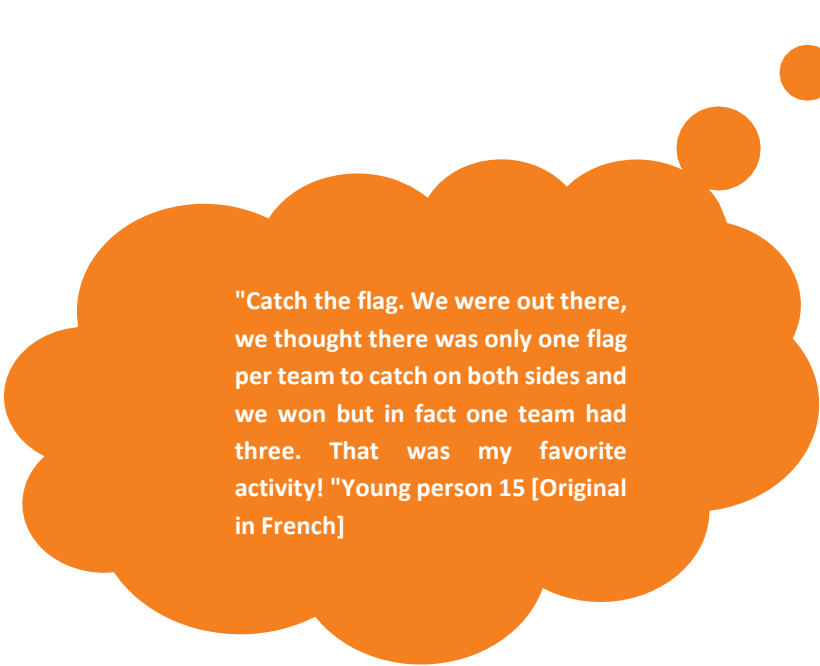
Here is what one of the facilitators had to say about the **musical chairs activity on climate refugees**:



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

The purpose of this metaphorical version of musical chairs is to define the reality that Earth is now producing climate refugees. In this situation, the game chairs represent the ice patches in the North of the planet or some 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 represented a new population of refugee. This activity also served as an introduction to the portion of the day which would evoke emotions for the participants as they faced concerns which refugees from around the world have to overcome every day". Young facilitator, 16 [Original in French]



"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]

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

"This version of Catch the flag started with a disadvantaged team and another team with no disadvantage with a purpose to reinforce the message that newcomers must work harder to

achieve the same results as a Canadian who were born in Canada. The goal of this game was that one team had to find one hidden flag, and the other, three flags. To further support the metaphor, the "refugee" team was unaware that their team needed to find three flags. None of the participants knew if they were playing a skewed version of the game until the "refugees" disadvantaged team found a flag and thought they had won. Although the game had to be 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. At first, 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 giving it their best. Then, in the small group discussions, the conversation moved to more concrete situations [...]. It was concluded that newcomers in Canada are not getting the economic and health care they need to have a quality of life which is 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 participants wondered about how we arrive in Canada. They adapted the activity to most accurately reflect their own experiences. "I experienced this situation and I know it is difficult" says a 17-year-old facilitator. Here's what the facilitators had to say:

"People must leave their hometown because of the war. First, they were divided into four groups which would represent their "family". To move to Canada, they needed a visa, a plane ticket, money and their birth certificates which were available at specific stations. Each group had to perform a hard task given by a person at each station. These tasks included pushups, burpees, singing, etc.

*The goal was to teach them the challenges refugees face before moving to Canada. The objective was to show them the process one must take to come to Canada. Being a refugee, I remember the process it took for us to come here which took almost one to three 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 made aware of the challenges that a refugee encounters when they arrive in 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 Canadians 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 a visa*



At this station two young participants acted as immigration officer to simulate the journey of families fleeing their country to settle in Canada. Behind a makeshift desk, they welcomed two members of each family to ask them these questions:

1. Do you have your birth certificate? (If you don't, you had to go to another station to get it.)
2. Do you know this flag? (Showing the Canadian flag)
3. Why do you want to leave your country?
4. Why did you choose this country?
5. What are you looking for in this new country?
6. How many children do you have?

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



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

"In order to get money, we gave each group various tasks ranging from push-ups, dancing, singing. When participants weren't completing the tasks, we denied their request because that is reality for many people" a facilitator shared.

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

For the birth certificate and the plane ticket, participants had to successfully complete different sport tests.

***“ 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 Canadian citizen and I followed it. Also I found out that their rights don't get as respected as Canadian-born people [...].” Anonymous Letter***

***“You have to know the difficulties that refugees or newcomers face by 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 them. 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 thinking about immigrating illegally or do immigrate to Canada. Considering their present “leadership” this is quite understandable as the few days following the American presidential election we saw a lot of 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 sort of evaluation. Considering the administration's appreciation of newcomers, it could possibly be very easy to achieve this agreement.”***

***Two young participants, 15 and 12-years-old (from a Letter to the Government)***

**“**

## ***Recommendations***

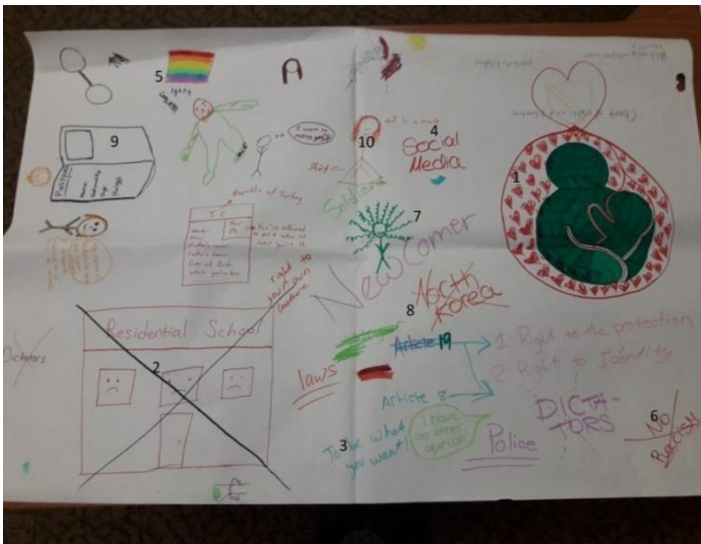
4. Canada should work to ensure that all countries become signatories of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and implement it fully.
5. Newcomers need to be supported when they arrive.
6. The immigration process should be simplified and shortened.
7. A specific agreement with U.S. should be reached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

## IV. A New Life

During the *Shoes of a Newcomer* activity participants continued to address the challenges and barriers to resettlement or faced at the arrival in Canada. Young participants drew pictures of their ideal world and wrote letters to the government to report on the challenges they face. Some are shown below.



### A. My ideal community/my ideal world Would look like this...



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



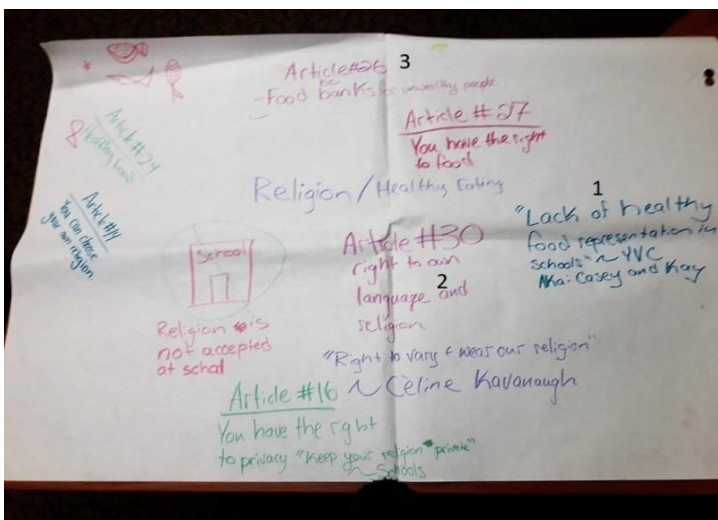
1. Right to Internet Access and resources for newcomers
2. Justice
3. No war
4. Communication and right to vote
5. Equality
6. Welcoming
7. Healthy Environment
8. Jobs and education
9. Medical care
10. Election
11. No Trump that pose a threat to the world



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



1. Peace
2. Tim Hortons
3. Fresh water
4. Free sport 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 government.

### “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 in Canada three months ago, and I was disappointed, scared and sad, because according to me, as a first step, speaking with somebody is probably a hard thing for me, because my English is not very good. After a few weeks, I made a lot of friends and felt like myself, more free and quiet. It was hard, but I did it, and I am proud of myself that I overcame 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]

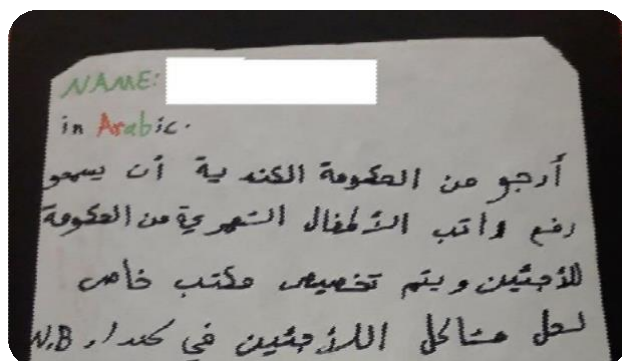
*“There is the language gap, so it is difficult to retain information [talking about school]”* Young person, 16

## Recommendations

8. Structures such as MCAF should collaborate with other structures such as the CYA to help young people overcome language barriers and the transition to a new school, so it is positive and they can 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 or refugees are concerned about is access to care, specifically, the psychological care of young people suffering from trauma. Here are excerpts from their testimonies:



***"We ask the Canadian Government to provide 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

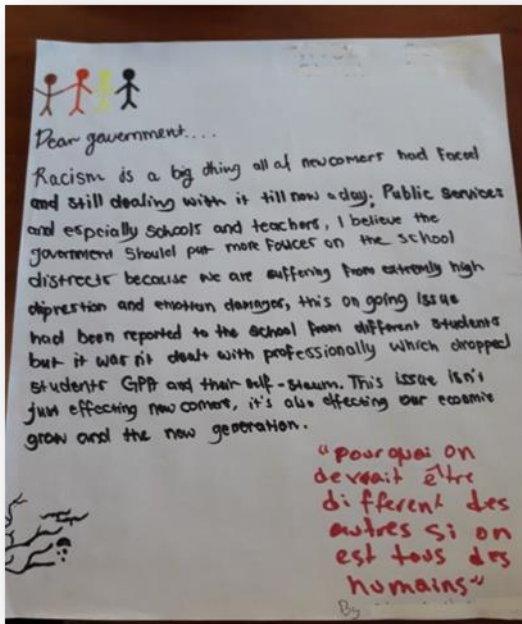
**Article 24:** You have the right to the best healthcare possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

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

***"It would help a lot if the process of getting [a permanent residence] took less time, because when you're in Canada and you do not have the residence card, you cannot get family insurance or get a job. We need to do it all 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, missing classes, bad grades, less respect, I don't want to go [to school] even more."*** Group of young people





*“Dear government, [...] Public services and especially schools and teachers, I believe the government should put more [...] for school districts because we are suffering from extremely high depression and emotional damages. This ongoing issue has been reported to the school from different students but it wasn’t dealt with professionally, as a result, students’ GPA scores dropped and so did their self-esteem. This issue isn’t just affecting newcomers, 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 involved in the immigration process.
13. There should be more accessible programs for youth mental health, particularly, among newcomer youth.
14. Child benefits should be increase and federal support should be extended for refugee children.
15. Health Care system delays, sometimes take 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.



### “ In their own words

*“I tried out for [...] Soccer team and when they told me I had to pay \$3 000, I did not go to the rest of the tryout because I do not have enough money.”* Young person, 15

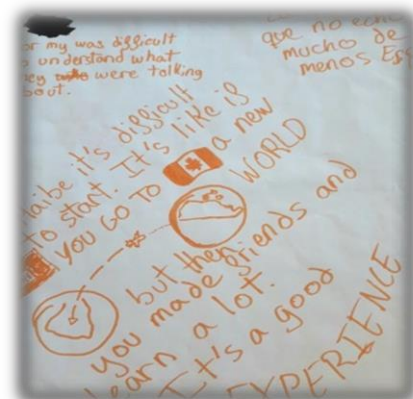
*“Pressure to feel like a Canadian is heavy, especially when you are attached to your [...] culture”*

*“Nobody tells you about the “rules”/cultural norms when they come to Canada so you are lost in school”* Group of young people

*“In sports too, there is racism, we have been called monkeys.”* Young person, 17 [Original in French]

*“ We don’t find love for each other in religions, but in our hearts.”* Young person, 17 [Original in French]

”



*Letter from an Exchange Student*

## Recommendations

17. Recreational activities should be 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



On Saturday night, the youth organized a multicultural evening. The dinner included African, Nepali, Syrian and Acadian dishes. 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, the young participants discussed stereotypes, racism and xenophobia realities that many young people have claimed to have experienced.

#### A young facilitator's comments about the evening:

*“Having spent Saturday morning and afternoon discussing the challenges faced by young newcomers, from 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 with spontaneous music and dance.*”

*Seeing those from all different 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 « halal in Turkish » meat and gluten-free food. It was a really good experience for me and everybody. I hope to come here again next year.”* 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 being 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

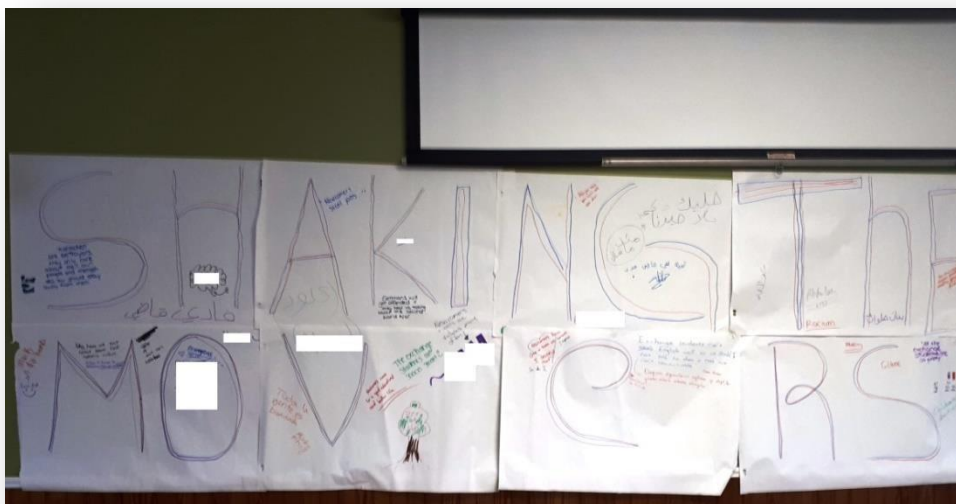
**Article 2:** all children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religions is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be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



### C. 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 excerpts the young participants share their experiences at school:

### *“In their own words*

*“You have the right to learn. In Canada, we have free education and we encourage people to get an education.”*  
Young participant

*“The school system is outdated, because for newcomers it is 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

*“Our future is 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 are subject to, makes them not want to go to school or even go out in public. Our goal it's not just to let refugees come to Canada but to make them feel safe.”* Young person, 16

*“As we discussed, we shared so many stories, and it was really sad. 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 feel 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's voices and to take them 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. Collect 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

“Racism has destroyed our lives since we came here, it still does. We couldn’t live in peace because all lives matter. It is still an issue to this day.” 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 what the reason may be.” Young person, 12

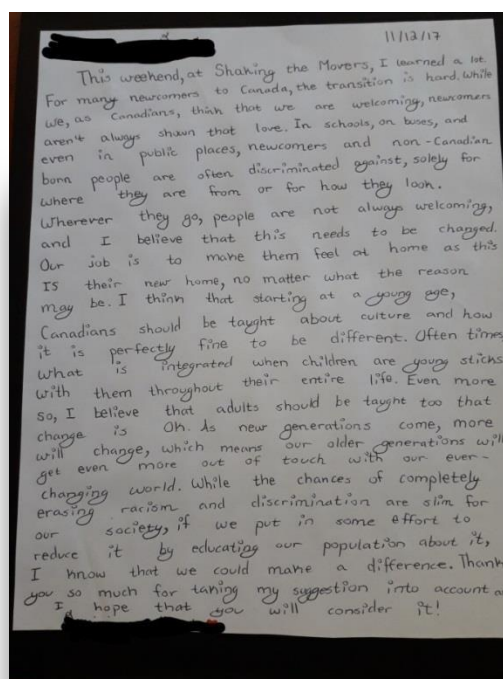
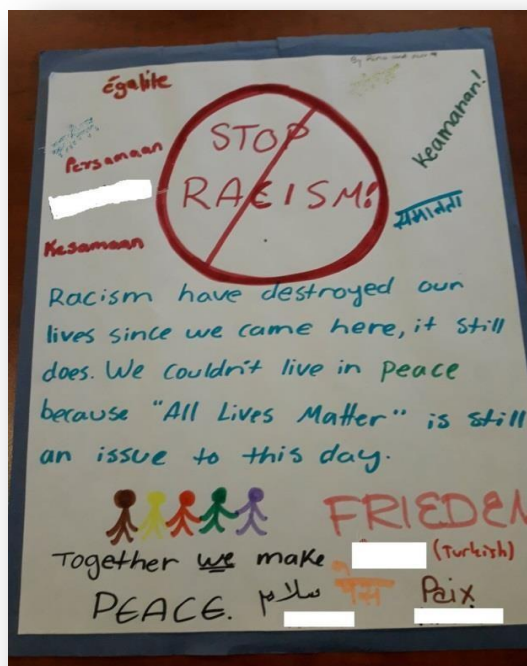
“A person told me not to go to a dinner with a Syrian family because I would be in danger, people don’t realize they are being racist.” Young participant

“Racism is a big thing all newcomers have faced and are still dealing with until nowadays.” Young person, 17

“Racism comes from the fact that people are ignorant and that people do not want to learn to get to know others.” Young person, 12 [Original in French]

“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 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, even though 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. I didn’t know that it was that bad in school. So yeah, racism exists.” 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. Offer more programs to help newcomers learn about Canadian norms, while retaining their own culture.
28. There should be more public education for both youth 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 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 participants made a commitment to no longer remain passive in the face of situations of injustice that they would witness at school or in a public space. This discussion also made it very clear, that racist jokes should no longer be tolerated.

### Young people are committed to

32. Respect one another.

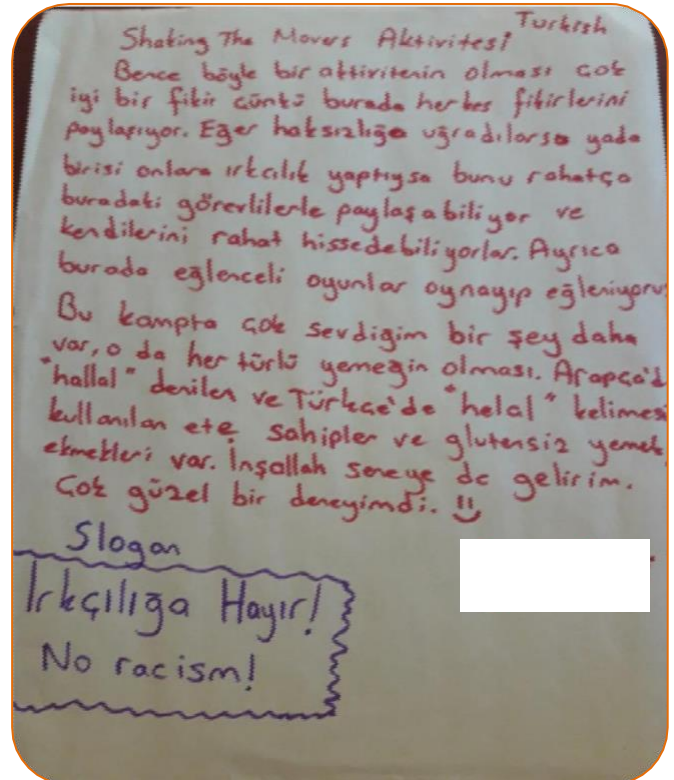
33. Do not remain passive in the face of verbal or physical violence in school or in a public place and seek help from adults in positions of authority.

**“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 a good time[...] It's basically to help people, who moved to Canada to communicate with people, feel welcomed and not scared, disappointed or something else.

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

Young person, 15



## VII Conclusion

### A Message from the Young Facilitators

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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, to health professionals and to government in where more diverse cultural representation is needed.

Some of the young facilitators and participants were taking part in this type of experience for the first time. The implementation of their recommendations will encourage them. The voices of young people must be heard. We want to be heard 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. "***

Défenseur des  
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New Brunswick  
Child & Youth  
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Landon Pearson Resource Centre  
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