



YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM FINAL REPORT

CultureLink's Community
Services Department
Toronto, December 2019.



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"Through my participation in the Youth Leadership Program with CultureLink, I have gained a much deeper understanding of the multi-faceted issues that refugees face in their journey towards a better life". Anam, project participant.

The Youth Leadership Program (YLP) is an educational & leadership initiative held in collaboration between CultureLink and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

The project was officially launched on June 20, 2019- the World Refugee Day- and was directed to educate the community and raise awareness on refugees' issues. The project targeted 10 young people ages 18 to 24 who have not been deeply exposed to refugees' issues and life experiences suffered by people fleeing war, violence, and persecution.

During the project, participants had the opportunity to develop leadership skills and become agents of change in their communities.

The project encouraged young people to develop and implement engaging activities in their own communities promoting support and harmonious relationships between refugees and the host community.

The project successfully offered support in the areas of leadership, promotion, speaking engagement, community engagement and advocacy work. In addition, participants had the opportunity to actively participate in educational activities and interact with refugees from different countries, who openly shared their life stories.

PROJECT OUTCOME

*"Advocating teaches us to first use our voice, and then we use our voice to stand up for what is just and right".
Alessandra, project participant.*

The purpose of this initiative was to create an educational opportunity to engage young people ages 18 to 24 in advocacy and leadership work, raising awareness about refugees' issues in the broader community, in particular, in communities that are not directly exposed to life experiences suffered by people displaced by violence, conflict and persecution.

The long term outcome is to enhance young people's leadership skills to become leaders on refugees' matters, increasing community awareness and supports towards the local integration of refugees, their capacity to heal, recover and build a better future in Canada.



The project successfully met the short-term outcome directed to engage 10 young people ages 18 to 24 in advocacy and leadership work by creating experiential learning opportunities to raise their awareness about refugees' issues, developing basic advocacy skills, and exposing them to advocacy work.

ACTIVITIES

*"I have never taken time to reflect on my privileges".
Ebony, project participant.*

Project phases and targeted activities.

PHASE I: OUTREACH STRATEGY

Targeted population: 8-10 young people ages 18 to 24.

During the month of July, the team was able to successfully outreach the targeted population. At the beginning of the project, we had 16 young people registered, nevertheless, due to project delays with the training phase, the total number of participants dropped to ten (10).

Given the fact that 51% of Toronto residents *were born outside Canada*, and most of them are somehow exposed to refugee and immigrant matters, there were challenges in terms of outreaching participants who met the criteria of not being exposed to refugees issues. Nevertheless, we were able to identify those who were not deeply exposed to refugees' issues, and who also met the criteria of being at least 18 years old and enrolled in high school or in a college program, ideally not related to the refugees and immigration field, and looking for volunteer and leadership opportunities.

ACTIVITIES

PHASE II: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The experiential learning phase was initially planned to be delivered during the month of August- before school started- nevertheless, due to external factors, this phase started at the end of August, and the schedules for the sessions were adjusted based on participants' availability, since 100% of them were enrolled in school.

Participants actively engaged in complex learning opportunities as mentioned below:

- **Session 1:** *Fleeing war and conflict.*
- **Session 2:** *Raising awareness of violence against women and girls. Understanding Female Genital Mutilation.*
- **Session 3:** *Fleeing from civil war. The Guatemala case.*
- **Session 4:** *Public Speaking Training.*
- **Session 5:** *Public speaking and public petitions.*
- **Session 6:** *A critical view on human mobility: a world in crisis.*
- **Session 7:** *Advocacy Work and community engagement training.*

PHASE III: ADVOCACY PREPARATION

During this phase, participants prepared and rehearsed their speaking engagements to engage in advocacy work.

Our facilitators helped the participants with speech preparation & rehearsals, stage management, and public speaking and advocacy skills enhancement.

**Project phases
and targeted
activities.**





The Youth Leadership Program is an educational opportunity that engages young people in advocacy and leadership work, raising awareness about refugees' issues in the broader community. **Attend this panel event to learn about refugees and the refugee crisis.**

ACTIVITIES

PHASE IV: ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Participants were prepared to engage in advocacy and community engagement, raising awareness on refugees' issues and changing public attitudes. The following results showcase the success of the Youth Leadership Project (YLP):

- 100% of Participants engaged in advocacy work by individually providing education to other youth and their communities.
- 80% of participants have initiated their engagement in advocacy work using social media and CultureLink's electronic newsletter and website to share their learnings and individual experiences in increasing their own awareness around refugees' issues and rights.

Project phases and targeted activities.

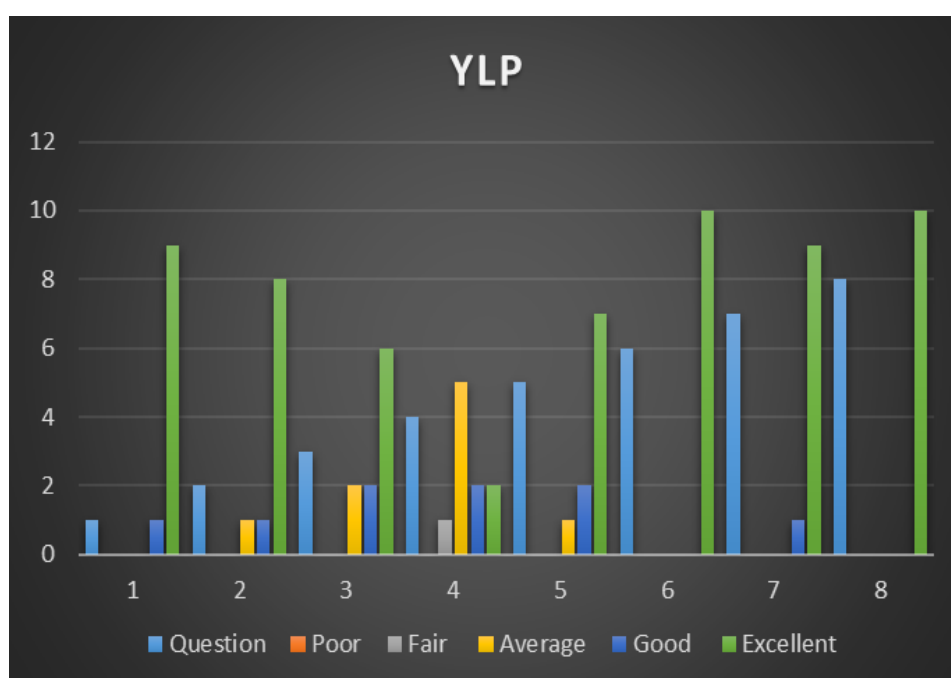
- 30% of the participants engaged in individual public speaking events, and 60% of participants have engaged in community speaking events targeting communities that we presume are not directly exposed to life experiences suffered by people displaced by violence, conflict and persecution. Since the majority of the participants did not feel fully confident of doing the speaking engagement alone, this activity was accommodated to their needs and was successfully delivered as a collective community engagement event at Ryerson University.

EVALUATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

During the project implementation, qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used to make informed decisions to adjust activities and logistics. A final evaluation survey collecting participants' feedback was used to better understand the project's impact. The following questions were included in the survey:

1. Did you enjoy your experience with YLP?
2. Do you feel you have learned new skills or gained new knowledge regarding refugees' issues and advocacy work?
3. Were you able to establish new social connections for advocacy work?
4. Were you able to practice your public speaking skills?
5. Have you gained new knowledge about your community during this project?
6. Were the content and activities implemented important to you?
7. Would you be able to use what you have learned during this project?
8. Were staff/facilitator(s) well prepared?

Below, the chart represents the results collected:





Open questions were also included as follows:

How was your experience with the Youth Leadership Program?

Participants responded that they had a great experience and that the project provided an opportunity "to know about the life of refugees and be able to understand what they have to sacrifice in order to come to Canada". They have:

- Learned "how to talk confidently in front of people".
- Gained "some of the techniques to keep calm, look confident in stage".
- Learned "about the law and the process refugees have to do in order to enter Canada".
- Learned "about the story of refugees".
- Learned "what was happening globally in regards to refugees".
- Gained "more insight on what it is like to be a refugee"

"My passion to advocate for refugees was reignited with YLP". Project participant.

What were 3 impacts of your speaking engagements on the audience?

Respondents commented the following:

- "People began to critically think about the position Canada is taking to assist with the global refugee situation".
- "People had a better understanding about what refugees have to go through when they first arrive in Canada".
- "They would speak to others about refugees".
- "They would be involved with refugee programs".



What were 3 impacts of your speaking engagements on the audience?

- "One audience member made us reflect on our language and asked to stop saying refugee crisis because it made refugees seem like they are the problem".
- "A number of audience members said they were inspired to make a difference and advocate for refugee rights after the speaking engagement".

How would you adapt the program to enhance the advocacy and goal of raising awareness for refugees?

- "I would incorporate a lesson on how to write advocacy letters to the government and teach how to deal with this issue on a systemic level".
- "Essentially, show us how to have our voices heard by the people in power".

How likely would you recommend this program to other youth?

- 100% Very Likely.

Would you like to participate in this experience again?

- 100% Yes.

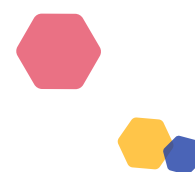
Recommendations:

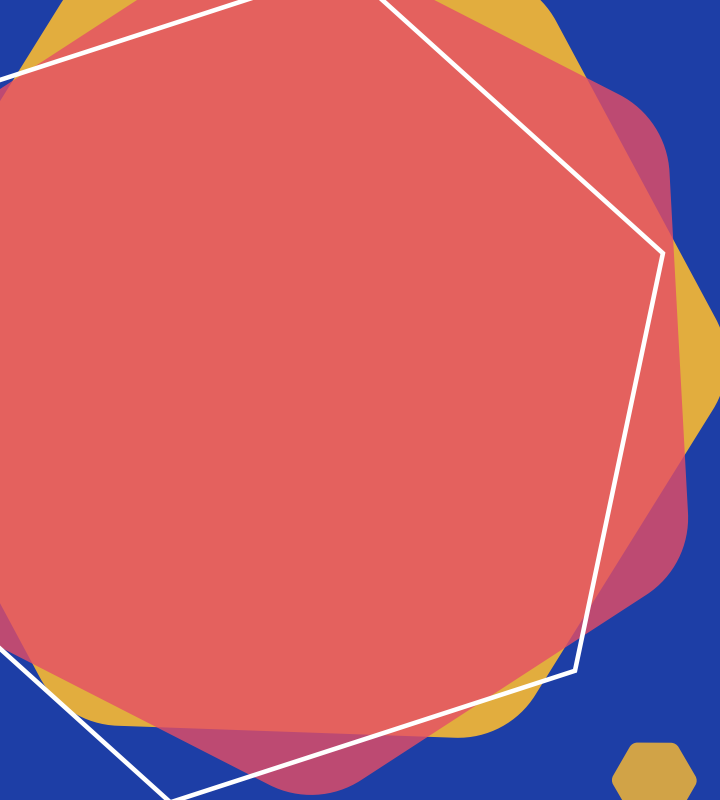
Based on the team experience, we highly recommend being more flexible regarding the eligibility criteria since there were many youth interested who did not meet the criteria established in the project. In addition, we recommend to allocate more time for outreach and training, and significantly increase the United Nations' staff involvement in all phases of the project implementation.

- "A number of audience members said they were inspired to make a difference and advocate for refugee rights after the speaking engagement". Project participant.

FINANCIAL REPORT

| Item | Actuals June to December 2019 | Total Budget | Yet to be Spent | Comments |
|---|--|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Hospitality/training & workshops | 1,700 | 1745 | 45 | |
| Participants & staff traveling | 1,625 | 1,625 | - | |
| Delivery assistance supplies | 600 | 600 | - | |
| Delivery Assistance-Copier monthly usage | 150 | 30 | - 120 | Absorbed by CultureLink |
| Workshop ¹ facilitators | 1250 | 0 | - 1,250 | Absorbed by CultureLink |
| Project Administration | 1000 | 1000 | - | |
| TOTAL COST | 6325 | 5000 | -1325 | Absorbed by CultureLink |





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CultureLink is a settlement and community organization with more than 30 years' experience in developing and delivering services to meet the needs of diverse communities. Passionate about providing innovative services, we adapt to changes and create new programs that best respond to and address our clients' specific needs. Our team of more than 70 staff members, speaking more than 30 languages, is dedicated, knowledgeable, and multicultural. We serve between 10,000 and 12,000 participants on average each year.