To build bridges, we need strong foundations: Establishing leadership spaces for immigrant and refugee youth

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We are on Unceded First Nation Land
Coast Salish Territory
What is The Fresh Voices Initiative?

- Fresh Voices from Long Journeys: Insights of Immigrant & Refugee Youth is an initiative of Vancouver Foundation.

- Began in October 2011 as a partnership with the BC Representative for Children and Youth.

- We offer a way for immigrant and refugee youth from across B.C. to engage in dialogue and action to identify and remove barriers to their success.

- Events for dialogue and action at the local, regional and national level.
Fresh Voices from Long Journeys: Insights of Immigrant and Refugee Youth
Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation

Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision-making

Rung 7: Young people lead & initiate action

Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people

Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed

Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed

Rung 3: Young people tokenized*

Rung 2: Young people are decoration*

Rung 1: Young people are manipulated*

*Note: Hart explains that the last three rungs are non-participation

Youth Engagement for the Fresh Voices Initiative

Members of the immigrant and refugee community have said that in order for them to be involved and meaningfully represented, they need safe spaces where they can articulate their own experiences and realities. That is why throughout the planning and facilitation the focus was on engaging immigrant and refugee youth.
Other elements of the Fresh Voices approach:

• Youth-Adult Partnership
• Coordinator/Facilitator with Strong Community Connections
• Local Partnerships
• Grassroots and Institutional Partnerships
• Taking a risk
• Ensuring diversity in terms of immigration journeys, race, gender, sex, more…
How do we establish foundations?

Every young person has a journey that needs to be supported in regards to: Culture, Spirituality, Employment and Family

Valuing and celebrating differences; diversity is a strength

Ensuring that young people are provided opportunities to give back to the community

Workers who speak different languages, or same language as youth

A commitment to systemic change
Having young people at the center makes policy fun!
Any questions?

Thank you/ Nandri / Shukran / Ta blu / Tashakor/ Gamsahabnida/ Xie Xie / Gracias / Cam On

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