

equitas

YOUNG PEOPLE



AT THE HEART OF CHANGE

A zine about grassroots
organizing, transformation, and hope.

ABOUT THIS ZINE

During 2020-2021, 39 groups of young people across the country came up with and carried out important projects to address various human right issues through the Equitas National Program. This zine presents 39 Community Action Projects through art and storytelling. They are grouped into 4 different themes that emerged across Canada.

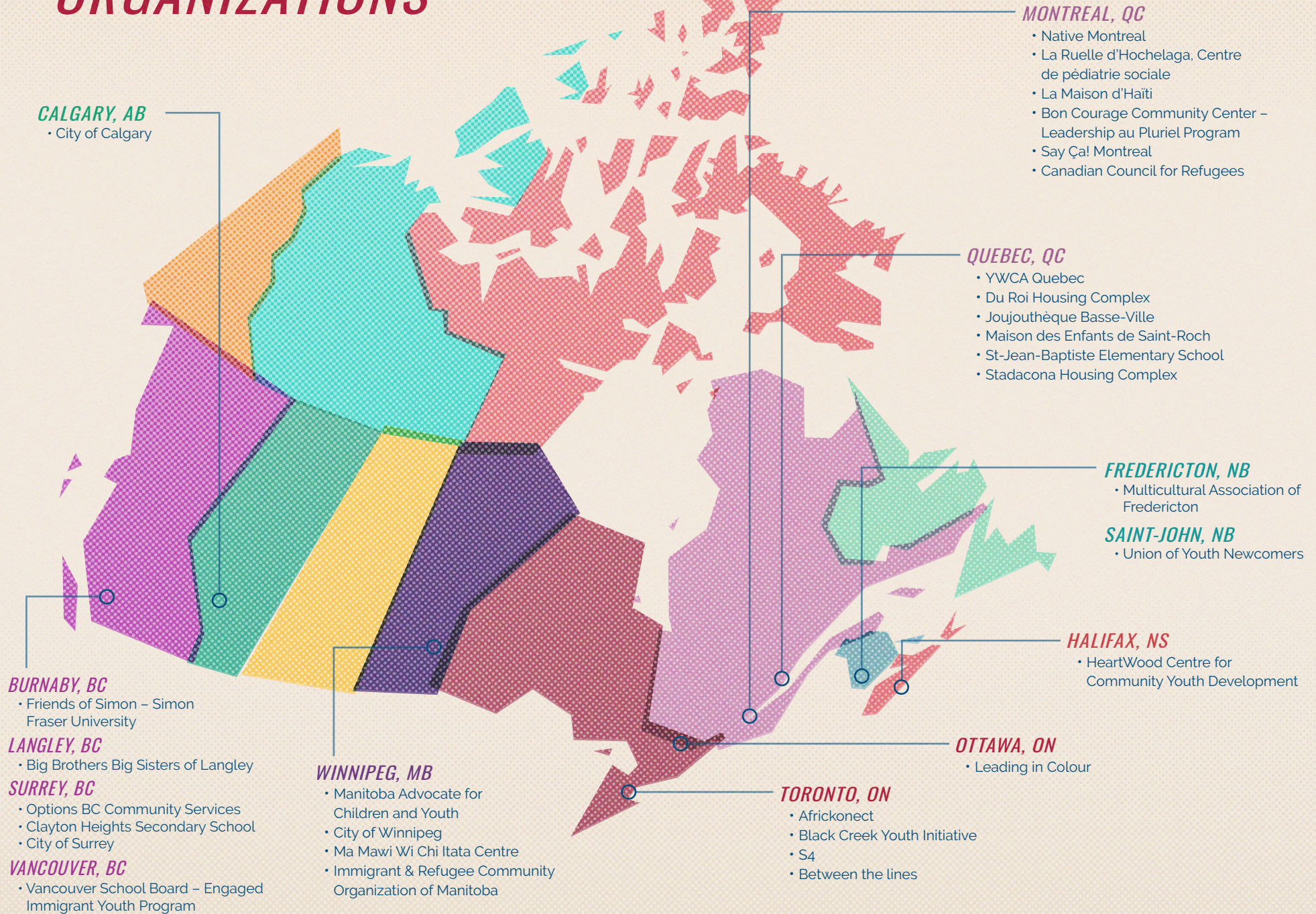
The intersection of different lived experiences, and the way that various human rights issues affect each other are integral aspects of effective human rights work. The eclectic and impactful collection of projects in this zine showcases the ways in which diverse communities can work together and build networks to achieve our common goals of advancing equality, social justice and respect for human dignity throughout Canada.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE

The lands on which the work for these projects and this zine was carried out are part of the unceded Indigenous territories of Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), Mississauga of the New Credit, Haudenosaunee, Huron Wendat, Anishnabeg, Swxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwəta (Tsleil-Waututh), xwməkwəyəm (Musqueam), Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Stoney Nakoda (the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations), the Métis Nation (Region 3), Kwantlen, Matsqui, Katzie, Semiahmoo, Cree, Dakota, Dene, Oji-Cree First Nations, Wəlastəkwiyik (Maliseet) and Mi'kmaq Peoples, and the Algonquin Anishinabe Nations.

We are grateful for their continued stewardship of these lands and waters. Today, the lands are home to a diverse population of Indigenous Peoples and other communities. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous Peoples and other communities across Canada.

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS



“CREATING YOUTH SPACES”

Creating spaces for youth to learn about their rights and participate in their communities

The creation of spaces and groups that exist specifically for young people is essential for the realization of children's rights. In these spaces, children and youth can express themselves, be heard, grow and learn in new ways. This year, 8 groups of young people decided to create their own spaces where they feel like they belong and can express themselves. In these spaces, they also explored what their rights mean to them and how they are or are not respected in their communities.

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD:

Art. 15: Right to form a group
Art. 24: Right to a clean environment
Art. 31: Right to play
Art. 42: Right to know your rights

ISADORA AYESHA LIMA



Africkonect (Toronto, ON)

Africkonect, a new, youth-led grassroots organization, organized a launch event to help identify the priorities, needs and challenges of youth in their community. By organizing this event, Africkonect was able to establish connections with other community organizations, which will, in turn, help progress their vision and mission.

Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY) (Winnipeg, MB)

The young people at MACY are producing a children's rights themed mural that will depict a young person's right to rest and to enjoy their life. The purpose of the mural is to raise awareness in their community about their rights.

Options BC Community Services (Surrey, BC)

Options youth created a human rights book "to celebrate human dignity in all our differences and similarities". The book exists both in a print and digital version, and includes stories, videos and artwork. In their words, they hope that their "collective voices will help young people everywhere understand human rights and empower them to challenge injustice, so that we can all move towards a more inclusive society where we all feel a strong sense of belonging."

"A YOUNG PERSON'S RIGHT TO REST AND ENJOY THEIR LIFE"

Multicultural Association of Fredericton (MCAF) (Fredericton, NB)

The youth of MCAF coordinated a series of events around children's rights for children in their organization. They also organized a virtual event with decision-makers in order to raise awareness about the importance of making schools more inclusive and welcoming to newcomers in Fredericton.

Say Ça! Montreal (Montreal, QC)

The youth of Say Ça decided to use their French-language learning program as a place to have deep conversations and attend workshops on issues that matter to them. To address environmental issues, a topic they feel invested in, they collaborated on a multidisciplinary art project that involves music, writing, song-writing and drawing.

"A MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIETY"

YWCA Quebec & the Young Women of the Du Roi Housing Complex (Quebec, QC)

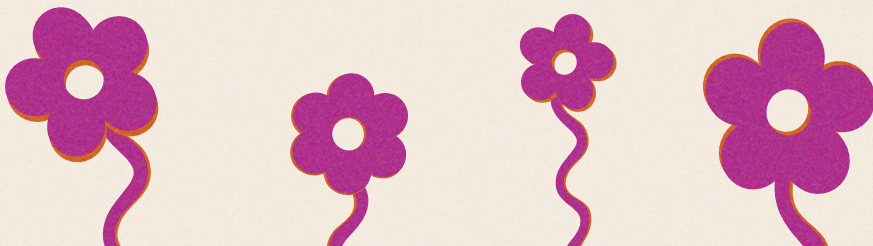
A group of young women living in the Du Roi Housing Complex, supported by the YWCA Centre Filles, reclaimed the common room of their community housing unit and made it their own. Taking ownership of the space allowed the young women to have an area that reflects who they are and one where they can be themselves.

Native Montreal (Montreal, QC)

The youth at Native Montreal are making a podcast in which they interview Indigenous youth about their perspectives on environmental issues. They have created this platform for young people to express themselves on this important topic.

Joujouthèque Basse-Ville & Maison des Enfants de Saint-Roch (Quebec, QC)

In a series of children's rights activities delivered by these two organizations, children revealed that they do not have enough time or space for play and do not get to express themselves. To culminate the series, the children were supported in making a video about their rights.



The COVID-19 pandemic increased physical and social isolation. As community resources decreased due to public health measures and restrictions, mental health issues worsened, and some of the most vulnerable people felt the effects of this global crisis most acutely. 13 groups of young people decided to have a positive impact on those around them and carried out 13 projects addressing different forms of isolation that people have been experiencing over the past year.

Art. 27:
**Right to food,
clothing and
a home**

BREAKING SOCIAL ISOLATION

Lanaudière Native Friendship Center & the Children's Group (Joliette, QC)

When learning about their rights, the children's group of Lanaudière Native Friendship Center spoke a lot about how homelessness affects multiple people in their community. They decided to fight this injustice and support homeless people by collecting important items, such as food and blankets for them.

Black Creek Youth Initiative (Toronto, ON)

The children in this group created a social isolation mural. They each completed a panel of the mural with the help of a professional mentor over zoom sessions. The panels will be combined to make a final piece and publicly displayed in the Toronto neighborhood of Black Creek.

Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB)

The young people from IRCOM wanted to combat social isolation among newcomer youth, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year. They hosted a series of outdoor activities to bring newcomer youth together.

YWCA Quebec & the Young Women of St-Jean-Baptiste Elementary School (Quebec, QC)

These young women raised public awareness about challenges that homeless people face through the creation of a video, letters denouncing anti-homelessness public benches and a poster campaign, as well as cooking meals for homeless people.

Friends of Simon – Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, BC)

In response to isolation felt by newcomer families due to the pandemic, a group of newcomer children put together COVID-19 wellness kits to be distributed at their school to newcomer families. The kits are filled with items that will support families in feeling safe participating in community life.

S4 (Toronto, ON)

S4 youth created a zine about love in various Indigenous languages. They involved Indigenous artists from many different areas of Turtle Island and beyond to share their perspectives on love and how this is particularly important during a time of heightened social isolation.

Clayton Heights Secondary School (Surrey, BC)

In this school, an art class created different projects to be put on display at the local seniors' home to speak to the issue of isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ma Mawi Chi Itata Centre (Winnipeg, BC)

In order to combat the negative effects of homelessness amongst Indigenous youth in Winnipeg, the youth from this group created care packages and distributed them among this population.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Langley (BBBSL) (Langley, BC)

BBBSL youth created mental health gift boxes to help out young people struggling with mental health issues during this time of increased isolation.

HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development (Halifax, NS)

Youth assembled and mailed art kits for children of BIPOC families in and around Halifax to combat pandemic loneliness. Youth also wrote cards to seniors to break their social isolation caused by COVID-19.

YWCA Quebec & the Young Women of the Stadacona Housing Complex (Quebec, QC)

The young women of the Stadacona Housing Complex worked on creating strong relationships in their own group and decided to break the isolation of girls living in a nearby group home. They made personalized holiday cards for them.

Lanaudière Native Friendship Center & the NAPA Project (Joliette, QC)

The Lanaudière Friendship Center youth decided to create the project NAPA and build relationships with homeless people during a winter camping activity that they organized. Together, they shared meals, stories and teachings that will be captured in a writing workshop and a collective photo exhibit. What inspired youth to do this is the desire to have a positive impact on the life of homeless people in their community.

La Ruelle d'Hochelaga, Centre de Pédiatrie Sociale (Montreal, QC)

After doing research with local organizations and people they know in their neighborhood, the children of La Ruelle learned there was a need for certain items for homeless people so they made care kits for them and will be distributing them.



SADÉ ALEXIS

“COMBATTING RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION”

Creatively combatting racism and different forms of discrimination

Through their projects, many young people across Canada decided to address issues of systemic racism, different forms of discrimination, and stereotypes. As many of the young people are Black, Indigenous, People of color (BIPOC), they have been particularly affected by the terrible events that have shaken the whole world in the past year and inspired by the global social justice movements, such as Black Lives Matter, the denunciation of Indigenous racism in public health institutions and the fight against anti-Asian racism. Here is how these groups have decided to add their voices to these movements.

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD:

- Art. 2: Right to no discrimination
- Art. 27: Right to food, clothing and a home
- Art. 12: Right to have views respected
- Art. 13: Right to share thoughts freely

COMBATTING RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Bon Courage Community Center & the Visions PluriELLES Project (Montreal, QC)

Visions PluriELLES is a platform created by and for racialized young women. This platform is a safe space for all women who have experienced discrimination and/or racism and wish to share their experiences via podcast, images and videos on Instagram and Facebook.

Bon Courage Community Center & Éveil Vocationnel des Jeunes de Minorités Project (Montreal, QC)

Éveil Vocationnel is a virtual workshop organized by and for racialized young people to inspire them to pursue the projects and dreams that interest them. The workshop presents virtual interviews and portraits of successful racialized members of the Quebec's community and is being offered on an ongoing basis.

“A SAFE SPACE FOR ALL WOMEN”

City of Winnipeg (Winnipeg, MB)

The children from the City of Winnipeg created a set of anti-racism cards. These cards feature artwork that represents what a City of Winnipeg without racism looks like to them, as well as actionable items to build a more inclusive Winnipeg free from racism and discrimination.

YWCA Quebec & the Young Women of the Stadacona Housing Complex (Quebec, QC)

The young women in this group wrote an open letter about the ways gender stereotypes and sexism are maintained through their school uniform policies. They also are having weekly discussions and are participating in weekly workshops on sexual education and healthy relationships.

City of Calgary (Calgary, AB)

The City of Calgary is creating a mural on gender, racial and religious equality in order to contribute to building a more inclusive Calgary.

Between the Lines (Toronto, ON)

In order to counter racism in their communities, the youth from this group met on a weekly basis to engage in discussions around racial justice, and how to reach their broader communities on this topic.

“EDUCATE PEOPLE IN THEIR COMMUNITY ABOUT HOW RACISM AFFECTS THEM”

Say Ça! Montreal (Montreal, QC)

The youth of Say Ça decided to make their French-language learning program a space in which to have conversations and attend workshops about the challenges they are facing as young newcomers and young people living in Montreal. Racism came up as one issue they wanted to act on, so they decided to create an anti-racism comic strip to raise awareness and educate people in their community about how racism affects them and those around them.

La Maison d'Haïti (Montreal, QC)

The youth of Maison d'Haïti streamed a game of Among Us with invited guests and used the platform to talk about inequalities such as racism and discrimination that have worsened with the COVID-19 pandemic.



"LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DIVERSE YOUTH"

Shining a light on the lived experiences of diverse youth in Canada

The unique intersections of a young person's identity lead to diverse and distinct experiences of living in Canada. These experiences can sometimes be wonderful, but sometimes can also be full of challenges. 10 groups decided to shine a light on the many and various paths that life can take for youth in Canada. Here is how they decided to share their views and experiences.

UN CONVENTION ON THE *RIGHTS OF THE CHILD:*

Art. 2: Right to no discrimination
Art. 12: Right to have views respected
Art. 13: Right to share thoughts freely

JIEUN JUNE KIM

LIVED EXPERIENCES OF DIVERSE YOUTH

Bon Courage Community Center & The LGBTQ Activist (Montreal, QC)

The youth from this group created an Instagram platform to discuss topics related to the LGBTQ+ community. Through videos and social media posts, they discussed identity, coming out, and a host of other topics!

Bon Courage Community Center & Portraits d'Ébènes (Montreal, QC)

This group of youth created an online platform through social media to artistically showcase the diversity of the Black community in and around Montreal. By highlighting stories of neurodivergent, LGBTQ+ and disabled Black people, they are hoping to support diverse Black people's representation in arts and media.

Canadian Council for Refugee (National network, Canada)

The youth of CCR organized Talk to Action. Talk to Action was a series of newcomer youth consultations with approximately 15 organizations across Canada to assess and consolidate key advocacy issues for newcomer youth which they then shared with decision-makers.

Leading in Color (Ottawa, ON)

Leading in Color hosted a series of online events called Diaspora Dialogues. These events consisted of BIPOC youth presenting on topics of concern to them and their diaspora communities, including the Indian, Nigerian, and Hong Kong diaspora.

Bon Courage Community Center & Lettre au Premier Ministre du Canada (Montreal, QC)

This group wanted to raise awareness about the issues newcomers face, so they produced several video clips and published them on social media. They are hoping their project will reach decision-makers and the Prime Minister of Canada to help promote the regularization of newcomers' immigration statuses.

Bon Courage Community Center & Voix d'Inflexion (Montreal, QC)

This group of youth invited members of BIPOC communities who are models of success to share their journey through several filmed interviews to inspire other youth from these communities.

Vancouver School Board – Engaged Immigrant Youth Program (Vancouver, BC)

Newcomer young people and their families participated in a virtual cooking class and made a book based on the recipes they used. They shared meals from their cultures and had discussions around food, immigration, and how important cultural foods are to feeling at home.

Bon Courage Community Center & Par et Pour les Immigrants (Montreal, QC)

To help build more welcoming communities for newcomers in Quebec, the youth from this group created informative video clips on important topics for a newcomer's arrival such as housing, law, the education system, work and opening a bank account. Being immigrants themselves, they know how integrating into a new country can be challenging and they're here to help!

*“BEING IMMIGRANTS THEMSELVES,
THEY KNOW HOW INTEGRATING INTO
A NEW COUNTRY CAN BE CHALLENGING”*

City of Surrey (Surrey, BC)

The youth from the City of Surrey created a video to shine a light on the transition between high school and adult life in order to break stereotypes surrounding this transition and alleviate anxiety among their peers.

Union of Youth Newcomers (Saint-John, NB)

The Union of Youth Newcomers held a virtual event to raise awareness of the challenges and barriers that are faced by newcomer youth in Saint John, New Brunswick.

THANK YOU...

A special thank you to all the incredible young people from the following community organizations, schools, municipalities, housing complexes and networks:

Africkonect, Between the Lines, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Langley, Black Creek Youth Initiative, Bon Courage Community Center – Leadership au Pluriel Program, Canadian Council for Refugees, City of Calgary, City of Surrey, City of Winnipeg, Clayton Heights Secondary School, Du Roi Housing Complex, Friends of Simon – Simon Fraser University, HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development, Joujouthèque Basse-Ville, Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, La Maison d'Haïti, La Ruelle d'Hochelaga, Centre de Pédiatrie Sociale, Leading in Color, Maison des Enfants de Saint-Roch, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, Multicultural Association of Fredericton, Native Montreal, Options BC Community Services, S4, Say Ça! Montreal, St-Jean-Baptiste Elementary School, Stadacona Housing Complex, Union of Youth Newcomers, Vancouver School Board – Engaged Immigrant Youth Program, YWCA Quebec.

Thank you to those who created art in this zine:

Artwork:

Isadora Ayesha Lima, Jieun June Kim, Pui Yan Fong, Sade Alexis

Graphic Design:

Rabeea Syed

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THANK YOU FOR READING



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