Decolonizing Capacity Building and Leadership Development for Indigenous and Newcomer Youth through Intercultural Dialogue: A Case Study of Surrey, British Columbia

Capstone Report

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April 20, 2018
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Executive Summary

Surrey, British Columbia is in the midst of a significant demographic transformation. Its diverse Indigenous and newcomer population is larger and younger than any other municipality in Metro Vancouver. Surrey’s Indigenous and newcomer youth are the city’s leaders of tomorrow, and with this comes an opportunity for a sea change in the way local service providers develop leadership and capacity building programming with these youth today using a decolonizing, intercultural approach, one that has important implications for Indigenous self-determination and newcomer integration. The Surrey Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue Event that took place on January 27, 2018 was one of the first programs of its kind in the area to take this approach. This report presents a case study that incorporates observations at the event and participant insights from follow-up focus groups and surveys, together with a theoretical exploration of what it means to decolonize leadership development and capacity building with Indigenous and newcomer youth. An evaluation of the event’s outcomes against current relevant policy objectives are also made and policy recommendations proposed for future policy and program development.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank the refugee, newcomer, Indigenous, and ally youth who shared their opinions, thoughts, experiences, and enthusiasm with me over the course of my research. This project is ultimately about learning from them so that future intercultural dialogue policy and programming best meets their needs and helps develop their capabilities and skills as Surrey’s civic leaders of tomorrow.

Second, I wish to express my thanks to Jennifer Basu, Aileen Murphy, and June Liu of Surrey LIP and Jeska Slater of the Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association for their collaboration and mentorship in helping me develop my facilitation and research skills as a practitioner of community planning. Thanks also to Olga Shcherbyna of Surrey LIP for her support of this project and provision of helpful literature resources.

Finally, I acknowledge that my research in Surrey, Langley, and at UBC took place on the the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Qayqayt, Tsawwassen, and Musqueam First Nations. The observational portion of the research that took place on January 27, 2018 at the Surrey Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue Event took place on Kwantlen First Nation’s Fort Langley reserve, specifically. I am grateful to Kwantlen First Nation Chief Marilyn Gabriel and her family and community for their hospitality in welcoming me onto their land and into their home, and for the wisdom they shared during the event.
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I. Background and Context

Project Significance

This project is being completed in partnership with Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (Surrey LIP) and the Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA). The two agencies organized a Surrey Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue Event (the Event) that took place on January 27, 2018 at Kwantlen First Nation’s Cultural Centre and Longhouse in Fort Langley. The Event is notable and calls for research because it is the first of its kind in Surrey and informs several different areas that affect Indigenous and newcomer youth in the city: 1) capacity building and leadership development; 2) decolonizing civic engagement and the newcomer integration process; and 3) policy-making and service provision. The leadership development and capacity building that Indigenous and newcomer youth participated in at the Event and while preparing for it is also significant because of its positive impact, at the “big picture” level, on Indigenous self-determination and self-governance and the decolonization of the newcomer settlement and integration process in Surrey. By combining insights from field research with relevant theory, this report aims to provide LIP, FRAFCA, and other stakeholders with a more comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of the Event and implications for future policy-making and programming.

Project Research Questions

The project aims specifically to address the following research questions:
1. What does Surrey’s unique demographic situation with regard to its population of Indigenous and newcomer youth mean for leadership development and capacity building?

2. Why is developing policy and programming for leadership development and capacity building among Indigenous and newcomer youth important?

3. What came out of the the Surrey Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue Event from the perspective of the Indigenous and newcomer youth participants?

4. How can these insights be thematically framed using an appropriate theoretical framework and then used to generate policy recommendations?

Project Goals

This project is being submitted in fulfillment of the capstone requirement of the author’s Master of Community and Regional Planning program at the University of British Columbia.

The project aims to:

1. Document the Event and provide a record of its content and effectiveness through researcher observations and participant accounts

2. Explore relevant theoretical frameworks and situate the Event and current local policies within them

3. Generate programming and policy recommendations for decolonized leadership development and capacity-building for Indigenous and newcomer youth in Surrey
### Definition of Key Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Key Term</strong></th>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>“The involvement of youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with opportunities for planning and decision making” (Kress, 2006, p. 51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development</td>
<td>Teaching youth how to lead and nurturing their leadership abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>“The process by which people, organizations and society systematically stimulate and develop their capacities over time to achieve social and economic goals” (UNISDR, 2017, n.p.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decolonization</td>
<td>The conscious disruption and dismantling of systems, institutions, attitudes, beliefs, and processes directly or indirectly originating from the European colonization of Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural dialogue</td>
<td>Activities or discussions between groups from different cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>Native to or relating to a community native to the land today known as Canada before European settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>Someone who lands in Canada as a permanent resident or refugee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcomer</td>
<td>An immigrant who landed in Canada within the last five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>“Someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence” (UNHCR, 2018, n.p.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>Someone under 25 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-determination</td>
<td>Independence and autonomy over civic processes and decision-making, including the acculturation of newcomers to Canada and educating them about its history</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Immigrant integration | The facilitation of an immigrant's social, economic, linguistic, and/or political transition into Canadian society, including knowledge of Indigenous issues and history

Table 1: Summary of key terms

Note that some of these terms are marked in bold throughout the report, and more detailed definitions and explanations for leadership and capacity building can be found in Section II. In addition, while this case study focused on the Surrey Indigenous-Refugee Intercultural Dialogue Event and most non-Indigenous attendees were refugees specifically and their insights reflected their experience as refugees, the benefits of leadership development and capacity building through intercultural dialogue discussed later in the report are applicable to all newcomers. As such, this report does not take a refugee-specific focus and is intended for use in program development and policymaking for all newcomers.

Report Structure

After painting a demographic picture of Surrey’s immigrant and Indigenous populations, an overview of the organizational, policy, and partnership context of Indigenous and newcomer leadership development and capacity building in Surrey will be provided. The report will then turn to a theoretical exploration of Western and Indigenous leadership models, identifying one framework through which the Surrey Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue Event will later be examined. Next, the Indigenous self-determination and newcomer integration implications of
decolonizing Indigenous and newcomer youth leadership development and capacity building will be discussed before attention is cast on the Event and the primary research the author conducted there and with participants in the following weeks is presented and thematically analyzed. Insights from representatives of local youth service providers with regard to existing policies and programs for intercultural dialogue and leadership development and capacity building, as well as ideas for future programming and improved inter-organization coordination, will then be identified. Finally, some recommendations for Surrey LIP and other organizations to move forward in developing future policies and programs for Indigenous and newcomer youth leadership development and capacity building will be briefly enumerated based on the sum of the primary and secondary research presented and discussed to this point.

Demographic Snapshot

Surrey, British Columbia, is one of the largest and fastest-growing cities in Canada. Between 2011 and 2016, the city’s immigrant population grew by 17.2 percent, over twice as fast as the 8.4 percent growth rate of the total immigrant population of the Metro Vancouver region (Statistics Canada, 2011; 2016b). Surrey’s population of immigrant youth between the ages of 15 and 24, specifically, rose by 4.7 percent while that of the region decreased by 11.2 percent. In addition, one in every three immigrant youth living in Surrey is a newcomer, having landed within the past five
years. Surrey is a popular destination for refugees in Metro Vancouver, too, particularly Government-Assisted Refugees, with about half settling in Surrey (Friesen, 2018).

Map 1: Regional context map situating Surrey within Metro Vancouver (Qyd, 2007)
Surrey is geographically situated within the traditional territories of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Qayqayt, and Tsawwassen First Nations, and is home to more Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) children and youth than any other municipality in the region (Chand, 2013). Between 2011 and 2016, Surrey’s Indigenous population grew almost twice as fast (18.6 percent) as the city’s already rapidly increasing general population (10.6 percent), and about one out of every five Indigenous people in Surrey is between 15 and 24 years of age (Statistics Canada, 2011; 2016a). The Indigenous community of Surrey is also extremely young: At 25.6 years, it boasts a lower median age than the general Surrey population (37.5)
and the Indigenous populations of Metro Vancouver (30), British Columbia (28.9), and Canada (28) (Statistics Canada, 2011; 2013).

Figure 2: Median Age of Indigenous Population (c. 2013)

![Bar graph showing median age of Indigenous populations in Surrey, Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, and Canada.](image)

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011; 2013

Organizational, Policy, and Partnership Context in Surrey

This section will situate the January 27 intercultural dialogue event within the broader institutional context that funds, plans, and operationalizes programming for leadership development and capacity building in Surrey. Doing so is key to understanding the ecosystem of organizations, policies, and partnerships that directly and indirectly serve Indigenous and newcomer youth in Surrey. It is also important for
evaluating the outcomes of the Event against relevant policy objectives later in the report.

Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (Surrey LIP) is a City of Surrey-administered project based on an innovative multi-stakeholder model of collaborative governance that seeks to improve immigrants’ settlement and integration outcomes through their direct engagement with social planning processes. Local Immigration Partnerships, or LIPs, gained traction in Canada around 2009, when the first one was established in Ontario (Angeles and Shcherbyna, 2017). The approximately 66 LIPs nationwide are primarily funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and most LIPs in British Columbia are led by NGOs, with municipally run Surrey LIP and Vancouver Immigration Partnership being two notable exceptions (ibid.). The LIP model is based on a less top-down approach that involves collaborating with a diverse array of organizations, governments, and other stakeholders (often including newcomers themselves) to better coordinate service delivery and improve integration outcomes for newcomers.

Surrey LIP has two strategies, one for immigrants and one for refugees more specifically. The Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy (2016) establishes objectives and policies for working towards this mission that are linked to five “strategic directions”, or areas of focus: Accessible Services, Engaged Community, Meaningful Employment, Thriving Youth, and Sustainable Leadership. Two of the strategic directions, Engaged Community and Thriving Youth, are particularly germane to this project since they relate to newcomer youth and/or intercultural dialogue. For
example, Objective 5 within the Engaged Community strategic direction is to “encourage and support the delivery of programs, services and activities to assist immigrants in making connections with Aboriginal peoples, residents and longer term immigrants” (p. 29). Likewise, the strategic direction of Thriving Youth encompasses Objective 13 of the Strategy, which specifically alludes to the engagement of immigrant youth in civic life and with other groups who comprise Surrey’s diverse population: “Encourage and support opportunities for Immigrant youth to connect across cultures, participate in events and activities and share their perspectives” (p. 33). Investing In the Potential of Refugee Youth is a relevant strategic direction in the other Surrey LIP strategy, the Refugee Integration Strategy (2017). Its Objective 2 is to “support opportunities for refugee youth to convene, connect across cultures, share their experiences and perspectives and build leadership skills” (p. 15). Moving towards these objectives and facilitating the implementation of the Thriving Youth and Investing in the Potential of Refugee Youth strategic directions of both strategies is Surrey LIP’s Youth Services Working Group, whose members represent LIP and various newcomer- and youth-serving organizations in Surrey.

The Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee’s (SUILC) All Our Relations: A Social Innovation Strategy (2017) is a high-level policy document that guides municipal decision making “to build and strengthen relationships at all levels of the community so as to improve the economic participation, educational attainment, and health outcomes for the Indigenous population in Surrey” (p. 3). Its Strategic Objective 2 calls for the active leadership development of the city’s Indigenous youth and
increased Indigenous **leadership** and engagement in local civic affairs more generally. Strategic Objective 4 (“Increase education and understanding about the urban Indigenous community in Surrey”) also proposes “creating a cross-cultural dialogues project” as part of Goal #35 (p. 25). The SUILC oversees implementation of the *Social Innovation Strategy.*

Another policy relevant to newcomer and Indigenous **capacity building** and **leadership development** is the City of Surrey’s *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy* (2010), which calls for meaningful civic engagement opportunities for youth, including those who identify with historically marginalized or excluded populations. In creating the *Strategy,* the City directly consulted youth, who remarked that they “need capacity building opportunities and skill training to develop their leadership potential” and “desire to work with their peers on projects that interest them” (p. 13). To that end, the *Strategy* uses a lens of five positive attributes of youth development (competence, character, connection, confidence, and caring/compassion), and lists specific existing programs, staff, and youth councils within the City of Surrey that are assets to achieving these youth development objectives through their associated “action points.”
A network of community-based agencies and organizations provides programming and services for the large population of Indigenous and newcomer youth in Surrey. Although too numerous to list here, Figure 3 below shows Surrey LIP’s Services Map, which plots many of them from a comprehensive web-based directory. Some of these organization’s programs for youth have a **capacity building** and **leadership development** component, such as Surrey LIP’s Refugee Youth Planning Team (Surrey LIP, 2017) and FRAFCA’s Indigenous Youth Group (FRAFCA, 2017).
The Youth Services Working Group is one of Surrey LIP’s multiple working groups. It brings together front-line workers who serve newcomer, refugee, and immigrant youth to network and co-ordinate service delivery. Perspectives on these efforts from members of the Youth Services Working Group gathered during a focus group will be discussed later in this report.
II. Decolonizing Capacity Building and Leadership Development

Recall that the project uses an analytical lens of decolonization to examine the topic of capacity building and leadership development. That is, it seeks to examine how the two can further the dismantling of colonial structures in civic life in Surrey, starting at the level of intercultural dialogue between Indigenous and newcomer youth. This section will establish working definitions and draw from relevant literature to theoretically frame and scope this process.

Definitions and Theoretical Framework

Capacity building and leadership development among Indigenous and newcomer youth are key pathways to achieving the goal of decolonizing civic engagement, intercultural dialogue, and newcomer integration. But because the two concepts can be rather ambiguous and context-dependent, it is important to first provide working definitions of capacity building and leadership development. For the purposes of this report, capacity building refers to “the process by which people, organizations and society systematically stimulate and develop their capacities over time to achieve social and economic goals” (UNISDR, 2017, n.p.). Likewise, youth leadership means “the involvement of youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with opportunities for planning and decision making” (Kress, 2006, p. 51). Together, these descriptions of capacity building and leadership point to not only skill development and growth at the intrapersonal level, but also strengthening networks and resilience in achieving goals at the interpersonal group
level, which in this project involved building bridges across cultures to decolonize newcomer integration. They also imply a deliberate increase in the degree of autonomy and independence in decision-making, whose benefits for both Indigenous and newcomer youth, as well as society and civic life more broadly, will now be discussed within the context of decolonizing newcomer integration.

Among the various models of leadership found in the literature, the holistic model of servant leadership is highly relevant to the leadership development of Indigenous and newcomer youth in Surrey because it aligns well with the qualities of leadership that were observed at the January 27 intercultural dialogue event. In a study of servant leadership’s potential within the youth leadership development context specifically, Eva and Sendjaya (2013) explain that “servant leadership is both an effective and ethical leadership approach given its emphasis on key values such as altruism, authenticity, morality, accountability, empowerment, integrity, and spirituality” (p. 586). Sendjaya et al. (2008) propose a framework of servant leadership consisting of six dimensions that correspond to these values: voluntary subordination, authentic self, covenantal relationship, responsible morality, transcendental spirituality, and transforming influence. These dimensions are defined in Table 2 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Dimension</strong></th>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary subordination</td>
<td>An “altruistic inclination to serve others” (p. 592)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic self</td>
<td>“Leadership behaviours which flow from one’s true self and manifest in his/her humility, integrity, and accountability” (p. 593)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenantal relationship</td>
<td>“Leadership behaviours characterized by shared values, mutual trust, concern for others which create profound and genuine relationships” (p. 593)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible morality</td>
<td>“Leadership behaviours that assist others to engage themselves in moral reasoning and actions” (p. 594)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcendental spirituality</td>
<td>A “sense of mission, calling, interconnectedness, and wholeness” (p. 594)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming influence</td>
<td>“Leadership behaviours which produce positive lasting effects on others” (p. 594).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Definitions of the six dimensions of servant leadership (Sendjaya et al., 2008)*

These six dimensions of **servant leadership** will be revisited in the next section of the report, where they will be mapped to the processes and outcomes of the **intercultural dialogue** event.

But first, why is Sendjaya’s framework of **servant leadership** appropriate for framing the **decolonization** of **capacity building** and **leadership development** with Indigenous and newcomer youth? Critically, the holistic nature of the framework stands in opposition to the transactional essence of most Western **leadership** models whereby leaders are placed in a hierarchy of power and evaluate their actions and decisions on the basis of the balance of resources they stand to gain or expend and how effectively they can satisfy the expectations of their followers (Young, 2006).
Young (2006) also refers to the then-Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development’s 1996 \textit{Hawthorn Report}, which discussed how the capitalistic and economically (i.e. transactionally) focused model of \textit{leadership} used to govern the \textit{Indian Act} in Indigenous communities across Canada negatively disrupted and was in fact less effective than local Indigenous approaches to \textit{leadership}.

In contrast, then, Indigenous conceptualizations of \textit{leadership} are based in local Indigenous knowledge, are closely linked to self-governance and \textit{self-determination}, and can be described as forms of transformational \textit{leadership} that emphasize community, family, and “engagement and interaction between people, which is spiritual and literal” (Arden and Wall, 1990; and Coyhis, 1993 as cited in Young, 2006, p. 17). Young further explains that scholars of Indigenous \textit{leadership} such as Depree (1994), Reyes (1993), Ryan (2003), and Green (1992) characterize it as oriented to change and growth and as a pathway to resist and deconstruct oppressive colonial practices in a self-determined way. Finally, the frameworks of Indigenous knowledge that inform Indigenous \textit{leadership} models “consider relationships with self, family, community, nations and creation as integral to \textit{leadership development}…[and] is contextual, \textit{decolonizing}, empowering, ethical, and beneficial to the community” (Armstrong, 2003; Atleo, 2004; Castellano, 2000; Ermine, 1998; Kawagley, 1995; Archibald, 2003; Battiste, 2002 as cited in Young, 2006, p. 18).
Therefore, while Sendjaya et al’s (2008) six dimensional framework of servant leadership does not explicitly represent an Indigenous model for decolonizing leadership development, it acts as a useful proxy since clear parallels can be drawn between it and the common elements among Indigenous leadership models just mentioned, especially when juxtaposed against the traditional Western perspective of leadership. Both are grounded in notions of wholism, interconnectedness, mutualism, and positive ethical action at different scales ranging from oneself to one’s community and society. Both shift the focus away from Western leadership approaches of power hierarchies, quid pro quo relationships, and the economic value of decisions made as a leader. Moreover, using Sendjaya et al’s framework as a theoretical lens of leadership in this study is suitable for two other important reasons. First, there is no one single universal Indigenous model of leadership, and Surrey’s Indigenous population is extremely diverse and represents a cross-section of Indigenous communities across Canada, not just the First Nations on whose land Surrey is physically situated. Second,
directly applying Indigenous leadership models as a non-Indigenous researcher raises issues surrounding the ownership and use of Indigenous knowledge.

**Decolonizing Indigenous Youth Leadership and Newcomer Integration**

Now that working definitions of **capacity building** and **leadership development** have been established and theoretical models of **leadership** explored, why are they important for Indigenous and newcomer youth in Surrey specifically? The burgeoning immigrant and Indigenous populations in Canada today are overwhelmingly young and urban (Policy Horizons Canada, 2017). As they converge and live side-by-side in increasing numbers in large Canadian cities like Surrey, growing up to become the next generation of civic leaders, it is crucial to develop policies and programming for intercultural dialogue and capacity building with and between newcomer and Indigenous youth. Such engagement will, over time, empower these young people with the leadership skills to work towards eliminating systemic societal barriers they face (Policy Horizons Canada, 2017) and create “space for hybrid cultures and citizenship practices” (Fleras & Elliott, 2002 and Sandercock, 2003 as cited in Gyepi-Garbrah et al., 2014, p. 1800) that will fundamentally redefine the relationship between Surrey’s Indigenous and newcomer communities.

Developing Indigenous youth’s capacity to design and lead intercultural dialogue programming has significant implications for Indigenous self-determination and self-governance, as well as the simultaneous decolonization and indigenization of the newcomer settlement and integration process in Surrey. To reiterate from the
Definition of Key Terms towards the beginning of the report, **decolonization** refers to the conscious disruption and dismantling of systems, institutions, attitudes, beliefs, and processes directly or indirectly originating from the European colonization of Canada. These systems and institutions encompass the process of newcomer **integration**, which is largely based on a eurocentric settler paradigm currently. Taking a wider historical perspective, it is important to remember that before the establishment of the Canadian colonial state, it were Indigenous peoples who welcomed and integrated settler newcomers (Gyepi-Garbrah et al., 2014). Later, Canada’s cities were used as spatial instruments through which the state reproduced its colonial power, a phenomenon that continues to this day (Stanger-Ross, 2008). Thus, Indigenous youth’s engagement with newcomer youth is a key mechanism through which the latter’s acculturation to Canada may be **decolonized**: “The next logical step to positioning **self-determination** in support of Aboriginal density and complexity in urban areas (Anderson, 2009) is to develop Aboriginal initiatives through self-governing organisations that engage the non-Aboriginal community, particularly immigrant newcomers. This is important because it may permit modern cultural hybridity in ways that are led by the strength of Aboriginal cultures in ways that are not fixed in a static idyllic past or in negative modern misperceptions of a ‘whitestream’ society” (Gyepi-Garbrah et al., 2014, p. 1799). Moreover, Angeles and Shcherbyna (2017) remark that the current neoliberal paradigm of newcomer **integration** in Metro Vancouver places emphasis on the economic value of newcomers’ labour and the facilitation of their **integration** to that end. Interestingly, this resembles the
predominant capitalistic Western model of leadership previously discussed and strengthens the argument that a decolonization of both leadership development and newcomer integration is needed in tandem. The Surrey Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue Event is not unique in Metro Vancouver in working towards this using intercultural dialogue: The Vancouver Dialogues project is also a salient example where the Indigenous community has played a leading role in the newcomer integration process (Suleman, 2011).

Goals of Decolonizing Leadership Development and Capacity Building

Programs designed by Indigenous Canadians that teach refugees and other newcomers about Canada's true history as soon as possible after they arrive in Canada disrupt the colonial rhetoric and misconception of the Canada government as a non-violent and benevolent actor in the nation’s history. Thus, through their autonomous, self-determined, and resurgent nature, such decolonizing programs reconfigure the historically dominating power relationship between the colonial state over Indigenous peoples and newcomers, one that controls newcomer integration and “erase[s] Indigenous histories and senses of place” (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p. 61 as cited in Kope and Arellano, 2016) in the acculturation process and dismisses diverse views, values, and locally grounded knowledge in favour of the eurocentric hegemony.

Building capacity and leadership skills has numerous benefits specific to youth who have recently landed in Canada, too. Programs for newcomer youth that emphasize civic participation, leadership, advocacy, and social justice can help
develop their **leadership** skills and political consciousness, and better equip them to understand and act on issues of power, racism, and diversity (Van Ngo, 2009). Civic participation is also a component of the Canadian Council for Refugees’s (1998) guidelines for the political **integration** of immigrants. Anisef and Kilbride (2003) have emphasized the importance of including youth in the pursuit of this goal, given the highly formative nature of childhood and adolescence. Developing meaningful activities for immigrant youth that incorporate cultural aspects of both their original and new countries is an effective way to increase their engagement with the community at large, as well (Deckers & Zinga, 2012).

Finally, fostering **leadership** skills in Surrey’s Indigenous and newcomer youth has the potential to indirectly promote social cohesion through programs that incorporate **intercultural dialogue** and that are planned and executed as a result of that **leadership** capacity. Young adults in the 18-24 age bracket living in Metro Vancouver report feelings of loneliness more frequently than adults in older age brackets, and newcomers to the region who have lived in Canada for less than 10 years also feel lonelier than residents who have lived here longer (Vancouver Foundation, 2017). The Vancouver Foundation’s *Connect & Engage* report also highlights that in 2017, only 20 percent of Metro Vancouver residents “attended a cultural or ethnic event put on by a cultural or ethnic group different from their own” (p. 21), less than half the proportion in 2012. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that **intercultural dialogue** programs for Indigenous and newcomer youth in Surrey may
reduce loneliness and promote cross-cultural understanding at the same time that they build capacity and leadership skills in their youth participants.
III. The Surrey Indigenous-Refugee Intercultural Dialogue Event and Research Methodology

Figure 5: Photo of participants at the Surrey Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue Event on January 27, 2018 (Kelsie Marchand, 2018).

This section of the report outlines the events that took place at the Surrey Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue Event and how observational data was collected at the event and primary insights from participants at the focus group and survey gathered following the event. (Consent was gathered from participants at the Event and the follow-up focus group and survey, and all data collected was anonymized.) These observations and insights are then mapped to Sendjaya et al’s six dimensions of servant leadership.

On Saturday, January 27, 2018, approximately 38 Indigenous and newcomer (mostly refugee) youth participants participated at the Event at the Kwantlen First
Nation Culture Centre Longhouse in Fort Langley. Kwantlen First Nation Chief Marilyn Gabriel and her family helped facilitate the event with traditional ceremonies throughout the day. Activities at the event included a witnessing ceremony, a film screening facilitated by members of FRAFCA’s Indigenous Youth Group about issues Indigenous women in Canada face, a creative map activity facilitated by members of Surrey LIP’s Refugee Youth Planning Team, and an simulation activity facilitated by KAIROS that let participants experience the impacts of several centuries of colonization. After most of these activities, participants shared their thoughts in reflective discussions. Before the event began and during lunch, participants also had the opportunity to socialize and intermingle, sharing personal stories and experiences with their fellow participants of diverse backgrounds. Over the course of the day, the researcher naturalistically observed how the participants interacted with each other and responded to the activities, and recorded the insightful comments participants made in activity discussions. No questions were posed to or comments directly solicited from the participants at the Event itself: The observations recorded only included interactions and insightful reactions and comments made by participants naturally as part of the Event’s pre-programmed activities. These observation notes can be found in Appendix A.

Following the event, the researcher conducted one semi-structured focus group with Surrey LIP Refugee Youth Team event participants (n = 6) and one survey with FRAFCA Indigenous Youth Group event participants (n = 2; survey used after focus group cancellation) in order to gather more in-depth primary reflections on what they
learned at the Event, how effective they perceived the Event and what improvements could be made for future ones, and other thoughts on what intercultural dialogue and decolonization means to them personally. Focus group and survey questions can be found in Appendix B, and responses in Appendix C.
IV. Youth Participant Voices and Research Outcomes

As mentioned in the previous section, the model of servant leadership and its six dimensions (Eva and Sendjaya, 2013) closely represent the kind of youth leadership and capacity building that took place among the Indigenous and newcomer youth participants at the intercultural dialogue event. It serves as a natural lens through which observations of the event and later reflections from participants will now be thematically explored.

Voluntary Subordination

The voluntary subordination dimension refers to the behaviour of willingly being of service to others, and its main outcome in the youth leader as an individual is a greater sense of altruism towards others in the community. At the event, this dimension of leadership was expressed through the Indigenous youth participants’ planning and facilitation of activities that contributed to the newcomer youth participants’ acculturation to and integration into Canadian society, including providing them with an understanding of the history of colonization in Canada and the impacts it has had on Indigenous peoples to this day. An event activity that exemplified voluntary subordination well was the presentation and subsequent discussion of two female Indigenous youth filmmakers’ film about the issues that Indigenous women in Canada face.

“It’s important to keep educating and share these experiences.” --Indigenous youth participant
“I love knowing my culture is being shared.” --Indigenous youth participant

“I attended the event to contribute in teaching others about my culture.” --Indigenous youth participant

“I hosted the Indigenous Women INpower workshop.” --Indigenous youth participant

**Authentic Self and Covenantal Relationship**

Authentic self as a dimension of **leadership** means understanding one’s true self and how one’s values connect to past life experiences and visions for the future. Being authentic also implies a degree of vulnerability, which was observed in spades throughout the day during the **intercultural dialogue** event. Both during structured programming and during periods for socializing before the event and during lunch, newcomer participants were observed sharing their diverse life experiences, both positive and negative, with each other and with Indigenous participants, and vice versa. Closely related to this **leadership** behaviour is the covenantal relationship, which points to mutual understanding and cultural awareness and in turns promotes cooperation in achieving joint goals. In this case, the goals were building bridges across diverse backgrounds and strengthening solidarity through **intercultural dialogue**, in addition to the more indirect goal of **decolonizing** newcomer integration to Canada.

“I felt welcomed. The food was something that I had a cultural connection with: In my culture too, when someone leaves we give food for them to take on their way. Also,
older family members eat first at Kwantlen First Nation, which is the same as in my culture too. We are similar, Indigenous people and people from my country.”
--Refugee youth participant

“I felt connected to the Indigenous youth. I wish there were more at the event to connect with.” --Refugee youth participant

“The fireplace in the middle of the longhouse was a good place to connect with other youth.” --Refugee youth participant

“I think bringing the groups together to learn and share traumas worked really well.”
--Indigenous youth participant

“I watched the movie about Indigenous women. I didn’t understand it at first, but hearing directly from the film creators who are Indigenous women themselves helped me understand.” --Refugee youth participant

“The only and best way to truly understand this history is through personal conversation.” --Refugee youth participant

Responsible Morality, Transforming Influence, and Transcendental Spirituality

The leadership dimension of responsible morality is defined by an ability to connect one’s actions and decisions to consequences in the real world, and the reasoning skills to assess the potential moral ramifications of these actions and decisions before making them. This quality was clearly apparent in participants during the follow-up focus group and survey. Likewise, the transforming influence and
transforming spirituality dimensions of leadership respectively refer to an empowered ability to engage with the world to effect change, and to connect one’s actions as a leader to a higher calling or meaning, or system greater than oneself. The defining moment of the event that demonstrated these three dimensions of leadership was the discussion after the “blanket” activity that simulated the impacts of colonization: With many of the newcomer participants (especially the refugees) having just learned about these impacts in an emotionally visceral way that resonated with their own life experiences, they astutely identified a personal obligation to contribute towards decolonization and reconciliation.

“I didn’t have the same experience as Indigenous people, but I can empathize and be an ally. I can be friends and stand by them. I can help protect their land and protect Canada.” --Refugee youth participant

“The event inspired me to go home and share this information and knowledge about the real truth of Canada. As refugees we have some idea of what Indigenous people have suffered. We experience this with Indigenous people through their words and through dialogue.” --Refugee youth participant

Outcomes and Limitations of Intercultural Dialogue Event

Gauging from the quotes above, the Event’s Indigenous and newcomer youth participants undoubtedly have a strong grasp on the higher level impacts of the event in terms of reconciliation and intercultural understanding through common shared experiences. Such awareness and a resolve to act upon the new knowledge shared and relationships formed echoes the kind of authentic, community-minded, selfless,
and morally responsible leadership represented in Sendjaya et al’s servant leadership framework. The programming model the Event was based on was thus promisingly effective towards meeting objectives in the Surrey LIP and SUILC strategy documents introduced earlier in the report calling for intercultural dialogue and youth leadership development. However, since the Event was the first of its kind in Surrey, this is a preliminary conclusion and this type of programming will need to be repeated and iteratively monitored and modified over time in order to improve the reliability of the model.
V. Voices from Service Providers

After the Event and the researcher’s follow-up focus group with the Surrey LIP Refugee Youth Planning team and survey with the FRAFCA Indigenous Youth Group, Surrey LIP consultant Jennifer Basu (2018) conducted a focus group with members of the Surrey LIP Youth Services Working Group, which to reiterate from earlier in the report, comprises youth workers from various front-line service providers in Surrey who work together to implement the actions in the Thriving Youth direction of the Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy and achieve its objectives. She asked them three questions (see Appendix B) about policies and programs they already have in place for intercultural dialogue between Indigenous and newcomer youth, ideas they have for future policy and program development, and gaps they identified where greater inter-organization support or coordination is needed. Here the main points from their comments will be presented.

With regard to relevant existing policies and programs, one Working Group member mentioned the Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA) assisted with cultural competency training for their organization’s staff. Another said that their youth program participants visited a First Nation in Metro Vancouver, and one member remarked that their programming incorporates intercultural experiential learning (e.g through ceremonies and blessing food). One member felt that at their organization, however, there is currently a greater focus on enhancing staff and educator’s intercultural awareness than the youth actually participating in their organization’s programming.
Working Group members suggested several ideas to advance intercultural dialogue between Indigenous and newcomer youth. First, more local events like the Surrey Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue Event should take place. Second, more collaboration between Indigenous and newcomer youth should be designed into programming. Third, while it is important to address the history of Indigenous communities in Canada, focusing on history alone can be triggering and it is just as important to celebrate and “educate on [their] beauty, resilience, and modern-day culture” (p. 2). And fourth, territorial acknowledgments and/or cultural welcomes should happen at the start of events and tokenism should be avoided in intercultural dialogue programming.

Now turning to the kinds of additional support or coordination that Working Group members identified is still needed to advance the development and execution of intercultural dialogue policy and programming, a number of ideas were proposed: There should be more cultural competency training sessions for service providers, and relationship building between Indigenous and newcomer youth-serving organizations. More thought should also be given to “what service providers can offer Indigenous Peoples in return for their involvement [in intercultural programming]” (p. 2). And finally, greater focus should be given to relationship-building between organizations, who could also share information about each other’s events and create a common list of guest speakers to attend them and facilitate intercultural dialogue programming there.
These insights from service providers clearly demonstrate that there is a desire to increase intercultural dialogue program offerings and to collaborate more across organizational and cultural lines, a sentiment corroborated by the earlier comments of the youth who attended the Surrey Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue Event on January 27. However, the Working Group members’ comments indicate that a thoughtful and culturally sensitive approach involving more training and greater coordination between service providers is needed in order to achieve this vision.
VI. Recommendations for Decolonized Leadership and Capacity Building with Indigenous and Newcomer Youth in Surrey

Synthesizing the primary and secondary research covered to this point in the report, some actionable programming and policy recommendations will now be proposed. Note that specific timelines and roles to execute the recommendations are not given since they are dependent upon funding and the logistical decisions of Surrey LIP and its partners.

Main Overarching Recommendation

Continue to support and develop the replication and scaling up of intercultural dialogue programming for leadership and capacity building among Indigenous and newcomer youth in Surrey in response to existing policy objectives.

Figure 6: Schematic map of relevant strategy documents and objectives
Policy Recommendations

1. The City and Surrey LIP can work with various stakeholders, particularly Indigenous, refugee and immigrant youth groups and ally adult-oriented organizations to create policies and programs towards the leadership development of Surrey’s Indigenous and newcomer youth that incorporates Indigenous leadership principles and similar alternative Western ones, such as the leadership dimensions proposed in the Servant Leadership Framework.

2. Various Indigenous, refugee and immigrant youth stakeholder groups can work with the City and Surrey LIP in passing a Resolution to hold regular intercultural dialogue events as part of the City’s Youth Programs. These programs could be co-sponsored by multi-sectoral organizations, including but not limited to faith-based organizations, churches, business, schools, colleges and universities.

3. Iteratively monitor and evaluate after every program or event to determine whether it made progress toward existing policy objectives of the relevant Strategies, and make policy and programming adjustments as necessary. Feedback should be sought from as many youth participants as possible.

4. Surrey LIP could act as a central liaison for strengthening existing and foster new working relationships between organizations to coordinate the development and running of intercultural dialogue, leadership development, and capacity building programming with Indigenous and newcomer youth.

Programming Recommendations

If and when Surrey LIP decide to continue planning, running, and/or coordinating intercultural dialogue programming between Indigenous and newcomer youth, the specific programming suggestions proposed below could be followed:

1. Fine-tune the design, planning and implementation of the intercultural dialogue programs and events while keeping the goals of decolonization and the development of the six dimensions of Servant Leadership in mind.

2. At events, create opportunities for the six dimensions of Servant Leadership to be discussed, promoted, and critiqued from intercultural and decolonizing perspectives using a variety of educational, creative, artistic and spiritual spaces and techniques.
3. At events, allow for unstructured time for youth participants of various cultures and backgrounds to socialize and connect organically.

4. If a program or event is emotionally intense, consider making participants aware of this before they attend (i.e. a “trigger warning”). A trigger warning would have been useful, given various histories of traumas and diverse experiences of youth so that they could fully appreciate the program’s potentially powerful and evocative nature.
VII. Limitations

This project encountered several limitations to its representativeness, comprehensiveness, analytical depth, and generalizability. The time available to complete follow-up interviews and focus groups with participants and service providers after the Event was limited. As such, the sample size was small (eight out of the approximately 38 event participants) with many voices not heard, particularly Event participants who were not also members of the Surrey LIP Refugee Youth Planning Team or the FRAFCA Indigenous Youth Cultural Group. Indigenous and newcomer youth living in Surrey who did not attend the Event represented another significant missing voice, as did Indigenous youth-serving organizations and service providers not represented at the focus group conducted by Jennifer Basu at a meeting of Surrey LIP’s Youth Services Working Group. Non-refugee newcomer voices were also largely missing. Another limitation mentioned earlier in the report is the fact that the Event was the first of its kind in Surrey, making it difficult to conclude with absolute certainty that the current programming model behind the Event is effective without replicating it through more events and programs and conducting evaluation activities after each iteration.
Conclusion

This report shed light on the potential of intercultural dialogue for decolonizing leadership development and capacity building with Indigenous and newcomer youth in Surrey as the city goes through rapid demographic growth and change. Continuing to develop policies and programs for this will both further Indigenous self-determination and newcomer integration. Relevant theories of leadership and local policies were explored, and insights were heard from Indigenous and newcomer participants of the Surrey Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue, as well as local service providers. Policy recommendations were generated for future policy and programming surrounding leadership development and capacity building through intercultural dialogue among Indigenous and newcomer youth in Surrey.
References


Appendix A: Surrey Indigenous-Refugee Intercultural Dialogue Event observation notes

Start time: ~10:30am
Participant count: 38
About ⅓ - ½ Indigenous youth, ½ - ⅔ refugees/newcomers/allies
Age range appears to be 13-18

Before starting, most participants observed chatting with other participants

Opening

1. Kwantlen welcome
   a. Welcome song
   b. Explanation of order:
      i. Witness
      ii. Work
      iii. Feast
      iv. Gift giving
2. Witnessing ceremony
   a. “You are all witnesses today”
3. Aileen gives introduction
4. Jeska gives introduction
5. Surrey LIP youth give introduction
6. Rain game icebreaker
7. Name game rhyming icebreaker

Women Workshop

Mentioning of matrilineal FN traditions

Jeska gives into to workshop

Introduction from the 2 indigenous women participants who created and led the workshop

Tradition of reverence and high regard in many FNs for gender roles of women and 2-spirit people

Observation as researcher:
- Extremely wide diversity among the participants
  - Newcomers and refugees from all over the world, from many different countries
  - FNs from all over Canada represented

Paraphrasing Kevin, husband of Kwantlen chief Marilyn: “I respect you, regardless of where you come from or what headgear you may wear”

Showing of short film Targeted (made by one of the leaders of the activity), about targeting through tokenization
“Women were the first people to welcome settlers in. White women felt threatened by this”

Film acknowledges missing and murdered Indigenous women

The Indigenous youth women leaders of this workshop are educating newcomer/refugee participants

Refugee participant: “Is this depicting today or the past?”

Leader: “Both”

Jeska: “4,000 missing, police not investigating”

Leaders: “Indigenous women are seen as not worthy in society, but one can’t say that when one does not know their circumstances. It is a stereotype.”

Leader relates this back to newcomer and refugee participants: “Have you ever been asked your opinion as a representative of your entire culture?”

Leaders: Targeting has been going on since contact, but it’s only recently come into public awareness

Indigenous participant: Thanks for making the film

Leaders: There is the Highway of Tears, but it’s not acknowledged by the government

Other Indigenous participant: Tells story of how she, as a girl from a community along the Highway of Tears, can’t hitchhike or travel alone

Leaders:

- Explain the concept of “contact” between Indigenous people and settlers
- Relate personal experience and perspective as Indigenous women
- Tokenization examples
  - Halloween costumes
  - Headdresses at festivals
- What it means to be an ally
- We shouldn’t have to live our daily lives in fear
  - Sexualized
  - Objectified
  - Fear of law enforcement
Participant: “Has there been any improvements under the Trudeau government?”

Leader: “Empty promises. Words but no action”

Refugee participant: “Why did this happen to Indigenous women?”

Jeska: “They were targeted by settlers in order to take the land. The effects carry forward to today. Settlers imposed eurocentric values that were not compatible with our values of respect for women”

Leader: “Indigenous issues are not a thing of the past, but rather carry into today”

Group discussions:
- Questions
  1. How do you show allyship in a productive way?
  2. Why is knowing or sharing knowledge and information about this issue important?
  3. How does this issue affect you or make you feel?
- Comments overheard in group discussing Question 1
  - Allyship is about trying to understand
  - Having the confidence to say, “That’s not okay to say”
  - Knowing where you stand as an ally
  - Understanding how Indigenous people feel, and asking how you can support them

Group summaries:
1. To learn from and understand each other. How they feel and think. Sharing language and culture
2. To raise awareness about how this issue is still impacting today. We should do our best to end what’s going on, to teach others.
3. Sad, less than. Police should make us feel safe, but we feel not welcomed, acknowledged, or safe in our own community on our own land.

Lunch Time

Kwantlen dinner song
- Non-verbal observation: Refugee/newcomer participants moving hands to the rhythm of the song in the traditional way

Reflection on Map activity after lunch

“We’re all humans, in our hearts we’re all the same. It’s important to ask questions of others. I met someone from Syria and Iraq.”

“I learned about another person’s multicultural background”

“It’s nice to meet everyone and learn about other cultures. It’s fun”

KAIROS Blanket Activity Workshop

Experiential workshop with FN facilitators.
Facilitator: “We’re being protected by ancestors in this space”

Activity is a journey towards reconciliation, 400 years through colonization.

Meeting other neighbours on the patchwork of blankets that represent Canada.

Journey begins:
1. Colonizers/settlers come
   a. Doctrine of Discovery
   b. Early cooperation between Indigenous peoples and settlers
   c. Much larger Indigenous than settler population
2. How treaties worked
   a. Recognized FN power and independence
3. Royal Proclamation
4. Changes
   a. Commodification of land
   b. Indigenous-settler relations got worse
   c. Douglas treaties on Vancouver Island
5. European diseases
   a. Up to 90% died in some FN communities
6. Dufferin (settler) argued for respecting FN land and the treaty process
7. Dispossession
8. European superiority
9. Terra nullius, “civilized use” of land
10. British North America Act
    a. Government of Canada was composed entirely of settlers, no Indigenous say in BNA
11. Indian Act
12. Restrictions on hunting and fishing
13. Forced relocation to reserves
    a. Education
    b. Clean running water
    c. Housing
15. Laws against leaving reserves
16. Laws against raising funds for or trying to fight for land
17. Disenfranchisement
18. Indian status
19. Assimilation
20. “Absorbing Indians into the body politic” (Campbell Scott)
21. Indian residential school system
22. European “paternal benevolence”
23. Separation from family and culture
24. Land claims
25. Delgamuukw vs. Gov’t
    a. Proves that Aboriginal title to land exists
26. IRS apology
27. Truth and Reconciliation Commission
28. Inequities today
Post-Blanket Exercise Reflection

- Very emotional, a lot of pain, trauma, and strength came out
- Intergenerational trauma made apparent to non-Indigenous participants, connecting the history lesson to how the Indigenous participants and their families feel today
- Although some participants may not have had the English facility to understand the history lesson within the blanket exercise narration, the non-verbal and symbolic cues of the blankets getting smaller and the sheer number of people forced off their blanket “land” and onto the side, as well as the emotionality of many of the other participants, really hit home the lesson of the activity
- Powerful stories and insightful comments from Indigenous, refugee, newcomer, and ally participants alike
  - People shared stories of coming from war-torn areas of the world and the violence and trauma that they themselves have experienced or witnessed. Connecting through that shared pain
  - Indigenous participant stories
    - Being raised in foster system, in a way like residential school system living on into today
    - Losing touch with culture
    - Not knowing how to be a mom to my own kids because my own mom couldn’t be a good mom
  - Violence and hate can happen all over the world, we must come together to overcome it and make change
  - Before coming to Canada I thought it was a peaceful country, but today has changed my perspective
  - I am with you and I support you, we are in this together (refugee participants saying this to Indigenous participants)
  - As a person of mainly European descent, I only recently learned about my family’s Indigenous matriarch. Today brought up for me feelings of shame.
- Kwantlen chief Marilyn
  - Three key values
    - Love
    - Respect
    - Kindness
  - We are all one family
  - Strength and courage of everyone in room
- Husband
  - It’s okay and healthy for men to cry, I only learned that at 28
Appendix B: Focus group and survey questions

Surrey LIP Refugee Youth Planning Team Event Follow-Up Focus Group

1. In your own words, what happened at the event?
2. Was the event different or the same as what you expected? Did anything surprise you?
3. What did you like at the event? What didn’t you like? How could it have been different?

FRAFCA Indigenous Youth Group Survey

1. In your own words, what happened at the event?
2. Why did you attend the event?
3. Was the event similar or different than what you expected?
4. What aspects of the event did you think worked well?
5. What aspects of the event could be improved or changed?
6. Should there be more events like this in the future?
7. If yes, why? If no, why not?
8. Some participants who are on Surrey LIP’s Refugee Youth Team told me in a focus group I did with them that because of the emotional intensity of the event, a trigger warning before the event would be helpful in the future (but without spoilers about what will happen). But they did feel that the emotionality of the event is key to what made it effective overall. What are your thoughts?
9. Do you think intercultural dialogue between refugee youth and Indigenous youth in Surrey is important?
10. If yes, how do you think intercultural dialogue could help decolonize the settlement of newcomers and refugees in Canada and help them become allies of Canada’s Indigenous peoples?
11. What was it like to share your own experiences, knowledge, and culture with the refugee youth at the event?
12. What did you learn from the refugee youth?

Surrey LIP Youth Services Working Group Focus Group

1. How have you used intercultural dialogue between Indigenous and newcomer youth in your programming? What policies does your organization have in place for this?
2. What ideas do you have to advance intercultural dialogue between Indigenous and newcomer youth?
3. From your perspective, what support or coordination still needs to be developed to incorporate intercultural dialogue in your programming?
Appendix C: Focus group notes and survey responses

Surrey LIP Refugee Youth Planning Team Event Follow-Up Focus Group

In your own words, what happened at the event?

We were welcomed by the aboriginal leaders and chief.

They involved us and connected us to their history, from beginning to present

[FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT RECOUNTS HISTORY, DEMONSTRATING UNDERSTANDING]

Treaty wasn’t to make peace with Indigenous peoples but to take land.

During the feather speaking reflection, everyone gave their opinion of how they felt:

- Sad
- Unfair what happened to Indigenous people
- Sharing stories from personal experience
- We feel connected to you and support you

Learned about what Indigenous women face:

- Highway of Tears
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Chief and family welcomed us with music. There was also the Dinner Song before lunch.

I felt connected to the Indigenous youth. I wish there were more at the event to connect with.

The fireplace in the middle of the longhouse was a good place to connect with other youth.

Watched the film about Indigenous women created by Indigenous women youth participants. Learned about how they’ve been and are oppressed, raped, murdered.

The blanket activity was very touching, emotional, and painful. It involved personal reflection and although it was painful it was a good experience to learn about the Indigenous history of Canada.

I wish I could’ve connected with the Indigenous youth to share more. An event spanning a full weekend would be ideal.

I didn’t think the event would start with a song. I learned that it’s a Kwantlen tradition to sing to guests. It was heartwarming.

I learned about Kwantlen culture and beliefs.

I watched the movie about Indigenous women. I didn’t understand it at first, but hearing directly from the film creators who are Indigenous women themselves helped me understand.
The only and best way to truly understand this history is through personal conversation. The event inspired me to go home and share this information and knowledge about the real truth of Canada. As refugees we have some idea of what Indigenous people have suffered. We experience this with Indigenous people through their words and through dialogue.

Everyone had something to say, even if they couldn’t vocalize it. That united us.

The song at the end of the event was like a goodbye song for next time.

The Chief’s words were encouraging. She spoke positively, not from hate or anger. She talked about how we can make things better.

The Chief’s husband had encouraging words. He said it’s okay to cry, even if you’re a man, even if you look tough. It’s a good way to get the pain out.

The welcome song connected and energized me.

I didn’t know the history of Canada before.

After the blanket activity, people were speaking and crying from the heart. Everyone felt like they knew each other in that moment. It was a like a family made of both refugees and Indigenous people.

FRAFCA did the icebreaker activity where we shared our names and where we’re from.

We learned about missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

We shared after the map activity.

During the blanket activity we learned the history of how settlers took the land and how that affected Indigenous people. Then we passed a feather around and told our stories. It was personally painful and heavy. The same situation that happened to Indigenous people happened to me in my country.

I felt welcomed. The food was something that I had a cultural connection with: In my culture too, when someone leaves we give food for them to take on their way. Also, older family members eat first at Kwantlen First Nation, which is the same as in my culture too. We are similar, Indigenous people and people from my country.

Was the event different or the same as what you expected? Did anything surprise you?

The event was surprising. I thought it was gonna be more energetic and positive. Still, the heaviness was conveyed positively. It was a good method because it helped me understand better.

I expected more Indigenous youth to attend.
I didn’t think it would be so emotional. I felt immersed in their [Indigenous people’s] perspective. The emotionality of the event made me feel and experience their pain. I have a similar history to Indigenous people.

I never learned the Indigenous history of Canada before. I thought Canada was a place of peace and that people here would never understand my story, history, and pain. But the event changed that assumption.

I think the Canadian government is moving forward to make it right with Indigenous people. That doesn't happen in my country.

I didn’t have the same experience as Indigenous people, but I can empathize and be an ally. I can be friends and stand by them. I can help protect their land and protect Canada.

First Nations reserves are so small compared to their traditional territory.

The Canadian guy attending the event who just recently found out that he had Indigenous heritage as well as settler heritage felt guilty, but he wants to make it right. He will share his knowledge. He got the same message although he didn’t go through the same experience as us refugees.

These events really get the message through to people.

What did you like at the event? What didn’t you like? How could it have been different?

The element of surprise, not knowing what was going to happen at the event, as well as the emotional element, helped.

Maybe have a trigger warning but without spoilers next time when advertising the event.
Questions about the event

In your own words, what happened at the event?
A beautiful ceremony of learning and teaching

Why did you attend the event?
To contribute in teaching others about my culture

Was the event similar or different than what you expected?
There was definitely things I did not expect to happen or learn

What aspects of the event did you think worked well?
I think the blanket exercise turned out really good

What aspects of the event could be improved or changed?
Should there be more events like this in the future?

- Yes
- No

If yes, why? If no, why not?

I love knowing my culture is being shared

Some participants who are on Surrey LiP’s Refugee Youth Team told me in a focus group I did with them that because of the emotional intensity of the event, a trigger warning before the event would be helpful in the future (but without spoilers about what will happen). But they did feel that the emotionality of the event is key to what made it effective overall. What are your thoughts?

A trigger warning would be good. Just so people are a little more prepared

Questions about intercultural dialogue

Do you think intercultural dialogue between refugee youth and Indigenous youth in Surrey is important?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how do you think intercultural dialogue could help decolonize the settlement of newcomers and refugees in Canada and help them become allies of Canada’s Indigenous peoples?

People need to know. A lot don’t know anything about us

What was it like to share your own experiences, knowledge, and culture with the refugee youth at the event?

What did you learn from the refugee youth?

I learnt we have been through some of the same tragic experiences
In your own words, what happened at the event?

It was an event to bring together groups who are under the systemic oppressions of westernized and global structures.

Why did you attend the event?

I hosted the Indigenous Women INpower workshop

Was the event similar or different than what you expected?

It was a bit different, I had not anticipated so much participation from the youth. It was very inclusive and inviting!
What aspects of the event did you think worked well?
I think bringing the groups together to learn and share traumas worked really well.

What aspects of the event could be improved or changed?
It was all great.

Should there be more events like this in the future?
☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, why? If no, why not?
It's important to keep educating and share these experiences

Some participants who are on Surrey LIP’s Refugee Youth Team told me in a focus group I did with them that because of the emotional intensity of the event, a trigger warning before the event would be helpful in the future (but without spoilers about what will happen). But they did feel that the emotionality of the event is key to what made it effective overall. What are your thoughts?
I agree, trigger warnings are extremely important.
Do you think intercultural dialogue between refugee youth and Indigenous youth in Surrey is important?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, how do you think intercultural dialogue could help decolonize the settlement of newcomers and refugees in Canada and help them become allies of Canada's Indigenous peoples?

It brings the realities of Indigenous peoples' realities, while living in a 'first world countries' we are treated and given 'fifth world conditions' with an ongoing genocide, this is not a perspective that Canada acknowledges or shares.

What was it like to share your own experiences, knowledge, and culture with the refugee youth at the event?

I felt very fortunate to share.

What did you learn from the refugee youth?

The oppression placed upon refugee is very fresh and they are very strong for moving forward.
Surrey LIP Youth Services Working Group Focus Group

How have you used intercultural dialogue between Indigenous and newcomer youth in your programming? What policies does your organization have in place for this?

- MY Circle participants visit Musqueam First Nation in Vancouver
- Staff training with Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Association (FRAFCA)
- Experiential learning (e.g. ceremonies, blessing food)
- Focus more on educators than youth

What ideas do you have to advance intercultural dialogue between Indigenous and newcomer youth?

- Organize more local events like the Indigenous and Refugee Youth Intercultural Dialogue Event
- Build more collaboration into programs
- Address the history but also educate on the beauty, resilience and modern-day culture of the Indigenous Communities

From your perspective, what support or coordination still needs to be developed to incorporate intercultural dialogue in your programming?

- Be mindful of tokenism
- Trainings for service providers (e.g. host open cultural competency training event)
- Create a list of guest speakers to share with the group
- Share other events with the group
- Facilitate relationship-building
- Ensure there are territorial acknowledgements / cultural welcomes at events
- Find out what service providers can offer Indigenous Peoples in return for their involvement
- Be forward-thinking / celebratory, not just sharing history / potentially triggering