



TOGETHER PROJECT

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**VOLUNTEER
ENGAGEMENT
WITHIN THE
DIGITAL
SETTLEMENT
CONTEXT**

AGENDA

PART 1

Volunteering with Refugees and Refugee Claimants in the Digital Settlement Context – Anna Hill

PART 2

Centring Newcomer Voices in the Digital Settlement Context –
Natasha Comeau

PART 3

Building Refugee Newcomer Women's Digital Literacy in the Digital Settlement Context – Mirna El Sabbagh

PART 4

Where Do We Go From Here? Lessons Learned and Potential Pathways to Improved Integration Outcomes for Refugees –
Andrew Luszyk



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**CENTRING NEWCOMER
VOICES IN THE DIGITAL
SETTLEMENT CONTEXT**

**NATASHA COMEAU
TOGETHER PROJECT**

CENTRING NEWCOMER VOICES - VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



Illustration: Emilie Muszczak

- Newcomers volunteering to share their settlement journeys via Together Project communications.
- Engaging with audiences through social media, website blog, and our podcast series.

CENTRING NEWCOMER VOICES - COMMUNICATION GOALS



Illustration: Emilie Muszczak

- “**Remote social support**” during the pandemic
- Promote **positive public attitudes** towards refugee newcomers
- Increase **understanding** of **integration challenges**

CENTRING NEWCOMER VOICES - COMMUNICATION GOALS



Illustration: Emilie Muszczak

- Promote newcomer storytelling and autonomy
- Highlight both the challenges of settlement and opportunities
- Emphasize the resilience of the newcomer community
- Allow space for vulnerable populations to reach larger audiences through our platform

CENTRING NEWCOMER VOICES - FOCUS GROUP SERIES

Focus Group Questions:

1. What forms of social media do you find to be the most effective in highlighting newcomer experiences? Why?
2. Do you have any examples of organizations you think are doing a good job sharing newcomer experiences, what do you like about them?
3. What do you consider to be the best use of Together Project's social media (i.e. Facebook, Website, Podcast) to highlight newcomer voices?
4. In reviewing Together Project's social media platforms shared in advance of this consultation what were some of your initial thoughts?

- Three focus groups hosted in Spring 2020
- 20 newcomer participates including newcomers from our programs, volunteers with newcomer experience and newcomer advocates outside Together Project
- Attendants were provided communications material to review ahead of time

CENTRING NEWCOMER VOICES - FOCUS GROUP TAKEAWAYS



Illustration: Emilie Muszczak

- Attendees were generally satisfied with Together Project's communications.
- Highlighted enjoying Together Project's branding, website design, storytelling infographic posts, statistics sharing and resource sharing.
- Many attendees believe we should use our platform to promote positive storytelling about newcomers' experiences.

CENTRING NEWCOMER VOICES - SUGGESTIONS

- Pursue more **press opportunities** to reach a broader audience outside of Together Project.
- Share more content with newcomers in our matches **through the volunteers.**
- Host newcomer **guest speakers** or hand over our **blog** to newcomers.
- **Feature** a newcomer family or individual who wants to share the story of their match, and progress updates about the household's integration.
- Share more **news articles** about the broader refugee experience globally, providing context for why newcomers may become refugees and come to Canada. This is particularly important to counter misinformation about refugees.

CENTRING NEWCOMER VOICES - NEW INITIATIVES



A FORMER REFUGEE HELPS NEW ARRIVALS OVERCOME OBSTACLES

My name is Fatma and I am a single mom from Syria with a son. I arrived to Canada in February 2016 from a Syrian refugee camp in Turkey to begin building my new life from zero. I still remember the feelings of my first moment of my arrival to Canada. It was snowing and -20 degrees. At first, I felt depressed and lonely. Read more [here](#).

READ MORE

Guest Blog Posts

Story of a Match



STORY OF A MATCH – AYA MEETS HER WELCOME GROUP

"My name is Aya, I am originally from Syria. I am a newcomer to Canada and arrived in January 2021. I was previously living in China. I am 21 years old and so far I am enjoying Canada.

I was very nervous when I first arrived. When I was in China I wouldn't see foreigners that frequently, so it was a culture shock to see so many different people from different backgrounds all in one place.

I joined Together Project because I really wanted to make new friends and get assistance with getting to know the city better. It's been amazing so far, the volunteers are really friendly and supportive. We have formed a book club, because I love reading, and we have settled on *Love in the Time of Cholera* for our first book this month." – Aya

We are excited to share Aya's Story of a Match, this update is the first of a series of updates from Aya over the course of her Welcome Group match with Together Project volunteers. Stay tuned to hear more about Aya's journey.

CENTRING NEWCOMER VOICES - TOGETHER PROJECT PODCAST



- Newcomer centred podcast series interviewing newcomers in our Welcome Group Program
- Opportunity to discuss integration challenges and the benefit of volunteer support
- Flexible and autonomous (if necessary)
- Storytelling opportunity for newcomers and a platform to share the work we are doing with potential volunteers, funders and partners.

CENTRING NEWCOMER VOICES - SAM'S STORY

Metro Morning with Ismaila Alfa



'It's so real! ...it's phenomenal!': Ugandan refugee and local volunteer meet in person for first time



Play Segment

10:12



Share Segment

Samuel Kimuli fled Uganda two years ago, survived the Toronto shelter system and COVID-19, and has found hope and support from a group called The Together Project. "It makes me humble": Kimuli talks about his journey and the strength he gets from volunteer Heejae Yang, as they meet face to face for the first time on an East York sidewalk.

Aired: Oct. 30, 2020

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-39-metro-morning/clip/15806130-its-real-...its-phenomenal-ugandan-refugee-local-volunteer>

- Sam started our program in March 2020 as a refugee claimant and is now a protected person.
- He arrived in Canada as a single youth from Uganda.
- We matched Sam with a group of university students.
- He was facing social isolation, housing and employment challenges, and COVID.
- He volunteered to be featured on our podcast and this led to him getting interviewed on CBC Metro Morning.
- He is now employed as a Cloud Engineer.