



Youth in Design

Pilot, Evaluation, and Next Steps

Youth Initiatives, WES Canada Programs

2024

Land Acknowledgment

WES uses and participates in a land acknowledgment to recognize the enduring presence and resilience of Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island. It is also a reminder that we are all accountable to these relationships. This is a first step in our collective progress toward truth and reconciliation.

Whose territory do you reside on? Visit: [native-land.ca](https://www.native-land.ca)

A light gray map of North America is shown in the background. Two blue circular callout markers are placed on the map: one over the Great Lakes region and another over the New York City area. Lines connect these markers to text boxes on the right side of the page.

Toronto

WES acknowledges that it is on the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, that is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

New York City

WES acknowledges that it is on the island known as Mannahatta—now called Manhattan—in Lenapehoking, the homeland of the Lenape people.

Agenda

- I. Background and Introduction to Youth In Design
- II. Q & A / discussion
- III. Youth & SPO Firsthand Experience
- IV. Evaluation Results and Recommendations
- V. Q & A / discussion
- VI. Next Steps
- VII. Q & A / discussion

Background and Intro to YID



Founded in 1974, WES is a non-profit social enterprise that supports the educational, economic, and social inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and international students. From evaluating academic credentials to shaping policy, designing programs, and providing philanthropic funding, we partner with a diverse set of organizations, leaders, and networks to uplift individuals and drive systems change.

Background

Despite high levels of educational attainment, immigrant youth are unemployed at higher rates and are more likely to be found in low-skilled, low-wage work compared with their Canadian counterparts.

- Post-pandemic **economic fallout**
- **National Roundtable on Immigrant Youth Workforce Development**
 - Stakeholder engagement, identifying strategies
- **National Town Hall**
 - A spotlight on youth voice, listening to their perspectives
- **State of Immigrant Youth Report**
 - Scoping the data, shaping the future
- **Phase II of Youth Initiatives**
 - Focus on youth voice, social capital, and work experience; launch of Youth in Design



Intro to Youth in Design

- In 2023, WES introduced the **Youth in Design (YID)** initiative in **Toronto** to develop and test a model aimed at building **social capital** for **refugee youth**. The program also focused on **promoting agency and redistributing power** among participants.
- To address power imbalances and foster effective partnerships, particularly for newcomers to Canada, the pilot adopted **equitable partnership principles (EPP)**.
- A central feature of the pilot was its dedication to **co-design**, involving **eight refugee youth** working alongside **five service provider organizations (SPO)**.

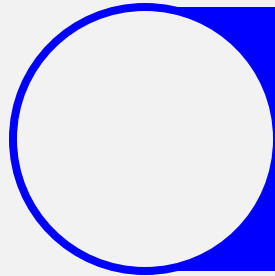
Structure



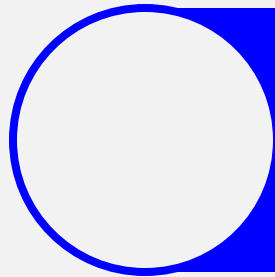
Youth and SPO Firsthand Experience

Evaluation Results and Recommendations

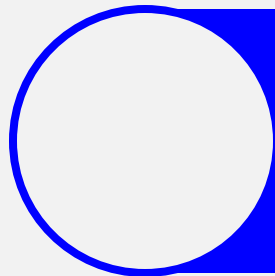
Blueprint Evaluation Findings



Current evidence suggests that there is a niche for Youth in Design in Canada, and further research is required to understand the potential demand.

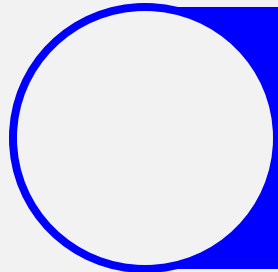


While the pilot yielded a “minimum viable product,” it might have benefited from additional up-front planning.

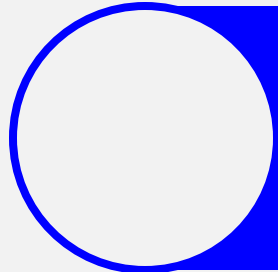


The pilot was able to embed the equitable partnership principles (EPP) well. Overall, SPO appear to have found the experience more rewarding than the youth participants.

Blueprint Evaluation Findings



The pilot strengthened and increased previous knowledge and soft skills. In addition, the pilot supported youth who were early in their settlement journey in expanding their social capital.



The developmental evaluation was perceived to enhance the accountability and agency of the program.

Recommendations and WES' response

Incorporate mechanisms to enhance **participants' engagement** and **agency**

Create **tailored** training content and co-design curriculum

Develop **program's pedagogical strategy** based on trauma-informed and strength-based approaches

Recommendations and WES' response

Conduct a
landscape analysis

Conduct a **cost analysis**
for YID pilot model

Blueprint

Questions and Comments

Need more information?

Ousama Alkhatib, Manager, Youth Initiatives

oalkhatib@wes.org