

# Summary: Community Conversations – Teens and Youth

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## 1. Aspirations – A community where you want to live

### **A safe place: feel safe while walking on the street; obey the laws**

- Safe – be able to feel safe on while walking on the street because if didn't feel safe would not go out and feel isolated or scared. Benefit of safety is to meet people, be involved in community. If there is crime not willing to go out.
- Safe – if safe then can work with other sectors. Fix safety then can talk about being friendly and being more Canadian. Some things are ways of being polite in western culture rather than fake. Safe means without fear.
- Safe and healthy
- Safe – important to stop fully
  - Want to protect people who are important to you
  - Life is the most important thing
  - Money you can get back, but your life or your health you can't get it back
  - Losing part of yourself is worse than dying
- Organized – not noisy and annoying, obeying the laws

### **A friendly community with trust and friendship: “friendly and real”, and “people have warm hearts”**

- Neighbourhood is close, people have warm hearts
- Friendly and real – real means not fake. Gets feeling many people in the NS act fake and not their real personality show something else to people and inside something else, especially when it comes to customer service. Important because if someone doesn't like me to be upfront rather than keep in heart. Wants to know if seeing the person inside not what the person attempts to be because if want to be in any relationship with people not be fooled. Trust is important. Friendly – means when people really care about each other. Real care – when living in an apartment no one knows each other, no real connection just hi/bye whereas in old days people could borrow from each other, go out, deeper connections now no one knows what's going on with others – just pretend to know.
- Friendly – taking care of each other, care more about the people around you, when you get more friendly then can help each other and the community.
- Community is a metaphor at UBC departments – and feel there is a community in a certain department – feels same purpose and people talk to each other and help each other (not always case in other Science faculties). Metaphor and same as community – when everyone is enthusiastic and helping then people come out to participate and be of something bigger. Sense of common purpose – something like getting connected is to get to know people – maybe come

together and help each other out to go on paths. When people share might have the same purpose or want to have the same purpose in life.

- Less stressful and less expensive – less stress mean living in North America is so strict and regulated especially in working i.e. if want to say something in general people as employees just follow the rules they don't innovate or think – if something could be better or another way of doing the same thing would be easier they just follow what's been told to do. Would like to see more flexibility and creativity. They care about finishing the day, getting the money and going home rather than really caring about the company – would like to see people are really invested.
- Yes – I've visited here a lot, the nature, there are people who have been nice to me here
- People and environment make me feel like I belong
- Can get help from them; ask their opinion
- Helping others provides self-worth
- Mother has Persian friends
- Wants to influence people to be better
- You belong to where you're glad to live in

#### **A community with diverse population and culture: many multicultural events – a “fun city”**

- Like multicultural people but too many people makes me depressed, stressed
- Fun – more cultural events for other diverse cultures and access to things – NV not a fun city because things close early – things being open later, more engaging stuff for adults to be involved in. Fun city is important – culturally, creative and active i.e. pop into a venue that has interesting event going on. Feels that activities in NV are geared to interests that are specific i.e. outdoor activities are here because of where we live, but if that's not your thing then one could feel isolated. Have opportunity to have diverse interests.
- In Europe there are so many different events to be a part of and can go to cities so easily.
- Canada is the best – better than France or other countries. Here is people are kind. Canada is more tolerant. In Canada – some people have worn burka in swimming so Canada is more tolerant to multicultural and diversity.

#### **Freedom and human rights**

- Canada is open – can use social media and Google – not restricted – like the freedom
- Justice and freedom
- Iran has religion and government combined and here it's separate
- When you compare – I understand that the real justice here, not in my country, real freedom is here, not in my country
- But people from different countries might have different opinions

### **A place where other family members, relatives or people with same ethnic background live in**

- Relatives
- Finding the right place for one person is necessary for everyone. Anyone who comes here as a newcomer immigrant – takes time. For some like to learn about NV and commuting to downtown, like the Iranian community in NV. There's no traffic here so easy to get around here. If have group of friends then anywhere is fine – can go to nowhere and do nothing and still have fun when have a group.
- As long as have group then can have fun.

### **A place with nice weather, beautiful natural resources and environment**

- Nice weather
- Lots of trees and plants, streams – sandy beaches - nature
- Get to see lots of nature – don't see that in China – lots of wildlife
- Talked about being in China – the pollution – hates going back – only good thing is things are cheaper
- When you go to the streets you enjoy the buildings, nature, you're ok with your weather. Tehran is the 3rd dirtiest city – when you breath you're smoking, compared to here
- NV – have great downtown view – enjoys walk and looking at view. Different people have different ideas on what's fast and slow in terms of pace.
- Inside NV saw interesting community. Deep cover very beautiful.
- The environment, the trees, everything, life

### **A community with a small population where is easy to connect with neighbours**

- More related to size of city. In small town everyone knows everyone. Problem more related to big cities. In Shanghai – everyone in a particular community knew each other, but when going outside of community didn't know each other. Wants to live in a safe community. Large population in Chinese community like Richmond avoided because wanted to interact with diversity so lived in NV because it looks like Canada. Language and culture easier to make friends from people within her own community so didn't want that but to mix.
- Quiet, peaceful, not too many people

### **Healthier life style**

- Healthier – not a fan of smoking or drinking – really don't find something fun to do at night because anywhere one wants to go has alcohol or is smoking. Getting people to get a feeling that you don't need to be drunk to be happy.

- Yes – there are plenty of non-smoking and non-drinking activities too. Biggest issue is that people are living so healthy – so kind of different in living in big cities like TO where there is more night life. IE more silent in NV – here we don't have as much commercial areas – even Lonsdale closes at 6 – nothing to do here. All agreed – after 6 in NV – nothing to do except Tim Hortons and McDonalds and Boston Pizza. NV feels isolating.

### **A community with services available for immigrants**

- Immigrants should do lots of things – lots of support – translators, language, helping students, university, college, etc.,
- Support and help and programs to introduce their community, the school, help us and get us information

### **Others:**

- For one participant everything is good, enjoys living also for another likes slow pace of life. Likes slower pace because has class, then cook, and doesn't go out normally. During weekend will go out for dinner. Will stay home and go to sleep – and likes it and enjoys life. But when wants to go out goes to Vancouver, but feels Lonsdale is convenient. Agrees Iranian stores are convenient.
- Goes out with sister's friends to cinema, fitness world, English bay and Ambleside Park at night. i.e. met friend at church and went to English bay for walking. Depends on people on how to use the program of here and what they like. Some may study hard, some may work hard, some might not have these and just lay at English bay and have lots of free time – all depends on each person.

## **2. Issues /Concerns**

### **Language barriers and challenges of higher education**

- If you lose a year of high school, then you're behind – nothing you can do to reach that person
- It's happened once in our life
- For any new immigrant it happened once – because of your English you should go one grade back, you think you're bad, you're not as good as them, it doesn't feel so good
- My math – I say I'm so good at that, I wanted to go to the next grade – but counsellor says you can't
- Took me out of my science class – because my English wasn't so good
- You don't know English very well, you feel bad, you don't want to study
- Would rather that they put you in grade 9 or under doesn't matter – can just try – they don't matter as much as grades 10 and up – just fin if you have to repeat the younger grades

- Last year my teacher put me in English 10 even though I was in grade 11 and go to summer school for English 11 – then passed it online with an A
- But if I was in English 11 now I wouldn't be disappointed
- One year wouldn't affect your life
- One year is one year – it's important
- When you're undergraduate – that's four years, if you study hard, you can make up for the time
- But it depends on the personality –
- I know it doesn't affect my score, but I felt bad
- Another problem they said that the space is full, so I couldn't take math
- You could take it online – but they said my English wasn't good, so I couldn't take it online
- If you study hard, it's not a big deal

### **Lack of employment opportunities and foreign credential recognition**

- My dad is a doctor, when he came here, he wasn't accepted – you have to do all these things, then maybe you'll get a job. He came here for a job, they should make a job for him, so when he comes here he can go to a job – the babysitter can work, but the doctor can't – he just wastes his time – four, five years then maybe he'll get a job, and it'll be beginner

### **Cultural / value conflict**

- For new immigrants, especially Iranians, parents want you to be doctor or engineer your parents will kick you out of the house! Haha

### **Hard to make friends**

- The trick is finding the people to be friends with – many agreed. Summer time is great in NS and in Van because everyone is out. Even in Lonsdale – people come out so more sense of community when weather is nice. But 85% of year weather is like this.
- The trick is finding the people to be friends with – many agreed.

### **Some unacceptable behaviour**

- Too many Chinese doing bad things – smoke, make Chinese people look bad - disrespectful – not optimistic – don't think about future – only care about what is happening now – don't work hard
- Traffic laws – people running red lights – punishment not strong enough
- Too much emphasis on material things not enough on bettering their minds

- Chinese should be more physically active like white people – come from developing country and don't adapt

### 3. Consequence

#### Isolation: hard to adjust and integrate - “like there's something wrong with me”

- Isolating – because i.e. we all exist as shoes in shoe boxes that get stacked so have high-rises that are stacked like boxes and no opportunity to get to know neighbours. So go into shoebox and no opportunity to interact so this is isolating. Meetup.com has arisen but if new meeting people could be intimidating.
- Feels more isolated when houses are separated. NV – most people are elderly and income after retire they come to rest or families with children have too much to think about then going out.
- Difficult to adjust to society in 3 years
- Hard to trust people ; some people talk behind his back
- Was addicted online games when he first came – home stay – parents came and changed that – pulled him back got him back to studying – self-control is important – can't make money that way
- You feel like I'm bad, like there's something wrong with me

#### Stressed and depressed

- Worries about being able to be doctor – lots of studying
- Pressure – where can I work? What will I be able to do?

#### Others:

- Friends don't feel the same way – they want to be rich – bring bad influence from China

### 4. Challenges that keep the community from making the progress we want

#### Lack of recreation, especially place to go at night

- Lack of night life especially in NV – technically no night life in NV – most important issue for youth
- Would like to see open stores until midnight. City market closes at 11pm. See people outside – get them outside if there is something to do.

- Something in progress in NV. IE bowling place on 3<sup>rd</sup> street – although very old and bad smell, people still went because there was nothing. If there was something like a huge bowling place where people can go to hangout or a go-to place and stays open late at night then other businesses around them can stay open. IE waves on 2<sup>nd</sup> used be open 24 hrs and then two other restaurants were open late, but once waves changed to close at 11 the others closed.
- IE – there are no billiard places in NV, but found in downtown – but to smelly and in Yaletown is so busy.
- What if one or 2 rec centres were open late like midnight – the youth drop in space, gym.
- To have fun go to NV and Vancouver. In NV goes out with family in downtown.

### **Transportation: expensive and long waiting time**

- Transportation – get around, and too expensive
  - Important to get to know your place
- Have to wait too long to for driver’s license
  - Want to hang out with friends, but can’t with L license
  - Study a lot during the week – get with friends and family to Lynn Valley – can’t pick them up with the bus
  - Want to be timely – time is money – if you lose time you can’t get it back
  - Want to do EVERYTHING with my time – focus on learning, school, my English, things that are useful for me

### **Aging population / demographics**

- Many retired living in NV so that’s why it’s quiet.
- NS – could be a place to raise a family. If young and haven’t built family yet could be very boring. Left after a year to move downtown.

### **High living cost**

- Too expensive
- Not the architecture – living in small places because of affordability.
- Expensive – affordability is a big deal.

### **Ongoing construction**

- A lot of construction sites in NV

## 5. Suggestions

### **Provide more resources and support for youth education, i.e. language support**

- I'm not good at English, so subjects need English, so you need to be understanding everything
  - They gave me social, and I couldn't get anything – only two questions on the test could I understand it
  - Math itself is a language, I could understand it – my teacher was good – she asked me do you understand that? She was so good – it was important to her, “you should try it”
  - Put kids into the things they're good at and put you in the next grade – but for the rest, because of your English, stay in this grade
  - My teacher said go to BC Online class – but my counsellor told me that I couldn't
  - My focus is on English, but if you put me in the next grade for math then I won't be bored
- Another good facility to use free classes for anything i.e. free French class – having free classes in facilities..
- My problem was space for the courses – so why do they get international students – international students are more important than me? Permanent residents should be a priority
- They haven't predicted how many PR are going to come this year
- Some things you have to pay for in school – your electives like woodworking, design and technology, and engineering
- Better education
- You can't write in the textbooks, and they'll charge you if you damage it
- Cutting English classes – talk about it to see what organizations can do.
  - I would be accepted into university
  - My English is improved!! Yes! Yes! When you get your English you can do anything you want
  - It's very important
  - If you want to go to university – if you have everything 100% but you fail English they're not going to accept you
    - If you want to go to a good university
    - I want to be an electronic engineer

### **Host workshops and events for immigrant youth, including cultural events**

- NSMS – there are workshops for newcomers – it can be such workshops but not held by one person or organization – have long term immigrants or non-immigrants have simple workshops – volunteers come together and have event held by these people i.e. have workshops held in helping young find education majors – have young people hold these workshops as volunteers. i.e. have youth hold workshops for other youths about i.e. learning next steps – everyone contribute their own knowledge and expertise.

- Use NSMS organization to form and organize events/programs– to help others – but NSMS or orgs like NSMS can help to manage and organize – the youth needs a hub that can manage all these things.
- NSMS or other orgs – have access to people and government to arrange/announce – “we want to plan for some social events/fun and we are requesting people who think who have good ideas/opinion to come and share their opinions to build something new.” Use people who love to participate and contribute to do something.
- Challenging thing is actual participation and outreach – preannounce something interesting such as food, game to get people’s attend to come.
- Cultural events – if there was a Canada Day – sign up with any org to be part of a huge carnival – for all diversity to be involved and join as volunteers. For Norouz – there are only two organizations do for community work and not for profit – but if want to volunteer in a place where people can sign up and young people could lead activities.

### **Create places for youth to get connected**

- NSMS is a great place has a lot of services. If possible – NSMS needs more funding.
- Really like gatherings like get connected and this conversation – really likes NSMS – enjoy people there. What’s lacking are places to make real friends (in NV, North America and Canada) where people just get to know each other and be a normal person. Some places to join to do fun things that are good fun such as dancing (but hates clubs) go somewhere to dance where there is no alcohol or feel oppressed or touched and not feel has to be wild or drunk.
- There are places in downtown but not in NV.
- Get more people to come- have get together – make new friends – find people with same values
- Nine years ago government funded program for all ages – for competitions, dancing classes fiesta food and the funding was cut this stuff was good because mixed all diversity – maybe government re-establish.
- If people lived in different design of living space might be more welcoming and less isolating – i.e. smaller gathering of units where committees come together to meet whereas a large tall high rise – chances are slim to none

### **Provide information that focuses youth population**

- What if there was a community paper or youth magazine – youth could write articles or promote groups or art shows they want to host. Something they could see and contribute to or radio station run by
- Need good influences to counteract the bad

### **Use social media to connect with youth**

- Facebook is helpful – finding friends, learning things, asking questions thru FB is great. For IE in Persian community – have helping Persians in Vancouver -4000 members – it’s a place to ask any question and anyone will answer. It’s a win-win situation and if have business can promote, share ideas and referrals share info. They have gathering once a month. Business owners can talk about their business. This FB method provides opportunity to get to know people from your own community and make friends.

### **Improve promotion and communication with newcomers: “visualizing is a key”**

- Visualizing is a key – there’s no pictures on things to know it’s happening – if see visual of people having fun, food, then tempted to join. Posting photos attract attention. Advertise on FB, Instagram, newspapers, NSMS, meetups.

### **Offer volunteer opportunities for youth**

- Youth volunteers – places where people could be involved.

### **Enhance laws and regulations**

- Enforcement of rules
- Gaps in the law

### **More services for people in need, i.e. food bank**

- Food bank – worries about people’s hearts – people aren’t as friendly

### **Other**

- Bring bad things from China

## **6. People that you trust**

### **Service providers**

- NSMS
- NSMS
- North Shore Multicultural Society – people from Iran – if they say do this it’s better for your life, they’re giving you the best thing and there’s no misunderstanding because they’re from Iran

## **Governments**

- Police
- Prime Minister
- City Hall – community spaces – dialogues being held there. City Hall feels so inaccessible. Not transparent. Don't know what they do there. Creates sense of not knowing what goes on their. IE paper or radio to be done by the city.

## **Schools and teachers**

- Teachers

## **Libraries**

- Libraries

## **Friends or family members**

- My relatives – I get to know my society and community a lot and fast
  - When I arrived here, I needed a job and no one told me what to do, I just went through each store and asked how do I get a job and they told me a resume and cover letter
  - I asked a lot for doing things – it wasn't as important so I didn't have to ask relatives
  - For buying a car I would go to my uncle

## **Youth who has positive image and reputation**

- People like him could make a difference – give back – be a positive influence

## **Some individuals**

- The people from Iran you can trust them – I don't like the food, but she told me you should take the food classes – and you can get a good grade because it's not hard
- The guy from Honda was from Iran and he helped us a lot to get a car for less
  - Because he explained to us there was no misunderstanding

## **7. Expected outcomes**

### **Guideline developed about “how you can be involved”**

- Guideline to “here's how you can be involved” or step by step guide on how to be included. Have an app or booklet that's interactive the Newcomers guide is not fun. An app would be awesome.

## Less isolation

- Less isolation. Isolation can lead to depression sees a lot here. Mental health would be improved. Few past days – hearing at work on radio that advertisement no shame to talk about mental issues – but it has been so frequently hidden so that’s related to being real.
- A cultural thing – people here control feeling and are pilot withholding feelings may cause mental problems. – can’t do anything about his in 6 months. Everything has two sides. Fake or acting can’t be resolved easily.

## Places are built or availability; more events.

- Seeing the places built and availability of places, more events.
- 6 months not a long time – having more upcoming events and festivals. Put on website so people have access. Let people know what projects are being done by city halls or libraries. Have organization communicate more about what they are doing for short term to long term goals. Would want to know organizations are thinking about it and planning to do xyz.

## 8. Now that we’ve talked about this issue a bit, what questions do you have about it?

- What is our plan after gathering all this? Once all conversations completed – will be writing paragraph long stories about what people have said. Share the info back to participants, but sharing with City Hall, NSMS, and other organizations that serve newcomers to use to make decisions.
- Why did they extend the time to get a passport – there should be a reason for it – they made a deal with us – like a store
- They should make the rules easier, but they make it hard. I don’t know why. They need immigration –
- What’s the goal of immigration?
- Why are we here? There are so many reasons why I’m here right now. I used to wear a pink shirt in Iran – they arrested me for wearing a pink shirt in Iran – here no one told me don’t put that on. I feel free here. There’s more privacy here
- If Canada was no ok for you, where would you go?
  - US, obviously – here, the best is UBC, but the REAL best is in the US – so I WANT to go to US
  - Sweden! Great memories from there
- Don’t make it harder for us!!