



# Canada Bridges: Unveiling Youth Potential



## Who We Are

Canada Bridges supports young people to be catalysts for change in their lives and communities.

*Our vision is a world where youth can show up, stand up and be heard, and our mission is to listen, learn and collaborate in community for unveiled youth potential.*

Each year we interact with and support over 200 youth as they explore the change they want to create in the world and take the first steps toward achieving that change. Our programming has been developed with Indigenous and racialized youth who face multiple systemic barriers such as racism and intergenerational trauma, and we have a toolbox of tested resources and activities that help youth explore their personal leadership potential: developing a stronger positive sense of self, recognizing their strengths, and building confidence in their ability to create change in themselves and in their communities.



## Our Approach

Across all of our programs, there are six key components of our approach:

1. **Deepen the understanding** that youth and young adults have of themselves, their communities and how change happens, **by co-developing and facilitating learning experiences** and workshops with community-based partners.
2. **Engage caring adults** to coach youth and young adults as they navigate systems, overcome obstacles, and create change.
3. Create opportunities for **youth action, practice and experience** in creating change.
4. Collaborate with partners in community to **strengthen skills, resources and expertise** in supporting unveiled youth potential.
5. **Make connections between people, communities and organizations** that could complement each other's learning and action.
6. **Share ideas, knowledge and learning** to create more engaging, understanding and empowering systems for youth.





*"Canada Bridges helps youth get their projects going, but they don't take over. They help them with resources and let the youth do their thing. Helping them become a leader and working with other peers."*





## Youth Change Leadership and Project Support

We support young leaders to create initiatives in their communities that they are passionate about. Youth have tackled issues ranging from water rights, to mental health, Indigenous language preservation to clean energy. They have started youth programs, hosted community events, made award-winning films, represented their nations at international conferences and started social businesses. Each year we support 40-50 youth who are taking forward initiatives in their communities, connecting them with resources or training, and facilitating leadership development activities that help them to be successful in their chosen projects and initiatives.

Our Indigenous Rising Treaty 7 program is informed by Indigenous ways of knowing, and shaped by youth participants - to build a community of young Indigenous change leaders within Treaty 7, enabling them to access the supports and resources needed to take forward their visions for change within their communities. This new initiative builds from current youth-led project support and provides on-going connections to Indigenous youth who are leading change projects in their communities.



*"It's important for Indigenous youth to lead projects in their community because they have more understanding of current situations and experiences than any other individual not from the reservation. We want to help our communities."*





## Unveiling Youth Potential Facilitation

We partner with other organizations on programs, workshops and activities for youth to explore their leadership potential, their communities and the dynamics of change leadership.

Often these workshops or activities take place as part of existing programs, events, or conferences and are tailored specifically for the youth involved. While we try to respond to all invitations received, for the past six years, we have prioritized invitations to work with community-based partners in the Siksika and Iyârhe Nakoda Nations. Collaborators include Siksika Employment and Training Services, Siksika Health, Siksika High School, Siksika Recreation, SOS Congo, Morley Community School, United Way Connect Event. During COVID-19, some of these programs have continued in online format, while others have been cancelled or postponed.

We are using this opportunity to further develop and refresh our facilitation tools and resources, making them more shareable, so we can bring more youth leaders onboard as facilitators. We hope that this will help to respond to increased demand once physical distancing restrictions are lifted.





## Interested in Joining the Board?

We are looking for values-aligned and passionate leaders to join our board. We want to talk to you if you:

- feel aligned to our Mission, Vision and Values
- understand and appreciate the organization's culture and way of working (developmental approach, work by invitation, social innovation, systemic thinking)
- are adaptable and flexible
- have time and willingness to participate in board meetings and preparation, as well as other events, to learn about and engage with the organization.

This year, we are hoping to find board members who bring these perspectives and skills to strengthen the team

- lived experience representing the communities we partner with including youth (18-30), Indigenous heritage, immigrant experience.
- financial management knowledge, interest in joining Finance and Audit committee
- fundraising connections or experience

If you are interested and would like to know more, please contact us!

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