

PROGRAM REPORT · 2026

Youth Changemakers Leadership Program(YCLP 2026)

*YCLP 2026 · Raising a Generation That
Doesn't Wait for Change — They Create It.*

NEIGHBORS
INTERNATIONAL

YOUTH
CHANGEMAKERS
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
Changemakers, Building Futures.

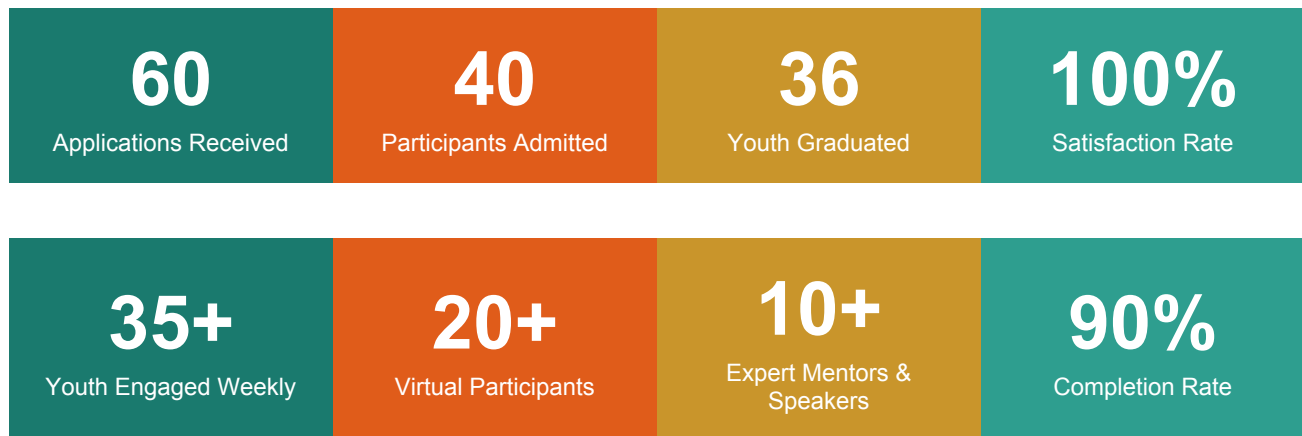
www.neighborsinternational.ca · Calgary, Alberta · November
2025 – April 2026

Implemented by: Neighbors International | Funded by: Genesis Centre, Calgary Canada
Program Duration: 6 Weeks | Cohort 1: February 7 – March 14, 2026



Executive Summary

The Youth Changemakers Leadership Program (YCLP 2026), implemented by Neighbors International, is a 6-week transformational leadership and social entrepreneurship program designed to empower immigrant and underserved youth to become confident changemakers in their communities. Through mentorship, experiential learning, and real-world problem-solving, the program equipped young people with the mindset, tools, and networks needed to drive sustainable social impact. This cohort was funded through the Genesis Centre Community Grant and served youth aged 13–20, primarily from immigrant and underserved backgrounds in Northeast Calgary.



YCLP 2026 Full Cohort



Some of our Facilitators & Mentors

The Problem We Are Solving

Northeast Calgary is home to a vibrant and diverse immigrant population, yet many newcomer and immigrant youth face significant barriers to reaching their full potential:

- Social isolation and cultural disconnection
- Limited access to mentorship and leadership development
- Barriers to entrepreneurship and economic participation
- Mental health challenges and identity struggles
- Gaps and access to opportunities and resources

- Limiting Mindset

Without intentional intervention, these challenges can lead to lost potential, disengagement, and long-term socio-economic gaps. YCLP exists to change this narrative — equipping young people with the confidence, skills, and community to thrive.

About the Program

Program Structure

- 6-week cohort-based program with a hybrid delivery model
- In-person intensive sessions plus virtual workshops
- Workshops, peer learning, mentorship, group projects, and pitch presentations
- Participants completed the program with a graduation ceremony and live business pitch

🦋 4. Program Overview

🎯 Objectives

- Empower youth as leaders and changemakers
- Foster social innovation and entrepreneurship
- Build resilience, confidence, and life skills
- Strengthen community networks and collaboration

Curriculum Topics

- Social entrepreneurship and business planning
- Discovering and responding to community burning issues
- Community leadership and changemaker profiles
- Public speaking and team collaboration
- Non-profit, for-profit, and social enterprise models for changemaking
- 15+ core topics and keynotes delivered across 12 sessions



Participants during a YCLP 2026 workshop session



Impact Dashboard

Program Reach & Participation

Theme	Participant Feedback
Applications	60 applications received from Calgary youth aged 13–20
Enrolled	40 participants admitted after selection process
Graduated	36 youth successfully graduated (90% completion rate)
Virtual Reach	20+ additional youth engaged through virtual sessions
Weekly Presence	35+ active youth engaged in-person each week

Learning & Development Outcomes

Theme	Participant Feedback
Topics Covered	15+ core topics and keynotes across 12 structured sessions
Expert Mentors	10+ expert facilitators, speakers, and mentors engaged
Duration	6 weeks of structured learning, mentorship, and team projects
Pitch Day	Multiple youth-led social impact ideas developed and publicly pitched

Overall Program Satisfaction

Participants were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with YCLP 2026. The results are unambiguous:

✓ **100% PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION RATE (36 of 36 Graduates)**

Every single participant who completed the program reported satisfaction — a testament to the quality of facilitation, community, and content delivered throughout YCLP 2026.

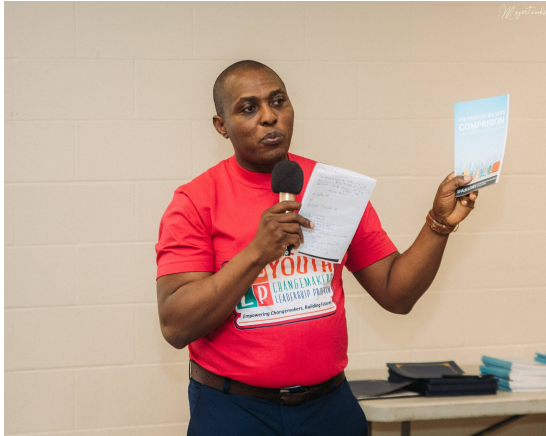
Key Findings

What Participants Valued Most

Participants consistently identified the following as the most impactful elements of the program:

Theme	Participant Feedback
Entrepreneurship Skills	Learning to build a business plan, understand budgeting, and apply for grants gave participants a tangible framework for turning ideas into action.
Pitch Day	The final business pitch session was repeatedly cited as a highlight — participants were inspired watching peers present social business ideas with conviction and creativity.
Guest Speakers	Exposure to local changemakers, entrepreneurs, CEOs, and community

& Mentors	leaders offered real-world perspective and motivation.
Teamwork & Communication	Activities fostering collaboration helped participants develop confidence in group settings and appreciation for diverse perspectives.
Changemaker Business Models	Learning about non-profit, social enterprise, and for-profit models opened eyes to the many pathways for creating positive impact.
Grant Writing Exposure	Hands-on exposure to real Calgary grants (some participants applied for funding up to \$2,800) made the learning immediately practical.



Executive Director, Akinyemi Lapinni, sharing opportunities



Leadership team & partners

Impact on Confidence & Changemaker Identity

One of YCLP's primary goals is to shift how young people see themselves — from bystanders to agents of change. The survey results indicate this goal was powerfully achieved:

"The program has made me more confident and helped me believe in myself as a changemaker. I used to be shy about sharing my ideas, but now I feel more comfortable speaking and working in groups."

— H Momand, YCLP 2026 Participant

"Before YCLP, I had ideas but wasn't sure how to bring them to life. Now, I feel more capable, prepared, and motivated to take initiative and create impact in my community."

— O Akinboye, YCLP 2026 Participant

"I view myself to be more confident, possess a business mind, and look forward to changing my world."

— E Omega, YCLP 2026 Participant

"Motivated me to go out and increase my part in volunteerism, and starting up my own business."

— H Habib, YCLP 2026 Participant



Guest speaker engaging YCLP 2026 participants



Volunteers engaged in small-group mentorship and discussion

Participant Impact Stories

Story 1: From Doubt to Action

"I learnt that a problem is not solved by decisions but by actions."

— YCLP 2026 Participant

A participant who initially struggled with direction is now actively planning a community initiative — demonstrating a powerful shift from passive thinking to proactive leadership.

Story 2: Confidence Ignited

"It has helped me improve in public speaking."

— YCLP 2026 Participant

Participants reported increased confidence, with many stepping forward to present ideas publicly for the very first time. Several participants, who described themselves as shy, led team presentations on pitch day.

Story 3: A New Vision for the Future

"Social entrepreneurship inspires me because making impact and profit is a win-win."

— YCLP 2026 Participant

Youth now see themselves not just as job seekers — but as solution creators and future founders. Several participants have taken concrete next steps, including applying for community grants of up to \$2,800 and developing business plans for their own social enterprises.

"This program was a great experience that helped me build confidence, learn new skills, and feel more prepared for the future."

— YCLP 2026 Participant

"I have developed a new perspective about business. The idea of social entrepreneurship really inspires me because making a positive contribution and profit at the same time is powerful."

— YCLP 2026 Participant

"I love the whole set up and wish we had more weeks together."

— YCLP 2026 Participant

Areas for Improvement

Participants offered thoughtful, constructive feedback on aspects of the program that could be strengthened in future cohorts:

- Session pacing: Some sessions ran over time while others felt rushed. Participants suggested visible countdown timers and advance agendas distributed 48 hours prior to each session.
- Theory vs. practice balance: Several participants expressed a preference for more hands-on, applied learning experiences alongside conceptual content.
- Workload management: Balancing assignments alongside school responsibilities was challenging; more flexible timelines and structured weekly check-ins were requested.
- Pre-session agendas: Participants requested a clear outline of each session's content to help them prepare and engage more deeply.

Topics Participants Want in Future Programs

Participants were asked what topics felt missing and should be covered in future workshops. Their responses reflect a sophisticated, ambitious appetite for practical real-world knowledge:

- Financial literacy — personal finance, stock markets, and online business models
- Fundraising strategies and sustaining a social project or organisation long-term
- Public speaking and confidence building (as a dedicated standalone workshop)
- Career planning, goal-setting, and interview preparation
- Gender inequality in the workplace and labour market
- Social wellness topics affecting youth — peer pressure, drug influence, and mental health

Partnerships & Collaborations

YCLP 2026 was made possible through strong collaboration across Calgary's community ecosystem:

Key Funder

- **Genesis Centre Community Grant (Calgary)**

Strategic Partners & Contributors

- Mount Royal University – Institute for Community Prosperity
- Rotary Club of Calgary East
- Youth Central
- Planet Youth / Trellis
- Calgary Northeast United Football Club
- MyAreea
- The Newcomers Guide
- Calgary Dollars

Featured Speakers, Facilitators & Mentors

Akinyemi Lapinni · Akpeko Gasono (PrintedSun Inc.) · Musap Abdel (SIYS) · Alabi Adenekan Sabainah Akanbi, PhD · Tyson Bankert · Tinsae Kebie · Cordelia Snowdon-Lawley · Wesley Hynd · Jeny Mathews-Thusoo & Team · Nivasinii Anandhakumar · Councillor Raj Dhaliwal



YCLP 2026 in session



YCLP 2026 closing session

Recommendations for YCLP 2027

Based on participant feedback and program delivery insights, the following recommendations are proposed for the next cohort:

- Introduce a dedicated financial literacy session covering personal finance, stock markets, and digital business models.
- Develop a time-management framework for each session with visible countdown timers and advance agendas shared 48 hours prior.
- Expand the public speaking component into a standalone confidence-building module with structured practice.

- Design a flexible assignment submission schedule to accommodate participants balancing school and extracurriculars.
- Incorporate YCLP alumni as guest speakers and mentors to demonstrate real-world changemaker pathways.
- Add a fundraising and project sustainability module to maintain participant momentum post-program.
- Scale to 100+ youth annually with increased strategic funding and expanded partner network.

Conclusion

YCLP 2026 has demonstrated meaningful, measurable impact on Calgary's immigrant and underserved youth. Every graduate reported greater confidence, a stronger sense of purpose, and practical skills they will carry into their communities and careers.

The program is clearly fulfilling its mission — and the demand for more weeks, more topics, and more connection is a testament to the quality of experience delivered. With 60 applications for 40 spots, demand already exceeds capacity. With continued and expanded funder support, YCLP is well-positioned to scale its reach, deepen its curriculum, and empower even more young Calgarians to create the change their communities need.

"Raising a Generation That Doesn't Wait for Change — They Create It."

— YCLP 2026 Program Tagline



NEWSLETTER & MARKETING EXCERPT

Ready-to-use copy for your newsletter, annual report, and social media channels.

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36 Calgary Youth Became Changemakers in Just 6 Weeks

This spring, 36 remarkable young Calgarians graduated from the Youth Changemakers Leadership Program (YCLP 2026) and the transformation was extraordinary.

Organized by Neighbors International and funded by the Genesis Centre Community Grant, YCLP brought together immigrant and underserved youth aged 13–20 for six weeks of intensive leadership training, social entrepreneurship workshops, and real-world mentorship. Out of 60 applicants, 40 were selected — and 36 crossed the finish line with new skills, new confidence, and new ambitions.

Participants learned to build business plans, write grant applications, pitch ideas, and collaborate across cultures. They heard from local CEOs, entrepreneurs, a Calgary City Councillor, and community leaders — and they pitched their own ideas to a room full of mentors, parents, and peers.

"I used to be shy about sharing my ideas, but now I feel more comfortable speaking and working in groups," said one graduate. Another shared: "Before YCLP, I had ideas but wasn't sure how to bring them to life. Now I feel ready."

The results: 100% satisfaction rate, 90% completion rate, and a cohort full of young people who have already begun applying for community grants of up to \$5,000 to fund their own social impact projects.

The future of Calgary is being built — one young changemaker at a time. Want to support the next cohort? Contact Neighbors International to learn how your contribution powers YCLP.

"This program pushed me to step outside my comfort zone, think more critically, and take action on something that matters."

— YCLP 2026 Participant

"I love the whole set up and wish we had more weeks together."

— YCLP 2026 Participant

"Social entrepreneurship inspires me — making impact and profit is a win-win."

— YCLP 2026 Participant

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