

Balancing Cultures

M: Do you balance your home culture and new culture?

A: Yeah, 'cause in our house like, my stepfather was a Canadian and my mom was a Filipino, so the culture of a Canadian and Filipino are mixed together, so my dad teach us what are their traditions and my mom also teach him the traditions of the Filipinos.

J: Do you have trouble balancing your Canadian culture, your home culture?

H: I think so, yeah. When you're coming from like a different country, you're not used to like the customs here. Like, you're just used to how it is back home and whatnot and just follow what everyone else follows. When you bring home the Canadian culture home, wherever you're from and you just kind of mix it in, it's very confusing because you don't know how to explain it to your parents, like this is what happens here also but like when you step into that house kind of just have to forget about it because you're home sort of thing.

Rose-Eva: Hello and welcome to Unheard Youth. We are a podcast created Edmonton Centre for Race and Culture. We're focusing on newcomer youth voices all across Canada and featuring what they have to say about identity, migration, and belonging. I am your host, Rose-Eva Forgues-Jenkins.

At the beginning of this episode, we heard from two different youth. The first clip was when we recorded youth at McNally High School and the second clip came from newcomer youth group, Sky Club. I chose these clips because they both feature the connecting theme for this episode. This episode is entitled, "Balancing Cultures" and other conversations with Edmonton youth.

First off, we hear from the youth at McNally High School. They talk about their migration stories and what life in Canada is like for them now. Afterwards, we hear from the youth at Sky Club as they discuss the differences between Canadian culture and their home culture. But first off, a bit more info about the City of Edmonton.

Edmonton is the only city that we didn't have to travel to because the Centre for Race and Culture is based at Edmonton. So here are some facts that I found.

Edmonton's population is just over 1 million, making it the fifth largest city in Canada. The city is commonly referred to as "The Gateway to the North" because of how the city is very much tied to all the oil and gas industries. After all, Edmonton is the home of the Oilers hockey team.

The city has expanded quite a bit in recent years with an 11 percent population increase since 2011. With that rise in population, there's also been an increase of visible minorities from 21 percent to 37 percent. So, we know that the city is rapidly growing and changing. But what are schools and community groups doing to welcome this increase in diversity? To find out, I sat down to chat with some folks that are working with newcomers in Edmonton.

First up, we hear from English language learner coordinator from McNally School, Lindsay Babiuk. Joining me for that conversation, we also have youth facilitator at Action for Healthy Communities, Jonathan Spanner.

Here's my conversation with them about the programs that they provide for newcomer students in Lindsay's classroom.

Lindsay: Hi, I'm Lindsay Babiuk. I'm the ELL coordinator here at McNally High School.

Jonathan: My name's Jonathan Spanner. I work with non-profit in the City of Edmonton called Actions for Healthy Communities. What I do specifically, I come in with Ms. Babiuk's class once a week on Friday mornings and help the ELL kids with less the nuts and bolts of English, more the other things that are necessary in learning language.

So, cultural skills, self-appreciation, workplace skills, different things that they might need and they may not find in their everyday curriculum. So, I'm in five or six different schools and how my week usually looks is, I'll have a field trip or two with my different classes. We've had a few with McNally. One was a bit of a disaster. We tried to go to the corn maze and it was raining too much and it was flooded so we had to just kind of take the kids for a walk and we just kind of went to a dog park and walked around for an hour. So, that was really good. The kids liked it, to be honest.

Lindsay: They did!

Jonathan: So, that was really good. We were going to go to the Art Gallery. So different just, I think, important places that if you grew up in Canada, you would go to and it would be kind of an important memory from your childhood. So, that's what I really like about going to these places with these kids because it's kind of seeing them experience for the first time and doing things that Canadian-born students would have had when they were six, six-seven, now they're 16, so they kind of have a little more awareness of where they are, so that's really great.

We also bring in workshops. So, we had a yoga instructor last week who was just amazing, I thought.

Lindsay: The program has been really great. I find learning a language, these students are exhausted by the end of the week and I find they always are looking forward to Friday session. And they are actually learning and developing skills in a really fun and engaging way. They don't even realize that they're actually developing those skills and days when Jonathan's not there, they're all wondering where he is and why he's not there. So, it's kind of a nice way to sort of close off our week and it's also been a really good opportunity to build community within our class. You'll hear the students are always supporting each other and part of that is because of the fun kind of atmosphere that's built within the classroom.

Rose-Eva: Yes, I was wondering about the curriculum, Lindsay. How does the ELL curriculum differ from the regular curriculum?

Lindsay: My students are part of what we call an ELL cohort and so they do spend a portion of the morning every day with me. And so, we want to give them the support not only for their academic classes as they move through that, but then just, you know, to have a sense of community. It's easy for students that are newcomers to Canada to be lost in our high schools. And having this kind of ELL cohort is a group where they can support each other. They all kind of understand where each other is coming from. Again, building that community is really important.

And this is the second year we're running this program and we've noticed really a big difference. Our students feel like they belong here. That's McNally's motto, is "You Belong Here" and the students can really, truly say that they do. Yeah, just giving them a safe space, that kind of common person to sort of go to with questions about grad requirements or certain courses that they should take, but then again, developing that foundational literacy skills that's required for their academic courses.

Jonathan: Yeah, just this week in the community of McNally, so like I said, I've been six or different schools and covering for co-workers, I've been in probably 15 schools over my three years working with Actions for Healthy Communities and I would say McNally's kind of school culture is by far the most positive and you know, community building and I think part of that has to do with how awesome the kids are. This is also by far the most diverse class, which is a really, really, amazing to see. There's 16 students that we'll be dealing with, I think from 10 different countries or 11 different countries, yeah, so it's highly diverse. They are so encouraging to one another.

I remember when we did that, I think it was a Jeopardy game, and one kid was having difficulty choosing a category so one of the other kids said, "It's okay. Just choose with your heart" and it was just like really beautiful and that's just kind of what I come to expect with this class now. Every Friday is just kind of a really positive experience and I think that just goes to speak to the culture that they have here at the school.

Rose-Eva: Any thoughts on how other programs could implement and make other newcomer students feel welcome? What do you think is a really important advice that you would have for having that program be so successful?

Lindsay: I think it's really important for the students to have kind of a go-to person within the school. I have students that were with me last year that are now in regular program and they're still coming to me for advice about something just 'cause they ... they had the opportunity to build that relationship with that one person and they're comfortable. Think that's a really important thing and you know, just giving them a voice, making them feel that they are heard, that they matter, and that they have a place to be.

Rose-Eva (hosting): You just heard from Lindsay Babiuk and Jonathan Spanner. Next up, we're going to hear from the newcomer students in Lindsay's classroom. The students got together in groups and asked each other questions about the topics of identity, migration, and belonging. A note that some students felt more comfortable expressing themselves in a language other than English. We loved hearing the diverse languages and experiences that were present in the class.

Hazel: Hi. My name is Hazel. I am 15 years old and I'm from Philippines. I'm in Grade 10.

Kunjika: Hi. This is Kunjika. I'm 16 years old and I'm from Nepal.

Kavu: Hello. My name is Kavu. Edmonton, Alberta. *[speaks Nepalese]*

Hazel: How did you feel when you first came to Canada?

Kunjika: I felt very nervous as well as excited when I first came to Canada because Nepal and Canada, they're like different thing and they're different country. They're like far. The Nepal is very far and Canada is like very far. And I want like experience Canada's weather, people.

Hazel: Why did you immigrate to Canada?

Kunjika: Because my family live in refugee camp. And refugee doesn't have much food and my family move to another country.

Shabir: My name is Shabir. I'm from Afghanistan.

Antonio: I am Antonio ---- and I am from Syria. I am live here in Canada from one years.

Abi-J: My nickname is Abi-J. I am from Eritrea, East African country. I have been here almost three months.

Antonio: I came to Canada because there was war in my country.

Shabir : What did you miss about your home country?

Abi-J: I miss a lot. I miss my friend. My schoolmates. They were so close to me. We had a lot of fun like that. So, I miss that situation.

Shabir: Do you have any strategies that help you cope?

Abi-J: Yes, I have strategies like hard work, friendly with people, because I'm new so I have to be a friendly with people to know the behavior of this country and also their culture.

Sofia: Hello. My name is Sofia. I'm from ----. I am 16 years old. And I'm McNally student.

Samaher: Hi. My name is Samaher. I'm 16 years old. I've been here for two years and a half.

Nafia: Hi. My name is Nafia. I'm from Syria. I'm 15 years old.

Samaher: Sofia. Why did you immigrate to Canada?

Sofia: I don't really know why. I just follow my dad. He got him, us to come.

Samaher: Nafia. Did you change anything about yourself when you come to Canada?

Nefia: No.

Sofia: Samaher. Why did you immigrate to Canada?

Samaher: Because there's a war in my country.

Sofia: Do it feel like home here?

Samaher: Yeah. Because I have my family, everything I want, the same what was.

Sofia: Samaher, what did you miss about your home country?

Samaher: I missed everything. My friend, my other family. I have two families, actually. My grandmother. All these people, I miss them. And I miss my home.

Sofia: How about you, Nafia?

Nafia: My friend, my home, and my family.

Marline: I'm Marline and I'm from Liberia. I'm 17 years old and I'm in Grade 11, McNally High School.

Angel: I'm Angel. I'm 17 years old. I'm from the Philippines and I'm currently in Grade 11.

Mohamad: My name's Mohamad. I'm 17 years old. I'm from Syria. I'm in Grade 11. I study in McNally High School.

Bonke: My name's Bonke. I'm from Congo. I'm 17 years old.

Marline: Okay, Mohamad. What makes you who you are?

Mohamad: What makes me who I am? My personality and my experience of people. Like we every day change, every moment, but whenever we see new people, we change, too, like I can't believe now I ... how big change that I get after I meet all the people. And especially like when I move to Canada, I have a lot of big change. Angel? What makes you who you are?

Angel: What makes me who I am is my own experience in life. Like, they teach me how to be mature enough to handle things personally and independently. Marline, what makes you who you are?

Marline: What makes me who I am is my personality and the relationship I have with my family and my friends. And I'm always around people and like making everyone happy. And everyone makes me happy. And yeah, helping other people, that's what makes me who I am.

Mohamad: Angel. Does it feel like home here?

Angel: Yes, it feels like home here 'cause the people here will welcome you warmly and they will never make you feel uncomfortable. Marline, does it feel like home here?

Marline: I would say yes 'cause where I'm from like everyone like do their own thing and no one's care about each other. And here, everyone like, people welcome everyone here and acknowledge you. And like here is like more freedom and do stuff that you want to do. Bonke, why did you immigrate to Canada?

Bonke: It's because something happened to my country, like dangerous, they kill people, terrorists. So, that's why.

Angel: We immigrate here to Canada because there are lots of opportunities in here and especially finding universities. Because in the Philippines it's too hard to find university that will fit in your certain course. Yeah.

Mohamad: I immigrate to Canada after the war that's happened in Syria. Like, I was so comfortable in my country and I wasn't thinking that I'll leave my country in one day. But after the danger's getting more and more so our family decide to move to Canada. And after I get here, I had like better opportunity to study and to work and to have good friends.

Marline: Awhhh. *[giggles]*

Mohamad: Marline, why did you immigrate to Canada?

Marline: Me and my family was immigrate to Canada because it's a long process. Day after my mom was happy. I didn't know why she was happy. She was so happy because she was immigrant to come to ... not only was America or Canada, because we didn't know yet, but they were asking my family, you guys want to stay here or you want to go to your country? But, by the grace of God, my mom, she says, "She doesn't want to go to my country. She wants to stay where we were."

So, everyone was like, "You have three kids and no one's with you. No one's helping you. Why can't you just take the money?" And my mom knew that that money's gonna finish and nothing gonna come out of it, so she knew something's gonna happen. And she knew that we gonna get a better education, so that's why she didn't take the money and she was there until the grace of God, we picked to come to Canada.

And when I got here, I was so happy. And so unhappy because I miss my friend and my home country and also I'm happy I'm good for the ... something's gonna come out of here and it gonna be a better things in life. Yeah.

What do you miss about your home country?

Mohamad: What did I miss about my home country? I miss my friend. I had a lot of friend in Syria and I miss them. And I miss the food, the food, yeah. In our country we have like a different taste of food and my home in Syria, I miss my home in Syria.

Marline: What did I miss most about my home country is the Liberian cuisine. It is so classic. The food is so delicious and I can't even find it here.

Mohamad, how did you feel when you first came to Canada?

Mohamad: It was so hard when I first came to Canada. Like, I wasn't speaking English and I wasn't know a lot of about Canada. I just get here and I wasn't ready for that. I don't know, but was so hard. I still remember that day when I was like, I wasn't speak the language and it was everything weird. Marline, what did you feel when you first come to Canada?

Marline: I was happy. At the same time, sad. Because I left so many things behind. I was so surprised that we were coming to Canada and when was on the plane, it was like a miracle. And when I got here, I was so happy that things 'cause they served us food and then the leftover, they put it in the garbage and I was so surprised that why they put the food in the garbage? They was supposed to keep it for the next morning but you know, they don't keep the leftover food. Bonke, how did you feel when you first came to Canada?

Bonke: I was so happy. I surprised like I didn't know if I was supposed to come to Canada so I was happy for that.

Everyone: One more, one more , one more.

Mohamad: One question.

Marline: Okay. I'll pick Angel's question. Angel, do you balance your home culture and new culture?

Angel: Yes, because in our house like my stepfather was a Canadian and my mom was a Filipino so the culture of a Canadian and Filipino are mixed together, so my dad teach us what are their traditions and my mom also teach him the traditions of the Filipinos. For example, eating rice every day just like that and sometimes we usually did the ... just the potato and something like that. Yeah, that's it.

Rose-Eva (hosting): You just heard from the students at McNally High School. A huge thank you to them for sharing their stories.

Next up, we're going to hear from the newcomer youth group, Sky Club. Here to tell us more, we have some youth who regularly attend the program. They are going to introduce themselves and tell us what stands out most to them about the youth group.

They also talk about the storytelling session that was hosted by the Centre for Race and Culture. We have Spoken Word Artist, Brandon Wint, come and facilitate a session with the youth to

explore their own relationship to the themes of identity, migration, and belonging. Here's what the youth had to say.

Hanifa: Hi. My name is Hanifa -----I'm 18. I am currently a student right now and I go to Sky Club.

Aysha: Hi. My name's Aysha. I'm 16. I'm from Botswana. I go to Sky Club. And yeah, I live in Edmonton.

Lorit: My name is Lorit ----. I'm 18. I'm in Grade 12. I've been living in Edmonton my whole life. I'm from Ottawa, though, Ontario game.

Juan: Hello. My name is Juan and I'm 17 years old. I attend the Sky Club and I've been attending for over 10 years now.

Emmanuel: Hi. My name is Emmanuel. Probably the newest addition to this group right now. And really excited to be a part of this inside dynamic right here. It's really interesting. I feel I have good feelings about this. Truly embracing the Sudanese culture over here. (Speaks Sudanese)

Juru: I don't know how I'm going to top that, but my name is Juru and I am 17 years old. I've been attending Sky Club since actually over the past 10 years.

Juan: This is Juan speaking and just for everyone to know, I have a twin named Juru and we sound, we're identical, obviously. We sound the same.

Voice: Just so you guys know

Juru: This is Juru and –

Juan: This is Juan.

Sarah: Hi. I'm Sarah. I'm 17 years old. I was born in Newfoundland but I moved to Edmonton when I was younger. I've been attending Sky Club ever since basically it was formed. I remember way back when, we had a van, it was basically a daycare van. It was huge and it fit like 25 kids in our car.

Yeah, all I remember really is swimming a lot, ice skating a lot and like being forced to do math homework, like constantly, like math homework, that was like three grades ahead of me. And yeah, that's all I really remember.

I remember seeing a lot of kids and you know, every Saturday used to be so fun. Because there was always something to do. We always got to like see our friends, like people we don't usually see outside of the club, you know.

Emmanuel: Yeah, some of my earliest memories definitely have to be a lot of swimming, a lot of just talking, hashing it out, yeah, just basically every day hangout, every Saturdays and just hanging out with some of my closest friends that I met here at Sky Club.

J: I remember seeing my older brothers attend Sky Club because I wasn't old enough. But once I was, I came and I met a lot of new people and built a lot of friendships and yeah.

Lorit: Yeah. I remember just like waiting every Saturday to come and link up with my friends and it was just a good way to connect with people you don't usually see. And to start building relationships within the community at a young age, which I think is vital.

Aysha: I'm quite new to this. I've been here for two years but I remember when I first came here, I was really scared to talk to everyone, so like I stayed on my own. But I got introduced to my group of friends, you know. Right now, I really couldn't like see myself coming here without or just like going about life without.

Voice: Awhhh.

Aysha: But I just love how when I came it was just a very welcoming environment and it allowed me to just get out of my box and I was able to talk to everyone.

Hanifa: I've been here since like I want to say like Grade 8. I was really like quiet and to talk to everyone, I just got my homework. And like I got help with stuff like that and then finally, I started talking to like there was sick girls there, Juru, Juan, Lorit, just making my way, making like new friends. And like yeah, we'd go on like field trips, go to the gym, go swimming, go skating, those were some fun activities.

Juru: We previously had a session with Brandon, who is a poet. The session was really fun because I've never done poetry before. This is Juru speaking right now, though. But I've never done poetry. This is the first time I've ever wrote and you know I don't know I feel so confident after saying my little poems? It was cute.

Juan: This is Juan speaking. It was cool to connect with another poet, especially because he built a platform for himself and I learned more writing techniques while I was at the session with him and it was fun.

Aysha: He came and we ... he started giving us exercises where we'd pick words that had a certain picture or feeling or emotion to do with, and then base it off of that word, we wrote a poem. And it was my first poem, but I wrote a poem that like, it really like, changed the way I look at my experience in life, it kind of like changed me a little bit. But it was really important, realization after I wrote that poem, it's like the poem itself when I was writing it, at first I didn't really know what to write about, but then I was like, what's one thing that's really important to me, and I'm like my mom. And the experience of meeting her again after three years was kind of like a very important one for me. And it's like reliving all of that. It's like I kind of want to go back to that place and just like have it going on forever and forever. You know, it kind of made me happy to have her around. Made me appreciate her still.

Rose-Eva (hosting): You just heard from the youth at Sky Club. Next up, you'll hear from a conversation that was recorded with some of the youth that you just heard from. I had previously met with the group and we had sessions on how to use recording equipment and what topics they'd like to talk about. Then, the youth came up with their own topics and questions for the following conversation. You'll hear the first part of their discussion on this episode of the podcast and the second part will be on the next episode. Here's what Juan, Juru, Hanifa, and Sarah had to say about the differences between their home culture and Canadian culture.

Juan: Hi. My name is Juan ---.

Hanifa: Hi. My name's Hanifa ---.

Sarah: Hi. My name is Sarah ---.

Juru: Hey. My name is Juru ---. We're here to have a conversation about basically identity. So, stay tuned. Do you have trouble balancing your Canadian culture with your home culture?

J: I would have to say no because I don't really see myself as a Canadian although I was born and raised in Edmonton. I always claimed myself as a Sudanese because that's the culture that I grew up with. I never really ... want to say, well, belonging was something that is a challenge.

H: I think so, yeah, when you're coming from like a different country, you're not used to like the customs here, like you're just used to how it is back home and whatnot, and just follow what everyone else follows. When you bring home the Canadian culture home like wherever you're from and you kind of mix it in, it's kind of difficult in a way. And it's very confusing because you don't know how to explain it to your parents, like this is what happens here. Also, but like when you step into that house, you kind of just kind of have to forget about it, because you're like you're home sort of thing.

S: Yeah, I would say I have trouble, too. I think not at much as I used to, because when I was younger, I thought that I could just kind of fit the mold and kind of just be a Canadian but color of my skin stopped me.

Yeah. So like you know, like my mom, for example, would cook me like African food to bring to school and I used to not want to pull it out and eat it because other people would be eating like... What do Canadians eat? Burgers, hot dogs, like a Snackable, and then my mom would have cooked me like this African meal and I just felt like I stood out. So before, I used to really want to just fit in and fit the mold. But now I realize like not even just African culture. There's so many cultures here in Canada that make up Canada as a whole, so I think I balance it better than I used to, is what I'm trying to say.

J: With me, I feel like I don't know this is hard, because in a sense, I was born here, in Canada and I've never been to my home, my actual home, which is South Sudan, so I feel like ... I don't really balance it. I feel like my Canadian identity overpowers my actual identity only

because I feel like with my actual identity, I don't ... like, I belong in that community but in the same sense, like being Sudanese, or just an immigrant in Canada, within your own culture it's like oh, look at this Canadian. Or, you Canadians. You guys don't know anything about you know, your actual cultures.

So, in a way, we get or I get shunned. I know back home, people will say "Ohhhh, (Sudanese language) Canada", which means "people from Canada" or they'll basically separate the two from actual south Sudanese with people who've been there through the struggle and the suffering and the pain to you know, the people who ran away, basically. So, that's how being Canadian for me, or being ... it's just a conflicting loyalty, basically.

J: At home, my mom will cook her asida and mullah which is African food and I tend to like Canadian food more. Like McDonald's are more, you know, the Westernized food. And because she'll cook something. I'll be like, "I want pizza." *[laughter]* She'll eat it by herself and she won't really complain in a sense.

Voices: That's so sad. Oh, my God.

J: I know. Yeah, haven't really realized how bad that is until *[laughter]* -

Voices: Pretty bad, right? *[laughter]*

J: Right. Pretty bad. Yeah. So, I guess, in a sense, I feel more Canadian or like I don't because I'm constantly reminded that I'm not Canadian, so it's like I don't know. Where do I belong, guys?

J: I believe the conflict that is that being a minority in Canada is hard to call yourself a Canadian when people don't see you as a Canadian. Because their first assumption is oh, like, you're not from here, even if you're born and raised and you're in Canada.

H: I sometimes think like at times like I feel I don't fit in at times. At times, like we come for like community things or we sit around and some of the kids I even grew up with, they're speaking their own language and I just kind of feel awkward. Like, I understand what they're saying but I just can't speak it in a way. And I just feel kind of awkward and I'm just sitting there. And like when they ... like when I first meet some one of my mom's new friends, stuff like that, they're like, "Oh, that's your daughter. Does she speak the language?" And then she'll be like, "No, she only ... she understands it but she won't speak in there." Like, "Ahhh, so she's that kind of kid." Like, she's been here all her life and they think that I wasn't actually born in Uganda even though I was but I wasn't there for the longest time.

I also feel like that if I was to go back home, I feel there would be like a barrier between me and my actual family back there. I'd feel kind of left out in a way 'cause all my cousins and aunts, uncles, they just grew up there all their lives. Then I come and I haven't been there for the longest time. I'd feel like kind of left out. I wouldn't know what to say. I wouldn't know what to do. I'd probably just feel really quiet. Maybe they'd kind of tease me a little bit, like "Oh, my gosh, she's a Canadian girl" sort of thing, so I feel like there'd be a huge barrier between us.

J: So, back to the question, do you have trouble balancing your Canadian culture with your home culture? So, this is the Chronicles 101 with Juru ----. Yeah, being ... living in Canada with so much family around me who were born and raised in South Sudan or was then known as Sudan or Khartoum, or wherever.

J: I get where Sarah was coming from where she was like bringing home food like Sudanese food and you're embarrassed to take it out. Like, I remember this one day in Junior High my mom made me mullah. I took it out and someone, this girl, she scrunched her face up, she's like, "What is that? It like smells weird. Like what are you eating?" After that I was like, "You know what? I'm not gonna do this in public." Because I don't want to explain to people what I'm eating and I don't want to be judged. I'd rather put that culture that I am from behind me when I'm in the real world and then when I'm actually in my home or my own space, I'll bring it back out.

H: About the food thing, too, yeah, 100 percent. Growing up like when it came to fast food and stuff like that, we were kind of restricted in a way. Because my dad, he really wanted us for our culture to stick with us, so he'd make us get our own food. Or like he wouldn't get food from different cultures, he just didn't want us getting no McDonald's, no Wendy's, and all that stuff. He didn't want us to like be like everyone else. He just wanted us to be us by the end of the day. But I still kind of felt left out when I brought home cooked meals and stuff like that. I mean, I would still eat it because it's my food, like what you gonna do? Right, you gonna to get me some food? Sudanese?

And I'm going to still eat it, just kids just kind of look at me and be like, "Oh, my God, what is she eating? It smells weird." Blah blah blah and all those kind of things and I just kind of feel insecure in a way and like at times I just feel like I don't want to eat no more. And I once the whole Grade 8 straight not eating my mom's food. That's a fact. The whole Grade 8. Like I didn't want to eat it. Like every ... yeah, so Junior high. So, I just eat like whatever she brought home from if it was fast food I'd take it to school or something like that, pizza, like those are the kind of things I'd take. Just I refused to take anything like rice or like cassava or like beans and stuff like that, I just refused to take it. The whole Grade 8. Because of like the environment I was around. There was other foreigners in the school, too, I thought we could just relate on a whole other level but I guess they just got used to the Canadian culture, that they thought I was kind of exclusive in a way that if someone else brought something else in there, they'd be like, "Oh, my God. What is that?" sort of thing. So that was Junior High.

S: I feel like it goes both ways, too, because if I went to a Sudanese function and I had a burger or something, they would call me out. Like they'd say "What are you eating? Do you not embrace your culture? Like where's the moolah? Where's the asida, where's the injera?" Like they would be mad, too. So, I feel like it works both ways. Like you get shunned both ways and it's hard to find the balance, like at the end of the day, you just kind of eat what you want, to be honest.

J: I feel like, in conclusion, we are first generation immigrants, so our parents wouldn't understand what we really go through in having that conflicting loyalties from inside your home

and outside your home. And trying to balance and ... help them understand in a sense. I feel like that's that. I drop the mic.

Rose-Eva: Don't actually.

Rose-Eva: And that's it for this episode of the Unheard Youth Podcast entitled, "Balancing Cultures and other conversations with youth in Edmonton."

I wanted to thank the folks that contributed their wonderful voices and knowledge to this episode, including Lindsay Babiuk, Jonathan Spanner, the amazing ELL class from McNally High School, and all the wonderful youth from Sky Club. Thank you so much for sharing your stories.

We would also like to thank our friends and partners at CJSR 88.5 FM and the Edmonton Community Foundation. This project has been made possible in part by the Government of Canada. Ce Project a ete rendu possible en partie grace au gouvernement du Canada. Thank you so much to Chivengi for providing the music featured in the podcast.

Don't forget to reach out on social media. Let us know your thoughts by commenting on our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Our username is unheard youth podcast. This episode was produced by me, Rose-Eva Forbes-Jenkins. We produced this show at the Centre for Race and Culture, Amiskwaskihikan, Edmonton, Alberta.

The Centre for Race and Culture acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 Territory, traditional homelands for many indigenous peoples including Nêhiyaw, Saulteaux, Niitsitapi, Metis, Dene, and Nakota. We pay our respects to the ancestors past and present who call this land home.