

Rose-Eva (hosting): Hello and welcome to the unheard youth podcast. I'm your host Rose-Eva Forgues-Jenkins. To Start off, we wanted to show a bit of what you're going to hear from the next 13 episodes of the podcast. This episode is entitled, Welcome to the Unheard Youth. Later on in the show, we'll tell you a bit more about how the podcast, and how it came together. But first, here's a compilation, featuring some of the many voices that you're going to hear on the podcast.

(Clip of compilation)

You just heard a compilation of what's to come on the later episodes of the podcast. Seeing as this is our very first episode, we wanted to let you know what this podcast is all about.

The Centre for Race and Culture in Edmonton wanted to create a podcast highlighting newcomer youth voices all across Canada. We listened to what Youth had to say in Fort St. John, British Columbia; Edmonton, Alberta; Montreal, Quebec, and Toronto, Ontario.

As your host, I travelled across country to record what youth had to say about the themes of the podcast - identity, migration and belonging. There are 13 completed episodes to this project.

To let you know a bit about the structure of the podcast, most of our episodes feature what the youth have to say. As your host, I gave you a bit of context and information about the city where we went, and a bit about the process of how the recordings happened. Before the recordings took place, the youth participated in a combination of workshops. Some of the topics of the workshops included social justice, storytelling, how to use the equipment, and then coming up with topics and questions that the youth wanted to discuss with each other.

These youth come from all over different parts of the world. They all have a different perspective on what it means to be a newcomer. We also have 4 episodes where I interview a guest expert on a topic. This introduction episode is the first one. Later on, you'll hear from my conversation with Noelle Jaipaul and Jamelie Bachalaani, where talk about our own migration stories, and define some of the terms that will come up on the podcast.

Each theme for the podcast has an episode where I interview a guest or guests. For the theme of migration we're going to hear more from with Noelle and Jamelie about the history of immigration policy in Canada. For the theme of belonging I have a conversation with Reuben Quinn about newcomer and Indigenous relationships. For the theme of Identity I talk to Yasmin Jiwani about the ways that media shapes how perceive ourselves

On the podcast we'll be hearing a lot about immigrants, refugees and newcomers. I wanted to know more about what these terms mean and how they're defined from a Canadian context. So I had a conversation with Noelle Jaipaul and Jamelie Bachalaani to discuss some terms that are useful to know for the rest of the podcast. We talk about what those terms mean to us, and some of the statistics on migration around the world and in Canada. Here is Noelle and Jamelie:

Noelle: I'm Noelle Jaipul. Thanks so much for having me on the podcast. I am excited to chat with you both today. I am a treaty 6 settler, so I was born and raised in Edmonton. My parents are both immigrants from Guyana, a country that is considered the West Indies in South America, just kind of north of Brazil.

Jamelie: My name is Jamelie Bachaalani and I was born and raised in Edmonton as well. My mother was born in Canada. She's Ukrainian and German and then my father immigrated from Lebanon in the late 70's.

Rose-Eva: And so I think for folks to understand what we're talking about, maybe we can talk about some terms that come up and what those specifically mean when we bring up those terms.

Noelle: Sure, so I think the terms that we hear most frequently in the Canadian narrative or immigrant and refugee. There's a lot of differences between these two immigration categories.

An immigrant is someone who chooses to a large extent to settle in another country permanently. Immigrants also face a lot of the push and pull factors, as we call them, that inspire them or motivate them to leave where they originally are from or other factors that pull them specifically to Canada. So better at work opportunities educational opportunities better opportunities for their children in the future things like that. Whereas refugees are forced to flee their country because of persecution, war or violence.

Typically we use the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or UNHCR as we can call them. We use their definition and there's certain components that legally identify people as refugees. So they're forced to flee their country because of persecution war or violence and they have a well-founded fear of persecution, for reasons that include race religion nationality political opinion or membership in a particular social group and they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. So that's really the biggest difference between immigrants and refugees. Refugees are kind of out of options by that point in time. They can't go back to their homes. Whereas immigrants who come to Canada there is that maybe it's an unsavory possibility or it's unpalatable, but they could return home if they chose to. Another interesting point to note is that both immigrants and refugees when they land in Canada, they are permanent residents. They are paying taxes to our governments. They are able to work, they are able to go to school, they're able to get Healthcare in Canada. The only thing that permanent residents cannot do that citizens can do is vote, or run for political office or those kinds of things that are more in the political sphere of organizing. But not to say that that is a hard and steadfast rule because municipalities are now looking into the idea of allowing permanent residents to vote in Municipal elections. Which is great news, I think and I think that would be really something transformational for our cities that receive a lot of immigrants and refugees.

Rose-Eva: So another definition that I think is important specifically for this podcast is, this podcast focuses on newcomer youth voices. What specifically is a newcomer? On the government of Canada website this is the definition that we get for newcomers to Canada is that it applies only to the first tax year that you are a new resident of Canada for income tax purposes

after your first tax year in Canada you're no longer considered a newcomer for income tax purposes.

There's another definition that I found where recent immigrants who are also known as newcomers refers to let in immigrants who came to Canada after 5 years prior to a given census year. So that's the official government understanding of newcomers, but I think that for the purposes of this podcast we define newcomers as anyone who feels like they're new to this land and some way shape or form.

Noelle: Another quick definition that I'll go through is internally displaced persons. This is actually the largest group of precarious folks around the world when we're talking about migration status. So internally displaced persons are displaced from their homes, they fled for similar reasons to refugees but they're within their own countries boundaries. And this is a real problem because the reason that they're fleeing whether it's war, violence, political upheavals, their government is no longer functioning to provide them with the supports that they need. So internally displaced persons are really kind of out of luck. They are often the most vulnerable in the world. So to be a refugee, going back to our refugee definition, you actually have to be outside of your country. You cannot register as a refugee with the UNHCR unless you were outside of your borders.

Something else that's been really popping up in the news lately and Canada in North America and Europe all over the world is the idea of undocumented folks or people without status. These are folks who have not been given permission to stay in a particular country or they've stayed after their visa has expired. So whether they came on a temporary Visa a work visa a student or visitor Visa, it can also cover people who fall through the cracks of the system such as a refugee claimant who is refused Refugee status when they're in the country, but they don't leave Canada because they really do have a fear of returning home. We actually see this quite a bit with LGBTQ+ refugees who come to Canada because they are asked to prove that they are within the LGBTQ+ community and they've escaped from countries where being gay, being homosexual, being trans, is dangerous and even illegal. But you can imagine that for folks were coming from countries where it's illegal to be gay proving that you're gay is very difficult, since you spend all of your life up till this point hiding the fact that you were gay in order to save your own life. So a lot of those refugee claimants are being denied Permanent Refugee status within Canada but they cannot return home so they become people without status.

A lot of the undocumented folks that we know about in Alberta are people who've come on the temporary foreign worker program, which is a flawed program, but that's a story for a different day. The temporary foreign worker program the rules change so frequently. There's Federal regulations, there's provincial regulations and sometimes people who are here on their temporary foreign worker visa - the rules change. Suddenly, they lose their status or maybe their employer fires them without cause -- they lose their status -- all of these different issues. So they're still living in Alberta trying to get their status back, trying to get their papers back, they're still perhaps working. They have children who are Canadian citizens in a lot of cases. They have families here. They've built a life here. We hear people use the terms illegal migrant illegal alien, all of these things. These are very problematic because they criminalize a person. A person is not illegal. We don't call people who have stolen things or ran a stop sign illegal people just because

they have been in an act that is against the law. International law actually recognizes that refugees may need to enter a country without official documents or authorization. So it actually is misleading to describe them as illegal migrants a similarly a person without status may have been coerced by traffickers whether that's through human trafficking, labour trafficking -- which is very common, sex trafficking. These people are really victims of their circumstances. They're the victims of a crime when we shouldn't be treating them as wrongdoers.

Rose-Eva: I think what stood out to me is that in the definition for Refugee there's a fact that's right open to interpretation. Like you said, how can you prove these things? Who needs to flee, who doesn't need to flee is very subjective.

Jamelie: My father immigrated to Lebanon year after the Civil War broke out which was actually like the process for him was quite easy. He waited in Greece for six months before he was allowed clearance into Canada. He's not a citizen. I like just assumed when I was little that he was a citizen. I didn't realize like what a permanent resident was. I also didn't realize that like he can still be deported. So I didn't realize there was one incident when I was a child that he was almost deported. So that is like as an adult I'm like wow -- that would have been such a huge shift in my life. Even the fact that he did immigrate to Canada, I often think about the privileged that I have from living in Canada, especially as a gay person, because it just became legal in Lebanon a couple years ago to be gay. If he had been denied entry into Canada like, life would be very different. So it's something I think about like often.

Rose-Eva: I think it really highlights how these definitions might seem abstract -- these definitions of really very much like tangible consequences for people who are living within these definitions and have to define themselves within this very strict category given by a government.

Noelle: And they're very clinical their clinical definitions of you know, this person has to follow these particular rules and this other person can follow these other set of rules and it totally takes the human aspect the humanity those people completely out of the equation.

Rose-Eva: Noelle, thank you so much for those definitions. Can you also give us some numbers to go along with those definitions?

Noelle: For Sure. Right now in the world we're witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. So the most people ever that we've seen unstably moving around, displaced and I think part of it is our population is a lot larger now than it's ever been, for sure. But I think there is also more conflict going on in the world. Less on the world war scale but more intra-national conflict so conflict happening within countries which leads to a lot of internally displaced people and the numbers reflect that. So in the world we have 68.5 million people displaced the so that is a United Nations statistic. Of that 68.5 million, 40 million are internally displaced and 25.4 million are refugees. And there are around the world ten million stateless people. So these are folks who don't have passports or documentations for any country and they have been denied a nationality which also means that they're denied access to basic rights such as education, Healthcare, employment and freedom of movement.

So Canada has a foreign-born population meaning, the amount of people who have immigrated to Canada, of 21.9%. So that's one in every five people that you walk down the street and say hello to will have been born out of Canada. So 22.3% of the total Canadian population, according to statistics Canada, identify as a visible minority. But of that 22%, 31% are Canadian-born. So that's people like me, who have parents from abroad but were born in Canada. But we're still visible minorities or racialized folks and then of that, 22% of the total population of visible minority Canadians, 65% were born outside of Canada. In the 2016 census there is 250 ethnic Origins present in Canada. In some cities the population of folks who are racialized or who are visible minorities are pretty high. So in Vancouver 51.6% of the population are not white. In Toronto 51.5%, in Markham, Ontario highest in Canada 78% of people are not white. So it's interesting thinking about you know, the total population in Canada 22% are visible minorities, but when you look at some of the more greater metropolis areas in our country they are far more diverse than that.

Rose-Eva: I was looking at the term visible minority because I think it's really interesting when we have like 75% being a visible minority that makes it seem not at all a minority at this point. And so what I think is really interesting about the term visible minority, as it's defined by the government of Canada as "persons other than Aboriginal peoples who are non-Caucasian in a race or non-white in color".

Jamelie: I'm half white, but I do consider myself to be a visible minority, but it's funny because it fluxes a lot. When I was in junior high and high school, I had like bright red hair and I shortened my name to Jamie and I only told people that I was German and Ukrainian -- I cut out the whole Lebanese portion of my identity. But now as an adult it's much harder for me to hide and I don't want to hide it. I would like to explore it, but I have four other siblings and we all range in the way we look. Two of my brothers appear white and they identify as white. One of my brothers identifies as brown. My little sister is kind of like in the mix, she's not really sure, but she often is mistaken for being half Black, so no one thinks that she's Arabic. So it is interesting to see a range of like one family and how some of us identify as visible minorities and some of us don't and just the way that you can be in a weird in-between area where some people also consider me to be a visible minority and some people just assume I'm white as well. So it is an interesting term because it is really hard to define.

Noelle: I think it speaks a bit too to the construction of whiteness and how being white and the privileges that come with whiteness are social, socially constructed, and we'll talk about this as we get into the migration history of Canada, but you know there was a time when Ukrainians and Polish weren't white enough for Canada or Italians or Irish that the... You know there is a level of whiteness that people should be attaining and it changes over time and it's interesting when you talk about your siblings in that too that, you know some of your siblings and I'm sure this is the case with many mixed-race families, that some kids will be more comfortable moving towards that that white identity and then claiming the white part of their identity, but will maybe be much more private about the other aspects of their identity and you know that brings into the discussion colourism and all of these things where if you can hide your other racial background should you? Could you? Would you? All of these questions.

Rose-Eva (hosting): That brings us to the end of this episode entitled, Welcome to Unheard Youth Podcast. I've been your host, Rose-Eva Forgues-Jenkins. A big thank you to everyone who was featured in this episode! The compilation includes voices from folks in Fort St. John, Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal. Thank you as well to Noelle Jaipul and Jamelie Bachalaani for their conversation featured on this episode. We would also like to thank our friends and partners at CJSR 88.5 FM, the Edmonton Community Foundation, and the Connecting Culture and Childhood project. This project has been made possible in part by the Government of Canada. Ce Project a été rendu possible en partie grâce au gouvernement du Canada. Thank you to Chivengi for providing the music featured in the podcast. Chivengi is a queer musician based out Montreal. Definitely go check out their work! Their name is spelled — and you can find their work in soundcloud.

Now that you've heard from us, we'd love to hear from you! Please reach out on social media! We can reach us on our facebook page at: Unheard Youth Voices Podcast. Our Instagram is: Unheard\_youth\_voices and our twitter is unheard\_youth. Please rate, review and subscribe!

The recordings featured in this episode were created in Edmonton, Alberta, Amiskwaskihikan. The Centre for Race and Culture acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 Territory, traditional homelands for many Indigenous peoples including Nehiyaw, Saulteaux, Niitsitapi, Metis, Dene, and Nakota. We pay our respects to the ancestors past and present who call this land home.