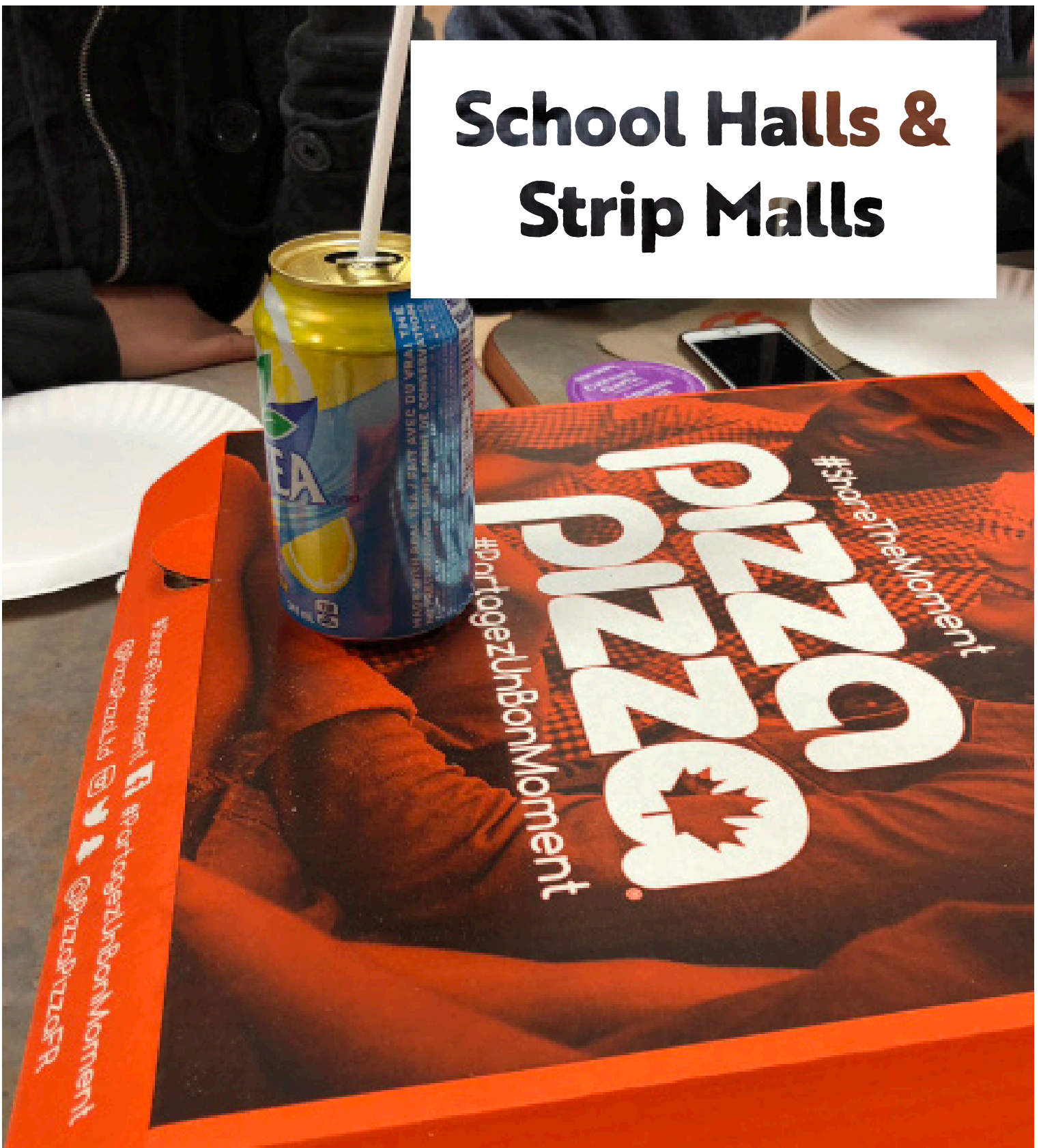


School Halls & Strip Malls



An ethnographic dive into what life is like for Filipino teens of LCP families — and the lives they aspire to.

Research by:



Supported by:



North York
Community
House

When Filipino teens come to Canada, they aren't just navigating a new culture but new familial relationships. Most families we met navigated solo. Social services weren't on their radar and don't operate on their schedules. So we spent time where they were: church, buses, work, home.

Filipino youth new in Canada have parents with some of the highest rates of university graduation among immigrants, and yet *they* have the lowest. The pathway to Canada often looks very different for these youngsters who experience separation and shifts in their familial roles.

Many youth we spent time with travel in packs and spend little time in one-on-one interactions with supportive adults. Most understand success to be material wealth, feel pressure to financially contribute, and have little access to alternate narratives of prosperity or fulfillment. The most common debate is whether to start earning now or later: "My mom thinks school is the only way

13 yrs

is the average age on arrival

19%

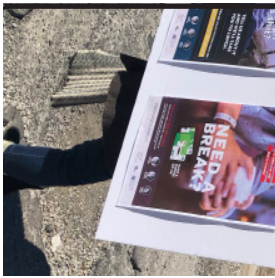
university graduation rate for children of live-in caregivers, 10% below that of government assisted refugees

forward, I don't agree. I want money - to get a job at McDonald's or Starbucks. I'll do that as soon as I'm done school."

North York Community House is a multi-service organization that has been creating opportunities for immigrants for 27 years. In March 2018, we spent a week capturing 40+ stories of Filipino youth and families, hearing *their* pain points & co-designing possibilities.

This research isn't a comprehensive or generalizable account. Our aim is to spark novel conversations between people and organizations. How might we reframe challenges and generate '*what could be?*' In this leaflet, we share our process & learnings.

research



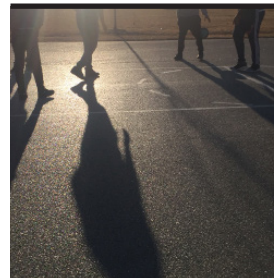
Saturday at 1pm On Bathurst Street starting conversations



Sunday at 4pm Heading to Church with a group of teenage girls



Sunday 5pm Visiting a private college where parents are upgrading skills



Monday 6pm Joining a pick-up game at Brookwell Park

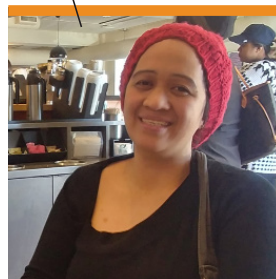


Tuesday 330pm Dropping in at a group at Donusview High

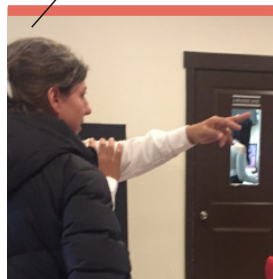
In 8 days, we spent time with 60+ people: 55 youth in and out of school, 7 parents, 3 church leaders, and 1 private college instructor.



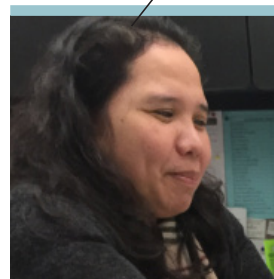
Eros (19) The trauma of separation at age 8 and reunification at 16 led to skipping school, drinking & drugs. Using google, Eros kicked Crystal Meth. Now he intentionally lets himself be mothered: "I want my mother to get a chance to be a mom...I envy the kids who she raised: if only I had grown up with her I could have been a better person."



Rina (40) Rina made a lot of sacrifices to bring her family together in Canada - working abroad in three countries, leaving accountability for care and retail work, and losing touch with her children. "You pay the price." She's not sure what she's gained. Her daughter's doing well but she doesn't recognize her; her son is avoiding the world, and her husband has yet to arrive. "I feel stuck."

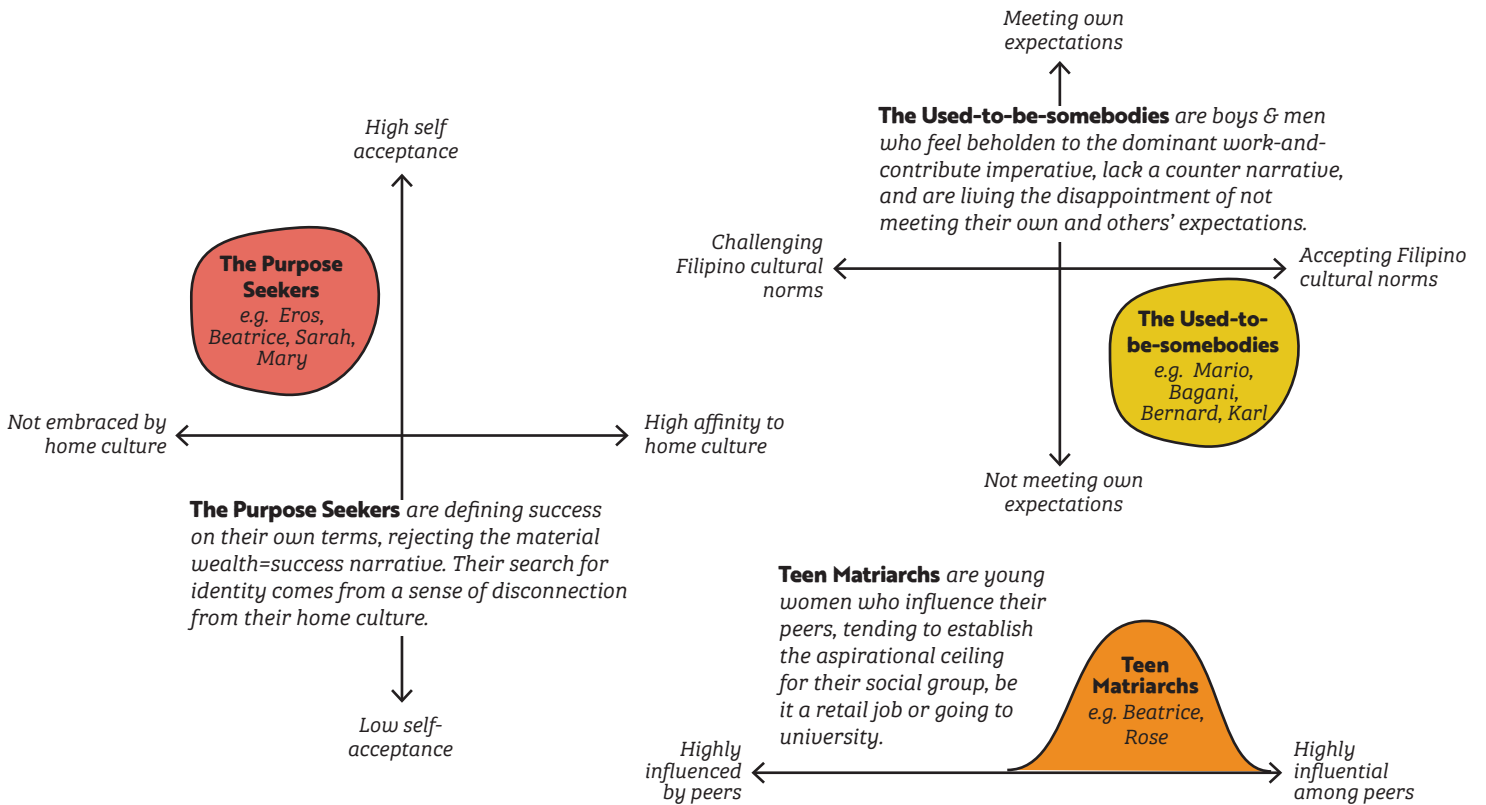


Pastors Nemie and Gina Dalor lead Praise Christian Family Church, and hold a strong narrative of youth empowerment. They came to Canada via high-skilled jobs in the US, and have created a high-tech spiritual experience. With big screens, multimedia, and a rocking youth band, the church operates as a third space for teens, who seem to hold higher ambitions for themselves.



Happy works for Clarkridge College, a private school offering PSW certificates to Filipino immigrants through evening and weekend classes. Happy has been doing the job for 10 years, and is frequently asked for advice from students. She's heard it all, and while she offers empathy, she knows of few supports or services available for students. She wants to do more.

We segment people in different ways to find compelling groupings to design with & for. What do Rose & Beatrice have in common? They both exert significant influence on their peer groups & set standards.



Two of many themes? Teens seeking jobs to financially contribute, and the alternative of being scouted to socially contribute. How to close the gap between narratives focused on money vs. purpose?

In North York, teens who have been scouted for opportunities to explore & develop themselves feel more confident their life is headed somewhere worthwhile. Hebrew was scouted for an internationally touring basketball team. Beatrice was spotted for her leadership skills. What if others

could have the experience of being recognized as individuals and brokered to developmental roles? What if social programs had scouts to recruit a regional youth leadership network - a team of young people with social influence? Like a sports team - with camaraderie, travel and resume building.

The third spaces where teens hang out play a formative role in shaping expectations & identity.

Youth with little exposure to alternate paths. Drawn together by shared experience, the Co-Survivors build bonding relationships that create belonging but may inadvertently prevent cultural inter-connection and self-exploration.

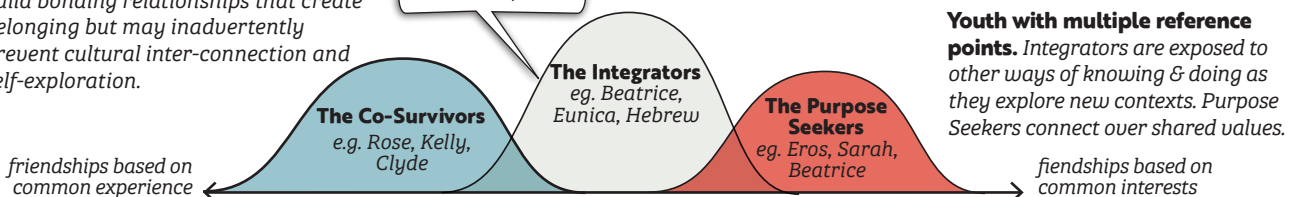
I don't speak Tagalog so I couldn't join the groups of Filipinos. I had to push myself out of my comfort zone and adapt.



Large groups of youth with little parental contact hang at parks & fast food joints.



A youth-focused church where teens join bands and produce collaborative shows.



Youth with multiple reference points. Integrators are exposed to other ways of knowing & doing as they explore new contexts. Purpose Seekers connect over shared values.

We generated 27 ideas across 7 opportunity areas, all to spark dialogue & debate. Here are three:

Going to the people

for: Lost Boys, Status Satisficers & Contemplators, like Rina

North York Filipinos are unaware of most services and don't have time to seek out what is on offer at service locations. Instead they learn from each other at gathering places like churches, private colleges, and hairdressers. These hubs of (mis)information work in part because they've adapted to the early mornings and late nights of Filipino families, unlike services open from 9-5, and not on weekends.

featured idea

Business on the Bus



What if there was a community outreach team, staffed by a collaboration of organizations & volunteers, present on popular bus routes and available to host meaningful discussions about how to do family and meet pressing needs with on-demand supports?

featured idea

Relationship Coaches

What if there was a new role - Filipino-Canadian relationship coaches - who were sewn into the standard first-week-in-Canada activities? To help kids & parents talk expectations, values, and path forward.



Reunification as an Experience

for: Co-Survivors, Status Satisficers & Shirkers, like Clyde

Reunification is an event, that while in the making for many years, comes and goes, often with little end-to-end design. Moms have been working so hard to get to this point, they may not have had time or space to re-conceptualize what happens next. Underestimating the challenge was a common reflection from moms. For many youth it was a blur or a disappointment. What if reunification as a defined experience was the norm? What if there were incentives, roles, and spaces for families in the first weeks and months?

Orienting for Canada

for: Lost Boys, Contemplators, & Used to be Somebodies, like Jud

Filipinos about to immigrate to Canada attend an orientation organized by the Philippines government, mostly about how to send money home. What if orientation were more than a day, and tackled some of the pains expressed by New Canadians - like disappointment around career opportunities, lower standard of living than expected, and being unsure how to do family separation and reunification?

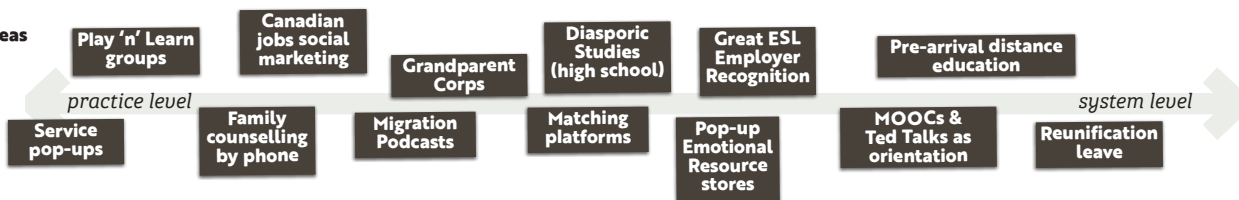
featured idea

How to do Canada



What if orientation was a series of online MOOCs & Ted-style talks that helped shift the narrative about life in Canada, from land of material acquisition, to being about purpose, freedom of identity, and democratic participation?

other ideas



visit www.inwithforward.com to see all segmentations, opportunity areas, emerging insights and ideas.

This Quick Dive was in partnership with North York. Quick Dives are 2 week periods of ethnographic research, synthesis, reflection and playback. Our research team draws

out insights and opportunities, all with the intent of gaining momentum for longer-term change. More information at: www.inwithforward.com