



Social Sciences and  
Humanities Research  
Council of Canada

Canada

Conseil de recherches  
en sciences humaines  
du Canada

INTERNATIONAL  
**CHILD**  
PROTECTION  
NETWORK  
OF CANADA

---

**FACILITATING CHILD PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION  
OCTOBER 5-6, 2015  
RYERSON UNIVERSITY, CANADA**

---

**Youth Preparatory Meeting – October 4<sup>th</sup> 2015**

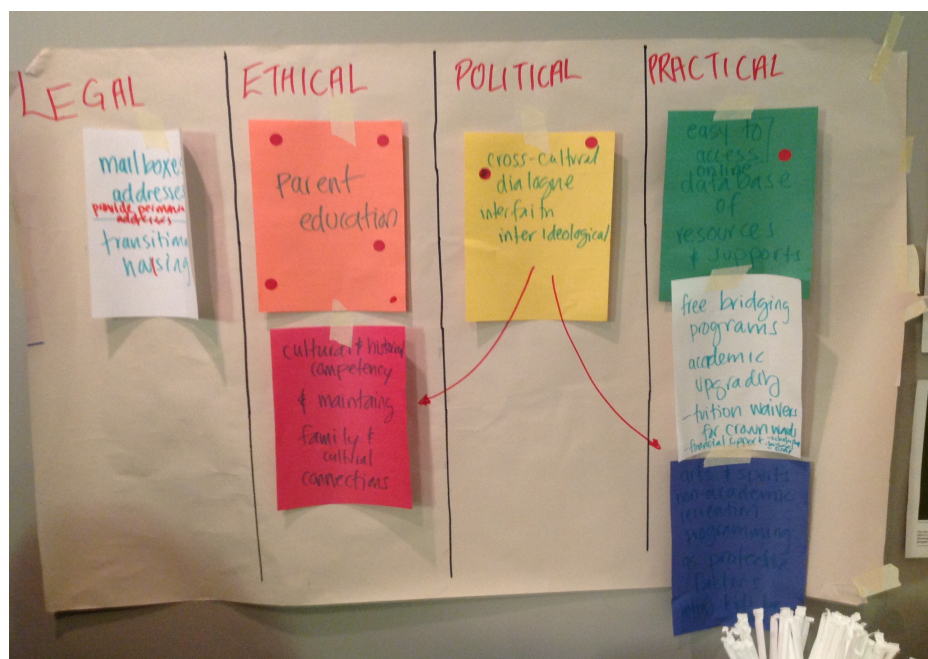
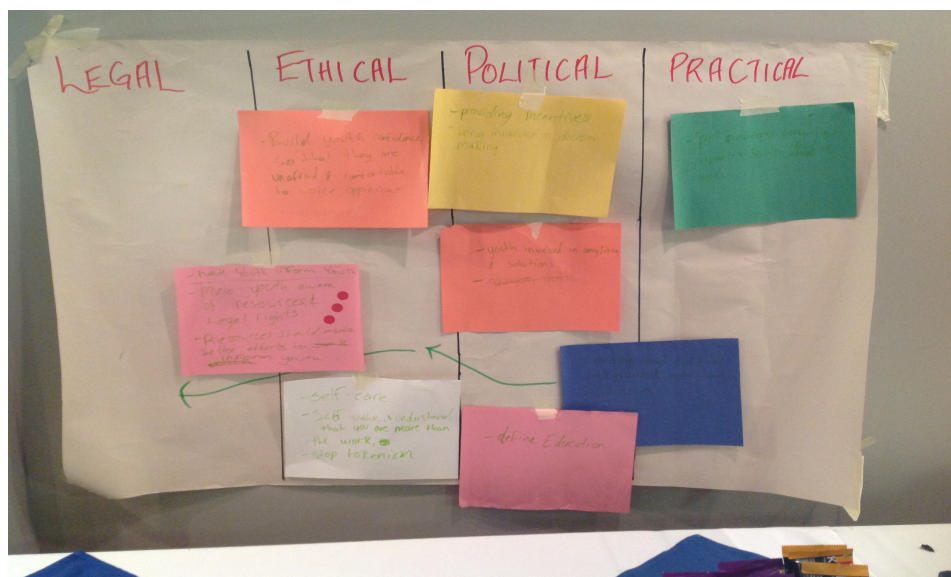
Prepared by Noah Kenneally

As part of the Facilitating Child Participation in International Child Protection Conference, conference organizers felt that it was consonant with the coordination of both the conference's subject and intent to engage with a group of young people to get their perspective and ideas regarding young people's participation in child protection.

On Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, a group of 7 young people (F/M) many of whom had been in care themselves, came together with a group of facilitators for a day-long workshop/meeting. Additionally, two Ryerson University Child and Youth Care students supported the young participants in order to ensure safe and inclusive space. The intent of this meeting was to bring the topics to be covered during the rest of the conference to the young people and receive their feedback and input, as well as to see if any of them wanted to attend the following days as participants.

Through participatory play-based activities and presentations, the legal, ethical, political and practical dimensions of child participation and child protection were explored and discussed, while the young people continuously grounded the conversation in their own experiences as young people and/or young people experienced with care and protection. Notably, to embody our discussions facilitators and participants worked together to brainstorm responses to legal, ethical, political and practical aspects of child participation in child protection. Together we participated in experiential learning by building bridges (physically and metaphorically) out of our suggestions and mapping them out once we had ensured that all young people's voices and opinions were heard. Suggestions that arose from our conversations revolved around ensuring that young people in care are provided the opportunity to understand the resources that are available to them, that parent education be a central aspect of emergent and responsive child participation in child protection, and that service providers managing resources listen to young people in order to respond to their informed expertise, grounded in their lived experiences as young people in care and as children in society.

Our day wound down with four of the young participants deciding to attend the rest of the conference, and three of those deciding to formally address the conference to share their perspectives. Suggestions from those who were unable to participate due to school and personal commitments were shared during the conference with permission from the young people. The whole FCPICP conference was enriched by the input of the youth participants, and we remain indebted to them for sharing of their insights, time, experience and perspectives.



Photos of the youth participants' suggestions about the four aspects of child participation in child protection