



YouthXYouth: Transforming Education through the Global Network of YouthXYouth

Valentina Raman 0:00

I'm Valentina Raman and I'm the co-founder of YouthXYouth, a global community of education activists working together to transform education towards our collective liberation. We seek to accelerate the process of young people influencing, designing, and collaborating towards a more just and equitable world and more thriving planet, through the transformation of our learning experiences and education systems.

Currently, we have about 150 young people between the ages of 15 to 25 in our community, who span 50+ countries, across five continents, with majority representation from the global south. Here on the screen, you see some of the conversations that have been happening around the globe, through our deep dialogue approach, which I will share with you in this conversation today, as well as some other ways that you, as an adult ally, could get involved and co-create with us, as well as your young people.

Our YouthXYouth process of change making begins and is led by young people themselves. Our youth are weaving each other to connect and reflect and radically reimagine the future of education. They have been telling us that education right now feels pointless, not focused on what matters, not interesting enough, not relevant to their lives. And they seek to create an experience that is designed for them and by them. This tool that you see on the right is some of the ways in which our young people are exploring intersectionality and identity and how to bring that into the, our classrooms and educational experiences, as well as how to bring environmental activism, and other forms of change making through our curriculum, culture, and systems.

Our process is led by a group of youth hosts, which are facilitators and designers of our radical reimagination process. And they are the ones who are telling us the direction that we should go, as a movement and as a community. And we have been deepening their tools, also in facilitation through our own practice and network of co-creators, which are the adult allies in our community that are encouraging with the emphasis on the "courage" our activists to be and become the change they want to see.

As a co-creator, you are a part of our community, in the deepest sense. You are helping us design new offerings for our youth education activists that can empower and enable them to tell their stories, become more self-aware, take care of their well-being, and other variety of offerings that we have cultivated with our co-creators. And we brought this all together for the very first time in January, when we officially kicked off with our first ever virtual



experience. We had over 95 sessions across three days with 470+ attendees. And we had six different formats of conversations. The anchor of the experience was our cafes, which are like the ISEEN Institute's homerooms that were led by our hosts and engaged a small group of youth activists across the three days, the three days of the experience. So you'll see here on youthxyouth.com/theexperience, some examples of our co-creators that we worked with, and the six types of sessions that make up a YouthXYouth experience: the campfire, which is a youth activist telling the story, so storytelling, campfire-like session; playground, which is a well-being in play-based activities; future worlds, which are education innovations that are postcards of the future that we wish to see; cafes, as I said, the homeroom experience; studios, which are skill building; activist workshops, led by many of our co-creators and adult allies; and cinemas, which are unique pre-screenings of documentaries, documentaries and other artistic forms to inspire radical reimagination. So these were some of the experiences and if you click on any one of these, then you can see the kinds of young people who shared their stories and other sessions during the day.

So what came out of this? Well, these are some of the quotes of our youth activists. After our three days of engaging together, these young people had never, many of them had never engaged with people beyond their local communities. And now we're suddenly immersed in this diverse global community of like-minded, passionate, transformers of education in their own ways, or, and/or taking their first steps in doing so, and seeing that there was a community of adult co-creators willing and able to support them in that journey. And that is the core of YouthXYouth: is to create an affirming, authentic space, for young people to step into their activist selves as current and future leaders of the change we wish to see in this world.

So where do we go from here? Well, the idea is not to create one experience, but to build a movement through three ways: the first is through a community Discord channel. So this Discord channel, which I didn't know what Discord was until one of our youth activists himself proposed creating a Discord, actually created it, and sent it to us right after the conference, and said, "Please, can we stay connected?"

Our second two pieces of the YouthXYouth movement building strategy are our local action circles and our global petition. Our local action circles are the anchor of the YouthXYouth experiences and driven by our three-part deep dialogue approach, that is all centered around intergenerational actions. We've created a activist toolkit to help our young people create and recruit members to their action circles, including adult members. So if this is something of interest to you, we can dive into what it would look like to start a local action circle in your school and local community. We'd love to have you as a co-creator, and have



your young people and adult allies and co-creators to help start a local action circle in your school and community. And I look forward to the conversation ahead. Thank you very much.

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