



Stories of Weather, Money, Food & Happiness in K'jipuktuk-Halifax NS, Canada

Photos by
Afia, Bible, Feza, Hekmat,
Janet, Noor, Roda & Susan

July 2026

YMCA & GRABS
collaboration



GROWING UP ACROSS BORDERS

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Special thanks go to
Hayat Hussein, Saeed Alzoubi, and Kathryn Bates-Khan at the Youth Outreach Team -
YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programmes
and to
Professor Evangelia Tastsoglou at Saint Mary's University.

LIVED EXPERIENCES
CONNAISSANCES
تجارب
HISTORIES
معتقدات

Juancho
2.16.10.2024



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The photographs included in this photo book were produced by and belong to young participant artists:

Afia, Bible, Feza, Hekmat, Janet, Noor, Roda and Susan.

The design and layout of this photo book were produced by the young participant artists. The final photo book was produced by GRABS researcher and PhD candidate Juan Manuel Moreno and printed at the *Centre des recherches sociologiques et politiques de Paris* (CRESPPA), Université Paris 8, France.

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Front cover photograph, 'Sunrise in Bedford DeWolf Park', K'jipuktuk-Halifax, NS, Canada, by Saeed Alzoubi, 2026

Back and inner covers illustration, *Growing Up Across Borders*, by Juanchila, 16.10.2024

Font used: Baskerville Old Face; Liberation Sans, by Pravin Satpute & Steve Matteson

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The GRABS project

Growing Up Across Borders (GRABS) is a five-year research project examining the lived experiences of young people aged 15-25 years old who are growing up in situations of forced migration and (im)mobility across borders. The project aims to better understand how lived experiences of violence, displacement, migration and borders impact young people's lives and transition into adulthood, crossing geographical mobility with mobility across their life course.

The GRABS team is based at the Centre de recherches sociologiques et politiques de Paris (CRESPPA), Université Paris 8, France, and is composed of five researchers: Professor Jane Freedman, who is the project leader, post-doc researchers Dr Glenda Santana de Andrade and Dr Isabel Morrell, and doctoral candidates Jessi Kume and Juan Manuel Moreno. Developing and exploring creative participatory methodologies, we work together with young people to gain a better understanding about their challenges, needs and priorities, as well as their coping strategies, agency and resilience when faced with such difficulties. We believe this will put us in a better position to understand how they can be better supported in their mobility and in their transition into adulthood. In this way, we hope to provide feedback to those who deal with policies and provide services for young people in situations of forced migration.

At GRABS we work in collaboration with local researchers, service providers, and community organisations in various locations across five countries – France, Greece, and the UK in Europe, and Canada and South Africa – each place experiencing varying migration, asylum and refugee situations and regimes; housing, employment, education, health and social security systems; and historical, socio-cultural, economic and political contexts. In K'jipuktuk-Halifax, part of unceded Mi'kma'ki territory and today Nova Scotia, Canada, we have worked in collaboration with the Halifax Refugee Clinic and the YMCA Youth Outreach Team at the YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programmes. We are being hosted by Saint Mary's University to be able to conduct this research.

The GRABS project is funded by the European Research Council (ERC Advanced Grant 101141171).

You can find out more about the GRABS project and research team in our website:

<https://erc-grabs.univ-paris8.fr/>

YMCA Youth Outreach

The YMCA Youth Outreach team – part of the Centre for Immigrant Programmes for the YMCA of Greater Halifax & Dartmouth – provides empowering programmes and services for young people aged 13-21, including: community leadership programmes in public speaking, conflict resolution, mentoring, and teambuilding); volunteering opportunities; school homework support; trips and social recreation activities. Through these programmes, YMCA Youth Outreach helps young people develop their leadership skills, independence and a social network essential to their settlement and sense of belonging.

The YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programmes provides newcomer children, youth, and their families with a variety of programs and outreach services to help them settle into their new communities while also supporting the community in understanding the issues and barriers they face.

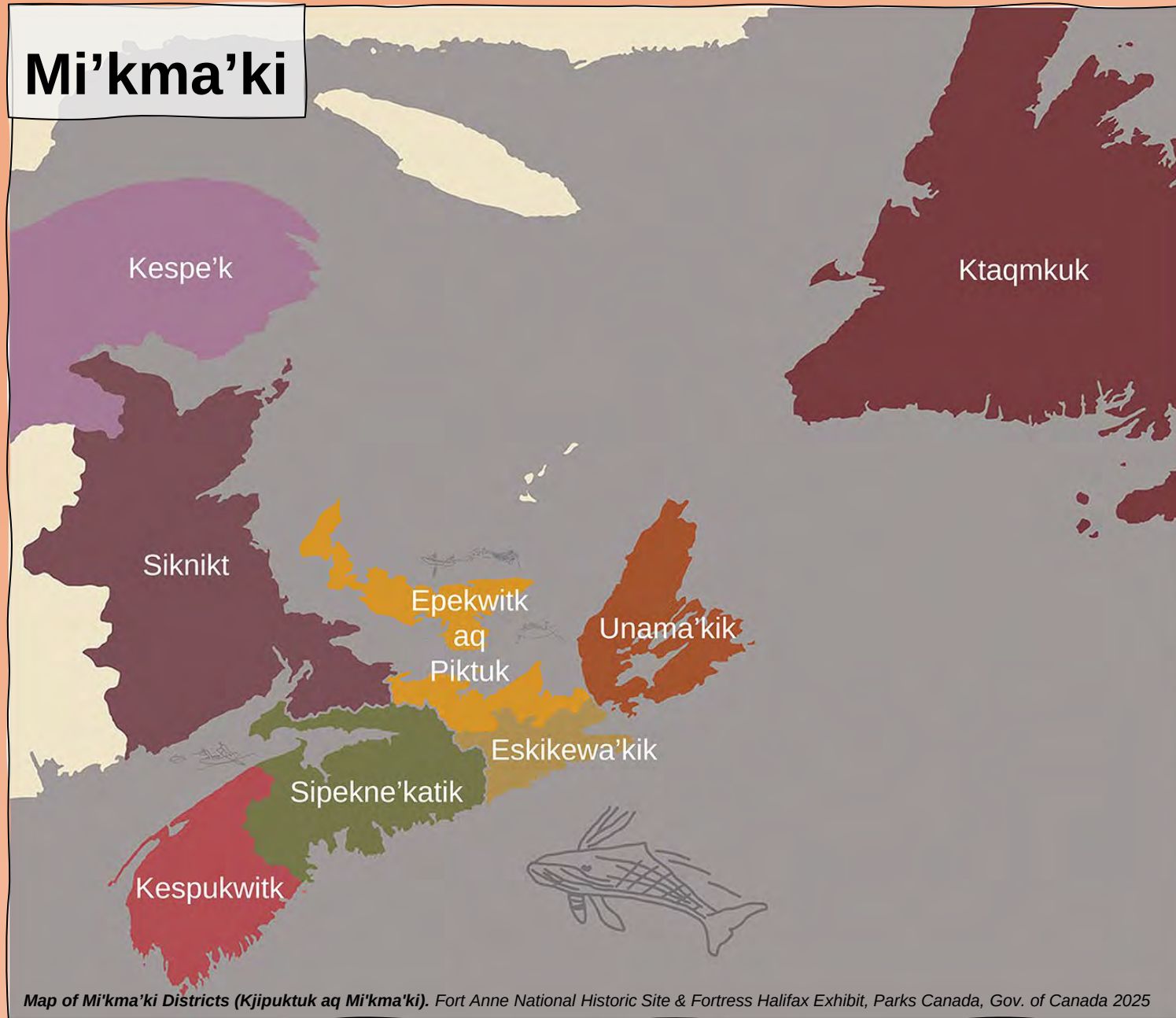
YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programmes' approach is to deliver community-based support that is inclusive and welcoming. In addition to the youth outreach programmes, other services and programmes include: individual and group settlement support and advice, language support and services, employment & education navigation, active living, crisis prevention and intervention, gender-based violence prevention projects, 2SLGBTQIA+ programmes, and HIPPY (home instruction for parents of preschool youngster), as well as settlement services for students at several partner schools.

You can find out more about their work and services on their website:

<https://ymcahfx.ca/ymca-youth-outreach/>

K'jipuktuk, *Great Harbour*, it's part of Mi'kma'ki

Mi'kma'ki



Map of Mi'kma'ki Districts (K'jipuktuk aq Mi'kma'ki). Fort Anne National Historic Site & Fortress Halifax Exhibit, Parks Canada, Gov. of Canada 2025

The research and workshop sessions leading to this photo book were carried out in K'jipuktuk, today also known as Halifax. K'jipuktuk means 'great harbour' in Mi'kmaw.

K'jipuktuk (Halifax), and what is today known as the province of Nova Scotia, form part of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory where the Mi'kmaq Peoples have lived for more than 11,000 years.

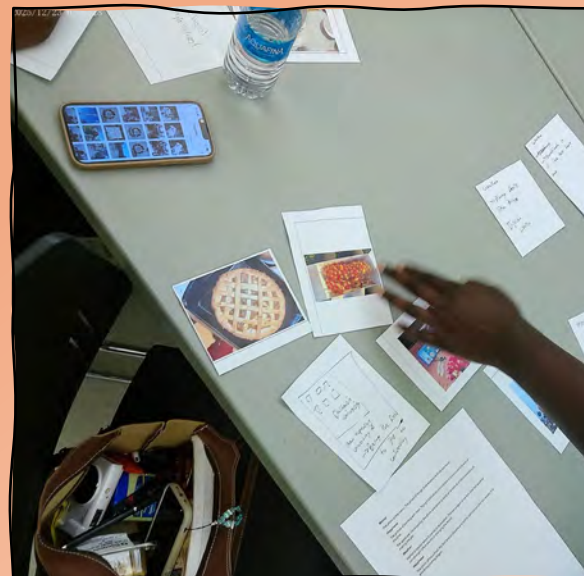
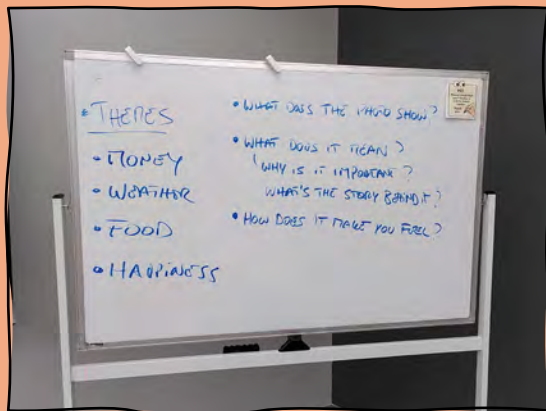
Located within the Northeastern Woodlands, Mi'kma'ki territory extends across all 4 provinces of today's Atlantic Canada (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland), the Gaspé Peninsula, and parts of the state of Maine, in today's United States.

We acknowledge and are grateful, as foreigners visiting, studying, working, living, or just passing through, to be in these lands to carry out this research project. Wela'lin.

Mi'kmaw district place names for Mi'kmaki and their meanings: The districts of Mi'kma'ki shown in this map and described below were based on rivers, streams and natural drainage systems. They were flexible, permeable boundaries that reflected the "changing conditions and the needs of people in each area, rather than acting as geopolitical boundaries."

Kespe'k ("end of land") is comprised of the Saint John River Valley and the Appalachian Mountain Range of northern New Brunswick and the Gaspé area of Quebec. **Ktaqmkuk** ("across the waves/water") Newfoundland. **Sikniqt** ("drainage area") includes the Miramichi River and the Acadian Coast and Bay of Fundy Region. **Epekwitk aq Piktuk** (Prince Edward Island, "cradled above water" and Pictou "explosion place") is comprised of PEI the lowland area along the Northumberland Strait, separated from neighbouring districts by the Cobequid Highlands and the Pictou and Antigonish Highlands. **Kespukwitk** ("end of flow") includes the area west of the La Have River to Yarmouth/Cape Sable in South/southwestern Nova Scotia. **Sipekne'katik/Sikipne'katik** (Shubenacadie, "area of wild potato/turnip") is comprised of the Shubenacadie District and the Minas Basin Coast. **Eskikewa'kik** (translation uncertain at this time, some suggest "skin dressers") comprised of the portion of Atlantic Coastal Region from the western portion of Nova Scotia west of Sheet Harbour to Canso. **Unama'kik** (a variation of the word Mi'kma'kik, meaning "Mi'kmaw territory") Cape Breton Island.

Sources: Sable & Francis (2018) *The Language of this Land, Mi'kma'ki*, pp.21-22; *Mi'kmaw Place Names Digital Atlas* (n.d.) (<https://placenames.mapdev.ca/>); Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre (n.d.) (<https://www.mikmaweydebert.ca/>)



Photovoice workshop sessions, June 2026.



About this photo book

This photo book is the product of a collaboration between the Youth Outreach Team at the YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programmes of Greater Halifax and Dartmouth, and the ERC Growing Up Across Borders research project. This collaboration led to a series of creative participatory workshops in photography and photovoice ran by GRABS researcher and PhD candidate Juan Manuel Moreno, consisting of 6 three-hour sessions held between April-June 2026, in K'ijipuktuk-Halifax, NS, Canada.

During the first couple of workshop sessions, participant youth discussed and decided on which themes they wanted to work on, they were given a digital camera and introduced to some basic skills in photography. Between each weekly session, participants were invited to take photos related to their chosen themes and bring them for discussion with the group. During these discussions, copies of the photographs were printed for participants to organise them according to the themes, while reflecting on their meaning, and the stories and feelings behind them.

The four main themes explored during the workshops and featuring in this photo book – **Weather, Money, Food, and Happiness** – had originally emerged from focus group discussions held during a prior visit in February 2026 and were later further discussed during the first session of the photography-photovoice workshops. While broad in scope, the themes carry different meanings and represent some of the lived experiences and stories the young people wanted to share through their photographs.

Participants chose how to display their photographs in the pages and organised them so that each participant's work will be grouped together. The works in this photo book are displayed in alphabetical order.

Afia



This is not just sunset it is a beauty I have understood after coming to Canada. Since I have come here in Canada there is a passion of capturing sun for every moment.

Rain from window at classroom.
Important because I liked rain a lot back home in Thailand, as it reminds me of monsoon season. Nowadays it is different in Canada.





This picture represents how money can be used to buy things that make people feel confident and happy.



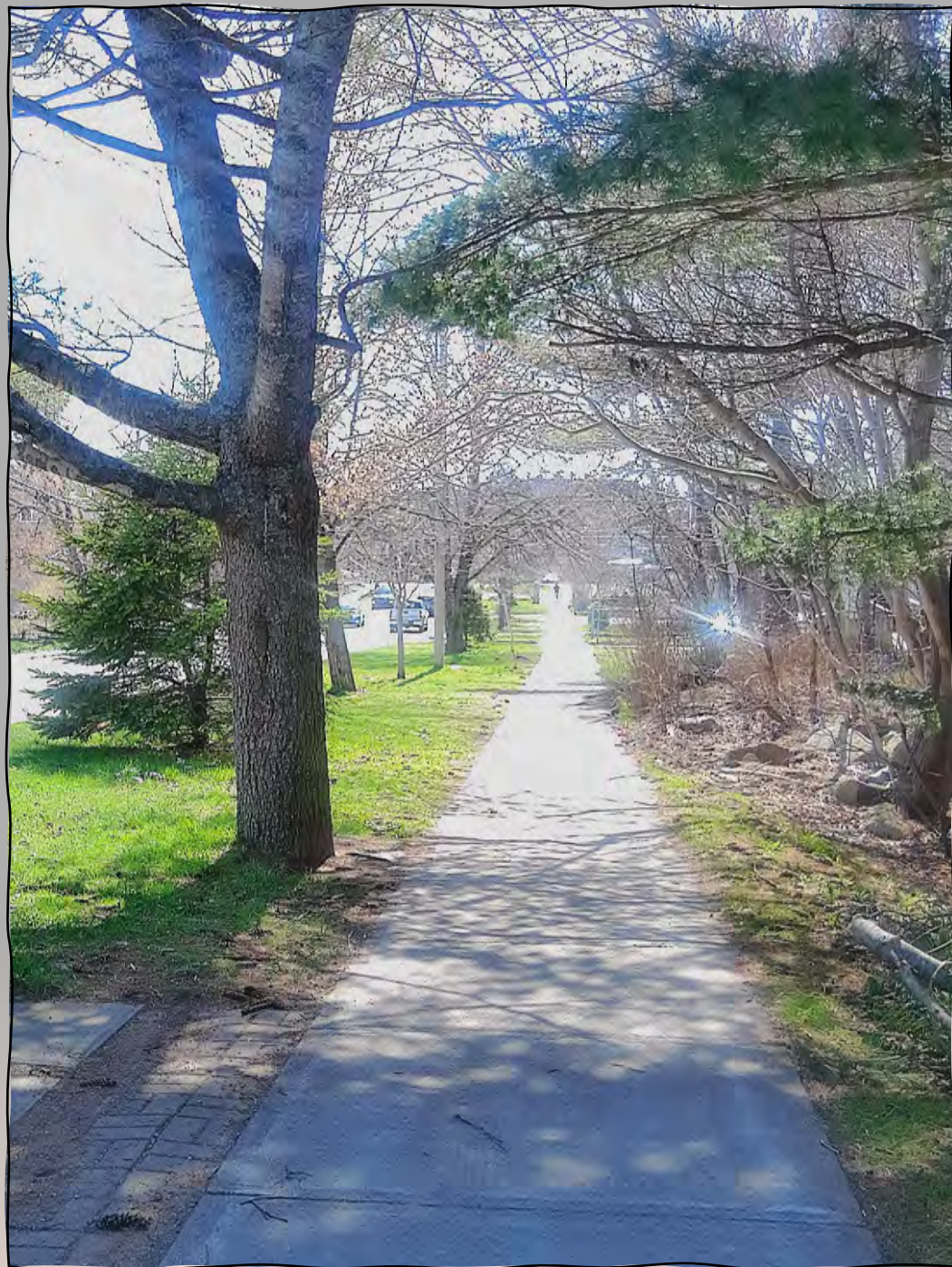
This skincare picture reminds me of spending money on products I enjoy and taking care of myself.



This frozen pizza is not just a pizza it has a journey with us from buying it in Canada for the first time and not knowing how to make and we bought this the first time in hotel and we made it in microwave and it didn't cook that well the bread was soft but the rest was still little bit the same and we just ate it like that and now is when we learned how to make it from adding our own chicken toppings and baking it well on the right time and me and my family love eating this pizza and this also one of the foods I can never say no to eat.

I love, love, love Subway and this is a picture when me and my friend Feza were going to buy skincare, but we saw the Subway restaurant and we could not stop ourselves to eat. This is one of the foods I can never say no to.





These photos show the path I used to take every day to go to school, my first school in Canada. Since then, we moved house and now I take the bus to go to school.



This is a picture of church; it makes me happy the most because it just not make me happy it also gives peace going there and getting more close to God.

Bible



I took this photo of a blossom tree outside my apartment while I was waiting for the bus. What makes this tree so interesting to me is how much it changes throughout the year. During the winter, it becomes so dry and bare that it is almost unrecognizable. Then, when spring arrives, it transforms into a beautiful tree covered in colourful blossoms. Since spring is my favourite season, seeing this change makes the tree even more special and beautiful to me.



I took this photo while I was in Toronto attending a conference. Looking at the picture, it seems like the weather was warm and nice, with a beautiful scene suggesting a perfect day outdoors. However, the reality was quite different; it was actually freezing cold. Every time I look back at this photo, it reminds me not only of the fun experiences and memories we made during the trip, but also of the chilly weather we had to endure.

I took this photo while I was on the Dartmouth side. We were there filming a music video, and while the crew was recording someone else's scene, I stepped aside and captured this incredible view. The sky looked especially beautiful that day, with colours that immediately caught my attention. The weather is often nice around that time, which made the scene even more striking. Whenever I look at this picture, it reminds me of that experience.



For this picture, I chose the theme of money. It was taken during my trip to Guatemala. At the time, I didn't think much of it, but looking back, I realized that when traveling, everything comes with a price tag. Nothing is free. In this case, instead of buying the items in the picture, I took a photo of them because they were beyond my budget. It was a nice way to capture the memory without the financial burden.



I chose this particular piece because I find it beautiful, and it immediately caught my attention. Visiting museums allows me to connect with creativity and different forms of expression. However, it can sometimes be a bit difficult knowing that experiencing these artworks often come with a cost. Even so, I still appreciate the opportunity to see amazing art pieces in person.

This photo shows food on a plate. This image of food serves a memoir for me. I took this picture in 2025 when we went for lunch during a mission trip in Guatemala and this was when we ate. I thought it was delicious and yummy that I had to take a picture of it. Another thing is also this picture makes me feel grateful whenever I look at it.





I have to say at first sushi felt completely unapproachable to me, the smell alone was enough to keep me at a distance. It was so unfamiliar I couldn't imagine myself liking it or enjoying. But over time, I guess my perspective changed. I gave it a chance. I started living the flavours just a little bit, and now I even find myself craving it. However, I'm still a bit selective about what the ingredients inside.



Halifax Town Clock. This photo shows the beauty of Halifax. I took this image because it shows a side of Halifax that is different and compelling. This picture is important because in a way it reminds me of how beautiful Halifax is. The story behind this picture is that I took it while we were on a walk around Citadel Hill. This image makes me feel good.



Reading books is something I truly enjoy. Whenever I sit down with a book, it gives me a sense of happiness and peace. It allows me to escape into different worlds, ideas and perspectives, which makes the experience more meaningful. It always lifts my mood and leaves me feeling



Receiving flowers has always felt special to me because I believe that any form of gifting carries kindness and thoughtfulness. This one moment stands out, it was during a summer I spent working with kids. As the summer was coming to an end, a little girl and her mother gave me the flowers as a 'thank you' gift. It was such a simple gesture, yet it meant so much. It made me feel appreciated and reminded me how meaningful small acts of gratitude can be.

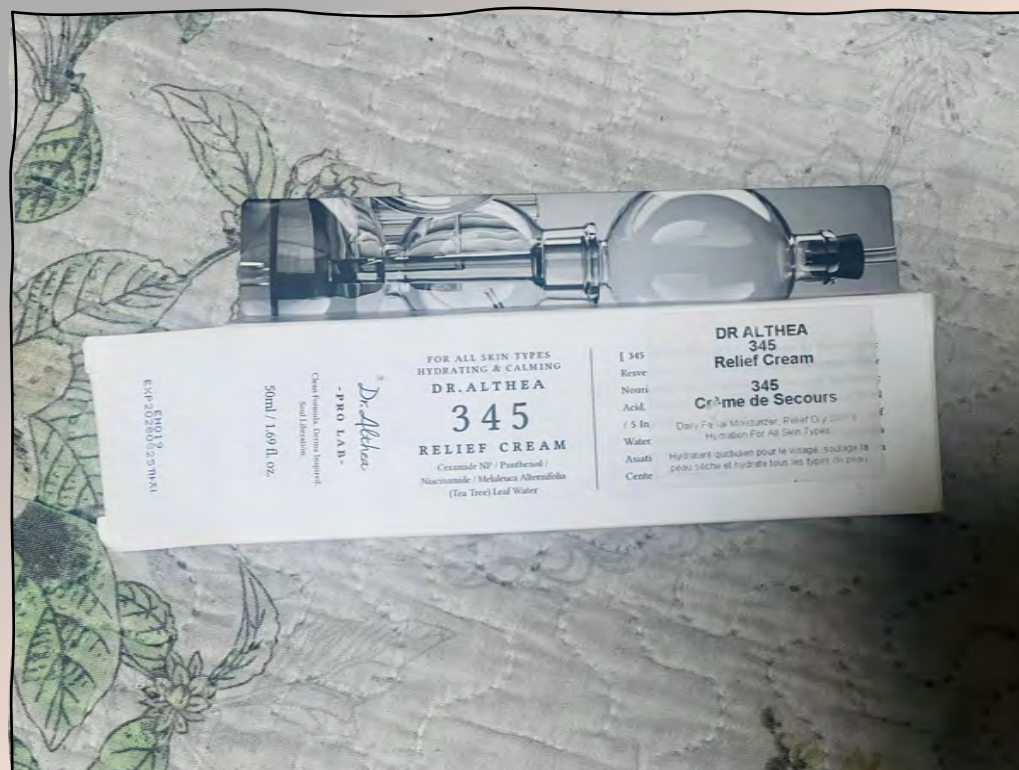
Feza



I took this photo next to school. I really liked the weather, was good at that time and the sun was shining. I felt really good that day, the pic make me feel good.



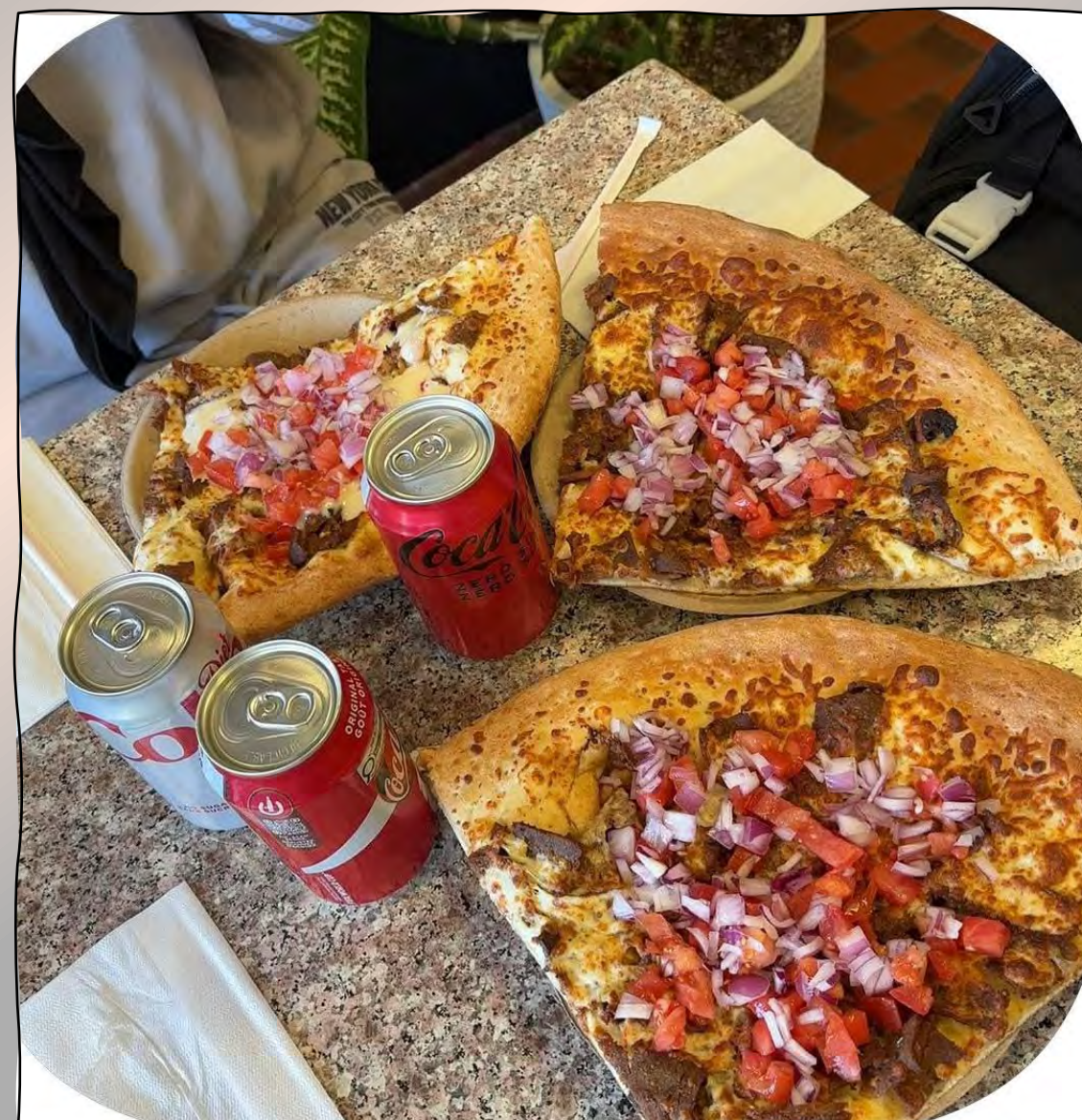
My picture shows cream and foundation products that people buy for skincare and makeup. This picture means that I use money to buy things that are important to me. I buy these products to take care of my skin and feel confident. This is important because money helps me buy everyday products that I use and enjoy. It also shows how I spend money on selfcare. This picture make me feel happy and confident because these products help me feel comfortable and express myself. I feel like I also spend a lot of money just this it's so important to me and I really love using this at same time it's so expensive.





We call it matoke (green bananas) and meat mixed together. I cooked it myself because I enjoy cooking. This meal reminds me of home and the traditions I grew up with. Cooking is something I enjoy because it brings people together and helps me stay connected to my culture, even while living in a new place. I wanted to share it because food is an important part of my story and who I am.

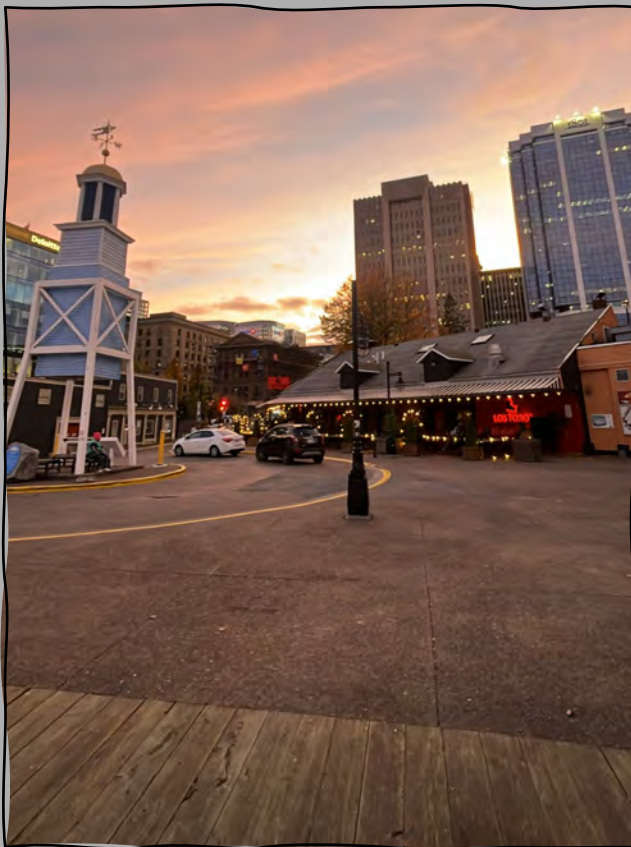
I really enjoy eating out a pizza with my friends it's my favourite meal or food that I usually eat at or whenever I'm feeling hungry. I feel so good eating it.





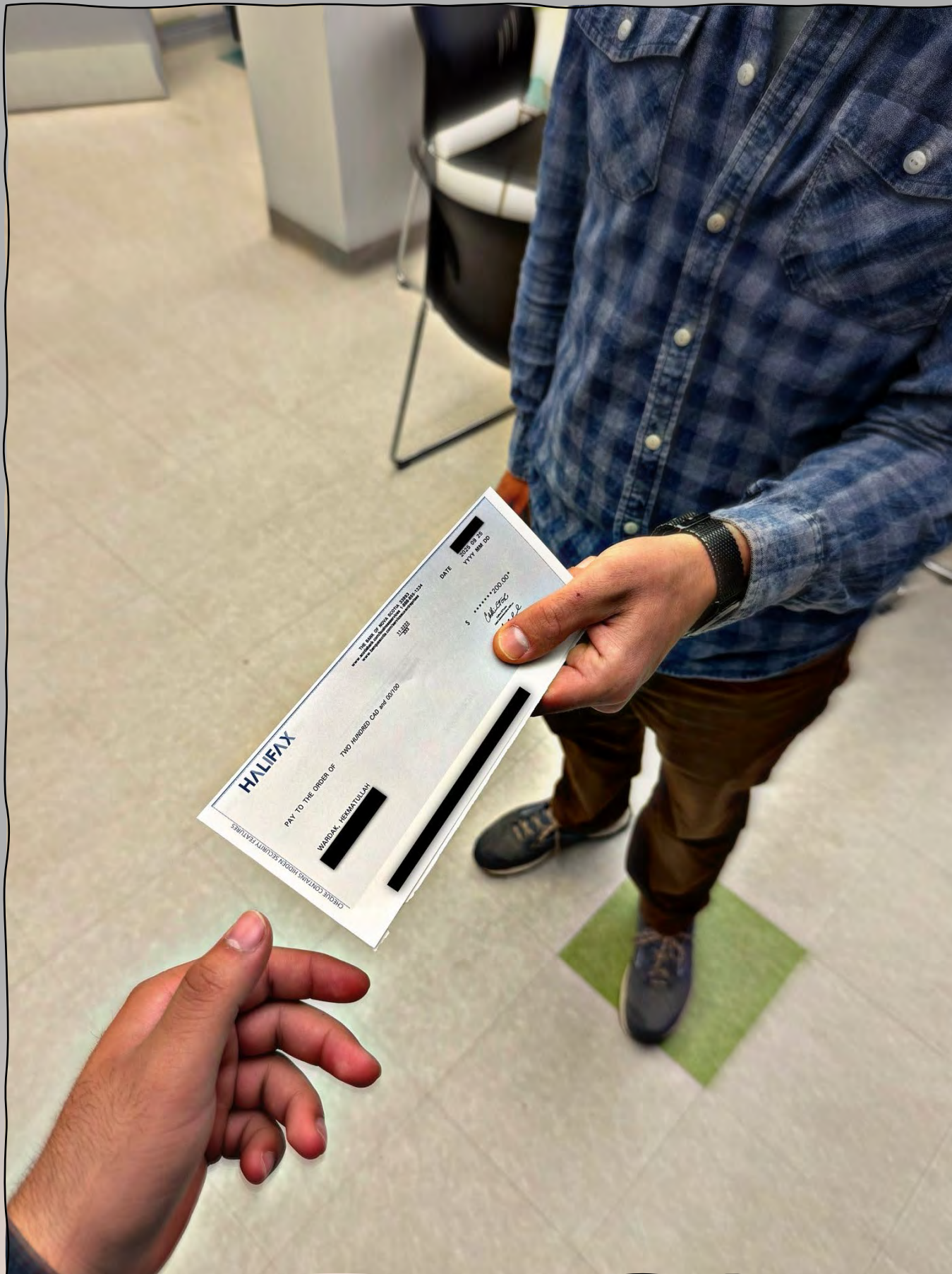
Atlantica Hotel, Halifax. This picture shows a hotel, a place where people stay to rest, travel, or enjoy vacations. Hotels usually mean relaxation, comfort, and travel. This is important because hotel gives people a safe and comfortable place to stay when they are away from home. However, the story behind this picture is different for me. I stayed at that hotel when I first arrived in Canada. It was one of my first stops after landing, so it reminds me of the beginning of my new journey. I was feeling a mix of excitement and nervousness because everything was new to me. The photo represents my first days in Canada and the start of a new chapter in my life.

Hekmat



These photos show some of the different kinds of weather and views I experienced after moving to Canada. From foggy mornings to snowy days, quiet beaches at night, and colourful sunsets, the weather here changes quickly and always feels different. Where I come from, we do not really have weather like the fog in these photos, so seeing it for the first time felt strange but interesting. These photos remind me how nature and weather can completely change the feeling of a place from one day to another.





This photo shows a pay check being handed over after work. The idea behind this photo is how the cost of living keeps getting higher while earnings often do not feel enough. Even after working and getting paid, there is always another expense waiting like rent, groceries, gas, or bills. To me, this photo represents a reality many people experience, especially students and young adults trying to balance work, responsibilities, and everyday life.



This photo shows a meal I made at home during Ramadan. I do not usually cook because my sisters are normally the ones preparing food for the family, so I wanted to help out for the day. During Ramadan, food is more than just eating. It is also about family, spending time together, and appreciating the effort that goes into these everyday moments.



This photo shows me grilling kabab over the fire during a family camping trip. Some of my favourite food memories come from simple moments like this, cooking outside, sitting around the fire, and eating together. The food itself was good, but the atmosphere and time spent with family made it more memorable.



This photo shows my tent and campsite during a camping trip last year, surrounded by trees and lit by the fire in the middle of the forest. Camping and spending time in nature always gives me peace of mind and makes me feel grateful for God's creation. Being away from the noise of everyday life and sitting around the fire with nothing but nature around me made this moment feel simple but meaningful.



This photo shows my cat, Lona, peacefully laying down while I annoyingly taking pictures of her. At first, I really did not want a pet at home when my family adopted her, but we bonded really fast. Now, a day does not feel complete without her around. she became one of the biggest sources of happiness for me. Even after a long or stressful day, seeing her and spending a few minutes with her reminds me that there are still simple and good things in life.

Janet



I don't like snow, cause it's too cold. The country I used to live in was in Africa; it was no snow. So, the moment I see the snow, reminds me of summer.



Parfume.



This is Sombe (cassava leaves). Sombe is the food I love it's my favourite food in world, the sombe is important to me because It's a food that my mother knows how to cook very well. And If my mother cook it, the food will satisfy me.

This Spanish omelette it's important to me because this is the first food I cooked when I arrived here in Canada. So, every time I cook this food it starts to reminds me the first time I cooked in Canada.





Skate Park in Dartmouth. I love this place because it reminds me of the first time I ride a bike in Canada.



Caledonia Junior High School. My first school I went to in Canada. I took this photo because reminds me the first time I started to speak English. This school reminds me the first friends I met at this school, and nice teachers I met at this school.

Noor



I found this bridge to be aesthetically pleasing. simple but admirable. This was taken on a windy night in Mississauga Ontario.

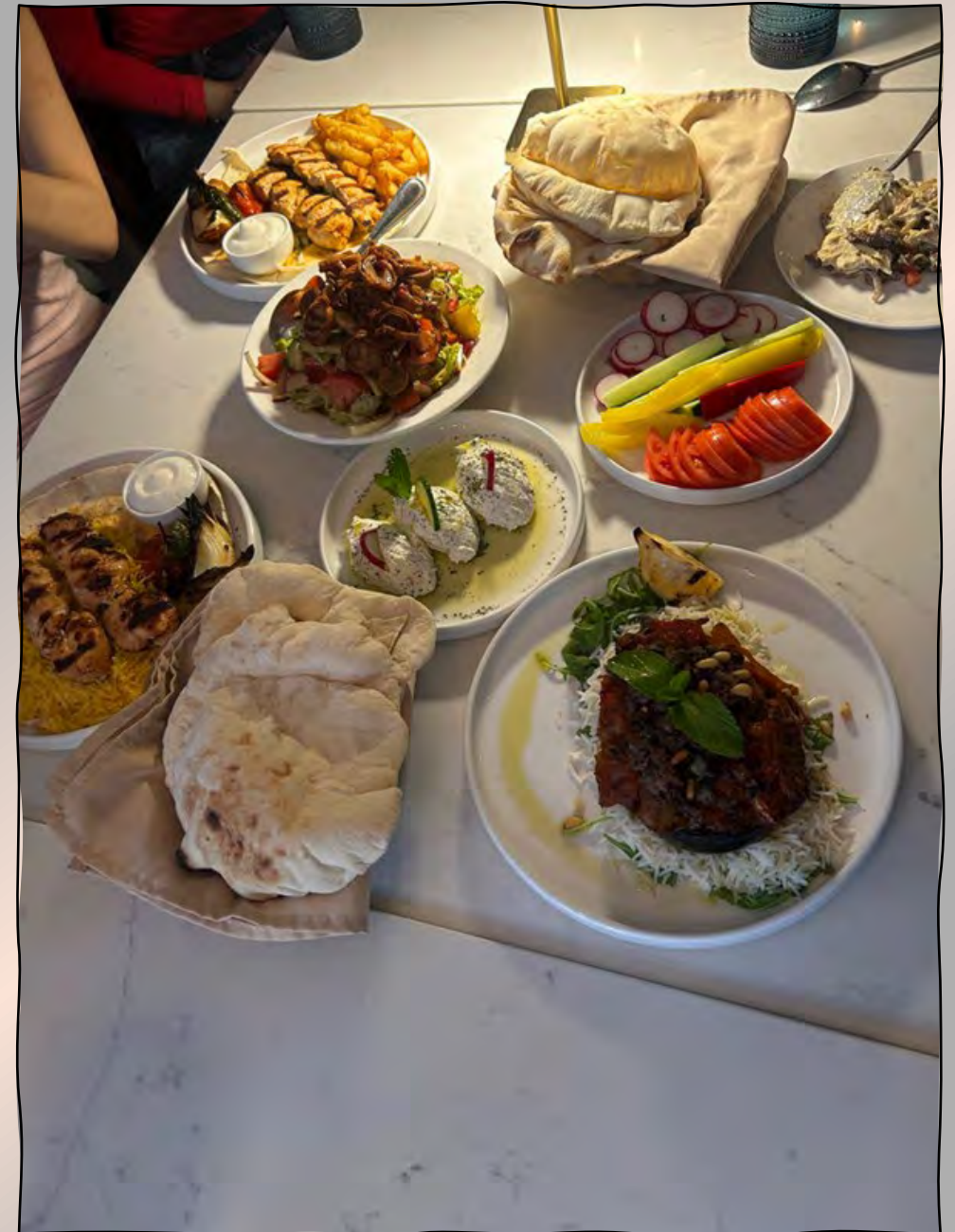


I asked my father to borrow some money from his wallet, and I got so emotional seeing a very old photo of me and my brother sitting in his wallet. The theme is money because both money and my father's love make me happy.

My friend caught me sleeping on campus and I chose the theme to be money because capitalism kills all of us everyday and it makes me tired to the point where I accidentally fell asleep on campus.



'Bliss' one of the best brunch places in Halifax, this opinion is unnegotiable.



'Au Liban' this Lebanese restaurant in Halifax makes me feel like I'm back in my grandmother's house. The bread is fresh just the way she bakes it, and the food is authentic as well.



This was taken on mother's day at Costco where everyone was picking up flowers for their beloved mothers, wives, and mothers in law.



He has ocean eyes but leave him home alone for too long and he'll act like you've personally betrayed him. Don't expect any cuddles until he's done giving you the silent treatment (even if you were only at work earning money for his stinky tuna treats). Photo taken at home.

Father and daughter memories in the making. Reminds me of the childhood I have spent with my father. This photo was taken in Playdium Dartmouth on a rainy day.



Roda



Halifax is bipolar when it comes to its weather. The two images show this: how fast weather can change! Often results in changing the mood.



The prices of things (how expensive foods are here!).



Dalhousie University. How expensive University is. Being the first one in the family to go to university.



The picture of corndog with fries. Trying it fulfilled my craving due to the popularity it was at the time. The apple pie. I love baking: the photo was taken to keep evidence of me succeeding in making the pie.



Joseph Howe
Elementary School. My
first time in Canada and
had to start school after
two weeks. It is where
my journey began.



Experiencing diverse cultures. Learning to write in Chinese.

Susan



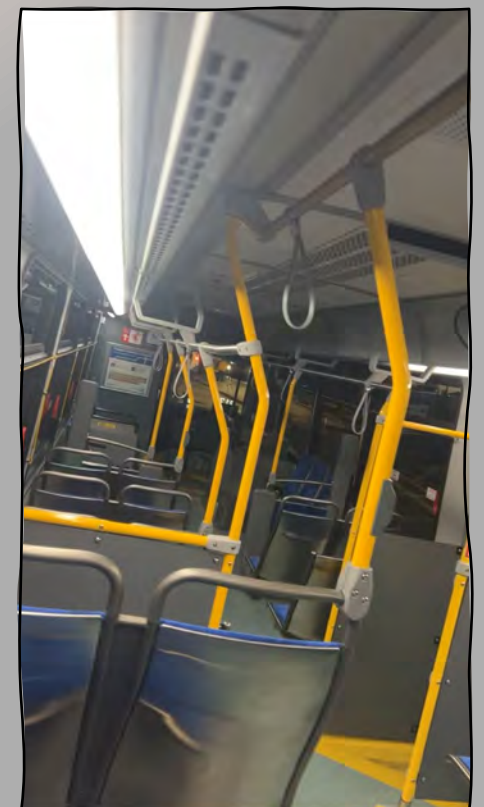
Back in Africa, it was hot as hell and beautiful every single day.

Coming to Canada was a massive reality check the weather is all over the place, and I honestly hate the snow. It is just way too cold out here!



Back in Africa, if you got sick, you basically had to pay an arm and a leg just to get treated it was so expensive and hard to get proper care. Moving to Canada, I was so relieved and surprised that healthcare is free and accessible. Even though it can still be a struggle for Black folks to be taken seriously by doctors here, at least it's free and you can actually get seen.

In Kenya, you had to pay a ton of money for a *keke* just to get anywhere, especially for school which wasn't free either. When I got to Canada, I was so shocked to find out that both school and transportation were free and you could just go anywhere you wanted.



Back in Africa, everything we ate was natural, fresh, and non-processed. Out here, everything feels heavily processed and full of chemicals. I really miss the taste of real food back home sometimes.



I really miss going to functions back home with my people, celebrating our culture and just coming together. Here in Nova Scotia, there aren't many South Sudanese people around to connect with and celebrate the culture like we used to, and I definitely feel that absence.



Back in Kenya, every Sunday evening the church drums would start playing, and the whole community would gather to dance to traditional music. It was such a happy, carefree time where everyone came together in pure joy.

For New Year's in Kenya, the whole neighbourhood would step outside together, singing and celebrating down the streets while everyone joined in. Here in Canada, people just watch fireworks and get drunk, but I really miss that deep sense of community back home.



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The moment I was taking these pictures, I was feeling so good and happy. It was a moment I really enjoyed, and I really like and will always remember :) **Janet**

These pictures represent important part of my life. They show things that make me feel happy, peaceful, grateful, and confident. Each picture connects to a theme and tells a story about my experience. The more each picture connect the more I experience. **Feza**

I enjoyed exploring different themes through photography and learning how a single image can communicate an idea or tell a story. **Hekmat**

Every workshop session felt refreshing, an opportunity to express my creative self without limitation. **Bible**

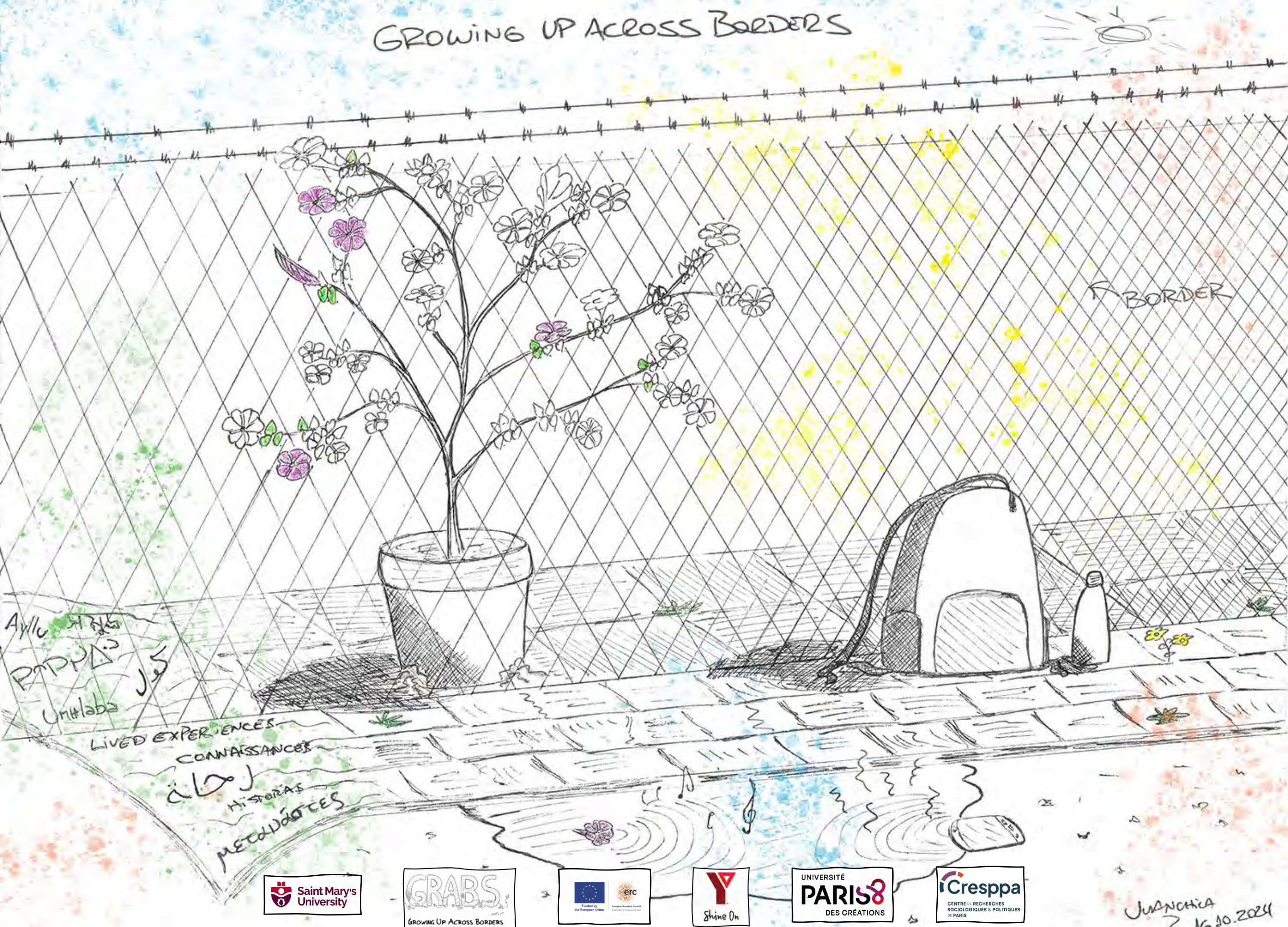
Photography is not just taking pictures, it's about capturing moments emotions and stories. **Afia**

Thank you so much for the opportunity and I learned a lot from you about the world and myself. **Noor**

Even though I joined only a few sessions, I really enjoyed the process and hearing how our experiences overlap. **Roda**

Ayllu
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