

Think Global, Act Local: What Canadians Can Do About Their Fury at Social Injustice in the News

by Craig and Marc Kielburger



Immigrant children peer out of barred windows in a building surrounded by razor wire. This isn't Texas—it's Laval, Quebec.

Canadians are appalled at stories of migrant children torn from their parents in the United States, asking ourselves what to do from up North. With no vote to leverage, we don't have much influence over American policymakers. But we can look in the mirror, and recognize that Canada isn't blameless.

The scale is vastly different—roughly 150 migrant children are [detained each year](#) in Canada versus the thousands now held in the U.S.—but the problem is the same.

[University of Toronto researchers](#) found conditions in Canadian immigrant detention centres can lead to serious psychological trauma for children.

Canadians can and should continue to speak out and donate to issues south of the border. At the same time, we can get our own house in order, sponsoring refugee families and advocating for better treatment of asylum seekers.

Take the phrase "think globally, act locally" and use it literally. It even applies to your daily news consumption. Every infuriating

international headline is a chance to take on a Canadian issue.

Families are being torn apart. [More First Nations children are removed from their homes](#) and placed in foster care today than were taken at the height of the residential school system. Chronic underfunding of welfare services for Indigenous regions means social workers can't find solutions that keep children with their families.

You can make a donation to groups like the [First Nations Child and Family Caring Society](#), or support Indigenous community-based services in your area.

Hate crimes are [on the rise in America](#). And it seems that news about another [white supremacist rally](#) or another unarmed black youth [gunned down by police](#) make [daily headlines](#). Canadians tend to downplay racist incidents in our country by favourably (and smugly) comparing ourselves to our U.S. neighbours.

Yet, arsonists [attacked a mosque](#) in Edmonton in June. A recent report found extensive racism against [black city employees](#) in Halifax.

And there are ongoing [complaints of racial profiling](#) by police forces [across the country](#).

After signing that [petition for police bias training](#), take action against your own unconscious biases. Find a group that offers anti-oppression training or try some of the many bias awareness-raising activities available online.

When we raise global issues, we're often chastised for ignoring problems on our doorstep. But they're not mutually exclusive, and there's often a direct connection. Let your passion for making a better world lead you back to making a better Canada.

Craig and Marc Kielburger are the co-founders of the [WE movement](#), which includes WE Charity, ME to WE Social Enterprise and WE Day. For more dispatches from WE, check out [WE Stories](#).