

Youth in Diaspora, Serving the Nation

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Rojbash. Good morning ladies and gentlemen and fellow youth. I would like to thank KNC-NA for giving me this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Kurdish youth from across the world. I am a Kurdish youth myself from the Syrian region. A Kurdish youth is one of diverse culture, rich history, and ideas. Over the years, we have gradually began to lose touch with who we truly are because we have been so integrated in our host countries and its cultures, we began to forget where we come from, our culture and most importantly our language. A blurred path has been paved for us-the new generation. The bond that once united us has been broken by past wars and treaties between the powerful states. As globalization continues and our world evolves, we need to evolve our ideologies and the way we approach different matters while remembering our origins. It's key to our achievement of the Kurdish dream. I believe the Kurds' main tool to attain success is its youth. We, the young generation, have to be provided with the knowledge of the past using the modern technology. The new generations are connected internationally with social networks. It takes a couple of seconds for a message to be received in Canada from Australia. It's how the youth interact nowadays and reach out to the world. Media and Education are powerful tools to engage and empower youths, to encourage the undertaking of legitimate and rational action without using terror.

- Education- empowering youths through knowledge and experience.
- Media- Effective use of various forms of media to reach the youth.
- Political Action-undertake of rational actions and be involved.



“Knowledge is Sorrow, Knowledge is Power,” Said Cklara Moradian, a Kurdish young activist. Hearing and knowing about the ordeals of our ancestors is painful and unforgettable but then it's these stories-these stories of heroes and survivors which empower us to aim for better and higher. The knowledge of the past teaches us the mistakes that have been committed; they give us the opportunity to learn from these mistakes and try to find alternatives to solve issues and conflicts. Education is not necessarily books and pens, although it is very important. Learning by getting involved in the community, volunteering, voting in elections. Youth take these activities for granted but these are the ways through which they can learn and enhance their skills and knowledge most effectively-putting their knowledge and skills in practice. Many of us look up to TV celebrities such as Donald Trump, Oprah, and President Obama but what most of us, youth,



do not recall is that they all have achieved some kind of education. Furthermore, youth are often identified as having an unhealthy role by most governments but youths are the origin of democracy and freedoms. No revolution and no freedom would have been attained without their presence and active role. Already, we can see several post-secondary Kurdish students forming their own organizations standing up for human rights, involved in disaster relief aid, and promoting their culture. These associations such as KAYO (Kurdish American Youth Organization) and KAYC (Kurdish American Youth of Canada) came about as educated youth searched for ways to increase their participation in their communities and make a change which they try to achieve through the activities they organize and participate in as a Kurdish community representant. These youth have learned and become aware of our Kurdish history and as they learned how others made a difference, this knowledge has strengthened them as Kurds and citizens to the extent that they are given opportunities to meet world leaders. Now, how to share this knowledge? How to engage other Kurdish youth into such activities in the 21st Century?

EDUCATION

“Knowledge is Sorrow; Knowledge is Power”-Cklara Moradian

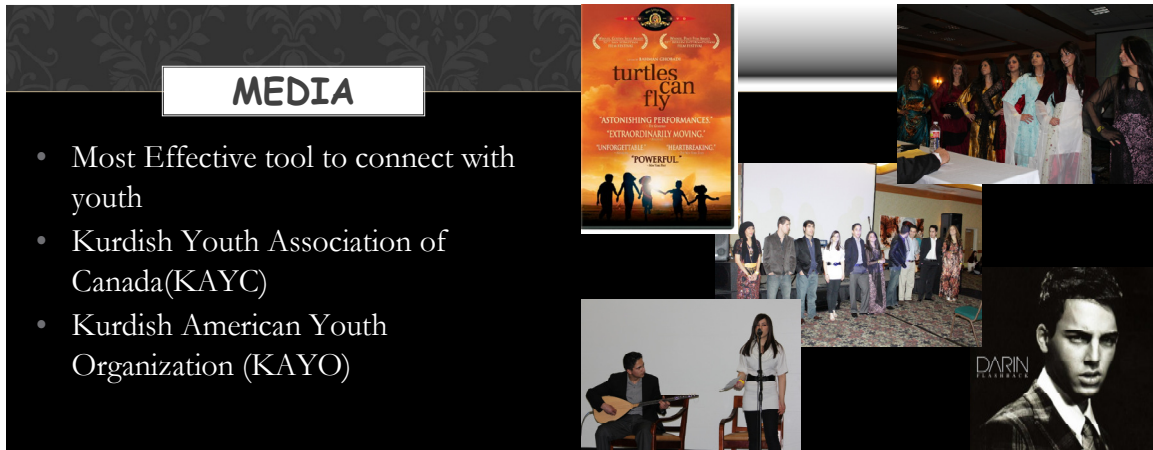
- Educating to empower youth.
- To be an active citizen.

Media has become so powerful and essential to our lives that many aspects of our lives are defined by it. In fact, it is very seldom to encounter a household without internet access or at least a TV in the house. The most effective tool to connect and reach out to the youth, it's the media. In order to reach the young adults, ways to connect with us must be used and that would be motion picture productions, music, and social networks. Every person uses one of these three tools at least once a day! Producing movies to portray the conditions and historical events which our nation had to undergo. A song can tell a story in 2 minutes and it's enjoyable. Many Kurdish artists such as Dillin Hoox and Darin Zanyar promote not only our nationality but encourage the Kurdish youth to be proud of who they are and promote the idea of evolution through the various genres of their music. On a personal note, 3 or 4 years ago, once I heard of Darin Zanyar as being a Kurdish artists in Sweden and USA, a sense of pride and a stronger sense of nationality started to build up in my personality; I said to myself, “Hey, Kurds are cool!” It sent me a message that I, a Kurd, do belong somewhere and do have a place in the society. A significant event, the Kurdish Youth Festival, organized by KAYO has been successful in engaging and empowering the youth through the various activities they have undertaken such as “Kurds Got Talent” where they acknowledge the various talents that youth have. In fact, last January, KAYO celebrated the 2nd Anniversary of the festival in Dallas, United States of America. It's most recently that we were proven the power of media and the youth. In North Africa and in the Middle East, the mass

protests and the peacefully-intentioned demonstrations were organized through the use of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube by the youth. Those youth began this so-called Middle-Eastern Revolution based on the knowledge they have obtained from the internet, that there are alternatives and successful systems to the dictatorship system, where human rights are recognized and more fair. And we are seeing, Kurdish youth in Qamishli are rising for their rights and freedoms. As youth in diaspora, we must show support by informing our governments that we care and we must stand along the people. That's how Egypt, Bahrain, and other countries in unrest gained support from the West.



Actions speak louder than words. Kurdish youth must participate and be involved in the political activities of their host countries in order to gain support from the western societies. Demonstrating in peaceful protests for democratic principles, educating themselves, and living up to their citizenship responsibilities.-like voting-these are a few ways to gain the trust of the United States of America and its allies. As mentioned previously, our Kurdish nation has and is undergoing many ordeals which are unforgettable but we must forgive and cooperate with other ethnic minorities and even those who are considered opponents if we want to move forward and evolve. The youth, in my opinion, especially of this generation, are more accepting and open-minded and the leaders must encourage the strengthening of these qualities to create connections with different nations and thus rendering the political actions more effectful and productive to carry out changes because different groups will be supporting each other in their cause-the common cause. We see this in Syria, where Kurds and many Syrian Arabs are co-operating in order to bring down the current regime. But these actions must be rational and justified in order to strengthen the relationship between the Kurds and the western states. With their energy, knowledge, and commitment youth need to prove to the West that they are allies through their participation within their communities.

POLITICAL ACTION

- To interact with a variety of nations and building connections.
- Undertake of effective and legitimate actions.



DIASPORIC KURDISH YOUTH

- Need and support for educational opportunities
- Use of media to unite and innovate
- Being a responsible and active citizen

Youth are the leaders of change in government, society, and its system. These changes can occur effectively if leaders and elders invest in the education of the young adults whether it's to become an artist, a politician, or a doctor. All educations are equally important. Leaders can use the different branches of media to reach the younger generations. We must embrace innovation and evolution because we can't live in the past if we want to move forward but also we must remember where our roots lie. Encouraging youth in their activities and being an active citizen are essential to develop connections and gain supporters especially from the western societies. Despite our differences, we must act a democratic nation. Non-profitable organizations such as KAYO and KAYC have been successful in their promotion of Kurds and encouraging other Kurdish young adults to become more active. Youth are ready to change and learn but are the leaders ready? Are they prepared to listen and invest in their ideas? Once thank you for this opportunity and enjoy the rest of your day. Sipas.