

2022

The Students Commission of Canada Annual Report



The Students
Commission
*Centre of Excellence for
Youth Engagement*



La commission
des étudiants
*Le centre d'excellence pour
l'engagement des jeunes*

Message from our Leadership

2022 was an important year for the Students Commission of Canada, and the communities we serve. We are proud of the way the SCC team and our partners worked with youth from across the country to bring people together in person and online, as well as provide new solutions to support an even broader set of needs.

We are all still learning from the pandemic, and it may take years before we fully understand the lessons and impacts. The past few years have taught us a lot about dealing with uncertainty, losing and regaining control, and being flexible in how we come together. In our work with young people, we saw trust become both stronger and weaker through the shut-downs and periods of isolation – and this has only strengthened SCC's commitment to do everything we can to ensure young people are valued, heard and supported, and their ideas for improving themselves, the lives of their peers and communities are put into action.

Our team is continuing to build on the good things that came out of the pandemic. This includes using virtual work and programs to reach more people and continuing to diversify our funding sources. We're balancing the opportunities created by the rise of remote work – which enabled us to hire young people and staff from a range of communities, keeping us close to the richness of diverse youth voices – with the very real need for human connection. We've seen how important physical spaces can be for people of all ages to share knowledge and culture, sometimes without even saying a word. We've learned how crucial it is for our SCC family and SCC community to meet in person at key points through the year and create safe places where young people and staff can speak up.

SCC's goal is to be a true national organization, powered by young people from every province and territory in Canada. We will be listening carefully to everyone's ideas, as we try to understand and talk about our new world and create opportunities to support meaningful change. One idea we're excited to bring to life in 2023 came out of our 2022 staff retreat. The team suggested a new 'Trust Framework' to go along with our Four Pillars. It feels like the right idea at the right time. Stay tuned for more!

The Students Commission of Canada had a great year in 2022 – and it was just the start. We promise that we will continue to work hard to keep the trust you have in us, and we will be here for you and the voices of youth in every part of our country.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brina Ludwig Prout".

Brina Ludwig Prout
National Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharif Mahdy".

Sharif Mahdy
Chief Executive Officer

Key Insights from 2022

Youth Voice - 300+ Organizations - Capacity Building - Youth Voice - 300+ Organizations - Capacity Building

We championed youth voices into action on positive system changes

- Youth designed their ideal child welfare system, saying support families first
- Youth helped shape accessible and responsive mental health services
- Indigenous youth “called in” leaders at the #CanadaWeWant showcase to prioritize everyday rights

We worked with more than 300 organizations to put knowledge into action on the ground

- Career exploration for youth needs to be grounded in diversity of experience
- Key 21st century skills are critical thinking, collaboration, networking and complex problem-solving
- Money matters: youth want to be paid above minimum wage in their roles
- Youth want employers who care about their interests, understand their need to balance school and work, and foster their autonomy in decision-making

We learned from animating the sector to build capacity and connections

- Virtual realities can be real and authentic spaces for connection; in-person touch points help sustain these relationships
- Youth lived experiences are a crucial component for upstream prevention in health promotion
- Youth programs nation-wide are buzzing with activity as the world reopens
- Organizational change happens when youth voice is integrated regularly, consistently and meaningfully

A frequently asked question

You might be wondering, what does the SCC do? We are a project-based organization that responds to the interests, concerns, and perspectives of youth. We decide what projects to undertake based on whether they align with our social purpose, Four Pillars™, strategic priorities and cultural practices. **The key thing about SCC is that we amplify the voices of youth from the ground up** through the multiple layers of schools, community organizations, private-sector and government systems that affect them. This means we facilitate youth engagement opportunities, evaluate youth program successes and improvements, gather youth voice through conferences, disseminate research and evidence-based practices, organize advisory groups, and support the youth-serving sector with the most up-to-date evidence and best practices. If it has anything to do with amplifying the voices of youth to create systemic change, we are likely a part of it!



Four Pillars



RESPECT



LISTEN



UNDERSTAND



COMMUNICATE™

The **Students Commission of Canada (SCC)** is an inter-generational national charitable organization. Our focus is to stay small, incubate ideas directly with youth, and work in partnership in all projects with youth and other organizations. We focus on being a node in the web of Canadian organizations and institutions that promote youth thriving in a healthy Canada. Our role as node in the network is focused on turning knowledge into action and action into knowledge.

Our vision:

A world where all young people transition positively into a successful adulthood.

Our social purpose:

To purposely work with others to ensure that young people's voices are heard and valued so that they can put their ideas for improving themselves, their peers, and their communities into action.

Thank you for being a valued member of the SCC's community and contributing to the work that we did to amplify the voices of youth in 2022!



Turn Knowledge into Action and Action into Knowledge

One of the SCC's strategic priorities, functions and processes is to support young people to generate impact at the systemic level, and to share evidence of this impact to the wider sector so that youth can continue to inform decision-making and practice.

Youth in care help redesign the systems they've lived through

We heard from youth that "their trauma is not for free" as the SCC facilitated an advisory group of youth with lived experience to work with the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to provide visionary and practical ideas of "moving beyond checklists" to improve child and family support.



"let's change Child Welfare being synonymous with child apprehension. Let's make it a focus on keeping families together, on making that the first goal, and then if that doesn't work out, that's okay. But make an honest effort that if CAS is involved, that their main goal is what can we do to keep this family together?"

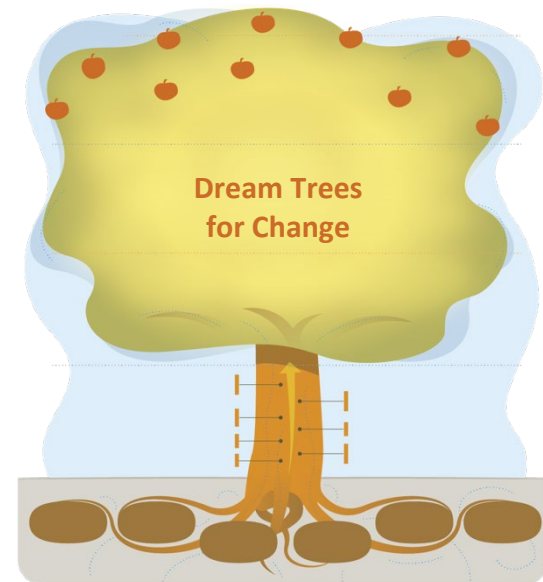
—MCCSS Youth Advisory Committee participant

"...seeing involvement of youth in various areas of this project is inspiring and motivating in honing in on the fact that these recommendations are by the youth for the youth to use."

—Research Assistant for SCC

E-mental health services shift due to youth input

We heard from youth about the lack of accessibility to mental health services and safe spaces to be themselves, so we facilitated consultations with youth to help create system-level changes to Kids Help Phone's services. This led to direct implementation in KHP's service delivery in ways that impact youth experience on their Peer-to-Peer platform. SCC has become a go-to place for organizations gathering meaningful youth perspectives in shaping their services by integrating youth voice to respond to youth needs and to innovate.



Indigenous youth speak truth to “call in” leaders at the #CanadaWeWant Showcase event.



We heard from Indigenous youth that they wanted a voice in how Canada moves towards reconciliation, so we gathered with them and non-Indigenous youth for the return of our first full in-person #CanadaWeWant since 2020. These youth shared their recommendations at the #CanadaWeWant Showcase day and developed an arts-based workshop that will be delivered nationally in 2023 to bring awareness to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls-to-action.

“To the people within these systems, the ones in charge; keep Indigenous people in mind, as we are all over turtle island, go against colonial standards. We need you to fight for us as hard as we are trying to. We deserve love, hope, respect, and our human being rights as everyone else. We deserve to be welcomed in these colonial spaces as we are not the ones who put them there. Change needs to begin now...”

- Youth participant from the #CanadaWeWant 2022 conference



Strengthen our Function as a Node in the Youth Thriving Web

The SCC is a catalyzing connecting point in a large system of youth-serving organizations and institutions. One of our key strategic priorities is to catalyze and lead action-oriented networks with a constellation of partners and peers committed to action on young people's voices.



Shaping career exploration for Grade 9s across Canada

We are proud to announce that the SCC became the new home for Take our Kids to Work, receiving the torch from The Learning Partnership, with generous funding from RBC Future Launch. The SCC supported the annual national Take Our Kids to Work day on November 2nd, 2022, which is Canada's most recognized career exploration event; over 250, 000 Grade 9 students across Canada participate every year. The SCC is now the new resource node for educators and employers across the country who want to increase career exploration opportunities for young people. We will be hosting the 29th annual national Take Our Kids to Work day on November 1st, 2023. We look forward to partnering with schools and teachers across the country to provide opportunities for students to learn about careers and the skills required to succeed in them.

Visit the [Take Our Kids to Work website](#) to learn more.

Take Our Kids to Work Day in partnership with @stdntsCmmssn continues to allow schools, employers, and families to open up their world of work to students across the country!

—Greg Norton, Twitter post



Investing in meaningful youth employment

Due to the generous support of our partners at RBC Future Launch and the federal government's Employment Skills Development Canada, we have continued to invest in a youth movement grounded in diversity of experience and building key 21st century skills: collaboration, networking and complex problem-solving.



SCC Hired:



7

part-time
youth staff

15

placement students; 2 of
which transitioned into either
full-time or part-time roles

14

full-time
youth staff

Over 90%

of staff hired at SCC in 2022
were under 26

We supported partners:



Youth hired
ages

15

to

25

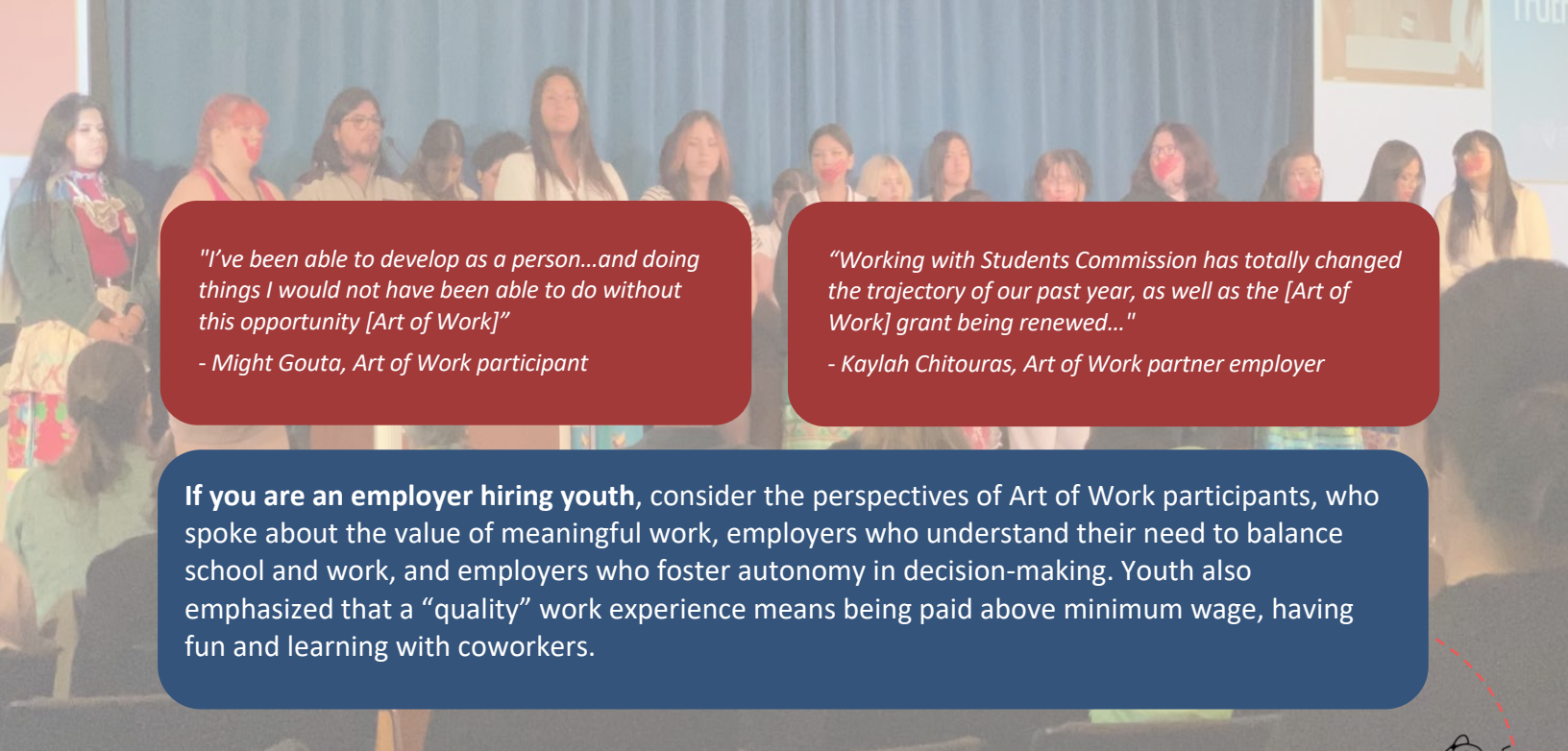
More than

1/2

identify as
Black,
Indigenous, or
racialized

60

youth were
hired through
the Art of Work
program in
partner
organizations



"I've been able to develop as a person...and doing things I would not have been able to do without this opportunity [Art of Work]"

- Might Gouta, Art of Work participant

"Working with Students Commission has totally changed the trajectory of our past year, as well as the [Art of Work] grant being renewed..."

- Kaylah Chitouras, Art of Work partner employer

If you are an employer hiring youth, consider the perspectives of Art of Work participants, who spoke about the value of meaningful work, employers who understand their need to balance school and work, and employers who foster autonomy in decision-making. Youth also emphasized that a "quality" work experience means being paid above minimum wage, having fun and learning with coworkers.

Priority: Strengthen Others Through Networking



Entering the new normal

The pandemic taught us a lot about how to strengthen the youth network in meaningful ways. We discovered that what we do in-person can be done online and that we can recreate a lot of what we do in person in real, authentic virtual spaces: it can result in more access, more diversity, and more inclusion. We also learned that in-person connection is key to sustaining these virtual communities and reinvigorating them. Self-isolation can be paralyzing and so we are rebuilding in-person connections while remaining committed to virtual ways of working and programming. For the first time in over two years, we engaged youth and adult allies in both virtual and in-person events, as well as job placements over the course of the year. In SCC's safer spaces, youth build relationships with each other and SCC that are strengthened through online and in-person activities and events.

100

External Events reaching

25,000

Youth, adult allies, and partners



"I feel communities being built & re-built"

- Youth participant,
#CanadaWeWant Conference
2022

"I will continue networking with other people and agencies working with youth and doing my part to enhance reconciliation."

- Youth participant, CWW
Conference 2022

"I have connected on a deeper level, with people who have the same passion for helping youth"

- Adult Ally, CWW Conference
2022

Bridging the gap between upstream prevention and youth engagement

2022's Knowledge Exchange, titled *Against the Current*, brought together youth engagement and health promotion experts and practitioners to apply the evidence about integrating youth lived experiences into upstream prevention work. Over 200 attendees from 11 countries gathered to grapple with how to push our collective work further upstream, *against the current*, by harnessing youth voice for system-level change. Participants spoke about how the event reinvigorated their motivation for work, expanded their ideas of how to engage youth, and how new frameworks challenged their approaches.

"We want youth engagement to go beyond empowering youth to make healthy decisions for their own health, and instead empowering them to make decisions that influence population health."

- Dr. Tanya Halsall, SCC research partner and creator of *Against the Current*



Youth programs revitalized after years of survival mode

The SCC continued to partner with grassroots organizations funded by the Youth Opportunities Fund, Ontario Trillium Foundation, as well as other subscribing organizations, to capture how these programs are impacting youth across the country, using our Sharing the Stories evaluation platform. In 2022, we expanded our use of the platform significantly through a partnership with Catapult, a national organization focused on youth employment and 21st century skills, which led to a 30% increase in subscribers to our platform and increased our reach of agencies serving Francophone youth.



Instagram reach
increased by
272%



Facebook reach
increased by
67%





2022 Financial Summary

2022 saw the return to in-person events and with that shift, SCC invested in multiple travel experiences to rebuild relationships with youth across the country. SCC continued to diversify its funding sources and program streams, be rewarded with returning clients and funders, and experience its strongest ever financial position.

REVENUES

	2022	2021
Fees for service	\$1,948,207	\$1,764,709
Contributions	\$1,442,577	\$662,145
Public Health Agency of Canada	\$652,391	\$425,876
Conference	\$80,000	\$84,500
Interest and other	\$28,723	\$5,731
Government assistance (Note 5)	\$11,596	\$404,459
Total Revenue	\$4,163,494	\$3,347,420

EXPENSES

	2022	2021
Personnel	\$2,083,173	\$1,895,389
Youth travel and accommodations	\$727,616	\$115,360
Program	\$378,205	\$220,023
Information technology	\$286,949	\$345,377
Partnerships	\$207,645	\$56,840
Occupancy	\$117,743	\$94,456
Professional fees	\$42,394	\$12,746
Office and general	\$34,575	\$23,980
Telephone and Internet	\$28,354	\$30,976
Insurance	\$19,367	\$18,312
Total Expenses	\$3,926,021	\$2,813,459

EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES

	\$237,473	\$533,961
NET ASSETS – Beginning	\$611,281	\$77,320
NET ASSETS – Ending	\$848,754	\$611,281

Stay Connected with Us In 2023

Donate to The Students Commission of Canada
<https://www.canadahelps.org/fr/dn/14522?v1=true>

Join the **Sharing the Stories** platform or get involved in our network of partners.



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