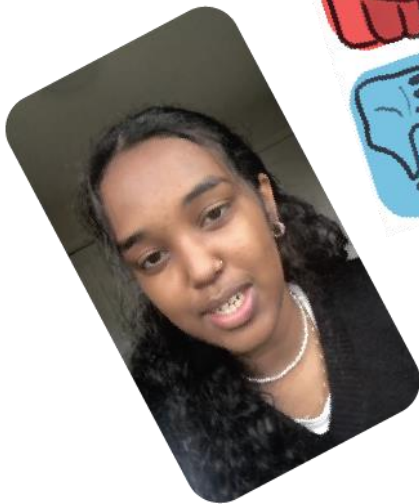
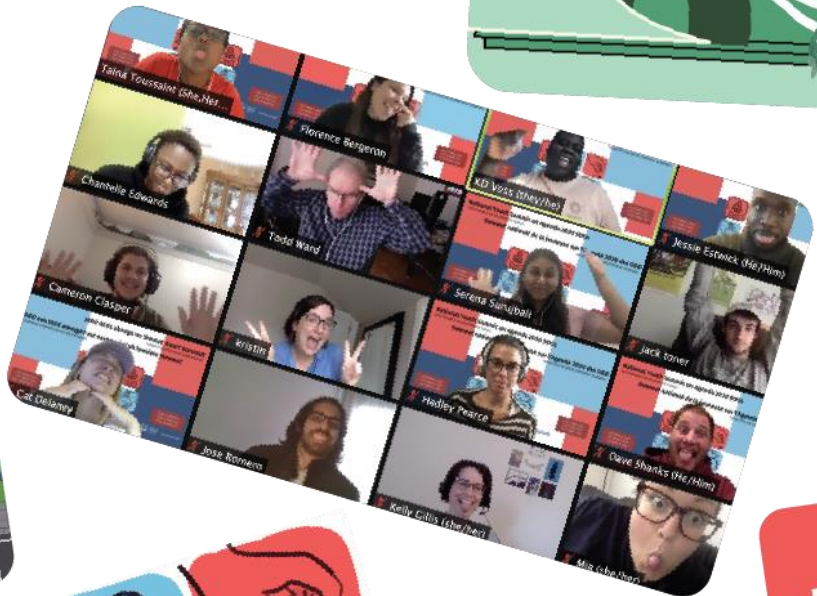
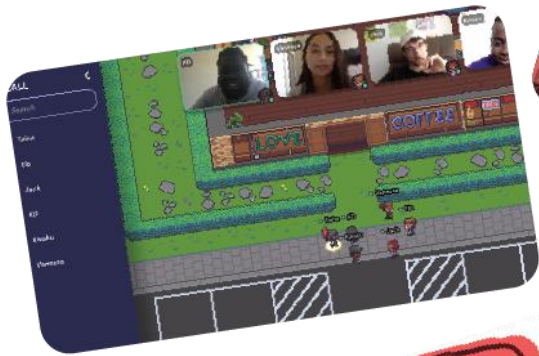


The Students Commission of Canada

Annual Report 2021



The Students Commission
Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement



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

OUR FOUR PILLARS:



RESPECT



UNDERSTAND



LISTEN



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.

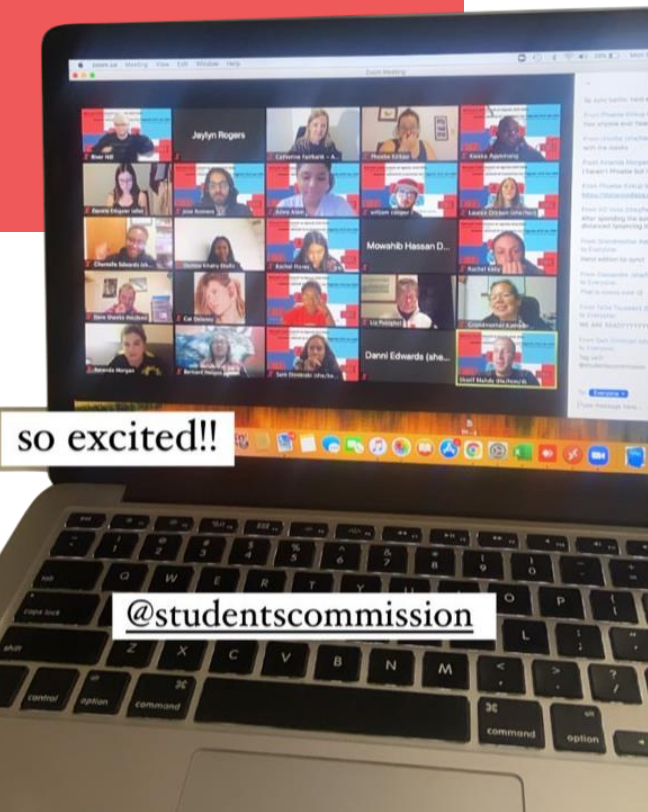
Our vision:

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 2021!



Message from our Leadership

2021 and the COVID-19 Global Pandemic continued to test young people and adult allies across the country and around the world. The SCC team responded by carrying forward and enhancing adaptations developed in 2020. We were buoyed and **sustained by the relationships** we have with organizations, institutions, youth and change makers across Canada.

Although our hopes that we would be able to restart in-person activities were dashed, we carried on and expanded our virtual reach and the number of events held. Plus, **the demand for our youth engagement and Sharing the Stories evaluation services increased substantially** as organizations seeking our services were looking to identify how best to support youth to manage and cope through the effects of the Pandemic.

Several key research and consultation projects helped us identify and publish the adaptations that organizations throughout the sector, including ourselves, were making and identify both the negative impacts on youth and organizations as well as some unexpected positive outcomes. These **positive outcomes included more inclusive programming**, reaching youth who through health considerations, remote geography, work and family responsibilities had been unable to access SCC's in-person activities. We are committed to ensuring that we **#Bounce Forward** in 2022 enhancing this increased accessibility through virtual options.

The **Government of Canada's COVID-19 support measures** allowed the SCC to stay on track with its ten-year strategy, retain and hire additional staff members to respond to the needs of young people.

We were blessed this year with a **substantial pro bono contribution from RBC** and a fabulous, committed team of IT experts from RBC, who thoroughly grasped our social purpose, our unique DNA and challenges, and provided us with both immediate solutions and a roadmap to **leaping forward with our IT platforms** and services. Many, many thanks to the RBC team.

Our story for the year features contributions from more than **15** partners with shared agreements to collaborate on promoting youth well-being, **158 organizations subscribing to Sharing the Stories** documenting how youth programming meets the needs of youth, **membership in 5 plus national networks** and more than **124** youth who have been employed with us this year to help create #The Canada We Want.



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
Executive Director



Priority: Turn Knowledge into action and Action into knowledge

Diversifying safer spaces for connection

Thanks to the generous support of RBC’s Future Launch Strategy, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage, the SCC **innovated, adapted and validated the ‘Safer Spaces’ model** for our first virtual annual #CanadaWeWant youth conference with 200 youth from across the country, creating opportunities for young people to build connection with their peers.

“Getting to meet people from across Canada. I have been having a very hard time recently and [this space is] giving me hope.” (Virtual conference youth attendee)

The **depth and quality of connection** acted as a buffer for the negative impacts of the pandemic and consequent isolation. For some, this was the first time they were able to participate in a SCC event, improving accessibility to safer spaces.

SCC safer spaces provided connection for **young people facing systemic issues** like racism.

The safer spaces model has been shared through training sessions with and mobilized by partners, who are creating more spaces to welcome young people across the country.

“I was amazed at how well Students Commission’s attitude and vibe translated to online...And I know that they work really hard trying to make that feeling there for everybody.”
(SCC partner)

Online safer space validated

100% of youth who responded to a follow up survey felt that the environment was caring and supportive, that they were included, and that they belonged.



14 Sites Preventing Violence in Relationships

This year, we advanced gender-based violence prevention in 14 Be the Program sites across Canada. Youth were “inspired to evaluate their own relationships,” and rethought what consent and boundaries meant to them, learned the nuances, and often “hidden signs” of toxic relationships, and left unhealthy partners. In a year where “we really had to adapt,” sites responded to an unpredictable pandemic landscape by weaving curricular themes across sessions to meet the emerging needs of youth. More than previous years, youth were more directly involved in co-creating trusting, connecting, and empathetic spaces that could hold diverse perspectives, “terrifying questions,” and “heavy conversations.” In these safer spaces, young people brought their relationship unknowns and tensions to the group, seeking out advice from their peers, supporting each other in navigating (often nuanced) unhealthy situations, and finding healing from hurtful pasts. The safety created in the Be the Program sites allowed youth to explore and share authentically without risk of judgment. The safety created in the space allowed youth to show up and be themselves. One youth shared to a site lead after a session that “she didn’t have anywhere else to think about the things talked about (in sessions) and ask questions in a way she wouldn’t be judged.”

“It’s the only place of its kind in the community.”

“The NBR project was extremely powerful in that it showed me, a person who’s faced racism in various forms due to my different identities that I was not alone. It provided me with a sense of community and allowed me to connect with so many others across Canada facing the same issues. Our efforts fighting against injustice and racism are ongoing and it will continue, using the NBR project as a standard to learn from.” (Nobody’s Born a Racist 2.0 participant)

Priority: Strengthen Others Through Networking

Supporting each other in a time of isolation

SCC is committed strategically and tactically to working in partnership with other youth-serving organization to enhance each other’s work and support youth thriving. Throughout 2021, we deepened our relationships, connecting with partners throughout our **networks to understand the pressures and adaptations being made through the COVID-10 pandemic**, championing and sharing their innovations. Together with our academic directors of the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement and organizational partners such as Frayme and Unicef, **we published several articles documenting the impacts and describing successful innovations for others to implement.** With increasingly accessible platforms, we hosted training workshops and guides to share innovative techniques for virtual delivery.

Improved Accessibility and Inclusion

A new guide identifies and deconstructs the uses of French that convey obsolete gender values. In our virtual events, the inclusion of French/English interpreters, ASL sign language and closed captions is now automatic. 98% of our publications are produced in English and French.

158

SCC works with 158 organizations to evaluate and enhance their youth programs.



Knowledge Exchange

In November 2021, SCC hosted its annual Knowledge Exchange. Virtual events tripled and quadrupled participation over in-person events in previous years.



#SharingSaturday

Every Saturday, the SCC promoted other organizations and their initiatives on our social media. Instagram visibility jumped 345%. On TikTok increased video content accelerated TikTok followers.



Adult Ally network meetings

The SCC network implemented shared programs across Canada on dating violence prevention, safer spaces, substance use, and generativity of youth.

200+

Organizations influenced

Spreading the Four Pillars

“We really use them. We go over them and talked about them every week.” (Program partner)

Integrating our roster of #Canadawant youth facilitators into 20+ projects



Sharing across generations

“I loved seeing people share so vulnerably and getting to learn from the generational experiences of co-creators.” (Knowledge Exchange participant)

Better together

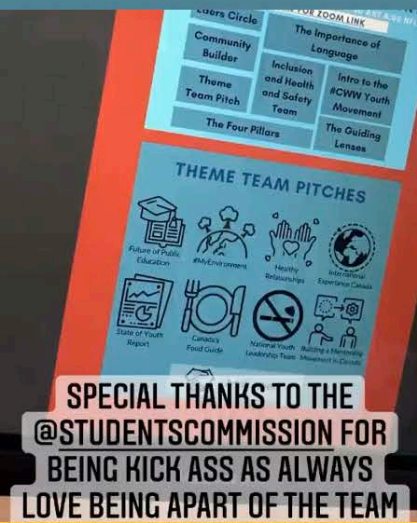
“I feel less isolated by seeing people doing this work all over and in different ways – familiar faces and new!” (Knowledge Exchange participant)

Plum profiles completed to assess talent



What I'm good at...

"It was interesting to see my top talents, some I expected and some were a surprise. I think knowing this will help me talk about my skills in a job interview or when networking."
(Youth who created a Plum profile)



Capacity building

"...doing the run through of the guide and making changes as a team was really great, it helps being a facilitator. I've never done that in other projects with workshop guides." (Youth Research Assistant)

Priority: Strengthen our Function as a Node in Youth Thriving Web

The SCC provided meaningful paid work to **124 young people** internally and externally during a year when many young people were missing typical employment opportunities. Youth were involved in the development, delivery, and promotion of SCC's projects as facilitators, research assistants, analysts, network coordinators, and communications support staff. We created new professional development opportunities for SCC staff and volunteers by using the Plum platform assessing talents, knowledge sharing, and being intentional about capacity building during projects. Through Art of Work, the SCC connected **15 organizations** to employ **75 young people** across Canada and develop a guide describing techniques for successfully employing diverse, under-employed youth.



25

Nobody's Born a Racist

Nobody's Born a Racist youth editorial board scheduled virtual panelists' series to align with our social purpose on anti-racism.

Opportunities

Where SCC created meaningful work...

"It was a wonderful experience for me to be part of [a research lab with a CEYE academic partner]. I realize now how lucky I am to have been given this opportunity. I learnt a lot, I developed some new skills, it will help my academic and professional future for sure!" (Art of Work placement student)



22

Staff positions (internal)

Youth were hired and worked virtually across Canada on more than 16 events, work shops and programs for other youth.



50

Youth Facilitators

Youth Facilitator Roster met regularly to learn skills to support and execute SCC work.

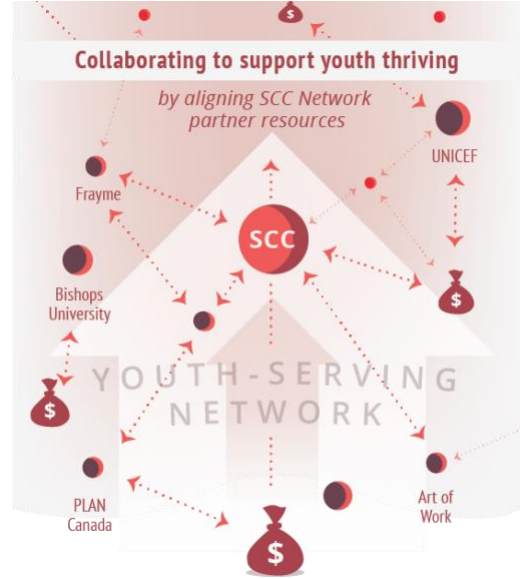
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Research Assistants

Youth learn research skills, amplify youth voice for key clients, including Kids Help Phone, Plan International Canada and the federal government.

Our 2021 Financial Summary

SCC organizational sustainability – and a network that grows



The Students Commission of Canada (SCC) works hard, but we’re not alone. SCC is a **node in a larger network of youth-serving organizations that collectively work to support youth thriving**. SCC’s strategy of collaborating to work with other organizations, aligning and sharing resources has also been successful in securing revenue to sustain its work and the work of its partners.

The Government of Canada’s COVID-19 support measures, as well as a significant increased demand for our services has resulted in increased cash generation in the year which allowed the SCC to retain all of its staff and maintain its longer-term plan to stabilize cashflow.

In 2021, the Board approved a reserve policy for the organization. Four reserves were approved: Emergency Wind Down Reserve, Operating Reserve, Capital Asset Reserve and Opportunity Reserve. Sufficient cash to cover Deferred Revenue has been maintained and the balance is to be internally restricted to ensure the financial stability of SCC and support the organization’s continued growth.

A significant investment in Information technology and IT personnel was made in 2021 to meet the continued need to pivot to digital services and home offices. This included increased equipment purchases, virtual software purchases, and an enhanced contract for digital services and security with our technology partner.

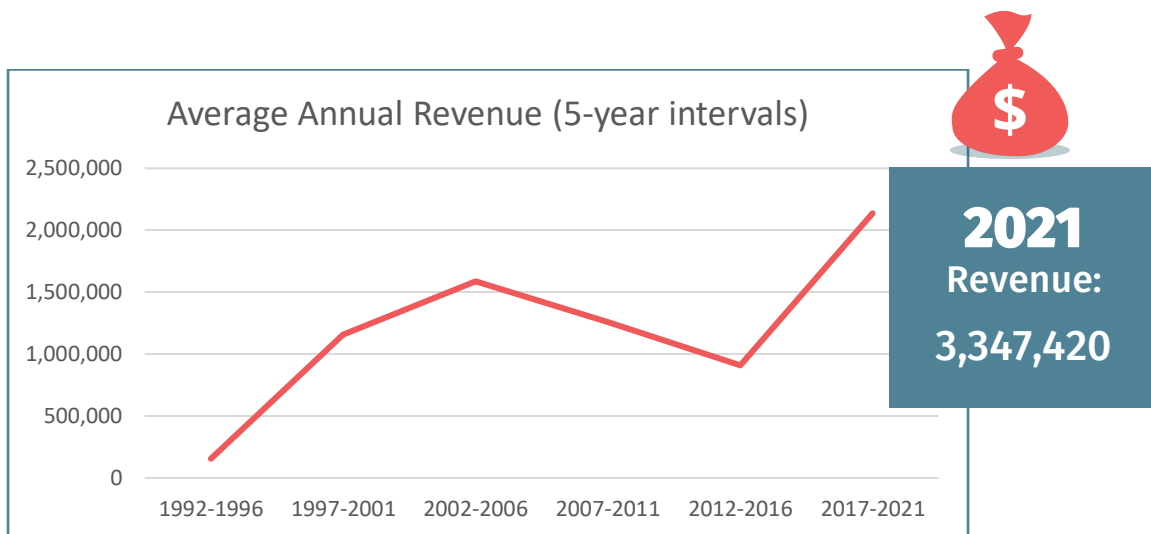


Fig. 1 A steady, at times scrappy, climb to organizational sustainability reflects the impact of a major funding source ending (2011) and the SCC rebounding back to financial stability (2021) through diversifying to over 94 funding sources.



Our Four Pillars

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RESPECT

The Students Commission of Canada begins with **respect**. First, respect for young people, their idealism, their hope and their capacity to improve the world. Second, respect for the gift that each person carries within. We believe that by creating conditions of respect, we enhance the capacity of people to work together and improve their lives and the lives of others. Respect means respect for diversity and an effort to strive for diversity of people and experiences and expertise in all of

what we do. Respect means actively seeking and valuing the gifts and experiences of all those with whom we work and live. Respect means reciprocity – that each person is an equal partner in our work. Respect means youth and adults working collaboratively as equals. Respect means that we have "commissioned" youth to carry out their hopes and dreams for a better world, and that as an organization we will facilitate, support, and assist them to our best capacity.

LISTEN

With respect as our foundation, we learn to **listen**. We listen not just with our ears, but with our heads, hearts and all our senses. We listen actively, intensely, not just to words, but to silences, to deeds, to experiences. We listen to the spoken word, the written word, the image. We listen to learn, to gather information, to enhance our capacity to give and to receive.

We listen to youth as experts, and we gather other information, other voices to ensure diversity. We listen because we are curious, because as people and as an organization we are constantly growing and changing through the input of others.

We listen to truly understand who others are.



UNDERSTAND

From listening comes understanding. To **understand** is to go beyond listening, to process what we have heard, to reflect upon the new knowledge and gifts given to us. Understanding creates new knowledge, new skills. If we truly understand who others are, and who we are, we

can work together as equals, valuing differences and building upon similarities and common goals. We understand the problems each of us faces, and the aspirations each of us has. Understanding creates the conditions for working effectively together.

COMMUNICATE™

If people really understand each other, then they can **communicate** – our fourth pillar. When people truly communicate, the obstacles fall away. Communication is the first action and creates the process for developing and taking all the actions we need to take, as individuals and as an organization to achieve our goals and

dreams. With communication, we create action plans and implement them with practical projects that make a positive difference. With communication, we continue to reaffirm the respect and trust we have for each other and create the relationships with others who can help us achieve our goals.



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Stay connected with us in 2022

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

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

Contact us at info@studentscommission.ca to learn about these opportunities to connect!

For more about the Students Commission of Canada (SCC) explore our website at <https://www.studentscommission.ca> or find us on LinkedIn. To follow live updates from the SCC, make sure to follow the hashtag #CanadaWeWant and the @studentscommission on Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook, and @StdntsCmmssnTwitter!

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