

Experiences Canada student exchanges and forums develop community leaders and informed citizens of tomorrow.

Experiences Canada is a national registered charity that helps young Canadians to explore their country in ways they never may have imagined through reciprocal exchanges, forums, conferences and other opportunities to connect with one another.

For 85 years, Experiences Canada has opened young people's minds and involved them in a broader world. We offer transformative learning opportunities accessible to youth across Canada – creating fun, safe, memorable experiences that deepen their connection to their community and their country, enrich personal relationships, and build confidence and skills.



VISION

We open young peoples' minds and involve them in a larger world



MISSION

We offer transformational learning opportunities accessible to youth across Canada – creating fun, safe, memorable experiences that deepen their connection to their community and their country, enrich personal relationships, and build confidence and skills



WE BELIEVE

...in the capabilities and potential of youth

...learning is an adventure

...young Canadians need to know their own country's diverse histories, cultures, and challenges first to better understand the world

...the most memorable experiences are shared experiences.

...exposure to new spaces and ideas will enable youth to see their world differently

...every youth deserves the opportunity to participate

...every youth deserves to be respected and included

...the safety and security of our youth is paramount

...everyone learns differently

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF EXPERIENCES CANADA



This year my term as Chair of the Board is ending. Although this year is perhaps going to be the most remarkable in my time at Experiences Canada, I have been inspired by the constant evolution and creativity in the organization during my eight-year tenure on the board. We have supported new programs and watched as our reach into communities across Canada has expanded. We have created new opportunities for youth to participate in discussions about key issues facing our country, and increasingly, we have involved youth directly in the shaping and delivery of our programs and services.

Like many of our stakeholders, finding ways to meet our vision and mission in a world where physical exchanges have not been possible has been a challenge. We saw our programming shift online, beginning with the first Online Reconciliation Conversations Series produced in just 6 weeks following the start of the pandemic. We deeply appreciate the support of our financial partners, Canadian Heritage and RBC Foundation for their immediate support to enable these shifts in programming. We are also most grateful to the staff of Experiences Canada for their creative thinking and agility to rising to this challenge, and to the many partnering organizations and exceptional speakers who responded so quickly and fully to our request for their help and expertise to make it happen.

Looking through the pages of this book, seeing the photos and testimonials from exchanges that happened prior to the outbreak of the global pandemic COVID-19 last March, it seems a lifetime ago! We all anxiously await the opportunity when we can once again see young people embracing each other, enjoying the discovery of new places, and traveling together.

We often talk about our vision as opening up young people's minds and involving them in a broader world. Throughout my time here, I have had the honour and privilege to meet with hundreds of youth from across the country, and experience Canada from their perspective. In fact, they have opened my mind, making me more thoughtful about the potential every one of us has to make a difference.

My gratitude goes out to the staff and the Board of Directors of Experiences Canada and all volunteers and organizers who make it possible for youth to participate in our programs.

Judith Sullivan-Corney





A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

About this time last year, it looked like we were headed for an unprecedented year of travel and exchanges. We just had no idea how true that would turn out to be!

The school year began with a promising start – lots of travel plans for the coming year and a new Youth Leadership Forum in development. I recall taking our newly hired Youth Forums coordinator Sarah Hanson on the road with me for the first two weeks of March to scout locations for a future Forum in Calgary, as well as meet with program partners involved in the Reconciliation Forum in Winnipeg. At that time, we were monitoring reports of COVID-19's spread across the globe, but none of the protocols that have now become standard in our lives were common practice. At every meeting, we awkwardly hesitated between a handshake and an elbow bump, respectful of the growing concern about the unknown virus. We were wrapping up our last meeting before heading back home on March 9 when Canada declared its first coronavirus-related death and media started to use the phrase global pandemic.

For many of our linguistic exchange participants, they had already completed the first leg of their journey, and several groups were in the middle of their travels when the federal government order to shut down was issued. Our first priority was to get everyone home safely. Then the most challenging part of the year began, undoing travel plans for more than 2000 youth, first postponing them, and then later canceling them when it became clear that the pandemic would endure much longer than any of us could have imagined. For those of you who never got to travel yourselves and complete the exchange, we share your disappointment and hope that there will be another opportunity either by rebooking of your group travel when it is safe to do so or participating in the virtual exchanges being offered in 2021.

The Virtual Exchanges will offer individual youth as well as groups the opportunity to connect online this year and share in the discovery of each other's community through the creation of multi-media projects they first share with one another, and then contribute to THIS! Is Canada -an

interactive map of Canada that will feature the stories of all participating youth.

It is one of the silver linings that has come out of our pandemic experience. Like everyone, the shift to online learning was abrupt, and we've learned a lot since we started with the Online Reconciliation Conversations series in May. Although it will never replace the opportunity to gather in person, we do believe that these times have helped to inspire our thinking about other ways of bringing youth together so they can learn from each other.

With travel still not likely until the end of 2021 at the earliest, we're planning additional online conversations to encourage youth to stay informed and engaged in the issues that affect their community. We hope that these experiences will also help them to continue to build on their own personal confidence and skills so they are more than ready when it is time to adventure out into the real world again.


Deborah Morrison

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR, AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Audit and Finance Committee of Experiences Canada I am pleased to report the financial results for the 2019-20 fiscal year. This report is derived from our audited financial statements for the year ended August 31, 2020, which are available on our website or upon request.

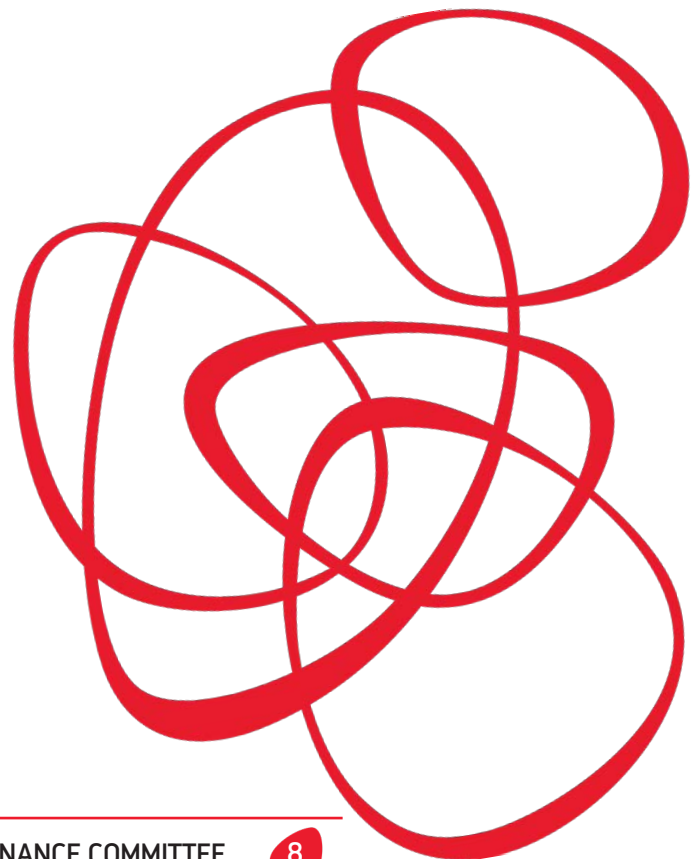
Experiences Canada completed its first year of a three-year funding agreement with the Federal Government's Exchanges Canada Program. We wish to thank the Minister and staff at the Department of Canadian Heritage Exchanges Canada for their steadfast support and commitment to our program.

The pandemic brought significant challenges to our programming. Approximately 43% of our groups were unable to travel due to the lockdown as of mid-March. Experiences Canada quickly transitioned to an on-line presence with a virtual forum entitled Reconciliation Conversations in the spring 2020, and a second series BLM – Anti-Racism Conversations this Fall. We are launching a Virtual Exchanges program in January 2021, which will continue to bring youth together, until they can meet face-to-face again.

Due to the pandemic, 2019-20 revenue was down by 36% at \$3.76 million compared to the previous year's revenue of \$5.90 million. Net expenditures also decreased by 37% from last year, from \$5.94 million to \$3.73 million. Special measures funding of \$48,497 was provided to groups that did complete travel to ensure equal access to the exchange program.

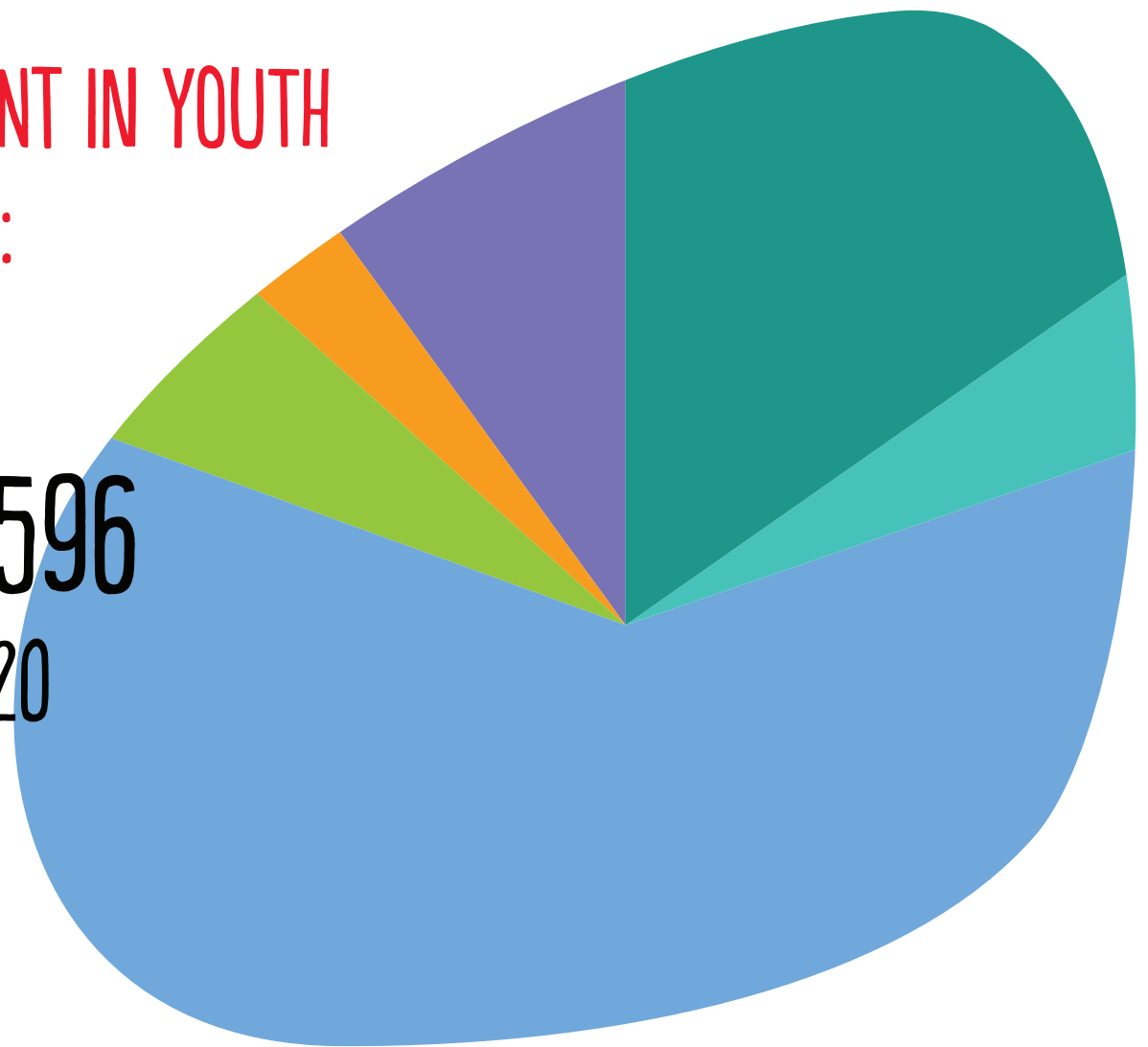
We would like to thank our individual contributors and funding partners RBC, Canada Life, Uniglobe, Westjet and Air Canada, for their generous support of this year's programs.

Denise Nawata



INVESTMENT IN YOUTH PROGRAMS:

\$3,726,596
IN 2019/20



65% Youth Travel
\$2,411,127

2% Youth Forum
\$69,938

25% Program Delivery Nat'l
Coordination
\$942,865

1% Special Measures
\$48,497

3% Marketing/PR
\$99,199

4% Corporate/Other
\$154,970