

experiences CANADA  **2022 ANNUAL REPORT**





Committed to
supporting youth
develop skills
in social justice,
allyship and
advocacy

Proud to support Experiences
Canada's Youth Forum on
diversity, inclusion and allyship

canada  TM

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THIS! IS CANADA



VOILA! LE CANADA



experiences
CANADA



VIRTUAL EXCHANGES
ÉCHANGES VIRTUELS

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY AND OTHER COMMUNITIES IN CANADA WHILE MAKING FRIENDS AND BEING CREATIVE?

Experiences Canada's Virtual Exchange program connects youth across Canada and provides them with the chance to learn more about Canada through a series of fun activities and media projects.

Available to Canadian youth between the ages of 12 and 17.

WWW.EXPERIENCESCANADA.CA/VIRTUAL-EXCHANGES/



ABOUT EXPERIENCES CANADA



Experiences Canada programs 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
- ...the most memorable experiences are shared experiences.
- ...every youth deserves to be respected and included
- ...learning is an adventure
- ...exposure to new spaces and ideas will enable youth to see their world differently
- ...the safety and security of our youth is paramount
- ...young Canadians need to know their own country’s diverse histories, cultures, and challenges first to better understand the world
- ...every youth deserves the opportunity to participate
- ...everyone learns differently





MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR - DAVID MCINNES



It's been another interesting year. We know the effects of the pandemic have been particularly hard on youth. They have dealt with the stress of online living and learning, the social isolation, and the increasing fragmentation of communities in the wake of social change and economic uncertainties. These difficulties have left many youth feeling more disconnected from their country, and from each other, than ever before.

Experiences Canada, with the understanding and support of its partners and amazing network of educators and parents working alongside us, continued to be innovative in finding alternative ways to deliver its vision to help young people to open their minds and engage in a broader world. Although our expenditures were significantly reduced due to the lack of travel, the level of activity within the organization itself was as busy as ever. Some of the programs started last year, like virtual exchanges, virtual choirs, and the virtual art gallery were reintroduced this year with new themes to keep it interesting for kids. We also had several new projects including an online series of resources to help young people plan for life after secondary high school. Career Choices provided practical advice and online resources to personalize the tools and training offered to each individual's interests – in both official languages.

I would like to extend a special shout out first and foremost to the staff at Experiences Canada who continue to make all this happen despite the significant capacity challenges we, like many organizations, have been confronting.

“ I just completed my virtual exchange with a student from a different province. I definitely recommend the program. I feel that a virtual exchange brings students to learn about the Canadian culture and builds leadership skills. Building relationships across cultures is vital to creating a healthier world. ”

Grace F, Virtual Exchange Participant

Similarly, we very much appreciate the support of our partners, Canadian Heritage, RBC Foundation , Canada Life, Uniglobe, Power Corporation, R. Howard Webster Foundation, North West Company: Healthy Horizons, the Winnipeg Foundation and the Pollard Family Foundation RBC Foundation, Canada Life, Power Corporation and North West Company as we've navigated these uncertain times. Lastly, I also want to acknowledge the contributions of my colleagues on the Board of Directors. Taking on this role is significant at the best of times, but it takes a truly dedicated person to embrace the challenge at times like this, and I am so grateful for their stewardship and insights. Together we look forward to offering new and renewed programs and opportunities that will mean the world to young people.

David McInnes





MESSAGE FROM THE CEO – DEBORAH MORRISON

For the second year in a row in our more than 85-year history, we did not have a single group travel on exchanges. While the continued pandemic restrictions were hard on us as an organization, the ones who have suffered the most are Canada's young people. We proudly serve youth at a critical time in their personal development – right when they are taking their first steps at independence, building their decision-making and honing their ability to communicate and participate in broader social settings. We have known for some time that travel and exchanges are a fun, exciting way to teach young people meaningful life skills, providing opportunities to meet and live with new people, facilitating cultural appreciation, and developing their ability to adapt to new environments. Our challenge during this time has been to find alternative ways to support this development when actual travel has not been possible.

In the first year, we quickly shifted to Zoom webinars and virtual exchanges successfully retaining about half of our regular participation rates. Back then all this was very new and exciting – but coming into the second year of online learning – “zoom fatigue” was a very real thing. So we had to change things up once again.

I am grateful for the commitment and creativity of our program staff who again responded to these challenges with a format for our Virtual Forum on Reconciliation that helped Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth located across Canada develop advocacy and allyship projects of their own to advance the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in their own schools and communities.

We began 2022 with a new hybrid Forum plan, bringing a cohort of 75 youth participants and youth leaders together first for a series of online webinars about Allyship where they explored topics related to diversity and inclusion including LGBTQ2S+; persons with disabilities; Islamophobia; environmental racism, and reconciliation. At the same time, youth worked in small groups to develop their own podcasts about these topics which they were able to produce in person when they gathered in Winnipeg in early May. For us, it was fantastic to see youth gathering together again, and a welcome signal that the year ahead may see more youth exploring Canada in ways they haven't dared to imagine.



We are so grateful for the ongoing support and commitment of our funders and stakeholders, without whom we could not have been so agile or learned so much. We look forward to building on what we've learned and being there to support youth in regaining their sense of wonder, optimism and excitement in the post-pandemic world that awaits us.

Deborah Morrison

PROGRAMS



VIRTUAL FORUM ON RECONCILIATION

The pandemic has made us all look at many things differently and find new approaches to connecting with one another. For us, one of the best changes was finding ways to empower our participants to become leaders and teachers in their own right.



We first began planning our Virtual Youth Leadership Forum on Reconciliation in 2019 with the intention to host an in-person event in Winnipeg, July 2020. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, our plans had to change not just once, but three times. In its final iteration, the forum was more than a week-long experience for everyone involved. Participants heard from Indigenous community and business leaders as well as youth activists to deepen their understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to Reconciliation and they were encouraged to develop their own projects of advocacy or action to address some of the topics they learned about. Youth were not only supported in the planning of their project proposal, but thanks to the support of Canada Life's Reconciliation MicroGrants, and Taking IT Global's Rising Youth initiative—they received seed funding to get their projects off the ground. As a result, our connection to these youth continued throughout the school year as we followed along as youth implemented the ideas and plans they shaped through during the Forum.

“ I've learnt a lot of about asking favours from indigenous elders and the way in which I must approach the discussion of Canada's relationship with Canada. Secondly, I have learned a lot of different permits and rules that need to be taken into consideration when working with young kids and using Markham owned lands to use as places for different events. ”

Mehul Madhura, Markham, ON

On the National Day of Reconciliation this past September 30th, we released a Reconciliation Inspiration Guide, featuring the projects these youth created so the legacy of their actions endures. Their efforts are seeding activities and change in their schools and communities that hopefully will carry on for years to come. We hope this book will be an inspiration for other youth and shows how to be a difference-maker, that every action has an impact, and the first step is making the decision to get involved.



CAREER CHOICES

Early on in the pandemic we consulted with our young alumni about other types of programming we could offer to support them. A surprisingly large number told us they were looking for more teenager-friendly information to guide them in planning for life after high school. Although we discovered for ourselves the sea of online information on this topic, Experiences Canada set to create a curated set of on-line workshops, job profiles and skills-building resources to help young people better prepare themselves for their future in work.



-  WEBINARS
-  E-LEARNING
-  CAREER VLOGS
-  RESOURCES

With the generous support of RBC Foundation, we livestreamed webinars in English and in French on a variety of topics focused on building job-readiness skills, as well as exploring career alternatives. The project also created a series of Vlog profiles of people in different careers to give young viewers a better idea of the education requirements, daily routines, and opportunities for career growth across a variety of sectors and roles.

Finally, the project offered individual youth an opportunity to customize their learning experience and explore topics more fully through a series of asynchronous online learning modules such as identifying their marketable skills, creating their own resume, and developing their post-secondary plans. The project reached over 15,000 users through the various components in this first year. As well, Experiences Canada presented the project to high school teachers at a series of professional development workshops and confirmed that the series aligns extremely well with Career/Civics curriculum in BC, Ontario and Nova Scotia the only three provinces where such a course is offered. Now that the webinar series is completed, all recordings and supporting materials are being repackaged and will be made available through the Experiences Canada website as a teaching resource and independent learning program for schools and youth at home.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM ON ALLYSHIP



Between May 3-5, 2022 we welcomed our first group of travellers since March, 2020 to Winnipeg, Manitoba. We don't know who was more excited to be on the hug rug at Richardson International Airport – the youth participants or the staff of Experiences Canada.

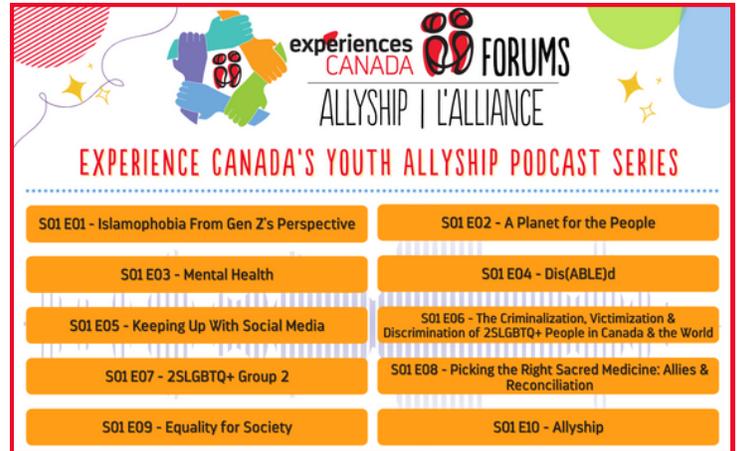


The youth worked hard to earn their spot at the national Forum. We had twice as many youth apply as we were able to register, and participants were required to complete a bimonthly series of seven online webinars and workshops held between January and April to be eligible to go to Winnipeg. Those online events introduced them to the topics of Islamophobia, Reconciliation, Mental Health, LGBTQ2+, Environmental Racism, Disability Justice, and Social Media. We partnered with 7 different organizations in the delivery of the content, creating discussion guides and activity plans for all the webinars and workshops. The archived recordings of the webinars and discussion guides will be made available for further educational use on our website.



Overall the webinar and workshop sessions maintained strong engagement among participants, with almost every episode running to time (or overtime) due to questions from the youth. Many commented on how much they learned from the sessions, and ignited an interest in finding ways they could do more to support communities when they returned home.

On the advice of our youth advisory council we decided to try a different culminating activity for the Forum and supported the youth in creating their own series of podcasts about what they had learned to share with other youth. The podcasts were recorded onsite in Winnipeg, then edited and are now available on all the major podcast platforms.



The Winnipeg Forum also featured an Opening Ukrainian Dinner followed by a Traditional Pipe Ceremony with Elder Parry Francois. Youth visited the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Qaumajuq, the new Inuit art centre at the WAG, Fort Whyte Alive to learn about the environmental impacts on urbanization, and they participated in a park clean up of Assinaboine Forest.

“ This forum was overall so informative and allowed me to be able to have discussions around topics that aren't necessarily common conversation in my household. I am really excited to be able to take what I have learned and educate others as well. ”

Regan Sentner, Prince Edward Island

The hybrid structure of the Forum is an innovation we will likely continue in the future. Having the youth get to know each other online only made it easier for the participants to forge friendships and get into deeper conversations with each other when they finally met in person.



VIRTUAL ART GALLERY

For the second year, we invited youth between the ages of 12- 25 to share their artistic skills in our Virtual Art Gallery. This year's theme was "Feels Like Home" encouraging artists to explore what home means to them. Over 150 youth participated with some of their work featured on the cover of this year's annual report.



We offered gift cards for art supplies to the top three entries in each category as selected by our panel of judges based on the technical and creative interpretation of the artwork itself, as well as their written description of the work. The success of this pilot project has led to the creation of a new virtual exchange module on Arts and Culture as another option for exchange groups to introduce themselves to each other. Work on a 2023 Virtual Art Gallery is just beginning.



“ This art gallery was an amazing opportunity to go back to what I love doing the most - painting! This was a truly memorable experience and thank you for that. ”

Ridima Pore, Virtual Art Gallery Participant



“ The theme, “Feels like home,” and the associated feelings of warmth and connection have helped anchor me over the past year while navigating all the transitions brought on by the global pandemic as well as heading off to university. Participating in this contest has allowed me to reflect and put into words what home means to me, and thinking about this and my artwork brings me a strong sense of comfort and encouragement. ”

Amelia Flynn, Virtual Art Gallery Participant



REPORT FROM THE CHAIR, AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE DAVID ROSS

On behalf of the Audit and Finance Committee of Experiences Canada, I am reporting the financial results for the 2021-22 fiscal year. This report is derived from our audited financial statements for the year ended August 31, 2022, which are available on our website or upon request.

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

The pandemic continued to bring significant challenges to our programming. We were still unable to connect youth in-person through reciprocal exchanges for a second program year. However, we delivered a virtual Youth Leadership Forum on Allyship from January to April, bringing 75 youth and youth leaders to Winnipeg in May to complete their program. We continued investing in the development of online programming including the Virtual Exchange program, a Virtual Choir, and a Virtual Art Contest. We also completed production of the Career Options webinars and online resources and hosted the Virtual Forum on Reconciliation in the Fall 2021.

While our annual budget remained significantly reduced from regular travel years, with the additional programming online our revenue increased by 2% at \$1.4 million compared to the previous year's revenue of \$1.38 million. However, we fell significantly short in covering the commensurate 14% increase in our net expenditures from last year, \$1.47 million to \$1.68 million. As a result, Experiences Canada again drew down on their reserves to cover the shortfall.

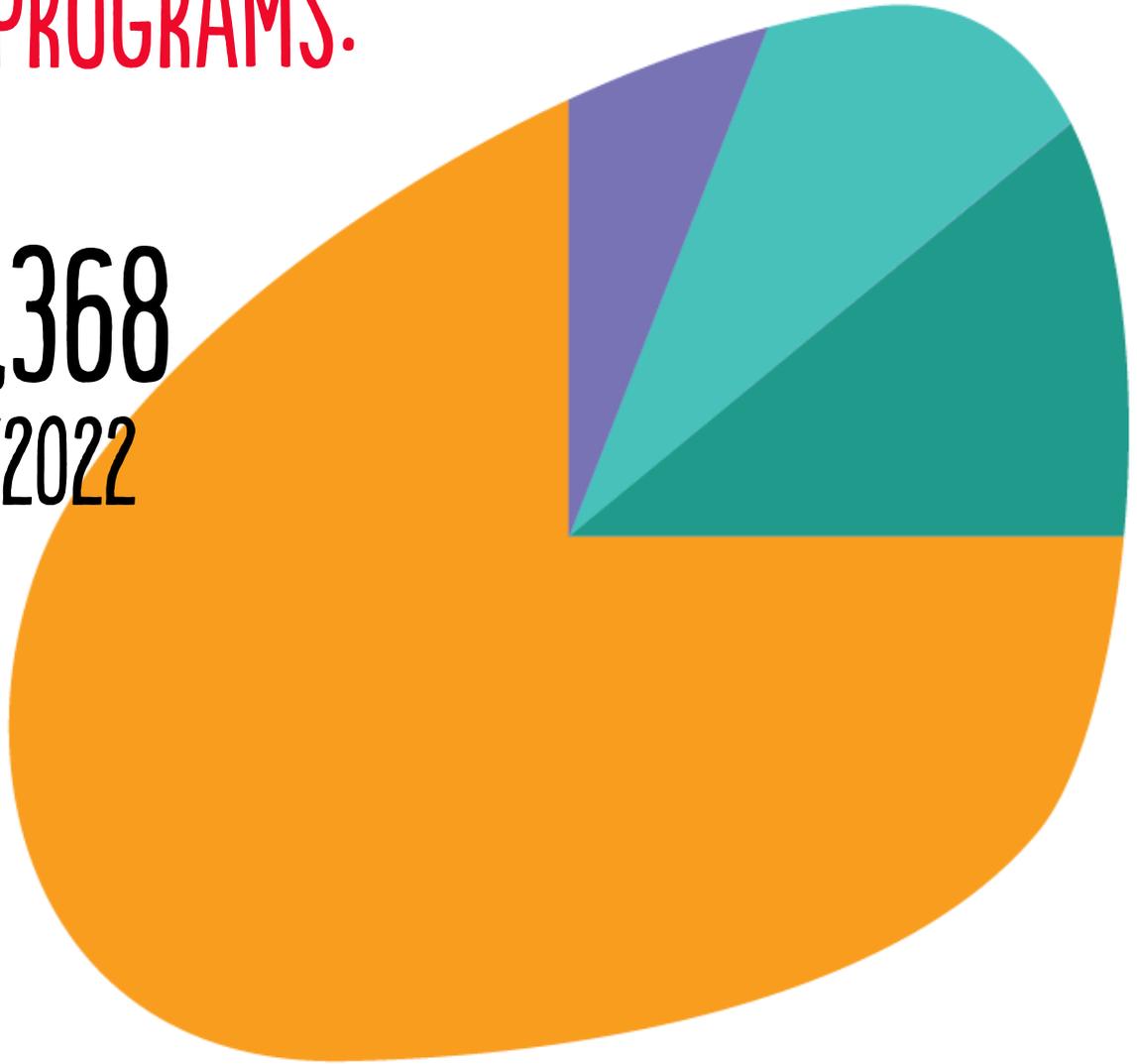
We wish to thank our individual contributors and funding partners for their generous support of this year's programs.

David Ross



INVESTMENT IN YOUTH PROGRAMS:

\$1,677,368
IN 2021/2022



81%

Youth Programming
\$1,357,587

10%

Program Delivery
Nat'l Coordination
\$164,283

6%

Corporate/Other
\$98,486

3%

Marketing/PR
\$57,012



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

We know youth are resilient, however the more we invest in getting them back on track the faster our pandemic recovery will be. Growing into yourself is not easy at the best of times. The pandemic has had profound impacts on youth, disrupting social routines and challenging youth who have often experienced isolation, boredom, and anxiety about what the future holds. Supporting young people to explore the broader world will help them regain ground in building personal skills, as well as restore confidence and optimism about their future. We could not accomplish our goals without the support, involvement and enthusiasm of our generous donors and partners. Thank you for investing in Canada's next generation of leaders and community builders!

We wish to extend our deepest appreciation to the following organizations and individuals who have contributed so generously.

- Eric Angen
- Stephanie Bakyta
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- S M Humphries
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- David McInnes
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- Starbank Developmentc 2148 Corp.
- Judith Sullivan-Corney
- Taking It Global

Canada



Foundation
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OF CANADA



R. Howard Webster Foundation
Fondation R. Howard Webster





SHAPE YOUR PATH



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



RECONCILIATION



CLIMATE CHANGE



THE DIGITAL WORLD

VIRTUAL FORUMS | FORUMS VIRTUELS

A comprehensive series of fun and engaging virtual forums designed to connect young people across the country and spur dialogue and learning in-line with curricula from grades 7-12 in STEM, social studies, language, and creative studies, as well as second language learning.

**STARTS ON
4TH
DECEMBER**

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE
INFORMATION, VISIT OUR WEBSITE:



WWW.FORUMS.EXPERIENCESCANADA.CA/

EXPERIENCE
OF A LIFETIME!



IN-PERSON EXCHANGES

Our reciprocal exchanges offer life-changing experiences, enabling youth to build personal skills and self-confidence; form new friendships; and inspire them to become more actively engaged in their communities.

WHY CHOOSE US:

- ✓ AFFORDABLE
- ✓ SAFE
- ✓ MEMORABLE



ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR
TRAVEL IN 2023!



WWW.EXPERIENCESCANADA.CA/EXCHANGES/

85
YEARS/ANS

experiences
CANADA



SEVEC | Visites Interprovinciales | Bilingual Exchange Secretariat

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

At a time when so much has been keeping us apart - you can bring us together!

Every youth should have the opportunity to participate in our programs. Your donation will remove barriers for youth who need additional financial support or resources. Let's help all Canadian youth regain their wonder, confidence and optimism about exploring the broader world around them.

WWW.EXPERIENCESCANADA.CA/DONATE/