

Citizen Shift: Global Citizenship and Future Skills Report

The Students Commission of Canada

**The Students
Commission
of Canada**
*Centre of Excellence for
Youth Engagement*



**La commission
des élèves du
Canada**
*Le centre d'excellence pour
l'engagement des jeunes*

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Team Summary

We came together in CitizenShift, eager to dive deeper into what it means to be a global citizen. As a team, we first set up some community guidelines framed through the **SCC's four pillars: respect, listen, understand, and communicate™**. Establishing these community guidelines built us a foundation of trust to be able to have difficult conversations about global citizenship without fear of judgment.

As a team, we participated in activities related to **employment, global citizenship, and mentorship**. These activities prompted group conversations on what barriers exist in fostering global citizenship. Some standout themes included **a need for community action, skill building, advocacy on a global scale, and mentorship**. In addition, each of us completed travel journals that walked us through the process of working abroad in another country. This helped us build skills in travel preparation, research, and global awareness.

In preparation for the #CWW showcase, we divided up efforts. Half of us worked on creating products to be shared at the roundtable portion of the event, while the other half worked on creating our speech to amplify the group's recommendations. For products, we created a mock-up website, in addition to a handful of skits that modeled the need for mentorship and third spaces. As for our recommendations, **we advocated for changes to be made to the curriculum to account for global issues, as well as to provide more hands-on work opportunities for young people**. We also pitched the creation of an online platform that would aggregate all opportunities for young people in one place. Finally, we requested more funding for third spaces for young people across Canada.

Working Towards Global Citizenship

Meet the Team: Global Citizenship and Future Skills

Our diverse group was comprised of 18 young people ages 14 to 25 from Yukon, Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, and Nunavut. Together, we explored **the role youth play in shaping the future through global citizenship and building future skills**. Collaborative discussions and activities encouraged us to **explore different cultures and build different skills to put our voices into action and be curious about others**. Many of us joined this theme team at this year's #CWW because we were interested in the topic and we wanted to learn more about the topic. We also joined the team because we wanted to share our stories about how we came to Canada. Yet, most importantly, we joined the team because **we wanted to make an impact in the world beyond our small little village**.

Themes: What Did Young People Discuss?

Community Building and Third Spaces

One of the main themes we explored during the week was community building and third spaces. We discussed that being a global citizen and developing future skills outside of school started in the community and in third spaces such as after school programs in other organizations. Some of us who identified as immigrants felt very welcomed in Canada and mentioned that we started building our community the moment we stepped foot in the country using immigration programs. One of us mentioned that people around them were welcoming when they arrived in Canada.

*“Develop a network, talk to people who feel the same about these issues.
There’s a strength in numbers.”*

– Youth participant

Yet, we also discussed that being part of a community and having access to third spaces was becoming more and more of a privilege for youth. Nowadays, we discussed how, as youth, we are not being reached in the spaces we actually are (i.e., school lunch programs), and **the number of third spaces is diminishing**. We mentioned how spaces like the #CanadaWeWant Conference helps us **build a community of passionate youth wanting to make change across the country and globally**. We think that creating a safe community with a lot of third spaces will increase the opportunities for youth to become global citizens

and the knowledge of what it is. We need to have more cultural celebrations locally to start learning and being more opened to other cultures. We need to develop our communities and start building global citizenship locally before we can expand to a more global approach.

“This has been one of the best weeks of my life. It highlights how good this conference was. I’ve never once in my life clicked with people the way I clicked with you guys. This was the first time I’ve done something like this, and I don’t want to leave.”

– Youth participant

“I feel even better about today than yesterday - which I didn't think was possible. Food was great, friendships are already strengthening, and I am going to hate saying goodbye to this place in a few days. Such a strong sense of community.”

– Youth participant

Mentorship

Our team discussed what the group wanted from mentors, with some just wanting guidance and others wanting someone who’s honest with them and they can relate to, and others finding value in both, among many other traits. We looked at the role of mentorship in becoming global citizens and developing future skills. We discussed how we would feel more prepared to navigate diverse environments if we had mentors that guide us, answer our questions, and help us understand the steps we need to take toward our goals. We benefit when mentors share their own experiences, communicate clearly, and show patience when we struggle to understand something. We also grow when mentors personalize their support, help us make plans, and introduce us to new people who expand our networks. When mentors diversify their own connections, give us honest feedback, and help us break down challenges, we gain confidence. Having someone who supports us and believes in us motivates us and makes us feel like we’re not alone.

“Mentors can make me feel more prepared through good communication and having patience when I’m not understanding what they’re communicating.”

– Youth participant

Our confidence in joining programs civic engagement programs varies, but many of us feel more comfortable when organizations and mentors communicate clearly and consistently. We appreciate when organizations and mentors share opportunities, celebrate our cultures, and encourage us to get involved, but we also feel they could improve how they

reach us. We want information shared through schools, announcements, lunchtime sessions, and verified social media accounts. **Some of us trust coaches or in-person messengers more than social media because online information can feel suspicious.** We're more likely to engage when outreach is clear, trustworthy, and easy to access.

“I want a mentor who can help support me on how to present my ideas and write them.”

– Youth participant

“Young people need support and help to get involved.”

– Youth participant

Skill Building

We see a wide range of experiences when it comes to careers, confidence, and skill-building. Some of us feel ready to build resumes, apply for jobs, or even juggle multiple roles at once. Others of us feel brand new to the job market, **especially when our schools offered very little preparation**, like when resume building was covered in a single class we happened to miss. While some of our schools provided full semester-long courses that helped us feel prepared, others offered programs that felt bland or not very useful. Overall, we feel somewhat prepared, but **many of us still want more support as we move toward our careers.**

“I will plan for a long-term career goal for myself. I got some ideas budding in me.”

– Youth participant

As a group, we discussed how when we volunteer, travel, or participate in cultural exchanges, we gain soft and transferable skills that strengthen our resumes. We learn new perspectives, build life experience, and meet people who expand our networks. These experiences make us more **open-minded, adaptable, confident, and responsible.** We also gain deeper knowledge about fields we want to work in and learn how to connect with people from different cultures. If we study abroad, like going on an exchange to France, we build language skills and learn to read body-language cues.

“Stay educated and have that willingness to learn, attend seminars, group discussions, anything hosted by your town.”

– Youth participant

We're drawn to traveling because it lets us explore new cultures, try new foods, gain independence, and see the difference between real life and what we see online. Programs like International Experiences Canada (IEC) or the #CanadaWeWant conference remind us to look for opportunities that help us build new skills and expand our worldviews. As a group, we're gaining valuable experience, but we also recognize **gaps in support and preparation**. We're learning through work, travel, and community involvement, yet many of us still want **more structured opportunities to build confidence and understand the job market**.

“[Conferences] really helped build my confidence.”

– Youth participant

Global Citizenship as Canadians

We talked about global citizenship as something much bigger than just belonging to one country. **We see ourselves as part of a worldwide community, where our actions can ripple far beyond our local surroundings**. Because the world is so interconnected, we recognize that what we do, what we say, what we create, and what we stand up for, can influence people across borders. When we share our beliefs, cultures, and ideas, we contribute to movements that often start with one person and grow into something much larger. We understand that cultures evolve, that similarities and differences both matter, and that bringing multiple perspectives together helps us imagine more sustainable futures.

“Being a global citizen is standing up for not just people in Canada, but for people all over the world.”

– Youth participant

We become global citizens when we take action and use our voices. Social media gives us a platform where something happening in one corner of the world can be amplified everywhere. We know that speaking up, making plans, and following through on them are all part of shaping change. We also recognize the responsibility that comes with this, like **avoiding misinformation and making sure what we share is accurate**.

We've seen how starting locally can grow into national or even global impact. When we advocate for something in our own communities, it can reach national news and spark wider conversations. Being a global citizen means caring not just about issues in Canada, but about people everywhere, staying informed, and being willing to learn through seminars, discussions, and online spaces.

“I will strive to work to make a difference. By acting, sharing, and learning I will help to make the Canada we want.”

– Youth participant

To reach the point where we can act meaningfully, we know we need certain qualities:

- We need to become more **social** and **engage** with others.
- We need **introspection** to understand our own biases and motivations.
- We need **bravery**, because speaking up takes courage and authenticity.
- We need **networks** - people who share our concerns and can help us build stronger ideas.
- We need to stay **open to feedback**, especially from perspectives different from our own, so we don't get stuck in an echo chamber.

Traveling helps us build these qualities. When we explore new cultures, reflect on our experiences, and learn from the world, we come back with skills and insights we can apply at home, whether that's in our communities or in our careers.

After we learn from the world, we think about how to bring those skills back into our lives in Canada. We start locally by using what we've learned to take action in our communities, advocate for change, and build careers that reflect our global awareness. **The journey begins with understanding the world, but it becomes real when we apply those lessons at home.**

“To make systemic change it's important to start locally. Exercise your rights, protest, and reach out to local newspapers. It only expands from there.”

– Youth participant

“I feel blessed to hear all these unique perspectives and experiences. Saddened by many of the sad event that have occurred in Canada's history and inspired to act and make a difference.”

– Youth participant

Team Products

Our Global CitizenShift theme team created a **website mockup** showcasing what global citizenship is all about. Through conversations and activities, we developed,

as a group, answers to questions such as “what is global citizenship?”, “how can you contribute?”, “in what ways can we deal with global citizenship?”, and “why is global citizenship important?”. This website mockup also explores how mentorship can support us in becoming better citizens of the world. It also thoughtfully explores the various paths youth can take to gain and grow some transferable skills. **This website mockup serves as a valuable resource for understanding the needs and aspirations of young people in their journey towards global citizenship and building transferable skills.**

Our team also create a short 2-minute video showcasing **the impact that conferences, such as the #CanadaWeWant Conference, where youth are truly given a seat at the table can change the course of someone’s life.** Through this funny and well thought out scenario, we illustrated the long terms impacts of attending conferences and **feeling heard and valued in third spaces.**

Youth Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Educate Youth on Global Issues

*Being a global citizen means moving beyond the national scale and becoming versed in what’s happening around the world. **We want Canadian youth to be given more opportunities to become educated on global issues.** This information could reach youth through school, social media, or news articles geared towards young people. **This creates awareness of global challenges, while also building the capacity for Canadian youth to thrive in a global economy.***

Recommendation 2: Implement Workforce Skill-Building into the Curriculum

*To create more opportunities for youth in Canada, we need to change the curriculum in our education system. **We are recommending an expansion of introductory career exploration courses to provide a more in-depth navigation of resume building, networking, interviewing, and other key workforce skills.** Beyond these career exploration courses, we are **recommending specialized elective courses.** These courses could be more specific to particular career paths, informing youth of steps for success, and the chance to get a better idea of if it's a path they want to take or not. If youth have improved access to employment opportunities, they'll have a greater and more equitable access to developing transferable skills and to start building their network.*

Recommendation 3: Novel Way of Displaying Job Listings

*We are recommending **more diverse and expansive ways of posting job listings, beyond websites like LinkedIn and Indeed.** Recruiting within schools, community centers, youth programs, and other spaces help reach youth not already getting easy access into the job market. **Working with mentors** could greatly benefit youth and give them opportunities to build skills and possibly work with organizations related to their passions.*

Recommendation 4: Create a Central Online Platform for Youth Opportunities

*We are recommending **an online platform that gathers all youth-oriented opportunities in one place, easy for youth to access.** This would increase their ability to engage with local and global issues, effectively building skills and their self-confidence. **Having these more accessible opportunities will help bridge the gap between the youth who have access to resource and those who don't.***

Recommendation 5: Increase Funding Towards Third Spaces

*We want **increased funding placed towards third spaces across Canada.** Third spaces such as the #CanadaWeWant conference allow youth the opportunity to build relationships and skills outside of their home and school. Local community centers can also help create spaces like this for youth. In addition, these **third spaces can serve as hubs for information, where youth can get direct access to opportunities they might qualify for.** There are*

*presently a lot of gaps Canada-wide, with some communities much further from youth-friendly opportunities than others, such as rural, remote and Northern communities. It's important to bare this in mind when delegating funds, as some areas may have a higher need than others. **Increased funding to every province and community will give all youth across Canada better access to these opportunities.***

Showcase Speech

Nous sommes les membres de l'équip thématique Citoyenneté 2.0 avec un focus sur la citoyenneté mondiale.

It is essential for young individuals in Canada to be knowledgeable and informed about global events, as this awareness provides the foundation for modern global citizenship in an interconnected environment. Being a global citizen involves recognizing that our local decisions from the products we choose to the policies we endorse resonate throughout international systems, affecting human rights, economic equity, and climate justice across different nations. Canadian youth who engage with complex topics such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) move beyond a passive sense of national identity and become proactive members of the "global community," characterized by empathy, analytical thinking, and a shared sense of responsibility. The current world order is undergoing a "tectonic shift" as we move through 2026. The era of a single dominant superpower is being replaced by a fragmented, multipolar landscape where economic nationalism, AI-driven competition, and shifting trade blocs (like the BRICS+ expansion) are the new normal. For Canadian youth, being uneducated about these changes is no longer just a "knowledge gap" it is a risk to their future stability. This understanding empowers them to challenge misinformation, appreciate the diversity of cultures that exist within Canada's multifaceted society, and participate in decision-making processes addressing global challenges such as climate change and systemic inequality. Supporting a knowledgeable youth ultimately ensures that Canada's future leaders are equipped to thrive in a global economy and are ethically driven to contribute towards fostering a more equitable, peaceful, and sustainable world for all.

*We need to change the curriculum in our education system, so that more work opportunities for youth will arise. If specialized elective courses are implemented, youth will have a better understanding of the career path they need to take and start networking in high school. **Les possibilités d'emploi pour les jeunes sont essentielles au développement de compétences transférables que vous pourrez mettre à profit tout au long de votre vie.***

*Without a job, how are young people supposed to gain expertise? **Une partie du problème réside dans le fait que les offres d'emploi ciblent les élèves, mais que les jeunes se voient souvent refuser ces postes, sans aucune explication. Sans compter que la recherche d'emploi est traditionnelle et dépassée.***

We need a new way of displaying job listings, such as being recruited through our schools and community centres by mentors who can help us recognize our soft skills and identify next steps- whether that includes shadowing or volunteering for organizations relating to your passions. We must reach youth where they are, because a lack of conversation does not mean lack of interest.

*Youth face many barriers that prevent them from being global citizens. We are asking for an online platform that gathers all youth leadership opportunities, conferences, and events in one place. **Il servira à mettre en avant les opportunités qui leur permettraient de s'attaquer à des problèmes tant au niveau local que mondial, ainsi que de développer leurs compétences et leur confiance en eux. Cela permettra d'offrir des opportunités aux jeunes qui ne sont pas encore impliqués et d'encourager les générations futures à devenir des citoyens du monde.***

*Establishing this resource, and similar programs will increase the number of youth able to create meaningful change. Being a global citizen can be daunting, therefore establishing these supports that youth can turn to is vital. **Cette tribune permettrait aux jeunes de partager leurs expériences, leurs points de vue et leurs recommandations, pour avoir d'impact significatif.***

By creating networks through which young citizens can make their voices heard, we ensure that the change we need is brought to fruition.

There's a lot of youth in Canada who don't know where to find information on employment or volunteer opportunities, and don't have access to third spaces like youth programs, sporting programs, or the Canada We Want conference.

Going to conferences can be intimidating and they might not have mentors who can inform them of opportunities like International Experience Canada. We are asking for funding for more community spaces for youth. Community centres give youth a space outside of home and school where they can build skills and widen their network.

They can serve as a hub for information, with opportunities, clubs, and committees being posted on bulletin boards. As someone from up North, it can be difficult not having access to very many opportunities. It's really important to prioritize youth with these

community centres because they are the future, and they need more resources to make the future we want.

En mettant en œuvre ces recommandations, nous pouvons garantir que les générations futures seront composées de citoyens du monde.

Once again, this was CitizenShift, and we hope you'll work with us to build the Canada We Want!