

Annual Report – 2025

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

Contents

Message from Leadership	3
2025 at a Glance	4
Organizational Overview	5
SCC Program Streams	5
Turning Knowledge Turning Knowledge into Action and Action	6
Lifting Up the Future	6
Knowledge in Action	7
Action into Knowledge	9
Strengthening the Network.....	11
Lifting Each Other Up.....	11
Experts in Youth Engagement.....	12
Collaboration across the Youth Sector	13
Expanding Opportunity and Access	14
A Collective Impact.....	14
Strengthening the Node.....	15
Internal Shifts.....	15
Investing in People.....	15
Financial.....	17
Thank You + Stay in Touch.....	18

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Message from Leadership

Dear SCC Community,

Lift up the future, the theme of our events in 2025, emerged directly from the voices of youth working with our team to design the #CanadaWeWant conference. At the Students Commission of Canada, we walk our talk: we centre what we do in youth voice. In 2025, we focused on spotlighting diverse pathways, turning knowledge into action, amplifying youth voice, and building spaces where young people can explore and shape their futures.

In 2025, we continued building our wide network working alongside youth serving organizations, educators, caregivers, and partners to create spaces where young people could connect, build skills, and see new possibilities for themselves. We saw the impact of our work at a broader level across the sector. Our expertise in youth engagement continued to grow and reach new audiences, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (CEYE), marking a significant milestone in advancing and sharing this knowledge.

Bringing people together remained a priority, with in-person gatherings creating space for connection, learning, and collaboration across the country. National initiatives such as Take Our Kids to Work Day and its Career Live option continued to expand, helping hundreds of thousands of young people explore future pathways and connect classroom learning to real-world experiences. Together, these efforts highlight how we are not only supporting young people directly, but also through expanding partnerships and collaborative action driving change and strengthening the capacity of youth-serving sector to meet youth needs.

Hearing and responding to the challenges young people are navigating today, we amplified their call for safer communities and smaller “third” spaces that created belonging and supported those effective spaces with research and evidence to continue their work, expanding youth access across Canada to skill development, healthy connections, and spaces to thrive in diverse ways with other peers and adults who were consistently described as listening, non-judgemental and caring. Our work helped not just ourselves, but others walking the same path meet youth where they are at and help them move forward with greater confidence.

Throughout it all, the Four Pillars, Respect, Listen, Understand, Communicate™ and our T.R.U.S.T. Framework guided how we worked. This report reflects a year of growth, learning, and connection. It shows what is possible when we work together and stay centred on youth voice.

With gratitude,



Sharif Mahdy

Sharif Mahdy
CEO, Students Commission of Canada



Brina Ludwig

Brina Ludwig Prout
Board Chair, Students Commission of Canada

2025 at a Glance

446,714



41,891

YOUTH ENGAGED

ADULTS ENGAGED

488,605

SCC Impact
Footprint

We also delivered...

233k views on our website

185+ reports

196 presentations/workshops/trainings

300+ Knowledge Mobilization Products
(ranging from infographics, videos, toolkits and
guides, data parties, proposals, performance
measurement evaluation plans, etc.)

137 social media posts on our various
platforms

Organizational Overview

The Students Commission of Canada (SCC) is an inter-generational national charitable organization founded in 1991. Our 10-year strategy, created in 2018 has a clear and intentional focus: 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 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.

This 10-year strategy is guided by three priorities that shape our work:

- Turning Knowledge into Action and Action into Knowledge
- Strengthening Others through Networking
- Strengthening Our Function as a Node in the Youth Thriving Web

These strategic priorities reflect our belief that young people are not only at the heart of the work—but are co-creators of the change we seek. They structure how we collaborate, learn, grow, and share with others working to amplify youth voice.

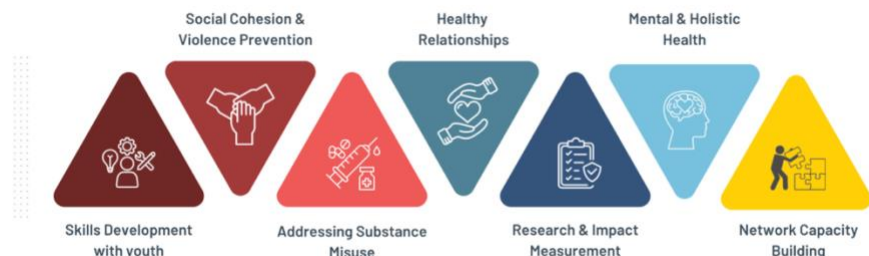
Our Four Pillars: Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate™

T.R.U.S.T. Framework: The SCC's Four Pillars provide the foundational overview of what the SCC Culture is. The T.R.U.S.T. Framework operationalizes these expectations in contributing to the SCC's social purpose.

- Take Initiative and be curious
- Reinforce a sense of community
- Uncover community boundaries
- Support healthy conflict management
- Thrive in the pursuit of excellence

SCC Program Streams

In 2025, we organized our programs in various streams based on the needs and concerns of young people; if youth are talking about it, chances are we have a program for it! These streams allow us to respond more intentionally to the diverse challenges that youth face. By grouping our programs in this way, we can better align resources, strengthen outcomes, and create more meaningful impact across communities.



Turning Knowledge into Action and Action into Knowledge

At the Students Commission of Canada, knowledge isn't something we keep on a shelf. It's something we live and move with, something we learn from, act on, and return to. It's in the stories young people share, the spaces we create, and the questions we ask together. In 2025, we continued to turn knowledge into action and action into knowledge. This dual commitment remains central to our organizational approach and reflects our conviction that youth voice, when valued, supported, and applied, can lead to meaningful, lasting change.

Lifting Up the Future

In 2025, young people continued to navigate a fast-changing world shaped by artificial intelligence, economic uncertainty, shifting opportunities and the pressures of transitioning into adulthood. Across our work, we heard a clear need for smaller, more intentional “third spaces” beyond school, home, and work - places where youth could build genuine connection, explore new pathways and imagine their futures with support from trusted adult allies. These spaces gave young people somewhere to land when existing systems did not fully meet their needs, creating room for belonging and possibility.

“The struggles many of us face as young Canadians: Lack of community support, no safe spaces, feelings of isolation, and systems that seem to work against us.”

– Youth participant

Our streams helped us create more intentional spaces, build ladder opportunities for diverse youth across the country and connect individual growth with broader social and systems change. We worked to deepen adult allyship and build capacity in the youth-serving sector, recognizing that young people were better supported when the systems around them were also learning, adapting and working collaboratively. We also invested in partnerships and community-building efforts that were deeply aligned with our long-term vision in lifting up youth's future.



Knowledge in Action

*Harvesting what youth know and
supporting them to act on it.*



Across our national conferences, long-standing programs, and local initiatives, we created opportunities for youth to identify pressing issues in their lives and communities—and to do something about them.

Through our national conferences, **#CanadaWeWant** and **Make Your Mark**, we brought young people together across geography, identity and lived experience. They explored complex topics and co-created recommendations for change, turning shared dialogue into work that could carry forward.

“For me, it's like, it's multiple cultures that gets entwined with each other in some way or type of form. We're all kind of the same. For example, Ramadan, they don't eat in the daytime, but we do. But if you think about it, at night, we both eat at the same time. That's what I find interesting. Like that all cultures can be in one building and smile, laugh, joking with each other, eat food together, talk about politics, talk about their home life, talk about everything, basically. That's what I like about it, that people can actually be people like, be actually kind-hearted to each other, not be rude or mean. It's a planet. I like it, how they do it here. I'm very appreciative that.”

— Youth participant



Beyond convening, we also curated national and cross-provincial spaces that responded to emerging crises, youth needs and the skills young people said they needed to lift up their futures. Through projects such as **Be the Program**, **the Art of Work**, and **Hearing Unheard Moments**, youth acquired skills to build healthier relationships, explored diverse employment pathways, navigated transitions into adulthood, held difficult conversations and created healthier spaces online and offline. These national initiatives strengthened collaboration across organizations and helped move youth concerns into shared action.

“Talking about challenges with others helped me see things from a new perspective.”

– Youth participant

At the community level, we helped youth voice move into local decision-making and community change. Through initiatives such as the **Building Safer Communities Program Vancouver** and the **Prince Albert Youth Group**, young people contributed to conversations about safety, belonging, services and opportunity in their own communities. In Prince Albert, youth met with local decision-makers, raised concerns, proposed changes and volunteered in the community. Their work helped open new pathways for youth civic engagement and created ongoing opportunities for young people to advise on community priorities with their cities.

“I feel like it's just a good place for people that, for example, don't have safe space at home.”

– Youth participant

Across our work, the different cohorts of **#CanadaWeWant Roster** served as a youth advisory backbone, helping us stay grounded in young people’s realities, priorities and ideas. Roster members brought their perspectives into program design, facilitation, decision-making and representation in key spaces. Their contributions strengthened our work and demonstrated that youth leadership was not a future goal. It was already happening in conference rooms, community spaces, project teams and conversations where decisions were being shaped.

What united these initiatives was the relational approach that made action possible. We created environments where young people felt seen, safe and supported enough to share honestly, try new things and support one another through difficult work. This trust helped turn youth knowledge into action that was practical, community-rooted and connected to the futures young people wanted to shape.

“There are too many young people who feel like their voices don’t matter, and I used to be one of them.”

– Youth participant





Action into Knowledge

*Transforming youth-led
work into learning for
the sector.*



As we supported youth in taking action, we also remained equally committed to capturing, analyzing and sharing the knowledge that emerged from these efforts. This ongoing learning loop is a defining feature of SCC's contribution to the youth sector: we don't just do the work—we also learn from it and help others learn as well.

Across 2025, we published findings in academic journals, including articles in the **Journal of the Commonwealth Council for Education Administration & Management**, **Qualitative Health Research**, and **Discover Public Health**. We contributed to national evaluation efforts and produced reports that synthesized insights across programs and communities. This work helped demonstrate what's working for youth across Canada. Through aggregate reports for two major youth-serving investment initiatives—the **Youth Opportunities Fund** at the Ontario Trillium Foundation, which supported grassroots and community-led projects in Ontario, and **Catapult Canada** at the Rideau Hall Foundation, which supported youth-serving organizations building stronger learning pathways across Canada—we mapped the outcomes of youth-serving organizations nationwide, showing how collective efforts were shaping a stronger ecosystem of support.

Project Dashboard

Welcome to the Project Dashboard, where you can create your own data collection links, monitor response rates, and view results in real-time.

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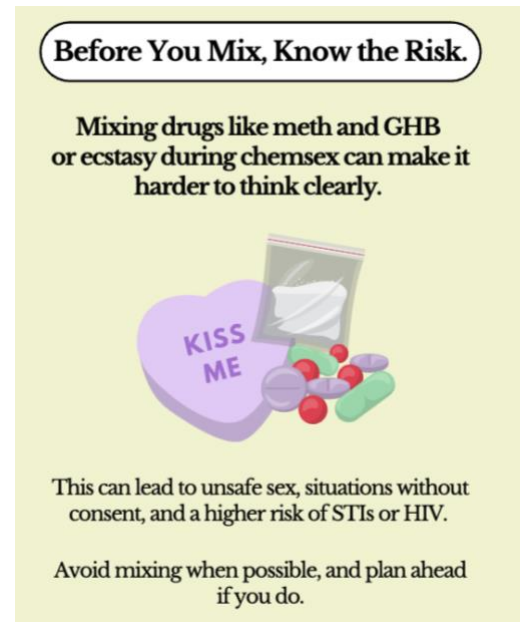
[Forgot Your Password?](#)

The strength of this knowledge work rested on a foundation we had been building for more than a decade through **Sharing the Stories**, our research and evaluation platform. Over the past 10+ years, Sharing the Stories helped us gather consistent youth voice data, support community reflection and strengthen evaluation practice across programs. In 2025, we built on that foundation by launching the **Project Dashboard**, a supplementary platform created in response to feedback from community partners. The dashboard gave subscribing users the ability to set up their own data collection links, share them with participants, monitor response rates and view results in real time using reliable and valid research and evaluation tools.

We also helped organizations turn youth voice and community knowledge into stronger strategies, programs and decisions. Through needs assessments, program reviews and youth engagement strategies, we supported organizations such as **Plan International Canada, Kids Help Phone, the National Indigenous Circle Against Family Violence, Pathways to Education Canada, and Trans Canada Trail**. This work helped partners listen more closely to young people, understand community needs and design next steps grounded in evidence and lived experience.

Apart from evaluation and strategy, we created a range of knowledge products that made learning easier to access, share and apply. We began sharing more learning through social media, translating key insights into shorter, more accessible formats that could reach youth, partners and communities. This work took different forms depending on the audience and purpose, from practical tools and campaign materials to resources designed for youth-facing conversations. One example was our work with the **Public Health Agency of Canada**, where we developed a series of harm reduction resources on concurrent polysubstance use for 2SLGBTQIA+ young adults. The resources included social media packages, posters and a zine, offering different ways for young people and communities to engage with the message and make informed decisions about health and substance use.

Ultimately, this work represents a **model of reciprocal learning**: youth take action based on what they know, and we—as an organization and as sector—learn from what they do. In 2025, this model allowed us to respond to urgent issues and to build a deeper, more connected understanding of youth realities across Canada.



Strengthening the Network

In 2025, we continued to *Lift Up the Future* by strengthening the ecosystem that surrounds young people, investing not only in youth themselves, but in the communities, relationships, and systems that help them thrive. By supporting youth-serving organizations, educators, caregivers, and mentoring adult allies, we helped build the collective capacity needed to create lasting, meaningful change. We know that lifting up the future requires more than direct support, it demands equipping the people and networks around youth with the tools, connections, and confidence to grow alongside them, creating a stronger, more connected path forward for everyone.



Lifting Each Other Up



Throughout the year, we saw meaningful growth in both sector capacity and collaboration. Through programs like **The Art of Work**, we created spaces where young people could build skills, form relationships, and begin to see themselves as part of a broader workforce and community. By bringing youth together with employers and mentors, we helped translate potential into opportunity. The Art of Work program played a central role in strengthening connections with over 65 youth participants, 40 employer partners, and more than 20 employment-focused workshops delivered. The program not only equipped young people with essential skills for the work force but also increased SCC's presence in communities and strengthened partnerships across the sector.

Importantly, The Art of Work served as a gateway, connecting youth to additional programs such as the **Make Your Mark Youth Conference**, **Be the Program**, **Hearing Unheard Moments (HUM)**, and **Against the Current Knowledge Exchange**. Our continued partnerships with organizations including **Kids Help Phone**, the **Government of British Columbia**, **Pathways Canada**, **Plan International**, and **Canadian Heritage** ensured that youth voices were amplified on key issues at a national level.

"This was lifechanging, at least for me. I got a new outlook on life. This is the first professional experience where I got to sit down with people my age and truly understand that I'm not alone in this, that there are other people going through similar things. I'm starting to see things differently, not even just work related. I'm not alone in this. If someone can take a bad situation and turn it into something good, then so can I. Ultimately, I want to emphasize how important it

is to connect with other people, especially people who are going through the same thing you are” - Youth participant, The Art of Work

Lifting up the future also means creating environments where young people feel safe, valued, and understood. In 2025, we worked alongside partners to address the complex challenges facing youth today, including social polarization and violence prevention, by fostering dialogue, building awareness, and strengthening community capacity through initiatives like **Hearing Unheard Moments (HUM)**. This initiative onboarded 10 national partners and supported 14 communities in addressing social polarization and violence prevention, while developing more than 35 resources to guide local implementation.

Additionally, **Be the Program**, our healthy relationships and teen dating violence program, provided in-depth programming to 230 youth across 24 sites and engaged schools and community partners in promoting positive relationship skills. Focus groups with 43 young men and boys explored positive masculinity, while Trauma-Informed Practice training with the Coaching Association of Canada further strengthened frontline capacity.



“We are thinking about how we can make this as safe as possible and as comfortable as possible and as nurturing as possible. Because we just don't know who's in the classroom. We don't know what these young people are carrying.” - Youth worker, Catapult



Experts in Youth Engagement

In 2025, we continued to strengthen and share knowledge on youth engagement at both the national and international levels and celebrated our **25th anniversary of the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (CEYE)**. We tracked the growing reach of our research on youth engagement, which is now referenced internationally including in Europe, South Africa, Japan, and even a rural community in Costa Rica. Our youth engagement framework has been applied in deeply meaningful ways, such as in a

remote Indigenous community in Nunavut where it has been recognized as a protective factor against youth suicide. This demonstrated that meaningful youth engagement is not bound by geography, it is a shared priority that resonates across cultures and communities.

Our expertise on youth engagement extended to public engagement, including 14 radio interviews on social cohesion. We also completed data collection, analysis and the draft of the **Second State of the Youth Report** for the federal government, **engaging 1,937 youth across 151 sessions nationwide**. These consultations provided critical insights into the realities young people face today, helping to inform future policy, programming, and advocacy efforts.



Collaboration across the Youth Sector

Collaboration remained at the heart of our work. Through in-person gatherings and knowledge-sharing events, we supported stronger connections across the youth-serving sector. The first in-person **Against the Current Knowledge Exchange** event brought together 140 attendees including academics, policymakers, youth workers, and researchers to exchange ideas and best practices. Similarly, the first **Catapult gathering** in Winnipeg convened partners from across the country to build capacity in program evaluation and learn from one another. Our support for Catapult Canada enabled grantees to better understand and articulate their impact, identify opportunities for growth, and strengthen their programming. By investing in evaluation and knowledge-sharing, we helped organizations advocate for resources and design more responsive services.



“The theme that's been carrying on is that as adults, it's kind of our responsibility to be there for kids and to educate them and to give them like a safe space and make sure they're understood and stuff like that.” - Youth worker, Catapult



Expanding Opportunity and Access

We remained committed to making career exploration and system navigation more accessible to all youth. **Take Our Kids to Work (TOKW) Day 2025** reached 386,271 students, alongside 920 workplaces, 1,123 educators, and 2,168 families across every province and territory. By connecting classroom learning with real-world experiences, TOKW helped youth see how their interests align with future opportunities and emerging industries. Through conversations, workplace visits, and real stories from professionals, youth gained clarity, confidence, and new ideas about what's possible.

Our virtual Career Live event further expanded access, bringing together 5,000 youth nationwide to engage directly with professionals. With 790 questions answered and 86% of participants finding the experience helpful, the event created an interactive and inclusive space for exploration.

"This was great I learned a lot, and I am so thankful being able to experience this. I am so excited to apply what I learned in my daily life and look forward to doing the things I have learned in my future. Thank you so much." - Youth attendee, TOKW Career Live



A Collective Impact

Taken together, these efforts represent far more than individual programs, they reflect SCC's role as a trusted bridge-builder within the youth-serving ecosystem, working every day to lift up the future. In a time marked by complexity and constrained resources, we supported organizations and communities to listen more deeply, collaborate more effectively, and communicate their impact with clarity and purpose. By strengthening connections and building capacity across the network, we are helping to create the conditions where young people can thrive. Lifting up the future means not only responding to today's challenges, but actively shaping a more inclusive, connected, and hopeful path ahead for the next generation.

*"I feel hopeful about a generation striving for change." - Youth participant,
#CanadaWeWant 2025*

Strengthening the Node

Lifting up the future starts with lifting up our own team. In 2025, we made space to turn inward and taking the time to reflect, realign, and reinvest in what makes the Students Commission of Canada strong. We focused on our people, knowing that the way we show up for each other shapes how we show up for young people and our partners. We strengthened our internal processes with more intention, creating clearer ways of working that support both our day-to-day work and our long-term sustainability. We also continued to build a culture where everyone leads in their own way. Our distributed leadership approach means that across the organization, people are stepping up, sharing responsibility, and contributing their strengths toward a shared goal.



Internal Shifts

In 2025, we introduced SCC Node Streams: Skills Development; Finance and Governance; Program Development and Fidelity; and Production, Tech & Innovation. These node streams brought more clarity and focus to our priorities. This was paired with a team restructuring that gave everyone clearer, more defined roles, helping us better understand how our work connects and where we each contribute. These changes helped break down silos between people and projects, creating a more collaborative environment where information and ideas move more freely.

We continued to lean into a shared, distributed leadership model where everyone leads something, making our work feel less hierarchical and more collective. As a result, we were able to collaborate more effectively and move forward with greater momentum.

We also saw meaningful growth in our digital presence, with increased engagement across our social media channels and website. At the same time, we began investing in new tools and infrastructure, including hardware to support emerging AI opportunities, ensuring we are not only strengthening how we work today, but also preparing for how we will work in the future.



Investing in People

Investing in people remained at the centre of our work. We strengthened our internal systems, supports, and practices to ensure our team feels valued, supported, and equipped to thrive.

Our annual January staff retreat brought the team together for training, collaboration, and shared learning, strengthening both our skills and our sense of community. We also remained committed to nurturing the next generation of leaders and professionals, welcoming early-career professionals



through Canada Summer Jobs placements and student internships. These experiences fostered intergenerational learning and brought fresh perspective into our work.

Together, these efforts reflect a simple belief that people do their best work when they feel respected, heard, and supported. By strengthening how we care for and invest in our team, we have deepened our capacity as an organization. We are moving forward with greater clarity and cohesion, continuing to build a strong foundation so we can create spaces where every young person is valued, heard, and supported to thrive.

Financial

REVENUES for the year ended December 31	2025	2024
Contributions	3,690,847	1,853,149
Fees for service	\$1,534,181	\$1,890,814
Public Health Agency of Canada	330,127	387,763
Conference	67,320	49,989
Interest and other	35,629	52,636
Total Revenues	\$ 5,658,104	\$ 4,234,351
EXPENSES for the year ended December 31	2025	2024
Personnel	\$2,528,270	\$2,359,806
Partnerships	1,050,050	11,750
Youth travel and accommodations	604,370	594,941
Art of Work youth employment placements	548,568	169,340
Program	332,599	756,010
Information technology	242,469	305,360
Professional fees	143,184	70,807
Occupancy	110,161	104,845
Office and general	31,400	30,480
Insurance	27,443	24,855
Telephone and internet	17,692	17,449
Total Expenses	\$5,636,206	\$4,445,645
NET ASSETS	2025	2024
Beginning of year	639,330	850,624
Excess of REVENUES over EXPENSES	\$21,898	\$(211,294)
Total end of year	\$ 661,228	\$ 639,330



Thank You + Stay in Touch

Stay connected with us in 2026.

[Donate to The Students Commission of Canada.](#)

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](#) 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, and Facebook!

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