



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*

Annual Report – 2024

The Students Commission of Canada

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada - Pilot Project

Northern Lights Development Fund

State of Youth Report

CIRA

Region of Waterloo
- Exploring Youth Wellness

City of Vancouver – Building Safer Communities Project

Springboard

Ontario Youth Justice Initiative

All My
Relations

#CanadaWeWant
Conference

Over the Influence

Youth In
Digital Spaces

Centre 23

British Columbia Ministry of Health Project

Plan International - Needs Assessment
and Community of Practice

PHAC Polysubstance Use
& Sexual and Gender Minorities

BGC Canada Evaluation

Pathways
Program Review

Adult Ally Network

#CanadaWeWant Youth Rosters

Canada Service Corps
Symposium

Be the Program

Hearing Unheard Moments

SIFT

Take Our Kids to Work Sharing the Stories

Make Your Mark
Conferences

Garden Root
Network

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Message from Leadership

Dear SCC Community,

Breaking Barriers, Transforming Communities, the theme of our events in 2024, 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 conversations marked by honesty, hope, and ambition, youth named the systems that need shifting and the role they are ready to play in building the Canada they want.

What began as a theme for our major events quickly became a reflection of our entire year. It shaped the way we responded to risks, deepened relationships, and stayed grounded in the voices of young people across the country. 2024 asked us to break barriers: to rethink how we strengthen the network, how we work as a node, and how we hold true to our purpose in uncertain times.

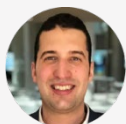
Rooted in our social purpose and long-standing commitment to working with youth, we adopted this theme as the foundation for our annual report. It reflects both the challenges we encountered and the community-driven transformations we witnessed and supported throughout the year.

This was also a year of hard choices. For the first time since 2018, the SCC Board of Directors and Leadership team decided to tap into the SCC reserve fund—not as a sign of instability, but as a strategic decision to sustain momentum, protect our partnerships, and remain responsive to the young people and communities we have been working with. We made this choice knowing that real transformation often requires us to step into discomfort and lead with trust. This investment paid off. As of the writing of this report, the SCC has confirmed several multi-year partnerships that will bring the SCC's revenue and expenses back into balance in 2025.

Throughout it all, the Four Pillars—Respect, Listen, Understand, Communicate™—and our T.R.U.S.T. Framework guided how we worked. We leaned into community, made space for healthy conflicts of ideas and stayed curious. These principles shaped our internal culture and external impact, allowing us to navigate uncertainty while deepening collaboration across communities.

This report is more than a record of our activities. It offers a look at how this purpose came to life in 2024 — a year marked by uncertainty, perseverance, and growth. As you read, we invite you to reflect on the many ways that youth, and those who walk alongside them, are breaking down barriers and shaping stronger, more inclusive communities.

With gratitude,



Sharif Mahdy

Sharif Mahdy
CEO, Students Commission of Canada



Brina Ludwig Prout

Brina Ludwig Prout
Board Chair, Students Commission of Canada

2024 at a Glance

488,541



6,576

YOUTH ENGAGED

ADULTS ENGAGED

495,117
SCC Impact
Footprint

We also delivered...

251k views on our website

203 reports

45 presentations/workshops/trainings

60 Knowledge Mobilization Products (ranging from infographics, videos, toolkits and guides, data parties, etc.)

100+ social media posts on our various platforms

Organizational Overview

The Students Commission of Canada (SCC) is an inter-generational national charitable organization. In 2018, we developed a 10-year strategy with 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.

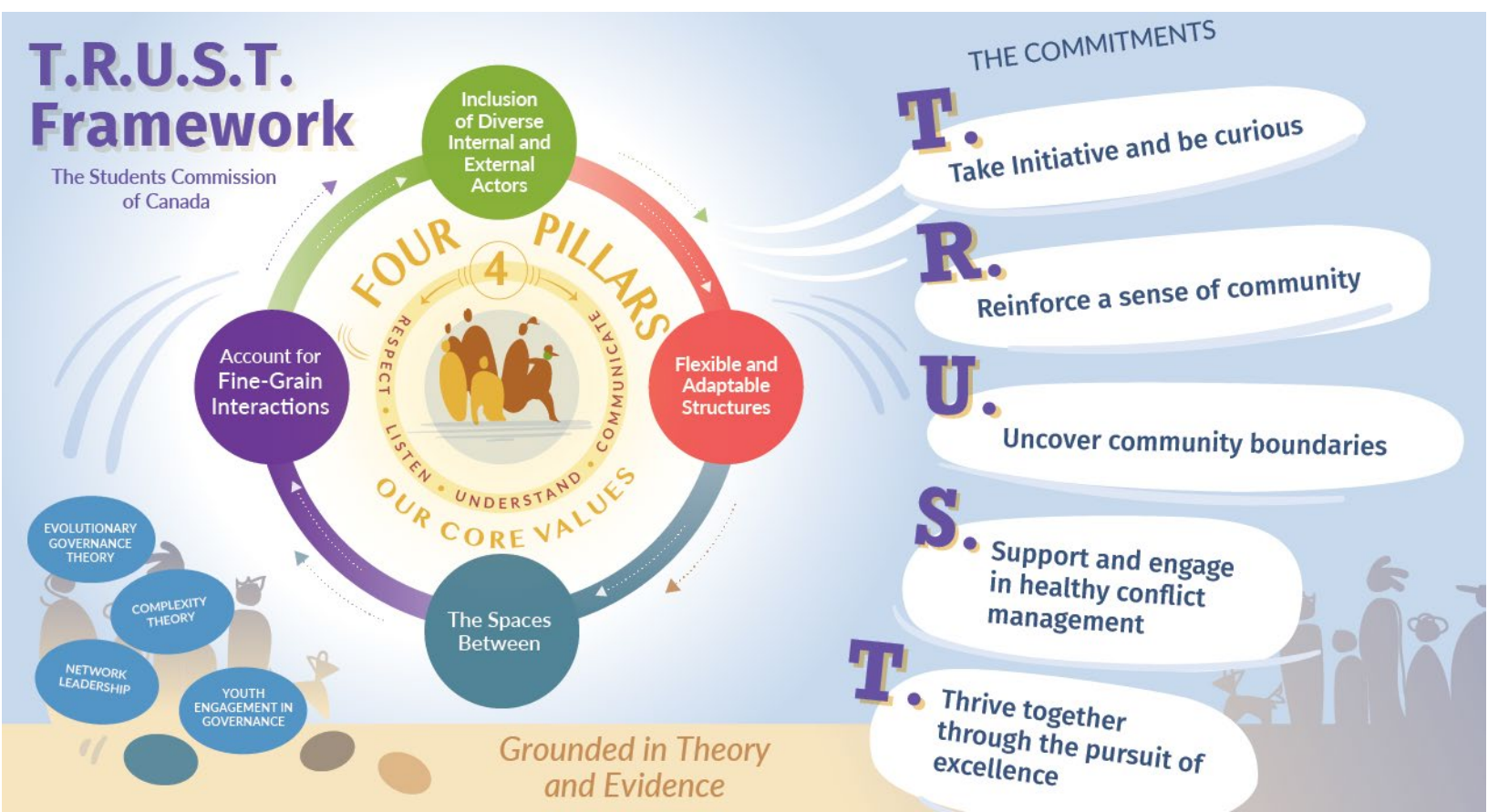
This 10-year strategy is guided by three priorities that shape our work:

- 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™

Our T.R.U.S.T. Framework complements the Four Pillars by identifying specific practical guidelines and expectations that enhance trust between youth, partners, volunteers and staff. It includes Five Commitments that support the conditions for trust to flourish and thrive.



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 2024, 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.

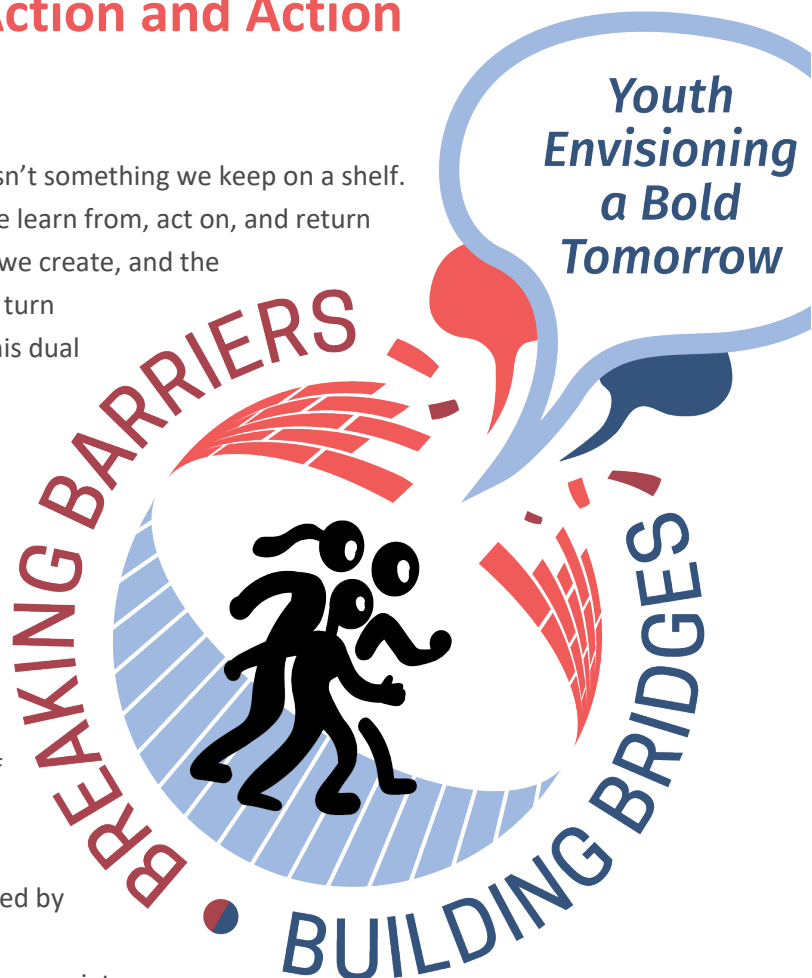
Breaking Barriers

We continued to observe the effects of the pandemic among youth, including increased social anxiety, difficulty with peer interactions, and signs of disconnection such as loneliness, intolerance, and a growing focus on individual needs over community wellbeing. These emerging patterns were often framed by what has been described nationally as a “loneliness epidemic.” This pointed to the need for reinforcing appropriate structure in our events and programs. We adapted accordingly, finding ways to incorporate clearer frameworks and supports into our events while maintaining the relationship-focused, responsive approach that makes our spaces feel safer.

Even through these complexities, we witnessed moments of profound connection. We brought together diverse youth across the country and created intentional spaces for belonging. We adapted our physical and cultural environments—such as adding quiet rooms and prayer spaces—leading to increased participation from underrepresented groups. And in doing so, we proved that it is possible to respond to young people's changing needs. We also invested time and effort in developing partnerships and engaging in community-building work that was not immediately funded, but that we believe is essential for long-term impact across the sector.

“I feel like it's really important to have a nice and safe environment for everyone, and it helps everyone feel like they belong.”

— Youth participant





Transforming Communities

Through Knowledge in Action

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



In 2024, SCC deepened its commitment to supporting young people as they translate their insights into meaningful action. 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.

Our conferences—**#CanadaWeWant**, **Make Your Mark**, and the **Canada Service Corps Symposium**—collectively engaged youth in structured, supportive environments where they could connect with peers, explore complex topics, and co-create recommendations for change. These convenings emphasized cultural identity, social issues, and leadership, offering a rare space where youth perspectives shaped the agenda and directly influenced national conversations. The diversity of voices and lived experiences represented at these events also underscored SCC’s unique ability to break down silos and bring young people together across lines of geography, identity, and experience.

“It’s just such a safe environment. And as someone who’s really passionate about advocacy, it’s like one of the only spots where I feel like and can be really honest and be upfront about it.”

— Youth participant

“It's all the cultures together. It feels kind of like a little family here because everyone's so kind to each other. They accept you and there's no judgment. And there's people wanting to learn about these other cultures, other different languages, or how things work in their culture. And everybody comes together, and everyone just gets along, and it's good. It's like a little family... It doesn't matter your differences or your ethnicity, you come together as just human beings.”

— Youth participant



Beyond convening, we supported youth in implementing what they learned. Through projects such as **Garden Root Network**, **SIFT**, and the launch of the **Sustainable Development Goals Community Project**, young people led initiatives that addressed both personal and collective well-being—tackling issues from climate and food security to mental health and intergenerational healing. These projects did not emerge in isolation. They were the result of years of listening and collaboration, where SCC staff helped youth move from insight to action.

“I feel really good and enlightened to learn so many different ways we can make the world a better and a more sustainable place to live.”

— Youth participant

A critical shift in 2024 was the growing leadership of young people in shaping and sustaining programs themselves. The **#CanadaWeWant Rosters** became a cornerstone of this shift, demonstrating how youth leadership can evolve from conference participation into national influence. After the success of the first cohort, which we extended for a second year, we onboarded a second cohort. Members of the Rosters facilitated sessions, advised on decisions, and co-represented their peers in key spaces. Their presence and credibility proved that young people are not only ready to lead—they are already doing so.

“I like how everyone is a leader here, it's different than other spaces I've been in, we all share leadership.”

— Youth participant



We also took on projects that responded to community-level crises. **Over the Influence** and **Before You Mix, Know the Risk** (in partnership with Public Health Agency of Canada) exemplified how youth can lead conversations on substance use prevention, especially in marginalized communities. Through peer-led education campaigns, accessible tools, and public-facing content, young people challenged stigma, expanded knowledge, and advocated for safety and care in ways that resonated with their realities.

“One of the best ways to reduce drug use is proper education about substances.”

— Youth participant

What unites these initiatives is not just action—but the relational approach that made them possible. Our work created spaces where youth could feel seen, safe, and supported. That trust enabled them to speak up, try new things, and support one another through difficult work. The results were projects that were effective and deeply rooted in community.

“I feel seen, heard, and understood. I am less lonely”

— Youth participant

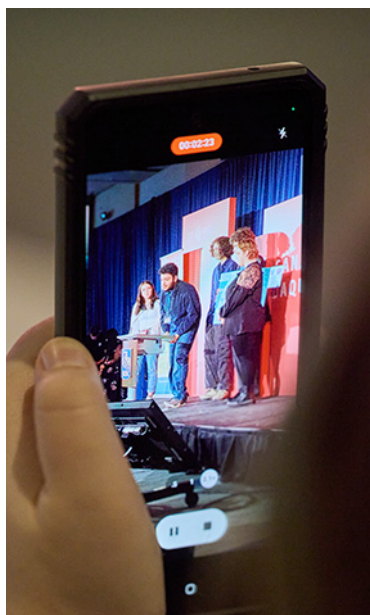
Through Action into Knowledge

*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 2024, we published findings in academic journals, including articles in the *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*, *Qualitative Health Research*, and a leadership-focused manuscript. We contributed to national evaluation efforts and produced reports that synthesized insights across programs and communities. This work helped demonstrate what's working—and what's not—for youth across Canada. Through two major aggregate reports, we mapped the outcomes of youth-serving organizations nationwide, showing how collective efforts are shaping a stronger ecosystem of support.



The strength of this knowledge work lies in its foundation: 10+ years of consistent youth voice data, community engagement, and reflection. Our **Sharing the Stories** platform remained a valuable source of insight for partners such as Kids Help Phone, who used our data to shape strategy and services. The refreshed **Youth Engagement Toolkit**, developed for the Joint Consortium on School Health, is another example of how we transformed years of youth-led work into practical guidance for others adapting to post-pandemic realities.

The launch of the **Second State of Youth Report** process for the federal government reflected our ability to translate lived experiences into systems-level input. Similar engagements allowed us to elevate youth voices into municipal, provincial and national policy spaces, with data collection methods grounded in inclusion, safety, and youth-led design.

Even in more challenging contexts—such as substance use and community violence—we committed to learning. As part of **Over the Influence**, young people reflected on their experiences and co-created tools that could inform peers and practitioners alike. Similarly, our work with the City of Vancouver and with the Ontario Youth Justice Division prioritized real-time data



collection and evaluation, ensuring that each community event became an opportunity for listening and adaptation. Through these projects, we could surface social- and system-level challenges and support the efforts to combat community violence and youth involvement with the justice system.



Ultimately, this work represents a **model of reciprocal learning**: youth take action based on what they know, and we—as an organization and as a sector—learn from what they do. In 2024, 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 2024, we continued our work to strengthen the broader ecosystem that surrounds young people—by supporting youth-serving organizations, mentoring adult allies, and championing initiatives that build capacity across communities. This strategic priority recognizes that sustainable impact comes from supporting young people directly and from equipping the people and systems around them to do better, together.



Breaking Barriers

This work unfolded against a backdrop of sector-wide strain. Delayed and uncertain funding decisions made it difficult for many of our partners—and for SCC itself—to plan and deliver with confidence. Ambitious engagement targets challenged us to expand our reach beyond established networks. At times, we faced the reality that our existing relationships weren't enough to access immediately every community or audience required by our initiatives. However, these constraints didn't halt progress; rather, they reinforced the need for careful, relational, and long-term investment in community.

In this context, we laid essential groundwork. Through slow and intentional relationship-building—especially with French-speaking partners and regional organizations—we expanded our network in meaningful and durable ways. These efforts strengthened participation in 2024 and are already yielding results in 2025.



Transforming Communities

Fostering capacity, connection, and collaboration across the youth-serving sector.

Our work to support others took many forms. Through partnerships with organizations such as **Springboard**, **Pathways to Education**, and **BGC Canada**, we offered evaluation services and youth engagement consultation that helped teams build stronger, more youth-centered programming. These collaborations were rooted in mutual learning: while we shared expertise, we also helped surface the grassroots insights that staff and youth at each site had been generating over time. The Pathways to Education Program Review, for example, mapped key challenges across program locations and celebrated the unique innovations that emerged in response—insights that informed Pathways Canada's strategic planning for the future.

We also contributed to the sector's shared understanding of what works—at scale. In 2024, with the **Youth Opportunities Fund**, we continued a 10-year journey of capturing how its projects shaped the lives of young people and what enabled their success. Similarly, our support for **Catapult Canada** helped multiple grantees reflect on their outcomes, share promising practices, and identify opportunities to deepen their impact.



“Our programs aren't just about education; they're about empowerment. It's about giving young people the tools to navigate a world that often overlooks their voices.”

— YOF Funded project's staff

Across these projects, we saw the ripple effects of investing in evaluation and knowledge-sharing. By helping others understand their own impact, we strengthened their ability to advocate for resources, improve services, and design more responsive programs. In some cases, we helped organizations create entire strategies for sustained collaboration—such as our work with **Plan**

International, where we conducted a national review and co-design process to build a Community of Practice model tailored to their needs.

We also continued to foster direct peer learning across the sector. The **Adult Ally Network** became a consistent space for monthly reflection, learning, and mutual support. With nearly 30 participants from across Canada, this network amplified promising practices in youth engagement and helped adult professionals shift their approaches in real time. Similarly, the second edition of **Be the Program** engaged youth and adult allies in addressing teen dating violence and it equipped delivery sites across the country with the tools and resources they need to make change in their own communities.

We remained committed to making career exploration and system navigation more accessible for youth. In 2024, **Take Our Kids to Work** celebrated its 30th anniversary with new tools and delivery models that made the event more inclusive than ever. We supported schools, workplaces, and families with resources that ensured every student could have a meaningful experience—regardless of background or location. A pilot program connecting youth directly with hosting employers added a new layer of opportunity and equity to this national tradition.

Finally, we worked alongside institutions to bring youth engagement into government processes. In partnership with the **Impact Assessment Agency of Canada**, we developed a comprehensive youth engagement toolkit and tested it through a pilot project. This initiative illustrated how federal systems can better include youth in environmental and



development decisions—setting a precedent for how structured youth participation can be embedded in national policy frameworks.

Taken together, these efforts represent more than just discrete projects. They reflect SCC’s role as a trusted bridge-builder, helping youth-serving organizations, systems, and communities better connect, understand, and support one another. In a time of limited resources and growing challenges, we helped others move forward with respect to listen, to understand and to communicate their impact and the changes they want to make.

Strengthening the Node

In 2024, we briefly turned inward with intention—to reflect, recalibrate, and reinvest in what makes the Students Commission of Canada a powerful contributor to the youth engagement sector. Our ability to influence systems, support others, and amplify youth voice depends on the strength of our own foundation. This year, we deepened that foundation by aligning more closely with our social purpose, strengthening our internal culture, and taking thoughtful steps to secure our future sustainability.



Breaking Barriers

Many of the pressures we witnessed across the youth sector—financial uncertainty, burnout, fragmentation—were mirrored within our own organization. The need to rebuild trust, reconnect to shared purpose, and shift from individual to collective mindsets was evident and necessary. At the same time, we saw these challenges as an opportunity: to clarify how we work, why we work the way we do, and what it takes to sustain an organization rooted in youth thriving.

We also embraced financial risk with strategy and care. Amid widespread funding instability in the sector, we made the decision to run a deficit—prioritizing people, continuity, and culture over short-term cuts. This investment paid off. We retained a strong, committed team and avoided disruption during a time when many organizations were forced to downsize or pivot drastically. Our team’s stability enabled us to move forward with confidence, build partnerships, and attract new opportunities that are coming to fruition in 2025.



Transforming Communities

Investing in internal systems, people, and purpose to enable long-term impact.

One of the most meaningful moments of the year came at the **January Staff Retreat** in Toronto. Beyond the professional development offered—including ASIST suicide prevention training—this retreat served as a turning point in re-establishing trust and openness within the team. Through difficult but

constructive conversations, we created space for vulnerability, resolved tensions, and laid the groundwork for healthier, more transparent communication moving forward.

We also implemented concrete strategies to support staff wellbeing and development. Our **T.R.U.S.T. Framework**, introduced in 2023, articulated shared principles for how we work with one another. We complemented this with conflict resolution training and individualized discussions around our Total Compensation Grid, including the launch of a new RRSP/TFSA matching program. Together, these initiatives reinforced our belief that people do their best work when they feel respected, listened to, understood and where we can communicate that support through fair compensation and an on-going shared learning community.

We continued to nurture early-career professionals through Canada Summer Jobs placements and student interns, creating intergenerational learning opportunities across teams. In May, we convened our **Centre of Excellence on Youth Engagement** for a strategic retreat that helped align our research and knowledge mobilization priorities for the year ahead with academics from universities across Canada who volunteer with us throughout the year in collaborative work. Finally, we celebrated a major milestone: the official launch of Version 7 of the **Sharing the Stories** Platform. This innovative version of our platform—years in the making—represents a leap forward in our capacity to support youth engagement and impact measurement at scale, positioning us to attract sustained funding and partnerships in the years to come.

Each of these efforts helped strengthen our role as a critical node in the youth thriving web. We emerged from 2024 with more clarity, cohesion, and capacity than we began with. More importantly, we did so without compromising our values. We invested in our people, our culture, and our systems, so we can continue to deliver on our mission—creating spaces where every young person is valued, heard, and supported to thrive.



Financial Summary

REVENUES for the year ended December 31	2024	2023
Fees for service	\$1,890,814	\$1,313,399
Contributions	1,853,149	2,313,449
Public Health Agency of Canada	387,763	1,030,220
Interest and other	52,636	57,602
Conference	49,989	69,120
Total Revenues	\$ 4,234,351	\$ 4,783,790
EXPENSES for the year ended December 31	2024	2023
Personnel	\$2,359,806	\$2,366,613
Program	756,010	828,318
Youth travel and accommodations	594,941	672,860
Information technology	305,360	216,743
Art of Work youth employment placements	169,340	393,587
Occupancy	104,845	96,480
Professional fees	70,807	37,394
Office and general	30,482	33,576
Insurance	24,855	24,316
Telephone and internet	17,449	17,590
Partnerships	11,750	94,443
Total Expenses	\$4,445,645	\$4,781,920
NET ASSETS	2024	2023
Beginning of year	850,624	848,754
Excess of REVENUES over EXPENSES	\$(211,294)	\$1,870
Total end of year	\$ 639,330	\$ 850,624

Thank You + Stay in Touch

Stay connected with us in 2025.

[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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