

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of the
Upcoming 2024 Federal Budget**

**By:
Young Canadians Roundtable on Health**



Recommendation 1: Implement long-term, sustainable funding to non-profit youth-led organizations and charities to allow autonomy for grassroots, community organizations with expertise in their fields.

Recommendation 2: Decrease student debt through targeted programs.

Recommendation 3: Revisit the Canada Youth Policy to develop actionable steps for each Ministry to engage with children and youth in all decision-making processes.

Recommendation 1: Implement long-term, sustainable funding to non-profit organizations and charities to allow autonomy for grassroots, community organizations with expertise in their fields.

- Increase the availability and eligibility of small and medium-sized funding for non-profit organizations that work nationally.
 - Non-profit youth-led organizations and charities are crucial in actively empowering children and young people to participate in their communities.
 - These organizations amplify youth voices, leadership, and engagement, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.¹
 - Non-profit youth-led organizations contribute to the overall development of communities and address local concerns and needs that might otherwise be overlooked.²
 - Many issues and challenges young people face require specialized attention and tailored solutions. By providing funding to youth-led organizations, we ensure that these organizations can focus on addressing issues that directly impact their peers and set the foundation for their life course.³
- Increase the availability of core funding not tethered to specific funding calls.
 - Focusing funding on only a few select issues inadvertently leads to neglecting other significant concerns children and youth have in their lives and communities.⁴
 - Narrow funding criteria can exclude certain groups or organizations that do not fit within predefined parameters or have ideas to increase the health of children and youth that do not fit within the narrow boundaries.⁵
 - ⁶Broad funding prevents the marginalization of deserving organizations that might not fit specific criteria but still have valuable contributions to make.

¹ Hsu, P-J., (2023). Explore the Power of Children: Understanding Nonprofit Organization's Roles in Reinforcing Youth Character Education. University of San Francisco's Master's Projects and Capstones, 1537.

² Allahwala, A., Bhatia, A. (2022). Supporting youth-led community geography on the impacts of neighbourhood social infrastructure on young people's lives: a case study from East Scarborough, Canada. *GeoJournal* 87 (Suppl 2), p 329–342.

³ United Nations. (2018). Full Participation of Youth in Decision-making Key to Shaping Brighter Future for All, Social Development Commission Hears as General Debate Continues. Commission for Social Development. Retrieved August 1, 2023 from: <https://press.un.org/en/2018/soc4860.doc.htm>

⁴ Imagine Canada. (2022). Funders' Perspectives on Unrestricted Funding in Canada. Report. Retrieved August 1, 2023 from: https://www.imaginecanada.ca/sites/default/files/2022-05/Trust-%26-Impact-Funders-Perspectives-on-Unrestricted-Funding-report_0.pdf

⁵ Gregory, A. G., & Howard, D. (2009). The Nonprofit Starvation Cycle. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 7(4), 49–53.

⁶ Stasio, C. (2022). Why Unrestricted Funds Are Important for Nonprofits. World Institute on Disability. Retrieved August 1, 2023 from: <https://wid.org/why-unrestricted-funds-are-important-for-nonprofits/>

- Youth-led organizations often bring fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to societal challenges; we are more likely to think creatively and develop new approaches to address complex issues, which can lead to more effective and sustainable solutions.^{7 8}
- Expand funding for the hiring of youth in non-profit and charity sectors.
 - Hiring youth within these sectors ensures that the voices, perspectives, and needs of young people are directly represented and integrated into decision-making processes.⁹
 - When youth are involved in community projects, it promotes a sense of belonging, strengthens social cohesion, and leads to positive change.¹⁰
 - Funding to a wide range of youth organizations cultivates a pool of young leaders with diverse skill sets, experiences, and expertise; this fosters leadership development and prepares a generation of youth to take on significant roles in society.¹¹
 - Investing in youth employment contributes to the long-term sustainability of non-profit and charity organizations.¹²

⁷ Kleibeuker, S.W., De Dreu, C.K., Crone, E.A.. (2013). The development of creative cognition across adolescence: distinct trajectories for insight and divergent thinking. *Developmental Science*, 16(1), p 2-12.

⁸ Stevenson, C.E., Kleibeuker, S.W., de Dreu, C.K., Crone, E.A.. (2014). Training creative cognition: adolescence as a flexible period for improving creativity. *Front Human Neuroscience*, 8(1), p 827.

⁹ Watson, D., Mhlaba, M., Molelekeng, G. et al. (2023). How do we best engage young people in decision-making about their health? A scoping review of deliberative priority setting methods. *International Journal of Equity in Health* 22(17).

¹⁰ Abdelaal, N., Kemeni, C., & Bardeesy, K. (2022). "Knocking on the Door": Youth Civic Engagement and Its Impacts on Social Connectedness and Wellness. TMU. Retrieved August 1, 2023 from: <https://www.ryersonleadlab.com/youth-civic-engagement>

¹¹ Larson, R.W. & Angus, R.M.. (2011). Adolescents' Development of Skills for Agency in Youth Programs: Learning to Think Strategically. *Child Development*, 82, p 277-294.

¹² Government of Canada. (2022). 13 Ways to modernize youth employment in Canada – Strategies for a new world of work. Report. Retrieved August 1, 2023 from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/youth-expert-panel/report-modern-strategies-youth-employment.html>

Recommendation 2: Decrease student debt through targeted programs.

- Increase the income threshold for eligibility for the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program (grants and loans).
 - A higher income threshold makes post-secondary education more accessible to students from middle-income families who still struggle to afford the wildly rising tuition and living costs.
 - Financial assistance has not increased at the same rate as inflation or tuition costs, leaving many students with higher debt upon graduating or preventing the continuation of their studies.¹³
 - Average undergraduate tuition fees for full-time domestic students have risen almost double what they would be if tuition rates grew proportionally with inflation.
 - A higher income threshold allows more students to qualify for grants and loans, reducing their reliance on personal savings, part-time work, or high-interest loans to fund their education, significantly lowering the burden of student debt and the long-term financial stress it may impose.
 - Increasing financial assistance eligibility reduces the need for students to work long hours during their studies, allowing them to focus on their academic pursuits and overall physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional well-being.¹⁴
 - Expanding access to financial assistance levels the playing field and enables students from a broader range of economic backgrounds to pursue higher education, leading to increased social mobility, better health, increased likelihood for home ownership, and increased community-wellbeing.¹⁵
- Increase the availability and amount of grants/bursaries available through financial assistance programs for first-generation students.
 - Grants and bursaries for first-generation students alleviate financial stress and reduce the debt burden.
 - First-generation students often face unique challenges and barriers in accessing post-secondary education due to a lack of familial experience

¹³ Galarneau, D. & Gibson, L. (2020). Trends in student debt of postsecondary graduates in Canada: Results from the National Graduates Survey, 2018. Insights on Canadian Society: Statistics Canada. Retrieved August 1, 2023 from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2020001/article/00005-eng.htm>

¹⁴ Fletcher, C., Cornett, A., Webster, J., & Ashton, B. (2023). Student Financial Wellness Survey: Fall 2022 Semester Results. Trellis Research National Aggregate Report. Retrieved August 1, 2023 from: https://www.trelliscompany.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/SFWS-Aggregate-Report_FALL-2022.pdf

¹⁵ Deller S, Parr J. (2021). Does Student Loan Debt Hinder Community Well-Being? International Journal of Community Wellbeing, 4(2), p 263-285.

and guidance, and often these students come from low-income backgrounds.

- These graduates are the most likely to carry debt three years after graduation (29% had repaid their student debt fully), compared to students from households where one or more parents completed college or university (68% had repaid their student debt fully).¹⁶
- Create targeted debt relief for students in health disciplines.
 - Graduates of health and related studies programs are among the most likely to have student debt at graduation (58% of students) and have the most significant debt burden at each level of study.¹⁶
 - The debt professional degree students (such as doctors) take on has increased by nearly \$1000 yearly for the last twenty-five years, with over 85% of graduates from professional programs having large amounts of debt after graduation. ¹⁶

¹⁶ Galarnau, D. & Gibson, L. (2020). Trends in student debt of postsecondary graduates in Canada: Results from the National Graduates Survey, 2018. Insights on Canadian Society: Statistics Canada. Retrieved August 1, 2023 from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2020001/article/00005-eng.htm>

Recommendation 3: Revisit the Canada Youth Policy to develop actionable steps for each Ministry to engage with children and youth in all decision-making processes.

- Each ministry must develop and implement steps during decision-making processes to ensure adequate consultation of children and youth.
 - Ministries must follow precise guidelines when any new policy change or decision occurs.
 - Since children and youth cannot vote for those they believe will best represent their interests, the government must conduct consultations for all decisions due to their potential impact on their lives today or in the future.
- Create a National Child Health Officer position within the government,
 - This position can only be held by a youth aged 18-32, allowing for a youth voice to be available in the government regardless of who is elected.
 - Sit within the Ministry of Families, Children, and Social Development and act as the direct liaison for youth in this Ministry.
- Involve child and youth organizations in decision-making that impacts the health and well-being of children and youth in Canada by creating an ongoing grassroots Advisory committee.



About the YCRH

The Young Canadians Roundtable on Health (YCRH) was created in 2013 based on one of the recommendations in The Sandbox Project's founding report, "Reaching for the Top." The recommendation focused on creating a national advisory of youth (15-32) leaders to participate in child and youth health decision-making. The YCRH collaborates with industry, government, research, health practitioners, and families. The YCRH's activities happen across Canada, bringing together as many youth perspectives as possible. The YCRH operates in a unique model within the frame of the Sandbox Project while being youth-run and youth-led. The majority of our roundtable are volunteers. Working in close partnership with The Sandbox Project staff, YCRH leadership has the authority to make decisions and coordinate youth health projects independent of Sandbox approval. The YCRH gets its administrative and logistical support from the staff at the Sandbox office, and The Sandbox Project has responsibility for the legal and administrative obligations of the YCRH.

As a group, the YCRH dedicates itself to enhancing the health and well-being of children and youth across Canada. The objectives of the YCRH are as follows:

- To be **Canada's strong youth voice** in issues relating to child and youth health
- To create opportunities to **support and educate Canadian youth** to improve the quality of health in youth across the country
- To develop new relationships with people and organizations involved in **child and youth health issues**
- To generate **national awareness of youth health** initiatives
- Collaborate with partners to advance equity and **inclusion in child and youth-related research** and programs

Contact Information

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