



Summary of Recommendations

1

Building an Inclusive Society

1.1

Make meaningful progress towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. This would require immediate action to implement the 94 Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Report and the 231 Calls to Justice in the Report for the National Inquiry Report into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. All sectors in society can contribute to this goal by identifying which of the Calls to Action and Calls to Justice could be addressed in their organizations, developing implementation plans, taking actions, and reporting on progress.

1.2

Create an Anti-Racism Act for Canada that gives a legislative foundation for the Anti-Racism Secretariat, which will receive ongoing, sustainable funding and resourcing. Ensure the Anti-Racism Act will name and address all forms of racism including anti-Arab racism, anti-Asian racism, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia, anti-Latinx racism, and antisemitism. Furthermore, develop and implement a National Action Plan Against Racism to accompany the national Anti-Racism Strategy, ensuring concrete strategies with actionable goals, expansion of disaggregated data that transitions away from the use of visible minorities to racialized identities with measurable targets, and timetables, and appropriate budgetary allocations.

1.3

Ensure community-based grassroots, non-profits, and charitable organizations that serve and represent marginalized communities can survive the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes providing predictable, stable and core funding for organizations led by and providing services to the 2SLGBTQIAA+ community, on reserve and urban Indigenous communities, people with disabilities, Black communities and other racialized groups, as well as women and gender-diverse people. Funding should also be made available to support ongoing efforts to support diversity, equity, and social inclusion on an organizational and structural level.

1.4

Advance public policy for recovery benefits for people living with disabilities and disability-related income support, such as the Canada Disability Benefit, which is grounded in the experiences of people living with or have lived with disability-related income supports.

1.5

Strengthen the federal Employment Equity Act by including protection on the basis of racialized identity, noting the specific impacts on Black and Indigenous communities. Ensure protection on the basis of gender expression, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

1.6

Attach employment equity measures through community benefits agreements on all federal investment and recovery programs, to ensure Black, Indigenous, racialized communities, 2SLGBTQIAA+ communities, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups have equitable access to any new jobs created.

2

Promoting Meaningful Employment

2.1

Evolve the Canada Summer Jobs Program to a Canada Youth Jobs Program. This could be achieved by making the program flexibilities implemented in response to COVID-19 permanent, including offering job placements with adequate compensation for young people aged 15 to 30, year-round.

2.2

Increase funding for the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy and ensure youth have access to high-quality jobs and are prepared for jobs of the future. As part of this, support initiatives and innovative pilots that provide young people with on-the-job experience, as well as pre-employment and training supports, and access to wrap-around services (i.e., access to mental health support, transportation, and child care). This should also include targeted funding and dedicated programs to support youth experiencing additional, and unique barriers and marginalization in the labour market, such as: young women and gender-diverse youth; Black, Indigenous, and racialized youth; youth living with disabilities; and newcomer youth.

2.3

Incorporate youth recruitment initiatives in national and sub-national workforce strategies. For instance, for sectors experiencing a significant labour shortage such as the early learning and childhood sector, initiatives to recruit and retain young people in these critical jobs, such as Early Childhood Educators, should be included and funded as part of comprehensive workforce strategies.

2.4

Explore establishing an employment and training Youth Guarantee policy for Canada. This would include a guarantee that all young people in Canada 30 years old and under are provided with a quality offer of employment or education and training within 16 weeks of leaving their job or schooling.

2.5

Lower the uniform national eligibility requirement of Employment Insurance to 360 hours and increase the benefit rate from 55% to 85% of earnings for low-income earners.

3

Ensuring Housing for All

3.1

Commit to eliminating chronic homelessness in Canada and provide appropriate resourcing to support community-based organizations and other entities delivering prevention, rehabilitation, and transitional housing programming, services and supports.

3.2

Ensure the 33% carve out for gender-responsive investments in the National Housing Strategy is fully rolled out and there is a public accounting of how funds were allocated, as well as provide local housing authorities directions and a mandate on investing through a gender-responsive lens.

3.3

Rapidly update existing and build new safe and secure housing for young people across the continuum. This includes high-quality transitional, permanent, supportive, and affordable housing (such as non-profit and co-operative) units which includes building at least 100,000 units of social housing and 500,000 units of non-market, co-op, and non-profit housing within 10 years. For young people with complex needs, wrap-around services should be accessible and adequately resourced as part of housing.

3.4

Implement an urban, rural, and Northern Indigenous housing strategy. The strategy should contain both dedicated investments and an Indigenous-led governance structure. It should also have an explicit focus on the housing needs of Indigenous youth.

3.5

Expand the temporary rental assistance for low-income households with a dedicated carve out for young people experiencing a core housing need with an explicit focus on young cis- and trans women, and gender diverse youth.

3.6

Explore co-benefit programs that pair improvements and expansions of the non-market and market housing stock in Canada alongside measures to increase youth employment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from housing through the implementation of energy efficiency retrofits.

4

Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

4.1

Establish and invest in a Youth Mental Health Recovery Plan with clearly defined goals. Design the strategy with input from young people and focus on targeted investments and interventions that promote positive mental health and wellbeing for young people in Canada as part of Canada's COVID-19 recovery.

4.2

Expand mental health funding and increase capacity for community organizations to provide mental health and wellness programs and services to young people. This includes increased funding to allow youth-serving community organizations to innovate and expand existing programs that support positive mental health outcomes for young people. Provide dedicated funding to increase availability of community or culturally specific mental health supports for young people that recognizes historical and systemic oppression faced by Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIAA+, and marginalized communities.

4.3

Integrate mental health service funding in other programs and services. Eliminate siloed grants and invest in mental health as a wrap-around service in areas such as housing programs, employment services, and settlement services. This would better support the complex needs and challenges of all young people.

4.4

Provide access to funding to support the delivery of mental health first aid training for Canadian employers and service providers that work with young people.

5

Investing in Youth Leadership

5.1

Expand the leadership role of the Prime Minister's Youth Council to support a youth pandemic recovery response for Canada. These efforts would include providing public perspectives and recommendations to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and ensure a generational lens is applied to decision-making and promote broad awareness and government accountability. Ongoing efforts should also be made to ensure the Council is composed of youth up to the age of 30, with cross-sectoral intersectional representation from all regions of Canada and inclusive of young people with a diversity of lived experiences. Finally, the application process should be evaluated regularly to identify and address barriers for harder to reach youth.

5.2

Establish a fund to invest in youth-led initiatives for post-pandemic recovery. As part of Canadian Heritage, the fund would be accessible to grassroots groups, established youth-led and youth-serving charities and non-profits to invest in youth-led projects focused on pandemic recovery.

5.3

Ensure active engagement by the Taskforce on Women in the Economy with young cis- and trans women and gender-diverse youth between the ages of 18 to 30 to ensure their perspectives are considered in the development of recommendations.

5.4

Include a child and youth wellbeing section in the Government of Canada's Quality of Life Framework for Federal Budget with key developmental indicators to track progress and build on the foundation of existing indexes within Canada and globally. Ensure the key performance indicators are aligned with what is reported in the Government of Canada's State of Youth reports.

5.5

For Canada's Youth Policy, embed key performance indicators in future State of Youth reports that track key developmental indicators such as the NEET rate, youth employment, and the proportion of young people working in full-time stable employment that is permanent and with benefits. Furthermore, reduce the timeframe for reporting from every four years to every two years.

6

Supporting the Youth-Serving Sector

6.1

Ensure youth-serving organizations can recover and adapt for the future. Introduce and expand financial support and stable core funding that helps organizations bridge through the next 18 months and implement modernization initiatives that promote resilience. Stable and predictable funding will address financial precarity in the sector, which has historically led to negative consequences such as time-limited programs or high turnover within the sector.

6.2

Increase synergies between government, the youth sector, and the private sector to respond to the needs of young people in a sustainable way. Engage the youth sector, which has a wide reach and understands the unique challenges and needs of young people, in decision making and program design. This will help to ensure policy and programs are accessible for youth-serving organizations and help young people recover from COVID-19.