



The Students  
Commission  
Centre of Excellence for  
Youth Engagement



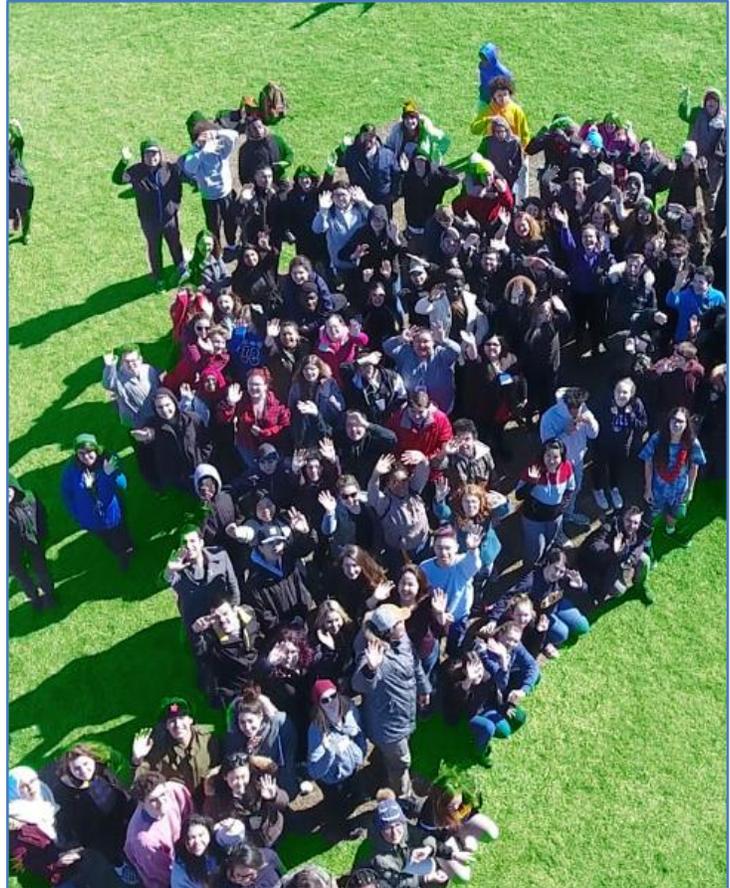
# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN CANADA

APRIL 2018

Children and youth across Canada have been engaged in discussions about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) since September 2017. The three core objectives for this engagement process were:

1. To provide children and youth with the opportunity to increase their awareness on the UNCRC;
2. Provide children and youth with the opportunity to share their perspectives /voices on children's rights and on important issues facing children in Canada; and
3. To inform Canada's 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> periodic report on the UNCRC in July 2018.

This report is the culmination of these activities and reflects children and youth's perspectives on the UNCRC. It is our hope that this report will be a call to action to all adults and governments across Canada to ensure that all children and youth in Canada know their rights and can see them exercised.



Delegates from the #CanadaWeWant Conference

## SUMMARY

More than 500 Canadian children and youth under 18 from **coast to coast to coast** have participated in this process since September 2017. Nearly 30% of the children and youth who participated identified as indigenous. The process involved the delivery of 17 workshops across the country, collection of data from the workshops, and a report based on those preliminary results, which was analyzed and supplemented by children and youth at the national #CanadaWeWant conference. There were many themes that surfaced throughout the journey.

Primarily, it was found that there was a **widespread lack of awareness amongst Canadian children and youth** that children and youth aged 0-17 had rights under the UNCRC. There was also specific concern that **Indigenous children's rights under the UNCRC needed to be better respected.**

Finally, there was a consistent theme that knowing their rights made children and youth **"feel good" and empowered.** Children and youth expressed heightened desires to bring their new-found knowledge on children's rights to their peers and communities.

The Students Commission of Canada was contracted by the Government of Canada to complete an engagement process focused on gathering input from children and youth under the age of 18 on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

# #CANADA WE WANT

## *The change we want to see*

A deeper regard and respect, across the country, for each article under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For every child to know about the rights available to them, because every adult has the knowledge to teach them about the Convention.

A healthier relationship between adults / decision makers and children and youth so that children and youth's voices are better heard and valued.

A country where youth feel that their thoughts, opinions, and voice matter.

## *The way we want to get there (Activities):*

- a) Mandatory incorporation of the UNCRC in all school boards and curricula across the country.
- b) Mandatory placement of the UNCRC (in child-friendly language) included in the spaces and place where children live.

## *The way we want to get there (Activities):*

- a) More frequent check-ins from people of government on how youth perceive their rights are being respected.
- b) More peer-to-peer dialogue between children on how they perceive their rights are being respected.

## *The way we want to get there (Resources):*

- a) Support from local, provincial and national governments.
- b) Support from non-profit and for-profit organizations.

## *What we need to get there (Resources):*

- a) Improved school curricula.
- b) Rights-based programs and services.
- c) Informed parents, family members, and adult mentors/allies.

## *What will make the tree healthy?*

**Full embracing and adherence to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

## *What will make the tree healthy?*

**Increased awareness amongst Canadian children, youth and their adult allies about the UNCRC.**