



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

2023 International Experience Canada (IEC) Study

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This public opinion research report presents the results of a quantitative online survey and a qualitative bulletin board conducted by Environics Research on behalf of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The quantitative survey was conducted with 2,560 Canadian youth, and the online focus groups were conducted with 120 Canadian youth in March 2023.

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Executive summary

Background and objectives

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) manages International Experience Canada (IEC), a program that enables young Canadians to work and travel abroad. Through the program, IEC provides Canadian citizens aged 18-35 with a path to work permit or visa, giving them opportunities to work and explore one of over 30 partner countries and territories. As a reciprocal program, IEC also enables international youth citizens to work and explore Canada. The age limit and types of work permits available depend on the youth mobility arrangement negotiated with each partner country. The program includes options for Open Work Permits (i.e., Working Holiday) which do not require a job offer, as well as Employer-Specific permits that are tied to a valid job offer.

IEC aims to maximize reciprocity between international youth participation and Canadian youth participation. As a result, a primary objective of this research is to provide insights and build on past research to help IEC increase Canadian youth participation in the program.

The 2022-23 International Experience Canada (IEC) Study was designed to gather information about both IEC participants and non-participants (including communities of interest such as indigenous youth and 2SLGBTQI+ youth), to inform policy development and communications, including development of new and targeted promotion and communication products, and identify barriers that IEC could address. This involves evaluating knowledge of the IEC program among its target audiences. More specifically, the objectives of the research include measuring:

- Awareness of IEC and interest in travelling abroad;
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on attitudes and travel intentions;
- Attitudes toward working and travelling abroad (including work-integrated learning);
- Attitudes toward safety while travelling abroad and trust in foreign governments;
- Gaps in resources and services (including in work abroad services) for communities of interest;
- Attitudes, barriers and information gaps specific to identified communities of interest, past IEC participants and youth in general;
- Whether work experiences abroad result in improved cultural awareness by youth (versus those who do not undertake such experiences);
- Where youth obtain information about international travel destinations;
- Motivations and barriers to participating in international work abroad experiences, such as those facilitated by the IEC program perceived benefits of travel or work abroad experience;
- Experiences and attitudes in target communities of interest including 2SLGBTQI+ youth, Indigenous youth, youth women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), and youth with mobility/hearing impairments; and
- Identifying the most desirable travel destinations among Canadian youth

Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used to meet the research objectives. The quantitative phase consisted of an online survey with Canadian youth, aged 16 to 35. The qualitative phase consisted of online focus groups. Both phases of research included particular communities of interest: secondary school students, 2SLGBTQI+ youth, transgender youth, and economically disadvantaged youth.

1. A **quantitative online survey** conducted February 15 to March 5, 2023, with 2,560 Canadian youth aged 16-35. Respondents were recruited from an online panel and respondents under 18 years of age needed parental consent before completing the survey. The survey was approximately 10 minutes in length and explored behaviours and attitudes toward international travel, perceived benefits and barriers of an international experience, awareness and perceptions of the IEC program and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel attitudes.
2. 16 **online focus groups** were conducted with Canadian youth. Groups consisted of 6-8 participants each, for a total of ~120 participants. The qualitative research participants were recruited via telephone and e-mail by Trend Research, through organizations serving Indigenous youth, and through IEC partner organizations.

A more detailed methodology is presented in Appendix A of this report.

Statement of limitations: Qualitative research provides insight into the range of opinions held within a population, rather than the weights of the opinions held, as measured in a quantitative survey. The results of the qualitative research should be viewed as indicative rather than projectable to the population.

Since online panel surveys are not random probability samples, no formal estimates of sampling error can be calculated. Although not employing a random probability sample, online surveys can be used for general population surveys provided they are well designed and employ a large, well-maintained panel.

Contract value

The contract value was \$199,405.45 (HST included).

Key findings

Qualitative phase

Youth in the focus groups were generally enthusiastic about discussing their past travel experiences. Most had taken at least one international trip in the past five years; and nearly all had a current passport. The United States, Europe, Asia, and Australia were common destinations. In terms of motivations and benefits of travelling, discovery and exploration were top of mind, especially among the most avid travellers. For many, travelling was an opportunity to see something new and experience other places and ways of being, but it was also a time for self-discovery and introspection.

Some past travellers had slightly negative experiences during their trips. They often remarked on the expense of travelling, and several had encountered inconveniences related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but overall, their international trips were viewed as highly positive and formative experiences. These sentiments about travel in general were echoed by IEC participants when discussing their experiences with the program.

A small minority of focus group participants had no recent international travel experience. Often, this was a matter of low interest or other life priorities, but some had encountered other barriers preventing them from travelling outside of Canada, including cost, responsibilities at home, fear or discomfort around travelling, and pandemic-related concerns. Of note, health care and medical support were of high concern among youth with impairments and Indigenous youth.

Looking ahead to future travel, most youth in the focus groups had some plans or aspirations to travel abroad, naming a wide range of possible destinations and activities. In general, youth were universally motivated to travel in search of new and different experiences, self-fulfilment, and simply to get away. Among Indigenous youth, interest in connecting with Indigenous cultures in other parts of the world was also an important motivator for future travel intentions.

While chosen destinations and activities were usually a matter of personal preference, the factors that would deter youth from travelling to certain areas were consistent between groups. Youth often indicated that they would avoid countries where there was active conflict or concerns around human rights, and several also mentioned that adverse climate conditions might be a deterrent. Some barriers were more specific among particular demographics; women in all groups and those in the 2SLGBTQI+ youth groups were more concerned about personal safety, while Indigenous youth and those living with impairments had higher degrees of concern about the availability of health care in other countries. Indigenous youth also discussed how the legacy of colonialism in some countries would be a deterrent to them.

Though leisure travel was appealing to most youth in the focus groups, few view spending more than a month outside of Canada as a realistic option. Many youth seemed hesitant about working or studying abroad for longer time periods due to other priorities and attachments at home in Canada. Among the few participants who expressed an interest in living abroad, this was often motivated by an interest in pursuing career opportunities outside of Canada, a desire for a deeper cultural immersion in another country, or personal reasons like living with a partner. These motivations were mirrored by the IEC participants group when discussing their reasons for pursuing an international experience.

Previous awareness of IEC was quite low, but viewing a definition of the IEC program and some details about the types of visas available left most group participants with a positive impression of the program, and some immediate questions about the countries involved, how the program works, and what past participants might

have to say about it. In line with the low general inclination to live abroad, very few participants said they would pursue IEC, but most said they would recommend it to others, and several wished they had known about it when they were younger.

Discussing the discrepancy between inbound and outbound IEC participants that exists in Canada, participants often suggested that Canadians might be more inhibited about international experiences due to finances and a cultural indifference to travel, while international youth are likely attracted to Canada for its jobs, high quality universities, and beautiful scenery. There was a broad consensus that while IEC could benefit from more marketing and support to boost interest, encouraging more Canadian youth to participate in IEC would ultimately require real remedies to economic hardships that lead youth to feel they simply can't afford to take time to leave Canada and pursue international opportunities. Where Indigenous youth are concerned, it is important to note that removing access barriers is critical in order to support equality of access to IEC and other programs, but it is equally important to respect where there may be reasons for not travelling that are rooted in culture and generational trauma. Another differentiating characteristic for this group was a desire to travel with other Indigenous youth, or to have the option of being closely connected to other Indigenous people while living abroad.

The focus groups concluded with feedback and discussion around strategies and specific promotional materials used by IRCC to market the IEC program to Canadian youth. Viewing a brochure with details about the program, participants broadly felt the brochure was informative, but not eye-catching, and they sometimes questioned the efficacy of this medium for appealing to youth. An Instagram video with testimonial from a real IEC participant generated mixed discussion; while the video was seen to be visually appealing, youth often found it hard to relate to the specific details of the narrator and her work as a snow sports instructor. In comparison, Indigenous youth were more positive about a similar video with an Indigenous woman narrating her own IEC experience, finding her story to be relatable and inspiring. When youth were asked to provide general advice on marketing to their age group, there was a consensus that it would be most effective to reach youth on social media, especially TikTok and Instagram. Focus group members tended to prefer authentic images from real participants, supported with clear information about IEC (how it works, who is eligible, etc.), though some felt that stock imagery was okay if used to support written information. Participants also often felt it was important to reach youth with information about IEC while they are still in high school or post-secondary, to give them time to consider the opportunity and fit it into their life plans.

Quantitative phase

Consistent with 2022, travelling internationally is common among Canadian youth aged 18 to 35; most Canadian youth (85%) travel for leisure or business, reporting at least one international trip for this reason in their lifetime. Up from last year, half (51%) travelled specifically for a work, study, or volunteer experience. Of those who have travelled for work, study, or volunteering, two-thirds (63%) say they have obtained a visa for this purpose; this has also increased since 2022. Year-over-year increases can likely be attributed to widening opportunities for international travel as pandemic restrictions lessened through 2022. International experience is most often self-arranged (39%) or arranged through school (25%).

When asked to reflect on their international experiences, young travellers once again assign the highest value on the opportunity to learn about new cultures, the adventure, and personal growth, mentioning other benefits (e.g. learning a secondary language, gaining career skills) less often. Most (65%) say they include their international experience on a resume, an increase over last year. Those who don't often cite a lack of relevance to a specific role, consistent with 2021 and 2022. Seven in ten (70%) agree they are eager to highlight their

international experience to potential employers, and six in ten (62%) believe their experience has improved their job prospects since returning to Canada.

More than one in ten (16%) Canadian youth say they have participated in the IEC program; Australia, France, Germany and the UK remain the most visited IEC partner countries, consistent with the past two years. Among IEC participants, total satisfaction (88%) and likelihood of recommending the program (89%) to family or friends is high and consistent with satisfaction results from 2021 and 2022. IEC credit a great overall experience and personal growth (39%) as the main reason for their satisfaction with the program.

As in past years, awareness of the IEC program is low; just two in ten (20%) say they know the program well or know a fair amount. Those with awareness of IEC are likely to have heard about it through family or friends (34%), directly from an IRCC source (32%), or through general internet searches (25%). This marks a shift from 2022, when internet searches ranked second overall. The desire to learn more about IEC is consistent with 2022; three in ten (29%) say they are interested in learning more. Like 2022, communicating such information would be most effectively conveyed through the internet (46%), school (27%), or by word of mouth (26%).

Interest in post-pandemic travel is high, with more than three quarters (78%) very or somewhat likely to travel for business, and four in ten (42%) likely to travel for work. Two-thirds of youth (64%) say they are comfortable travelling internationally as long as they are vaccinated, and more than half (57%) feel they are more likely to travel when possible because the restrictions made it difficult for so long.

As in 2022, language, obligations at home, and financial concerns are the most prominent barriers preventing youth from pursuing travel experiences. COVID-19 is still a notable consideration for many youth. The proportion who say there are places in the world they would no longer consider living in because of the pandemic (45%) has increased compared to 2022 (39%). The proportion who won't feel comfortable living in another country unless COVID-19 rates are approaching zero is 31 percent this year, compared to 34 percent in 2022 and 53 percent in 2021.

Likelihood of participating in a program like IEC is 39 percent, an increase compared to 30 percent in 2022. Three-English speaking countries, Australia, England, and the United States, top the list of interesting destinations for IEC or a similar experience, with Japan and France rounding out the top five. Youth most often said they would choose their destination based on its culture (24%), a simple desire to go (20%), or general interest (20%).

Political neutrality statement and contact information

I hereby certify as senior officer of Environics that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada, and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.



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Introduction

Background

International Experience Canada (IEC) is a program managed by IRCC offering Canadian youth the opportunity to travel and work in one of over 30 partner countries and territories. As a reciprocal program, IEC permits international youth citizens from partner countries/territories to travel and work in Canada as well. The age limit and types of work permits available varies depending on the youth mobility arrangement negotiated with each partner country but for Canadians to qualify, they must be citizens resident in Canada between the ages of 18-35.

The IEC program aims to maximize reciprocity between international youth participation and Canadian youth participation in the work-travel pathways negotiated with partner countries/territories, however, IEC officials believe participation in the program by Canadian youth is not as strong as it should be and is not reciprocal in terms of participants with almost all partner countries. IEC has a targeted stakeholder engagement and promotion plan in place, with the goal of increasing awareness of opportunities abroad, and increasing Canadian youth participation in the program.

This report provides insight into the travel and work abroad behaviours and attitudes of Canadian youth and examines their perceptions and attitudes towards travel and work abroad experiences like those facilitated by IEC. Insights about perceived barriers and motivators to pursuing work abroad experiences, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, will inform policy and allow targeted engagement and promotion. The survey results will also be used to inform corporate performance reporting requirements (such as Performance Information Profiles and associated Performance Measurement Strategy Framework) for the IEC program.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to build on knowledge gained from previous public opinion research studies, extending our time series data on Canadian youth awareness of International Experience Canada (2018-present) and interest in travelling abroad. It also includes a focus on better understanding the motivations and barriers for Indigenous youth and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Objectives of the research include measuring:

- Awareness of IEC and interest in travelling abroad;
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on attitudes and travel intentions;
- Attitudes toward working and travelling abroad (including work-integrated learning);
- Attitudes toward safety while travelling abroad and trust in foreign governments;
- Gaps in resources and services (including in work abroad services) for communities of interest;
- Attitudes, barriers and information gaps specific to identified communities of interest, past IEC participants and youth in general;
- Whether work experiences abroad result in improved cultural awareness by youth (versus those who do not undertake such experiences);
- Where youth obtain information about international travel destinations;
- Motivations and barriers to participating in international work abroad experiences, such as those facilitated by the IEC program perceived benefits of travel or work abroad experience;

- Experiences and attitudes in target communities of interest including 2SLGBTQI+ youth, Indigenous youth, youth women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), and youth with mobility/hearing impairments; and
- Identifying the most desirable travel destinations among Canadian youth.

To meet these objectives, Environics conducted two phases of research:

1. The **quantitative online survey** was conducted to gather information from Canadian youth by gathering feedback on their previous international experiences, views on travel in general, and their views on the IEC program and future intentions regarding international experiences.
2. **Online focus groups** were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of travel motivations, learn about youth impressions of IEC in more detail, and explore promotional strategies for raising awareness of the program among youth in general and among specific key audiences.

The quantitative phase provides tracking data on overall attitudes towards travel and international opportunities, while the qualitative research dives deeper into views of youth, including Indigenous youth, 2SLGBTQI+ youth, youth with impairments, women in STEM, and IEC participants to explore if and how their views differ on these topics. Overall, the research will inform future communications about the IEC program and strategies to encourage participation.

About this report

This report begins with an executive summary outlining key findings and conclusions, followed by a detailed analysis of the qualitative results and the quantitative survey data. A detailed methodology section is provided in Appendix A. Provided under a separate cover is a detailed set of “banner tables” presenting the results for all questions by population segments as defined by region and demographics for the quantitative portion of the research. Results for the qualitative phase are included in the report as quotes from participants of the bulletin board and the individual interviews. The quantitative data tables are referenced by the survey question in the detailed analysis. Tracking data from the most recent wave of the study (2022) is included where applicable in the quantitative section of the report.

Note that previous waves of the study did not include youth aged 16 and 17. For comparison purposes, where applicable, the report includes columns showing results for the entire sample (i.e. age 16 to 35) and the sample excluding 16 and 17 year olds.

In this report, quantitative results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. Net results cited in the text may not exactly match individual results shown in the tables due to rounding. Qualitative results do not reference percentages or precise proportions to avoid any implication that results are projectable.

I. Detailed findings – Qualitative phase

A. Travel History and Motivations

Past Travel

Across groups, most participants said they had travelled outside of Canada in the past five years. Often, these trips were short vacations to one or two touristic destinations, but several participants had taken lengthier trips involving multiple stops in different locations. Participants' experiences encompassed nearly every part of the world, but trips specifically in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Australia were quite common.

Those with travel experience discussed a range of positive experiences and benefits derived from travelling. Some common themes included:

- Discovering different places, people, culture, foods, and history.
- Opening their minds to something different than the usual at home, learning about different perspectives.
- Connecting with other cultures, new people, and new ways of living.
- Discovering oneself, introspection, learning to be on their own.
- The pleasure of discovery itself.
- New experiences like tastes, climates, landscapes, music, and wildlife.
- Visiting family (close or extended) and learning about ancestors. Connecting with family and personal ancestry were common themes among the focus groups overall, and particularly within the Indigenous youth discussions.
- The feeling of disconnection with day-to-day life; escape, adventure, freedom, relaxation.
- Learning or perfecting a second language.

While participants largely described their travel experiences in highly positive terms, most could recall some negative details as well:

- Cost.
- Being homesick, missing family and friends.
- Language barriers.
- Adapting to cultural differences was sometimes more difficult than expected.
- Coping with pandemic-related issues.
- Among Indigenous participants, a few had difficulty crossing the US border with a status card as ID.

Most groups included one or two participants with no recent travel experience outside of Canada. While non-travellers included participants from all regions and age groups, several younger participants (i.e. under age 20), youth with impairments, and Indigenous youth had not travelled outside of Canada. Trips within Canada were common among these participants.

Discussing their reasons for not travelling internationally, for many participants it was as much a matter of interest as it was opportunity; some people simply didn't have much interest in travelling and preferred other pursuits. Some types of travel barriers were mentioned multiple times by participants in different groups:

- The cost of travel was a major barrier; many indicated that they were struggling to keep up with everyday expenses because of rising costs, and travel was a luxury that was simply out of reach for the time being.
- Lack of free time and personal obligations were a substantial factor, especially for participants who have full-time jobs, children, or other family members needing care.

- Fear of violence and conflict in other countries were common mentions, particularly among women.
- Discomfort with cultural differences and language barriers.
- A desire to see more of Canada instead of going to other countries.
- For some, travelling was seen as a hassle because of the logistics and the risk of complications like cancelled flights. A few mentioned being turned off by hearing “horror stories” in the media or from other people.
- For those with impairments or chronic illness, accessibility and medical support were major concerns that require detailed planning before a trip begins. Managing health conditions was also brought up in groups with Indigenous youth.
- Issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic were obvious factors for many. A portion of each group was devoted to discussing this in more detail (see *Pandemic and Travel* below).

In the group conducted with IEC participants, the introductory discussion centred specifically on their IEC experience. For all members of the group, their IEC trip was a rewarding experience that offered many of the same benefits that other youth related to travel in general. While experiences were mostly positive, some members of the group had overcome challenges during their IEC experience that included:

- Logistical challenges with accommodation.
- Anxiety and difficulty adjusting to being away from home.
- Boredom or dissatisfaction with job opportunities.

Future Travel Considerations

Most participants had some dreams or tentative plans for future travel, and some talked about exotic and far away places they would visit if they had no restrictions to worry about. Potential future travel destinations and activities were as varied as the participants themselves, but the motivations for future travel were similar to the benefits discussed around past travel, such as the feeling of getting away, experiencing something different, and seeking self fulfillment.

- Among Indigenous youth, connecting to Indigenous cultures in other countries was a unique travel motivator. One participant spoke of comparing Canada with other post-colonial spaces like Australia and New Zealand:

“I find it interesting from post-colonial perspective. They have a similar history to Canada with Indigenous groups and I wonder how they approach governance.”

Broadly speaking, while preferred travel destinations were largely a matter of personal taste, there were some common elements that would deter participants from travelling to specific places:

- War and conflict; Ukraine and the Middle East were specifically mentioned often in this context.
- General concerns about freedom or perceived threats to personal freedom in countries with more restrictive systems of governance (China and Russia were two examples).
- Safety concerns, especially for women, racialized people, 2SLGBTQI+, etc. in less egalitarian countries.

“As an LGBTQ person in a visibly queer relationship, I would be very uncomfortable going to certain places.”

- Countries with a history of serious human rights concerns or human trafficking.
- Health and sanitation issues were mentioned several times, especially among youth with impairments and Indigenous youth.
- Climate, i.e. places that are perceived to be too hot, too cold, too rainy, etc.

- Ethical and environment considerations related to the impact of tourism on a destination and its residents.

“I could imagine going anyplace for culture and stuff but if Indigenous people are asking tourists not to visit Hawaii... as an Indigenous person, you understand that.”

- In the discussions with Indigenous youth, some brought up the painful legacy of residential schools and racism that motivates them to avoid places that have historically contributed to colonization.

“I have zero interest in going to United Kingdom, for obvious reasons, same with France. They are pain points. Straight up I am the first generation in my family to not have to go to residential school, my mom has brought up some pretty heavy things, my grandma won’t talk about it, so why would I want to go there?”

While the desire to travel in the future was strong and common to most participants, barriers such as money and time understandably tend to increase with age and obligations like work and family. Some group participants indicated that rising costs had led them to delay travel, or consider destinations where their money could stretch further.

Passports

Most participants in the groups have a current passport or had one in the past that is now expired; there were very few who said they had never had a passport. Among those who didn’t have a current passport, usually this was simply due to a lack of need for one. Other reasons included the hassle and wait times involved in applying, uncertainty about the process, challenges finding a guarantor, and concerns about gathering the required documentation. Still, most participants without passports felt they could get past these obstacles if or when they needed to and did not see a passport as a major obstacle to travel in and of itself.

Pandemic and Travel

Among those with international travel experience, there was some variation between groups but overall, roughly half said they had travelled since March 2020. Experiences with travel since the onset of the pandemic varied, largely depending on when the travel occurred:

- For those who were travelling early in 2020, their travel experiences included many unexpected changes and rapid shifts in plans as different locations moved to close public facilities and restrict travel. A couple of participants experienced situations that required them to self-isolate during travel or upon their return.
- Those who travelled later in 2020 and through 2021 experienced a variety of rules and restrictions, depending on where they travelled, including mask mandates, tests, and vaccination requirements. Travellers often had to navigate chaotic airport situations during this time as well.

In the group of IEC participants, one participant related her experience of obtaining a visa during this time:

“When we came over Japan’s borders were actually still close[d] to tourism, and they had just opened up the working holiday visa. So there was a lot more paperwork for applying for the visa than there normally would be.”

- For those who travelled more recently, remaining travel restrictions were often subtle or even nonexistent, depending on the destination.

In general, participants who travelled during COVID-19 tended to see pandemic-related changes to travel as temporary, and dissipating. Most expected that travel will eventually return to normal in most places, if it hasn't already.

Among those participants with previous international travel experience, but not since COVID-19, this was mainly a matter of opportunity rather than lack of desire to travel. Several of these participants had trips that were cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic, and many were eagerly planning to travel in the near future.

Many participants could identify with a sense of pent-up demand as a result of the pandemic limiting travel and other recreational pursuits for months or years.

“Being trapped in my house for a year makes me want to get out more and since they stopped mandatory masks in the airport I felt more relaxed in the airport.”

“If it had not been for Covid I would not be here today, and I definitely wouldn't have had the drive to travel as much as I do now.”

For participants without travel experience, most did not feel that the pandemic had put them off travelling in the future – travel just wasn't something that was a high priority for them. For a small handful of participants, scattered across groups, concerns about COVID-19 were still fairly top-of-mind as a deterrent to travel.

“My feelings of worry when I travel are that I don't want to get others sick.”

The IEC participants group was asked a separate question about what they feel they would have missed out on if their IEC experience had been cancelled or put off due to the pandemic. There was a consensus in the group that most would have tried to pursue a similar experience later if possible, and that their IEC trip had given them far more than just an opportunity to travel:

“Not going would have been spirit crushing. we had spent so much time planning that it would feel like such a waste. As for missing out, I personally feel like this trip has helped me grow tremendously as a person.”

“My trip was life changing. It expanded my view on what I could accomplish and where I could go in life. I never would have met my best friend and it directly affected my goals for the future. I probably wouldn't want to travel and move around if I never went on my internship.”

Interest in living outside Canada

Most participants had little interest in really living outside of Canada for a longer period of time (i.e. more than a month). This usually was not a matter of the overall appeal of an international experience, but more often rooted in other priorities. For many participants, there was a sense of attachment to their home, community, and family; this was mentioned often across all groups, but was an especially important consideration among Indigenous youth.

“My family has been here for generations and generations, it feels weird to consider leaving. Half my family are immigrants but the other half are Indigenous. It's like I would be abandoning them, it hard to explain.”

Tangential to the sense of attachment in general, several participants in the Indigenous youth discussions also mentioned the current Indigenous political landscape in Canada and the importance of being present in order to witness and influence change at home during a pivotal moment in history:

“It feels a lot better if Indigenous people remained in Canada to help fix it on the inside. This is an important time frame and important for us to watch it happen, if not, we don't get to be part of things happening.”

Others felt committed to the life that they have started building as a young adult, and other goals such as home ownership, career, and starting a family were a more important priority at this point in time. Some also felt that it would be expensive and complicated to sort out logistical details and ensure their affairs in Canada were being looked after in their absence.

Those who more readily saw themselves living outside of Canada were generally younger participants (i.e. under 24), those who were still finishing school or in the early stages of career building, or those who were already avid travellers. The length of stay they envisioned varied quite a bit from person to person, ranging from months to years. The IEC participants focus group was fairly aligned with these characteristics as well. Most were younger adults at the earlier stages of a career, or still deciding on a career path, though a couple of people in that group had put more established careers on hold to pursue an international experience.

Motivations for living outside of Canada generally fell into three categories:

- Interest in applying their skills and gaining work experience: Several younger participants were interested in the possibility of gaining work experience in their chosen field, especially in some technical and creative industries where jobs in Canada are more limited.
- Desire for deeper cultural immersion in another country: For those with an avid interest in travel, living in another country was seen as a way to get a more authentic experience, a deeper connection with people, and, for some, a more solid foundation in a second language.

“When you visit for a short time, you don’t really see the reality.”

For Indigenous youth, the prospect of cultural immersion was additionally important in the context of connection with other Indigenous peoples, and the relevant learning they could bring home with them to their own communities.

“After my undergrad I was planning to go to Australia or New Zealand for a year or two. I was really interested in Indigenous cultures and how their experiences are relative to our own. I kind of compare and see to what they are doing better or lacking on and would like to take it back to use it for our experiences.”

- Personal and family obligations: Living abroad to be with a partner or to support a family member were motivations that came up several times, including several of the IEC participants.

Most who would consider living abroad tend to imagine this happening in destinations that are interesting but would be relatively easy to adapt to, like the United States, countries in western Europe (i.e. France, England, Germany, Spain), and Australia. Familiarity with the language and cultural norms were an important considerations for most.

For those inclined to consider living abroad, the most important challenge they could foresee was creating a new support system or managing without much support in another place; this concern was echoed in the IEC participants group, where several participants mentioned that being away from their supports was one of the more difficult aspects of living away from Canada. Other participants had concerns that lined up with other travel-related barriers already discussed, including cost, safety, and health issues.

B. International Experience Canada

IEC Program Interest

To begin the discussion about IEC, the moderator showed participants a written definition of the program and read this definition out loud. Participants were also shown descriptions of the types of visas available through IEC. Previous awareness of IEC was quite low; usually just one or two people in each group said they had heard of the program before, though the concept of working and studying abroad was broadly familiar.

First impressions of the IEC program were quite positive; participants liked the idea of having the government's help to simplify the process of going to another country.

Some immediate questions about the program were common across groups:

- What countries are included in the program?
- Does the program provide funding?
- Does the program provide support in finding work, lodging, contacts? Many participants had the initial impression that the program would connect them to a list of employers or jobs.
- How much does it cost?
- What is the process? Who is eligible?
- What if something happens to me while I'm there?
- What do past participants think about their experience?

The IEC participants' group was asked questions about their experience with the IEC program and the benefits they received from it. In this group, the IEC program was widely seen as a positive experience that they would recommend to other youth without hesitation. For some, the work experience they had was directly related to their career aspirations, but for others, the trip gave them a chance to experience something completely different but still worthwhile.

"I took a little break from my career. I was in tech sales, super corporate, very different. So it was a big jump for me to come to Europe and live a little. And that's exactly what I plan on telling future employers. The pandemic just happened, I want to live a little."

"I really think that to immerse yourself somewhere and to discover a new country, you really need to take your time, and I think that only can be done if you stay at least for a month or two. Why not take advantage of a visa so you can work, live, and actually learn how a new place functions from day to day?"

IEC Program Barriers

Overall, most participants were not highly interested in participating in IEC, usually due to the same reasons they had for not living abroad in general (i.e. cost, personal obligations, different life priorities). Often, older participants (i.e. 25+) indicated that IEC is something they wished they had heard about when they were younger, before they were more settled. Most said they would recommend the program to someone else, if it seemed to be a good fit.

"For me personally it's not just financial. I would have to arrange care for my children while I am gone. It's just not feasible for me."

Cost was a significant barrier for many participants. Asked to consider how much a program like this might cost, participants discussed the various expenses that would be involved (i.e. transportation, rent, food, recreation, and the costs of applying for appropriate documentation) but often had trouble arriving at a cost estimate with confidence. Participants were also generally uncertain that earnings from their work in another country would

be enough to offset the cost of travelling. Some youth volunteered that coming from backgrounds without any generational wealth or substantial parental support, working abroad seemed like a luxury that was only realistic for the wealthy. This view was common among Indigenous youth, but prevalent in the general population groups as well.

“I don’t have family that could help support in this, and I think other people might have those luxuries. I hope there might be scholarships or something to help support applicants who are Indigenous.”

Also related to cost, some participants were concerned about what they would be coming back to upon their return to Canada, anticipating that costs for rent would continue to go up and it may be difficult to secure stable income and settle back into life at home after being away.

“I feel like I would be very overwhelmed just getting everything sorted and making sure that everything was organized... like health benefits. And my job is not really a career so would I have a job when I come back?”

IEC Reciprocity

Group participants were shown a paragraph describing IEC’s reciprocity with other countries; this paragraph also outlined the discrepancy between Canadian youth going abroad, and youth from other countries coming into Canada. After viewing this information and having it read out loud by the moderator, participants were asked to suggest potential reasons why Canadian youth are less likely to use the program.

Participants offered a range of hypotheses that tended to fall into three categories:

- **Cost:** Across groups, cost was mentioned often in a range of contexts. The cost of travel itself was a frequent suggestion, with many participants noting that Canadians pay relatively high prices for domestic and international flights. The burden of tuition and student loans, the high cost of living, rising rent costs, and ballooning prices for real estate in Canada were also a factor; many participants felt that travelling abroad would be a major financial setback for young people who are trying to establish themselves in a difficult economy.

“I wonder if in other countries there is less of a financial burden around education... I feel like people in our country are so strapped by the time they finish education that a gap year is not realistic.”

Another related issue was the discrepancy between countries in economic conditions and the value of currency; several participants in different groups mentioned that earnings in other currencies would not convert well to Canadian dollars, making it hard to justify working abroad.

“There are a lot of internships in Asia or in South America that I chose not to pursue, because I would have made a lot less money there than if I just would have gotten a part time job here in Canada.”

- **Cultural Norms:** Participants frequently mentioned differences in cultural norms that exist between countries. There was often a perception that young people in places like Europe and Australia are highly encouraged to see the world at a young age, while in Canada youth are expected to follow a linear trajectory from school to the workplace without time between. This cultural distinction was often mentioned hand-in-hand with the feeling that taking time out of life for travel would lead to long-term financial set-backs.

“You are told that you have to go to university, get a job, get married, buy a house, have children.”

“Canadians prefer to stay in their comfort zone.”

“There’s something to be said of the culture of travel...if you snowboard or ski in Canada, you’ll meet a lot of New Zealanders and Aussies. They are more in tune with experiences while young instead of material items.”

- Benefits of Canada: Many participants pointed out that Canada has a high standard of living, excellent universities, good job opportunities, and many beautiful regions to choose from, which makes it highly attractive to international youth looking for another country to live in. Participants hypothesized that the same benefits that attract other youth to Canada make it less enticing for Canadian youth to leave the country if they want to gain experience by travelling.

“Everybody dreams of Canada; it is like a utopia.”

“Canada is marketed as a safe place.”

Brainstorming ways to encourage more Canadian youth to take advantage of IEC, participants frequently focused on personal finances, the national economy, and the rising cost of living as an important area of focus, particularly for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many participants suggested that in order to really move the needle on Canadian interest in IEC and other work abroad experiences, the government needs to address issues like student loan debt and rising real estate prices to make it more realistic for young people to see these opportunities as benefits, not setbacks.

“I had a very stable home life at the time, and if I didn't have that support and stability back home I probably wouldn't have left it. I think it's very difficult for people to think about travelling when their home base isn't really established in the first place.”

In the more immediate term, other suggestions to improve uptake generally revolved around logistical and financial assistance for the program, such as:

- Financial help or subsidies for travel expenses.
- Support with finding work and accommodation.
- Guide services to help with planning and provide support for youth while they are abroad.
- For Indigenous youth, the opportunity to connect with other Indigenous travellers or even travel together was something that might help them feel safer and more comfortable while travelling.
- Help coordinating healthcare and other supports for youth with illness, impairment, and disability.
- Safety information and support, particularly for those who are Indigenous, racialized, or 2SLGBTQI+.

Communicating With Youth About IEC

Across groups, participants often suggested that reaching youth while they are still in high school or post-secondary is important, because it allows people time to consider the opportunity and fit it into their longer-term plans as they prepare for post-secondary education and the workforce. Participants often reiterated that IEC was not something they had ever heard about when they were younger, and several suggested that they would have benefited from hearing about the program early on, from IEC participants themselves.

“I think it's a really great program and opportunity, I wish I knew about this after graduation since I had fewer responsibilities to think about then.”

In terms of other specific channels for reaching youth, participants across groups widely agreed that social media was likely to be most effective, especially platforms like TikTok and Instagram that are more popular with young people. Some felt that Facebook could be useful for connecting potential applicants with each other and possibly informing parents who could encourage their children to look into IEC. Mentions of other types of advertising, like signs or brochures, were more sparse.

Promotional Materials and Messaging

Participants were shown a digital copy of a brochure for IEC that is currently in use, and asked to provide their impressions of the brochure in terms of its design, its content, and its effectiveness as a tool for marketing IEC to youth. Reactions to the brochure were positive overall, but not enthusiastic:

- The brochure’s design was generally seen as pleasant, clean, and attractive, but participants did not find it to be very eye-catching or memorable. Often, participants found it to be very typical of government publications, mainly because of the white background and text-heavy design.
- The photographs were seen to be important because they broke up the text and provided colourful visual interest, but some participants noted that they felt like generic travel photos that didn’t convey much about IEC.

“If it just looked a little bit more candid it would be a little bit more relatable to me personally.”

“It’d be interesting to have pictures of people working, like a laptop somewhere in the coffee shop abroad, or someone in a lab.”

- The map graphic was also seen as an attractive element, but some felt that it could be made more useful if it was less abstract and somehow highlighted IEC partner countries.
- Participants were very interested in the list of IEC partner countries, and saw that as a critical piece of information that helped to illuminate the program as a whole. Those who read the brochure more closely found that the written information answered many of their initial questions about IEC.

“It looked kind of messy, but once I started to read it, it seemed clear and concise.”

- Some participants noted that a paper brochure might seem outdated to younger people, and that the brochure would benefit from a QR code linked back to the IEC website or social media, not just URLs.

After reviewing the brochure, each group was shown a short video that was posted to IEC’s Instagram account. The video included a short testimonial about an IEC participant’s experience working in Switzerland, and her personal motivations for going. Reactions to the video were generally consistent from group to group, with a mix of positive impressions and critiques:

- Participants naturally compared the video format with the brochure, finding the video to be a more engaging medium for reaching youth. It was widely felt that the video could be enhanced with more specific information about what IEC is for, i.e. who is eligible, what the benefits are, and how to apply.

“Seems like a great adventure but also not clear on how this program helps with the permits or anything else. Like, how is this different than just applying directly for a work permit abroad?”

“I think they’re on the right track, but just be a little bit more specific and detailed about the experience and the process.”

- Participants sometimes misunderstood the snowboarding element as a simple depiction of a recreational activity, and often missed where the video indicated that she was working as an instructor. The video did not resonate as a realistic depiction of working abroad.

“I liked the video more, it was short and appealed to the emotions, but I couldn’t help but worry about what ‘expert skill’ I had that could translate to working abroad.”

- The snowy Swiss mountains were often noted to be attractive, and for some, quite enticing, but some felt that the setting could easily be mistaken for Canada, which made it less effective as a tool for generating interest in foreign travel. A few participants said they would be more interested in seeing destinations that appear to be more exotic and not so cold.

- A few participants felt the narrator’s story about following in her grandmother’s footsteps was authentic and heartwarming, but a handful of participants said they didn’t relate to this at all.

Participants in the three groups held specifically with Indigenous youth were shown a different video from IEC, featuring an Indigenous youth who travelled to Australia through IEC. This video was generally well-received and perceived to be informative, authentic, and inspiring.

“Thought the video was really cool! She’s Indigenous, I relate with how she spoke and reacted to things. It’s different than seeing a white person doing it, you know she understands, she knows what it is to be Indigenous.”

At the end of each group, participants were asked to discuss the effectiveness of promotional material more generally, with a particular emphasis on two related topics: the use of images versus written content, and the appeal of personal photos and videos versus stock imagery. Participants were shown some examples of content from IEC’s Instagram page to help guide the discussion.

While participants widely felt that images and videos should be central to any materials aimed at young people regardless of the medium, they also often mentioned that it is important to have clear, factual information immediately at hand for those who wish to look closer. Referring to the example content from Instagram, participants often felt that there wasn’t enough context to explain IEC, and that it would be easy to overlook this content as generic travel-related advertising without something more noteworthy to grab their attention.

“I think it should just be more explicit... just give people the raw information about this option that they probably don't know about and be a little more upfront in your face.”

Overall, there was a consensus that for the purposes of IEC, personal photos and videos were best for portraying authentic depictions of young people working and living abroad. Real material was seen as a feature that could increase interest, credibility, and relatability of the content, as long as the images contained identifiable places and activities. Often, stock images were noted to be artificial and generic in appearance by comparison. This is not to say that participants were entirely dismissive of stock imagery; some participants in most groups saw valid applications for stock imagery to support more factual, informative written content about IEC.

“The stock photo just looks so staged, and the fake laugh doesn't do anything for me, whereas the actual Canadian couple makes it look like personally, we could do it.”

“Stock photos of people are off-putting to me. If it was stock of beautiful nature or clips of fun activities then stock with info is good. But I'd put real stories in it.”

II. Detailed findings – Quantitative phase

A. Demographic profiles of respondents

Respondent Demographics

The qualified respondents to the online survey are Canadian youth aged 16 to 35 including representation from the following communities of interest to IRCC: secondary school students, 2SLGBTQI+ youth, Indigenous youth, economically disadvantaged youth, and youth with disabilities and impairments. Of the 2,560 total respondents, 73 are under 18 years old.

Table 1: Survey participants' gender

	Youth 16-35 (n=2,560)	Youth 18-35 (n=2,487)
Female	50%	51%
Male	49%	48%
Another gender	1%	1%
Prefer not to say	<1%	<1%

Table 2: Survey participants' age

	Youth (n=2,560)
16-17	3%
18-24	36%
25-35	62%

Table 3: Survey participants' province

	Youth 16-35 (n=2,560)	Youth 18-35 (n=2,487)
NET: BC/Territories	13%	13%
Alberta	12%	12%
Manitoba / Saskatchewan	7%	7%
Ontario	39%	39%
Quebec	22%	22%
Atlantic Canada	6%	6%

Table 4: Survey participants born in Canada

	Youth 16-35 (n=2,560)	Youth 18-35 (n=2,487)
Yes	84%	84%
No	15%	15%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%

Table 5: Survey participants with immigrant parent(s)

	Youth 16-35 (n=2,560)	Youth 18-35 (n=2,487)
Yes, one parent	13%	13%
Yes, both parents	34%	33%
No	52%	52%
Prefer not to say	2%	2%

Table 6: Languages spoken by survey participants

	Youth 16-35 (n=2,560)	Youth 18-35 (n=2,487)
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English	92%	92%
French	29%	29%
Other	10%	10%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%

Table 7: Survey participants' education level

	Youth 16-35 (n=2,560)	Youth 18-35 (n=2,487)
Elementary school or less	1%	1%
Secondary school	14%	13%
Some post-secondary or current post-secondary student	12%	11%
College, vocational or trade school	20%	20%
Undergraduate university program	33%	34%
Graduate or professional university program	19%	19%
Prefer not to say	2%	2%

Table 8: Survey participants' identity

	Youth 16-35 (n=2,560)	Youth 18-35 (n=2,487)
2SLGBTQI+	16%	16%
Indigenous	10%	10%
Women in STEM	8%	8%

Table 9: Survey participants' employment status

	Youth 16-35 (n=2,560)	Youth 18-35 (n=2,487)
Employed full-time for pay (i.e. more than 30 hours per week)	63%	63%
Employed part-time for pay	11%	11%
Self-employed	5%	5%
Unemployed, and currently seeking work	4%	4%
Homemaker	2%	2%
Student	12%	12%
Other	1%	1%
Prefer not to say	2%	2%

Table 10: Survey participants' physical impairment

	Youth 16-35 (n=2,560)	Youth 18-35 (n=2,487)
Vision impairment or vision loss not easily corrected with glasses or contact lenses	6%	6%
Hearing impairment or hearing loss that is a partial or total inability to hear	6%	6%
Mobility impairment that impacts your ability to perform tasks that require motor control and coordination	5%	5%
Other physical impairment not listed	1%	1%
No physical impairment	82%	82%
Prefer not to say	4%	4%

B. Travel Style and Behaviour

Past Travel Experience

Half (51%) report travelling outside of Canada for work, study, or volunteering at some point in their lives; of these about one in six (62%) say they obtained a visa for this purpose.

Leisure or business continues to be the most common reason for international travel among Canadian youth, with 85% reporting at least once such trip in their lifetime. International travel is far less common for work (38%) or study (34%), and least common for volunteering (26%). In total, roughly half (51%) report having travelled for any of the four reasons, a 10% increase from 2022 results. Among all youth, almost seven in ten (67%) have taken at least one international trip since the pandemic started, a large increase from 2022. In the past year, travel restrictions have loosened in many countries around the world and people have become more comfortable resuming travel.

Six in ten (63%) youth with international experience say they obtained a visa for their travels outside of Canada. This includes over four in ten who obtained a visa to work (47%), to study (38%), and to volunteer (27%). Aligned with the increase in international experience, these results are also much higher than 2022. Similar to previous years, these travel experiences are most commonly self-arranged (39%), through school (25%), or with an employer (18%).

Table 11: Travel for leisure/business/work/study/volunteering (% reporting at least one lifetime trip)
Question 3: How many times have you done any of the following activities outside Canada in your lifetime? Travel for...

	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1188)	Female (n=1346)	2022 Overall (n=2,504)
Leisure or business	85%	85%	68%	77%	89%	90%	85%	85%	85%
Work	38%	38%	21%	39%	38%	39%	46%	29%	27%
Study	34%	34%	38%	41%	34%	26%	39%	29%	25%
Volunteering	26%	26%	27%	31%	27%	19%	30%	22%	17%
NET: Travelled for work, study, volunteering	51%	51%	45%	53%	52%	49%	57%	44%	41%

Table 12: Travel for leisure/business/work/study/volunteering (mean # of lifetime trips)
Question 3: How many times have you done any of the following activities outside Canada in your lifetime? Travel for...

	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1188)	Female (n=1346)	2022 Overall (n=2,504)
Leisure or business	10.10	10.23	5.38	6.05	10.46	14.47	9.57	10.63	11.5
Work	2.65	2.69	1.53	2.85	2.18	2.93	3.31	1.98	2.1
Study	2.18	2.15	3.40	3.60	1.45	1.19	2.33	2.04	1.1
Volunteering	1.24	1.21	2.16	1.96	0.84	0.74	1.42	1.07	0.7

Table 13: Travelled for leisure/business/work/study/volunteering (since pandemic began)

Question 3C: Of the trips you mentioned above, how many have been since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, 2020?

Subgroup: Those who travelled for any reason in Question 3 (n = 2286).

	Overall 16+ (n=2286)	Overall 18+ (n=2225)	16-17 (n=61)	18-24 (n=830)	25-30 (n=640)	31-35 (n=755)	Male (n=1066)	Female (n=1199)	2022 Overall (n=2,171)
Total travelled (i.e. taken at least one trip) since pandemic began	67%	67%	54%	65%	69%	67%	70%	63%	33%

Table 14: Visa/work permit for each type of travel

Question 6: Did you obtain a visa or permit to work, study or volunteer outside of Canada?

Subgroup: Those who worked / studied / volunteered in Question 3 (n = 1,289); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

	Overall 16+ (n=1,289)	Overall 18+ (n=1,256)	16-17 (n=33)*	18-24 (n=493)	25-30 (n=358)	31-35 (n=405)	Male (n=687)	Female (n=589)	2022 Overall (n=1,021)
Work	47%	48%	27%	52%	48%	41%	54%	38%	30%
Study	38%	39%	30%	48%	45%	27%	43%	31%	27%
Volunteer	27%	27%	27%	45%	29%	20%	32%	20%	15%
Total Obtained Visa	62%	63%	45%	69%	67%	53%	68%	55%	49%

Table 15: Visa/work permit for each type of travel

Question 6: Did you obtain a visa or permit to work, study or volunteer outside of Canada?

Base: All youth respondents (n = 2,560).

	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)	2022 Overall (n=2,504)
Work	24%	24%	12%	28%	25%	20%	31%	17%	12%
Study	19%	20%	14%	23%	23%	13%	25%	14%	11%
Volunteer	14%	14%	12%	16%	15%	10%	18%	9%	6%
Total Obtained Visa	32%	32%	21%	36%	34%	26%	39%	24%	20%

Table 16: Travel arrangements

Question 8: How did you arrange your international experience?

Subgroup: Those who worked / studied / volunteered in Question 3 (n = 1,289); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

	Overall 16+ (n=1,289)	Overall 18+ (n=1,256)	16-17 (n=33)*	18-24 (n=493)	25-30 (n=358)	31-35 (n=405)	Male (n=687)	Female (n=589)	2022 Overall (n=1,021)
Self-arranged	39%	40%	27%	37%	37%	45%	43%	35%	43%
Through school	25%	25%	30%	30%	27%	17%	21%	31%	26%
Employer	18%	19%	6%	13%	21%	24%	21%	15%	17%
Travel or adventure company	10%	10%	15%	12%	10%	8%	11%	9%	7%
Non-profit organization	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Government program	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	<1%	1%	<1%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Prefer not to say	4%	4%	18%	5%	3%	3%	3%	5%	2%

Past International Travel Benefits and Challenges

Similar to previous years, youth travellers identified learning about a new culture, exploration, and personal growth as the top three benefits of international experience. Language barriers and COVID-19 travel restrictions are considered the greatest challenges. Despite these challenges, they are excited to highlight their international experience to potential employers, with two-thirds of youth travellers highlighting their international experience on their resume.

Among Canadian youth who have travelled internationally for work, study, or volunteering, seven in ten say the key benefits of their experience were learning about a new country or culture (73%) followed by nearly three-fifths saying exploration and adventure (59%), and roughly half saying personal growth (49%). Benefiting from language (42%) and career skills (42%) are also perceived to be benefits but mentioned to a lesser extent. These results follow the same pattern as results in previous years.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) say they have listed their international experience on their resume after returning to Canada. Those who did not include their international experience on their resume were asked about the reasons. Among these youth, the most common reason is a perceived lack of relevance or importance to the specific job applied for (42%); this was also the top mention in 2021 and 2022. Other reasons for not mentioning this experience on a resume includes not thinking the experience was worth noting (14%) and simply not thinking about it (8%).

Most Canadian youth who travelled for work, study, or volunteering agree they are eager to highlight that experience to potential employers (70%) and that they feel the experience improved their job prospects (63%). Over half (55%) report being asked about this experience by potential employers. Agreement with each of these statements is slightly higher than 2022 results.

When asked about challenges faced while travelling, youth most commonly mention language barriers (44%). This is same top challenge as the past two years. This year's second biggest challenge is culture shock (35%), with travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic falling to third place with just under one-third (28%) of youth saying it was a key challenge compared to nearly four in ten (37%) in 2022.

Table 17: Key benefits of travel

Question 4: What would you say are the key benefits you gained from your work, study or volunteer experiences outside of Canada?

Subgroup: Those who worked / studied / volunteered in Question 3 (n = 1,289); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

	Overall 16+ (n=1,289)	Overall 18+ (n=1,256)	16-17 (n=33)*	18-24 (n=493)	25-30 (n=358)	31-35 (n=405)	Male (n=687)	Female (n=589)	2022 Overall (n=1,021)
Learned about a new country or culture	73%	73%	55%	68%	76%	78%	73%	73%	76%
Exploration and adventure	59%	59%	36%	48%	64%	68%	52%	68%	68%
International travel experience that contributed toward my personal growth	49%	49%	24%	37%	53%	60%	44%	54%	57%
Obtained international career experience or professional development	42%	43%	15%	38%	50%	42%	46%	37%	37%
Learned or improved a secondary language	42%	42%	36%	43%	44%	39%	43%	40%	36%
Other	1%	1%	6%	0%	3%	1%	1%	2%	3%
Not applicable	5%	4%	21%	5%	3%	5%	4%	6%	5%

Table 18: Included international experience on resume

Question 24: Have you included your international work or volunteer experience on your resume after returning to Canada?

Subgroup: Those who worked / studied / volunteered in Question 3 (n = 1,289); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

	Overall 16+ (n=1,289)	Overall 18+ (n=1,256)	16-17 (n=33)*	18-24 (n=493)	25-30 (n=358)	31-35 (n=405)	Male (n=687)	Female (n=589)	2022 Overall (n=1,021)
Yes	65%	65%	52%	68%	67%	60%	68%	60%	57%
No	30%	30%	39%	25%	30%	36%	28%	33%	39%
Not sure	5%	5%	9%	7%	3%	4%	4%	6%	3%

Table 19: Reasons for not including international experience on resume

Question 25: For what reason have you not included this experience on your resume?

Subgroup: Those who did not include international experience on resume (n = 399).

	Overall 16+ (n=391)	Overall 18+ (n=378)	18-24 (n=130)	25-30 (n=104)	31-35 (n=144)	Male (n=189)	Female (n=198)	2022 Overall (n=299)
Didn't think it was relevant/important to the job I was applying for	42%	43%	41%	41%	47%	42%	42%	30%
Not valid experience at the time/not worth noting/didn't do much for me	14%	14%	14%	12%	15%	14%	14%	16%
Didn't think of it/didn't want to/didn't know I could	8%	8%	10%	4%	8%	6%	10%	8%
It was a very short trip	6%	6%	1%	10%	7%	4%	8%	5%
Trip was mainly for leisure/didn't work or volunteer abroad	5%	5%	8%	4%	5%	5%	6%	5%
Still working for the same employer/it was part of my work/haven't needed to update my CV yet	4%	5%	4%	6%	4%	8%	1%	11%
It was long time ago	4%	4%	2%	1%	8%	2%	7%	3%
Was a learning trip during high school/university/it was for study not work	3%	2%	2%	4%	2%	1%	5%	6%
Informal experience	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%
Other	4%	4%	4%	6%	1%	6%	2%	4%
No specific reason	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%	2%	5%
Don't know	11%	11%	13%	14%	6%	8%	12%	8%

Table 20: Agreement with statements about international travel

Question 26: How much do you agree with the following statements?

Subgroup: Those who worked / studied / volunteered in Question 3 (n = 1,289); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

Top 2 Box (Strongly or somewhat agree)	Overall 16+ (n=1,289)	Overall 18+ (n=1,256)	16-17 (n=33)*	18-24 (n=493)	25-30 (n=358)	31-35 (n=405)	Male (n=687)	Female (n=589)	2022 Overall (n=1,021)
I am eager to highlight my international experience to potential employers	70%	70%	52%	73%	69%	68%	73%	66%	64%
I feel that my international experience improved my job prospects upon returning to Canada	63%	63%	52%	64%	63%	62%	66%	58%	53%
Potential employers ask about my international experience	55%	56%	39%	57%	57%	53%	59%	50%	47%

Table 21: Key challenges of travel

Question 5: What would you say are the key challenges you faced during your work, study or volunteer experiences outside of Canada?

Subgroup: Those who worked / studied / volunteered in Question 3 (n = 1,289); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

Challenges	Overall 16+ (n=1,289)	Overall 18+ (n=1,256)	16-17 (n=33)*	18-24 (n=493)	25-30 (n=358)	31-35 (n=405)	Male (n=687)	Female (n=589)	2022 Overall (n=1,021)
Encountering a language barrier	44%	44%	42%	41%	45%	46%	41%	47%	46%
Challenges with country customs and laws, cultural norms or cultural shock	35%	35%	27%	36%	34%	35%	36%	33%	33%
Feeling safe or secure (ex. Concerns about personal safety, and/or racial, religious, or sexual orientation/gender discrimination)	29%	29%	15%	29%	32%	26%	28%	29%	23%
Travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic	28%	28%	19%	29%	26%	29%	30%	25%	37%
Isolation or loneliness	26%	26%	9%	25%	29%	26%	24%	28%	25%
Financial issues funding my travel experience	25%	25%	21%	24%	27%	24%	22%	28%	23%
Challenges with travel, residency or employment documents/permits	25%	25%	6%	23%	29%	26%	28%	21%	20%
Restrictions, lockdowns or work/school interruptions in your host country due to the COVID-19 pandemic	19%	19%	19%	21%	18%	17%	20%	17%	25%
Impact on my obligations back in Canada (family, children or career)	18%	18%	15%	14%	22%	19%	18%	17%	19%

Challenges	Overall 16+ (n=1,289)	Overall 18+ (n=1,256)	16-17 (n=33)*	18-24 (n=493)	25-30 (n=358)	31-35 (n=405)	Male (n=687)	Female (n=589)	2022 Overall (n=1,021)
Challenges finding employment outside of Canada	18%	18%	0%	19%	22%	14%	20%	15%	14%
I did not know how to get started	11%	11%	18%	13%	12%	7%	12%	10%	8%
Having to cut short your time abroad due to the COVID-19 pandemic	10%	10%	19%	14%	8%	8%	11%	10%	N/A
Other	1%	1%	6%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Not applicable	9%	9%	21%	6%	7%	13%	7%	11%	12%

C. Work Abroad and Awareness of IEC

Past Participation in IEC

Fewer than two in ten youth (16%) report having participated in the IEC program in the past; of those IEC participants over two-thirds (68%) travelled through the open work permit option. Satisfaction remains high (89%) among past IEC participants, with a majority (89%) saying they are likely to recommend the program.

Fewer than two in ten youth (16%) say they have participated in the IEC program, an increase from one in ten (9%) last year. Participation in other youth mobility programs is comparatively lower than IEC with fewer youth saying they have participated in other programs like International Aboriginal Youth Internships (4%).

Most IEC participants (80%) say they participated in the IEC program before the COVID-19 pandemic, and they were most likely to use the open work permit option (68%). Among these past participants, Australia remains the most common destination with nearly one-third (29%) having travelled to the country through IEC. Consistent with previous results, France (19%), the UK (15%), and Germany (14%) are also top destinations.

Overall satisfaction with the IEC program remains steady and high, with a majority of participants saying they are very or somewhat satisfied (89%). When asked to elaborate on their reasoning, one in four (among those satisfied) say that IEC was simply a great personal experience (40%). Likelihood to recommend the program is also high, with 89% of past participants very or somewhat likely to recommend IEC to a friend or family member (a slight increase from last year's results).

Table 22: Past participation in IEC

Question 9: Have you ever participated in the International Experience Canada (IEC) program, which provides Canadian youth facilitated access to a work permit in 36 different countries and territories?

	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)	2022 Overall (n=2,504)
Yes	16%	16%	4%	19%	18%	11%	22%	9%	9%
No	83%	82%	93%	78%	81%	88%	76%	89%	87%
Not sure	2%	2%	3%	3%	1%	0%	2%	2%	4%

Table 23: Past participation in IEC

Question 9A: Did you participate in the IEC program before or after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020?

Subgroup: Those who have participated in IEC (n = 395); 16-17 not shown due to small sample size.

	Overall 16+ (n=395)	Overall 18+ (n=392)	18-24 (n=168)	25-30 (n=128)	31-35 (n=96)	Male (n=269)	Female (n=125)	2022 Overall (n=220)
Before the COVID-19 pandemic (before March 2020)	80%	80%	77%	79%	87%	79%	83%	87%
After the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 or later)	35%	35%	36%	42%	24%	34%	36%	21%

Table 24: Participation in other Canadian youth mobility programs

Question 9B: Have you ever travelled abroad using another Canadian youth mobility program such as the International Youth Internship Program (IYIP) or the International Aboriginal Youth Internships (IAYI)??

	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)	2022 Overall (n=2,504)
Yes - International Youth Internship Program (IYIP)	16%	16%	11%	22%	16%	10%	21%	11%	7%
Yes - International Aboriginal Youth Internships (IAYI)	4%	4%	1%	6%	5%	2%	6%	3%	2%
Yes - Other	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%
No	74%	74%	67%	62%	77%	85%	67%	81%	87%
Not sure	5%	5%	19%	9%	3%	3%	6%	5%	4%

Table 25: IEC countries visited

Question 10: Which International Experience Canada partner country(ies) did you go to?

Subgroup: Those who have participated in IEC (n=395); 16-17 not shown due to small sample size.

	Overall 16+ (n=395)	Overall 18+ (n=392)	18-24 (n=168)	25-30 (n=128)	31-35 (n=96)	Male (n=269)	Female (n=125)	2022 Overall (n=220)
Australia	29%	29%	24%	35%	31%	30%	28%	18%
France	19%	19%	18%	17%	23%	19%	20%	17%
United Kingdom	15%	15%	18%	14%	11%	16%	13%	11%
Germany	14%	14%	13%	12%	19%	16%	10%	12%
Belgium	12%	12%	11%	16%	7%	13%	9%	3%
Costa Rica	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%	11%	11%	8%
Austria	10%	10%	9%	14%	6%	11%	6%	4%
Denmark	9%	9%	6%	12%	10%	11%	5%	5%
Japan	9%	9%	9%	7%	9%	11%	3%	6%
Italy	8%	8%	9%	8%	6%	9%	6%	7%
Mexico	8%	8%	10%	8%	3%	8%	8%	5%
Croatia	6%	6%	3%	14%	3%	6%	7%	2%
Czech Republic	6%	6%	4%	10%	3%	6%	6%	3%
Greece	6%	6%	6%	7%	5%	6%	6%	6%
New Zealand	6%	6%	4%	7%	6%	7%	3%	4%
Chile	5%	5%	3%	9%	3%	4%	8%	3%
Korea (Republic of)	5%	5%	5%	7%	2%	5%	4%	3%
Portugal	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	6%	3%
Sweden	5%	5%	4%	7%	4%	6%	3%	2%
Estonia	4%	4%	5%	5%	2%	4%	4%	2%
Hong Kong	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%	5%	2%	6%
Norway	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	7%
Slovakia	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	1%
Spain	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	5%	5%
Andorra	4%	4%	2%	3%	6%	3%	4%	1%
Ireland	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	4%	1%	4%
Netherlands	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%
Poland	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%
Switzerland	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%
Ukraine	3%	3%	5%	2%	3%	4%	2%	2%
Latvia	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	0%	1%

San Marino	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%	2%	1%	<1%
Slovenia	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	1%	1%
Lithuania	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	<1%
Luxembourg	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Taiwan	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	1%
None of the above	3%	3%	5%	1%	0%	2%	5%	5%

Table 26: IEC Travel Stream

Question 17A: What International Experience Canada stream did you travel through?

Subgroup: Those who have participated in IEC (n=395); 16-17 not shown due to small sample size.

	Overall 16+ (n=395)	Overall 18+ (n=392)	18-24 (n=168)	25-30 (n=128)	31-35 (n=96)	Male (n=269)	Female (n=125)	2022 Overall (n=220)
Open work permit	68%	68%	66%	73%	63%	66%	73%	68%
Employer-Specific Work Permit (pre-arranged contract of employment was required)	31%	31%	31%	27%	37%	34%	24%	25%
Do not know	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%	<1%	2%	7%

Table 27: IEC satisfaction rating

Question 21: To what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with your work and travel abroad experience via the International Experience Canada program?

Subgroup: Those who have participated in IEC (n=395); 16-17 not shown due to small sample size.

	Overall 16+ (n=395)	Overall 18+ (n=392)	18-24 (n=168)	25-30 (n=128)	31-35 (n=96)	Male (n=269)	Female (n=125)	2022 Overall (n=220)
Net: Satisfied	89%	89%	84%	88%	98%	88%	90%	86%
Very satisfied	50%	50%	49%	47%	55%	52%	46%	35%
Somewhat satisfied	39%	39%	35%	42%	43%	37%	44%	51%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8%	8%	11%	10%	2%	8%	9%	9%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2%	2%	4%	2%	0%	3%	1%	1%
Very dissatisfied	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	<1%	1%	1%
Do not know	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%	3%

Table 28: IEC satisfaction rating reasons

Question 22: Why do you say that?

Subgroup: Those who have participated in IEC and were satisfied with it (n=352); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

	Overall 16+ (n=352)	Overall 18+ (n=349)	18-24 (n=98)	25-30 (n=41)*	31-35 (n=51)*	Male (n=147)	Female (n=42)	2022 Overall (n=190)
Great experience/ personal growth	40%	40%	39%	42%	39%	37%	45%	51%
Ability to travel/see new places/meet people	12%	12%	10%	13%	13%	13%	9%	7%
Easy process/ good support	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%	11%	11%	10%
Good program to learn	9%	9%	9%	6%	12%	9%	7%	9%
It was fun experience	7%	7%	7%	5%	11%	6%	10%	9%
It was okay/could have been better	6%	6%	9%	4%	6%	6%	8%	4%
Was able to work and earn money	5%	5%	4%	6%	6%	5%	4%	1%
Everything was set up/arranged professionally	4%	3%	2%	2%	6%	3%	6%	6%
Some negative sides (e.g. Complex Process)	1%	1%	3%	0%	1%	2%	1%	6%
Improved a second language	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	<1	2%	0%
It was difficult to find a job	<1%	<1%	1%	0%	0%	<1%	0%	1%
Didn't stay for long	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Other	3%	3%	2%	5%	1%	3%	2%	3%
No reason/my thoughts/just do	3%	3%	3%	2%	5%	3%	4%	5%
Not sure	3%	3%	5%	2%	1%	3%	3%	4%

Table 29: IEC satisfaction rating reasons

Question 22: Why do you say that?

Subgroup: Those who have participated in IEC and were dissatisfied with it or neutral (n = 43); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

	Overall (n=43)*	2022 Overall (n=24)*
It was okay/could have been better	12%	20%
Great experience/ personal growth	11%	12%
Some negative sides (e.g. Complex Process)	7%	21%
Was able to work and earn money	5%	0%
Ability to travel/see new places/meet people	2%	5%
It was difficult to find a job	2%	0%
Easy process/ good support	2%	0%
It was fun experience	2%	0%
Good program to learn	2%	0%

Other	3%	6%
No reason/my thoughts/just do	25%	23%
Not sure	17%	15%

Table 30: IEC recommendation rating

Question 23: To what extent are you likely or unlikely to recommend an international working abroad experience such as International Experience Canada to family or friends?

Subgroup: Those who have participated in IEC (n=395); 16-17 not shown due to small sample size

	Overall 16+ (n=395)	Overall 18+ (n=392)	18-24 (n=168)	25-30 (n=128)	31-35 (n=96)	Male (n=269)	Female (n=125)	2022 Overall (n=220)
Net: Likely	89%	89%	84%	92%	95%	90%	87%	85%
Very likely	48%	48%	43%	46%	58%	48%	47%	33%
Somewhat likely	41%	41%	41%	46%	37%	42%	39%	52%
Neither likely nor unlikely	8%	8%	12%	7%	4%	7%	11%	13%
Somewhat unlikely	2%	2%	3%	2%	0%	2%	1%	1%
Very unlikely	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	<1%	1%	1%
Not sure	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	1%	<1%	0%	1%

Awareness of IEC (Among all Canadian Youth)

General awareness of the IEC program among Canadian youth has increased since 2022 but still remains low. Those who are aware of IEC are most likely to have learned about the program through friends and family or general internet searches. Among those who are not aware of IEC, roughly one-third are interested in learning more which is consistent with past results. General internet searches, schools, and word of mouth are their preferred channels for learning more.

Awareness in terms of those who know the program well (9%) and know a fair amount about the program (11%) has increased since last year. Consistent with previous years, those who are aware of IEC are more likely to learn about it from friends and family (34%) as well as through general internet searches (25%). Other common source include: academic or campus resources (22%), through work (17%), or from people or groups followed on social media (17%). In total, one-third (32%) heard about the program directly through the IRCC either through its website, social media, or information sessions.

About half of participants (51%) say they have never heard of IEC at all. Of these youth who were not previously aware of IEC, one third (29%) indicated interest in learning more, preferably through internet searches (46%), through their school (27%) or through friends and family (26%).

Table 31: IEC Awareness

Question 17B: Before taking this survey, to what extent were you aware or unaware of the International Experience Canada program?

	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)	2022 Overall (n=2,504)
Know the program well	9%	9%	3%	11%	9%	7%	12%	6%	4%
Know a fair amount about the program	11%	11%	4%	14%	11%	8%	14%	8%	7%

Know a little bit about the program	13%	13%	8%	14%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
Only know the name	11%	11%	16%	12%	11%	9%	11%	11%	12%
Never heard of it	51%	51%	59%	42%	52%	59%	45%	57%	61%
Do not know	5%	5%	10%	7%	4%	3%	4%	5%	3%

Table 32: How they became aware of IEC

Question 18: How did you become aware of the International Experience Canada program?

Subgroup: Those aware of IEC program (n = 1,121); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

	Overall 16+ (n=1,121)	Overall 18+ (n=1,098)	16-17 (n=23)*	18-24 (n=482)	25-30 (n=308)	31-35 (n=308)	Male (n=601)	Female (n=513)	2022 Overall (n=887)
From my friends and family	34%	34%	30%	32%	32%	38%	33%	36%	35%
NET: IRCC / IEC Source	32%	32%	13%	30%	36%	30%	37%	24%	23%
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada website (Canada.ca/iec)	16%	16%	0%	13%	21%	16%	18%	12%	13%
International Experience Canada Abroad Facebook account: @CanadiansAbroadIEC	13%	14%	0%	14%	15%	12%	17%	9%	7%
International Experience Canada Abroad Instagram account: @iec_abroad	12%	12%	9%	11%	14%	11%	15%	8%	7%
International Experience Canada information seminar/session/fair (please specify which seminar/session/fair)	<1%	<1%	4%	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
General internet search	25%	25%	17%	23%	28%	25%	25%	25%	24%
Academic institution/School campus	22%	21%	30%	23%	23%	17%	21%	22%	21%
Through my work	17%	17%	4%	17%	18%	17%	19%	14%	14%
Person/group I follow on social media	17%	17%	17%	16%	20%	15%	18%	16%	13%
From a news agency (in print or online)	13%	13%	9%	14%	14%	11%	16%	9%	9%
Through a Recognized Organization (AIESEC, SWAP, etc.)	14%	14%	4%	13%	17%	12%	17%	10%	8%
Specific websites I visit (please specify which website(s))	1%	1%	0%	2%	<1%	0%	1%	<1%	<1%
Other	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Do not know	5%	4%	30%	4%	5%	5%	3%	7%	7%

Table 33: Like to receive information about IEC

Question 19: Would you like to receive information about the International Experience Canada Program?

Subgroup: Those who have never heard of IEC (n = 1,439); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

	Overall 16+ (n=1,439)	Overall 18+ (n=1,389)	16-17 (n=50)*	18-24 (n=478)	25-30 (n=388)	31-35 (n=523)	Male (n=587)	Female (n=833)	2022 Overall (n=1,617)
Yes	29%	29%	22%	32%	33%	24%	29%	29%	30%
No	54%	54%	54%	47%	54%	61%	56%	53%	54%
Not sure	17%	17%	24%	21%	14%	15%	15%	18%	16%

Table 34: Preference to receive information about IEC

Question 20: How would you prefer to receive information about the International Experience Canada program?

Subgroup: Those who have never heard of IEC and are interested in receiving information about it (n = 659); 16-17 not shown due to small sample size n=23

	Overall 16+ (n=659)	Overall 18+ (n=636)	18-24 (n=254)	25-30 (n=179)	31-35 (n=203)	Male (n=255)	Female (n=392)	2022 Overall (n=743)
General internet search	46%	46%	42%	51%	48%	50%	43%	50%
Academic institution/School campus	27%	27%	33%	25%	21%	24%	29%	33%
From my friends and family	26%	26%	26%	24%	28%	24%	29%	25%
Through my work	22%	22%	17%	22%	28%	23%	21%	22%
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada website (Canada.ca/iec)	20%	21%	13%	21%	29%	18%	22%	20%
International Experience Canada Abroad Instagram account: @iec_abroad	17%	17%	15%	21%	16%	12%	20%	16%
Through a recognized organization (AIESEC, SWAP, etc.)	16%	16%	14%	19%	17%	14%	18%	18%
From a news agency (in print or online)	15%	15%	16%	16%	13%	14%	16%	15%
International Experience Canada information seminar/session/fair	15%	16%	12%	19%	16%	14%	16%	17%
International Experience Canada Abroad Facebook account: @CanadiansAbroadIEC	13%	13%	8%	18%	16%	11%	15%	15%
Person/group I follow on social media	13%	13%	13%	13%	14%	13%	13%	15%
Specific websites I visit	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%	1%	2%	1%
Other	3%	3%	1%	5%	3%	2%	4%	4%
Do not know	16%	15%	19%	13%	13%	16%	15%	11%

D. Motivations and Barriers to Work, Study or Volunteer Outside of Canada

Impact of COVID-19 on Travel Attitudes

Interest in international travel has grown stronger among youth, with more than three quarters (78%) predicting they are likely to travel outside of Canada before they turn 36. The sense of pent-up demand for international travel still exists and an increasing proportion of Canadian youth say that they feel comfortable travelling as long as they are vaccinated (64%).

Most Canadian youth look forward to some form of international travel, especially for leisure or business purposes. The likelihood of youth saying they would travel for leisure, work, volunteer, or study purposes have all increased since 2022. Nearly four fifths (78%) say they are very or somewhat likely to pursue a trip for leisure or business before they turn 36. Two fifths (42%) say they are at least somewhat likely to travel specifically for work.

Compared to 2022, a larger proportion of Canadian youth (64%) say that they feel comfortable travelling internationally as long as they are fully vaccinated. Many youth still relate to having a sense of pent-up demand with over half (57%) agreeing that they are more likely to travel internationally because travel restrictions made it difficult to travel for so long. Although agreement with this statement is high, it has fallen compared to 2022 when more travel restrictions were in place. Over four in ten agree there are places in the world they would no longer consider living in (44%), a result that has increased since 2022.

Table 35: Likely to travel before turning 36

Question 11A: How likely are you to do any of the following activities outside of Canada in the future before you turn 36?

Net: Very or somewhat likely	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)	2022 Overall (n=2,504)
Travel for leisure or business	78%	79%	70%	75%	84%	78%	77%	80%	76%
Work	42%	42%	44%	49%	42%	34%	48%	36%	34%
Volunteer	29%	29%	40%	37%	29%	21%	33%	26%	20%
Study	29%	28%	48%	40%	26%	18%	33%	24%	20%

Table 36: Agreement with statements about travel

Question 12: Having experienced the COVID-19 pandemic, how much do you agree with each of the following statements?

Net: Strongly or somewhat agree	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)	2022 Overall (n=2,504)
I feel comfortable travelling internationally as long as I am fully vaccinated	64%	64%	60%	64%	66%	62%	64%	63%	56%
I am more likely to travel internationally when it is possible because travel restrictions have made it difficult to travel for so long	57%	57%	47%	55%	61%	56%	56%	58%	64%
There are places in the world where I would no longer consider living in	44%	44%	44%	47%	46%	41%	47%	42%	39%

case there is another pandemic									
The pandemic has made me less likely to live outside Canada in the future	36%	36%	21%	36%	38%	34%	39%	32%	33%
I won't feel comfortable living in another country until their COVID-19 rates approaches zero	31%	31%	23%	36%	31%	25%	36%	25%	34%

Future Travel Motivations and Barriers for Canadian Youth

Opportunity for adventure and learning about a new culture remain top travel motivators for Canadian youth. Language barriers, financial concerns and personal obligations are among the most common reasons given against travelling. Four in ten say they are likely to participate in IEC or a similar international program in the future, most often due to having positive impressions about this type of experience.

When asked to indicate how much they agree with a list of possible motivations for international opportunities, most agree that exploration and adventure (80%) and learning about a new country or culture (78%) motivates them to travel. Personal growth (71%), improving secondary language skills (68%), and professional development (57%) are also strong motivators. These results are consistent with top motivators in 2022. In a new open-ended question, respondents were asked to name other motivators; the top responses were similar to the items in the agreement scale.

Canadian youth were also asked to think about factors that prevent them from seeking work, study, or volunteer opportunities abroad. Youth most often agree that language barriers (58%) and financial issues (58%) are barriers, closely followed by obligations at home in Canada (54%) and not knowing how to get started (54%). In an open-ended question that asked respondents to name additional barriers, personal obligations (19%) and financial concerns (16%) were mentioned most often.

After considering motivators and barriers, Canadian youth were also asked about their likelihood of participating in a program like IEC in the future. Four in ten (39%) said they are at least somewhat likely to participate in an international program, an increase from 2022 results. Among the youth likely to pursue it, common reasons in favour of an international mobility program like IEC include positive impressions of this type of experience (32%), the chance to explore new culture (18%), and general interest in travel (11%); this top three is consistent with 2022. Australia (22%), England (14%), and USA (13%), three other English-speaking countries, are the top three destinations among those who are likely to pursue an international program in the future. Respondents were also asked to say what it is about a destination that would make it their top choice; the top three reasons given were culture (24%), it's a place they always wanted to visit (20%), and general interest (20%).

Among those who say they are neither likely nor unlikely to pursue an international experience (23% of youth), the top reasons are consistent with 2022: uncertainty or lack of interest (18%), followed by their general life stage or family barriers (11%). These reasons are similar but even more prominent among the three in ten youth (33%) who say they are not interested in an international mobility program: uncertainty or lack of interest (38%), followed by their general life stage or family barriers (28%)

Table 37: Travel motivations

Question 13: Thinking about what motivates you to work, study or volunteer outside of Canada, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I am interested in...

Net: Strongly or somewhat agree	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)	2022 Overall (n=2,504)
Exploration and adventure	80%	81%	75%	76%	82%	85%	77%	84%	84%
Learning about a new country or culture	78%	78%	74%	75%	80%	81%	75%	82%	81%
Pursuing international travel experiences that contribute toward my personal	71%	71%	68%	68%	74%	70%	67%	75%	72%
Learning or improving a secondary language	68%	68%	62%	68%	70%	66%	66%	69%	65%
Obtaining international career experience or professional development	57%	57%	52%	61%	59%	52%	59%	55%	55%

Table 38: Other travel motivators

Question 14: What else motivates you to work, study or volunteer outside of Canada? (3% or higher)

Motivators	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)
Learning about a new country or culture (food, religion, history, etc.)	25%	25%	33%	24%	27%	24%	22%	28%
Exploration and adventure	20%	20%	25%	20%	19%	20%	16%	23%
Pursuing international travel experiences that contribute toward my personal growth	12%	12%	9%	11%	13%	13%	12%	12%
Meeting new people/making new friends	9%	9%	109%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%
Better job opportunities with higher salary/better pay	9%	9%	8%	9%	8%	9%	11%	7%
A change of weather/scenery/place of living	6%	6%	7%	4%	6%	9%	5%	7%
I travel for leisure/fun/relaxation	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%
Helping others/making a difference in the world	5%	5%	5%	7%	5%	4%	5%	6%
Obtaining international career experience or professional development	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%	5%
Visit family/friends	4%	4%	5%	6%	3%	2%	4%	4%

Table 39: Travel barriers

Question 15: Thinking about what prevents you from working, studying or volunteering outside of Canada, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Net: Strongly or somewhat agree	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)	Overall (n=2,504)
I will have financial issues funding my travel experience	58%	58%	62%	59%	58%	55%	54%	61%	58%
I will encounter language barriers	58%	58%	49%	59%	59%	55%	56%	59%	59%
I have too many obligations here in Canada (ex. family, children or career)	54%	54%	38%	48%	56%	60%	51%	57%	58%
I do not know how to get started	54%	54%	52%	57%	55%	51%	51%	57%	56%
I will experience issues finding employment outside of Canada	50%	50%	36%	49%	53%	48%	49%	49%	49%
I will experience isolation or loneliness	48%	48%	32%	51%	48%	45%	45%	50%	46%
I will not feel safe or secure (ex. concerns about personal safety, and/or racial, religious or sexual orientation/gender discrimination)	43%	43%	41%	47%	43%	40%	39%	48%	39%
I will have an issue with the country customs and laws, cultural norms or experience cultural shock	38%	38%	32%	41%	40%	32%	39%	36%	33%
I will have an issue with travel, residency or employment documents or permits	37%	37%	32%	42%	37%	32%	38%	35%	34%
I have concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic or future similar pandemics	37%	37%	25%	42%	36%	33%	37%	37%	44%

Table 40: Travel barriers

Question 16: What else prevents you from working, studying or volunteering outside of Canada? (3% or higher)

	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)	2022 Overall (n=2,504)
I have too many obligations here in Canada (ex. family, children or career)	19%	19%	21%	15%	19%	23%	18%	20%	22%
I will have financial issues funding my travel experience	16%	16%	26%	19%	14%	15%	14%	18%	16%
No interest/prefer to stay in Canada/settled here/would only travel for leisure	9%	10%	4%	9%	9%	11%	9%	10%	7%
I do not know how to get started/lack of confidence to do so/stepping out of my comfort zone	6%	6%	3%	6%	6%	4%	5%	7%	4%
Personal health or wellness issues	5%	5%	4%	7%	5%	4%	4%	7%	5%
I will experience isolation or loneliness	5%	5%	7%	7%	5%	4%	4%	6%	2%
I will have an issue with travel, residency or employment documents or permits/travel documents	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%
I will experience issues finding employment outside of Canada	3%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%	4%	2%
Time/not enough vacation time	3%	3%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%
I will have an issue with the country customs and laws, cultural norms or experience cultural shock	3%	3%	5%	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%

Table 41: Likelihood of participating in a program like IEC in the future

Question 27: To what extent are you likely or unlikely to participate in a work and travel abroad program like International Experience Canada in the future?

	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)	2022 Overall (n=2,504)
Net: Likely	39%	39%	33%	49%	39%	28%	43%	34%	30%
Very likely	12%	12%	8%	15%	12%	8%	14%	10%	7%
Somewhat likely	27%	27%	25%	33%	27%	20%	29%	24%	22%
Neither likely nor unlikely	23%	23%	26%	24%	21%	25%	24%	22%	23%
Somewhat unlikely	14%	14%	18%	12%	17%	15%	12%	17%	18%
Very unlikely	19%	20%	10%	10%	21%	29%	17%	22%	25%
Do not know	4%	4%	14%	6%	3%	3%	3%	5%	4%

Table 42: Reasons for being likely / not likely to participate in a program like IEC (3% or higher)

Question 28: Why do you say that?

Subgroup: Those likely to participate in a work and travel abroad program like IEC in future (n = 713); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

	Overall 16+ (n=993)	Overall 18+ (n=969)	16-17 (n=24)*	18-24 (n=465)	25-30 (n=273)	31-35 (n=231)	Male (n=515)	Female (n=470)	2022 Overall (n=713)
Positive impression of program/ curious about it/sounds interesting	32%	32%	33%	29%	36%	32%	27%	38%	30%
Explore new culture and experience life/work in abroad	18%	18%	17%	17%	19%	19%	19%	17%	19%
Enjoy travelling/seeing new places	11%	11%	21%	11%	11%	11%	9%	14%	14%
Personal preference, choices and experience	7%	7%	8%	9%	7%	6%	9%	6%	2%
Need more information/ if opportunity arise	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%	6%	4%
Concern about Career/Financial/Visa/Process/Safety	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	5%	2%	6%	3%
Would add experience to my resume/will offer better employment chances in Canada	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	8%
Age/Family/Life stage/timing	3%	3%	0%	2%	4%	3%	2%	4%	5%

Table 43: Reasons for being likely / not likely to participate in a program like IEC (3% or more)**Question 28: Why do you say that?****Subgroup: Those neither likely nor unlikely to participate in a work and travel abroad program like IEC in future (n = 595); 16-17 not shown due to small sample size.**

	Overall 16+ (n=595)	Overall 18+ (n=576)	18-24 (n=228)	25-30 (n=145)	31-35 (n=203)	Male (n=279)	Female (n=309)	2022 Overall (n=580)
Not sure about future/Not interested/Like Canada	18%	17%	16%	17%	18%	15%	20%	25%
Age/Family/Life stage/timing	11%	11%	4%	12%	17%	9%	12%	15%
Need more information/ if opportunity arise	10%	10%	9%	16%	7%	8%	12%	11%
Concern about Career/Financial/Visa/Process/Safety	10%	10%	9%	11%	10%	10%	9%	9%
Depends on opportunities offered internationally	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%	6%	4%	8%
Positive impression of program/ curious about it/sounds interesting	4%	4%	4%	6%	4%	3%	5%	6%
Haven't thought about it before	4%	4%	6%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%
Personal preference, choices and experience	3%	3%	6%	1%	2%	3%	4%	2%
Unable to participate/may not qualify/too many restrictions/too much work to do	3%	4%	2%	3%	6%	3%	4%	4%

Table 44: Reasons for being likely / not likely to participate in a program like IEC (3% or more)**Question 28: Why do you say that?****Subgroup: Those unlikely to participate in a work and travel abroad program like IEC in future (n = 860); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.**

	Overall 16+ (n=860)	Overall 18+ (n=840)	16-17 (n=20)*	18-24 (n=212)	25-30 (n=256)	31-35 (n=372)	Male (n=353)	Female (n=498)	2022 Overall (n=1,097)
Not sure about future/Not interested/Like Canada	38%	38%	30%	41%	40%	35%	40%	35%	34%
Age/Family/Life stage/timing	28%	29%	10%	13%	25%	40%	24%	32%	35%
Concern about Career/Financial/Visa/Process/Safety	18%	18%	10%	15%	18%	20%	16%	20%	20%
Unable to participate/may not qualify/too many restrictions/too much work to do	5%	6%	0%	4%	3%	8%	5%	6%	4%
Prefer to take care of things myself/not through a program	3%	3%	25%	5%	3%	2%	3%	4%	2%
Need more information/ if opportunity arises	3%	3%	10%	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%

Table 45: Countries of interest for travel abroad (3% and above)

Question 29: If you were to participate in a work and travel abroad program like IEC in the future, which country or countries would you be most interested in going to for such an experience?

	Overall 16+ (n=2,560)	Overall 18+ (n=2,487)	16-17 (n=73)	18-24 (n=960)	25-30 (n=696)	31-35 (n=831)	Male (n=1,188)	Female (n=1,346)
Australia	22%	23%	7%	23%	24%	23%	22%	23%
England	14%	14%	16%	12%	17%	14%	12%	16%
United States of America	13%	13%	11%	12%	13%	14%	14%	12%
Japan	12%	12%	12%	13%	12%	11%	13%	11%
France	12%	12%	18%	12%	11%	13%	10%	14%
Italy	9%	9%	15%	8%	9%	10%	8%	11%
Germany	8%	8%	10%	7%	7%	9%	9%	7%
New Zealand	7%	7%	7%	4%	8%	10%	5%	9%
Argentina	6%	6%	4%	8%	6%	4%	9%	4%
Ireland	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%	6%	4%	7%
Greece	5%	5%	4%	6%	4%	5%	4%	6%
Belgium	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%	6%	4%
Spain	5%	5%	7%	3%	5%	7%	4%	6%
Costa Rica	4%	4%	8%	4%	4%	4%	3%	6%
Switzerland	4%	4%	0%	3%	5%	5%	4%	5%
China	4%	4%	5%	5%	4%	3%	5%	3%
Brazil	4%	4%	10%	5%	2%	3%	4%	3%
Austria	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%
South Korea	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%
Scotland	3%	3%	4%	2%	4%	4%	1%	5%
Norway	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Sweden	3%	3%	1%	2%	4%	4%	2%	3%
Denmark	3%	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%

Table 46: Countries of interest for travel abroad (3% and above)

Question 29: If you were to participate in a work and travel abroad program like IEC in the future, which country or countries would you be most interested in going to for such an experience? Subgroup: Those who are very or somewhat likely to participate in a program like IEC (n=908)

Top destinations among those likely to participate	Overall 16+ (n=908)
Australia	29%
England	19%
France	10%
United States of America	9%
Japan	9%
Argentina	9%
Italy	8%
Germany	8%
New Zealand	8%
Belgium	8%
China	8%
Greece	7%
Austria	7%
Costa Rica	6%
Spain	5%
Algeria	5%
Brazil	5%
Switzerland	5%
Ireland	5%
South Korea	4%
Armenia	4%
Angola	4%
Afghanistan	4%
Denmark	3%
Bahrain	3%
Barbados	3%
Norway	3%
United Arab Emirates	3%

Table 47: Countries of interest for travel abroad (3% and above)

Question 30: What is it about these destinations that make them your top choices?

Subgroup: Those who named at least one country in Question 29 (n = 2,122); *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

	Overall 16+ (n=2,112)	Overall 18+ (n=2,053)	16-17 (n=59)*	18-24 (n=785)	25-30 (n=579)	31-35 (n=689)	Male (n=992)	Female (n=1,099)
Culture/history/ music	24%	24%	32%	24%	21%	26%	22%	26%
Always wanted to go/ explore/visit	20%	20%	22%	20%	22%	19%	16%	24%
Interested in them/fun places/ I like them	20%	20%	15%	21%	22%	18%	22%	18%
Beautiful place/landscape/ nature/scenery	12%	12%	15%	15%	10%	11%	11%	13%
Language is the same/English or French-speaking	11%	11%	7%	8%	11%	15%	9%	14%
Familiarity/been there before/ I like it there	9%	9%	2%	7%	10%	10%	7%	10%
Strong economy/job opportunities	8%	9%	5%	7%	10%	9%	9%	8%
Developed/safe country	6%	6%	0%	4%	6%	8%	5%	6%
Climate/warm weather	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	8%	5%	7%
Family/friends/k now people there	5%	5%	7%	7%	3%	5%	5%	5%
Heard good things/ reputation	5%	5%	5%	7%	3%	4%	5%	4%
Lifestyle/politics	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	5%	4%	5%
People are friendly	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Food and drink	4%	4%	5%	3%	3%	5%	4%	3%
Language is different/to learn a new language	3%	2%	7%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%

Table 48: Countries of interest for travel abroad (3% and above)

Question 30: What is it about these destinations that make them your top choices?

Subgroup: Those who named at least one country in Question 29 and said they are at least somewhat likely to participate in a program like IEC in Question 23 (n=408) *Small sample size, interpret with caution.

Top reasons among those likely to participate	Overall 16+ (n=408)
Interested in them/fun places/I like them	21%
Always wanted to go/explore/visit	16%
Culture/history/music	16%
Beautiful place/landscape/nature/scenery	8%
Strong economy/job opportunities	7%
People are friendly	4%
Familiarity/been there before/I like it there	4%
Developed/safe country	4%
Heard good things/reputation	4%
Family/friends/know people there	3%
Climate/warm weather	3%
Other	10%
DK/NA	13%

Appendix A: Research methodology

In order to meet IRCC's research objectives two phases of research were conducted with Canadian youth aged 16 to 35.

Qualitative phase

Environics Research conducted a series of 16 online focus groups with 120 Canadian youth aged 16 to 35 in January and February 2023 to discuss their experiences and perceptions of international travel in general, and the International Experience Canada program (IEC). The focus groups were conducted online using Zoom. Groups were recruited by region, with general population groups for Ontario (2), British Columbia (1), Atlantic provinces (1), Manitoba and Saskatchewan (1), Alberta (1), and Quebec (2). Additional groups were recruited for 2SLGBTQI+ youth (2), youth with mobility, visual, or hearing impairments (1), female youth in STEM fields (1), Indigenous youth (3), and youth who had participated in the International Experience Canada program (IEC) (1). The two Quebec sessions were conducted in French and the other fourteen sessions were conducted in English.

Table 49: Focus group schedule

Target group	Dates	Time	Attendance
Ontario - General population youth 16-35 (English)	Tuesday January 24	6pm EST	7
British Columbia - General population youth 16-35 (English)	Tuesday January 24	8pm EST (5pm PST)	7
Atlantic Provinces - General population youth 16-35 (English)	Wednesday January 25	5pm EST (6pm AST)	8
Alberta - General population youth 16-35 (English)	Wednesday January 25	7pm EST (5pm MST)	7
Ontario - General population youth 16-35 (English)	Thursday January 26	5pm EST	8
Manitoba and Saskatchewan - General population youth 16-35 (English)	Thursday January 26	7pm EST (6pm CST)	8
2SLGBTQI+ youth 16 to 24	Monday February 6	8pm EST	8
Quebec - General population youth 16-35 (French)	Tuesday February 7	5pm EST	6
Quebec - General population youth 16-35 (French)	Tuesday February 7	7pm EST	8
2SLGBTQI+ youth 25 to 35 (English)	Wednesday February 8	8pm EST	8
Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (English)	Thursday February 9	6pm EST	7
Female youth who are completing or who have completed a STEM degree (English)	Thursday February 9	8pm EST	7
Indigenous Youth 16 to 35 (English)	Tuesday, February 21	6pm EST	8
Indigenous Youth 16 to 35 (English)	Wednesday, February 22	7pm EST	8
Indigenous Youth 16 to 35 (English)	Thursday, February 23	8pm EST	8
Past IEC participants (English)	Tuesday, February 28	7pm EST	7

Participants were 16 to 35 years of age, and included a range of age, education and backgrounds. The groups lasted approximately 90 minutes, and consisted of between six and eight participants (out of 8 people recruited for each group). Participants in most groups were provided a \$125 honorarium to encourage participation and

thank them for their time commitment; participants in the Indigenous youth groups were provided a \$175 honorarium, those in the IEC participants group were provided a \$100 honorarium.

All groups were video- and audio-recorded for use in subsequent analysis by the research team. During the recruitment process and at the session sign-in, participants provided consent to such recording and were given privacy and confidentiality assurances. All qualitative research work was conducted in accordance with professional standards and applicable government legislation (e.g., PIPEDA).

Recruitment

Groups were recruited using two methods. For all groups except the Indigenous youth groups and the IEC participants group, recruitment was conducted by Environics' qualitative partner Trend Research, which is one of Canada's most well established and respected qualitative research recruiting operations. This recruiting was conducted by telephone and e-mail by Trend's professional team of experienced and trained qualitative research recruiters. Trend maintains a panel of prospective qualitative research participants across Canada. The panel is composed of people who have taken part in quantitative surveys and agreed to be contacted to be potential paid participants in qualitative research projects, as well as people who are recruited to the panel through social media promotion.

Environics developed the recruitment screener and provided it to IRCC for review prior to its deployment with Trend. Participants were contacted randomly by phone and e-mail and screened to ensure they were invited to the appropriate session. Participants were also screened to ensure the groups included a mix of gender, education and age, and that they would be comfortable voicing their opinions in front of others. Normal focus group exclusions were in place (marketing research, media and employment in the federal government, and recent related focus group attendance). Participants recruited through Trend were offered a \$125 honorarium to encourage participation and thank them for their time commitment.

The three Indigenous youth groups and the IEC participants group were recruited using a networking approach, where organizations serving Indigenous youth and IEC partner organizations were asked to share information about the study with their own networks. Interested potential participants were directed to contact Environics Research. Those who contacted Environics were screened according to the same general criteria used for other focus groups, and to ensure they qualified as Indigenous youth (based on self-identification) or as participants of IEC. The networking approach was used due to the relatively low incidence of these groups within the general population. Note that a few members of the regional general population groups recruited by Trend also identified as Indigenous. Participants in the Indigenous youth sessions were offered a \$175 honorarium, while IEC participants were offered a \$100 honorarium.

Indigenous youth participants were recruited with an effort toward reaching a broad cross-section of Indigenous people living across Canada, but no specific quotas were set. Participants resided in communities across Canada. Note that the following table is based on province/territory of permanent residence; some youth participants are currently attending school away from their home communities.

Table 50: Indigenous Focus Group Participant Residence

Province / Territory	Count
Alberta	5
British Columbia	3
Manitoba	2
New Brunswick	1

Newfoundland and Labrador	3
Nova Scotia	3
Ontario	3
Quebec	2
Saskatchewan	1
Yukon	1
Total	24

During recruitment, youth were asked to indicate which Indigenous group they identify with, i.e. First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. Of the 24 participants, 14 were First Nations, six were Métis, and four were Inuit.

Table 51: Indigenous Identity of Youth

Province / Territory	Count
First Nations	14
Métis	6
Inuit	4
Total	24

In addition to the broader identity groups, many First Nations participants named the specific nations, bands, and communities that they are connected to, including a wide range of peoples such as Mohawk, L'nu, Mi'kmaq, Dene, Algonquin, Ojibwe, Blackfoot, Cree and often naming more specific community names within these groups (e.g. Akwesasne, Siksika Nation, Wiikwemkoong, and others).

Moderation

Two senior researchers were used to moderate most sessions, as follows:

- Stephanie Coulter, Senior Research Associate, Environics, moderated general population sessions in English, and the IEC participants session in English.
- France Mercier, Senior Associate, moderated both French sessions and the sessions with 2SLGBTQI+ youth and youth with impairments in English.

Additionally, the three Indigenous youth sessions were moderated in English by an Indigenous consultant, Elena Abel, from NVision Insight Group Inc.

Statement of limitations

Qualitative research provides insight into the range of opinions held within a population, rather than the weights of the opinions held, as would be measured in a quantitative study. The results of this type of research should be viewed as indicative rather than projectable to the population.

Quantitative phase

The **quantitative online survey** was conducted to understand travel behaviour and motivations among Canadian youth, from the perspective of the youth themselves. It gathered information on their travel experience, their views on travel in general and post-pandemic travel, their views on the IEC program and their future intentions regarding international experiences.

Sample design and weighting

A sample of 2,560 Canadian citizens aged 16-35 was drawn from an online panel of Canadians who have consented to participate in online surveys. These survey participants were qualified through a screener at the beginning of the survey. This sample was stratified by region, age, and gender to reflect proportions provided by IRCC, based on the 2021 Census. Given the limited number of respondents aged 16-17, these cases were left unweighted.

Table 52: Gender

	% of population	% of weighted sample	Actual Unweighted	Actual Weighted
Male	49%	50%	1,188	1,286
Female	51%	49%	1,346	1,250
Another gender	-	1%	23	21
No Response	-	<1%	3	3

Table 53: Age

	% of population	% of weighted sample	Actual Unweighted	Actual Weighted
16 to 17	9%	3%	73	73
18 to 24	32%	36%	960	911
25 to 35	59%	62%	1,527	1,576

Table 54: Jurisdiction

	% of population	% of weighted sample	Actual Unweighted	Actual Weighted
Atlantic	6%	6%	150	156
Quebec	21%	22%	558	574
Ontario	40%	39%	1005	995
Manitoba / Saskatchewan	7%	7%	180	177
Alberta	12%	12%	333	316
BC/Territories	14%	13%	334	341

Since online panels are not random probability samples, no formal estimates of sampling error can be calculated. Although opt-in panels are not random probability samples, online surveys can be used for general population surveys provided they are well designed and employ a large, well-maintained panel. Respondents were informed about privacy and anonymity.

Questionnaire design and pre-test

Environics adapted the survey questionnaire provided by IRCC to meet the research objectives. Once finalized, the online survey was translated into French. The final online survey/screener is included in Appendix B.

Environics' data analysts programmed the questionnaire, then performed thorough testing to ensure accuracy in set-up and data collection. This validation ensured that the data entry process conformed to the surveys' basic

logic. The data collection system handles sampling invitations, quotas and questionnaire logic (skip patterns, branching, and valid ranges).

Prior to finalizing the survey for field, a pre-test (soft launch) was conducted in English and French. The pre-test assessed the questionnaire in terms of question wording and sequencing, respondent sensitivity to specific questions and to the survey overall, and to determine the survey length. As no changes were required following the pre-test, the pre-test cases (60 English, 23 French) were included in the analysis.

Fieldwork

The survey was conducted by Environics using a secure, fully featured web-based survey environment. The interviews took place from February 15 (soft launch pre-test) to March 5, 2023. The average interview length among those who completed the full quantitative survey was 15 minutes.

All respondents were offered the opportunity to complete the survey in their official language of choice. All research work was conducted in accordance with the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research – Online Surveys and recognized industry standards, as well as applicable federal legislation (Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, or PIPEDA).

Participation rate

The participation rate for the survey was 6.8% (calculated as the number of responding units, divided by the sum of unresolved units, in-scope non-responding units, and responding units).

The completion results are as follows:

- Total number of sample units invited to participate: 74,278
- Invalid cases: 0
- Unresolved units: 68,645
 - Invitations bounce back: 0
 - Invitations did not respond: 68,645
- In-scope non-responding units: 596
 - Non-response from eligible respondents: 0
 - Respondent refusals: 0
 - Language problem: 0
 - Selected respondent not available (illness; leave of absence; vacation; other): 0
 - Early break-offs: 596
- Responding units: 5,037
 - Completed surveys disqualified – quota filled: 1,076
 - Completed surveys disqualified for other reasons: 1,401
 - Completed surveys: 2,560

Non-response bias analysis

The table below presents a profile of the final general population sample of Canadian citizen youth 16 to 35 (unweighted), compared to the actual population of Canadian citizen youth 16 to 35 (2021 Census information). Unweighted age samples 18+ are very similar to census proportions. Men are slightly underrepresented in the unweighted sample due to generally lower rates of participation in online panel surveys.

Table 55 Youth sample non-response bias: Gender (16 to 35)

	Sample (unweighted)	Canada (2021 Census)
Male	46.4%	50.8%
Female	52.6%	49.2%

Table 56: Youth sample non-response bias: Age (16 to 35)

	Sample (unweighted)	Canada (2021 Census)
16 to 17	2.9%	8.7%
18 to 24	37.5%	32.5%
25 to 35	59.6%	58.8%

Statement of limitations

Since online panel surveys are not a random probability samples, no formal estimates of sampling error can be calculated. Although not employing a random probability sample, online surveys can be used for general population surveys provided they are well designed and employ a large, well-maintained panel.

Appendix B: Quantitative and qualitative instruments

English and French quantitative and qualitative instruments are provided under separate cover.