



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

# 2024-25 International Experience Canada (IEC) Youth Study

## Research Report

Prepared for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

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Canada 

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# 2024-25 International Experience Canada (IEC) Youth Study

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Prepared for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Supplier name: Earnscliffe Strategy Group  
March 2025

This public opinion research report presents the results of a qualitative research conducted by Earnscliffe Strategy Group on behalf of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The quantitative research was conducted between January 24<sup>th</sup> to February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and the qualitative research was conducted from February 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : *Étude 2024-2025 auprès des jeunes sur Expérience internationale Canada (EIC) - Rapport de recherche*

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## Table of Contents

<b>Executive summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
General travel behaviour among Canadian youth.....	2
Motivations and barriers for international experiences .....	3
Views on IEC and other youth mobility programs .....	5
Creative testing with IEC promotional materials .....	6
IEC Participants .....	6
Contract details and neutrality certificate .....	7
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Methodology.....	9
About this report.....	10
Statement of limitations .....	11
<b>Detailed findings</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Section A: General travel behaviour among Canadian youth.....	12
Section B: Motivations and barriers for international experiences.....	21
Section C: Views on IEC and other youth mobility programs .....	32
Section D: IEC Participants .....	57
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>Appendix A: Quantitative methodology report</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>Appendix B: Qualitative methodology report</b> .....	<b>75</b>
<b>Appendix C: Quantitative and qualitative instruments</b> .....	<b>79</b>

## Executive summary

Earnscliffe Strategy Group (Earnscliffe) is pleased to present this report to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) summarizing the results of quantitative research with Canadian youth (16 to 35), and qualitative research with youth (16 to 35), parents of youth, and past IEC participants on awareness of International Experience Canada (IEC) and interest in travelling and living abroad.

### Introduction and objectives

International Experience Canada (IEC) is a program managed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada which offers Canadian citizen youth aged 18 to 35 the opportunity to travel and work in one of over 35 partner countries and territories. Because it is a reciprocal program, foreign youth from partner countries/territories can do the same in Canada.

The 2024-25 International Experience Canada (IEC) Study was intended to gather information about both IEC participants and non-participants (including communities of interest such as economically disadvantaged 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 research builds on knowledge gained from previous public opinion research studies and includes a focus on better understanding the motivations and barriers for economically disadvantaged and younger youth aged 16 to 18.

The total contract value of the research project was: **\$174,082.15 including HST**.

### Methodology

To meet the research objectives, Earnscliffe conducted two phases of research: a quantitative phase (online survey) and a qualitative phase (focus groups).

#### Quantitative phase

For the quantitative phase, Earnscliffe conducted an online survey of Canadian youth aged 16 to 35, exploring travel behaviour and motivations, travel experiences, views on travel and living abroad in general, awareness and views of the IEC program and future international experience intentions. The online panel survey was conducted with 2,518 Canadians citizens aged 16 to 35 from January 24 to February 6, 2025. The sample was stratified and weighted by region, age, and gender based on the 2021 Census.

## Qualitative phase

For the qualitative phase, Earnscliffe conducted a series of twelve focus groups with 112 Canadian participants between February 3 and February 10, 2025, to discuss experiences and perceptions of international travel and living abroad, awareness of (or experience with) the International Experience Canada program (IEC), and feedback on approaches for marketing IEC to Canadian youth. The focus groups were conducted online using Zoom. Participants were given an honorarium of \$100 to \$175. Groups were recruited according to several criteria, with separate groups for several distinct audiences:

- Five (5) general population groups with youth 16 to 35; one group each from Atlantic Canada (EN), the Prairies (EN), Quebec (FR), Ontario (EN), and British Columbia / the Territories (EN).
- One group specifically with Canadian youth aged 16 or 17 (EN).
- One group specifically with economically disadvantaged youth (EN).
- One group with Canadian youth who experience physical, visual, and/or hearing impairments (EN).
- One group with Canadian women aged 16 to 35 who are completing or who have completed a Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) degree (EN).
- One group with Canadians who have participated or are currently participating in the IEC program (EN).
- Two (2) groups with parents of Canadian youth aged 16 or 17 (one group in English, one in French).

## Statement of limitations

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 surveys with the public provided they are well designed and employ a large, well-maintained panel. Respondents were informed about privacy and anonymity.

Qualitative research is a form of scientific, social, policy and public opinion research. Focus group research is not designed to help a group reach a consensus or to make decisions, but rather to elicit the full range of ideas, attitudes, experiences, and opinions of a selected sample of participants on a defined topic. Because of the small numbers involved the participants cannot be expected to be thoroughly representative in a statistical sense of the larger population from which they are drawn, and findings cannot reliably be generalized beyond their number.

Key findings of this research are presented below:

## General travel behaviour among Canadian youth

- In line with results from 2023-24, a majority of four in five survey respondents (80%) have travelled for leisure or business at least once in their lifetime, while four in ten (39%) travelled for a work, study, or volunteer experience. About one in four (23%) have obtained a visa for work, study, or volunteering, down from the previous wave.

International trips are usually self-arranged (51%) or arranged through school (37%) or an employer (28%).

- In the qualitative focus groups, most participants had travelled outside of Canada at some point for leisure, and a few had taken longer trips to live, study, work, and/or volunteer in other countries.
- The top benefits of international work, study, or volunteer experiences mentioned in the survey include learning about a new country or culture (76%), exploration and adventure (62%), and personal growth (62%). Two in three (63%) of those who have taken such a trip have included the experience on their resume; among those who did not, the most common reason was a lack of relevance (33%).
- In the survey, youth who have taken international trips for work, study, or volunteering most often cited language barriers (52%), cultural differences (38%), and financial issues (27%) as the challenges they faced during their trips.
- Focus group participants discussed the benefits and challenges they had experienced on international trips. For benefits, experience with other cultures, language learning, making friends, exploring, and fun were mentioned often. Feelings of culture shock, homesickness, and complications with travel arrangements were common themes when discussing challenges.

## Motivations and barriers for international experiences

- One in three youth (36%) say they are very or somewhat likely to travel internationally to work before the age of 36; this is a decline compared to 2023-24 (41%). Likelihood of travelling to volunteer has also declined (25%, compared to 28%), and so has likelihood of travelling to study (24%, compared to 28%).
- Among those indicating an interest in working outside of Canada, one in three would prefer to work for a Canadian company while living overseas (35%), while one in four would prefer to work for an employer from the country they are visiting (25%). Another 36 percent did not have a preference.
- The qualitative research found that while longer international trips were widely appealing in concept, most were not planning to pursue this sort of experience. A few participants were planning or researching major international trips. Of note, several of the IEC participants were considering additional trips.
- Four in five youth agree that they are motivated to travel for work, study, or volunteering by exploration and adventure (82%) and by learning about a new country or culture (81%). Asked to name other travel motivations in a separate question, respondents most often mention learning about a new country or culture (21%), better job opportunities (11%), and curiosity (10%).
- In terms of motivation, focus group participants interested in taking longer trips outside of Canada frequently talked about a desire to be immersed in the day-to-day life and culture of another country. Economic motivations, like cost of living and job opportunities, were also a frequent theme.

- Survey respondents widely agreed that they would be concerned about how much money it would take to live overseas (71%) and that they would have issues funding such an experience (66%). Language barriers (61%) and simply not knowing how to get started (59%) are also a major area of concern. Other top barriers mentioned in an open-ended question include obligations in Canada (15%), funding (9%), and a lack of interest (3%).
- The focus group discussions around barriers aligned with the survey results; frequently mentioned barriers included finances, personal obligations, never having thought about it before, and not knowing where to start. Several focus group participants said they would avoid going to places with conflict, and places with serious human rights issues.
- New questions about financial assistance were added to the survey in 2024-25. A majority of respondents say they would need a moderate or large amount of financial assistance for studying abroad (66%), volunteering abroad (63%), or working while living abroad (56%) for six months or longer.
- Around half of respondents needing at least some financial assistance say that getting that assistance would be a major or an insurmountable barrier for volunteering abroad (57%), studying abroad (54%), or working abroad (47%). Similarly, about half say most or all of the assistance would need to come from private borrowing (55% volunteering, 56% studying, 48% working).
- Youth who would need financial assistance for working abroad and faced major or insurmountable barriers in obtaining it were categorized as economically disadvantaged for further analysis. Compared to other youth, those categorized as economically disadvantaged are less likely to travel overall (both in terms of past travel and future travel intentions), and more likely to name financial issues as a barrier to travel. Economically disadvantaged youth also have lower awareness of IEC, lower rates of past participation in IEC and other programs, and are less likely to participate in a program like IEC in the future.
- Youth with impairments can face complex and compounded barriers to international travel. In the quantitative results, youth with impairments are more likely than others to express concerns about finding employment, being safe and secure, mental health issues, trouble with documentation, and cultural norms while travelling. These youth were also more likely to note that financial assistance would be a barrier to travel. While these barriers are common among youth overall, these worries may be exacerbated when considered in combination with mobility, hearing, or vision impairments. The qualitative research suggested that many youth with impairments were not confident that they would be able to arrange accessibility accommodations while travelling, and they also had high concerns around access to medical care and health insurance. Some noted a lack of people with visible disabilities in the communication materials they reviewed, while others mentioned that using visual and audio content in materials like videos and social media would make that content more widely accessible.

## Views on IEC and other youth mobility programs

- Over half of respondents (54%) had never heard of IEC before taking the survey, an increase compared to 2023-24. Among those aware of IEC before taking this survey, the most common channels for learning about it are friends and family (26%), Facebook (23%), and Instagram (22%).
- Awareness of IEC was similarly minimal in the qualitative focus groups, even with prompting; among the very few who knew about IEC, it was usually seen as an inbound, not outbound, opportunity. Learning about the program through a short video and a written description, participants tended to be curious to learn more, and had many questions about how the program works. Frequent areas of inquiry included which countries are involved, what work opportunities are available, and what kinds of support or services are provided by IEC.
- More than one in three survey respondents (37%) say they are somewhat or very likely to participate in IEC or a similar program in the future, a slight decline compared to 2023-24 (40%). For those likely to participate, reasons included a positive impression of the program (34%), access to opportunities and personal growth (19%), and the chance to explore new cultures outside of Canada (14%).
- Survey respondents tend to favour English-speaking countries when asked where they would most like to go for an experience like IEC: the top three choices are Australia (27%), the United Kingdom (16%), and the United States (15%). Culture (23%) and general interest (23%) are the most commonly given reasons for choice of country.
- Despite low awareness coming into the focus groups, most youth and parent participants developed a positive impression of IEC after learning more about it. Even those with a low degree of interest felt the program would be a good fit for others, and many said they would recommend it.
- Genuine consideration of IEC was limited to those who were already interested in a long-term international trip, though some without current travel intentions felt they might consider IEC in the future.
- More than one in three survey respondents who had never heard of IEC say they would like to receive information about it (36%). Top preferred channels include general internet searches (37%), academic institutions or schools (29%), and digital newsletters (29%).
- In the focus groups, there was a wide consensus that youth are most likely to notice IEC promotional materials on social media platforms (especially Instagram and TikTok), in high school and postsecondary settings, and on public transit. Many participants noted that it is important to clearly explain what IEC is, and put participating countries front and centre where possible.
- Qualitative focus group participants widely felt that as a program name, International Experience Canada was ineffective at conveying what IEC does. Youth often recommended adding words like “work” and “travel” to give more context, and the term “working holiday” was widely seen to be a more accurate representation of the program.

As a tagline, “Start your adventure abroad: Work, Travel, Explore” was well received; some suggested adding a word like “Live” to better convey the idea of cultural immersion.

- On the theme of IEC reciprocity, focus group participants were told that there is a discrepancy between outbound and inbound participation in IEC, and asked to consider reasons why more Canadians don’t pursue experiences abroad. Participants often discussed the notion of a set life path from secondary to post-secondary to career to home ownership that was perceived to be well-entrenched in Canadian culture. Lack of awareness, the cost of travel, and the appeal of being in Canada were also common themes.

## Creative testing with IEC promotional materials

- Youth and parents preferred the idea of a QR code over an NFC signal for reasons of privacy and device security.
- A cultural benefits approach to IEC promotion was widely preferred among focus group participants, as opposed to an approach highlighting professional growth. Some participants observed that youth living abroad are often working to pay for the experience, not to build their careers. The professional benefits approach was seen as potentially effective if aimed at older youth audiences.
- For use in social media promotion, images depicting the cultural benefits of IEC were generally preferred over images depicting professional growth, though most felt there was room for both in a social media campaign.
- Focus groups participants had neutral to lukewarm responses to the newsletter mock-up. Participants appreciated the content, but didn’t think the look and feel was well positioned to appeal to youth. Including more appealing photographs was seen as a simple way to increase the visual appeal of the newsletter.
- A majority of participants who reviewed the promotional video appreciated the exciting tone; some suggested it would motivate them to look for more information about IEC.
- Group participants found the outbound (France) webpage to be visually effective, well organized and easy to navigate. The general IEC page also met with approval, though participants often wondered why it did not use the same drop-down style layout for its content.

## IEC Participants

- The survey results indicate that just over one in ten youth over the age of 18 (13%) have participated in IEC, down from 2023-24 (16%). Top IEC destinations include Australia (26%), the United Kingdom (20%), Germany (14%), Belgium (12%), and France (12%).
- About two thirds (67%) of past participants say they have taken just one IEC trip, and a similar proportion use an open work permit for their experience (69%).

- A strong majority of past IEC participants in the survey (79%) are very or somewhat satisfied with their experience. For those satisfied with IEC, the most common reasons are simple satisfaction (24%), a great experience (21%), and an easy process (10%). Most IEC participants (80%) are likely to recommend an international working abroad program to family or friends.
- In the qualitative focus group with past IEC participants, some said they had learned about IEC when they were already researching opportunities for work and travel abroad, while others learned about it through university, or from other young international travellers.
- Some participants had significant challenges working with destination countries to obtain permission to live and work there, though others found the process to be fairly simple.
- Similar to results from other parts of the study around challenges, the challenges mentioned by past IEC participants included issues like money concerns, planning difficulties, homesickness, and language barriers.
- Though several of the IEC participants had encountered difficulties along the way, their overall impressions of the IEC program were positive, and there was often a sense that overcoming those challenges was part of what made it beneficial for them.

### Contract details and neutrality certificate

Research firm: Earnscliffe Strategy Group (Earnscliffe)

Contract number: CW2381896

Contract value: \$174,082.15

Contract award date: November 20, 2024

I hereby certify as a representative of Earnscliffe Strategy Group that the final 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.

Signed:

Date: February 28, 2025



Doug Anderson  
Principal, Earnscliffe

## Introduction

Earnscliffe Strategy Group (Earnscliffe) is pleased to present this report to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) summarizing the results of quantitative research with Canadian youth (16 to 35), and qualitative research with youth (16 to 35), parents of youth, and past IEC participants on awareness of International Experience Canada (IEC) and interest in travelling and living abroad.

### Introduction and objectives

International Experience Canada (IEC) is a program managed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada which offers Canadian citizen youth aged 18 to 35 the opportunity to travel and work in one of over 35 partner countries and territories. Because it is a reciprocal program, foreign youth from partner countries/territories can do the same in Canada.

The IEC program has the mandate to maximize reciprocity between international youth participation and Canadian youth participation in the work-travel pathways it has negotiated with over 35 countries and territories. IEC also 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 research will be used to provide insight into the travel and work abroad behaviors of Canadian youth, as well as perceptions and attitudes towards travel and work abroad experiences among IEC's target audience. Barriers and motivators to pursuing work abroad experiences will also help inform policy and targeted engagement and promotion.

The 2024-25 International Experience Canada (IEC) Study was intended to gather information about both IEC participants and non-participants (including communities of interest such as economically disadvantaged 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 research will build on knowledge gained from previous public opinion research studies, extending time series data on Canadian youth awareness of International Experience Canada from 2018 to present, and interest in travelling abroad. It will also include a focus on better understanding the motivations and barriers for economically disadvantaged and younger youth aged 16 to 18.

The specific objectives of this research include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Awareness of IEC and interest in travelling abroad;
- Attitudes toward working and travelling abroad;
- Attitudes toward safety while travelling abroad and trust in foreign governments;
- Gaps in resources and 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, and skills development of, youth (versus those who do not undertake such experiences);
- Awareness and attitudes of previous campaigns such as IEC influencer marketing;
- Attitudes and branding resonance of IEC taglines, messages, names, etc.;
- Attitudes and preferences of informative marketing like newsletters, email marketing, social media, etc.;
- Where youth obtain information about international travel destinations; and
- Opinions of existing IEC promotional material and feedback about potential new materials to be used in the future.

The total contract value of the research project was \$174,082.15 including HST.

## Methodology

To meet the research objectives, Earnscliffe conducted two phases of research project: a quantitative phase (online survey) and a qualitative phase (focus groups).

### Quantitative phase

For the quantitative phase, Earnscliffe conducted an online survey of 2,518 Canadian youth aged 16 to 35 from January 24 to February 6, 2025. This survey was designed to gather data about travel behaviour and motivations among Canadian youth, their travel experiences, their views on travel and living abroad in general, their awareness and views of the IEC program and their future international experience intentions. The sample of 2,518 Canadians citizens aged 16 to 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. The sample was stratified by region, age, and gender based on the 2021 Census.

### Qualitative phase

For the qualitative phase, Earnscliffe conducted a series of twelve focus groups with 112 Canadian participants between February 3 and February 10, 2025, to discuss experiences and perceptions of international travel and living abroad, awareness of (or experience with) the International Experience Canada program (IEC), and feedback on approaches for marketing IEC to Canadian youth. The focus groups were conducted online using Zoom. To thank them for their time, participants were given an honorarium of between \$100 and \$175.

Participants were recruited using a five-minute screening questionnaire with questions to ensure participants qualified based on their age, location, and criteria for specific audiences (e.g. parents of youth, women in STEM, etc.), also ensuring a good mix of other demographics such as gender, education level, etc. A total of 8-10 participants were recruited for each group; between 6 and 10 attended each session. Groups were recruited according to several criteria, with separate groups for several distinct audiences:

- Five (5) general population groups with youth 16 to 35; one group each from Atlantic Canada (EN), the Prairies (EN), Quebec (FR), Ontario (EN), and British Columbia / the Territories (EN).
- One group specifically with Canadian youth aged 16 or 17 (EN).
- One group specifically with economically disadvantaged youth (EN).
- One group with Canadian youth who experience physical, visual, and/or hearing impairments (EN).
- One group with Canadian women aged 16 to 35 who are completing or who have completed a Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) degree (EN).
- One group with Canadians who have participated or are currently participating in the IEC program (EN).
- Two (2) groups with parents of Canadian youth aged 16 or 17 (one group in English, one in French).

## About this report

The following report presents the analysis of quantitative and qualitative research. For each section of the report, results of each phase of research are presented beginning with quantitative results that provide a statistical analysis of youth impressions, experiences, and opinions, followed by relevant qualitative results to add nuance and insight into these views.

The term “respondent” and present tense is used when quantitative (survey) results are discussed, and “participant” and past tense when qualitative (focus group) results are discussed.

In this report, quantitative results are shown for all respondents for the current wave of research (2024-25) and the past wave (2023-24). Current results are also broken down to show results for three key audiences of interest to IRCC: youth with mobility, visual or hearing impairments (compared to those without), youth who identify as 2SLGBTQI+ (compared to those who do not), and youth who are economically disadvantaged (compared to those who are not).

Unless otherwise noted, highlighted differences between sub-groups are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Statistically significant differences between these sub-groups are noted by a plus sign or a minus sign; the presence of a plus sign indicates that the result is significantly higher compared to the related comparison group, a minus sign indicates a lower result. The statistical test used to determine significant differences between proportions is the Z-test, the test used for comparing means is the two-tailed T-test. Sub-groups are only tested against related groups, for example, women in STEM are compared to women not in STEM. Total results for 2024-25 are compared to total results from 2023-24. Differences between proportions of 5% or less are not indicated, and in some cases statistical testing has been omitted due to small base sample sizes.

Tables for some survey questions have been truncated for length and readability of the report. This is indicated below the tables, along with the threshold used. Complete data for each

question with all response categories are included in the data tables (under a separate cover). Due to rounding or multiple response options, results may not add to 100%.

Details about the quantitative methodology are found in Appendix A, and details about the qualitative methodology are provided in Appendix B. A glossary of terms that explains the generalizations and interpretations of qualitative terms used throughout this report can also be found in Appendix B. Research instruments (i.e. survey questionnaire, qualitative screener, focus group discussion guides) are under separate cover.

Verbatim quotations from qualitative focus group participants are included throughout the report to provide examples of participant responses in their own words.

### Statement of limitations

Since online panel surveys are not random probability samples, no formal estimates of sampling error can be calculated for the survey. Although not employing a random probability sample, online surveys can be used for surveys with the public provided they are well designed and employ a large, well-maintained panel. Respondents were informed about privacy and anonymity.

Qualitative research is a form of scientific, social, policy and public opinion research. Focus group research is not designed to help a group reach a consensus or to make decisions, but rather to elicit the full range of ideas, attitudes, experiences, and opinions of a selected sample of participants on a defined topic. Because of the small numbers involved the participants cannot be expected to be thoroughly representative in a statistical sense of the larger population from which they are drawn, and findings cannot reliably be generalized beyond their number. Detailed findings from this research are presented in subsequent sections of this report.

## Detailed findings

### Section A: General travel behaviour among Canadian youth

#### 1. Past travel experience

##### *Lifetime travel*

A majority of Canadian youth (80%) say they have travelled outside of the country for leisure or business in their lifetime; this is consistent with results from 2023-24. Smaller proportions have travelled for work (27%), study (26%), or volunteering (19%); these mark declines compared to 2023-24. The net of all travel for these three categories (work, study, volunteer) is also lower than the net for 2023-24 (39%, compared to 46%). Net travel for work, study, and volunteering is higher among youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (57%), youth who are not economically disadvantaged (82%), and women in STEM (48%).

The mean number of lifetime trips to work outside of Canada is higher this wave, at 5.8 (compared to 2.4 in 2023-24), but other types of trips are consistent from last wave. Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment have fewer lifetime trips for leisure or business compared to others (6.2 trips vs. 9.7 trips).

**Exhibit 1 - Past travel experience (Base: All respondents)**

Travel experience (% taking at least one trip)	Total (n=2518)	2023-24 Total (n=2573)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=848)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1670)
Travel for leisure or business	80%	80%	83%	79%	82%	80%	77%	82%+
Work	27%-	33%	21%	28%+	45%+	25%	21%	31%+
Study	26%-	29%	26%	25%	44%+	24%	20%	29%+
Volunteer	19%-	22%	16%	19%	35%+	17%	14%	22%+
NET: Work, study, volunteer	39%-	46%	37%	40%	57%+	38%	31%	44%+

Q3: How many times have you done any of the following activities outside Canada in your lifetime?

**Exhibit 2 – Mean number of lifetime trips (Base: All respondents)**

Mean # of trips, includes 0	Total (n=2518)	2023-24 Total (n=2573)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=848)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1670)
Travel for leisure or business	9.2	8.4	10.8	9.1	6.2	9.7+	8.1	9.8
Work	5.8+	2.4	7.1	5.7	7.1	5.9	4.9	6.3
Study	2.7	2.0	2.5	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.8	2.2
Volunteer	1.5	1.3	3.2	1.2	1.9	1.5	1.4	1.5

Q3: How many times have you done any of the following activities outside Canada in your lifetime?

### ***Travel for work, study, or volunteering***

Over half of those who travelled for work (56%) or study (58%) say they obtained a visa or work permit, while just under half of those volunteering did so (45%). For all three categories individually, the proportion who say they obtained visas or permits has risen significantly since 2023-24, though the total receiving any visa is steady with last year. Calculating out of the total sample, one in four youth (23%) have obtained a visa for work, study, or volunteering, marking a decline compared to 2023-24 (28%).

Looking at the complete sample, youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (40%) and youth who are not economically disadvantaged (26%) are more likely than others to have obtained a visa for work, study, and/or volunteering. Women in STEM are also more likely to obtain a visa or permit (26%) compared to other women (14%).

**Exhibit 3 - Visas and permits for each type of travel (Base: Worked, studied, or volunteered abroad)**

Permits	Total(n=997)	2023-24 Total (n=1175)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=135)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=832)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=147)	No impairment (n=819)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=263)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=734)
Work	56%+	43%	54%	56%	67%+	54%	50%	58%
Study	58%+	34%	58%	57%	68%+	56%	55%	58%
Volunteer	45%+	23%	45%	44%	54%	43%	47%	44%
Total obtained visa	58%	61%	53%	58%	69%+	56%	53%	60%
Total obtained visa, out of whole sample (n=2,518)	23%-	28%	20%	23%	40%+	21%	16%	26%+

Q6: Did you obtain a visa or permit to work, study or volunteer outside of Canada?

Half of those who travelled for work, study, or volunteering say their travel was self-arranged. Other frequent methods mentioned are through school (37%), employers (28%), or travel companies (20%). These results are consistent with the previous study wave. Youth with a

mobility, visual or hearing impairment are more likely than others to say their travel was arranged through an employer (38% vs. 27%).

**Exhibit 4 - Travel arrangements (Base: Any who worked, studied, or volunteered abroad)**

How travel was arranged	Total (n=995)	2023-24 Total (n=1175)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=135)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=830)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=147)	No impairment (n=817)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=261)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=734)
Self-arranged	51%	50%	53%	51%	49%	51%	53%	50%
Through school	37%	36%	45%	37%	39%	38%	38%	37%
Employer	28%	28%	25%	29%	38%+	27%	28%	28%
Travel or adventure co.	20%	23%	16%	21%	27%	19%	16%	21%
Religious organization or church	2%	N/A	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Friends or family arranged	2%	N/A	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Non-profit organization	<1%	3%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Other	3%	1%	4%	3%	1%	3%	4%	3%
Prefer not to say	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%

Q8: How did you arrange your international experience?

### **Qualitative discussion of lifetime travel experiences**

In the focus groups, most youth participants had travelled outside of Canada at some point, mostly for leisure, and a few had taken longer trips to live, study, work, and/or volunteer in other countries. Many participants were eager to share details about their travel experiences, which included a wide range of trips and destinations, such as sunny all-inclusive resort vacations, lengthy back-packing trips, sightseeing holidays, and visits to see family or friends overseas.

*“I went to Panama for a month and a half. Kind of life altering experience for me.”* – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment

## **2. Past international travel benefits and challenges**

### **Benefits of travel**

Looking at the survey results, those who travelled (for work, study, or volunteering) most often said that a key benefit gained from travel was learning about a new country or culture (76%). Other benefits mentioned by a majority of travellers were exploration and adventure (62%) and personal growth (62%). Compared to 2023-24, mentions of personal growth have increased significantly, up 11 points from 50% to 62%. Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment

are less likely than others to name the top three benefits (64%, 49%, and 48%, respectively), and 2SLGBTQI+ youth are more likely to mention personal growth specifically (72%).

**Exhibit 5 - Key benefits of travel (Base: Any who worked, studied, or volunteered abroad)**

Benefits	Total (n=995)	2023-24 Total (n=1175)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=135)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=830)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=147)	No impairment (n=817)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=261)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=734)
Learned about a new country or culture	76%	75%	81%	76%	64%	79%+	79%	75%
Exploration and adventure	62%	59%	69%	62%	49%	66%+	66%	61%
Personal growth	62%+	50%	72%+	60%	48%	65%+	65%	60%
Learned / improved a secondary language	42%	43%	49%	40%	48%	41%	44%	41%
International career experience / professional development	38%	40%	43%	37%	35%	39%	42%	37%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%

Q4: What would you say are the key benefits you gained from your work, study or volunteer experiences outside of Canada?

Among youth who travelled to work or volunteer (i.e. not study), two in three (63%) say they have included the experience on their resume. This is consistent across sub-groups, and in line with results from the previous wave (64%). Economically disadvantaged youth (58%) are less likely than others (66%) to include the experience on a resume.

**Exhibit 6 - Included international experience on resume (Base: Those who travelled to work or volunteer)**

Included on resume	Total (n=837)	2023-24 Total (n=1008)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=100)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=710)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=132)	No impairment (n=680)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=217)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=620)
Yes	63%	64%	65%	64%	62%	65%	58%	66%+
No	32%	30%	26%	32%	33%	31%	37%+	29%
Not sure	5%	6%	9%	4%	5%	4%	5%	5%

Q24: Have you included your international work or volunteer experience on your resume after returning to Canada?

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

Those who did not include their experience on a resume most often say it simply wasn't relevant (33%); other top reasons include a trip being mainly for leisure (10%), or that the experience just wasn't needed on an application (10%).

**Exhibit 7 - Reasons for not including international experience on resume (Base: Those who did not include international experience on resume)**

Reasons	Total (n=269)	2023-24 Total (n=308)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=27)*	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=233)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=45)*	No impairment (n=217)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=83)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=186)
Didn't think it was relevant	33%	23%	29%	33%	22%	35%	36%	32%
Trip was mainly for leisure	10%	2%	19%	9%	13%	9%	14%	9%
Not needed	10%	6%	19%	9%	5%	11%	7%	11%
Didn't think of it / Forgot	5%	10%	3%	6%	7%	5%	6%	5%
It was a very short trip	4%	4%	0%	5%	0%	6%	4%	5%
It was long time ago	3%	1%	4%	3%	2%	3%	5%	2%
Have not updated CV yet / Busy	2%	N/A	0%	3%	5%	2%	4%	2%
Informal experience/ was for personal growth	2%	2%	0%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%
International experience is not recognized/ valued here	2%	N/A	0%	2%	0%	2%	3%	2%
Resume is too long as is	2%	N/A	7%	1%	0%	2%	2%	1%
Still working for the same employer / it was part of my work	1%	8%	4%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Safety concerns	1%	N/A	0%	1%	4%	1%	N/A	2%
Other	4%	12%	4%	4%	0%	5%	6%	3%
None / Nothing / No particular reason	8%	3%	7%	8%	10%	7%	7%	8%
Don't know / Refused	14%	17%	8%	14%	30%+	9%	7%	17%+

Q25: For what reason have you not included this experience on your resume?

Note: Tests of statistical significance omitted due to small sample sizes.

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

About three in four youth who have travelled for work, study, or volunteering agree that they are eager to highlight this experience with potential employers (73%), marking an increase compared to 2023-24. A majority also agree that their experience improved their job prospects (59%), and that potential employers ask about their experience (55%); these results are consistent with last year. Across sub-groups, there are no notable differences in these attitudes.

**Exhibit 8 - Box Agreement with statements about international travel (Base: Any who worked, studied, or volunteered abroad)**

Agreement (% Strongly or somewhat agree)	Total (n=995)	2023-24 Total (n=1175)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=135)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=830)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=147)	No impairment (n=817)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=261)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=734)
I am eager to highlight my international experience to potential employers	73%+	67%	74%	73%	72%	74%	70%	74%
I feel that my international experience improved my job prospects upon returning to Canada	59%	57%	61%	59%	54%	61%	57%	60%
Potential employers ask about my international experience	55%	55%	48%	56%	56%	55%	51%	56%

Q26: How much do you agree with the following statements?

***Travel challenges***

Canadian youth who travelled for work, study, or volunteering were asked about challenges they faced while visiting other countries. At 52%, language barriers were the most common challenge; this is an increase over the result for 2023-24 (45%), when it was also the most common challenge mentioned. At 38% (same as 2023-24), challenges with cultural differences rank second again this year. Financial issues at 27% rank third this year, just edging out isolation or loneliness at 26%; other than switching rank, results for these challenges are nearly unchanged from the previous wave. Challenges with documents and permits were also mentioned by 26%. Results for these top five challenges are generally very similar across sub-groups, but economically disadvantaged youth are more likely to mention financial issues (39%) compared to others (23%).

**Exhibit 9 - Key challenges of travel (Base: Any who worked, studied, or volunteered abroad)**

Key challenges	Total (n=995)	2023-24 Total (n=1175)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=135)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=830)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=147)	No impairment (n=817)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=261)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=734)
Encountering a language barrier	52%+	45%	55%	52%	47%	54%	56%	51%
Challenges with country customs and laws, cultural norms or cultural shock	38%	38%	39%	37%	41%	37%	41%	37%
Financial issues funding my travel experience	27%	26%	32%	27%	24%	29%	39%+	23%
Isolation or loneliness	26%	27%	28%	26%	22%	27%	26%	26%
Challenges with travel, residency or employment documents/permits	26%	24%	31%	25%	39%+	24%	30%	24%
Feeling safe or secure	22%	28%	21%	22%	22%	22%	25%	21%
Challenges with my mental health	18%	20%	27%+	16%	27%+	16%	21%	16%
Travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic	17%	19%	20%	17%	19%	17%	17%	18%
Challenges finding employment outside of Canada	16%	16%	15%	16%	20%	15%	17%	16%
Restrictions, lockdowns or work/school interruptions in your host country due to	13%	15%	14%	13%	19%	12%	16%	12%
Impact on my obligations back in Canada	12%-	19%	15%	12%	9%	13%	15%	11%
I did not know how to get started	12%	14%	12%	11%	12%	11%	12%	11%
Having to cut short your time abroad due to the COVID-19 pandemic	8%	9%	4%	8%	11%	7%	8%	8%
Other	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	0%
Not applicable	8%	8%	4%	8%	4%	8%	8%	7%

Q5: What would you say are the key challenges you faced during your work, study or volunteer experiences outside of Canada?

### **Qualitative discussion of travel benefits and challenges**

Focus group participants briefly discussed the benefits they received from international travel, as well as challenges they faced. Common benefits included experience with other cultures, language learning, making friends, exploring, and fun. Some participants with more extensive

travel experience, including IEC participants, felt that travel had given them perspective and helped them to become more independent and resourceful.

*“It was right at the end of university. It was the prime time to kind of explore... just having the freedom to travel and do what I wanted to do.”*  
– IEC participant

A few focus group participants shared examples of challenges they had faced while travelling abroad, like feelings of culture shock, homesickness, and complications with travel arrangements.

The topic of mental health elicited a range of reactions. While some participants acknowledged that travel could be a stress factor with impacts on mental health, others felt that travel was beneficial to their mental well-being.

*“Growing up, I always had extreme anxiety... I was medicated for a long time. Now, as an adult, going to new places... I'm somewhere completely different and my brain kind of resets. And I'm happy.”* – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment

Discussing the idea of travel benefits and challenges in general, participants often weighed the potential benefits and challenges as they spoke. The following table summarizes the range of considerations about living abroad that came up often in the focus groups discussions.

**Exhibit 10 - Benefits and challenges of international travel**

Benefits	Challenges
International experience, experience new things, different cultures, foods, connect with family history or heritage  <i>“Grow as a global citizen.” – Young (16 to 35) women in STEM, National</i>	Financial considerations (travel, accommodation, food, incidentals, emergency funds, cost of living, exchange rates)
Opportunity to improve work skills / learn how other countries do one’s profession to bring new skills back (mentioned specifically by teachers, health care professionals)  <i>“For my job, it would be cool to experience how other animal hospitals work.” – General population youth (16 to 35), Atlantic Canada</i>  <i>“From a technology perspective, there are structures everywhere. Bring that back into your community and work.” – Young (16 to 35) women in STEM, National</i>	Distance/isolation from family, friends, support network, pets  <i>“My Dad is Mi’kmaq. We are connected to ancestral land. It would be hard to leave.” – General population youth (16 to 35), Atlantic Canada</i>
Learn or improve a language	Planning and organization, securing visas, permits, other paperwork, etc.
Meet new people, make friends, network	Language barriers
Humanitarianism, understanding, acceptance	Societal clashes, civil unrest, conflict, political strife
Adaptability	Fear of the unknown
Independence, freedom, curiosity	Safety
Boost one’s self-confidence	Health care
Fun and adventure	Accessibility (particularly for youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairments)
Improving mental health, getting away from everyday life	Stressful, negative impact on mental health

## Section B: Motivations and barriers for international experiences

### 1. Attitudes toward future travel

#### *Travel intentions*

While leisure and business travel intentions among survey respondents have increased compared to the previous survey wave, there has been a small but significant decline in the proportion of youth who say they are likely to work, volunteer, or study outside of Canada before they turn 36. 2SLGBTQI+ youth are more likely to travel for leisure or business, but on par with other youth for work, volunteer, or study travel outside the country. Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment are less likely to travel for leisure or business, but compared to other youth, they are significantly more likely to travel for volunteer or study experiences. Economically disadvantaged youth are less likely to engage in all types of travel compared to other youth. Women in STEM are also more likely to engage in all forms of travel compared to women outside of these fields.

**Exhibit 11 – Net likelihood of travelling in the future before age 36**

Likelihood of travelling (NET: Very/somewhat likely)	Total (n=2518)	2023-24 Total (n=2573)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=848)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1670)
Travel for leisure or business	82%+	76%	86%+	81%	76%	83%+	78%	83%+
Work	36%-	41%	34%	36%	36%	36%	32%	38%+
Volunteer	25%-	28%	25%	24%	33%+	24%	21%	27%+
Study	24%-	28%	27%	23%	36%+	22%	23%	24%+

(NET Likely) Q11: How likely are you to do any of the following activities outside of Canada in the future before you turn 36?

Among those indicating an interest in working outside of Canada, similar proportions say they do not have a preference (36%) or would prefer to work for a Canadian company while living overseas (35%); fewer (25%) would prefer to work for an employer from the country they are visiting. Youth with impairments are notably more likely to prefer working from an employer in

the country they are visiting (40%), while other youth are more likely to say they have no preference (38%).

**Exhibit 12 - Work preferences (Base: Those interested in working outside of Canada)**

Work Preferences	Total (n=899)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=119)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=751)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=95)	No impairment (n=778)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=265)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=634)
Do not have a preference between the two	36%	40%	35%	21%	38%+	36%	36%
For a Canadian company while living overseas	35%	34%	36%	36%	35%	35%	35%
Work for employer from that country	25%	25%	25%	40%+	23%	24%	25%
Do not know	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%	5%	3%

Q11B: (If you were to work overseas, would you be more interested in working for a local employer in that country or to work for a Canadian employer while you lived overseas (i.e. a digital nomad)?

Note: This question was new in 2023-24-25.

### **Qualitative discussion of travel intentions**

The qualitative research found that while many youth have considerable interest in short, recreational trips, interest in longer trips was often limited or seen as a distant aspiration – something that sounded appealing, but that they weren’t actively planning to do. A few participants were in the early stages of research or planning for a trip like this, and a couple of participants were in more advanced planning stages. Of note, several of the IEC participants were considering additional trips.

*“I really want to do the Japan visa, because I’ve been to Japan before, and I just loved it there. I want to spend a lot of time there and just kind of see everything and really immerse myself.” – IEC participant*

*“Growing up, Norway was where my grandmother always wanted to go... since she passed, that’s why I decided I want to go there as well.” – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment*

*“I definitely want to go to New Zealand... kind of a different version of BC in the southern hemisphere.” – General population youth (16 to 35), British Columbia and the Territories*

## **2. Future travel motivations for Canadian youth**

### **Travel motivations**

Agreement with four out of five travel motivations asked in the survey has increased compared to 2023-24, perhaps signalling growing positivity toward travel in the post-pandemic era.

Topping the list are exploration and adventure (with 82% agreeing that this motivates them) and learning about a new country or culture (agreed upon by 81%). 2SLGBTQI+ youth are more likely to agree that they are motivated by learning about a new country or culture (87%, vs. 81% other youth), personal growth (78% vs. 73%), and learning another language (73% vs. 67%). Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment are less likely to agree that they are motivated by exploration and adventure (75% vs. 84% other youth), learning about a new country or culture (73% vs. 83%), personal growth (68% vs. 75%), or learning another language (61% vs. 70%). Economically disadvantaged youth are more likely to be motivated by exploration and adventure (85% vs. 81%) and learning about a new country or culture (83% vs. 80%), while those who are not economically disadvantaged are more motivated by international career development (60% vs. 56%).

**Exhibit 13 - Travel motivations (Base: All respondents)**

Agreement (NET: Strongly or somewhat agree)	Total (n=2518)	2023-24 Total (n=2573)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=848)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1670)
Exploration and adventure	82%+	79%	85%	82%	75%	84%+	85%+	81%
Learning about a new country or culture	81%+	76%	87%+	81%	73%	83%+	83%+	80%
Personal growth	74%+	68%	78%+	73%	68%	75%+	73%	74%
Learning or improving another language	68%	68%	73%+	67%	61%	70%+	67%	68%
International career experience or professional development	59%+	55%	61%	59%	58%	60%	56%	60%+

Q13: 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?

The top three other travel motivations mentioned by youth are fairly consistent compared to 2023-24, with learning about a new country or culture taking top spot at 21% (19% past wave). Better job opportunities ranks second this year with 11% (same as 2023-24). Curiosity and

discovery takes third spot at 10%, down from 15% in 2023-24. Better job opportunities are of particular interest to women in STEM (13%, vs. 8% other women).

**Exhibit 14 - Other travel motivations (Base: All respondents)**

Motivation	Total (n=2518)	2023-24 Total (n=2573)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=260)	No impairment (n=2161)	Econom- ically disadvan- taged youth (n=848)	Youth not econom- ically disadvan- taged (n=1670)
Learning about a new country or culture	21%	19%	21%	21%	17%	22%	23%	20%
Better job opportunities / higher salary	11%	11%	10%	10%	13%	10%	11%	11%
For curiosity/ discovering/ different experiences	10%-	15%	9%	10%	8%	10%	10%	9%
Meeting new people / networking	9%	10%	9%	9%	6%	9%+	7%	9%
International career experience or professional development	6%+	4%	7%	6%	5%	7%	6%	7%
Life experience / goals	6%	N/A	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%	6%
Personal growth	6%-	8%	6%	6%	4%	6%	5%	7%+
Exploration and adventure	6%+	4%	4%	6%	3%	6%+	5%	6%
I travel for leisure/fun/ relaxation	6%	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	5%
A change of weather/ scenery/ place of living	5%-	7%	6%	5%	3%	6%+	5%	5%
See the world	4%-	11%	6%+	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%

Q14: What else motivates you to work, study or volunteer outside of Canada?

Note: Table continues on following page.

**Exhibit 15 - Other travel motivations continued (Base: All respondents)**

Motivation	Total (n=2518)	2023-24 Total (n=2573)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=260)	No impairment (n=2161)	Econom- ically disadvan- taged youth (n=848)	Youth not econom- ically disadvan- taged (n=1670)
Helping others/making a difference	3%	6%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Better quality of life/ cost of living	2%	N/A	4%	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%
For different perspective on life	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Visit family/friends	2%	3%	3%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%
To study/ school	1%	N/A	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Learning or improving another language	1%	N/A	<1%	1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%
Family heritage/ history	1%	N/A	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other	3%	3%	4%	3%	7%	3%	3%	3%
None/ Nothing else	12%+	10%	11%	12%	8%	12%+	12%	11%
DK/NA	10%+	7%	9%	10%	18%+	8%	8%	10%

Q14: What else motivates you to work, study or volunteer outside of Canada?

Note: Table continued from previous page.

### **Qualitative discussion of travel motivations**

Among focus group participants interested in taking longer trips outside of Canada, this was often driven by a desire to be more immersed in a place and to better experience day-to-day life there. A couple of participants noted that the cost of living in some other countries can be advantageous, especially with the current economic conditions in Canada. A number explicitly mentioned an intention to move permanently to the United States where they felt career opportunities, cost of living, and their standard of living would be better.

*“I would find it interesting to see different people coming and going. It's good to talk to them, meet different people, eat amazing food and have amazing time with them.” – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment*

### 3. General barriers to travel for Canadian youth

#### **Travel barriers**

Cost concerns are at the top of a list of barriers to travel in the survey, with nearly three in four Canadian youth saying they agree that they would be concerned about how much money it would take to live overseas (71%), and two in three agreeing that they may have financial issues funding a travel experience (66%). Compared to others, 2SLGBTQI+ youth are significantly more likely to express concern about how much money it would take (84%, vs. 69%) and funding the experience (78%, vs. 63%). Economically disadvantaged youth are more likely than others to agree on every single barrier in the list, except for documents and permits.

While the proportion expressing concern about language barriers is consistent at 61%, this issue ranks third, below the financial concerns that were newly added to the survey this year; language barriers are of roughly equal concern across sub-groups.

Also of note, the proportion who agree with the concern “I do not know how to get started” has increased compared to 2023-24 (59%, vs. 54%). This is of particular concern among 2SLGBTQI+ youth at 64%.

**Exhibit 16 - Travel barriers (Base: all respondents)**

Barriers (NET: Strongly or somewhat agree)	Total (n=2518)	2023-24 Total (n=2753)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=848)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1670)
How much money it would take to live overseas*	71%	N/A*	84%+	69%	69%	72%	82%+	65%
I will have financial issues funding my travel experience*	66%	N/A*	78%+	63%	65%	66%	80%+	58%
I will encounter language barriers	61%	60%	63%	61%	59%	62%	68%+	58%
I do not know how to get started	59%+	54%	64%+	58%	58%	60%	67%+	55%

Q15: 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? I am concerned...

Note: Table continues on following page.

\*New battery items in 2023-24-25.

**Exhibit 17 - Travel barriers continued (Base: all respondents)**

Barriers (NET: Strongly or somewhat agree)	Total (n=2518)	2023-24 Total (n=2753)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=848)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1670)
I have too many obligations	56%	54%	55%	57%	55%	57%	63%+	52%
I will experience issues finding employment	52%-	48%	63%+	50%	62%+	52%	61%+	48%
I will experience isolation or loneliness	50%-	47%	61%+	49%	55%	50%	55%+	48%
I will not feel safe or secure	39%-	42%	54%+	37%	52%+	39%	49%+	35%
I will not feel safe due to global conflicts or terrorism	39%	N/A	45%+	38%	53%+	38%	46%+	36%
I might experience challenges with mental health	37%-	42%	58%+	34%	55%+	35%	45%+	33%
I will have an issue with travel, residency or employment documents or permits	34%-	38%	46%+	33%	43%+	34%	37%	33%
I will have an issue with the country customs and laws, cultural norms	33%-	37%	41%+	31%	44%+	31%	38%+	30%
I have concerns about potential future pandemics	23%-	31%	27%+	23%	37%+	22%	26%+	22%

Q15: 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? I am concerned...

Note: Table continued from previous page.

Naming other barriers in an open-ended question, most respondents (50%) do not name anything specific; youth who are not 2SLGBTQI+ or who do not experience impairments are more likely to list no barriers (52%). The most common barriers named are too many obligations (15%), issues with funding (9%), and a lack of interest; these are broadly consistent across sub-

groups, with economically disadvantaged youth more likely to mention funding issues (13%) compared to others (7%).

**Exhibit 18 - Other travel barriers (Base: All respondents)**

Additional Barriers	Total (n=2518)	2SLGBTQI + youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=848)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1670)
Too many obligations here in Canada	15%	14%	15%	12%	15%	16%	14%
Issues funding my travel experience	9%	11%	9%	12%	9%	13%+	7%
No interest	3%	5%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%
None/nothing else	50%	43%	52%+	37%	52%+	44%	54%+
Don't know / Refused	10%	8%	10%	16%+	9%	9%	10%

Q16: Is there anything else that prevents you from working, studying or volunteering outside of Canada

Note: Table shows results for items mentioned by 3% of respondents or more. Due to changes in the way this question was asked, results for the previous wave are not shown.

### **Qualitative discussion of travel barriers**

Looking at the qualitative research, for those youth who were not considering this type of travel at all, this was often a matter of finances, personal obligations (e.g. school, career, family, pets) or simply never having thought about it before (especially among those under age 18), rather than an absolute lack of interest; this aligns with reasons from the quantitative research. Echoing the quantitative results, those who said they had not given it much thought often also said they wouldn't know where to start.

*"I'm doing an engineering degree, so it feels like if I were to go travel away while studying, it would be it would kind of change a lot of things and maybe set me off track."* – General population youth (16 to 35), British Columbia and the Territories

For youth with impairments, a lack of confidence that they would be able to arrange the accessibility accommodations needed was a definite barrier. Access to health care abroad was also particularly salient for youth with impairments.

*"I need to have special adaptations for accommodations. It means that I'm looking at paying like \$4,000 in accommodation costs for a week... whereas folks who don't have mobility related barriers can be more flexible in how they choose to travel."* – Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment

Regardless of their travel intentions, focus group participants frequently indicated an inclination to avoid places with conflict, and places with serious human rights issues. In terms of specific places that they would avoid, a few mentioned they would not wish to go to the USA right now.

*“Depending on where the travel was... would I be safe there as a non-resident, as a woman, as a black person, as a person with an invisible disability?” – Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment*

#### 4. Views on financial assistance for international experiences

New questions about financial assistance were added to the survey in 2024-25. A majority of respondents indicate that they would need a moderate or large amount of financial assistance to pursue an international experience for six months or more, whether that experience is studying abroad (66%), volunteering abroad (63%), or working while living abroad (56%). Perceived need for financial assistance is higher among economically disadvantaged and 2SLGBTQI+ youth across all three categories.

**Exhibit 19 - Financial assistance (Base: All respondents)**

Financial assistance (NET: Need moderate or large amount)	Total (n=2518)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=848)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1670)
Studying abroad	66%	72%+	65%	61%	67%	93%+	51%
Volunteering abroad	63%	70%+	62%	58%	64%	89%+	50%
Working while living abroad	56%	65%+	54%	52%	56%	100%+	33%

D12A: For the next few questions, imagine you wanted to do each of the following overseas for at least 6 months.

How much financial assistance would you, personally, require to do so?

Note: This question was new in 2023-24-25 and is used to define economically disadvantaged youth in the analysis.

While perceived need for financial assistance is quite high, more than half of respondents who would need such assistance also indicate that getting financial assistance would be a major or an insurmountable barrier for volunteering abroad (57%) or studying abroad (54%). Similar proportions say most or all of the assistance would need to come from private borrowing (55% volunteering, 56% studying).

Less than half say that getting financial assistance would be a substantial barrier for working abroad (47%) and that it would come from private borrowing (48%); this rises to more than half among 2SLGBTQI+ youth (56% barrier, 54% private borrowing) and those who experience impairments (58% barrier, 58% private borrowing).

Calculating based on the complete sample, nearly half of youth say that getting financial assistance would be a major or insurmountable barrier to study (46%) or volunteer (45%) abroad, and more than one in three (38%) say the same about working abroad. Similar

proportions of Canadian youth say that most or all of the funds would need to come from private borrowing (47% to study, 44% to volunteer, 39% to work).

**Exhibit 20 - Financial assistance as a barrier (Base: Those who would need at least a little financial assistance for each experience)**

Financial barriers (NET: Major or insurmountable barrier)	Total	2SLGBTQI+ youth	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment	No impairment	Economically disadvantaged youth	Youth not economically disadvantaged
Volunteering abroad	57%	64%+	56%	61%	56%	81%+	41%
Base size for volunteering abroad	n=2019	n=307	n=1665	n=215	n=1749	n=816	n=1203
Studying abroad	54%	62%+	53%	63%+	53%	86%+	34%
Base size for studying abroad	n=2102	n=318	n=1736	n=225	n=1820	n=828	n=1274
Working while living abroad	47%	56%+	46%	58%+	46%	100%+	9%
Base size for living abroad	n=2016	n=314	n=1652	n=222	n=1734	n=848	n=1168

D12B: If you decided to do each of the following, how significant a barrier would getting the necessary financial assistance be for you?

Note: This question was new in 2023-24-25 and is used to define economically disadvantaged youth in the analysis.

**Exhibit 21 - Financial assistance as a barrier (Base: All respondents)**

Financial barriers (NET: Major or insurmountable barrier)	Total (n=2518)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=848)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1670)
Volunteering abroad	46%	55%+	45%	50%	46%	78%+	29%
Studying abroad	45%	55%+	44%	53%+	44%	84%+	26%
Working while living abroad	38%	49%+	36%	48%+	37%	100%+	6%

D12B: If you decided to do each of the following, how significant a barrier would getting the necessary financial assistance be for you?

Note: This question was new in 2023-24-25 and is used to define economically disadvantaged youth in the analysis.

**Exhibit 22 - Reliance on private borrowing for financial assistance (Base: Those who would need at least a little financial assistance for each experience)**

Reliance on private borrowing (NET: Most or all of it)	Total	2SLGBTQI+ youth	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment	No impairment	Economically disadvantaged youth	Youth not economically disadvantaged
Studying abroad	56%	59%	56%	61%	56%	72%+	46%
Base size for studying abroad	n=2102	n=318	n=1736	n=225	n=1820	n=828	n=1274
Volunteering abroad	55%	57%	54%	58%	54%	70%+	44%
Base size for volunteering abroad	n=2019	n=307	n=1665	n=215	n=1749	n=816	n=1203
Working while living abroad	48%	54%+	47%	58%+	47%	71%+	31%
Base size for living abroad	n=2016	n=314	n=1652	n=222	n=1734	n=848	n=1168

D12C: How much of the financial assistance you think you would need would come from private borrowing (e.g. a bank loan, credit card debt, etc.)?

Note: This question was new in 2023-24-25 and is used to define economically disadvantaged youth in the analysis.

**Exhibit 23 - Reliance on private borrowing for financial assistance (Base: All respondents)**

Reliance on private borrowing (NET: Most or all of it)	Total (n=2518)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=848)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1670)
Studying abroad	47%	52%	47%	52%	47%	71%+	35%
Volunteering abroad	44%	48%	44%	48%	44%	67%+	32%
Working while living abroad	39%	47%	37%	48%	38%	71%+	22%

D12C: How much of the financial assistance you think you would need would come from private borrowing (e.g. a bank loan, credit card debt, etc.)?

Note: This question was new in 2023-24-25 and is used to define economically disadvantaged youth in the analysis.

## Section C: Views on IEC and other youth mobility programs

### 1. Awareness and impressions of IEC

Over half of Canadian youth (54%) say they had never heard of IEC before taking the survey; this is an increase over results from 2023-24. Stated familiarity with IEC is markedly higher among youth with impairments, and youth who are not economically disadvantaged.

**Exhibit 24 - IEC Awareness (Base: All respondents)**

Awareness	Total (n=2518)	2023-24 Total (n=2573)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI + (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Econom- ically disadvan- -taged youth (n=848)	Youth not econom- ically disadvan- -taged (n=1670)
Never heard of it	54%+	46%	53%	54%	36%	56%+	60%+	51%
Only knew the name	14%	14%	14%	14%	8%	14%+	13%	15%
Knew a little bit about the program	16%	18%	19%	16%	22%+	16%	15%	17%
Knew a fair amount about the program	11%	12%	10%	11%	23%+	10%	9%	12%+
Knew the program well	5%-	7%	4%	5%	11%+	4%	4%	6%+

Q17B: Before taking this survey, to what extent were you aware or unaware of the International Experience Canada program?

For those youth who were aware of IEC before taking this survey, the most common channels for hearing about the program are friends and family (26%), Facebook (23%), and Instagram (22%). Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment are less likely to hear about the program from friends and family compared to others (16%), but more likely to hear about it from Instagram (34%). 2SLGBTQI+ youth are less likely than others to hear about IEC from Facebook (14%). Economically disadvantaged youth are more likely than others to hear about IEC from an academic institution or school (23%).

**Exhibit 25 - How they became aware of IEC (Base: Heard of IEC before taking survey)**

Channel	Total (n=1168)	2023-24 Total (n=1285)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=169)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=963)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=165)	No impairment (n=967)	Econom- ically disadvan- taged youth (n=345)	Youth not econom- ically disadvan- taged (n=823)
From friends and family	26%	32%	24%	27%	16%	29%+	28%	25%
Facebook	23%	N/A	14%	25%+	28%	23%	24%	23%
Instagram	22%	N/A	17%	22%	34%+	20%	18%	23%
Academic institution/ School campus	18%	19%	25%+	17%	14%	19%	23%+	16%
General internet search	17%	24%	24%+	16%	11%	18%+	19%	17%
Person/ group on social media	15%	17%	16%	15%	19%	14%	13%	16%
IEC or IRCC website	12%	14%	15%	11%	12%	12%	13%	11%
LinkedIn	11%	N/A	8%	12%	18%+	10%	10%	12%
X (Twitter)	7%	N/A	8%	7%	12%+	7%	5%	8%
Through my work	7%	17%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Specific websites	6%	<1%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	6%
IEC conference/ info session	4%	N/A	4%	4%	7%	4%	4%	4%
From a news agency	4%	12%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%
Through a recognized IEC org.	3%	12%	4%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%
Other	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	6%	4%	6%	5%	4%	5%	6%	6%

Q18: How did you become aware of the International Experience Canada program?

Note: The list of resources changed in 2024-25. Previous data is shown for reference only.

### **Qualitative discussion of IEC awareness**

In the focus groups with youth and parents (excluding the group with IEC participants), awareness of IEC was minimal; several sessions did not have a single participant who recognized the program by name. Of the few who did recognize the program, it was usually seen as a way for youth from other countries to enter Canada, but not vice versa. Even when prompted with a detailed definition of IEC, few participants indicated familiarity with it.

*“Is it for people coming here or Canadians going out?” – Youth (18 to 35) women in STEM, National*

*“International people are able to experience Canada.”* – General population youth (16 to 17), National

*“Travel agency program to help people explore other countries for work or studies.”* – Economically disadvantaged youth (18 to 35), National

*“I thought it was a visa process to come to Canada. I had no idea that through IEC, I can apply to go to 35 other countries.”* – General population youth (16 to 35), British Columbia and the Territories

To help ground the conversation, participants were shown a short video, produced by IRCC, intended to promote IEC for outbound Canadian youth. Participants tended to find this video interesting. It piqued their curiosity, and, for some, it motivated them to get more information for IEC. What participants seemed to take away from the video was that there is a government program that can help Canadians travel and/or get work permits in 35+ countries. The video was often seen as vibrant, fun, interesting, and professional; many participants were surprised that it was a Government of Canada ad.

*“This seemed like a non-traditional federal government commercial. This was not cookie-cutter. I was quite surprised. The quality was excellent.”* – General population youth (16 to 35), Atlantic Canada

*“I will be talking about this with my teen. I will go visit the website.”* – Parent of youth (16 to 17), National (French)

*“I think it's good way to draw in like people, to show that it's something that will benefit you and be helpful to you.”* – Economically disadvantaged youth (18 to 35), National

*“I had no idea about this! Would probably tell my friends about it, but I don't see folks who look like me here, so I would have no way to know if there are things applicable or available to folks w mobility disabilities.”* – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment

*“It's good. It got the point across. You can get the opportunity to work and travel abroad. They didn't put too much information but just enough to spark your curiosity.”* – Youth (16 to 35) women in STEM, National

One drawback mentioned often was that the video did not really answer questions about IEC, like how it works, how much it could cost, and what countries are included. Some noted that the images in the video look like Canada, so it didn't convey the idea of an international trip. Participants in the group for youth with mobility, visual or hearing impairments noted a lack of diversity in the people shown in the video, specifically a lack of people with visible disabilities, and mentioned that having more of the key points written on the screen would be helpful.

Exhibit 26 - Select still captures from outbound IEC video



Provided with more information about the program, consistent with the lack of name recognition, very few youth or parents were at all familiar with the IEC program. While the program sounded interesting to those inclined to travel, one key question raised often is what the program actually offers that they can't do themselves – if they have to find a job, apply for visas, and arrange travel anyway, then what is IEC doing for them? Several parents, in particular, worried that they would have to do all the legwork, while several youth had the impression that IEC was a paid service or agency, leading them to wonder what, exactly, it would cost them and what it would provide. There was a frequent assumption – or perhaps hope – that IEC would provide support for finding accommodations and work.

*“If the program is offered by the government, I would want it to be more seamless. For example, you have to do all the legwork to find housing.”*  
– Parent of youth (16 to 17), National (English)

*“I don't have a good understanding of what they actually do... Are they going to guide you? ...I'm kind of not getting it.”* – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment

*“Having a work permit doesn't necessarily guarantee you're going to get a job... especially with what you hear from people about job insecurity, it does not seem all that feasible to me.”* – General population youth (16 to 17), National

*“It says it facilitates the process for youth working abroad. What exactly does that mean? If the applicants are doing the visa, getting the job, buying the trip themselves.”* – General population youth (16 to 17), National

Over the course of the focus group discussions, some questions about the program were raised frequently by participants, including both youth and parents:

- What countries are involved?
- What kind of career/work/employment opportunities are available? What jobs are in demand in the different countries? Is there training for certain jobs?
- What is the salary comparison?
- How long can you stay?
- What are the tax implications (for example, do you pay taxes in Canada and host country)?
- What medical insurance is available?
- Is it safe?
- What are the admission criteria beyond age? Is any visa/permit acceptable?
- What is the process?
- Does one need a job first? Do they help you find work?
- How much does it cost?
- Do they help find accommodations? Where are the accommodations?
- Are there food packages?
- Is it just you or can your spouse travel with you?
- What does the government help with? What is offered in the IEC program? What is their objective?
- What support is provided to you while you are out of Canada?
- Do they fly you home if you want to come home?
- What is the incentive to do this?

## **2. IEC interest and intentions**

### ***Interest in participating in IEC***

More than one in three survey respondents (37%) say they are somewhat or very likely to participate in a program like IEC in the future; this marks a slight decline compared to the previous year (40%). A high proportion of youth who experience impairment say they are likely

to participate (48%) compared to others (36%), while economically disadvantaged youth are less likely (31%) compared to others (40%).

**Exhibit 27 – Likelihood of participating in a program like IEC in the future (Base: All respondents)**

Likelihood	Total (n=2518)	2023-24 Total (n=2573)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Econom- ically disadvan- taged youth (n=848)	Youth not econom- ically disadvan- taged (n=1670)
NET: Likely	37%-	40%	35%	37%	48%+	36%	31%	40%+
Very likely	10%-	12%	8%	10%	15%+	10%	7%	12%+
Somewhat likely	27%	28%	26%	26%	33%+	26%	24%	28%+
Neither likely nor unlikely	23%-	27%	28%+	23%	22%	24%	25%	23%
Somewhat unlikely	16%+	13%	16%	16%	14%	17%	16%	16%
Very unlikely	19%+	15%	19%	20%	14%	20%+	25%+	16%
Do not know	5%	5%	3%	5%	3%	4%	4%	5%

Q27: To what extent are you likely or unlikely to participate in a work and travel abroad program like International Experience Canada in the future?

Respondents were asked to provide reasons for their likelihood of participating in a program like IEC. For those who say they are likely to participate, the top three reasons are positive impressions in general (34%), access to opportunities and personal growth (19%), and the chance to explore new cultures outside of Canada (14%). Among likely respondents, 2SLGBTQI+ youth are more inclined to be driven by a positive impression (42%); youth with impairments are less likely than others to say their response is based on opportunity for personal growth (12%) or exploring another culture (7%).

Among those who are neutral about participating in this type of program, the most common explanations relate to timing, life stage, or family (13%), concerns about risks like career, finances, and safety (10%), and a sense of ambivalence that depends on the specific opportunity available (10%). Among neutral respondents, youth with impairments are less likely than others to say that their choice depends on the specifics of an opportunity (2%), and economically disadvantaged youth are more likely than others to mention concerns about various risks like career, finances, and safety (14%).

For respondents who say they are not likely to participate in IEC or a similar program, this is most often due to life stage (35%), feeling happy or established where they are (24%), and concerns about various types of risk (14%). Among unlikely respondents, life stage is mentioned less frequently by 2SLGBTQI+ youth (28%) and youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (21%). Being happy or established is less of a factor for youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (10%) and women in STEM (17%). Women in STEM are more likely to be deterred by concerns about various risks like career, finances, and safety (26%).

**Exhibit 28 - Reasons for being likely to participate in a program like IEC (Base: Likely to participate)**

Reasons for likelihood of participating	Total (n=912)	2023-24 Total (n=1067)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=123)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=758)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=121)	No impairment (n=764)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=255)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=657)
Positive impression	34%+	20%	42%+	33%	29%	35%	35%	33%
More opportunities/ personal growth	19%	N/A	15%	20%	12%	21%+	18%	20%
Explore new culture / work abroad / live outside Canada	14%-	18%	13%	14%	7%	15%+	13%	14%
Enjoy travelling/ seeing new places	12%	10%	18%	12%	8%	13%	11%	13%
Concern about career/ financial/ visa/ process/ safety	6%+	4%	7%	6%	8%	6%	8%	6%
Need more information /don't know how	4%	3%	6%	4%	0%	5%	6%	3%
Opportunity to study abroad/new educational opportunities	4%	N/A	2%	4%	1%	4%	4%	4%
Depends on opportunities offered internationally	3%	N/A	3%	3%	1%	4%	3%	3%
Personal preference	3%	8%	4%	2%	3%	2%	4%	2%

Q28: Why do you say that?

Note: Table shows results for items mentioned by 3% of respondents or more.

**Exhibit 29 - Reasons for being neutral about participating in a program like IEC (Base: Neither likely nor unlikely)**

Reasons for likelihood of participating	Total (n=586)	2023-24 Total (n=681)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=98)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=470)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=56)	No impairment (n=513)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=208)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=378)
Age/ family/ life stage/ timing	13%+	9%	13%	13%	6%	13%	13%	12%
Concern about career/ financial/ visa/process/safety	10%	9%	13%	10%	12%	10%	14%+	8%
Depends on opportunities offered	10%+	4%	7%	10%	2%	10%+	7%	11%
Positive impression	9%	N/A	8%	10%	5%	10%	10%	9%
Need more information	9%	9%	15%	8%	5%	10%	10%	9%
Haven't thought about it before	8%+	3%	5%	9%	8%	8%	7%	8%
Have plans for my future/might consider it	7%	7%	8%	7%	6%	7%	8%	6%
Happy/ already established	7%+	4%	9%	7%	4%	7%	7%	7%

Q28: Why do you say that?

Note: Table shows results for items mentioned by 3% of respondents or more.

**Exhibit 30 - Reasons for being not likely to participate in a program like IEC (Base: Not likely to participate)**

Reasons for likelihood of participating	Total (n=894)	2023-24 Total (n=707)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=126)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=755)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=76)	No impairment (n=787)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=349)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=545)
Age/ family/ life stage/ timing	35%+	28%	28%	36%+	21%	36%+	36%	34%
Happy/ already established	24%+	14%	24%	24%	10%	25%+	20%	26%
Concern about career/ financial/ visa/process/safety	14%	12%	20%	13%	18%	14%	16%	13%

Q28: Why do you say that?

Note: Table shows results for items mentioned by 3% of respondents or more.

### **Qualitative discussion of interest in IEC**

Despite low initial knowledge of the program, after being guided to learn more about it, most youth and parents seemed to come away with a positive impression of the program. Parents were broadly supportive of the program concept, and many were hopeful that their children would consider such an opportunity. Among youth who didn't feel that an international experience would be right for them, many still felt this program would be good for others they know. Many said they would recommend the program to others if they felt it would be a good fit.

*"I would recommend this to someone who is 18; a recent graduate, with no family."* – Youth (18 to 35) women in STEM, National

*"I was just talking to a cousin of mine on the phone just few days ago, who is in trades and talks a lot about wanting to go somewhere to work... a very ideal candidate for something like this, I'd imagine."* – General population youth (18 to 35), Ontario

*"I am grateful to know that there are people [in the government] working to inspire our kids to be free and independent."* – Parent of youth 16 to 17, Quebec

Genuine intent or strong consideration of IEC tended to be limited to those who were already interested in pursuing a long-term international trip; several of these participants indicated that IEC was something worth looking into as a means of facilitating such a trip. Some of those without strong travel intentions noted that IEC was something they might consider in the future.

*"I've always been interested in traveling, and the only way to really make it sustainable would be a volunteer experience or get a visa and work in another country... But you know wheelchairs be wheelchairs, that kind of thing."* – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment

**IEC destination preferences**

English-speaking countries top the list of preferred destinations for a work abroad program: Australia (27%), the United Kingdom (16%), and the United States (15%); these were the top three destinations in 2023-24 as well, with slight upticks for Australia and the United States. Youth with a mobility, hearing, or visual impairment are less likely to name most of the top ten destinations in the list compared to other youth.

**Exhibit 31 - Countries of interest for travel abroad (Base: All respondents)**

Country	Total (n=2518)	2023-24 Total (n=2573)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=359)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=2086)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=262)	No impairment (n=2161)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=848)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1670)
Australia	27%+	24%	23%	27%	19%	28%+	25%	28%
UK	16%	15%	19%	16%	11%	17%+	18%	16%
United States	15%+	13%	9%	16%+	9%	15%+	14%	15%
France	13%	12%	14%	13%	9%	14%+	14%	13%
Switzerland	10%+	5%	7%	11%+	6%	11%+	12%+	9%
Japan	10%-	13%	14%+	9%	7%	10%	11%	9%
Italy	9%	9%	10%	9%	5%	9%+	10%	8%
UAE	8%	N/A	3%	9%+	10%	8%	7%	9%
Germany	7%	8%	7%	8%	4%	8%+	7%	7%
Spain	6%+	4%	8%	6%	3%	7%+	7%	6%
New Zealand	6%	6%	9%+	5%	5%	6%	6%	6%
Greece	6%	6%	7%	5%	3%	6%	7%+	5%
Ireland	5%	5%	8%+	4%	5%	5%	6%	4%
Costa Rica	4%	5%	2%	5%	2%	4%	4%	4%
Belgium	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%
Argentina	4%	5%	5%	4%	6%	4%	4%	4%
Denmark	4%	4%	6%	3%	2%	4%	3%	4%
Austria	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%
Brazil	4%	6%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%
Finland	4%	N/A	5%	3%	2%	4%	4%	3%
Sweden	3%	2%	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%
NL Antilles	3%	N/A	2%	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%
Norway	3%	2%	4%	3%	1%	3%	4%	3%
Netherlands	3%	N/A	5%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
South Korea	3%	4%	6%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%

Q29: 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? Enter your top choices below (select up to three).

Consistent with the previous wave of study, culture is the top reason for choosing specific destinations for an international experience (23%). Also at 23%, general interest in the destination ranks second this wave (compared to 12%, good for fourth in 2023-24). Beauty retains third place at 11% this wave, 4 points lower than last year. The top three reasons are largely consistent between sub-groups, though 2SLGBTQI+ youth (28%) and youth who do not experience impairments (24%) are more likely than others to mention culture.

Also of note, strong economy ranks higher this year with 10% (compared to 7%). This is particularly of interest for youth who are not economically disadvantaged (11%) and for women in STEM (14%).

**Exhibit 32 - Reasons for destinations of interest (Base: Those who named at least one country)**

Reason	Total (n=2148)	2023-24 Total (n=2177)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=319)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=1777)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=208)	No impairment (n=1881)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=736)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=1412)
Culture/ history/ music	23%	24%	28%+	22%	14%	24%+	24%	22%
Interested in them/fun places	23%+	12%	20%	23%	22%	23%	24%	22%
Beautiful place/ landscape/ nature	11%-	15%	10%	11%	9%	11%	11%	11%
Strong economy/ job opportunities	10%+	7%	10%	10%	8%	10%	8%	11%+
Language is the same/ English or French-speaking	9%	9%	14%+	8%	4%	10%+	8%	9%
Developed/ safe country	8%+	5%	7%	8%	6%	9%	7%	9%
Familiarity/ been there before/ I like it	8%+	5%	10%	8%	6%	9%	7%	9%

Q30: What is it about these destinations that make them your top choices?

Note: Table continues on following page. Table shows results for items mentioned by 3% of respondents or more.

**Exhibit 33 - Reasons for destinations of interest (Base: Those who named at least one country)**

Reason	Total (n=2148)	2023-24 Total (n=2177)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=319)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=1777)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=208)	No impairment (n=1881)	Econom- ically disadvan- taged youth (n=736)	Youth not econom- ically disadvan- taged (n=1412)
Always wanted to go/explore/visit	8%-	22%	8%	8%	7%	8%	10%+	7%
Heard good things/ good reputation/ people are friendly	7%	7%	5%	7%+	6%	7%	6%	8%
Climate/warm weather	6%	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	6%
Family/friends/ know people there	4%	5%	6%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%
Food and drink	3%	4%	6%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Ethnic homeland /my roots are there	3%	4%	7%	2%	6%	3%	3%	3%
Quality/way of living / good place to live	3%	N/A	4%	3%	2%	3%	2%	4%
Language is different/ to learn a new language	3%	4%	5%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%

Q30: What is it about these destinations that make them your top choices?

Note: Table continued from following page. Table shows results for items mentioned by 3% of respondents or more

### 3. Communicating about IEC

#### *Interest in learning more about IEC*

In the survey results, more than one in three (36%) of those respondents who had never heard of IEC say they would like to receive information about it; 2SLGBTQI+ youth are particularly interested (46%).

**Exhibit 34 - Want to receive information about IEC (Base: Never heard of IEC / Don't know)**

Information	Total (n=1350)	2023-24 Total (n=1288)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=190)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=1123)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=97)	No impairment (n=1194)	Econom- ically disadvan- taged youth (n=503)	Youth not econom- ically disadvan- taged (n=847)
Yes	36%+	32%	46%+	35%	34%	37%	38%	35%
No	43%-	48%	39%	44%	39%	44%	42%	44%
Not sure	20%	20%	15%	21%	27%	19%	20%	21%

Q19: Would you like to receive information about the International Experience Canada Program?

For those indicating an interest in receiving information about IEC, their most preferred channels are through a general internet search (37%), academic institutions or schools (29%), and digital newsletters (29%). Women in STEM are more interested in learning about IEC in a school setting (51%) compared to others (35%), while a digital newsletter is less compelling to youth with mobility, visual or hearing impairments (20%) and more compelling to economically disadvantaged youth (34%).

**Exhibit 35 - Preference to receive information about IEC (Base: Interested in hearing about IEC)**

Method	Total (n=763)	2023-24 Total (n=676)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=115)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=623)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=58)	No impairment (n=669)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=287)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=476)
General internet search	37%	41%	30%	39%	36%	38%	38%	37%
Academic institution/ School campus	29%	25%	35%	29%	38%	29%	31%	29%
Newsletter – digital	29%	N/A	35%	29%	20%	31%+	34%+	26%
IEC or other GoC website	25%	N/A	32%	25%	21%	27%	25%	26%
Person/group on social media	25%	15%	20%	27%	29%	26%	25%	26%
From my friends/ family	22%	22%	24%	21%	25%	23%	20%	23%
Through work	16%	15%	11%	16%	15%	16%	14%	16%
IEC or IRCC Instagram	15%	13%	15%	16%	7%	16%+	12%	17%
IEC conference/ info session	12%	12%	13%	13%	11%	13%	11%	13%
Newsletter - paper	11%	N/A	10%	11%	12%	11%	12%	10%
Through a recognized IEC org.	9%	12%	10%	9%	12%	9%	11%	8%
IEC or IRCC Facebook	9%	9%	7%	10%	8%	10%	10%	8%
From a news agency	9%	13%	9%	9%	10%	9%	10%	8%
IRCC LinkedIn	6%	N/A	8%	6%	9%	6%	7%	5%
IRCC X (Twitter)	2%	N/A	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%
Email	1%	N/A	2%	1%	0%	2%	2%	1%
Social media	1%	N/A	2%	<1%	0%	1%	<1%	1%
Do not know	12%	18%	15%	11%	20%	10%	13%	12%

Q20: How would you prefer to receive information about the International Experience Canada program?

Note: The list of resources changed in 2024-25. Previous data is shown for reference only.

**Qualitative discussion around communicating to youth about IEC**

On the topic of communicating about IEC in the qualitative research, there was a general consensus across groups, including parents and IEC participants, that youth are most likely to notice IEC promotional materials on social media platforms (especially Instagram and TikTok), in high school and postsecondary settings, and on public transit. A few mentioned that while social media is extremely important for communicating with young people, it is also important to give youth ways to verify the veracity of the information given; official websites and television ads were suggested as trustworthy channels that can strengthen the sense of legitimacy.

Several IEC participants said they found out about IEC after they had already made the decision to pursue a work abroad trip, and it was their research into a particular location that led them to IEC. A few of these participants, as well as some older youth in other groups (i.e. those in their 30s), expressed regret that they had not heard of the program at a younger age, and encouraged the use of channels and platforms that can get the program in front of younger people sooner, to give them time to make room for this kind of experience in their life plans.

*“I think you're less likely to step away from those obligations to consider an opportunity like this... I think it would be easier to transition into if it was available for kids graduating high school.” – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment*

In terms of specific messages to use, many participants highlighted how important is it to convey exactly what IEC is, and often recommended putting the participating countries front and centre where possible.

### **Qualitative discussion around IEC naming and taglines**

In addition to gathering input on communication channels, focus group participants were asked to reflect on the program's name and taglines used in promotional materials. As a name, International Experience Canada (IEC) was widely seen to be ineffective at conveying what the program does. Even the IEC participants tended to think of their experience in other terms, particularly a “working holiday.” Most participants tended to associate the name with a program that invites foreigners to experience Canada; not a program that encourages Canadians to work and travel abroad. Youth often recommended adding words like “work” and “travel” to the program name to give more context.

*“This doesn't specify it's for work purposes. It says it's for tourism in and out of Canada.” – Youth (18 to 35) women in STEM, National*

*“It seems more like you're getting the opportunity to travel internationally, but you have to be working for this to be possible... I think it would clarify it for a lot of people, if it was just more aptly named.” – General population youth (16 to 17), National*

*“Even when I was looking at it, I didn't realize International Experience Canada was the same thing as a working holiday visa until I really got into the nitty gritty.” – IEC participant*

*“If you hear this name, you won’t have any idea what this program is about.” – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment*

“Gap year” was seen as a term that had potential for certain audiences; in particular, it was often related to the time between high school and post-secondary (or sometimes a break during post-secondary education), so it was seen as more meaningful for younger Canadians (i.e. high school age). The term had different connotations among certain focus group audiences. While younger participants in the youth sessions often saw it as an intentional break that could be used for saving money, parents tended to describe a gap year as time to figure out your life, for reflection and self-discovery. A few mentioned it as an opportunity to travel and saw IEC as a great way to spend a gap year. Some parents expressed concern that 18 may be too young for solo travel abroad. For IEC participants / past participants, a “gap year” in English was seen as a time for youthful fun, rather than a time to work; the equivalent term in French (année sabbatique) was seen more as a rest period away from work, for someone more established in a career path. The term did not resonate with IEC participants as something that described their IEC trips.

*“A gap year in your 30s is a luxury. We’re stuck in the cycle here.” – Parent of youth (16 to 17), National (English)*

*“A gap year, to me at least, feels more like a time to really add to your resume, get some more work experience, get volunteer hours. Just build a better portfolio for yourself.” – Economically disadvantaged youth (18 to 35), National*

*“I think probably more like work, because I know a lot of my friends were like saying they want to take a gap year and like, do construction and like, save up.” – General population youth (16 to 17), National*

*“I’ve talked to a couple high school teachers, and they said they’ve seen a rise in recommending gap years to students post-COVID... it’s kind of difficult to figure things out at the moment for a lot of high schoolers.” – General population youth (16 to 35), British Columbia and the Territories*

*“In some countries, 18 is young and not even the age of majority.” – Parent of youth (16 to 17), National (French)*

*“When I hear “gap year,” I almost think you went, and you travelled personally, or you volunteered... I don’t think you went there to work. I just think of it as more of like a leisure term.” – IEC participant*

“Working holiday” was widely seen as a favourable way of describing the program among youth in general. IEC participants / past participants largely agreed that “working holiday” was a good way to describe the program, adding that this terminology is widely used among youth who travel in this way.

*“Nobody will tell you I did IEC in Australia... they will say I did a working holiday visa in that country.” – IEC participant*

*“I prefer “working holiday visa” because it’s clear it’s a visa, and it’s to work.” – IEC participant*

*“Working holiday visa is what other countries call it and encapsulate the experience better.” – General population youth (16 to 35), British Columbia and the Territories*

The term “young professional experience” did a good job of conveying the “work” and professional dimension of the experience but lacked the “travel” dimension to give full meaning to the program’s name. Other terms like “international co-op” didn’t resonate or fit with what participants had come to understand about the program.

*“It will exclude a lot of these student type jobs... these jobs that are not necessarily what people studied in.” – IEC participant*

The tagline “Start your adventure abroad: Work, Travel, Explore” was generally well received, though a few felt it may give an unrealistic portrait of what living abroad is really like. Some suggested altering it slightly by adding a word like “Live” to better convey the idea of living or experiencing life in another culture; they emphasized the importance of cultural immersion as a key benefit of an international experience.

*“Start your adventure, that grabs your attention.” – General population youth (18 to 35), Prairies*

*“To me it’s more than working. It’s the opportunity to live in another country, which, of course, comes with working.” – IEC participant*

*“It’s giving like those ads that you see in social media... do you want to be one of these people who has their laptop by the pool.” – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment*

Another tagline, “Become an internationally experienced Canadian” did not strike a chord with participants, who widely saw this as vague and not in line with their understanding of the program. Several suggested that this statement could work as a secondary message to the first tagline, “Start your adventure abroad: Work, Travel, Explore.”

#### **4. IEC Reciprocity (qualitative)**

In the focus groups, youth, parents, and past IEC participants were asked to consider the three-to-one discrepancy between inbound and outbound IEC participants. Participants offered many different reasons for the discrepancy between outbound Canadian participation, and international inbound participation in IEC, but the most dominant theme was a cultural expectation of a set life path from secondary to post-secondary to career to home ownership:

- Many participants indicated that in Canada, youth are guided to follow a certain path that does not permit time for long-term travel.
- Some perceived a lack of support, or even a degree of stigma toward the concept of a gap year here in Canada.

- Those with international travel experiences of their own often agreed that youth from other countries seem to receive more encouragement for this type of experience.
- Parents offered that we raise our children differently in Canada; that in our culture we do not push them to leave.
- For some, especially parents in Quebec and IEC participants, there was a sense that youth in other places, like Europe, for example, are more accustomed to travel given the geography and proximity of so many other countries.

*“Here, we are surrounded. We are less accustomed to great diversity. We’re our own island; even surrounded by anglophones.”* – Parent of youth (16 to 17), National (French)

*“In Canada, we have to work, work, work. It’s expensive just to survive.”*  
– Parent of youth (16 to 17), National (English)

*“You have to go in a straight line, and you only travel when you will retire.”* – IEC participant

Another common theme that came up in the reciprocity discussions was a simple lack of awareness. Many participants noted that they had never heard about IEC at any point in high school or post-secondary, and that simple lack of exposure is likely preventing Canadian youth from learning about or pursuing the opportunity.

*“I just think the opportunity needs to be presented more widely.”* – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment

Cost was also a common reason. Some participants noted that travelling from Canada to other countries is expensive and far. Some also felt the cost of education, especially in Quebec, made it advantageous to stay close to home. A few also indicated that their desire to see other parts of Canada outweighed their interest in other countries.

Several participants also pointed to the general appeal of Canada as a destination for inbound travellers. It was noted that Canada is often seen as a dream destination for people in other parts of the world, so it would naturally attract many youth to it through the IEC program.

*“Canada is seen as a first world country. We’re already privileged.”* – Youth (18 to 35) women in STEM, National

*“Canada sells its merits well. We are known to be safe and friendly.”* – General population youth (18 to 35), Quebec

*“We have a diverse landscape country-wide. We have oceans, mountains, prairies, wine country, seafood, big cities.”* – General population youth (18 to 35), Prairies

## 5. Creative testing with IEC promotional materials

The focus group research included creative testing of several materials produced by IRCC and other possible methods for promoting the program with Canadian youth. In general, participants reacted with positivity and provided constructive feedback.

### **QR codes and NFC**

Youth and parents preferred the idea of a QR code over an NFC signal for reasons of privacy and device security; they did not like the idea of information being pushed to a device. A few participants did think they would be comfortable with NFC if they were at an information session, mainly for ease of use.

*“I think QR is best practice. NFC is frightful. If I don’t know what it is and I’m sensitive to spam. I want to control the information I take in.”* – Youth (18 to 35) women in STEM, National

*“QR codes are free to generate, also, you can scan them from a distance.”* – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment

*“NFC is aggressive. There is just so much unwanted info.”* – Parent of youth (16 to 17), National (English)

### **Focus of promotional materials**

Participants in some groups were asked to consider two areas of focus for IEC promotional material, cultural benefits of the program, and professional growth benefits.

The cultural benefits approach was widely preferred among participants across groups. Some pointed out that young people working abroad often take short-term service or manual labour jobs that are not directly related to their intended career path; in other words, they are working to pay for the experience of living abroad, not to build career experience. The appeal of visiting other countries was often seen to be based on cultural differences, new experiences, food, language, and socializing more than working itself, which led participants to see the cultural benefits approach as more effective for a broader audience of youth.

While focusing on cultural benefits was preferred more often than focusing on professional growth, there were some proponents for the professional benefits approach. There was an age divide in the sense that younger people tended to be more attracted to cultural benefits, while older youth, already set in a career path, would be more interested in professional growth. This led participants to see the professional benefits approach as potentially effective if aimed at more specific, possibly older, audiences.

*“Focusing on the cultural benefits would attract my son on what I wish for him – to learn about himself, that there’s more to life, see the world. The professional growth will always be there.”* – Parent of youth (16 to 17), National (English)

## Social media images

Consistent with participants' preference for a focus on the cultural benefits of IEC, images in social media depicting the cultural benefits were generally preferred over images depicting professional growth, though most felt there was room for both in a social media campaign about the program. Participants had some suggestions for selecting images that would be more informative and compelling:

- Images featuring more obvious international destinations, rather than images that could be mistaken for Canadian locales.
- Including images of solo travellers, as well as social situations, to avoid making IEC look like it is specifically a group experience.
- Images that convey jobs that are attractive, realistic, and attainable for IEC participants.
- If images are conveying work, make sure the work is clearly identifiable.

*"I don't think I would go with a group. I want to see myself on that mountain, not like a bunch of people like that. Seems like a travel group thing."* – Economically disadvantaged youth (18 to 35), National

*"If you just show travelling, then it looks like it's going to be more of a travel experience. And if you just show work, then it makes it look less like a fun travel experience."* – General population youth (16 to 17), National

Exhibit 36 - Example work images for social media



Exhibit 37 - Example cultural benefits image for social media



## **Newsletter**

Overall reaction to the newsletter was neutral to lukewarm. Mainly participants appreciated the content/information but did not find the overall look and feel all that appealing or youth-oriented. Most participants who reviewed the mock-up, including both youth and parents, did not think many young people would sign up for this type of publication unless they were already serious about pursuing an IEC opportunity.

*“It's not something that's makes you want to continue reading it.”* –  
General population youth (16 to 17), National

*“It looks like I'm late for my taxes or something.”* – IEC participant

Understanding that the design of the newsletter has to align with Government of Canada design requirements, the most common suggestion for improving the newsletter was to include more appealing photographs that more explicitly convey the idea of international travel.

*“Instead of that picture of her walking, show something beautiful in Germany, or something fun to do.”* – IEC participant

In terms of the content, it was generally seen to be appropriate and useful. Some suggested that content like the tips and tricks, or information about picking a country, might be more attention-grabbing at the top. There was also appetite for testimonials and hearing about the experiences of others. There were not many strong preferences about other newsletter content.

*“I would be more inclined to read this if I could hear a person's story.”* –  
General population youth (18 to 35), Prairies

*“I like it. It covers a lot of topics: budget, testimonials. The examples of past experiences are helpful.”* – General population youth (18 to 35),  
Prairies

*“I like the testimonial, especially since it says the country she was in.”* –  
Economically disadvantaged youth (18 to 35), National

Exhibit 38 - Mock-up of digital newsletter for IEC



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada



## International Experience Canada

March 1, 2025



New! Canada-Finland Youth Mobility Agreement. This agreement will allow Canadians and Finns aged 18 to 35 to work and travel in each other's country through IEC or the Finnish equivalent. [Learn more at Canada.ca/iec.](#)

### Travel far and feel at home – Theresa in Germany

After completing her hotel professional apprenticeship, Theresa longed to experience life as a guest, not a host.



[Watch how Theresa embraced change.](#)



Got a friend who's experienced IEC? We'd love to hear their story! Share this with them and have them reach out to us at [IEC.EIC@dc.gc.ca](mailto:IEC.EIC@dc.gc.ca).

### IEC Tips and Tricks Series: Part 2 – Setting a budget and Sticking to it

- **Plan for Living Expenses:** Research the cost of living in your host city, including rent, groceries, transportation, and leisure activities. This will help you create a realistic monthly budget.
- **Use Local Banking Options:** Check with your bank about fees for using your Canadian bank card abroad or consider opening a local bank account to minimize fees.
- **Look for Student Discounts:** Many countries offer discounts for international students at museums, transit systems, and restaurants—carry your student ID to take advantage of these savings!



### Having country commitment issues?

Explore our [online immersive experience](#) or join in-person to picture yourself in one of our partner countries!

Visit us at:  
Founders' Hall – Charlottetown, PEI  
May 2-4<sup>th</sup>, 2025 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.



### Prevent application fraud

**Watch Out for Fake Job Offers and Promises:** Make sure to verify employers independently. Also be cautious of phishing emails especially if you receive messages claiming you must pay for job offers or interviews.

**Sources of information:** Rely on official government sources or information from [Registered Organizations](#).

### Need more details on a country?

Check out the Government of Canada's official source of travel information and advice: [Travel advice and advisories by destination](#).



### Stay connected #IECvoyage or #EICvoyage



Please note that the content shared from or about third parties does not constitute an endorsement by the Government of Canada.

If you no longer wish to receive updates on International Experience Canada Newsletter, please reply to this email address and add 'Unsubscribe' to the subject line

## **Video**

The promotional video was among the most positively received elements of all those tested. The majority of participants who saw the video, both youth and parents, appreciated the tone of the video and felt that it conveyed IEC with a sense of excitement. Participants noted that the video did an excellent job of showcasing how IEC provides youth with an opportunity to both work and travel internationally. It conjured up a certain level of interest and enthusiasm in the program, and some participants suggested the video would motivate them to look for more information about IEC. Though a few were confused by the tagline “write your own story,” this was the only substantial criticism that came from the group discussions.

*“Within the first 5 seconds you get the point. It was a lot more informative about the program.”* – Youth (18 to 35) women in STEM, National

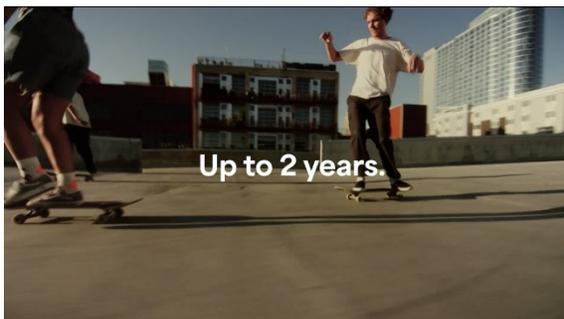
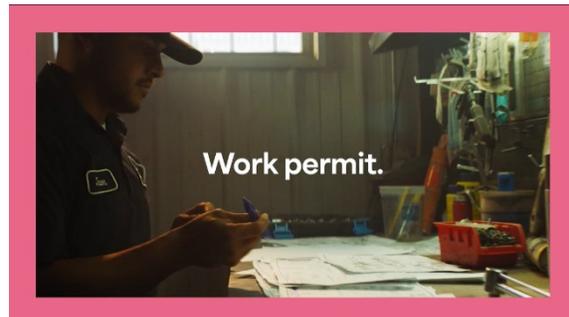
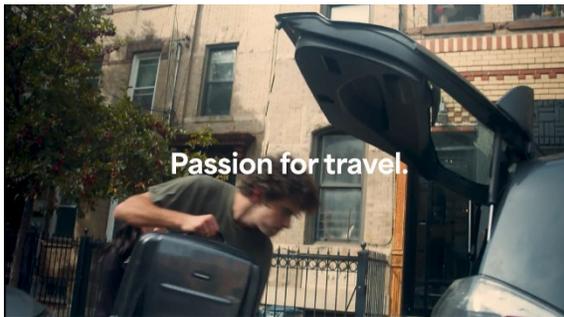
*“I love this video. It’s catchy. I want to go!”* – Parent of youth (16 to 17), National (French)

*“This one actually gives you a full in-depth explanation of how it works...a better understanding of it.”* – Economically disadvantaged youth (18 to 35), National

*“It was very fast paced and enticing. The point about not needing to have any work experience was pretty captivating, because especially in Canada, it’s pretty hard as a youth to get a job.”* – General population youth (16 to 17), National

*“It did provide clarity, showing that there were people in the trades as well and in different working fields that are able to apply.”* – General population youth (18 to 35), Ontario

**Exhibit 39 - Select still captures from promotional IEC video**



**Webpages**

Some focus groups were guided to look at an outbound IEC webpage for a specific country (France), followed by a general webpage for the outbound IEC program.

Group participants found the outbound (France) webpage to be visually effective, well organized and easy to navigate. Participants liked the drop-down style for the content and generally agreed that the web page would be useful at answering many of the most pressing questions they would have about using IEC to go to a specific country.

*“While the pictures could be more vibrant, this is a great layout and highlights the right information. It ticks my boxes.”* – General population youth (18 to 35), Prairies

*“It would be really cool to see actual people that have done this stuff.”* – Youth (16 to 35) with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment

The general IEC page also met with approval, though participants often wondered why it did not use the same drop-down style layout for its content. The step-by-step organization outlining the process and requirements was clear, organized and looked like it would simplify the application process. IEC participants noted that the web pages seemed to be sufficient at addressing the core steps for applying and planning an IEC trip, based on their experience with the program. Several participants in different groups suggested that the list of participating countries should be higher up, to address one of the more common questions people have about the program.

*“I like this a lot. It shows the steps in order. It’s less frightening. Give you a list to complete.”* – General population youth (18 to 35), Quebec

While youth participants generally agreed that the webpages contained the answers to any major questions they had about IEC, a few of the parent participants felt there was information missing. For example, after viewing the webpages, they were still not clear on the benefits of IEC, what service the government is providing, whether a case worker would be assigned to help navigate the process, or if IEC applications received some sort of discount (versus applying for a visa directly).

In terms of the green button at the bottom of the page, some participants expected it would take them to a government or embassy website or to an online application. Some were also hopeful that the link would lead them to potential employment opportunities or accommodation options in the host country.

## Section D: IEC Participants

### 1. Past participation in IEC and other youth mobility programs

#### *IEC participation*

Just over one in ten youth over 18 (13%) say they have participated in IEC; this is a slight downtick from 2023-24. Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment are more likely than others to say they have participated in IEC (32%); this result may be influenced by familiarity with a disability support organization called Inclusive Education Canada, which also uses “IEC” as an acronym. Economically disadvantaged youth are less likely to say they have participated (8%) compared to others (15%).

**Exhibit 40 - Past participation in IEC (Base: Age 18 or older)**

Participation	Total (n=2305)	2023-24 Total (n=2502)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=336)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=1903)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=246)	No impairment (n=1971)	Econom- ically disadvan- taged youth (n=771)	Youth not econom- ically disadvan- -taged (n=1534)
Yes	13%-	16%	12%	13%	32%+	11%	8%	15%+
No	82%+	77%	84%	83%	64%	85%+	89%+	79%
Not sure	5%	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%	3%	5%

Q9: Have you ever participated in the International Experience Canada (IEC) program, which provides Canadian youth facilitated access to a work permit in more than 35 different countries and territories?

One in four past IEC participants (26%) say they visited Australia through IEC, an increase compared to 2023-24. Other top destinations include the United Kingdom (20%), Germany (14%), and Belgium (12%). At 12 percent, the proportion who say they visited France has declined this year.

**Exhibit 41 – IEC Partner countries (Mentions of 5% and higher)**

Country	Total (n=302)	2023-24 Total (n=625)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=37)*	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=257)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=76)	No impairment (n=219)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=61)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=241)
Australia	26%+	17%	32%	25%	33%	24%	34%	24%
United Kingdom	20%	17%	28%	19%	16%	22%	25%	19%
Germany	14%	13%	6%	15%+	15%	13%	8%	15%
Belgium	12%	8%	11%	12%	16%	10%	11%	12%
France	12%-	23%	8%	12%	9%	13%	20%	10%
Austria	7%	4%	0%	8%+	4%	8%	7%	7%
Costa Rica	7%	6%	13%	6%	12%	5%	5%	7%
Italy	6%-	11%	0%	7%+	7%	6%	6%	6%
Japan	6%	9%	3%	6%	10%	4%	11%	4%
Spain	6%	8%	8%	5%	8%	5%	8%	5%
Denmark	5%	4%	3%	6%	7%	5%	5%	6%
Switzerland	5%	6%	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%
Mexico	5%-	9%	0%	5%	3%	6%	7%	4%
Chile	5%	4%	11%	4%	5%	4%	10%	3%
Hong Kong	5%	7%	3%	4%	8%	3%	13%+	3%

Q10: Which International Experience Canada partner country(ies) did you go to?

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

Most of those who participated in IEC have done so once (67%); this is consistent across sub-groups and in line with previous results from 2023-24. Among those who have participated in IEC more than once, the most common reasons for doing so are learning about a new country or culture (54%), learning a second language (52%), and obtaining career experience (46%).

**Exhibit 42 - Number of times participating in IEC (Base: Participated in IEC)**

Number of times	Total (n=299)	2023-24 Total (n=408)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=37)*	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=254)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=76)	No impairment (n=216)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=61)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=238)
Once	67%	69%	56%	68%	53%	71%	71%	66%
Twice	28%	28%	33%	27%	41%	24%	25%	29%
Three times or more	5%	3%	10%	4%	6%	5%	4%	5%

Q9A: How many times have you participated in the IEC program?

Note: Tests of statistical significance omitted due to small sample sizes.

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

**Exhibit 43 - Reason for participating in IEC more than once (Base: Participated in IEC more than once)**

Reasons	Total (n=99)	2023-24 Total (n=127)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=16)*	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=80)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=37)*	No impairment (n=61)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=18)*	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=81)
Learning about a new country or culture	54%	68%	57%	54%	46%	60%	75%	49%
Learning or improving a secondary language	52%	45%	48%	53%	64%	46%	54%	52%
Obtaining international career experience or professional development	46%	57%	50%	44%	49%	43%	44%	46%
Personal growth	40%	33%	45%	40%	30%	47%	45%	39%
Exploration and adventure	37%	40%	26%	39%	22%	47%	38%	37%

Q9A1: Which of the following are reasons that you chose to participate in IEC more than once?

Note: Tests of statistical significance omitted due to small sample sizes.

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

### **Other programs**

One in ten youth 18 and over (10%, down from 16% in 2023-24) say they have participated in the International Youth Internship Program (IYIP) and another 5% say they have participated in the International Aboriginal Youth Internship (IAYI). Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment are significantly more likely to recall participation with both programs; again, it is

possible that some respondents may be conflating these with unrelated programs aimed at those living with disabilities or otherwise in need of support. Youth who are not economically disadvantaged are more likely to recall participating in IYIP (12%).

**Exhibit 44 - Participation in other Canadian youth mobility programs (Base: Age 18 or older)**

Other Program	Total (n=2305)	2023-24 Total (n=2502)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=336)	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=1903)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=246)	No impairment (n=1971)	Econom- ically disadvan- taged youth (n=771)	Youth not econom- ically disadvan- taged (n=1534)
Yes – International Youth Internship Program	10%-	16%	10%	11%	24%+	9%	8%	12%+
Yes – International Aboriginal Youth Internship	5%	5%	4%	5%	18%+	3%	3%	6%
Yes – Other	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%
No	81%+	72%	84%	81%	53%	85%+	87%+	78%
Not sure	5%	6%	4%	4%	9%+	4%	4%	5%

Q9B: 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)?

### ***Visas and work permits***

Most participants of IEC or other programs do not recall the specific name of the visa or permit they received for their trip. The most common mentions are work visa or work permit (9%) and student or study visa (6%).

Among part IEC participants, two in three (69%) say they used an open work permit, while 44% used an employer-specific permit (respondents were able to select more than one).

**Exhibit 45 - Type of visa obtained (Base: Participated in IEC / other youth mobility program)**

Permit Name	Total (n=302)	2023-24 Total (n=625)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=37)*	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=257)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=76)	No impairment (n=219)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=61)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=241)
Work Visa/ Permit	9%	7%	6%	10%	5%	11%	9%	9%
Student/ Study Visa	6%	4%	5%	6%	8%	6%	3%	7%
Working Holiday Visa	4%	N/A	2%	4%	0%	5%	3%	4%
Open Work Permit	4%	N/A	0%	4%	3%	4%	5%	3%
Visitor Visa	2%	6%		2%	0%	3%	2%	2%
Other	15%	5%	19%	15%	10%	18%	17%	15%
Not sure/ do not recall	63%	71%	71%	61%	76%	58%	67%	62%

Q10A: What was the name of the type of visa you got from the host country when you participated in IEC/other youth mobility program? If you participated more than once, please list them all.

Note: Tests of statistical significance omitted due to small sample sizes.

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

**Exhibit 46 - IEC Travel Stream (Base: Participated in IEC)**

Stream	Total (n=297)	2023-24 Total (n=408)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=37)*	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=252)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=76)	No impairment (n=214)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=61)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=236)
Open work permit	69%	66%	78%	67%	63%	70%	80%	66%
Employer-Specific Work Permit	44%	41%	43%	44%	53%	41%	35%	46%
Don't know	3%	4%	0%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%

Q17A: What International Experience Canada stream did you travel through?

Note: Tests of statistical significance omitted due to small sample sizes.

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

### **Satisfaction and likelihood of recommending IEC**

A strong majority of IEC participants (79%) say they are very or somewhat satisfied with their experience. For those satisfied with IEC, the most common reasons given for their rating are simple satisfaction (24%), a great experience (21%), and an easy process (10%). Those who are neutral or not satisfied also tend to be non-specific with their reasons, most often saying they are satisfied or didn't have issues (12%), they just didn't like it (7%), or they felt there were some negative sides to the experience (7%). Most IEC participants (80%) say they are likely to recommend an international working abroad program to family or friends.

**Exhibit 47 - IEC satisfaction ratings (Base: Participated in IEC)**

Satisfaction	Total (n=297)	2023-24 Total (n=625)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=37)*	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=252)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=76)	No impairment (n=214)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=61)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=236)
NET: Satisfied	79%	85%	83%	79%	69%	83%	83%	78%
Very satisfied	36%	37%	41%	36%	36%	36%	38%	36%
Somewhat satisfied	43%	48%	42%	43%	33%	47%	45%	42%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14%	11%	11%	14%	16%	12%	16%	13%
Somewhat dissatisfied	5%	3%	6%	5%	12%	3%	1%	6%
Very dissatisfied	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	N/A	1%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	N/A	2%

Q21: To what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with your work and travel abroad experience via the International Experience Canada program?

Note: Tests of statistical significance omitted due to small sample sizes.

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

**Exhibit 48 – Reasons for IEC satisfaction ratings (Base: Those satisfied with IEC)**

Reasons for IEC satisfaction rating	Total (n=236)	2023-24 Total (n=348)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=31)*	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=199)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=53)	No impairment (n=178)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=50)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=186)
Satisfied / No issues	24%	N/A	16%	26%	19%	25%	28%	23%
Great experience / personal growth	21%	42%	29%	20%	20%	22%	15%	23%
Easy process / good support	14%	11%	17%	13%	10%	16%	20%	12%
Good program to learn	11%	7%	6%	12%	10%	11%	11%	11%

Q22: Why do you say that?

Note: Tests of statistical significance omitted due to small sample sizes. Table continues on following page.

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

**Exhibit 49 – Reasons for IEC satisfaction ratings continued (Base: Those satisfied with IEC)**

Reasons for IEC satisfaction rating	Total (n=236)	2023-24 Total (n=348)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=31)*	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=199)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=53)	No impairment (n=178)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=50)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=186)
Learning about a new country or culture	6%	N/A	10%	5%	2%	7%	2%	7%
Was able to work and earn money	4%	1%	3%	5%	0%	6%	0%	5%
Ability to travel/ see new places/ meet people	4%	8%	0%	5%	5%	4%	0%	5%
Some negative sides (e.g. Complex Process)	4%	6%	8%	3%	2%	5%	2%	5%
It was a fun experience	3%	11%	6%	3%	2%	4%	4%	3%
Expensive / costly	3%	N/A	4%	2%	0%	4%	2%	3%
It was okay/could have been better	2%	6%	3%	1%	4%	1%	2%	2%
Didn't like it/disappointed	<1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Other	4%	1%	4%	5%	0%	6%	9%	3%
No reason	8%	6%	7%	8%	13%	6%	11%	7%
Not sure	10%	3%	7%	11%	22%	6%	6%	11%

Q22: Why do you say that?

Note: Tests of statistical significance omitted due to small sample sizes. Table continued from previous page.

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

**Exhibit 50 – Reasons for IEC satisfaction ratings (Base: Those not satisfied / neutral with IEC)**

Reasons for IEC satisfaction rating	Total (n=58)*	2023-24 Total (n=58)*	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=22)*	No impairment (n=34)*	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=11)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=47)
Satisfied / No issues	12%	N/A	9%	15%	10%	13%
Didn't like it/ disappointed	7%	14%	9%	6%	0%	9%
Some negative sides (e.g. Complex Process)	7%	11%	4%	9%	18%	4%
It was okay/ could have been better	5%	10%	0%	9%	9%	4%
Great experience / personal growth	3%	16%	0%	6%	8%	2%
It was a fun experience	2%	N/A	0%	4%	0%	3%
Good program to learn	2%	N/A	0%	3%	10%	0%
Expensive / costly	1%	N/A	0%	2%	0%	2%
Other	20%	2%	18%	17%	27%	18%
No reason	9%	17%	14%	6%	9%	9%
Not sure	31%	18%	45%	23%	9%	37%

Q22: Why do you say that?

Note: 2SLGBTQI+ youth / not 2SLGBTQI+ not shown due to small sample size. Tests of statistical significance omitted due to small sample sizes.

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

**Exhibit 51 - IEC recommendation ratings (Base: Participated in IEC)**

Likelihood	Total (n=297)	2023-24 Total (n=408)	2SLGBTQI+ youth (n=37)*	Youth not 2SLGBTQI+ (n=252)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment (n=76)	No impairment (n=214)	Economically disadvantaged youth (n=61)	Youth not economically disadvantaged (n=236)
NET: Likely	80%	83%	89%	79%	72%	83%	82%	80%
Very likely	39%	37%	44%	38%	33%	40%	45%	40%
Somewhat likely	41%	46%	45%	41%	39%	43%	82%	80%
Neither likely nor unlikely	15%	12%	8%	16%	20%	13%	14%	15%
Somewhat unlikely	4%	3%	3%	4%	6%	3%	3%	4%
Very unlikely	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%

Q23: To what extent are you likely or unlikely to recommend an international working abroad experience such as International Experience Canada to family or friends?

Tests of statistical significance omitted due to small sample sizes.

\*Results should be interpreted with caution due to small sample size.

### ***Qualitative discussion of IEC participant experiences***

One of the twelve focus groups was conducted specifically with past and current IEC participants. In addition to discussing similar topics and reviewing many of the same materials shown to other focus groups, members of the IEC group discussed their lived experiences with the program.

In terms of learning about IEC in the first place, some participants came across the program while they were already researching opportunities for work and travel abroad. Others learned about the program through university, and from other young people on their own international trips.

*“I was backpacking in Southeast Asia... it's really common there for people to do the working holiday in Australia, and then do like little trips up to Southeast Asia. So I met a lot of people who were doing that. And then when I went home, I started researching it.”* – IEC participant

Experiences with the application process were mixed and dependent on destination country. Some participants had significant challenges working with destination countries to obtain permission to live and work there; though the experience was frustrating, the IEC partner organizations helped them to navigate these difficulties. Others, visiting different countries, found the process to be fairly simple.

*“It was a very frustrating process, and took quite a quite a long time.”* – IEC participant

*“I think I sent in a scan of my passport, and maybe some other documents, and I had to send in a bank statement, just to show that I had money to get there... it was super quick and easy to get the visa.”* – IEC participant

IEC participants also had a range of experiences when it came to finding jobs in their destination countries. Those more focused on getting jobs in a particular line of work tended to need more time for their job search, and some were delayed by the process of getting their work permit.

*“It's easier once you're there to apply to jobs because you can meet in person. So once I landed, it did take me about 3 months, but I was also a little stubborn.”* – IEC participant

Challenges mentioned by the IEC participants tended to echo the general travel challenges that are common in the survey results, and focus group findings in general. Participants mentioned issues like money concerns, planning difficulties, homesickness, and language barriers.

*“If you don't master the language, it can be a real challenge.”* – IEC participant

*“Been here in Spain for 3 months and still struggling on finding work. it took 2 months to get my residence card to even apply for work.” – IEC participant*

*“I’ve been seeing the Super Bowl with my same friend group for 10 years now, and that was a little tough yesterday... I really felt that. And at Christmas.” – IEC participant*

*“People are not just there to be your friend, and they’re not on holiday. Like, this is the real life, and they’re not where you’re from. So you don’t connect exactly the same.” – IEC participant*

Though several of the IEC participants had encountered difficulties along the way, their overall impressions of the IEC program were positive, and there was often a sense that overcoming those challenges was part of what made it beneficial for them.

*“I think it is good for your brain to kind of take a step back from your life back home, and then sort of be a little more spontaneous, and meet people that you wouldn’t have otherwise met.” – IEC participant*

*“From a career angle, I am in urban planning... every time I travel somewhere, it’s beneficial to me, because every culture approaches city planning differently.” – IEC participant*

*“The thing I definitely appreciated the most is understanding a different work-life balance... I would definitely recommend this experience to everyone, because you kind of get a different pace of life, a different experience, different culture.” – IEC participant*

While their experiences differed from each other in many ways, IEC participants had positive advice to offer young Canadians, and they were unanimous in recommending the experience to other young people.

*“Research the country you’re wanting to go to.” – IEC participant*

*“I think the advice I would give would be if you want to do it, do it. Don’t wait.” – IEC participant*

*“Everything’s going to work out in the end... It’s not going to be easy, but it’s worth it.” – IEC participant*

## Conclusions

The quantitative and qualitative research findings demonstrate a low awareness of IEC among Canadian youth, and in the case of the qualitative research, among parents as well. Despite low awareness of the program, there is general agreement that working and living abroad, as a concept, holds a degree of appeal and offers a wide array of benefits to Canadian youth.

Learning about IEC, qualitative participants often have an initial expectation that the program will provide a degree of support to youth, whether that is in the form of finding jobs, accommodations, or even financial assistance. New survey questions added this year indicate that in addition to worries about finding a job and a place to live, the financial risks associated with a long-term overseas trip are considerable for many. A high proportion of youth feel they would need to borrow privately to fund such a trip, and this is even higher among 2SLGBTQI+ youth and those with mobility, vision, or hearing impairments. These youth may be starting with higher needs and less robust support on average than their peers.

Reviewing the quantitative results for youth with mobility, vision, or hearing impairments naturally raises the question: why are their views on travel different? The qualitative research included a focus group specifically with youth who experience these kinds of impairments; several of the participants in this group raised the issue of accessibility as a barrier to international travel (and domestic travel, for that matter). It may be worth exploring if structured volunteer and study opportunities abroad are viewed as potentially more accessible than leisure travel among this audience, and if they perhaps view international employers as more accommodating than Canadians ones.

The entrenched cultural expectation of a set life path from secondary education to post-secondary to career may present a significant challenge to shifting perspectives, but given the current affairs landscape and post-pandemic economic and cultural impacts on young Canadians, conditions may be ripe for encouraging youth – and their parents – to reconsider these expectations and open themselves to alternatives. Locations with advantageous exchange rates and cost of living compared to Canada may hold particular appeal for youth in this economy.

While some barriers to participation are difficult to change, many of the concerns raised in the research are actionable. For example, themes like “not knowing where to start” and “I’ve never heard about it” come up often, suggesting that simply showing the program to a wider audience of youth holds great potential for increasing interest and intention. Qualitative participants – including those who have themselves participated in IEC – often suggest that reaching youth as early as possible is essential, because it gives them time to consider the idea over a longer timeline of future planning. This tells us that IRCC’s general approach to promotions, reaching youth with appealing messages in the channels they use, is on the right track.

## Appendix A: Quantitative methodology report

### Survey methodology

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 experiences, their views on travel and living abroad in general, their awareness and views of the IEC program and their future international experience intentions.

### Questionnaire design

Earnscliffe 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 a separate cover.

The questionnaire was programmed, then thoroughly tested by Leger programmers 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 were included in the analysis.

### Sample design and selection

A sample of 2,518 Canadian citizens aged 16 to 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. The sample was stratified by region, age, and gender based on the 2021 Census.

**Exhibit 52 - Sample distribution by gender**

Gender	% of population	% of weighted sample	Actual unweighted	Actual weighted
Male	49%	49%	1230	1235
Female	51%	49%	1250	1241
Another gender	N/A	1%	32	34
No response	N/A	<1%	6	8

**Exhibit 53 - Sample distribution by age group**

Age	% of population	% of weighted sample	Actual unweighted	Actual weighted
16 to 17	9%	10%	213	250
18 to 24	32%	33%	826	830
25 to 35	59%	58%	1479	1437

**Exhibit 54 - Sample distribution by region**

Region	% of population	% of weighted sample	Actual unweighted	Actual weighted
Atlantic	6%	6%	160	156
Quebec	21%	22%	569	564
Ontario	40%	39%	981	983
Manitoba / Saskatchewan	7%	7%	169	173
Alberta	12%	12%	305	307
British Columbia / Territories	14%	13%	334	334

## Data Collection

The online survey was conducted in English and French from January 24 to February 6, 2025, and took an average of 14 minutes to complete. The survey was fielded by Leger using their proprietary online panel.

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).

## Weighting

In addition to setting quotas, the data weighted based on age, gender and region, to reflect the population in Canada, as reported by Statistics Canada.

## Quality Controls

Leger's panel is actively monitored for quality through a number of approaches (digital fingerprinting, in-survey quality measures, incentive redemption requirements, etc.) to ensure that responses are only collected from legitimate Canadian panel members.

## Results

The participation rate for the survey was 5% (calculated as the number of responding units, divided by the sum of unresolved units, in-scope non-responding units, and responding units).

- Total entered survey: 3838
  - Completed: 2518
  - Not qualified/screen out: 829
  - Over quota: 89
  - Suspend/drop-off: 402

- Unresolved (U): 47104
  - Email invitation bounce-backs: 38
  - Email invitations unanswered: 47066
- In-scope non-responding (IS): 402
  - Qualified respondent break-off: 402
- In-scope responding (R): 2709
  - Completed surveys disqualified – quota filled: 0
  - Completed surveys disqualified – other reasons: 191
  - Completed surveys – valid: 2518
- Response rate =  $R/(U+IS+R)$ : 5%

## 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 similar to census proportions, with younger groups slightly underrepresented due to lower rates of participation in online panel surveys. Gender proportions are very similar to census data.

**Exhibit 55 - Gender distribution comparison to census**

Gender	Sample (unweighted)	Canada (2021 Census)
Male	49.0%	49.2%
Female	49.8%	49.4%
Another gender	1.3%	1.4%

**Exhibit 56 - Age distribution comparison to census**

Age	Sample (unweighted)	Canada (2021 Census)
16 to 17	8.5%	9.9%
18 to 24	32.8%	33.0%
25 to 35	58.7%	57.1%

## Statement of limitations

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 surveys with the public provided they are well designed and employ a large, well-maintained panel. Respondents were informed about privacy and anonymity.

## Demographic profile of respondents

**Exhibit 57 - Age profile of survey respondents**

Age	(n=2518)
16 to 17	10%
18-24	33%
25-30	30%
31-35	28%

**Exhibit 58 - Gender profile of survey respondents**

Gender	(n=2518)
Male	49%
Female	49%
Another gender	1%
No response	0%
NET: Other	2%

**Exhibit 59 - Region profile of survey respondents**

Region	(n=2518)
British Columbia	13%
Alberta	12%
Manitoba/Saskatchewan	7%
Ontario	39%
New Brunswick	2%
Nova Scotia	3%
PEI	0%
Newfoundland and Labrador	1%

**Exhibit 60 - Country of origin profile of survey respondents**

Born in Canada	(n=2518)
Yes	82%
No	17%
Prefer not to say	1%

**Exhibit 61 - Parent origin profile of survey respondents**

Immigrant Parents	(n=2518)
One parent	11%
Both parents	28%
No	59%
Prefer not to say	2%

**Exhibit 62 - Language profile of survey respondents**

Languages spoken	(n=2518)
English	88%
French	31%
Spanish	2%
Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin)	2%
Hindi	1%
Other	6%
Prefer not to say	1%

**Exhibit 63 - Education profile of survey respondents**

Highest level of education attained	(n=2518)
Elementary school or less	6%
Secondary school	16%
Some post-secondary	11%
College, vocational or trade school	20%
Undergraduate university program	27%
Graduate or professional university program	17%
Prefer not to say	2%

**Exhibit 64 - Identify as being a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community**

Identity	(n=2518)
Yes	14%
No	83%

**Exhibit 65 – Student profile of survey respondents**

Student status	(n=2518)
NET: Yes	40%
Yes, attending high school full-time	11%
Yes, attending high school part-time	2%
Yes, attending college or university full-time	21%
Yes, attending college or university part-time	7%
No, not currently a student	58%
Prefer not to say	2%

**Exhibit 66 - Employment profile of survey respondents**

Employment status	(n=2518)
Employed	76%
Employed full-time for pay (i.e. more than 30 hours per week)	48%
Employed part-time for pay	23%
Self-employed	4%
Unemployed and seeking work	11%
Unemployed and not seeking work	9%
Other	2%
Prefer not to say	2%

**Exhibit 67 - Mobility, vision, or hearing impairment profile of survey respondents**

Mobility, visual, or hearing impairment	(n=2518)
No physical impairment	86%
Mobility impairment that impacts your ability to perform tasks that require motor control and coordination	4%
Vision impairment or vision loss not easily corrected with glasses or contact lenses	4%
Hearing impairment or hearing loss that is a partial or total inability to hear	3%
Other physical impairment not listed (please specify)	2%
Prefer not to say	4%

**Exhibit 68 - Financial assistance for working while living abroad profile of survey respondents**

Financial assistance for working while living abroad	(n=2518)
None - I could do that now without any additional financial assistance	14%
A little – I may need at least a small amount of financial assistance and/or loans to be able to	24%
A moderate amount – I would need a moderate amount of financial assistance and/or loans to be able to	30%
A large amount – I would need a sizeable amount of assistance and/or loans to be able to	26%
Prefer not to say	6%

**Exhibit 69 - Barrier to financial assistance profile of survey respondents**

Barrier to financial assist., working while living abroad	(n=2518)
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Not a barrier – I could get the necessary financial assistance with no issues	8%
A minor barrier – I could get the necessary financial assistance with some difficulty	32%
A major barrier – I would have major difficulties getting the necessary financial assistance	28%
An insurmountable barrier – I would not be able to get the necessary financial assistance	10%
Prefer not to say	2%
Not selected	20%

**Exhibit 70 - Student loan profile of survey respondents**

Currently have outstanding post-secondary loans	(n=2518)
Yes	28%
No	71%
Prefer not to say	1%

## Appendix B: Qualitative methodology report

### Focus group methodology

Earnscliffe conducted a series of twelve focus groups with 112 Canadian participants in February 2023-24 to discuss their experiences and perceptions of international travel and living abroad, their awareness of (or experience with) the International Experience Canada program (IEC), and their feedback on approaches for marketing IEC to Canadian youth. The focus groups were conducted online using Zoom.

Groups were recruited according to several criteria, with separate groups for several distinct audiences:

- Five (5) general population groups with youth 16 to 35; one group each from Atlantic Canada (EN), the Prairies (EN), Quebec (FR), Ontario (EN), and British Columbia / the Territories (EN).
- One group specifically with Canadian youth aged 16 or 17 (EN).
- One group specifically with economically disadvantaged youth (EN).
- One group with Canadian youth who experience physical, visual, and/or hearing impairments (EN).
- One group with Canadian women aged 16 to 35 who are completing or who have completed a Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) degree (EN).
- One group with Canadians who have participated or are currently participating in the IEC program (EN).
- Two (2) groups with parents of Canadian youth aged 16 or 17 (one group in English, one in French).

A total of 8-10 participants were recruited for each group; between 6 and 10 attended each session. Attendance for each group is included in the table below.

#### Focus group schedule and attendance

Group #	Audience	Region/Language	Time	Attendance
Monday, February 3, 2025				
1 (SC)	General population youth 16 to 35	Atlantic Canada/EN	5:00 pm ET/6:00 pm AT/6:30 pm NT	9
2 (SC)	General population youth 16 to 35	Prairies	7:00 pm ET/6:00 pm CT/5:00 pm MT	10
Tuesday, February 4, 2025				
3 (SC)	General population youth 16 to 35	Quebec/FR	5:00 pm ET	8

4 (DA)	General population youth 16 to 35	Ontario/EN	5:00 pm ET	9
5 (SEC)	General population youth 16 to 35	BC/Terr/EN	8:30 pm ET/7:30 pm CT/6:30 pm MT/5:30 pm PT	10
Wednesday, February 5, 2025				
6 (SC)	Parents of youth 16 to 17	National/FR	5:00 pm ET/6:00 pm AT/6:30 pm NT/4:00 pm CT/3:00 pm MT/2:00 pm PT	8
7 (SC)	National - Parents of youth 16 to 17	National/EN	7:00 pm ET/8:00 pm AT/8:30 pm NT/6:00 pm CT/5:00 pm MT/4:00 pm PT	9
8 (DA)	Youth 16 to 17	National/EN	7:00 pm ET/8:00 pm AT/8:30 pm NT/6:00 pm CT/5:00 pm MT/4:00 pm PT	8
9 (SEC)	Youth with a mobility, visual or hearing impairment	National/EN	7:00 pm ET/8:00 pm AT/8:30 pm NT/6:00 pm CT/5:00 pm MT/4:00 pm PT	8
Monday, February 10, 2025				
10 (SC)	Youth (16 to 35) women in STEM	National/EN	7:00 pm ET/8:00 pm AT/8:30 pm NT/6:00 pm CT/5:00 pm MT/4:00 pm PT	6
11 (SEC)	Past IEC participants	National/EN	7:00 pm ET/8:00 pm AT/8:30 pm NT/6:00 pm CT/5:00 pm MT/4:00 pm PT	8
12 (DA)	Economically disadvantaged youth (16 to 35)	National/EN	7:00 pm ET/8:00 pm AT/8:30 pm NT/6:00 pm CT/5:00 pm MT/4:00 pm PT	8

## Recruitment

Participants were recruited using a five-minute screening questionnaire. The screener contained a series of standard screening questions to ensure participants qualified based on their age,

location, and influence with young Canadians, ensuring a good mix of other demographics such as gender, household income, vocation, etc.

Our fieldwork subcontractor, Quality Response, relied on panels and databases of Canadians; this is the approach employed most often for this type of recruitment. Quality Response reaches out to members of their database first via email and followed up with telephone calls to confirm respondent eligibility and availability.

Quality Response's database includes approximately 35,000 Canadians with profiling on a range of attributes including standard personal demographics, household composition, medical background, technology usage, financial services, health and wellness, business profiles, and other relevant criteria. Their database is constantly being updated and replenished and operates out of their own, onsite telephone room in Toronto, Ontario. Potential group participants are recruited to their database via mixed-mode: following a proprietary telephone survey, online, referral, social media and print advertising. Quality Response understands the nuances of qualitative recruiting and the importance of locating qualified, interested respondents. Their recruiting is undertaken in strict accordance with the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research – Qualitative Research.

Reminder calls were made prior to the groups to confirm participants' intention to attend and to encourage higher rates of participation. To encourage full participation, participants were given an honorarium of \$100- \$175.

A total of ten participants were recruited for each group. All participants agreed to the presence of observers and recording of the session during the screening process and at the beginning of the session (for those who attended). Arrangements were made to permit Government of Canada staff to observe all sessions virtually.

## Moderation

Groups were moderated by Stephanie Constable (SC), Stephanie Coulter (SEC) and Doug Anderson (DA) who are all on Earnscliffe's Standing Offer for Public Opinion Research. In our experience, there is value in using multiple moderators as it ensures that no single moderator develops early conclusions. Each moderator takes notes and summarizes their groups after each night. The moderators each provide a debrief on their groups including the functionality of the discussion guide; any issues relating to recruiting, turnout, or technology; and key findings including noting instances where they were unique and where they were similar to previous sessions. Together, they discuss the findings both on an ongoing basis in order to allow for probing of areas that require further investigation in subsequent groups, and before the final results are reported.

## 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.

## Glossary of terms

Generalization	Interpretation
Few	Few is used when less than 10% of participants have responded with similar answers.
Several	Several is used when fewer than 20% of the participants responded with similar answers.
Some	Some is used when more than 20% but significantly fewer than 50% of participants with similar answers.
Many	Many is used when nearly 50% of participants responded with similar answers.
Majority/Plurality	Majority or plurality are used when more than 50% but fewer than 75% of the participants responded with similar answers.
Most	Most is used when more than 75% of the participants responded with similar answers.
Vast majority	Vast majority is used when nearly all participants responded with similar answers, but several had differing views.
Unanimous/Almost all	Unanimous or almost all are used when all participants gave similar answers or when the vast majority of participants gave similar answers and the remaining few declined to comment on the issue in question.

## Appendix C: Quantitative and qualitative instruments

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