



**YWCA**  
C A N A D A

NATIONAL ADVOCACY.  
COMMUNITY ACTION.  
UNE VOIX NATIONALE.  
DES ACTIONS LOCALES.



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

## MESSAGE FROM INTERIM CEO AND BOARD CHAIR

2021 was a year of great challenges but also one of opportunities. Our tagline **National Advocacy. Community Action.** continued to ring true as YWCA Canada led on key issues impacting our member associations and the people we serve.

Through wave after wave of COVID-19 spikes and evolving public health guidance, we stayed focused on the far-reaching impacts of the pandemic on Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, women, gender diverse people and youth. We saw the Coronavirus reshape the world of work — where we work, how we work, whose work is valued and also who gets access to paid employment as women, gender-diverse people and youth's participation in the workforce dropped dramatically.

YWCA Canada remained alert and responsive. We engaged employers, government, and the public to ensure the rights of women, girls and gender diverse people did not move backward. As we write this message,

we are watching the hard-gained rights of women, gender-diverse people and girls around the world fall under threat of war, anti-choice legislation, transphobia, extremism, bad actors and worse policies.

As member associations continued to support the most vulnerable in their communities, YWCA Canada walked alongside reaching out to listen, respond, scaffold and support.

Early in 2022, we responded to the threat of the COVID-19 Omicron variant by shipping \$103,000 in personal protective equipment and supplies to member associations, ensuring that front line workers were equipped to safely serve the community.

In 2022, YWCA hosted the Think Big! Lead Now! Young Women's National Leadership Program; a program with over 600 women and gender diverse youth as alumnae. We spoke with Marine Coeurdassier who shared her thoughts about the impact of the program.



[Watch the full interview here](#)

**Marine Coeurdassier**

Think Big! Lead Now! Alumna



We partnered with YMCA Canada to release **Preventing a Lockdown Generation: A Plan to Support Canada's Youth in Post-Pandemic Recovery**, a report that spotlights the risk of youth in Canada dealing with the economic and social fallout from the pandemic and provides a plan to support Canada's young people in post-pandemic recovery.

We celebrated a monumental win for affordable universal childcare — an advocacy priority issue for YWCAs for decades. We will remain focused on ensuring the roll out of the \$30 billion dollar over five years federal commitment works for women, families and care workers.

We moved the work for a National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence forward by centering the voices of survivors and their advocates in our soon to be released **What We Heard Report**, funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada. In collaboration and consultation with 70 allied organizations, we surfaced the priorities, needs and recommendations of key stakeholders to ensure future action is survivor grounded and community informed. The information contained within this report is also helping

to guide our own work on gender-based violence, and has led to new initiatives focused on supporting survivors and those who support with them.

In a year where we have heard so much about the great resignation, we also shift our energy to celebrate and warmly welcome new leaders in the YWCA. We are excited by the energy, commitment and innovation they bring into the movement.

In the pages ahead, we share highlights from our conversations with leaders across the YWCA who spoke about the scope and impact of our work.

Our impact is amplified by thoughtful partnerships across sectors. We are grateful for their support and opportunities to collaborate.

We sincerely thank our donors, volunteers, friends and partners who have supported YWCA Canada this past year. Your commitment has made a real difference at a time that has been so challenging for so many.

We would not be able to do this work without you — thank you.



**Susan Kennard,**  
Board Chair



**Raine Liliefeldt,**  
Interim CEO



## A Survivor-Centered Approach to Ending Gender-Based Violence

### We Listened

Ending gender-based violence and supporting survivors has been a priority for YWCA for over 150 years. We have done this work in partnership with and led by member associations, allied organizations and funders. We developed strategies, policies, and practices to create safe communities free of gender-based violence. In 2021, funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada, we connected with 70 stakeholders to move work forward on a National Action Plan to end gender-based violence. Our **What We Heard Report** brought forward recommendations, outlined core priorities, and set out best practices as well as recommendations.

### We Responded

People fleeing intimate partner violence and domestic abuse need material support. They need affordable places to live and re-establish themselves and low-barrier access to the financial resources to make that possible. To take action on these foundational demands from survivors, repeated over and over again by the stakeholders who participated in the **What We Heard Report**, YWCA Canada submitted a series of proposals to turn these recommendations into reality. In early 2022, we were successful in a key area that will support survivors and their families. YWCA received \$2 million from The Slight Family Foundation to create Canada's first national emergency survivor support fund. YWCA Canada is one of 12 organizations to be funded through The Slight Family Foundation's transformational investment in women and girls.

The Slight Family Foundation donates \$2M to YWCA Canada to launch Canada's first National Emergency Survivor Support Fund



“Leaving a situation of violence in itself is not enough. Although (escaping violence) is the most important factor, the next thing is to ensure that it is sustainable so the individual feels that they can continue to stay apart from the situation that they've left.”

**Jiana Cutting**

Office Administrator and December 6<sup>th</sup> Fund Registrar, **YWCA Muskoka**



[Watch the full interview here](#)

This initiative was built off of the expertise and experience of YWCA Toronto, YWCA Halifax and YWCA Muskoka's ground-breaking December 6<sup>th</sup> Funds. Twelve member associations will partner to develop and deliver emergency financial aid to survivors fleeing violent living situations or looking to re-establish themselves after leaving emergency shelters. Our goal is to distribute 1500 grants of up to \$2000 each across the country.

“Leaving a situation of violence in itself is not enough. Although (escaping violence) is the most important factor, the next thing is to ensure that it is sustainable so the individual feels that they can continue to stay apart from the situation that they've left,” says Jiana Cutting, Office Administrator and December 6<sup>th</sup> Fund Registrar at YWCA Muskoka.

Jiana adds that the Emergency Survivor Support Fund being offered on a national scale “will make it more accessible. It will make [the fund] more well-known...and it may be the impetus that an individual needs to make the next move.”

As we prepare for the National Emergency Survivor Support (NESS) Fund's launch in July 2022, we are grateful for the support of our inaugural partners: The Slight Family Foundation, Aviva Canada and The Torrid Foundation, in addition to our incredible community of individual donors.

## Advancing Training and Capacity Building for the VAW Network

### We Listened

YWCA continued to build capacity of our staff through 7 staff resource networks.

To make sure our staff resource networks are achieving their goal of being high quality, accessible, relevant and vibrant learning, collaboration and networking spaces, we consistently seek out opportunities to deepen, improve and expand our work.

In keeping with this commitment, we consulted with our Violence Against Women Staff Support Network (VAW) to gain their input on improvements and future training topics. Members shared the desire to advance their knowledge on legal policies and processes to better support service users.

### We Responded

To meet the needs expressed by members of our VAW Staff Network, we were grateful to receive funding from the Grey Birch Foundation and the Mclean Foundation to advance the rigour and accessibility of our VAW Network sessions. We are putting their generous support to work by developing a training series with internal and external experts on legal support for survivors and competence-building on immigration, trafficking, and housing.

This series will feature workshops on gender-based violence: International Human Rights Legislation, social determinants of safety, trauma-informed and intersectional approaches to disclosures on responses. The series was launched with our partner Women's Legal Education & Action Fund, with a session on supporting victims of technology-facilitated gender-based violence.



## 2 BLOCK HATE

# Building Safer Spaces by Blocking Online Hate



### We Listened

In the past two years, our digital lives have expanded. We have witnessed an increase in misogyny, racism and homophobia across social media. Online hate is a major threat to marginalized communities.

YWCA has long advocated for safer online spaces because our work has consistently shown us there is no separate virtual space detached from the “real world”; what happens online is happening offline.

Recommendations from Project Shift — an earlier project dedicated to creating a safer digital world for young women — revealed that there was interest in an ongoing project from YWCA that addressed the gendered impact of cyberviolence. There was also a desire for capacity building and knowledge mobilization on this topic.



### We Responded

To answer that call, our work in this area has focused on shifting the public discourse from calling out online bullying as a minor and unavoidable social reality to recognizing it as hatred directed at people from equity seeking groups that requires action beyond focusing solely on requiring those most at risk to “protect themselves”.

Funded by Public Safety Canada, YWCA launched **Block Hate: Building Resilience Against Online Hate Speech**, now in its second year.

This initiative focuses in on the systems level changes needed to combat tech-facilitated violence, engaging survivors in community-grounded research to surface recommendations for key stakeholders including social media companies, civil society, education and law enforcement. This project works to raise awareness of the reality of online hate in Canada and create tactical ways we can build safer online spaces.

As part of our work to raise awareness, we partnered with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation to develop four videos as part of the #BlockHate campaign. The videos featured women who share their experiences of online hate.

## Disrupt & Dismantle! Leadership Fellowship

In January 2022, as part of Block Hate, we launched our **Disrupt & Dismantle! Leadership Fellowship** to explore the dangers and impact of unregulated online hate speech. Our fellows investigated the experiences and legalities of technology-facilitated violence while building on their own leadership skills.

The fellows led community-based participatory action research, engaging their peers in conversations on online hate. YWCA also commissioned a survey and engaged 1000 Canadian youth in a conversation about their experiences of hate speech. We learned about the alarming number of incidents, frequency, and the nature of violence youth from equity seeking groups experience.

Nadia Duman, a Block Hate Fellow, applied for the fellowship with interest in creating tools and resources for her community. Nadia, who has lived experience with online hate, says, “One of the most interesting experiences that I have gotten from this fellowship has been the capacity to connect with my community about something that I’m passionate about and that in the past, I didn’t know how many people would know about online hate speech in the local context, or would feel comfortable talking about it.”

Nadia, a Work Transition Coordinator at YWCA St. John’s, says that due to her intersecting identities of being an immigrant and queer woman, she has witnessed and experienced a lot of violence on digital spaces. As a new member of the YWCA movement, she says that this fellowship has created an excitement about connecting, researching and being in a space where she feels represented and supported. “Being engaged in a leadership fellowship has been something that has made me feel more intentional about organizing.”



[Watch the full interview here](#)



Jastina  
Aujla



Érika  
Cantu



Nadia  
Duman



Noor  
Fadel



Houmou  
Guirro



Pauline  
Iheme



Racheal  
Walser



Kelly  
Weiling Zou

# Empowering Communities Through Economic Empowerment

### We Listened

Through research consultation via YWCAs labour market access programs—Born to be Bold, Synergy and In Good Company—, we heard from community members and advocates the challenges they faced finding and keeping good jobs and how service organizations and employers needed to adapt to better meet their needs.

We heard that people want holistic support. Access to gainful employment doesn't come down to just education and employment experience, but access to safe and secure housing, mental health supports, childcare, transportation, etc. Human services need to consider these factors and move to offering programming that addresses all of these needs to see real success.

For employers, understanding the barriers women and gender-diverse people face in finding and retaining meaningful work is key to building workplaces and opportunities that allow everyone to thrive.

We know employment isn't the only part of attaining economic stability, empowerment and well-being. Being able to plan, save and create a strong financial foundation is a vital part of the equation. In 2019, YWCA launched The Accelerator Project as a pilot, which supported families in accessing the Canada Learning Bond to save for their children's post-secondary education. Through the evaluation of the pilot, we heard from service workers and service users what we needed to do to advance financial literacy, increase financial independence and provide families with the tools and resources needed for economic empowerment.

### We Responded

Our labour market access programs are working to put these key learnings into action for women and gender-diverse people. We're working with employers to embed promising practices that end workplace violence, advance women and gender-diverse people's skills and leadership at work, create the flexibility needed by caregiving employees, and surface and retain the exceptional talent and experience women and gender-diverse people bring to the table.

To support community members in attaining financial stability, we're expanding on our earlier successes with The Accelerator Project.



“When creators of programs listen to staff doing the work, it helps to put a name to what the community needs to mitigate against these systemic barriers. They help provide a better sense of what gaps exist, what participants are feeling and experiencing when accessing financial institutions, and how the community can better respond.”

**Sara Hohenadel**

Small Steps to Success Program Coordinator at **YWCA Cambridge**



[Watch the full interview here](#)

At the end of 2021, we learned that we were successful in securing funding from Employment and Social Development Canada for the next iteration of the Accelerator Project. With the Next Accelerator Project, YWCAs will work to improve access to higher education, increase the financial acumen of families, and increase the uptake of the Canada Learning Bond amongst families living on low-income, single-parent, and newcomer families across Canada. Our goal is to train staff at local associations, integrate financial literacy conversations through YWCA programs with an intersectional and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion lens, and develop accessible plain language resources for adult and youth.

“Projects like this are so crucial within local community organizations like the YWCA, providing places where participants feel both supported and connected to staff and programming, and are more likely to trust in staff to allow them to better advocate for them,” says Sara Hohenadel, Small Steps to Success Program Coordinator at YWCA Cambridge.

# Building Stronger Member Associations

### We Listened

We are in unprecedented times. Nonprofit organizations face numerous challenges and constraints that include staff turnover, program closures, and a growing need to bridge gaps and build up our organizations. Over the course of the last two years, our member associations have put key work on systems and infrastructure improvements on the back burner in order to shift resources and energies to respond to the pandemic. Through conversations with leadership, YWCA Canada learned about the challenges and critical issues faced by members associations and has responded with the Strategic Initiatives Fund Pilot.

### We Responded

YWCA Canada's Board of Directors directed funds to a pilot that saw applications from member associations to advance initiatives at the local level that would enable them to rebuild, regroup and stabilize. YWCAs Brandon, Halifax, Metro Vancouver and St. John's received funding to move their initiatives forward. These projects range from strengthening human resources, advancing equity, diversity and inclusion policies and practices, providing TransFocus gender diversity training for staff, and supporting the search for a new CEO. "YWCA St. John's works very hard to build strong relationships with the community, with governments, with businesses and with other organizations as well. For us, a thoughtful approach to the hiring process is very important," says Gobhina Nagarajah, Board Member at YWCA St. John's.



**Sylvia Parris**  
Board Member, YWCA Halifax

“We were able to have government level impacts and were able to make presentations to the appropriate deputy ministers and provincial government about the work and about the needs associated with that.

She adds that the YWCA Halifax board is one of the strongest she has been on:

I really appreciate and love that we do things. That we are doers. We take a solution-based approach on things [and] there's lots of lived experience and first-person voices.



“We really can't put a price tag on the support from national. Working collaboratively with national and having access to resources has been absolutely valuable. It's been integral to building the organization to what it is now and being able to carry out programming.

**Gobhina Nagarajah**  
Board Member, YWCA St. John's



[Watch the full interview here](#)

## 2021: OUR IMPACT

### Community engagement **Events**

hosted by YWCA Canada

■ 19 in 2021

■ 13 in 2022



Attendance

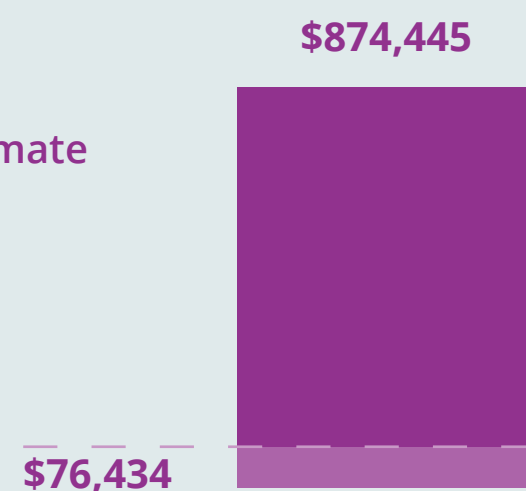
over **1,500** attendees

## Financials

Total Money Flowed Through to Local YWCAs

■ 2021

■ Value of In-Kind Estimate



# 15

National Projects

6 NEW

- Dollars & Sense
- National Emergency Support Fund
- Next Accelerator
- Uplift
- STEM Program for girls
- Campaign to End Gender Based Violence



## Networks

# 7


Staff Sector  
Networks

- Youth Programming Network
- Finance Network
- Human Resources Professionals Network
- Communications Staff Network
- Fund Development Network
- Housing and Shelter Development Community of Practice
- Violence Against Women Staff Support Network



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6. YWCA DURHAM, ON

7. YWCA EDMONTON, AB

8. YWCA HALIFAX, NS

9. YWCA HAMILTON, ON

10. COMMUNITY YMCA-YWCA KAMLOOPS, BC

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27. YWCA SUDBURY, ON

28. YWCA THOMPSON, MB

29. YWCA TORONTO, ON

30. YMCA-YWCA WINNIPEG, MB

31. YMCA-YWCA VANCOUVER ISLAND, BC



# THANK YOU

for your commitment to women, girls and gender diverse people and the YWCA movement. Your support has powered our work to end gender-based violence, foster economic equality, end housing and homelessness, engage and equip young leaders and strengthen international cooperation.

## FUNDERS

*YWCA Canada gratefully acknowledges and recognizes the following funders for their contribution and support to our national programs and initiatives.*

Canadian Heritage – Exchanges Program  
Employment Skills Development Canada  
Future Skills Canada  
Public Safety  
Canada's Community Resilience Fund  
RBC Foundation  
The Slight Family Foundation  
Women and Gender Equality

## DONORS

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*We honour the memory of the individuals whose legacy was realized in 2021.*

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Yvonne Elsbeth Schurmann

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Susan Denise Kennard  
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*We acknowledge and celebrate our Member Associations for their support of YWCA Canada's national and international initiatives. We would also like to acknowledge the contributions and commitment of our interns and volunteers.*

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BGC Canada  
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Meta  
Microsoft Canada  
National Alliance for Children and Youth  
Oxfam Canada  
Plan International  
Public Policy Forum  
Students for Consent  
Culture Canada  
The Canadian Black Policy Network  
The Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity  
TikTok Canada  
Torrid Foundation  
Tribe Network  
UBER Canada  
UNICEF Canada  
United Way Canada  
University of Ottawa  
Women's Shelters Canada  
World YWCA  
YMCA Canada  
YMCA of Greater Toronto  
Young Diplomats of Canada

### Project Partners

Amoretti  
Art+Feminism  
Axiom  
Canadian Centre for Gender & Sexual Diversity  
Canadian Women's Foundation

Career Edge Catalyst  
Fresh Start, Saint-John  
Hollow Frog  
Neighbourhood House  
Ina Counselling  
Intercultura, Services linguistiques  
ITech-BC Inc  
JeSuis MTL  
Learning Tree  
International  
L'environnement c'est intersectional  
MediaSmarts  
Military Family Services  
Modern Mediators  
OCASI  
Plan International Canada  
Sarjesa  
Smart Saver  
Southern Alberta Institute for Technology (SAIT)  
StartUp Dojo  
St. John Ambulance  
WomenatthecentrE  
Womxn of Colour  
Durham Collective  
World Financial Group  
YWCA Chile  
YWCA Delhi  
YWCA Kenya  
YWCA PNG

### Academic Partners

Centennial College, Corporate Communications  
University of Ottawa, Professional Development Institute



# FINANCES

YWCA Canada Financial Summary  
For the year ended December 31, 2021



## Revenues

	\$	%
Affiliation Fees	1,631,340	27.00
National Projects & Other	3,956,166	66.00
Donations, Sales & Other	415,768	6.90
Other	13,536	0.22
<b>2021 Total Revenues</b>	<b>6,016,810</b>	<b>100</b>
2020 Total Revenues	3,336,675	

## Expenses

	\$	%
Salaries	567,097	10.00
National Projects & Programs	3,897,679	71.00
Administration	718,880	13.00
Public Policy, Communications & Member Support	166,977	3.00
Governance	47,166	1.00
World YWCA Program	93,617	2.00
<b>2021 Total Expenses</b>	<b>5,491,416</b>	<b>100.00</b>
2020 Total Expenses – adjusted for reclassification	3,211,950	
<b>Investment Income</b>	<b>331,256</b>	





NATIONAL ADVOCACY.  
COMMUNITY ACTION.  
UNE VOIX NATIONALE.  
DES ACTIONS LOCALES.

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