



# Jeunesse | Youth en Patrimoine | in Heritage

## 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT



# A Word from the President

Cultural heritage forges the identity of our communities today; its preservation and enhancement are essential to meeting the major challenges facing our societies. Whether it's a question of education, social cohesion, or climate change, heritage contributes to the development of fairer, more sustainable living environments, and is therefore both deeply rooted in the present and resolutely focused on the future.

Youth in Heritage contributes directly to these objectives, in line with the United Nations' guidelines for achieving sustainable development goals by not only supporting young professionals who gain experience in a field related to cultural heritage, but also helping the organizations that benefit from these grants to fulfill their social and cultural missions in their communities.

Initially introduced with funding from Parks Canada and the Government of Canada's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy program (YESS) in 2021/22 with 100 bursaries, the program was renewed in 2023/24 with a two-year funding agreement, committing to hire a minimum of 44 youth per fiscal year. In year one (2023/24) ICOMOS Canada exceeded commitments with the hiring of 48 youth, along with the targets for supporting youth facing barriers to employment. The incredible diversity of these young professionals testifies to the richness and inclusiveness of our communities and of Canada's cultural heritage sector, with 22 (46%) youth identifying as either racialised, Indigenous, or disabled, and with 23 (49%) of youth identifying as 2SLGBTQ+. This diversity encourages us to pursue and push further our efforts to make it visible and improve access to the job market.

In YIH's second year funded by Parks Canada through the YESS Program, applications exceeded available grants, a trend which we expect to repeat in 2024/25 as we operate YIH with the same number of grants. We certainly hope that the success we saw in 2023/24, which confirms that of 2021/22, will enable us to expand and further develop the Youth in Heritage program in future years, with more bursaries available and on a multi-year basis to help us continue to support and track the emergence of a diverse, passionate and committed new generation of professionals committed to heritage conservation and the sustainable development of our communities.

**Mathieu Dormaels, PhD**  
**President, ICOMOS Canada**





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With support from Parks Canada and the Government of Canada's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy Program (YESS), ICOMOS Canada was able to renew the Youth in Heritage (YIH) program in 2023-24. Our mission is to encourage young people to consider working in the cultural heritage sector by helping connect them with employment, mentorship, and apprenticeship opportunities across Canada.

In our first year of operations in 2021/22 YIH supported 100 interventions for youth between the ages of 15 and 30 across the country, with Parks Canada and the Government of Canada providing over \$270,000 in grants for ICOMOS Canada to distribute. In our renewed new two year agreement signed with Parks Canada in the late Spring of 2023 however, our program was significantly reduced in size, with a target of disbursing \$140,000 in grants to support a minimum of 44 youth per year. While the program was a resounding success, its reduction in size and the constricted timeline restricted our ability to fully develop and expand the program to the scale envisioned in 2023/24.

This year, ICOMOS Canada was able to launch a new resources page on the YIH web portal as a means of providing a targeted space through which to advertise targeted opportunities and advice for those beginning careers in heritage, and to provide both youth and partner organisations with a platform through which to share their work.

Through YIH's grant program, we supported a total of 48 youth employed with 32 unique partner organisations across Canada, encouraging young people to consider working in heritage preservation by connecting them with meaningful employment, mentorship, and apprenticeship opportunities across Canada.

We are proud to report that YIH continues to do its part in supporting youth who face barriers to employment, with 83% of youth identifying with at least one of the Youth Employment Skills Strategy's identified groups, and 46% identifying as either racialised, Indigenous, or as a person with a disability. It is noteworthy that 49% of youth supported identified as LGBT2Q+.

# DATA COLLECTION

ICOMOS Canada collects data from YIH participants to meet the Youth Employment Skills Strategy's requirements. This includes standard questions on identity, skills, education, employment quality, and career preparedness. In addition to this, ICOMOS Canada has introduced new questions this year related to employment satisfaction for both employers and employees to help better understand whether or not employers and employees feel they are able to provide/participate in quality employment opportunities.

This year ICOMOS Canada had an excellent response rate, with a 100% completion rate among employers. Among youth there was a 100% rate for beginning of program surveys, and a 98% response rate for end of program surveys.



# PROGRAM OUTCOMES

This year, YIH had a 96% program completion rate, with all youth completing their employment contracts save for 2, one of which paused their employment to take a medical leave and the other which prematurely changed their employment to a part-time contract to accommodate their return to school. While YIH strives for a 100% program completion rate, both of these cases reflect flexibility of employers to accommodate and prioritise the needs, wellness, and growth of youth.

Immediate outcomes for youth following YIH are positive, with 28 (58%) of youth being employed post-program (25 or 52% of which were retained by employer organisations), and 16 (33%) returning to school. Only 2 youth were reported as being unemployed in the immediate period following the program, and there was no data available for 2 other youth, making an overall 96% completion rate for youth from which we have data. In addition to this, 24 (50%) of youth reported that they have plans to return to school following the program's completion, with 10 (21%) of youth additionally reporting that their participation in YIH influenced their decision to return to school.

In total, 27 youth indicated they are interested in pursuing a career in heritage post-program, with an additional 15 youth answering that they may be interested in a career in heritage, totalling 89% of youth respondents. One youth additionally noted that they were interested in a career in heritage, but felt that the economic conditions surrounding the heritage sector made it nonviable as a career choice in their immediate future.

## EDUCATION/TRAINING

45 (94%) employers said they provided quality training, and 3 (6%) employers noted that they lacked resources or capacity to deliver the level of training they would like. Comparatively, only 39 (81%) youth reported feeling that they received appropriate training.

47 (98%) on employers said that the youth they hired met their education requirements. 32 (67%) youth said their education prepared them for their job, 4 (8%) said their educations did not prepare them for their job, and 8 (17%) did not respond to this question. Youth who were in higher responsibility roles were more likely to report feeling unprepared for their role.



# EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

Employer partners for 2023/2024 could be categorised into 5 groups. It is important to recognise that there is some overlap between some of these groups, with many heritage sites being managed by non-profit organisations.

Artisan Workshop **4**

Businesses/Consulting Firm **9**

Non-Profit **14**

Post Secondary Institute **6**

Heritage Site **15**



# EMPLOYMENT TYPES

In 2023/24 our distribution of employment types has changed compared to 2021/22. Consistent with previous years, one quarter of employment opportunities were in management and administrative positions, many of which for 2023/2024 were focused on data management. Research and conservation continued to be significant employment categories.

This breakdown helps us better understand where youth are being employed in heritage, and what skills employers are looking for.

Communications **6**

Conservation **7**

Tourism **7**

Management **12**

Museums **3**

Research **9**

Trades **4**

# SKILLS IMPROVEMENT

Employers and youth alike reported consistent improvements in skills throughout the program period. The skills with the least noted improvement among both youth and employers are career navigation skills - this is not surprising given that many partner organisations are small or non-profit organisations with restricted capacities. ICOMOS Canada is currently actively searching for expanded funding and partnerships for YIH with hopes to develop a YIH training portal which could help provide youth with career navigation resources, among others.

Employers and youth were also asked to list the skills which they found most useful in their work. In our responses, the top two skills were communication (15 youth, 19 employers) and technical skills (19 youth, 20 employers). Teamwork (6 youth, 16 employers) and initiative/flexibility (5 youth, 15 employers) were also important skills, but both were mentioned at a much higher rate by employers than youth. An additional 6 youth mentioned networking skills as being important in their work, with no employers identifying this. Critical thinking, problem solving, and customer service skills were also mentioned at low rates by both youth and employers.

## Employer Reported Youth Skill Improvement

Transferrable	98%
Technical	94%
Career Navigation	67%

## Youth Reported Skills Improvement

Communication	81%
Critical Thinking	77%
Problem Solving	85%
Technical	94%
Career Navigation	70%

# QUALITY EMPLOYMENT

**23.31\$**  
Average Wage

**20.28\$**  
Median Wage

Supporting quality employment is important to YIH. The average wage of applications received for 2023/24 was 21.65\$, and the median was 20, the average wage of completed interventions was 23.32\$, and the median 20.28\$. Living wages across Canada in urban areas and on the East Coast, where a majority of our youth were located ranged from 18-26\$/hr.

A majority of youth had completed post-secondary at the time of their employment, with 85% having completed at least some post-secondary schooling.

**23.3** Average age  
of youth

**37** Youth received  
mentorship

**98%** Received  
supports

A majority of youth reported both expanding their professional networks/receiving mentorship while in their roles, and 100% of partners provided youth with supports in their roles. The most frequent supports offered included flexible work arrangements and schedule options and skills assessments. Many employers also offered insurance benefits and advancement opportunities, but non-profits with restricted resources were less likely to offer these.

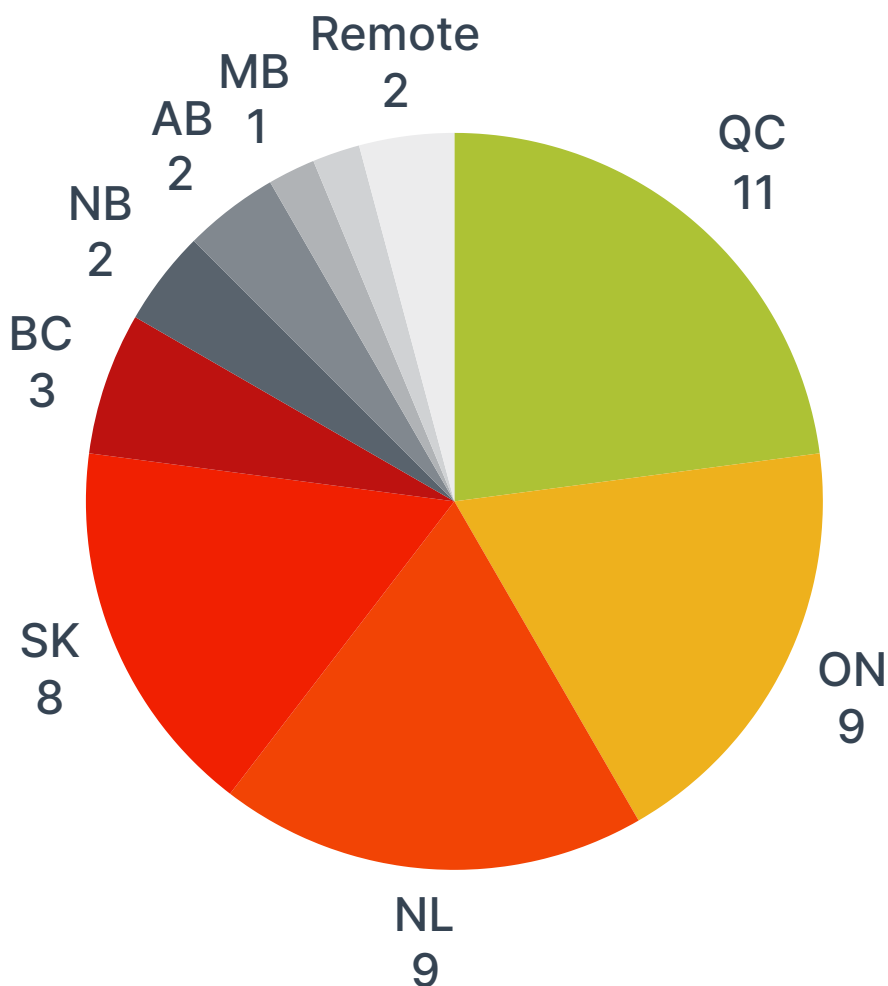
4 (8%) employers indicating that they would have liked to increase the salaries they offered but lack resources to do so, and 4 (8%) indicating that they pay the recommended amounts for students, with the remainder indicating they felt they were paying a quality wage. 5 (10%) employers disagreed with the statement that YIH provided them with adequate financial support, and a further 4 (8%) employers left additional feedback indicating that they would like to see the program be able to offer expanded or extended funding to be able to meet their needs.



# GEOGRAPHY

In 2023/24 we were proud to have been able to support youth from across the country in cities like Montreal, Saskatoon, and St. John's, as well as in small communities like Miscouche and Port Union.

While we were unable to attract applicants from Yukon, Nunavut, or the North-West Territories, YIH's targeted outreach in 2023/24 helped make sure that our distribution of grants was geographically balanced. We hope to be able to repeat in 2024/25 with a goal of supporting employments in all provinces and territories.



# EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

This year, YIH maintained its commitment to supporting disadvantaged and marginalised youth who face barriers to employment. Measuring across 8 categories, participants were asked to indicate if they identify as a member of a group facing barriers to employment, with 40 (83%) participants self-identifying with at least one category.

In line with the Youth Employment Skills Strategie's priorities, YIH had an additional target of having at least 45% of participants identify as either being Indigenous, racialised, or a person with a disability. YIH is delighted to report that 22 (46%) of our youth self-identified with one of these categories, meeting our target.

New this year, YIH collected data on LGBTQ2+ youth in its program. A total of 23 (48%) participants self-identified as LGBTQ2+, and 5 (10%) declined to respond to this question. This category represented the largest group by far, with 11 more participants self-identifying as LGBTQ2+ than the next largest category.

**83%** Youth Hired Facing Barriers

**46%** Youth Hired From Equity Groups

Indigenous Youth **9**

Youth with Disabilities **5**

Racialised Youth **12**

LGBTQ2+ Youth **23**

# YOUTH IMPACT

At Les Forges de Montreal (LFM) we helped support Maya Labrie-Collette's blacksmithing apprenticeship. Heritage trades and traditional skills play an important role in keeping our traditions alive and in growing Canada's skilled workforce. In an article which LFM wrote for the YIH blog Maya shared that 'it touches me to know that the dance between hands, tools (which we must make ourselves!) and matter has existed for millenia, and that I have the chance to practice this now.'



Photo Credit: Mathieu Collette LFM

In her role at the Colby-Curtis Museum, Eloïse Fouquet-Blanchette took on an important role helping update museum catalogues, connecting with community members, and worked towards developing a new exhibit celebrating women's history. Eloïse shared more on her experience with us in an article now available on our website, giving excellent insight into the range of skills and tasks needed to support community museums today.



Photo Credit: Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est and  
Dominick Ménard



# NEXT STEPS



In 2023/24 ICOMOS Canada participated in and hosted several events targeting emerging professionals and youth in heritage. Using data collected from the 2021/22 YIH cycle we were able to bring forward new and engaging conversations on the challenges both employers and youth face in starting their careers in the heritage sector. In 2024/25 we hope to build on this work to help improve our understanding of the current state of the heritage labour market.

In 2023/24 ICOMOS Canada faced a number of challenges with the delivery of YIH. The program's shortened timeline and significantly reduced budget delayed its launch and restricted ICOMOS Canada's ability to realize its goal of expanding training services.

Parks Canada's 2 year YESS Program funding commitment to YIH in 2023 has played an important role in our ability to prepare for 2024/25, giving ICOMOS Canada an appropriate amount of time to prepare for the launch of the program in April 2024. For 2024/25 having a funding agreement in place well in advance to the start of the program allowed ICOMOS Canada to appropriately prepare and improve YIH's delivery, including restructuring staff resources to accommodate reduced funding, and implementing new payment structures to help streamline disbursements.

With this said, while ICOMOS Canada was able to add a resources page to the YIH website and expand the existing job portal in 2023/24, we currently lack resources to operate these at full capacity, and the current level of funding provided to YIH is unsustainable in the long term. Moving forward, ICOMOS Canada is actively looking to identify new partners and funding sources to help expand the program and increase funding amounts to meet the needs of participants, and to meet our goal of developing a complete heritage focused EDI training portal for youth. As part of this, we will look to work with Parks Canada in 2024/25 in the hopes of renewing and expanding its commitment to funding YIH once again, with the goal of having a new agreement finalised by the end of 2024 to give ICOMOS Canada ample time to prepare to the 2025/2026 program year.