



League of Innovators Year 2 (2025-2026) Evaluation Report

LEAGUE *of* INNOVATORS

Written by Students Commission of Canada, March 2026



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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

League of Innovators was founded in 2011 by Ryan Holmes, a successful entrepreneur who wanted to share knowledge with younger generations and shorten their path to success. Through its suite of programs, League of Innovator supports youth with out-of-the-box experiences designed to build and sharpen their entrepreneurial skills. Objectives include building youth confidence, empowering them to create and take charge of their future, recognizing the power that they hold as innovators and entrepreneurs in an ever-evolving economy. Ultimately, the organization's goal is to amplify the impact of future innovators and entrepreneurs while shortening their path to success.

The League of Innovators received a grant from Catapult Canada for the years 2024-2026 for its Success Academy program, designed to refresh, expand, and re-launch its online entrepreneurship program. The Success Academy works with key partners to provide access to alternative educational resources and mentorship to youth ages 18-29 years old who identify as racialized, newcomers (including refugees), and/or NEET (not in education, employment, or training). For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the Success Academy served 143 young people.

Through the Success Academy program, participants were given the opportunity to gain the skills, network, experience, and confidence they need to thrive while launching their startups. The program was delivered online over the course of 4 weeks. It included an asynchronous online learning module through the YMCA's Ignite platform and four weekly synchronous online sessions featuring guest speakers. Guest speakers shared their personal experiences with entrepreneurship and included well-known start-up founders such as Mark Cuban, as well as past program participants who launched their own startups.

Sessions focused on foundational topics such entrepreneurship basics, skills that support entrepreneurship, and networking tips.

This report contains highlights of the independent evaluation conducted by the Students Commission of Canada (SCC) for the League of Innovators on youth's experiences with the Success Academy program for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

METHODOLOGY

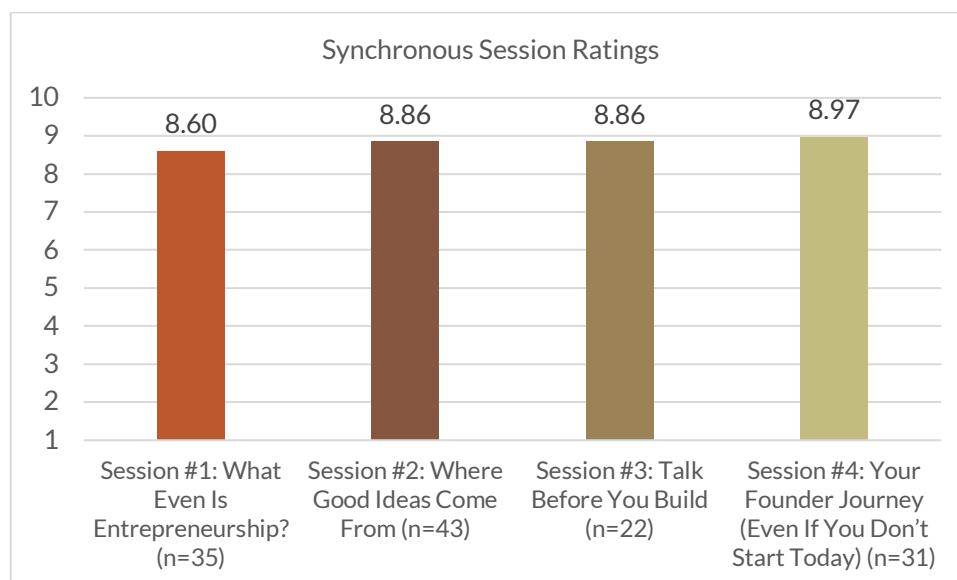
For this evaluation, League of Innovators used a combination of surveys. Feedback surveys were offered following sessions through Google Forms and quantitative surveys through SCC's online Sharing the Stories data collection platform. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year 53 of the 143 participants completed the feedback surveys through Google Forms and 8 participants filled out the two quantitative surveys offered through SCC's platform. The feedback surveys contained both quantitative and qualitative components; see *Participant Feedback Surveys*. The findings from these surveys are summarized below in the following sections.

Note that the demographic information of the 9 participants who completed the demographics survey through SCC's platform is summarized in the *Appendix* for reference, but may not be representative of the full 143-participant sample.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK SURVEYS

53 participants out of 143 responded to online feedback surveys following the four online synchronous sessions. The first three feedback surveys asked respondents to rank the synchronous sessions on a scale of 1 to 10 and provide their rationales for their chosen rankings. The fourth and final feedback survey asked respondents to provide the same rankings and rationales, in addition to feedback regarding the asynchronous online sessions and the Success Academy program overall. The findings from these feedback surveys are summarized below.

Synchronous Sessions



Overall, the surveyed participants rated the various synchronous sessions highly. When asked to provide their rationales for their ratings, these participants (n=25) most frequently cited the contributions of the guest speakers to each of the four sessions, noting how enjoyable, helpful, and motivating it was to hear from their experiences.

I loved that [the guest speaker] shared [their] own experience of founding [their] first company. It was really helpful in making me feel less alone in pursuing this venture and what to watch out for.

*My personal highlight was when [the guest speaker] shared [their] story ... some of the pitfalls to watch out for, and I felt confident at the end. I am sure this boosted confidence and trust for many future entrepreneurs in that meeting.
Entrepreneurship is definitely the ability to bring your idea to life and I look forward to sharpening that skill.*

[The guest speaker] made me realize that I need to build a thicker skin for rejection and understand that rejection is quite normal. Not getting a reply is not a bad thing. This was [an] eye-opener for me since I come a different culture. Great

structure and informative. Definitely, an opportunity for me to work on my weakness that I discovered in my SWOT analysis. Thanks LOI and YMCA team.

[The guest speaker] is a superstar, always trying to help people around. Been following [them] from the beginning of [their] Journey and [their] Journey feels very personal to me. Very Interesting session.

I gave this session a 10/10 because it was packed with valuable insights and felt genuinely authentic. [The guest speaker] brought a ton of energy and practical knowledge to the conversation. [Their] experience at [their company] and [their] stories about how [they] constantly reached out to notable business-people while never feeling any goal or person was "too big to reach" made the advice super relevant and actionable, especially for early-stage founders or those looking to build their personal brand. The session felt conversational, not scripted, which made it really engaging.

Participants (n=17) also often praised the content of the sessions, sharing that they were a helpful introduction to entrepreneurship with some relevant concepts and strategies to add to their entrepreneurial toolbelt.

The session was engaging and thought-provoking, with clear examples that made the concepts easy to apply.

Favourite session so far, left with many actionable takeaways to implement within understanding customer needs [and] providing an encompassing solution via iterations of product development with regard to those needs.

Was really informational and was a great experience. As I'm a high schooler, I got to learn a lot of new concepts. Everything was great!

However, some participants (n=10) shared challenges with the content of the sessions, including perceptions of lack of depth and concreteness (n=5) in some cases.

I feel like for a completely new person this was a useful class, but with the amount of information online, and that it's not a secret what Entrepreneurship is, plus my experience, I did get a few things I still learned.

More advanced knowledge in the sessions would be great and would pair well with the great anecdotes.

Two participants noted that, given their more advanced experience level, this introductory program may not have been the best fit for them.

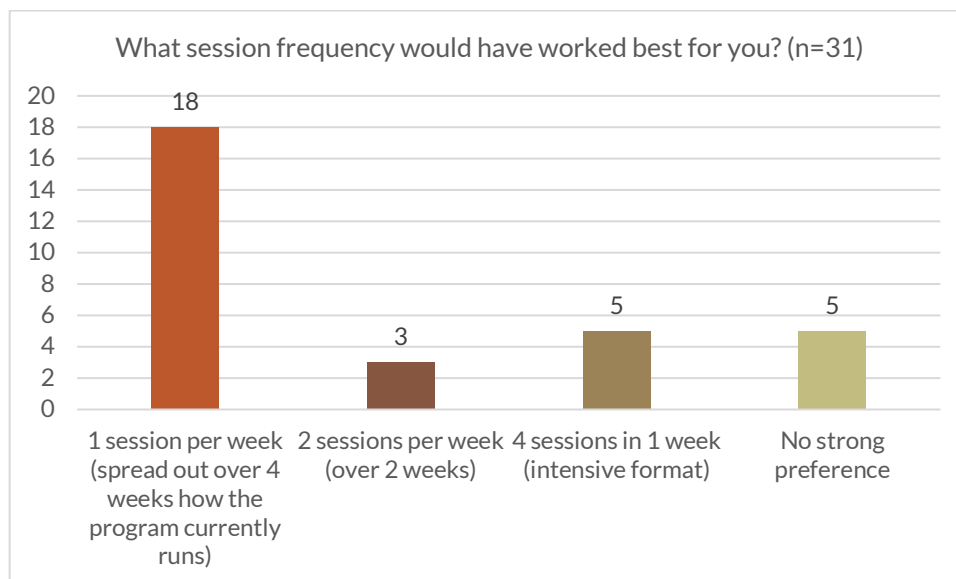
I think I might be a little too deep into entrepreneurship to get the full value from these calls. If I'm being totally honest I did this to learn more about LOI and meet others who are part of the network. I understand its hard given the time constraint but more activity focused items might be valuable to have during the meeting. Hope this helps.

Some of the surveyed participants (n=6) also shared that they hoped for more session interactivity in the form of different activities.

I would have liked if there were breakout rooms and an activity that allowed us to get to know each other better and improve each other's ideas.

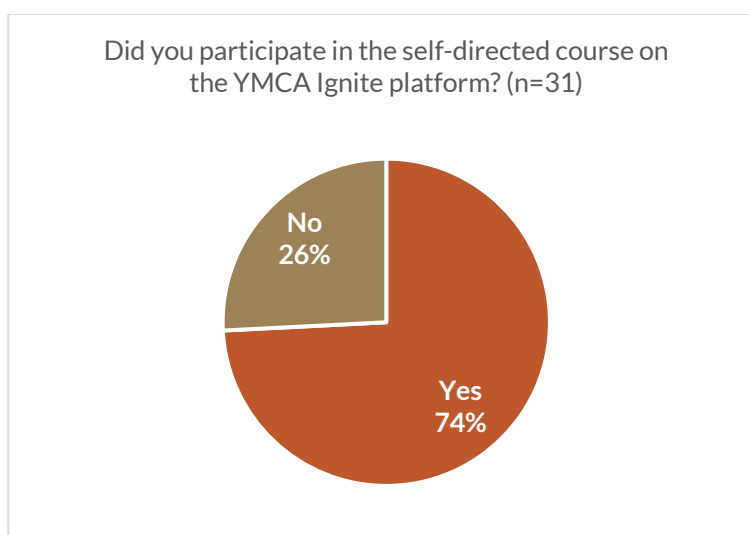
I really enjoyed the session and found it valuable, but I hope there could be more interactive time or activities where everyone can participate.

Most surveyed participants (n=18) shared that the session frequency of once per week worked well for them with respect to the other options presented, shown below.



Asynchronous Sessions

Roughly three-quarters (74%; n=23) of respondents (n=31) participated in the self-directed course offered via the YMCA Ignite platform.



Of those who participated in the self-directed course, many (n=13) felt that the foundational, introductory content of the course was useful and informative.

I enjoyed the E101 course on the YMCA's platform. It was easy to follow, had some good insights, and was a great starting point for anyone interested in entrepreneurship.

I thought it was very informative and I felt that I learnt a lot from it.

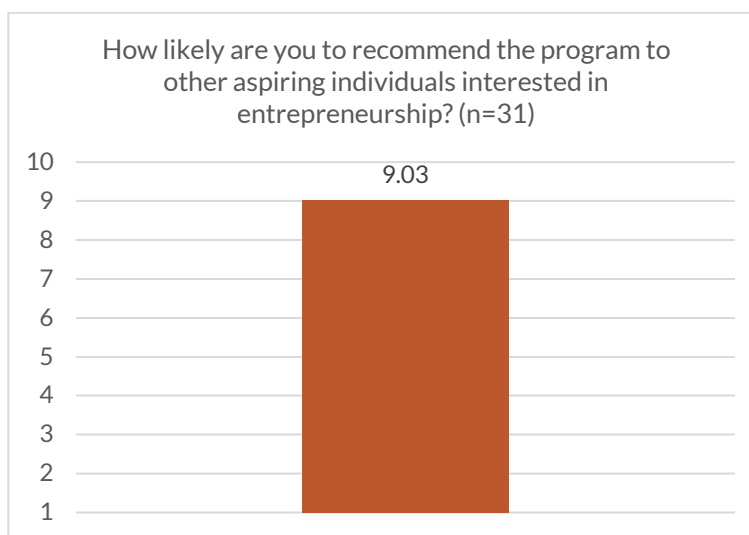
Others (n=8) praised the format of the self-directed course, with two youth adding the caveat that they felt that there was too much content.

It was pretty cool. Very easy to use and follow along.

It was easy to use but there were a lot of modules which were hard to complete due to my other extracurriculars.

The Success Academy Program Overall

On a scale from 1 (*Not likely at all*) to 10 (*Extremely likely*), surveyed youth (n=31) expressed a strong likelihood of recommending the program to other aspiring young entrepreneurs.



As well, 87% (n=27) of respondents (n=31) indicated that the program sparked their interest in starting their own businesses.

Finally, 12 participants elected to provide some testimonials on their experiences with the program. Some of these testimonials are shown below.

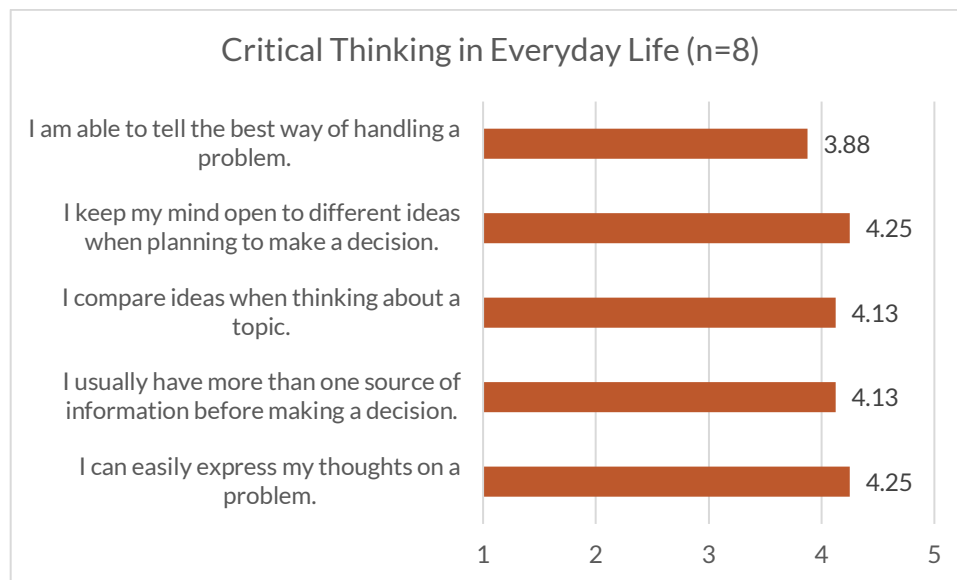
I realized I am not the only one having those random aha! moments. This program makes me feel like I am on the journey with others who get it. I highly recommend this program to anyone looking to make a change in their life and community.

I learned a lot about the true nature of entrepreneurship and the program made it very encouraging to start my own thing. Definitely feeling very motivated, and am glad I was able to gain so many insights from all the amazing speakers.

Entrepreneurship 101 was a great hands-on introduction to the mindset and fundamentals of building something from scratch. The speakers were inspiring, and the content was practical and well-structured. Highly recommend it to anyone curious about entrepreneurship.

CRITICAL THINKING IN EVERYDAY LIFE

8 participants out of 143 completed the *Critical Thinking in Everyday Life* survey between April and June of 2025. This survey examines participants self-reported critical thinking skills, including information gathering, idea evaluation, and problem resolution. Participants responded to a series of items on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Their average scores are visually depicted and summarized below.

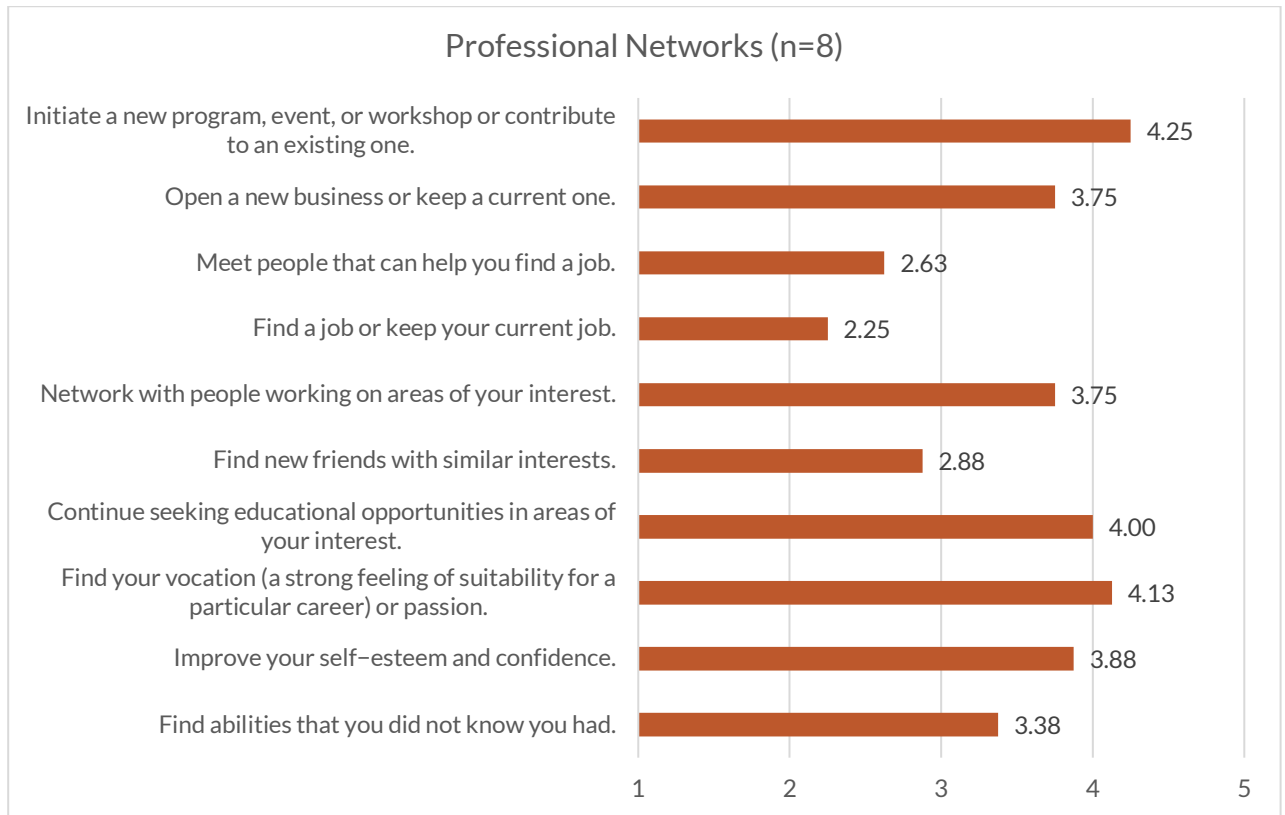


Takeaways:

- Overall, the surveyed youth reported moderate to high levels of critical thinking across the five items.
- When it comes to problem-solving, these youth indicated that they are more frequently open-minded ($M = 4.25$) and able to express their thoughts ($M = 4.25$).
- These youth indicated that they are less frequently able to tell the best solution or approach to a problem ($M = 3.88$) with respect to the other forms of critical thinking.
- Without pre-program data or relevant qualitative data to compare against, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding the role that the program played in fostering participants' critical thinking skills.

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

8 participants out of 143 completed the *Professional Networks* survey between April and June of 2025. This survey evaluates respondents' assessments of the impact of the program on their networking and other employment-relevant skills via a series of items on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*A lot*). Success Academy participants' average scores are depicted and summarized below.



Takeaways:

- Surveyed youth agreed most strongly that the program helped them to initiate or contribute to programs, events, or workshops ($M = 4.25$). These youth also felt strongly that the program supported them in finding their vocation or passion ($M = 4.13$).
- These youth felt the least strongly that the program played a role in helping them find a job or sustain an existing one ($M = 2.25$).
- Surveyed youth felt less strongly that the program helped them to meet new people who could support them in finding work ($M = 2.63$) and/or who held similar interests ($M = 2.88$). The open-ended feedback provided by Success Academy participants following the synchronous sessions sheds some light on this finding, as eight participants shared that they would have liked more opportunities to connect with one another.

I would have liked if there were breakout rooms and an activity that allowed us to get to know each other better and improve each other's ideas.

It would be great to have some in-person meet ups, coffee chats also with other founders part of LOI.

Would be nice to include some sort of medium to connect with other students participating in the course. Doesn't have to be too complex, even a course group chat would work. I think it'd be a nice addition in the future to allow for some connectivity to build between the group.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The Success Academy contributed to young people's entrepreneurial development by equipping them with real-world examples, foundational knowledge, and inspiration to pursue their vocations.

Participants consistently praised the program's structure, the quality of the guest speakers, and the relevance of the foundational content offered in both the synchronous sessions and asynchronous self-directed courses, reflected in high session ratings and a strong likelihood of recommending the program to peers. Youth particularly valued the motivational stories, practical advice, and sense of encouragement they received.

Results from the *Critical Thinking in Everyday Life* survey point to moderate to high levels of core critical thinking skills, including open-mindedness, idea comparison, and the ability to articulate one's thoughts. While these findings cannot be directly attributed to program participation and represented a small portion of the overall sample, they could suggest that youth have a strong foundation from which to navigate entrepreneurial problem-solving with curiosity and reflective awareness.

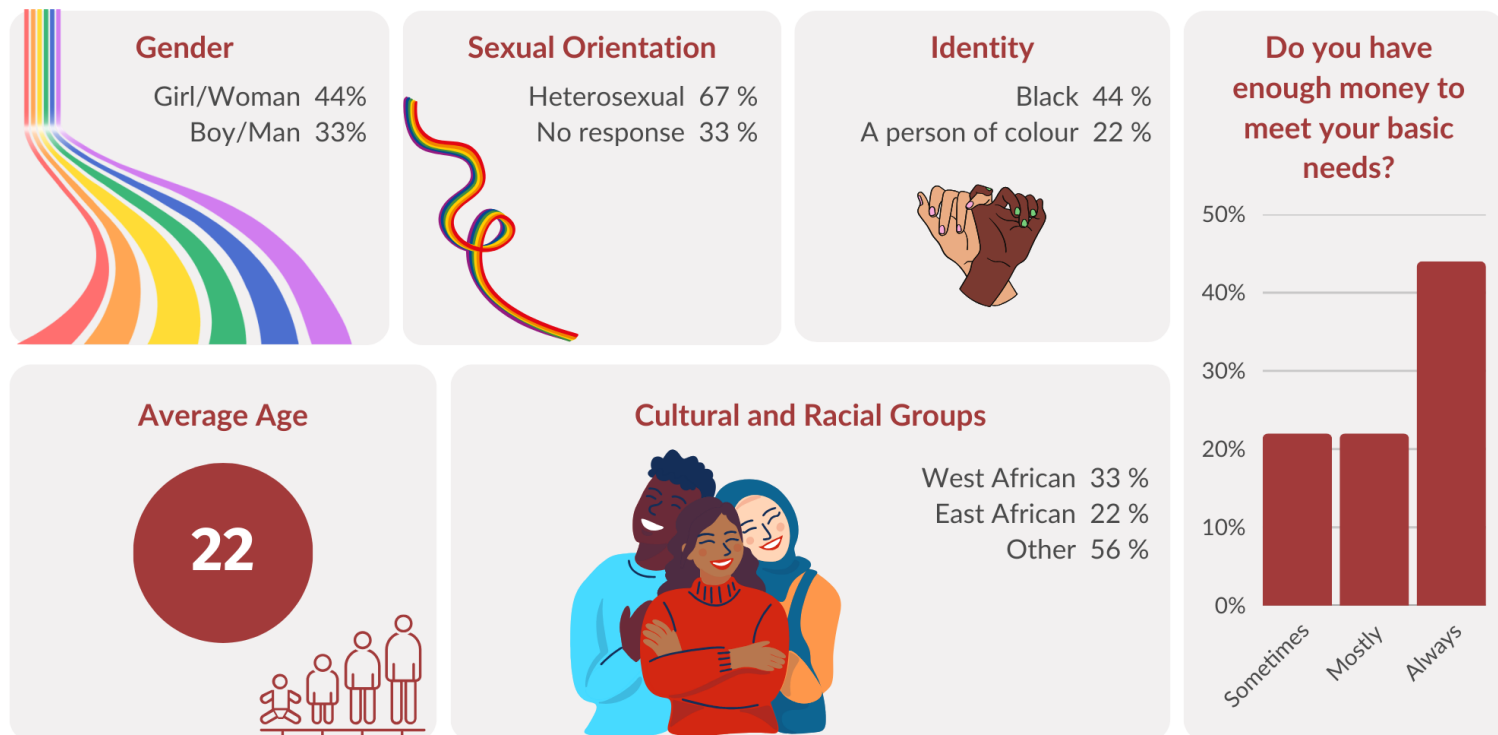
Findings from the *Professional Networks* survey suggest that the program supported young people in identifying their passions and initiating new projects or events, underscoring the program's role in helping participants feel empowered and capable of taking meaningful next steps in their entrepreneurial journeys. However, participants felt less strongly that the program helped them build connections that could directly support job searching or long-term networking. This aligns with open-ended feedback requesting more opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement, breakout discussions, and spaces to connect beyond the weekly sessions.

Overall, the Success Academy was a well-received introduction to entrepreneurship for 143 diverse youth across Canada, with at least 27 young people leaving feeling inspired to start their own businesses. By intentionally integrating more interactive networking opportunities and exploring pathways for deeper knowledge- and skill-building, particularly for participants with varying levels of experience, the program can build on an already solid foundation, ensuring even greater alignment between young people's needs and long-term entrepreneurial growth.

APPENDIX

Demographics

9 participants responded to the demographics survey on the SCC's online Sharing the Stories data collection platform. Their responses are summarized in the visual below.



Note. Identity categories pertaining to only one individual are not shown. Percentages were calculated out of the total number of respondents (n=9) and may total greater than 100% due to respondents' ability to select multiple options.