

2022 Y7 FINAL REPORT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACHIEVEMENTS

Meetings with decision makers and experts.....	4
Bilateral meetings with other delegations.....	7
Consultations with youth.....	8
Diversity and Inclusion	9
Negotiation.....	11
Communications	13
Maintaining the momentum in intentional youth inclusion.....	15

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DELEGATES

Research.....	16
Consultation and Engagement.....	16
Track Negotiations.....	17
Communications	18
Diversity and Inclusion	18

ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Pre-G7 Strategy.....	20
Post-G7 Strategy.....	21

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Prativa Baral - Head Delegate	23
Jaya Scott - Engagement Coordinator	24
Michael Lecchino - Communications Coordinator	26
Hargun Kaur - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator	27

PHOTOS

ACHIEVEMENTS

Overview

Despite the chaotic challenges due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the Y7 delegation was able to continue the yearly tradition set by the Young Diplomats of Canada to represent Canadian youth interests at the global stage, with this year's Y7 set in Berlin, Germany. Every member of the delegation brought individual strengths, content expertise, and diplomatic chops that allowed them to advocate for many important asks to both Canadian and German officials and that transcended a variety of transnational issues such as climate change, global health, democracy, and entrepreneurship, centring youth within all of these discussions. Our delegation was also successful in leveraging individual expert networks, different youth groups, and a wide array of relevant stakeholders to this year's thematic tracks, in order to maximize our knowledge base on both content and values, and as such, be well-prepared to push for recommendations while being well-versed in the needs and wants of Canadian youth.



2022-05-16 - The Canadian Delegation at the Y7 Summit in Berlin, Germany

Building and maintaining relationships domestically and globally

The priority of our delegation this year was, at the heart of it all, to focus on building and strengthening relationships, both within the Canadian ecosystem, and more globally. Our conversations with G7 officials led us to believe that the invasion of Ukraine would take up much of the space during the official meeting - and rightfully so. Given the many other challenges that the world is facing globally, from famine and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to the climate crisis as well as inflation and economic hardship, we felt like an appropriate strategy would therefore be to focus more broadly on establishing a strong infrastructure that would bridge youth delegations to Canadian officials, one that would transcend this year's recommendations alone. Our focus this year has therefore been to work towards establishing a more sustained relationship within Canada, such that subsequent delegations may have more than occasional ad-hoc meetings, but - we hope - a more comprehensive involvement from the beginning of the G7 discussions. This long-term vision is one that we pushed for in all of our conversations with Canadian officials, with the hope of at least introducing these asks and the merit of these asks. We believe this is in strong alignment to YDC's strategic priorities as well. To that end, we have also published an op-ed in the Hill Times, demanding a more intentional strategy for youth inclusion that encompasses several key aspects, including supporting youth delegations to international settings financially, developing a forum for youth to share their concerns and suggestions (including a transparent reporting process and a metric to track progress), launching youth consultative exercises across the country leveraging secondary schools and community centres, and broadly, formalizing the inclusion of youth representatives during this policy-making processes from the very beginning.

Meetings with decision makers and experts

Since March 2022, we have had the opportunity and the privilege to meet with many Canadian Ministers, Chiefs-of-Staff, G7 Canadian representatives, and most importantly, a wide array of Canadian youth. The purpose of these meetings were four-fold:

1. Get a better understanding of Canadian priorities according to current policies, strategies, and decision-making,
2. Present our viewpoints and recommendations, and that of other Canadian youth, on what we believe should be the country's priorities,
3. Discuss alignment and mis-alignment between youth and decision-makers in Canada, and

4. Establish strategies, including institutionally and structurally, to incorporate more youth voices in Canadian decision-making to ensure that the generational gap is reduced.

Some of these meetings occurred prior to our participation at the Y7, and many others have continued well thereafter, in an effort to ensure that our initial meetings were not just ad-hoc but that there was continuity in relationships and progress made towards intentional youth inclusion broadly. These high-level meetings spanned different Ministries and roles across the Government of Canada. In addition, our delegation held meetings with experts and thought leaders that spanned different industries.

Some of our discussions included meetings with:

- Simon Black - Economist, The International Monetary Fund
- Michael Bonser, GAC Executive Director for the G7 and G20
- Jillian White - Directory of Policy, Minister Ng's office (International Trade)
- Senator Boehm
- Senator Harder
- Senator Loffreda
- At the Embassy of Canada to Germany, Head-of-Mission to Germany Isabelle Poupart, Robert Fry (Director General of European Affairs at GAC), Harjit Sajjan (Minister of International Development), and Ambassador Stephan Dion
- Minister Marci Ien and her advisors
- David Morrison, G7 Sherpa
- Minister Ahmed Hussen
- MP Laurel Collins (NDP, Environment Critic)
- MP Francis Scarpaleggia
- MP Anju Dhillon
- Results CanadaTeam
- A wide variety of experts across our tracks, including officials from multilaterals, universities, research organizations, and non-profit and advocacy groups

These meetings helped set the tone of our delegation's strategic priorities, and develop short-term and long-term vision for asks. We are very appreciative that so many individuals took the time and energy to meet with us, and hope that the outcomes of those meetings translate into tangible changes within the government that helps build a stronger youth infrastructure in decision-making.



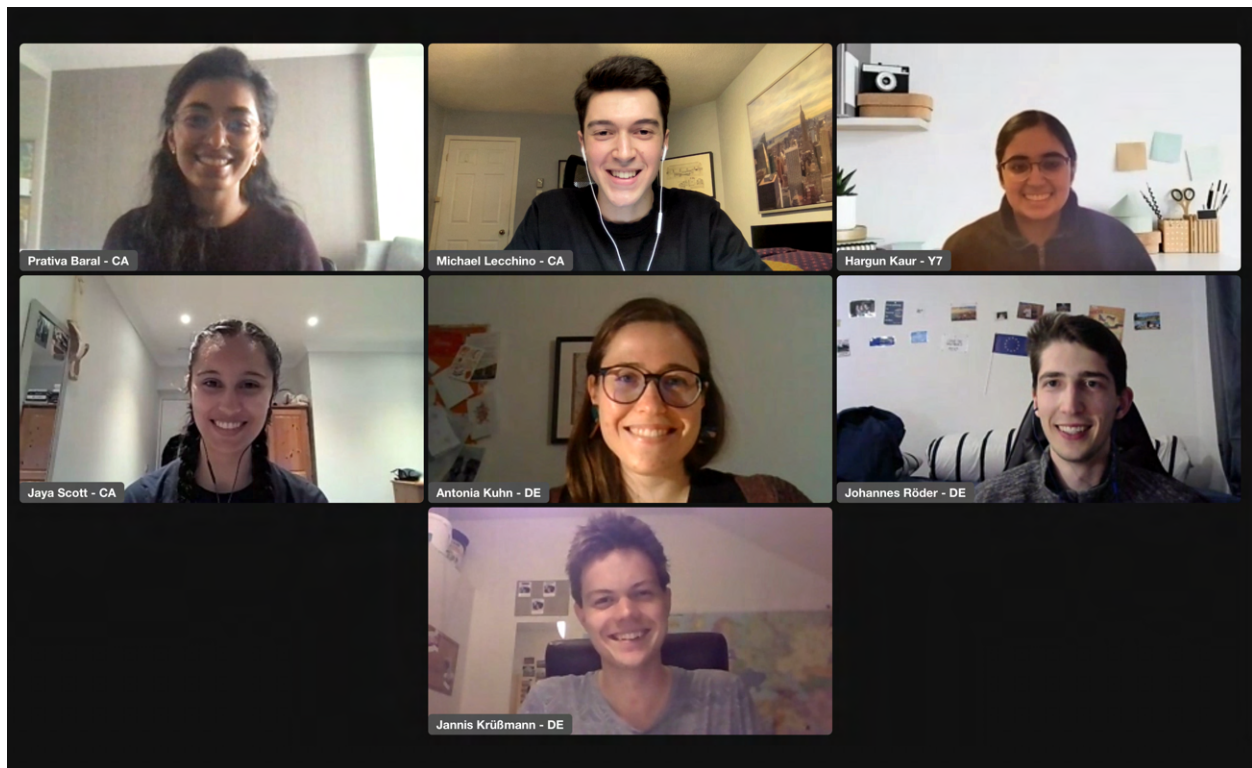
19.04.2022 - Meeting with Michael Bonser



02.05.2022 - Meeting with Senator Harder and Senator Boehm

Bilateral meetings with other delegations

Beyond Canada, we also focused on building relationships with other delegations, recognizing that our asks and recommendations are that much more powerful, when presented together. The concept of global solidarity, and the need to address global challenges as youth delegations, instead of only nationally, felt particularly pertinent and powerful this year, given the aforementioned global challenges. Diplomacy is also rooted in strong and genuine relationships: to that end, from the very beginning of our journey as Y7 delegates, we held bilateral meetings with participating countries individually, to get to know the other members, the needs of the youth in their country, their individual expertise and asks, and focus on finding alignment and shared values and goals. In a world that tries too often to differentiate and separate individuals, we did the opposite: forge friendships that helped our diplomatic journey and negotiations throughout the last several months.



2022-04-26 - Meeting with Germany's 2022 Y7 Delegation

Consultations with youth

One of our biggest internal goals as a delegation was to try to ensure that our viewpoints and recommendations reflected the needs and concerns of as many Canadian youth as possible. We tried, to the best of our ability and given the COVID-19 context, to speak with a variety of young voices right here in Canada, though we recognize that a lot more can always be done in this regard. We also did not feel comfortable to parachute into communities for the sake of (unpaid) consultations alone, as we recognized the unethical and problematic components of these and instead, focused on maintaining and building relationships with communities that we know and are part of. Given the specific identities and community-engagement of the four members of our delegation, we were of course not able to represent the diversity of thought and communities across Canada. To attempt to rectify this large gap, our strategy has been to approach existing youth groups who are part of - or have forged these relationships - with diverse Canadian communities. Some examples of this attempt include consultations with university students, with youth communities such as the Global Shapers Community (that has regional “hubs” across Canada), with the Prime Minister’s Youth Council, and with the World Health Assembly representative and her advisory youth council.



09.05.2022 - Meeting with the Prime Minister’s Youth Council (PMYC)

In total, our survey reached hundreds of Canadian youth, though 113 ultimately completed the survey. Many of our discussions on how to maximize reach made reference to the fact that young people are digitally tired, and unwilling to spend 10 minutes to fill yet another electronic survey. Though we attempted to incentivize completion rate - through gift cards

for example - many of our most important insights ended up ultimately being collected qualitatively through focus groups (despite being held on Zoom).

In total, our youth consultations included 5 sets of different youth groups who participated qualitatively, and our survey included 113 individuals. The list of participating consultation groups is included below. We also received insights from many others, such as students and participating members in community youth groups in non-formal ways (e.g., e-mails). Our formal focus groups of youth groups who we consulted with include:

- Canadian Council for Youth, Peace, and Security
- COY 16 (UNFCC Conference of Youth, interested delegates)
- Jane Goodall Institute of Canada Youth Advisory Council
- WHA Canadian youth representative and youth council
- Prime Minister's Youth Council (PMYC)

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity, equity, and inclusion was our north star as we navigated this past year, the consultations, the development of our communiqué, and our advocacy efforts. We led and ended every conversation with Canadian officials highlighting the need for more intentional youth inclusion in the decision-making process in Canada, which necessitates a true - and non-tokenized - diversity, equity, and inclusion lens. What this can look like in our current climate remains to be operationalized, but our hope, as the Canadian delegation, is that we have pushed for a DEI route that is well-beyond a checkbox.

On the more operational side, we tried to be as inclusive and diverse as possible in selecting youth voices in our survey reach and the focus group consultations. One way we did this is by leveraging the network of existing communities and youth groups that centre DEI, to advertise our survey and conduct our focus groups. As mentioned previously, we did not want to parachute into communities and instead focused on relationship-building.

On the recommendations side, a key part of our efforts to promote DEI as a delegation was through pushing for inclusive recommendations and language in the communiqué and in our negotiations, focusing on marginalized and vulnerable communities that will be hardest and first and foremost hit by many of the challenges we face.

For example, in the Sustainable and Green Planet track, the Canadian delegation pushed for local community ownership in the implementation of Nature-Based Solutions. Similarly, in the Youth, Peace, and Security track, the Canadian delegation took a red-line position on the

inclusion of language for mental health and trauma support as well as democratization of and a shift to a human rights focus in refugee and immigration policy. In the Resilience of Democracies track, the Canadian delegation pushed for recommendations that focused on eliminating technological barriers to reduce the digital divide, the inclusion of underrepresented communities as key consultation groups, and creating inclusive methods of engaging in advocacy and policy making. In the Global Health and Solidarity Track, this included specifying that “[...] food assistance programs be accessible to everyone, regardless of sex, gender, country of origin, abilities, ethnic background, sexual orientation, age, religion, or political beliefs”, that “country-specific global health diplomacy units [included] consistent and diverse youth representation”, and that “mental health education [needs to] address structural causes”. In the Economic Transformation for Shared Progress Track, the Canadian delegation ensured that stakeholders from or operating in rural, indigenous, migrant, historically marginalized, and underrepresented areas were included in our recommendations such as the one covering equitable financial tools.

The Canadian delegation strongly believes that “DEI” alone as a checkbox is not sufficient, and that for environments and policies to be truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive, they must address structural barriers and discrimination; we therefore strongly pushed for language and recommendations that went beyond addressing symptoms of problems, but tried to tackle the root causes of challenges.

Negotiation

Sustainable and Green Planet

Clause 3.1: The Canadian delegation prioritized this clause, advocating for a strong and ambitious climate club, based on the German presidency's stated aim that a climate club be an outcome of the 2022 G7. While at COP26, Justin Trudeau pledged support for a climate club. Given these leaders' interest and support, The Canadian delegation pushed for an ambitious and 1.5 aligned climate club, given that this is what youth and future generations require.

Clause 3.2: The Canadian delegation supported a strong climate financing commitment. However, this was not a controversial position among delegates - only the height of ambition was in question. To this extent, the Canadian delegation supported an ambitious clause by researching what appropriate, and high - but realistic - demands of the G7 for climate as well as biodiversity financing would be.

Economic Transformation for Shared Progress

Clause 1.1: The Canadian delegation prioritized this clause as education plays a crucial role in the development of youth in Canada. Young people need access to appropriate upskilling, reskilling, and lifelong learning opportunities to adapt and succeed in the digital and environmental transition of jobs. Strong partnerships between the private sector and educational institutions will ensure that young people are adequately prepared to (re)enter the workforce with confidence. Examples are implementing adapted curriculums and specialized work-placement programs so that students graduate with industry-specific skills employers are looking for. This circular economy and collaboration between economic stakeholders can also lead to an effective way to address the alarming rise in income inequality in Canada.

Clause 1.3: The Canadian delegation pushed for this clause as entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the Canadian economy. Successful entrepreneurs employ citizens, solve real-world problems, create value for customers, and lead to economic development. Therefore, it is crucial to develop ecosystems and environments where entrepreneurs can flourish. Seeing as Canada has many rural, migrant, and indigenous communities, it is important they are not left behind but rather have the tools to succeed which can be achieved through equitable financing opportunities. Overall, this recommendation could greatly aid Canadian micro-, small-, and medium-sized businesses as they are the backbone of the Canadian economy.

Clause 2.2: The Canadian delegation supported this clause because Canada relies heavily on immigration to support its economy. Recently, Canada has experienced an increase in population growth at a rate higher than any other G7 country. This growth was largely driven by increased immigration. Establishing labour standards and implementing legislation banning exploitative employment contracts will ensure the well-being of current and future Canadian workers. It is equally important to protect young Canadians who are entering the workforce by regulating unpaid employment opportunities and unpaid internships.

Resilience of Democracies

Clause 1.2: Recognizing the challenges in accessing technology and reliable internet in certain Canadian communities, the Canadian delegation prioritized this clause to ensure everyone has access to digital infrastructure to facilitate their engagement in digital democracies and learning. They also encouraged the addition of digital literacy to ensure that users are provided not only with appropriate infrastructure, but also equipped with the knowledge on how to best leverage the full technologies capabilities of devices.

Clause 2.1: The Canadian delegation prioritized this clause focused on a first step towards addressing the disinfodemic - given the effects of mis- and disinformation on polarization and lack of compliance in Canada. The delegation also pushed for the inclusion of specific references to underrepresented communities to prevent a definition that excluded minority and fringe opinions.

Global Health and Solidarity

Clause 1.3: The Canadian delegation prioritized this clause, advocating for legal, accessible, affordable abortions, based on global attacks observed on reproductive rights and the right for a woman to choose. Despite some challenges and charged conversation, given this often emotional topic, the Canadian delegation took a leading role in the negotiations, in framing abortion as a health issue, rather than a political issue, and was ultimately successful in gaining unanimous approval to include this clause in the final communiqué.

Clause 2.3: Given the interconnectedness of the pandemic and emergence of other diseases to the climate crisis, and the need to acknowledge the clear associations between animal, plant, and human health, the Canadian delegation prioritized this clause, requesting that a One Health lens be taken for disease prevention, through the establishment of global early

warning systems to monitor risk, and act accordingly, particularly in the most vulnerable areas.

Clause 3.2: The ongoing pandemic has received less and less attention, despite continuing to throw uncertainty to much of the world. The Canadian delegation recognized that sustained funding to a global organization like the WHO, even if an imperfect strategy, is the only way forward to ensure that an equitable approach that embodies global strategy is taken to address not just the COVID-19 pandemic, but also additional emerging threats such as monkeypox. We also recognized that financial commitment alone is not sufficient - decision-making in global health needs to include youth. We therefore pushed for our broader strategy of youth inclusion within this track as well, advocating for global health diplomacy units (necessary to establish a coordinated and united effort against global threats), stressing that such units have to include youth. This, we believe, is an ask that has never been asked before, but the Canadian delegation strongly believes that an investment in global health, and inclusion of youth in decision-making in this space, will result in a healthier and more sustainable world.

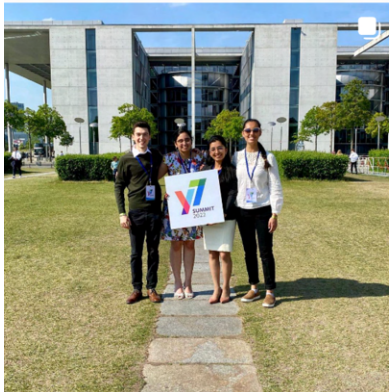
Youth, Peace, and Security

Recommendation: Youth Facing Violence: The Canadian delegation took a strong stance that clause c, on the democratization of refugee and immigration policy, should include youth as part of the human security framework and uplift their human rights, rather than viewing them as degenerate or a burden to society.

Communications

Our communications efforts were highly impactful this year, not just during the summit itself, but in the period leading up to the Y7 Summit, as well as during the post-summit advocacy. Under the strategic direction of our communications lead, Michael, the entire delegation contributed to the delegation's communication strategy: for example, during the social media takeover during the summit in Berlin, every delegate contributed meaningfully, some taking the lead on the live Twitter feed, others contributing to the written content for the visuals on Instagram, such that Canadians and Canadian youth from around the world could follow along the main happenings of every single day of the summit, live. This division of labour not only for the communications strategy but also in all aspects of our broader strategy this year was truly the essence of our delegation: we worked as a team, and worked well, in all of our initiatives, both internally and externally.

Michael was also the unofficial photographer and communications strategist for the Y7 Summit as a whole, quickly gaining a fan following given his impeccable communications and photographic vision.



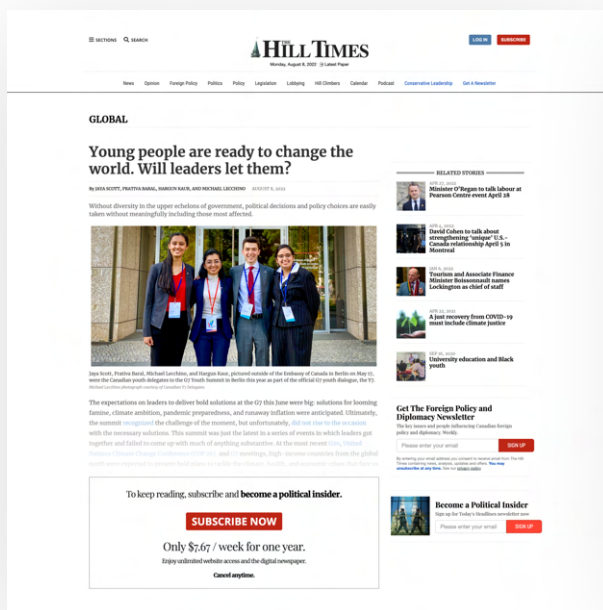
Y7 2022 Delegation - Instagram Takeover

Maintaining the momentum in intentional youth inclusion

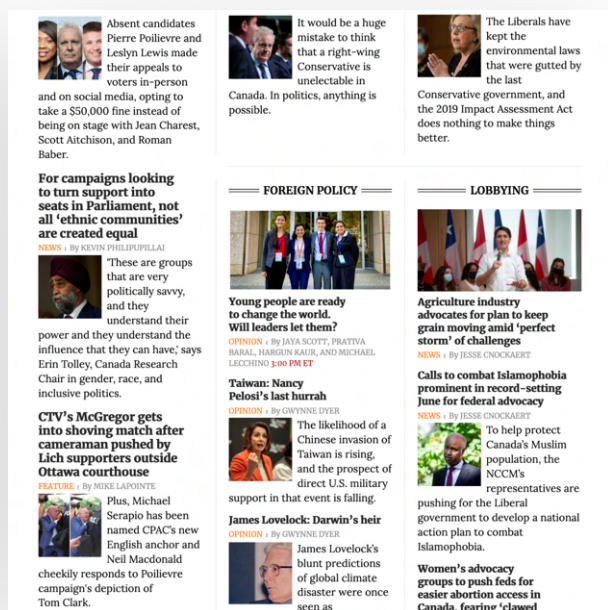
One of our biggest accomplishments this year has been to maintain and get commitments from the many stakeholders we engaged with to maintain ongoing relationships with incoming YDC delegates well past our mandate. We also wanted to contribute to YDC's broader mission of making these incredible international opportunities available to more Canadian youth: to that end, we are particularly proud of our conversations with Minister Ien's office and the bridging role we played between her office and YDC's development team to foster continuity in the relationship we've built, and initiate discussions that we hope will further contribute to YDC's success and sustainability.

Press articles:

- [Michael Lecchino in the Métro LaSalle](#)
- [Jaya Scott in The Observer](#)
- [Jaya Scott featured in a Deutsche Welle Politics video](#)
- [Op-Ed published in The Hill Times](#)



Op-Ed in The Hill Times



Op-Ed featured in the Foreign Policy section

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DELEGATES

Research

Being knowledgeable about the topic area and understanding it in a Canadian context is critical when entering track negotiations with other countries. We built this knowledge through individual desk research informed by scientific articles, op-ed pieces, and government documents and supplemented with interviews with subject matter experts and our previous experience. We would encourage the next team to allocate dedicated time prior to the first track negotiation meetings to researching their respective topics and engaging with subject matter experts as well as continuing research on more specific areas.

Consultation and Engagement

We had the privilege of interacting with and hearing voices from youth, policymakers, and community organizations across Canada. It was effective to have various means of reaching out for feedback including one-on-one consultations with subject matter experts, group sessions with organizations and youth groups, and surveys and social media polls for others to engage with on their own time. All questions during engagements were brainstormed beforehand - shared internally through shared documents and/or discussed during weekly meetings - and informed through our research and ongoing track negotiations.

Given the short turnaround between being selected as delegates and the Y7 summit, we would encourage the next delegation to begin consultations earlier during the process to ensure the views from the consultation are reflected during initial track negotiations. Having conducted most consultations after the initial track meetings, our efforts were more focused on validating existing topic choices and discussing nuances rather than shaping the actual topics and direction for the track. The new delegation can leverage existing contacts and relationships developed with stakeholders outlined in the above Achievements section to facilitate quick and early engagements with key stakeholders.

We also found it effective to re-engage with key stakeholders post summit to advocate for the final recommendations within a Canadian context. These meetings usually included briefly summarizing each track and highlighting key and relevant recommendations, answering questions or elaborating on the process/recommendations, and concluding with key asks (e.g., follow-up meetings, additional contacts). Post summit advocacy is a critical component

of ensuring translation of recommendations to action, and continuity of relationships with the relevant stakeholders.

Track Negotiations

At the end of the day, negotiations rely on building relationships: we would urge future delegations to focus on strengthening relationships between and within delegations, as well as the commonalities that exist within your teams. Negotiating becomes much easier when you recognize what brings you together, when you iron out how to align your individual country's strategic priorities, and when you recognize that diplomacy relies on your ability to see beyond the delegate's country-specific agenda, and into their identity, as another youth diplomat, trying to make youth priorities heard.

Our delegation focused on this relationship building from the start: well before the Y7 Summit in Berlin, we had set up bilateral meetings with different delegations. Within our tracks, we also individually reached out to and connected with the other members. This meant that when we reunited in Berlin, we had already communicated with, learned from, and most importantly, befriended many of the youth delegates. Negotiations, having difficult conversations, and ultimately voting, in Berlin became much easier as a result (though not without its hiccups!) when that baseline already existed.

There are of course certain tracks and clauses that will require more challenging conversations and negotiations. This year, we had several more charged topics that had to be carefully discussed: the Ukrainian invasion and the right to abortion were two of the more difficult issues that required particular nuance. The Canadian delegations, given our country's and our youth's very clear stance in these regards, took a leadership role in many of the discussions around these two topics in particular, to ultimately come to unanimous agreement. We believe that much of this was because of our content expertise of course, but more importantly, the months-long relationships we had built with delegates throughout our time in this process.

We would heavily stress that even in Berlin, many of the important discussions happened 1:1 or in the hotel lounge, outside of the official negotiation times in the schedules. Building partnerships during these unofficial gatherings was really helpful in understanding different delegation's priorities and ultimately, to build a coalition that kept growing until unanimous agreement was reached on voting day. Relationships therefore were central to our success, as the Canadian delegation.

Communications

Communication efforts across multiple digital channels play an important role for every delegation. It serves as a medium to communicate with external stakeholders and informs those who are interested in the delegation's composition, mission, and achievements.

In order to post relevant communications, it is crucial to start early and to spend time preparing what will be published throughout the delegation experience. During the consultation stage, we recommend leveraging YDC's engaged audience to run a nationwide survey. Publishing screenshots of consultations and high-level meetings on YDC's social media platforms is a great way to showcase the delegation's progress. Additionally, the communication efforts will inform potential future delegates of what the Y7 delegation mandate consists of.

Before the summit begins, the delegation should establish their content strategy for the in-person experience. This entails figuring out which pieces of content the delegation wants to create and whether the publications will be during or after the summit. Photos, short videos, and tweets are examples of publications that are created and posted during the summit while a podcast episode, op-ed article, and video summary are deliverables that can be created during the summit but are then refined and published post-summit.

During the summit, teamwork is crucial for an effective and efficient communications strategy. Although led by the communications coordinator, we recommend that every delegate takes on a portion of the communications aspect based on their skills and strengths. For example, one delegate could be responsible for visual creation, one for short captions, one for long descriptions, and one for live tweets.

Diversity and Inclusion

Given the limitations of zoom-centric methods of communication and our strategy to utilize our individual network and that of YDC's reach, as well as our firm stance to not parachute into communities for the sake of data collection, there are likely clear gaps in the youth that we were able to get insights from. One of our recommendations for YDC and subsequent delegations moving forward is to establish a diverse and inclusive youth council affiliated with YDC that all delegations can tap into from the very beginning, in addition to delegation-specific external consultations. This council would ideally be compensated - this way, delegations have the opportunity to hear from young people who may not otherwise have the financial resources or the energy to volunteer their time, but who have important insights

into the very diverse realities of being a Canadian youth today. We hope that this youth council would be established through a symbiotic relationship, where participating youth get compensated, financially and/or through exposure to international relations, the non-profit world, and a wide network of active young people across the country.

ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Pre-G7 Strategy

As our communiqué was being drafted and following the Y7 Summit, we focused on meeting with the GAC G7 team, and Ministers and senior-level advisors within the short period of time before the G7 summit. These meetings were between 30 minutes to 1 hour maximum, 1 hour meetings joint with the Y20 team. To make the most of these meetings, each delegate focused on advocating for the specific recommendation which could be most influential and impactful in the Canadian context for their respective track.

For the Sustainable and Green Planet Track, these were recommendations 2.1 and 3.1; on ending the development of new fossil fuel infrastructure and creating a strong climate club, respectively. Both of these proposals align with the Liberal government's stated climate aims, however policies to bring about those aims are lacking. Therefore, the focus was on convincing the government to implement these and other policies to achieve the targets they point to.

For the Economic Transformation for Shared Progress Track, this was recommendation 1.1. Although the Canadian government touts its (still upcoming) "just transition" support for the workforce, key elements and youth-specific policies are lacking. This recommendation highlights the digital divide, which is particularly acute in Canada, as well as the need for sustainable jobs. Finally this recommendation urges the Canadian government to foster connections between private companies, educational institutions, start-ups, and so on - providing a greater depth and breadth of opportunities for young people in Canada.

For the Resilience of Democracies Track, recommendation 3.1 was emphasized to facilitate active political participation of youth and engagement by marginalized groups to ensure representative and inclusive processes shape democratic decisions. The recommendation is cognizant that work needs to be done to bring decision making and participation to youth and marginalized populations, who may not be able to access or feel included in these processes as they currently stand. This recommendation runs parallel to the Canadian delegation's ask of the Canadian Government, and Ministry of Youth in particular, to develop a forum for youth to share their concerns and suggestions (including a transparent reporting process and a metric to track progress), launch youth consultative exercises across the country leveraging secondary schools and community centres, and fund or subsidize youth participation in international advocacy and forums.

For the Global Health and Solidarity Track, this was recommendation 3.2. This Recommendation asked the G7 to show leadership in developing global health cooperation by providing non-earmarked funding to the WHO and by creating global health diplomacy units (in their ministries of foreign affairs). Canada has been a leader in pledging recent funding to global health instruments such as the Global Fund for AIDS, TB, and Malaria and the Gavi Vaccine Alliance. Recognizing our shared interest in strong global health systems and how the liberal government seeks to position Canada as a leader in this space, this recommendation asks the government to think about long-term pandemic preparedness through a resilient global health system.

For the Youth, Peace, and Security Track, the recommendation that was recognized was on Institutionalization of the YPS agenda. Because Canada positions itself as a leader on the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda through its feminist foreign policy, institutionalizing the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda in a similar way fits with the values and practice of Canadian peacebuilding.

Post-G7 Strategy

Following the G7 summit in Schloss Elmau and the issuing of the leader's communiqué there, we are continuing our track-specific advocacy, although meetings with outstanding ministers are increasingly difficult to get. We have also turned our attention to writing on Canadian policy in the media. Most significantly, we are using follow-up meetings with decision makers to establish a stronger framework for youth inclusion in the G7 process with the Canadian government and youth inclusion more broadly. Key points to this end are included in our most recent op-ed, and below:

- Formalizing the inclusion of youth representatives during domestic policy-making processes from the very beginning;
- Launching ongoing and inclusive youth consultative exercises across the country on key topics to make sure that all youth voices are heard, through secondary schools and community centres;
- Developing a forum where young people can share their concerns and/or suggestions, including a transparent reporting process, where progress on key issues is provided and opportunities to shape implementation are offered; and,
- Supporting youth delegations to international settings financially, including youth in formative discussions, and facilitating meetings between delegates and Canadian negotiators and ministers.

We will continue to work for the establishment of these four supports and mechanisms for the remainder of our terms, and hope to do so in cooperation with the YDC executive and development teams.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Prativa Baral - Head Delegate

GLOBAL HEALTH & SOLIDARITY TRACK LEAD

What an honour it has been to represent Canadian youth at the international stage and to lead this fantastic delegation this past year! And what a joy to do so in-person, for the first time after two years, in Berlin, Germany. My desire to apply for this opportunity stems from the frustration of having worked on COVID-19 as a public health researcher and an epidemiologist, seeing so many policy changes implemented that did not necessarily reflect the needs or wants of the most vulnerable communities, the inequitable impact felt by young people across the world and in Canada, and ultimately, this optimism, perhaps naively, of wanting to attempt to influence Canadian policy-making such that young people can thrive. While a lofty goal perhaps, I truly believe that our Canadian delegation this year has pushed the needle through our advocacy in demonstrating the value of including youth in Canadian decision-making. I am so proud of the tough conversations we have had, the challenges we have bypassed, the incredible friendships we have forged, certainly within the Canadian delegation, but also with passionate and driven young people across the world who don't just want change, but won't accept any other alternative.

I entered this year a bit jaded, having lost some of my optimism given the challenging years we've had, and the lack of structural changes observed at the global and domestic levels. But through my conversations with many of the youth involved in this year's Y7, I learned that fundamentally, even if challenges like the climate crisis seem unsurmountable, the answer lies in community. It's through community such as this one that new ideas and potential solutions to tackle the pandemic emerge, it's through community such as this one that the grief and loss we feel seeing our planet lose its biodiversity is bearable, and it's through communities such as this one that we ultimately realize that hope is needed to continue to fuel the fire in us to at least try, even if we don't fully reach our optimal goals. And that's the message I will leave Canadian youth with: while this world may continue to bombard us with informational excess and overlapping crises, and it might seem easier to bury ourselves under a blanket and find distractions, it's best to look at our challenges straight in the eye, and try to push the needle, even if a little, towards the right direction. It can feel overwhelming to do this on your own - and that's why it's important to find the right community - such as YDC, and the incredibly kind, driven, and ambitious young people you will meet - by participating in these sessions, by advocating for your needs and that of your community. I also know that it's easy for me to ask young people to be involved, when there are real structural challenges and barriers that limit involvement of certain youth. I hope that our Canadian delegation this

year - and that all subsequent YDC delegations, continue to advocate for more fair and equitable representation, where these structural barriers are addressed, so that it's much much easier for you to lean in and share your story.

As the global health and solidarity lead for Canada this year, it felt particularly important to push for recommendations that met our ongoing needs, with respect to emerging infectious diseases, and more broadly large-scale challenges such as food insecurity, women's health, and mental health. Through my involvement in this track, I have met some of the most incredible global health advocates ranging from France, Germany, Belgium, and Italy. Watching them balance diplomacy and content expertise so well gives me great hope about the future.

I also want to give the biggest and warmest virtual hug to my delegation - Jaya, Hargun, and Michael. These past few months have been truly wonderful by your side: despite the very early 5 am calls, our weekly evening catch-up sessions, the ongoing strategy changes to reflect our current Canadian reality, the many many external conversations and discussions we held, you have kept your composure, humour, and drive throughout, and you have represented Canadian youth so diplomatically and efficiently, and I could not have been prouder to have done this alongside the three of you. A huge thank you to the YDC recruitment team who found a way to create a delegation whose members complimented each other so well! A warm hug to Jasmine as well, our fantastic YDC coordinator - the Canadian delegation feels so very lucky to have had so much support from you from the very beginning, which made this past year fly by seamlessly.

Jaya Scott - Engagement Coordinator

SUSTAINABLE & GREEN PLANET TRACK LEAD, YOUTH, PEACE, AND SECURITY TRACK LEAD

I applied for the Y7 delegation because I was keen to scale up my climate advocacy. Having initiated a national-scale campaign around Canada's climate bill, and being part way through my Masters degree in Environmental Management, I felt I had the right combination of experience and knowledge and I wanted to see what I could do at an international forum. Proximity to Berlin during my Masters degree made attending the summit a possibility for me - I would like to note that if I lived in Canada at the time, I would not have applied due to the financial cost of flying from British Columbia. I also applied because I believe that young people really can change the world - that our voices do reach leaders, that we have something important to say, and that we can lead. A big part of this experience for me has been acting on that belief and seeing myself as a changemaker within it.

Two things stand out from the whirlwind that was the Y7, which I will focus on because I couldn't illustrate the whole thing in one page. First, the negotiations themselves. I enjoyed working with fellow delegates on the direction of our communiqué, on goals and aims, and on language. I enjoyed the challenges, the questioning, the respectful debate, as well as the invigorating back-and-forth, the ideation, and the inspiration. I found the task of forging consensus fascinating, and was of course impressed by the knowledge and high-level of expertise brought to the all the tracks by the delegates.

Second, I would underscore the personal connections that came with meeting in person in Berlin. Getting to know the Canadian delegation, delegates from other tracks, the Co-Chairs and Track Sherpa teams, and of course delegates on my own tracks better was wonderful. It is easy to make friends over shared interests and goals and to bridge gaps between points of view and cultural backgrounds. Post-summit, as everyone has gone off and pursued advocacy in their own countries and continued working on their respective missions, these friendships are still important - while each of us desires to change the world, we cannot do it alone. Now we all have the Y7 community as champions, supporters, co-conspirators, and allies. My key takeaway is that we as young people are the emerging leaders of today; and what we will do together in the years to come is full of boundless possibility.

In terms of furthering my career, this experience affirmed that I am on the right path blending Environmental Science and Law. Being able to bridge the gap between science and policy and to forge consensus is what I hope to do as an international environmental lawyer. Attending the Y7 not only expanded my network, but gave me skills in negotiation, consensus building, and conflict resolution. It also provided the chance to speak directly with decision makers and officials, requiring tact as well as conviction. I have no doubt that these skills will support success in similar settings and beyond.

Finally, I would share with future delegates that representing Canada is a joy as well as a responsibility. Canada is regarded as a balancing actor; able to build bridges between disparate opinions, and is expected to be a behind-the-scenes consensus builder and cooperative force. This is an important and rewarding mantle to take up. It can be challenging to stick to your own positions and push for your priorities while seeking to accommodate others and create harmony, but by striking this balance you can help create an agreement which is stronger, and share in its triumph.

Michael Lecchino - Communications Coordinator

ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION FOR SHARED PROGRESS TRACK LEAD

Being selected as a YDC Delegate has led me to embark on a very exciting adventure. It started in early 2022 when Prativa Baral, Jaya Scott, Hargun Kaur, and myself were notified that we were chosen as the Canadian delegation to represent young Canadians at the 2022 Y7 Summit in Berlin, Germany. We spent the next months working together to identify Canada's priorities through personal research, high-level meetings, youth consultations, and a nationwide survey. We brought our findings to the Y7 Summit and negotiated with our counterparts to create policy recommendations that would ensure the well-being of current and future generations.

When I applied to become a delegate, I was the President of my borough's youth council, which taught me youth advocacy at the municipal level. The Y7 delegation experience was very formative as it allowed me to experience youth representation at the national and international levels as well as exposed me to the world of Canadian diplomacy. When I first joined the delegation, I hoped to meet like-minded youth who are motivated to make a positive impact, so I was elated to be constantly surrounded by passionate young people with forward-thinking ideas.

What I enjoyed most about the Y7 Summit in Berlin was getting to meet the other delegates and the collaborative nature of our track negotiations. As the Canadian delegate responsible for the economic transformation for shared progress track, I greatly enjoyed taking part in our productive discussions to address pressing issues young people are facing. Although sometimes in disagreement, we ultimately found creative solutions in the form of policy recommendations that youth would greatly benefit from. We focused on economic advancement through education and innovation, sustainable and equitable economic order, and responsible markets and fair fiscal policy. While working together on our track recommendations, I was impressed by the expertise the other delegates brought to the table which made me hopeful for the future as I believe these young people will become the leaders of tomorrow and bring forth positive change.

Behind the scenes, teamwork and frequent communication were the reasons our delegation was able to accomplish what we set out to do. We each brought a variety of skills and domain-specific knowledge to the delegation, so it was exciting to see how we were able to complement each other by focusing on our strengths. I took immense pleasure in working with the Canadian delegates to identify Canada's priorities, develop a strategy for the Y7 Summit, and do post-summit advocacy of our policy recommendations within Canada.

Reflecting on my Y7 Delegate journey as a whole, I am honoured to have been able to represent Canada on the world stage. The YDC experience has unlocked new career possibilities and allowed me to make meaningful connections with people from around the world. I intend to take the learnings from this experience and bring them into my professional career.

I am grateful for having had the opportunity to meet and work alongside my co-delegates, Prativa, Jaya, and Hargun. They are three incredibly talented and brilliant young Canadians I am proud to call my close friends. I am also thankful for the relentless effort from our program coordinator, Jasmine, and our communications coordinator, Anne-Sophie. They played an integral part in our success as a delegation. Overall, being a part of the Y7 delegation has been a memorable experience that I will cherish forever. Thank you, YDC!

Hargun Kaur - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator

RESILIENCE OF DEMOCRACIES TRACK LEAD

Wow - what a journey it's been over the past many months. I remember applying to be a Y7 delegate completely on a whim. Having been engaged with advocacy on my university and community level, I was attracted to the delegate role as it presented a new challenge and opportunity to take my skills to an international level. I didn't think I was qualified enough for the role, and being in the company of such inspiring, passionate young leaders, I continue to wonder how I was chosen to be one of the four delegates to the Y7 summit.

Reflecting back on my time as a delegate, I am beyond grateful for what truly has been an experience of a lifetime. I met inspiring, kind, and compassionate young people motivated to leave the world a better place than how they found it - many of whom I feel privileged to now call friends. We sat through hours upon hours of discussions to ensure our recommendations are truly representative of global perspectives - discussions that have broadened my thinking on key societal challenges. We walked barefoot, heels in hands, across the streets of Berlin, spent nights connecting over shared passions and frustrations, and danced the night away in celebration of the final communiqué. We have been through a collective experience that brought us together - each bringing our own expertise and lived experience - to change us in ways I could have never imagined. To all the Y7 delegates and sherpas: thank you for being here for the ride, accepting me for me, and touching me so deeply - I'll always cherish the moments, laughs, and hours of work we shared in Berlin and online.

To the Canadian delegates - Michael, Prativa, and Jaya - and our wonderful coordinator, Jasmine: you all are superstars. I remember feeling quite intimidated during our first conversation as I learned how accomplished and immensely talented each of you are.

However, I've been so grateful to have got to know you all for much more than just your accomplishments over the past few months - for your passion to make a difference in our advocacy meetings, your kindness and compassion in interactions with myself and other delegates, and your wild life stories that never fail to bring a smile to my face during our weekly touchpoints. I have and continue to learn so much from you all about how to find the hope to continue acting in seemingly dire situations, how to transform disagreements into consensus towards a stronger shared outcome, and how to continue advocating tirelessly for the world you hope to leave behind. Thank you all for being patient with my rants, making (cancelled) world tour and skydiving plans with me, and more importantly, inspiring me to be a better version of myself each and every day.

Aside from the people, I come out of the Y7 experience with a renewed appreciation for the importance of youth engagement and understanding of the privilege that comes with representing youth voices in advocacy. Throughout the consultation process, we engaged with bright young people from across the country - who had so many ideas on how to improve Canada to be more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient. It was a privilege to represent their ideas at the Y7 summit, but moreso, it was a humbling experience to see the potential of young people across the country. To ensure more young people are given opportunities and tools to be meaningfully engaged, I have been working with the Canadian delegation to formalize youth engagement processes through consultations with government counterparts and media publications.

To all youth looking to get involved in their communities and fight for issues important to them - please trust that you have the expertise from your lived experience as a young person to contribute something unique at the highest tables, find allies in other young people as advocacy can be an isolating world to navigate alone, and stay persistent in advocating for the change you wish to see - it might be slow, but it will come. And if you ever need someone to connect with after a rough day at the office, never hesitate to reach out to myself or any of the other delegates.

I have been changed by the Y7 experiences in ways I could have never anticipated - moving forward as a young person who is now more aware of my capabilities to be a changemaker, empowered with the right tools and networks to create change, and motivated to continually strive to create an inclusive and holistic advocacy process for other youth to be involved. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to YDC, the Y7 delegates, sherpas, and organizing committee for affording me the privilege of representing Canadian voices, providing the opportunity to make lifelong memories and friendships, and leaving me more motivated than ever to continue advocating for what I believe in.

PHOTOS



G7 Youth Delegations Group Photo



Y7 Summit Venue



Working Sessions & Negotiations



Canadian Y7 Delegation at the Canadian Embassy



Visit to the German Federal Foreign Office



Visit to the German Bundestag (Parliament)



Y7 Communiqué Handover to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz