



Report on Activities 2019-2020





**Mohammad Asadi Lari
(1996-2020)**

An influential, respected, admired and beloved member of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO's Youth Advisory Group, Mohammad Asadi Lari was an exceptional human being. He worked tirelessly for peace, inclusive science education, equitable and just global health, meaningful youth engagement, entrepreneurship and social innovation. An altruistic global citizen and builder, he was a model of compassion in the service of the values and ideals we stand for. We gratefully acknowledge his invaluable contribution to UNESCO's work. May his soul rest in light and peace.



Some 200 UNESCO National Commissions around the world support UNESCO in the pursuit of its objectives. Established in accordance with the Organization's constitution, National Commissions play a consultative, liaison and implementing role. They are the link between UNESCO and national governments, and coordinate partnerships with civil society through their networks that share resources, tools and knowledge. National Commissions are also involved in disseminating best practices internationally. Through their various activities, they promote UNESCO's values and ensure that its priorities take root within respective national settings. In this way, UNESCO National Commissions make a substantial contribution towards building a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future.



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Dinosaur dig excavation at UNESCO Global Geopark Cliffs of Fundy.
(Photo: Tourism Nova Scotia)





Simon Brault

Director and Chief Executive Officer
Canada Council for the Arts

New generations often call us to dream of a more inclusive, fair, interdependent, and peaceful world. Mohammad Asadi Lari, a member of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO) Youth Advisory Group, was one such young person who dreamt about, and initiated, change. He was a passenger on the Boeing 737 that was shot down by Iranian missiles early in 2020. While Mohammad's commitment may have inspired many young people, the circumstances of his tragic death drew attention to the tensions, dangers, and imperfect structures that exist in the world today.

The pandemic that broke out two months later once again brought to light the same imperfect and unsustainable reality that governs many of us. The inertia that can result from the comfortable banality of everyday life and globalization with its me-first mentality are no longer acceptable. The aspirations of young people like Mohammad should inspire and direct our decisions. These aspirations of solidarity, equity, and social justice must guide the sustainable development of our societies. As we are called to reinvent so-called normality, we should be guided by the principles of openness, inclusion, and collective well-being.

All citizens must be able to see themselves represented in their public institutions. The Canada Council and CCUNESCO address the civic duty to be relevant to society through their activities and their active involvement in national and international networks and platforms for exchange and cooperation. Every day, the continually renewed relevance and simultaneous presence of the Canada Council and CCUNESCO contribute to a broad sharing of the arts, knowledge, and information. They also help create discussion forums to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, seize innovative opportunities, including those generated by digital opportunities, and address the social, democratic, and climatic issues that are fracturing humanity. The Canada Council's presence in the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies and CCUNESCO's nine networks strengthen these discussions and actions.

In today's world, we must not only be drivers of development and innovation in forging alliances with various sectors, but we must also actively play a role in equitable cultural diplomacy for the advancement of both individual and collective emancipation. Such cultural diplomacy promotes a diversity of voices, including Indigenous perspectives and cultures. It draws on this diversity—which is often different from and critical of our own realities—by reaching out to people everywhere and raising concerns that politicians dare not address.

The events that occurred at the end of the 2019-20 year were a wake-up call about the need to re-imagine our society—a need that CCUNESCO's work has responded to this past year. The Canada Council greatly appreciates the complementary work undertaken by CCUNESCO within its midst.

I would like to pay tribute to the remarkable work of the CCUNESCO Secretariat, the passionate commitment displayed by the members of its Executive Committee, and the thousands of people who work within its networks. I would also like to commend Mireille Apollon on her renewed term as Vice-President and for her active promotion of the International Decade for People of African Descent. Lastly, I would like to congratulate President Liette Vasseur and Secretary-General Sébastien Goupil for their ongoing leadership of the citizens' forum that is CCUNESCO, both across Canada and with the Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO in Paris.

I hope that this Report on Activities will encourage you to continue to focus on youth, share your knowledge, establish links, and further your civic engagement as you contribute to our collective journey, casting aside the injustices and iniquities that arise from national, regional, and global crises. Just as the arts and culture have done for centuries, and just as they will continue to do for centuries to come.



Liette Vasseur

President, Canadian Commission
for UNESCO

We prepared this report during an extraordinary period full of enormous challenges for nations, as well as for global institutions like UNESCO.

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised issues that are central to the work of both UNESCO and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO). I am thinking, for example, of such issues as the pandemic's major impact on education, arts and culture. Other issues also concern UNESCO's broad mandate whether we think of the outbreak of violence against women and girls or acts of discrimination and racism against people of African and Asian descent. We are deeply conscious of how people of low income, people of African descent, newcomers and the homeless, are disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

In the space of a few months, the fight against poverty has seen major setbacks around the world. It is becoming difficult to hope that the sustainable development objectives of the UN 2030 Agenda will be achieved. To avoid a tragic increase in economic inequalities, concerted strategies and a profound transformation of our lifestyles will be necessary. Both domestic and international efforts will have to be redoubled to ensure that no one is left behind.

UNESCO will have a key role to play in these enormous undertakings by drawing attention to the importance of education and the sharing of scientific knowledge and other evidence-based information. The current crisis highlights the urgent need to strike the right balance between protecting the environment and pursuing social, technological and economic

development. CCUNESCO intends to play its full strategic role in encouraging discussions on this subject, and to defend UNESCO's values and priorities with strength and conviction.

This is the challenging context for the beginning of my second and final term as President of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. This past year, I played an active part in its work. For example, I participated in the UNESCO General Conference's Natural Sciences Commission, where we discussed a new standard-setting instrument on open science. In addition, while winners of the L'Oréal-UNESCO International Awards for Women in Science gathered at the Commission's office, I launched the second phase of a study on the barriers facing women in the STEM disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. I pledge to be as actively involved in our projects during my second term.

I would like to congratulate Mireille Apollon, whose term as Commission Vice-President has also been renewed for two years, and commend her leadership in promoting the International Decade for People of African Descent. The pandemic and recent acts of racist violence underscore the importance of the Decade's themes: recognition, justice and development and the need for all of us to work together to end racism and discrimination.

In conclusion, I would also like to thank Nadia Duguay for her contributions over the past four years as the civil-society representative on the Commission's Executive Committee. I hope that we will find new ways to continue our fruitful collaboration with her.



Sébastien Goupil

Secretary-General, Canadian Commission
for UNESCO

This report outlines the extremely rich and productive year the Commission has had. During this period, we have helped our networks to continue their expansion and consolidate their achievements. We also provided them with tools to extend their outreach. We also pursued efforts to solidify CCUNESCO's reputation with a growing number of partners. As a result, the Commission is now seen as a key player in advancing UNESCO's priorities both in Canada and around the world.

We have increased the number of our collaborations, with a range of stakeholders, including UNESCO, other UNESCO National Commissions, civil society partners and federal institutions such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ). These partnerships have led to major achievements, particularly in the context of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL), the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and preparations for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). We have taken advantage of the IYIL and the other two designated decades to forge relationships with several new partners, with whom we have organized events and produced a variety of publications.

It is important though, that I turn to how we have reacted to the unprecedented situation we currently find ourselves -- the COVID-19 pandemic. In a nutshell, the entire Commission team swiftly refocused its efforts and took strategic steps to address this exceptional situation.

With the support of our networks, we prepared discussion papers to influence the course of the social transformation we are experiencing. As part of the accelerated scientific research effort to address the pandemic, CCUNESCO and Acfas (Association francophone pour le savoir), the leading French-language learned society in Canada, co-published a discussion paper on open science that quickly garnered attention both at home and abroad.

CCUNESCO also participated in the creation of the COVID-19 Social Impact Network to study the pandemic's social impacts, particularly on newcomers, so that governments can adjust their measures accordingly.

We also set up a working group with our UNESCO Chairs to identify investments that would contribute to economic recovery, while at the same time strengthening community resilience and self-sufficiency -- and mitigating climate change.

In other words, the crisis galvanized our team to mobilize with our partners as never before in order to advance the causes we firmly believe in.

On that note, I would like to acknowledge the team's commitment and resilience. In particular, I would like to commend Pauline Dugré, our Program Manager, who is retiring after 19 years of highly competent and unfailingly dedicated service to the Commission. Many thanks indeed, Pauline!

Strong networks that pursue the 2030 Agenda's sustainable development goals

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO achieves its impact primarily through its networks. Hence the importance of supporting their development and activities. This support has been effective as the Commission's networks expand and become better equipped to intervene and make a real difference on the ground.

The 2019-2021 CCUNESCO Youth Advisory Group.



UNESCO Schools Network

The UNESCO Schools Network in Canada continues to make its mark through the vitality and commitment of its member-schools. For the first time since the network's inception, it made a historic breakthrough in the Yukon with the addition of two new schools to the network: F. H. Collins High School in Whitehorse and the Ghùch Tlá Community School in Carcross.

CCUNESCO also reached out to schools serving Indigenous communities elsewhere. For example, Allison Bernard Memorial High School on the Eskasoni Reserve in Nova Scotia joined the network last year. With 10 new candidate-schools in the pipeline from Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, the future bodes well for this important network.

UNESCO Chairs Network

With the recent creation of the five new Chairs listed below (including the first Francophone Chair in Western Canada), Canada now has a total of 28 UNESCO Chairs:

- UNESCO Chair in Migration and Francophonie in a Minority Context (University of Alberta);
- [UNESCO Chair on Food, Biodiversity and Sustainability Studies](#) (Wilfrid Laurier University, Ontario);
- UNESCO Chair for the Conception and Construction of Sustainable and Solidarity-based Schools (Université Laval, Quebec, and Laurentian University, Ontario);

Sébastien Goupil, Secretary-General of CCUNESCO, and Rémi Quirion, Quebec's Chief Scientist, signed a joint declaration of intent.

(Photo: Fonds de recherche du Québec)



- UNESCO Chair in Sustainable Engineering – Applied Solar Technologies (Polytechnique Montréal, Quebec);
- UNESCO Chair in Bio-cultural Diversity and Education (Simon Fraser University, British Columbia).

The Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) and CCUNESCO [signed a joint declaration of intent](#) that spotlights the contributions of UNESCO Chairs to the advancement of knowledge, as well as their uniqueness and substantial role within Canada's research ecosystem. In the joint declaration, the FRQ committed to providing \$15,000 per year over the next three years to each UNESCO Chair in Quebec – a first in the history of the UNESCO Chairs Network in Canada.

Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities

Over the past year, the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities welcomed 13 new municipalities from across the country, bringing the total membership to 80. The Coalition now includes, for instance, the municipalities of Chestermere and Fort Saskatchewan in Alberta and Peterborough and the Regional Municipality of Niagara in Ontario.

The Coalition prepared and published toolkits on three themes crucial to its mission:

- [LGBTQ+ Inclusiveness](#)
- [Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples: A Holistic Approach](#)

Joyce Williams and Linda Williams (daughter and mother) at Howe Sound raising their hands to Mother Earth. The duo is wearing their traditional Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw/Squamish Nation dresses.

(Photo: Kris Krug – David Suzuki Foundation)



- [Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees to Canada: The Role of Municipalities](#)

CCUNESCO also revised a [toolkit for Coalition member municipalities](#). This resource, which reflects the Coalition's updated institutional image, provides both current and candidate members with information that meets their needs and reflects today's realities.

Biosphere Reserves

The Commission supported both the Fundy Biosphere Reserve (New Brunswick) and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (Ontario) in the renewal of their respective biosphere designations by UNESCO.

We also supported a proposed new UNESCO biosphere reserve in At'l'ka7tsem / Howe Sound, British Columbia. In this regard, Project Director Ruth Simons, Squamish Nation Councillor Joyce Williams and federal MP Patrick Weiler came to Ottawa in December 2019 to officially submit this project's designation application to the Commission.

Geoparks

The Commission supported the nomination of two new geoparks – Cliffs of Fundy (Nova Scotia) and Discovery (Newfoundland and Labrador),

and submitted their applications to UNESCO for designation as UNESCO Global Geoparks. These new designations would bring the number of geoparks in Canada to five. Canada's geoparks network has immense potential for promoting Canada's geological heritage and the development of ecotourism.

The Canadian National Committee for Geoparks recently changed its name to the [Canadian Geoparks Network \(CGN\)](#). Adopted when the National Committee was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization, the new name more adequately reflects the communication and branding strategy being developed for the network.

CCUNESCO has developed guides and toolkits and provided training to the networks of biosphere reserves and global geoparks, including on the evaluation of [ecosystem services](#). The Commission also conducted a communications analysis for these two networks with a view to developing a new communications strategy.

However, the achievement this past year with potentially the greatest impact for these two networks was their inclusion in the [Federal Tourism Growth Strategy](#), thanks to the joint proactive efforts of CCUNESCO, the Canadian Biosphere Reserves

Association (CBRA) and the CGN. This is the first time a federal strategy has recognized the tremendous sustainable tourism potential of these UNESCO-designated sites. In fact, this recognition has already enabled some sites and their partners to access new funding sources.

Youth Advisory Group

Youth Advisory Group (YAG) members have contributed to numerous publications in the context of CCUNESCO-related projects - guides, discussion papers and blog posts.

YAG members are also in regular contact with CCUNESCO program officers to identify priority areas for young people among the Commission's projects.

CCUNESCO recommended the nomination of YAG member Katelnyne Herchak as Canada's representative to the [Youth Forum](#) that was part of the 40th UNESCO General Conference. She also represented Europe and North America on the Youth Steering Group that played a lead role in preparing and delivering the Youth Forum.

Memory of the World

As part of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme's Canadian Advisory Committee called for more Indigenous collections to be included in the [Canada Memory of the World Register](#). The Register currently lists six collections that showcase Indigenous documentary heritage, including collections considered essential for promoting, protecting and revitalizing Indigenous languages and cultures – such as the Archives of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

Taking into consideration CCUNESCO's leadership role in advancing the spirit of the International Decade for People of African Descent, a special call was also made for the Register to include documentary heritage covering the history and contributions of people of African descent.

Creative Cities Network

In December 2019, the City of Montreal, a "UNESCO City of Design," adopted the [Montréal 2030 Agenda for Quality and Exemplarity in Design and Architecture](#).

This initiative uses a broad consultative process to mobilize residents, businesspeople and architecture and design professionals in an effort to improve the quality of the built environment and living spaces of Quebec's metropolis, in a spirit of innovation and sustainable development.

Quebec City celebrated its designation as a "UNESCO City of Literature" by adopting the [One City, One Book](#) community reading model for its residents – in this case, everyone living in the city was invited to read Marie-Renée Lavoie's novel *Les chars meurent aussi* [Cars also die]. This community event, which embedded literary experience in the city, included book clubs, guided walks through the city's streets, shared reader profiles, and a meeting with the author.



Main stage at an event organized by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in Saskatchewan – June 2012.
(Photo: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation)

Loop – Olivier Girouard, Jonathan Villeneuve, and Ottoblix. A production by Ekumen and the Quartier des Spectacles Partnership in Montreal, a UNESCO Creative City of Design.
(Photo: Ulysse Lemerise, OSA)

Mobilizing knowledge to inform decisions and improve practices

CCUNESCO mobilizes the intellectual capital of its networks to help both governments and UNESCO address challenges that require large-scale solutions – such as climate change, pandemics, loss of biodiversity, racism and growing inequality.

Launch of the publication
*Reporting on violence
against women and girls:
a handbook for journalists.*
(Photo: Luc Valigny)



Laying the groundwork for the UNESCO General Conference

To support the Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO and Global Affairs Canada in their preparations for the 40th Session of UNESCO's General Conference in Paris, CCUNESCO conducted a series of consultations and surveys, and prepared a number of briefing notes. These documents supported the interventions by Canadian delegates on issues of considerable importance to Canada (especially human rights), and, more generally, enabled a Canadian perspective to be shared on many questions debated at the General Conference.

One of the Commission's surveys was a follow up to the [Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers](#) (2017). This survey canvassed the views of Canadian scientists on how UNESCO can better articulate its questions to Member States so that the Recommendation can be implemented more effectively. Our [overview](#) of the Recommendation is now available in six languages.

Another consultation focused on assessing UNESCO's work in the thematic area of information and media literacy.

We also facilitated the inclusion of official representatives of the Assembly of First Nations in the Canadian delegation to the General Conference – a first that enabled the Indigenous representatives to express

themselves and share their expertise, thereby enriching the Canadian contribution to the Conference.

During the General Conference, CCUNESCO also participated in the launch of [Reporting on Violence Against Women and Girls: A Handbook for Journalists](#), a UNESCO publication the Commission helped develop and then jointly launched in Canada with the French Embassy.

Documenting knowledge and making it accessible through publications

Thanks to its position and networks, CCUNESCO maintains links with researchers, experts and knowledge-keepers who can offer unique insights into emerging issues or questions that are particularly relevant to UNESCO's mandate. The Commission draws on its extensive Canadian and international networks to widely disseminate a broad range of ideas, perspectives and analyses. The Commission along with its networks and partners can thus add tremendous value to, and positively influence, policy development and decision-making.

This past year, the CCUNESCO prepared and distributed a total of around 40 publications. These include discussion papers, blog posts, toolkits and other resources on topics of interest to policymakers, organizations, academia, youth and the general public.



Cover of the *Canadian Diversity (Part 1): Facing the change—Canada and the International Decade for People of African Decent* publication. The illustration, *La femme et le pagne*, is by Yasmeeen Souffrant.



Document *The Heart of Our Biosphere: Exploring Our Civic Relationship with the Ocean in Canada* (Design: GOOD Company)

Teachers' Toolkit UNESCO Schools Network in Canada



Cover of the *Teachers' Toolkit* (Design: Banfield)

Here are some examples of these publications:

- CCUNESCO collaborated with the Canadian Institute for Identity and Migration on a special issue of [Canadian Diversity magazine](#) that was published as part of Black History Month in February 2020. This issue features a dozen articles by prominent leaders, researchers and thinkers, including the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean and the Honourable Jean Augustine. The contributors offer their thoughts and analyses on the named themes of the International Decade for People of African Descent: recognition, justice and development.
- Several of the Commission's partners, including its Youth Advisory Group, helped draft the publication [Towards a Recommendation on Open Science: Canadian Perspectives](#).
- In collaboration with the Canadian Committee for World Press Freedom, CCUNESCO published a discussion paper titled [How to Navigate an Information Media Environment Awash in Manipulation, Falsehood, Hysteria, Vitriol, Hyper-Partisan Deceit and Pernicious Algorithms: A Guide for the Conscientious Citizen](#).
- In collaboration with the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition, the Commission published [The Heart of Our Biosphere: Exploring Our Civic Relationship with the Ocean in Canada](#). This document aims to stimulate thinking about the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, to be launched in 2021.
- As part of the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL), we published [Spoken from the Heart – Indigenous Radio in Canada](#), an original research paper that looks at the current state of Indigenous broadcasting in Canada and explores its role in revitalizing Indigenous languages and cultures. This is the only report that has been published in the world on this theme in relation to the IYIL.
- Also in relation to the IYIL, CCUNESCO asked Mohawk artist and activist Ellen Gabriel to write an essay titled [Indigenous Languages: A Fundamental Right to Defend](#).
- The UNESCO Schools Network in Canada published its first [Teacher's Guide](#). This practical manual contains activities, resources and monitoring tools to help schools promote UNESCO values such as human rights, combating climate change and respecting and learning about Indigenous knowledge and customs.



Peter Kiatainaq and his dogsled with Kangiqsujuaq in the background. Customs, knowledge, skills and ways of life are part of intangible cultural heritage.
 (Photo: Robert Fréchette – Avataq Cultural Institute)

- The texts of six Canadian UNESCO Chairs were selected for inclusion in an international publication titled [Humanistic Futures of Learning: Perspectives from UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks](#). This publication is one of the first elements of [Futures of Education](#), a new UNESCO initiative that aims to articulate a vision of education for 2050 and beyond.
- [Promoting Empathy, Equity and Justice in Emerging Technologies: Lessons from Health Care](#), a discussion paper written by two YAG members, Bushra Ebadi and Mohammad Asadi Lari, highlights the importance of youth leadership in promoting and implementing new health technologies. The authors argue that justice, equity and empathy should be fundamental principles in the development and governance of any emerging technology.

Bringing ideas to life through events

Knowledge is not only shared through the written word, it is also spread through live discussion. That's why this past year CCUNESCO joined forces with many partners to organize events that disseminate knowledge about themes related to UNESCO objectives; we also connected with other events on these themes. For example:

- We partnered with National Research Council Canada to organize an open discussion on *La force motrice de la diversité* [The driving force of diversity] during the 2019 Acfas annual convention.
- In collaboration with the Canada Council for the Arts, we hosted [a panel discussion on culture and sustainability](#), at which participants from both government and civil society particularly discussed how to mobilize the cultural sector to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects.

- At the [Canadian Science Policy Conference](#), we organized a roundtable as part of a special session on equity, diversity and inclusion in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).
- Given that virtual events are an effective way to engage conversations, regardless of distance, UNESCO elementary and high schools in Canada exchanged ideas in fall 2019 with students from around the world as part of [#Decarbonize #Decolonize](#), an interactive video conference series that helped students learn more about water and climate change. This initiative led to the submission of a background paper to the UN Climate Change Conference in Spain (COP 25) in December.

Sharing best practices in daily life

The mobilization of knowledge is particularly effective when it facilitates the sharing of best practices that can be applied quickly.

For example:

- In partnership with the Laurier Centre for Women in Science and Ingenium, we developed a document titled [Standing Up to Gender Bias in STEM](#). This resource can be used by students or colleagues to explore gender equality in STEM by referring to the document's infographics and questions to stimulate discussion in small groups.
- In collaboration with the Institut Pacifique, training sessions on conflict resolution and

education for peace were organized in Quebec City for staff from UNESCO schools in Canada. A free and accessible teaching tool was also produced to help schools promote diversity and respectful coexistence within society.

- In fall 2019, CCUNESCO partnered with the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence to organize a series of multi-stakeholder training sessions in seven Canadian cities on how to prevent radicalization.
- CCUNESCO [supported the English translation of a guide for municipalities on protecting intangible cultural heritage](#), which was published by the Conseil québécois du patrimoine vivant and the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec.

The future of knowledge mobilization

CCUNESCO is concerned about the effectiveness of knowledge mobilization processes, and excited about opportunities to increase the impact of knowledge in our societies. We therefore partnered with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) to contribute to reflection on this theme. This partnership will lead to the publication of seven discussion papers that are currently being prepared by six UNESCO Chairs. To provide SSHRC with a European perspective, we have also supported the preparation of a thought leadership piece on this topic by a German UNESCO Chair, to be co-published with the German National Commission for UNESCO.

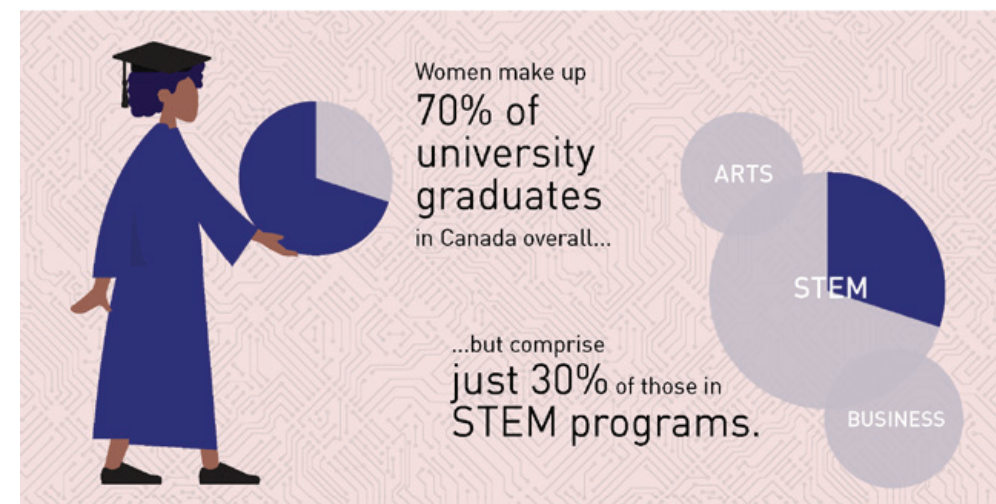


Image from the document *Standing Up to Gender Bias in STEM*.
 (Design: GOOD Company)

Partnerships amplify and disseminate the Commission's action programs

Collaboration is a fundamental principle of CCUNESCO activities that greatly multiplies their impact. In the past year, we thus focused on strengthening our links with external partners in order to promote UNESCO values.

2019 HELISET TFE SKÁL International conference on Indigenous languages in Victoria, British Columbia.
(Photo: First Peoples' Cultural Council)





Launch of Bow't Trail by Rhodnie Désir.
(Photo: Kevin Calixte)



Co-authoring forum of the Charter for an Inclusive Culture, organized by Exeko.
(Photo: Amandine Gazut)

We are constantly on the lookout for initiatives that can help achieve UNESCO objectives in Canada. Thanks to the enhanced reputation and credibility the Commission has acquired in recent years, we now receive partnership requests from many other organizations, including federal and provincial government departments, universities, non-governmental organizations, other UNESCO National Commissions, and UNESCO itself.

We also partner with organizations that share our values. These collaborations have allowed us to draw attention to issues related to UNESCO objectives, such as building knowledge societies, preparing the future of education, promoting science for a sustainable future, fostering creativity, protecting biodiversity and heritage (including Indigenous heritage and knowledge), establishing gender equality, and preventing discrimination.

Responding to designated days, years, and decades

Rituals are not only vectors of remembrance; they also drive action. That is why we take full advantage of the special days, years and decades declared and proclaimed by the UN and UNESCO, since they represent unique opportunities to draw attention to key issues and mobilize partners to address them. For example:

- For the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL), we collaborated with several new and longstanding partners, including the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, the Canadian Federation of

Library Associations' Indigenous Matters Committee, Indigenous Culture and Media Innovations, Minwashin, the International Network for Aboriginal Audio-Visual Creation and Wapikoni.

- In 2019, we helped the First Peoples' Cultural Council to organize the [HELISET TFE SKÁL international conference on Indigenous languages](#) in Victoria, British Columbia, which attracted 800 delegates from around the world.
- We participated in the North American and Arctic regional dialogue jointly organized by Canadian Heritage and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. As a result of the dialogue, the region's leading experts formulated recommendations and content for the IYIL's Strategic Outcome document. These ideas and contributions will be crucial to ongoing efforts to protect and revitalize Indigenous languages as we head towards the upcoming UN International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032). For more information on CCUNESCO's contribution to IYIL, see [this blog post](#).
- To mark the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), we developed a new strategy and partnered with organizations such as the Federation of Black Canadians and the Michaëlle Jean Foundation. Also in connection with this Decade, African Nova Scotian Affairs invited the Commission to [the launch of Nova Scotia's Plan of Action in Response to the Decade](#).

- We also supported and took part in the launch of [Bow't Trail](#) (webpage in French). This multidisciplinary artistic project by Haitian-born Montreal choreographer Rhodnie Désir features a series of videos and performances combining dance, music and digital projections that revisit places where African-descent identity is rooted in America.
- In the run-up to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), Canadian scientist Gerald Singh was appointed Chair of CCUNESCO's Natural, Social and Human Sciences Sectoral Commission. This sectoral commission now consists of a new group of experts who will help define the directions Canada might take to advance the Decade's goals. The appointment of this expert on oceans is a timely step in support of the Decade, which will highlight research on these critical ecosystems and how to preserve them.

The powerful role of moral support

The increasing number of proposals for collaboration that CCUNESCO is receiving from many different quarters is clear evidence that the Commission is making an ever-greater impact.

This past year, we accepted requests to lend the Commission's patronage to more than 60 initiatives related to UNESCO objectives.

These initiatives included several international conferences and summits, as well as many events directly involving the public across Canada.

One such initiative was [Take 3 for Climate Justice](#), a youth-action challenge in Manitoba on climate and human rights that CCUNESCO agreed to support. This initiative promoted global citizenship, a sustainable future and student leadership, by engaging students to think about the impacts of climate change on human rights. More than 70 schools took up the challenge to submit three-minute videos on climate-change themes.

We also supported the deployment of the [Canadian High School Ethics Bowl](#), which involved students from eight high schools demonstrating their critical thinking about problematic ethical issues – an essential skill amid the wholesale changes the world is currently experiencing.

Another initiative has been the [Big Data Challenge](#), a unique educational experience for high school students. By giving them access to cutting-edge analytical tools, participants are challenged to find



trends and hidden patterns in complex scientific data. This past year, teams analyzed sustainability-related data on such topics as the microclimates of water and oceans, and the impacts of global climate change.

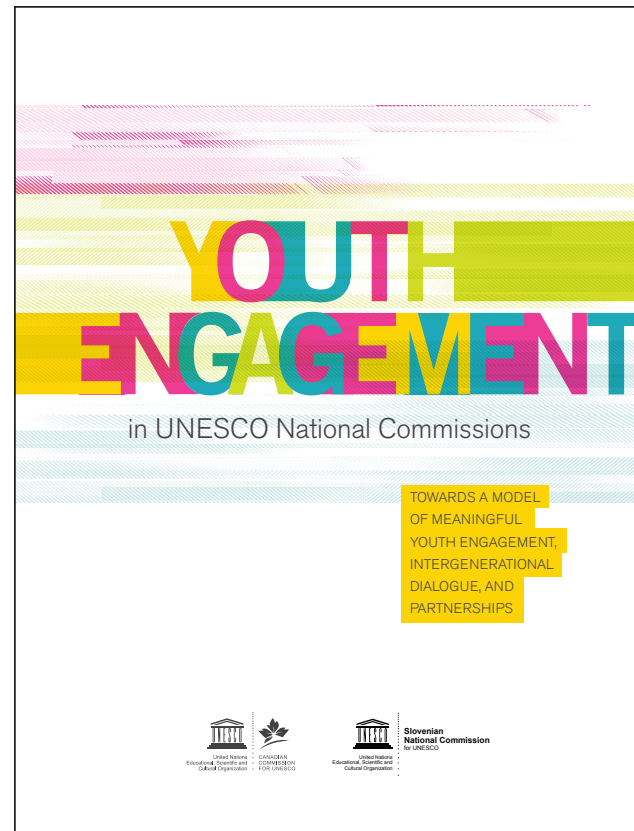
Under CCUNESCO patronage, the social innovation organization Exeko, in collaboration with the Group of Eleven (a group of Montreal cultural institutions) and nine community organizations, is pursuing a rich process of conception and co-authorship that will lead to the publication of a [charter of cultural accessibility](#) (webpage in French). This charter will be an important step towards making cultural life more inclusive.

Partnering to disseminate knowledge

CCUNESCO also partners with other organizations to disseminate knowledge more widely. For example:

- We supported and participated in [EDUsummIT 2019](#), an international summit held in Quebec City on the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education. The summit brought together a global community of researchers, policymakers and practitioners to promote the effective integration of ICTs in education by encouraging the sharing and use of research.
- The Commission joined forces with Kids Code Jeunesse on the [Algorithm Literacy Project](#). The goal of this project is to inform children and youth about how algorithms affect everyone's digital experiences and also influence our lives in many other ways. Both teachers and parents can use the project's video and practical guides to initiate conversations with young people and plan activities.
- Whenever possible, we also collaborate with other UNESCO National Commissions to ensure that knowledge benefits as many people as possible. For instance, in collaboration with the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO, we published [Creating Change in a Digital Age: African Perspectives on Human Rights and Technology](#), a discussion paper by two young African leaders, Nadia Owusu and Beverly Chogo.

- YAG Chair Bushra Ebadi collaborated with youth from several other countries around the world to develop a [new toolkit for UNESCO National Commissions](#) that CCUNESCO co-published with the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO. This document shares models, best practices, and examples of initiatives by various National Commissions to increase youth engagement. Specifically, it calls for action to: (1) address barriers that prevent youth and other marginalized communities from participating in National Commissions; (2) champion accessible and inclusive programming and governance; (3) “mainstream” youth involvement and provide them with active roles in all National Commission activities; and (4) invest in developing the leadership potential and skills of youth.



Cover of the *Youth Engagement in UNESCO National Commissions toolkit*.



The UNESCO Chair in Curriculum Development, Université du Québec à Montréal (UGAM). (Source: My Chair in 3 minutes, YouTube)



Branding of the 20% podcast presented by Québec Science.

Reaching out through digital media

The *My Chair in Three Minutes* video series on UNESCO Chairs in Canada was expanded by new presentations that were produced and posted online this year. A [Canada Memory of the World Register section](#) on the CCUNESCO website now makes it easy to discover listings on the Register, along with photos, text descriptions and labeled groupings. We also published [several blog posts](#) on our site to highlight Commission projects that address priority themes such as innovation, building inclusive communities, and protecting heritage and the biosphere.

On the digital media front as well, CCUNESCO is opting for a partnership approach. For example, we collaborated with L'Oréal Canada and radio CHOQ.ca on the [20% podcast series](#) (in French). This series, jointly produced by *Québec Science* magazine and Acfas, features interviews with women pursuing careers in science, technology and engineering.

