



# WE Are Social Entrepreneurs: High school students empowered to pair their passions with purpose for social change

Today's youth will build tomorrow's sustainable communities. That's why RBC and WE are investing in the next generation of social entrepreneurs—empowering youth to reshape today's world into tomorrow's opportunities.

The WE Are Social Entrepreneurs Conference, held this year in Vancouver, B.C.; Toronto, Ontario; and St. John's, Newfoundland, brought together more than 200 youth and educators for an exciting day of learning and action planning. As part of this journey, young social entrepreneurs develop skills that are needed now more than ever—collaboration, creativity, resiliency and financial literacy. By developing these skills, youth are able to drive innovation and turn their passions into purpose.

The one-day conference connects likeminded young people and offers inspirational speeches, skills workshops, design challenges and mentoring opportunities for youth to learn from and jumpstart the next social enterprise or charitable organization.

For many students, a highlight of the day is the Financial Literacy Workshop. Here, students have the opportunity to design their own business and make their own financial decisions, gaining a new perspective on the challenges associated with managing money and the importance of budgeting.

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*"I loved this because I got a sense of what reality is when making a business," said a youth participant from B.C.  
"I learned so many things that I feel privileged to know."*

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Following each conference, youth are encouraged to participate in a Business Case Challenge, outlining the issue they'd like to combat and their steps to do so. One winner is selected from each conference and brought to the WE Global Learning Center in downtown Toronto and WE's Take Action Camp in Bethany Hills, for a week-long, intensive acceleration program that provides the space, resources and necessary mentorship to take their ideas, products or programs to the next level.

A group of passionate students from John Polanyi Collegiate Institute attended the Toronto conference with their inspiring project, called YYZ Inbound. This group of students wanted to help support the Syrian refugees arriving in Toronto. As a welcome symbol, they designed and sold T-shirts with the Toronto airport code YYZ emblazoned across the front. This project proved wildly successful and the students quickly sold out of T-shirts—then donated all of the proceeds to Syrian refugees. With the success of YYZ Inbound, the students have expanded their project and are now helping multiple groups of refugees arriving in Toronto.

The youth of today are quick and eager to learn. They know what they're passionate about, and they know what they need to do to create change. RBC and WE are proud to empower them with the skills and tools they need to reshape the future. The WE Are Social Entrepreneurs program is set to grow in the 2018-19 school year, expanding to 12 conferences across Canada. Through this program, we are confident that we can continue to empower more students to realize their ability to change the world.