



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Y4Y Québec Holds Consultation to Explore Post-Secondary Students' Experiences During Pandemic**

**Youth Speak Up about Ongoing Challenges throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic in Relation to their Mental Health and Educational Experience.**

**Montreal, Quebec. February 4th, 2021**

On February 4th, Y4Y Québec held a virtual consultation for youth to voice their opinions and thoughts on how COVID-19 has impacted their lives, specifically their mental health and educational experience. In attendance were youth from varying backgrounds and educational experiences (programs, institutions and levels). Some professors also attended to provide a different perspective and were grateful for the opportunity to further their understanding of concerns that may be present among their students. Members of the National Assembly of Québec including Christopher Skeete, Marwah Rizqy and Gregory Kelley were also in attendance.

The following are six of the most prominent concerns voiced by participants, among many other valid and pressing issues:

1. The effects of zoom burnout/covid fatigue are significant, leading to lack of motivation and energy.
2. Creating boundaries between academic life and personal life has proved to be difficult since these have been forced into the same physical space.
3. Students feel they are being blamed rather than recognized for their efforts during this pandemic.
4. Support networks have been reduced significantly and social opportunities to create new networks within schools have been limited and mental health supports have not been enough to counter this.
5. Sustained financial costs of university tuition are not feasible nor justified.
6. Recognition of a presence of a gap of knowledge with online learning.

The impacts of Covid-19 on the educational experience and overall vitality of youth across the province is quickly coming to light. It is crucial that as a community we remain attentive and continue to offer platforms for youth's voices to be heard. Y4Y Québec has additional consultations with students and support staff across Québec planned in the coming months in order to further explore how youth have experienced the pandemic and what changes they hope to see.

“After one semester of online learning, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of youth reporting languishing mental health and we expect to see a spike in dropout rates,” said Y4Y President Madeleine Lawler. “Throughout the pandemic, the impact of measures and decisions on youth studying in post-secondary institutions has mostly been an afterthought. I’m glad that this initial consultation provided a platform for youth to voice their concerns, and I’m hopeful that future consultations will bring out some of the struggles that aren’t always highlighted in these discussions, particularly for youth living in regions outside Montreal.”

Y4Y Québec is a strong, stable, diverse and flexible provincial non-profit organization made up of young people working together to address the issues facing English-speaking youth (ages 16-30). It is an inclusive youth network that is part of the larger community ecosystem. If you are interested in learning more or would like to get involved, [www.y4yquebec.org](http://www.y4yquebec.org) is a great place to start!

For further information or inquiries for an interview, please contact Executive Director Kathleen Mulawka through email at [kathleen.mulawka@y4yquebec.org](mailto:kathleen.mulawka@y4yquebec.org) or via phone at (514) - 612 - 2895.