

## CANADA SENDS YOUTH DELEGATES TO COMMONWEALTH YOUTH FORUM

By Jenny Stodola

**Ottawa, ON** - Leah Davidson of Sherbrooke, Quebec and Mesgna Mesgna of Winnipeg, Manitoba are accredited Canadian delegates to the 12th Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF), to be held from June 21-22, 2021 convened by the Government of Rwanda, the Commonwealth, and the Commonwealth Youth Council.

Held as part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), CYF provides an opportunity for young people of the Commonwealth to build cross-cultural connections and networks, debate challenges facing its young people, and agree to youth-lead initiatives to influence decision makers and ensure that young people have a voice in its future.

Prior to the CYF, Mesgna and Leah will also act as official delegates to the Commonwealth Youth Council General Assembly, where they will participate in the election of the Commonwealth Youth Council Executive, which will be held online in early May. The Commonwealth Youth Council is the body which represents the Commonwealth's 1.4 billion young people. The elected candidates will run and develop the council, organise workshops and advisory panels, give recommendations for youth development, and attend high-level, policy-shaping forums across the world. As Canada's National Youth Delegates, Leah and Mesgna will support this work from 2021-2023.

**Leah Davidson** is a social entrepreneur and strategist passionate about technology solutions to education, sustainability, and economic empowerment. Her passion for advocacy for intercultural understanding and social inequalities has led her to educate others on issues such as the protection of the polar regions, advising how to engage youth in community engagement, and empower others through the creation of a rural microenterprise incubator and teaching middle and high school girls how to code mobile apps for community change. She was selected for Top 20 Under 20 Award by Youth in Motion and the Top 30 Under 30 Leaders in Sustainability, Leah has also shown her leadership representing the Canadian youth perspective at the international stage, previously participating in fora such as the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, Y20, Young Sustainable Impact, among others. Her passions remain in innovative technology-driven solutions in three areas: climate change and the environment, education and the future of work, and economic empowerment.

**Mesgna Mesgna** is both a Ralph M. Barford Loran Scholar, a prestigious designation given on the basis of character, leadership and community service; and a Horatio Alger National Entrepreneurial Scholar, studying as a second-year commerce student at the UBC Sauder School of Business. He is a passionate youth leader with a focus in policy and advocacy in the form of his work with Plan International Canada and partnering it with his program Bro Bonds, which brought male identifying high school students together for conversations on topics such as positive relationships, toxic masculinity, and health. In this partnership, Mesgna promoted, organized, and facilitated a dialogue to curate recommendations for the first ever youth-led roadmap for advancing towards gender equality on all levels for the Youth for Gender Equality (YGE) initiative. His contributions to the initiative led him to being selected to represent PLAN Canada at Women Deliver 2019. With his tenured experience with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg, Mesgna used his coaching and tutoring backgrounds to create Sports & Smarts, an after-school learning and athletics program for elementary students. He also represented Boys and Girls Club as a youth leader at Parliament Hill, shadowing leaders of the country all the while graduating with the highest honour, valedictorian. For his devoted work and being recognized as a youth leader in his province, he received the City of Winnipeg Youth Role Model Award and The Golden Rule for Citizenship and Community Service Award. He enjoys filmmaking, musicals, and art. One of the films he worked on, "Deeper Shades of Blue" made it to the Gimli Film Festival.

The selection of the National Youth Delegates was done through the Youth Secretariat, Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada in partnership with the Royal Commonwealth Society of Canada.

### **About RCS Canada**

The Royal Commonwealth Society of Canada (RCS) is both a learned Society and club, non-partisan, independent of governments and supported solely by public generosity. The RCS engages with its youth, civil society, business and government networks to address issues that matter to the Citizens of the Commonwealth. Its primary focus is to the promotion of young people throughout the Commonwealth.

For more information please visit [www.rcs.ca](http://www.rcs.ca)

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