

# vancouver foundation

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# GENERATION SQUEEZE

How to turn \$90,000 into a  
\$30 billion social movement

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Illustrations by **AMEESHA LEE**

**NOT SO LONG AGO**, affordable childcare seemed like an impossible feat. But non-profit Generation Squeeze paved the way for childcare to get to the top of Canada's policy agenda, starting with a memorable tagline — "\$10-a-day childcare."

Today, affordable childcare is backed by a \$30 billion investment from the federal government. By early 2022, all provinces and territories in Canada signed onto offering residents \$10-a-day childcare.

The "\$10-a-day" tagline was held up by a framework that it developed with a \$90,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation: a framework that Generation Squeeze built a network of allies and supporters around.

Generation Squeeze has been fighting for generational fairness since it was founded in 2012, with the support of the grant from Vancouver Foundation.

Generation Squeeze works to bring about change on a systemic level and names issues such as unaffordable housing and the worsening climate as symptoms of generational unfairness. To achieve its mandate, Generation Squeeze builds and frames evidence so it

More than

**1/4**

of Canadian children are vulnerable in early development when they enter kindergarten.

Canadians under age 45 have inherited

**3x**

more government debt compared to four decades earlier.

Annually, government spending on younger Canadians grows

**29%**

slower than economic growth.

integrates into everyday political discourse and collaborates with similar organizations to bring about policy change. As Kershaw describes it, Generation Squeeze is part of an ecosystem of actors, shaping a stronger social landscape.

It officially launched in 2012, but its roots and ongoing engagement with Vancouver Foundation run back to 2009. At the time, Vancouver Foundation reached out to Kershaw and his colleague to offer guidance.

“They made a generous offer. They said, ‘We would like to allocate \$90,000 to put you in touch with a communications specialist, who will help you with your communications and your thinking about theories of change,’” says Kershaw. “That investment... was just transformative.”

Not only did the meeting provide inspiration for the researchers’ next step, it also taught them how to frame evidence effectively. In the process of building this new skillset, Generation Squeeze was set to coin affordable childcare as ‘\$10-a-day childcare.’ The organization became an important advocate for this concept, being the primary group out of BC to champion the concept on a national level.

“Taking it to a federal level ... has really driven the historic money for childcare that’s not only benefitting Vancouver or the province of BC, but coast to coast,” says Kershaw. “That framing clearly proved important when the government was trying to say, ‘We’re gonna do this, and here’s how we’re gonna sell it.’”

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In addition to playing a key role in Canada’s uptake of affordable childcare, Generation Squeeze has successfully advocated for adding young people as beneficiaries of the national housing strategy. The seeds for these achievements were planted 14 years ago by Vancouver Foundation’s proactive outreach and grew with its financial support to date.

“[Vancouver Foundation’s] patient philanthropic mentoring and investment ... has been absolutely critical to the influence that I think Gen Squeeze has had on the Vancouver, the BC, and the national context.”

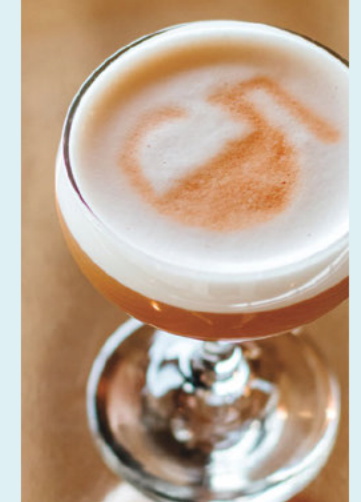
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